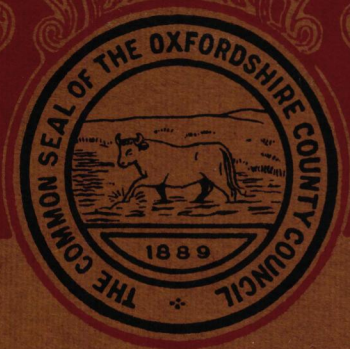




THE OXFORDSHIRE RECORD SOCIETY



PRINTED FOR THE SOCIETY

1974



OXFORDSHIRE ARCHITECTURAL AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

The Society for those interested in the archaeology, architecture and history of Oxford and Oxfordshire. It arranges lectures, excursions and publications; has Archaeological and Victorian Groups; and attempts to safeguard historic buildings and monuments.

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1. *Oxoniensia*, the regional archaeological journal, is published annually for articles and short notes on the archaeology, architecture and history of Oxford and its area. It includes excavation reports, surveys of buildings, and papers on local history, topography, industry and geology. Regular features are reviews of books on local subjects, and a Notes and News section (back numbers are available from the Hon. Treasurer, price £2.10 to members).
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AGRICULTURAL TRADE UNIONISM IN OXFORDSHIRE

The Oxfordshire Record Society

AGRICULTURAL TRADE UNIONISM
IN OXFORDSHIRE

1872 - 81

Edited by Pamela Horn

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FOREWORD

The Oxfordshire Record Society is most grateful to the British Academy for a generous grant in aid of the publication of this volume, and to Miss Helen Bromley of the Oxford University School of Geography, for her skilful execution of the map on p. 24.

J. F. A. Mason

OXFORDSHIRE RECORD SOCIETY

Note by the Society's Council:

Agricultural Trade Unionism in Oxfordshire 1872-81, edited by Dr. Pamela Horn, is issued to members as volume xlvihi, for the year 1970.

*

Manorial Records of Cuxham, edited by Dr. Paul Harvey, may appear late in 1974 or early in 1975; this is a joint publication with the Historical Manuscripts Commission, and that body determines the date of issue.

Late 14th Century Oxfordshire Sessions of the Peace, edited by Miss Elisabeth Kimball, is being printed, and may be issued in the first half of 1975.

Part 2 of Royalist Ordnance Papers, edited by Ian Roy, has been much delayed, but it is hoped that this too will be issued in 1975.

*

In view of continuing rises in printing costs each of these forthcoming volumes will probably be issued against two years' subscriptions, and if so they will cover the years 1971-6 inclusive.

June 1974

ERRATA

6. For legislaton read legislation.
- For sic read recte.
0. For Will^{m.} read Will^{by}.
- line 11. Insert Moore, John, 113, 114, 116.
7. Delete Morris, John, 116.

INTRODUCTION

Oxfordshire agricultural labourers, like their fellows elsewhere in the country, came relatively late to the idea of trade unionism, and it was not until 1872 that an effective organization was formed amongst them. Just over twenty years later the movement was dead, to be revived only in the twentieth century. Although the newspapers of the county and of the unions themselves are the main sources of information for the history of rural unionism in Oxfordshire during this period, some manuscript material has also survived. This volume prints a district and a branch minute book (both rare survivals) which show agricultural trade unionism at work at the local level, together with rules and correspondence illustrating the reaction of some landowners and farmers to the movement. In addition, answers to episcopal visitation enquiries have been included to indicate the response of certain parish clergy to the agitation. The documents cover the period 1872 to 1881, but this Introduction seeks to place them in a wider context by surveying the history of agricultural combination in the county during the two decades after 1872.

The advent of organized trade unionism among agricultural labourers in 1872 came, significantly enough, at the end of a period of general agricultural prosperity—a prosperity in which the farm worker had shared to but a limited extent—and at a time when urban employment was at a high level and the demand for labour buoyant. Then, too, the publicity surrounding the passage of the 1871 Trade Union Act, which gave legal protection to trade union funds, and the success of the movement for a nine-hour day among building and engineering workers gave the labourers further incentives to secure for themselves the benefits of combination.

Rural unrest first showed itself during 1871, when a number of labourers in Shropshire and Herefordshire joined together to form the North Herefordshire and South Shropshire Agricultural Labourers' Improvement Society. In the months that followed similar organizations were set up in Leicestershire and Lincolnshire. Nevertheless it was from agitation among the men of South Warwickshire that their Oxfordshire counterparts drew prime inspiration. The Warwickshire labourers began to combine in February, 1872, under the leadership of Joseph Arch, a stocky, forty-five-year-old former hedgecutter from the village of Barford. Arch was a man of great determination and he was able to transmit something of this quality to his followers.¹ A strike for higher wages in the Welles-

¹For an account of the early days of the agricultural trade union movement see Pamela Horn, *Joseph Arch* (Kineton, 1971); J. P. D. Dunbabin, 'The "Revolt of the Field": The Agricultural Labourers' Movement in the 1870s' in *Past and Present*, 26 (November, 1963). Reg Groves, *Sharpen the Sickle!* (London, 1949) provides a general history of the agricultural trade union movement up to the middle of the twentieth century. As regards the influence of the nine-hour movement in Oxfordshire, it is perhaps worth noting that the Oxford press in the early part of 1872 gave a great deal of coverage to the agitation among local building workers for this, and at a meeting of labourers at Swinbrook at the beginning of May, Stephen Paintin, a farm worker, declared that for his industry, too: 'Nine hours . . . should be the day, summer, winter, and all, fourpence each hour extra . . .' (*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 11th May, 1872.)

bourne area of Warwickshire during March, 1872, gave the movement national publicity, and at the same time called forth a response from the Oxfordshire villages. As early as 9th March, *Jackson's Oxford Journal* mentions 'a good deal of agitation' among the labourers in the Banbury district, and reports that at Bloxham and Milcombe this had led to a 1s. per week rise in wages being secured. In the weeks that followed there are accounts of meetings at Salford, Mollington, Turweston and several other nearby parishes. Following the establishment of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union (N.A.L.U.) at Leamington on 29th May, under the presidency of Joseph Arch, a number of these villages eventually formed branches in connection with the Banbury District of that Union.

Meanwhile, in southern and central Oxfordshire the focus of discontent proved to be the village of Milton-under-Wychwood, which is situated in the west of the county, just over twenty miles from Oxford itself. Here (in an area where the N.A.L.U. was to be particularly strong) a meeting of labourers on the village recreation ground in the middle of April led to the formation of what was first known as the Milton Union but which from October, 1872, formed the nucleus of the Oxford District of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union. (A list of branches of both the Banbury and Oxford Districts is given at the end of this Introduction). The Minute Book of the Oxford district, printed below, is the only one to have survived from the many regional assemblies set up in association with the N.A.L.U. throughout the southern and midland counties of England, and for this reason it has a unique value for the history of the agricultural trade union movement, particularly as the central archives of the N.A.L.U. have not survived.

In its pages can be found evidence of the efforts made by the union leaders not only to secure improvements in the wages and status of their members but also to assist those who wished to migrate to better-paid alternative employment in other parts of the United Kingdom, or even overseas to Canada and Australasia.¹ In this latter work they received the help (and often the financial support) of the respective Colonial Governments. As the *Ottawa Times* of 20th September, 1873, pointed out in respect of Canada: 'It is the duty, then, of all the Provinces to be alive to the importance of securing by every legitimate means the settlement of bodies of agricultural labourers, who form in every locality a nucleus for still further additions to that which forms the strength of a country—a prosperous because an industrious yeomanry.' As regards internal migration, the Horspath Branch Minute Book, which is printed below and is itself an almost unique survival of its kind, shows the rather mixed success which attended this policy at village level.²

¹For a general examination of N.A.L.U. emigration policy see Pamela Horn, 'Agricultural Trade Unionism and Emigration 1872-1881,' *Historical Journal*, xv (1972), 87-102.

²I am aware of only one other similar N.A.L.U. record—that of the Yetminster Branch, Dorset, which is preserved at the Museum of English Rural Life, Reading. This contains even less matter than the Horspath book.

Nevertheless, the main aim of the Union was undoubtedly to secure an advance in basic wage rates from the level of 11s. or 12s. per week which applied in most Oxfordshire parishes. To members of the general public this objective appeared modest enough but to farmers and landowners the mere intervention of a trade union into agricultural labour relations seemed an intolerable infringement of their rights. This was especially the case when strike threats accompanied the demands for a wage increase. Thus Mr. George Westover, a farmer from Duns Tew, complained, in a paper read to the Banbury Chamber of Agriculture in March, that the labourers 'had assumed an attitude so dictatorial and defiant that the farmer was absolutely on his defence.'¹

However, the most acute of the early clashes between farmers and unionists arose at the village of Wootton, where a union branch was formed on 29th May. Within a month membership had reached 185 and the men decided to demand an increase in their basic wages from 11s. to 16s. per week. This demand was made known in a circular letter, a copy of which was sent together with the union rule book to each farmer in the parish. On receipt of the letter farmers and landowners met and decided not only to reject the claim but to take retaliatory action. All unionists were to be dismissed, while the farmers themselves were to form a defence association to resist any future demand that might be made along the same lines. And plans were soon in hand to extend this latter organization over a wide area, under the title of the Oxfordshire and Adjoining Counties Association of Agriculturists, the rules of which are printed in this volume.

Meanwhile, on the first Friday of July about 120 labourers in Wootton and its immediate vicinity ceased work—some because they had been locked out by their employers and others because they had struck in support of their wage claim.

The dispute was to drag on for several weeks and on 17th July about forty unionists and their families migrated to Sheffield in order to seek alternative employment; but most of the remainder elected to stay in Wootton and to continue the struggle. With the approach of harvest the conflict assumed serious proportions for the farmers, who were anxious to bring in their crops, and they decided to apply to the military authorities at Aldershot for soldiers to work in the harvest fields. Although this was not the first time the military had been used for agricultural strike breaking—there are reports in August, 1867, for example, of striking labourers in Essex being replaced by two hundred soldiers from Colchester barracks—their intervention in 1872 aroused immediate controversy. Both the secretary of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union and the secretary of the London Trades Council wrote to the Secretary of State for War to protest, and it is significant that their efforts led to an amendment of the Queen's Regulations designed to prevent a similar situation

¹*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 30th March 1872.

arising in the future.¹ In the end only about ten soldiers were actually employed in Wootton and about forty in the Bampton area of the county. Nevertheless, their advent provided much-needed help for the farmers, even if (as one contemporary noted) it also 'envenomed a dispute hitherto carried on by the men without the least desire or sign of violence.'²

The Oxford District Minute Book contains a brief mention only of the Wootton affair and certainly does not give any indication of the wide publicity which it called forth both in trade union circles and in the national press. The dispute finally petered out at the end of August, when most of the remaining labourers returned to work—many having secured at least some increase in their wages to compensate them for their bitter struggle. At the same time, with the ending of the dispute, the pressure to continue the farmers' defence association also appeared to die away, and the organization was wound up in the autumn of 1872.

Yet, if the fate of the Oxfordshire Association of Agriculturists demonstrated that most farmers lacked the will to combine together *permanently* to oppose the union, this did not mean that their opposition to the N.A.L.U. had dwindled. Reactions varied but in the early days some embittered employers resorted to extreme measures in order to penalize men who had dared to join the union. Thus *Jackson's Oxford Journal* of 23rd March, 1872, noted: 'Many labourers have already received notices to quit their cottages in consequence of their connection with the Union, or sympathy with those out on strike,' while the Oxford District Minute Book itself provides a specific example in June, 1876, when the branch secretary at Weston-on-the-Green was evicted on what the N.A.L.U. alleged were anti-union grounds. The N.A.L.U. newspaper, the *Labourers' Union Chronicle* of 5th September, 1872 (quoting from the *Morning News*) likewise describes the eviction of several labourers employed by William Clinch, a farmer from Lew, near Witney, following their demand for an increase in wages. These were certainly not isolated instances, and in the north of the county, at the village of Tadmarton, a local farmer even horsewhipped a middle-aged labourer, named Isaac Bodfish, because he had joined the union.³

Clearly only a small minority of opponents were prepared to go to such lengths as these, but there is no doubt that hostility to the union was general among employers, as the two letters by George Wallis printed below indicate. Nevertheless, N.A.L.U. supporters could claim at least some material gain from their agitation, for all over the county wage rates were raised by at least 2s. per week. Sometimes the advance was secured without a strike (as the Horspath Branch Minute Book shows in

¹*Queen's Regulations for the Army for 1873*, Article 180. A fresh regulation explicitly prohibited military assistance 'in cases where strikes or disputes between farmers and their labourers exist.'

²Richard Heath, *The English Peasant* (London, 1893), p.227.

³*Oxford Chronicle*, 22nd June, 1872; and *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 22nd June, 1872.

respect of entries for March, 1873), but in other cases strike action was a necessary precursor. And where the farmers remained adamant in their opposition and men were dismissed, then union funds could provide an out-of-work benefit of 9s. per week until they found fresh employment, or migration grants were made to enable them to move elsewhere. In the years that followed, agitation was to extend over a still wider field to include pressure for the provision of allotment land; for the setting up of a benefit society in association with the Union to provide for members in sickness and old age; for the investigation of local charities in order to secure an equitable distribution of their proceeds; and for the extension of the franchise to rural householders—to match the rights given to the town workers in 1867. This latter ambition was not to be achieved until 1884.

Furthermore, although organizational work in the Oxford District was mainly carried out by the farm workers themselves, they were also able to call upon a number of non-labourer supporters to assist them in gaining their objectives. Among these were G. G. Banbury, a Woodstock draper, who became the District treasurer, and Joseph Leggett, a Milton-under-Wychwood carpenter, who became the first district secretary. Given the limited literacy of many labourers (a fact brought home by the erratic spelling and punctuation which appears towards the end of the Minute Book, when Leggett had resigned his office), this outside help was invaluable.

Meanwhile, after their activity in the spring and summer of 1872, the unionists seem to have decided to remain quiescent during the winter months. The relative calm was partially due to the fact that during the winter, employment was always in short supply and the farmers could more confidently have withstood a lock-out or strike at that time, than during the busier spring or summer seasons. Partially, too, the lull occurred as union leaders took stock and formulated their plans for the future. Then, with the approach of the spring sowing, militancy once more came to the fore, with disputes taking place in a number of villages. Undoubtedly the most significant of these, at least from a publicity point of view, occurred in the small village of Ascott-under-Wychwood—although rather surprisingly the Oxford District Minute Book makes no mention of it. Nevertheless, the case received detailed coverage not only in the national press but also in Parliament, on account of its special features.

The dispute arose out of a strike by labourers employed by Robert Hambridge, an Ascott farmer, in support of a demand for a 2s. per week rise in their basic wages. Hambridge offered concessions but refused to meet the men's claim in full. Consequently, on 14th April, 1873, they came out on strike. A week later labourers employed by other farmers in the village followed suit. It seems that Hambridge had been selected as the first target because of the large scale on which he operated; he was said to occupy a 'Government farm of 400 acres' and to have stock comprising '12 agricultural horses, four working bullocks, a superior flock of

500 sheep at turnips, milking cows, bullocks and young stock.¹ Nevertheless, despite the pressures upon him, Hambridge decided not to give in and immediately set about securing non-union replacement labour. After some effort he obtained the services of two youths from the nearby village of Ramsden, but at this point the wives and daughters of the strikers decided to take a hand. On 12th May, while Hambridge was absent from home on business, about thirty of them intercepted the young men as they were starting work and tried to persuade them to stop. Although some of the women carried sticks and 'jostled' the youngsters, it was generally agreed that their attitude was not very menacing. Furthermore, though the men left the field at the time of the 'intimidation', they freely returned to work there afterwards, under what *The Times* ironically called 'the powerful protection of one police constable'.

Subsequently seventeen of the women were charged at Chipping Norton Petty Sessions with a breach of the 1871 Criminal Law Amendment Act, a particularly harsh piece of legislation designed to restrict picketing. Sixteen were found guilty and two clerical magistrates sentenced seven of them to 'ten days' and the remaining nine to seven days', hard labour. The involvement of the clergy in this decision naturally reinforced the unionists' strong anti-Church hostility—an hostility which was based partly on sectarian grounds, since a number of local supporters were convinced Nonconformists. The visitation answers published below show the strained relations which existed between some clergy and the unionists.

Nevertheless, a great outcry followed the announcement of the sentences, especially as two of the women had young babies which had also to be taken to prison with their mothers. Soon after the decision was made public a large crowd of union supporters gathered outside the Chipping Norton Police Station and there were fears that an attempt would be made to release the women by force. Stones were thrown and N.A.L.U. leaders later claimed that only the presence of Christopher Holloway, the district chairman, prevented a serious riot. In the event, the women were sent under police escort to Oxford Gaol, where their sentences were to be served, in the early hours of the following morning.

Public opinion on a wider front was aroused, however, and questions were asked in the House of Commons concerning the case. Eventually the Lord Chancellor requested the Duke of Marlborough, as Lord Lieutenant of the county, to investigate the matter. Although the Duke's report supported the action taken, and his letter was backed 'by a testimonial, signed by 298 occupiers of land, and others from Oxfordshire parishes expressing entire satisfaction with the action of the justices', elsewhere doubts remained.² The Lord Chancellor himself expressed reservations

¹*The Times*, 2nd June, 1873; and *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 7th June, 1873.

²Parliamentary Papers, 1873, lix, S.P. 315, 27-31 and Diana McClatchey, *Oxfordshire Clergy 1777-1869* (Oxford, 1960), pp.199-200. The case is also discussed in the standard histories of the trade union movement—for example, Henry Pelling, *A History of British Trade Unionism* (London, 1963), 74 and Sidney and Beatrice Webb, *The History of Trade Unionism* (London, 1920 edn.), 332.

about the sentences imposed and the N.A.L.U. leaders naturally lost no opportunity of making use of the case for propaganda purposes, to be turned against both farmers and clerical magistrates. The occasion of the women's release from prison was turned into a large demonstration, and on 20th June, at a special gathering at Ascott itself, each of the women was presented with £5 in cash and a dress in the union colour (royal blue) by Joseph Arch, the N.A.L.U. president and Joseph Leggett, the Oxford District secretary.

Yet, if the Wootton and Ascott disputes had given rise to considerable publicity and sometimes to hard feelings, they were of minor significance only when compared to the major conflict which broke out between farmers and labourers in the Eastern Counties in the spring of 1874. In all, the lockout of several thousand unionists by East Anglian farmers lasted about five months and involved an expenditure of £24,432 10s. 7d. by the National Union Executive Committee in support of the men involved. One of the major tasks of the national leaders in these circumstances was to raise funds and not only were appeals made to the general public and to other trade unions for contributions, but agricultural workers elsewhere responded as liberally as they could. The Oxford District, for example, reacted by sending the very large sum of £1,280 18s. to the National lockout fund; and the Horspath Branch Minute Book shows the characteristically generous response of only one small branch of the union.

Despite this wholehearted support, however, the large scale on which relief had to be disbursed, coupled with the ability of farmers to secure non-union labour (or machinery) to replace the strikers, meant that in the end the N.A.L.U. had to accept defeat. At a meeting of the executive committee on 27th July, it was decided to recommend all those still on strike to return to work. In the event, many found great difficulty in doing this, while others were only re-employed on the understanding they left the union. Although the decision was perhaps inevitable in the light of the union's financial condition, there is no doubt that it gave rise to feelings of betrayal among many supporters. Out of this disillusionment developed internal conflicts among the N.A.L.U. leaders, and in the summer of 1875, J. Matthew Vincent, the National treasurer and proprietor of the union newspaper (the *Labourers' Union Chronicle*) decided to break away from the parent organization, to form a new society called the National Farm Labourers' Union. The Oxford District, as their Minute Book entries show, carefully avoided taking an active part in this dispute, merely remaining loyal to the old union. Nevertheless, the tendency for the two rival organizations to abuse one another at public meetings and through the press undoubtedly weakened general support for the union movement in the long run. Even in Oxfordshire, where the new body enjoyed little support, the issue proved divisive. Thus at Steeple Barton it was reported in January, 1876, that: 'A great many stand aloof from either Union, as they know they have been very much duped.' Not until

1877 did the acute stage of this particular internal dispute come to an end, following the amalgamation in the spring of that year of the rival newspapers (namely the *English Labourer*, representing the N.A.L.U. and the *Labourers' Chronicle*, representing the views of the National Farm Labourers' Union). The *English Labourers' Chronicle*, as the resultant newspaper was known, was to remain the organ of the N.A.L.U. until it ceased publication in the autumn of 1894. (The National Farm Labourers' Union itself was wound up towards the end of 1879¹.)

Yet any hopes that this amalgamation of the newspapers would re-establish unity within the movement were soon disappointed, and this time the Oxford District proved to be in the van of the dissidents.

The new conflict arose during the course of 1878 and concerned the rival merits of centralization and federalism as methods of union organization. Under the rules of the N.A.L.U. the districts were each required to remit three-quarters of their annual income to the central executive, while the district officials were expected to manage their local business upon the remaining one-quarter, i.e. upon $\frac{1}{4}$ d. per member per week. The Oxford district leaders, in particular, objected to this, especially when large sums of money were paid out for the relief of strikers in other parts of the country and when the decline in district membership caused financial difficulties within their own area. In these circumstances, some of them began to demand greater autonomy for the districts—in fact, a reversal of the financial arrangements, so that three-quarters of the subscriptions would be retained in the district and only one-quarter sent to Leamington. At the instigation of Thomas Bayliss, then secretary of the Oxford district, a committee was appointed by the N.A.L.U. in the summer of 1878 to examine the whole position of the Union and to recommend such economies or changes as might be necessary.

Towards the end of the year a number of reform proposals were put forward, and this was followed in January, 1879, by the holding of a special national conference of delegates to consider the new ideas. But, as can be seen from the Minute Book, the proposed measures did not at all satisfy the Oxford district leaders. At the delegate meeting, which was held in London, they put forward an alternative demand for a federal system of organization. After a heated debate, this proposition was rejected but the conference broke up in an atmosphere of confusion and bitter recrimination.

Within the Oxford district itself unrest continued and eventually in May, 1879, the disgruntled sections decided to sever their connections with the N.A.L.U. Under the leadership of Thomas Bayliss they attempted to set up a union of their own, to be known as the National Land and Labour Union, but its career proved unsuccessful and within a few months the whole organization had disappeared.

In the meantime, those branches within the district which had remained loyal to the N.A.L.U. were absorbed by the adjoining Banbury district.

¹The story is complicated, and may be found in P.R.O., BT.31/2240.

But there can be no doubt that this further dispute undermined yet again, general support for the union movement. During the 1880s affairs were conducted on an ever-lower key, especially since, as the union grew weaker, members were unable in most cases to retain the advances in money wages won in the early years of success. The situation was aggravated by the fact that from the late 1870s English arable agriculture was under increasing pressure, as prices slumped following the increase in cheap grain imports, particularly from the U.S.A., while poor harvests in England kept home yields low. The difficulties that these circumstances created were recognized by the union leaders. As the Banbury and Oxford district secretary declared in September, 1880: 'Times must mend if we all try, and I know many of you don't want the sufferings of last winter repeated. Then every man join the union and try and prevent it.'¹

Nevertheless, despite the failures on the wages front, in the early 1880s a number of unionists did concern themselves with action in the political field, and in particular with demands for franchise extension. This had been a feature of N.A.L.U. policy from early days and in both 1876 and 1877 the Banbury and Oxford districts had been active in sponsoring petitions for an extension of the franchise; thus in 1877 the Oxford district secretary had boasted that his area's petition contained upward of eleven thousand signatures. Later these petitions were also coupled with demands for wider changes. In August, 1879, a meeting at the small village of Finmere, for example, passed a motion in favour both of a wider franchise and of land nationalisation, while in the same year meetings at Churchill and Middle Barton passed resolutions condemning the use of corporal punishment in the armed forces. This latter was a Radical campaign much favoured by Joseph Arch, the N.A.L.U. president, whose own eldest son was a sergeant in the Army. Although in the final push for the county franchise in 1884 the impact of the union was weakened by its loss of membership, meetings were nevertheless held to support the cause during the last vital months as the Franchise Bill passed through Parliament. According to the *English Labourers' Chronicle*, at many of these meetings copies of Mr. Gladstone's speeches were also sold, for there is no doubt that the statesman was regarded as a hero by most active agricultural unionists at this time. During these months, too, there was even a modest revival in recruitment to the union ranks, so that in December, 1884, an Oxfordshire delegate claimed that 107 new members had joined the N.A.L.U. within the county during the preceding weeks and 'five

¹Of course, a perennial problem for the union movement was to decide whether to expel members who fell into arrears with their weekly subscriptions. There was a natural desire to keep membership at as high a level as possible, but on the other hand, if some supporters were able to avoid paying subscriptions, then the rest would begin either to follow suit or to complain of unfairness. The Rule Book of the N.A.L.U. in 1875 lays down in Rule 13(4) that: 'Any member, whose contribution shall be more than three months in arrears, shall not be entitled to relief, and if they are six months in arrear he shall be considered as excluded from the Branch.'

dozen additional copies' of the union newspaper had been ordered. Yet, in the event, the resurgence of interest proved short-lived, and for the majority of farm workers the broad outlines of existence during the 1880s were altered only by the gaining of the franchise. Those who were dissatisfied with conditions on the land joined the ever-growing exodus from agriculture to the towns, and the total number of male farm servants and agricultural labourers employed in the county fell from 19,305 in 1871 to 14,796 in 1891. The excitement of the early days of unionism had quite disappeared, and by 1889 the *national* membership of the N.A.L.U. was a mere 4,254. This was far fewer than had been recruited in Oxfordshire itself in 1873-74. (In December, 1874, the Oxford district had claimed a membership of 3,000 and the Banbury district of 2,599).

By 1889, therefore, the demise of the National Union seemed imminent, but thanks to a general revival of trade within the country and to the successful outcome of a strike by London dockers in August, 1889, a brief reprieve was gained—for the success of the unskilled dockers gave a new confidence to poorly paid workers everywhere. In this resurgence Oxfordshire played only a modest role, but at the annual conference of the N.A.L.U. in May, 1890, it was represented by John Cockbill, who had been a branch official and union delegate during the 1870s. And Joseph Arch, in his presidential address, expressed the hope that eight or ten new branches would be formed within the county in the near future.

However, one of the most active participants in this second phase of rural unionism in Oxfordshire was William Hines, a chimney sweep employed at one of the Oxford Colleges, who had been an enthusiastic supporter of agricultural trade unionism in the county from 1872—as the Oxford District Minute Book makes clear. Hines was a convinced Radical; indeed, in 1889, a fellow Liberal described him as one of the 'fast trotters' of the Liberal cause, and less than a decade later he was to abandon the Liberal Party for Socialism. During the autumn of 1895, when an Oxford and District Socialist Union was established in Oxford, he became a member of the Committee. To assist in his agricultural trade union work in the 1890s, Hines called upon some of the more Radical members of the University—among whom Herbert Samuel (later Viscount Samuel) was to be numbered.¹

During the late spring and summer of 1890, therefore, Hines and his undergraduate friends held meetings in many of the villages around Oxford, but the spontaneous success of earlier years was lacking. By the end of August it would seem that even the persistent Hines was becoming disheartened. In a letter to the *English Labourers' Chronicle* of 30th August, he declared that Oxfordshire labourers were quite willing to attend union meetings and to applaud the speakers, but 'they do not attend to the one thing needful, that is they do not join the Union in that earnest and systematic way they do in Norfolk and other districts.'

Perhaps Hines was also dissatisfied with the attitude of the union

¹Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs* (London, 1945), pp.14-16.

leaders towards Oxfordshire—although Joseph Arch did visit the county several times during 1890—or perhaps he was attracted by more Radical policies. The fact remains that by the beginning of January, 1891, his allegiance (and that of his helpers) had been transferred from the N.A.L.U. to the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Workers' Union.

The leaders of this latter organization had become involved in recruitment in the agricultural areas because of the threat which farm workers posed both as strike breakers and as new (and lowly-paid) recruits to the unskilled urban occupations from which the bulk of their own membership was drawn. The Dockers' Union selected two counties to begin operations, viz. Lincolnshire and Oxfordshire, and the first delegates left their London headquarters for the latter area on 17th January, 1891. The principal representative of the union in Oxfordshire was E. H. Nicholls, who had been active in the Seamen's Union prior to the 1889 dock strike, when he had undertaken organizational work for the dockers. He and Hines held their first meeting, at Burford, on Monday, 26th January, and this proved to be the precursor of many similar gatherings. Yet, despite the hard work of the two men and of their undergraduate helpers, the movement had little success. By September, a membership of about five or six hundred only was being claimed, divided among twenty-two branches, and the weak response is further underlined by the fact that a number of the members were not farm labourers at all. For example, in addition to Hines himself, several of the branch secretaries were employed in other fields, such as Price, the Islip branch secretary, who was a postman, and Jessett, the Kirtlington secretary, who was a boot and shoe maker.¹ Nevertheless, the annual report of the Dock, Wharf, Riverside and General Workers' Union claimed that through the union's efforts allotments had been secured, 'proper sanitary inspection of cottages' insisted upon, and wages had been raised. Overtime hours had been fixed in some villages and 'proper contract prices' agreed for the harvest and other busy seasons. Specific examples of these generalisations are difficult to produce, but the Assistant Commissioner who visited the county in 1892 in connection with the *Royal Commission on Labour* noted that at the village of Worminghall a wage increase of 1s. per week had been obtained as a result of industrial action backed by the Dockers' Union. And Hines himself claimed that the establishment of union branches in the villages of Great

¹The Dockers' Union agitation was, incidentally, held by some clergymen to have caused the labourers to turn away from the Church of England—just as its N.A.L.U. predecessor had been blamed in the 1870s. In 1893, the Kirtlington incumbent answered a Visitation query on the point of church attendance over the preceding three years by declaring: 'It was steady for the first two years—since then there has been some decrease. Possibly partly due to the action of Dockers' Union, which was strong in the parish last summer.' At Rousham, where attendance had also fallen, the 'migratory habits of agricultural labourers and bad influence of Unions' were the reasons given.

Milton, Haseley, Horspath, Cuddesdon and Tetsworth had led to higher wages being paid 'without a man asking' for them.¹

Yet if modest progress only had been made by the Dockers' Union in 1891, achievements in the following year were to be even smaller. Not surprisingly, therefore, it was decided at the Swansea Conference of the Union held in September, 1892, that all organizational work in the rural areas must cease because of the 'heavy charges involved.'

This might have seemed the end of rural trade unionism in Oxfordshire but E. H. Nicholls, who was still working in the county, refused to accept defeat. He decided to form a local union under his own direction, to be known simply as the Oxfordshire Labourers' Union. Although the pro-Liberal *Oxford Chronicle* sympathetically reported these efforts, it is clear that they had little real impact in the agricultural areas. As a last resort, early in 1893 Nicholls decided to visit Lincolnshire to try to promote links with those favourable to agricultural unionism in that county. His initiative met with some small success, and when the first formal meeting of the new Union was held on 1st April, 1893, it was announced that its name was to be changed to the Oxfordshire and Lincolnshire Agricultural Labourers' Union. But by the late summer of 1893 the whole enterprise had collapsed and as the *Oxford Chronicle* of 14th October sadly admitted: 'That the present moment is not propitious for forming a stable trades union among our local labourers has been proved by the unfortunate end of the Oxfordshire Agricultural Labourers' Union.'²

With the demise of the Oxfordshire union in 1893 agricultural trade unionism disappeared from the county for the remainder of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, some at least of the activists of the 1890s demonstrated their commitment to Radical ideals by offering themselves for membership of the first Parish Councils, when elections were held in December, 1894. At Wootton, for example, two of the seven councillors were labourers and a third, H. Dawson, was a former branch secretary for the Dockers' Union as well as manager of the co-operative shop established by the Union in that village. Similarly, the former secretaries of the Burford, Tetsworth and Weston-on-the-Green branches of the Dockers' Union were also selected by their respective communities, while at Horspath, where three of the five councillors were labourers, the former union branch secretary was likewise among those chosen.³

Indeed, despite the long-term failure of the agriculture trade union movement, the late Victorian labourer had some gains to show for his earlier allegiance to the cause. First and foremost, wage rates even at the

¹*Oxford Chronicle*, 19th September, 1891.

²For a full account of the agricultural trade union movement in Oxfordshire during the 1890s see Pamela Horn, 'The Farm Workers, the Dockers and Oxford University', *Oxoniensia*, xxxii (1967),

³None of the three Horspath councillors had, however, been active in the N.A.L.U. branch established in the village in the early 1870s; possibly they were too young for this.

end of the nineteenth century were higher than they had been in the late 1860s (despite the decline which had taken place from the 1872-74 peak), while retail *prices* had fallen sharply over the same period. In real terms, therefore, the labourer was considerably better off than his predecessor of thirty years. It may, of course, be argued that the rise in wages which occurred in the 1870s would have come anyway as agriculture was prosperous and the demand for labour buoyant, but it must be remembered that such prosperity had existed before, without the labourers deriving any great benefit from it. The union agitation pinpointed the need for some redistribution of agricultural income in favour of the worker.

The extension of the franchise in 1884 can, in part, also be attributed to the effects of union agitation. Even the *Economist*, which was never a particular friend of the trade union movement, declared in November, 1877: 'The existence and spread of labourers' unions supplies . . . a *prima facie* reason for giving the labourers votes. It is evidence that the class has, and it is conscious that it has, desires and interests peculiar to itself, and that it can no longer be treated as a mere appendage to some other class.'¹

At the purely local level valuable work was carried out in regard to the administration of charities and the provision of allotments, while grants were available to assist members to migrate to alternative employment within Britain or overseas. Again, in the early days of the movement especially, a valuable role was played in financing members' defence when they were charged in the courts with offences connected with their employment. The Oxford District Minute Book contains several examples of this particular aspect of union activity.

Finally, and most importantly, the N.A.L.U. gave to the farm worker feelings of self-confidence and self-respect which he had so obviously lacked in earlier years. After 1872 neither landowner nor farmer could forget that the labourer was a human being—not an ignorant 'Chaw Bacon' or 'Johnny Raw', whose views could be dismissed out of hand, but a man prepared, if necessary, to demand the rights and privileges which were his due. It is against this background that the documents which follow have to be seen.

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November 1972

¹See also note to p.97 below.

LIST OF BRANCHES OF THE BANBURY DISTRICT
OF THE N.A.L.U. IN 1873-4

(Based on *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, *passim*).

(All branches are situated in Oxfordshire unless otherwise stated).

Adderbury	Deddington	Shenington
Adstone (Northants.)	Duns Tew	Shotteswell
Aston-le-Walls	Epwell	(Warwicks.)
(Northants.)	Evenley (Northants.)	Shutford
Avon Dassett	Farnborough	Sibford Gower
(Warwicks.)	(Warwicks.)	Souldern
Aynho (Northants.)	Farthinghoe	South Newington
Banbury	(Northants.)	Stanton Harcourt
Barford (Great)	Fencot	Stoke Lyne
Blakesley (Northants.)	Fringford	(Northants.)
Bloxham	Fritwell	Sulgrave (Northants.)
Bodicote	Greatworth	Syresham
Boddington	(Northants.)	(Northants.)
(Northants.)	Hanwell	Tadmarton
Brackley (Northants.)	Helmdon (Northants.)	Tew (Great)
Brailes (Warwicks.)	Hethe	Tew (Little)
Chalcombe	Kings Sutton	Wappenham
(Northants.)	(Northants.)	(Northants.)
Charlton-by-New-	Litchborough	Wardington
bottle (Northants.)	(Northants.)	Warmington
Cherington	Middleton Cheney	(Warwicks.)
(Warwicks.)	(Northants.)	Weston-by-Weedon
Chipping Warden	Milton	(Northants.)
(Northants.)	Mixbury	Westbury (Bucks.)
Claydon	Mollington	Whitfield (Northants.)
Cottisford	Moreton Pinckney	Wigginton
Cropredy	(Northants.)	Wroxton
Croughton	North Newington	
(Northants.)	Radstone (Northants.)	
Culworth (Northants.)	Sandford St. Martin	

(66 branches: 33 in Oxfordshire, 26 in Northamptonshire,
6 in Warwickshire, and 1 in Buckinghamshire).

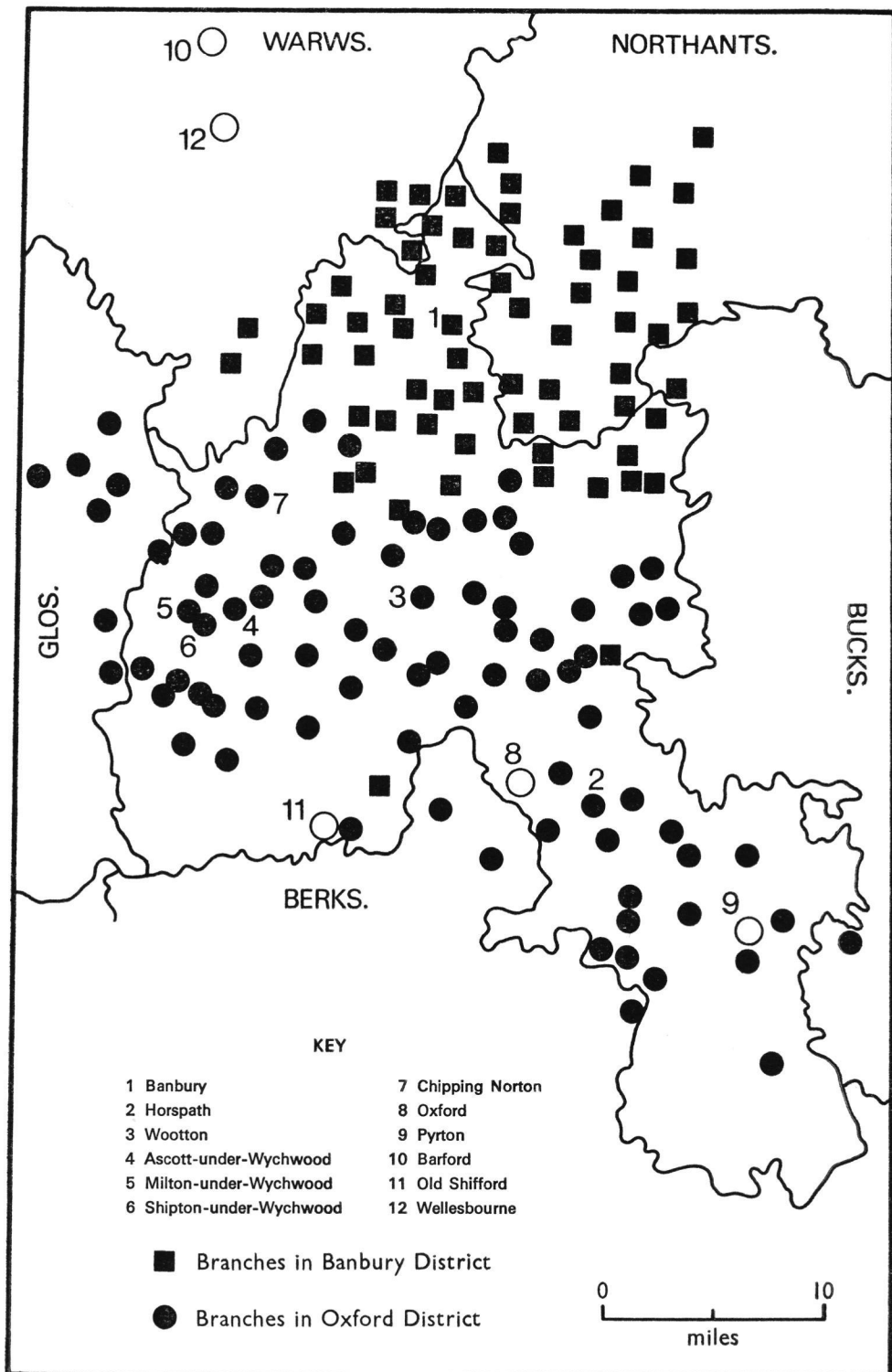
LIST OF BRANCHES OF THE OXFORD DISTRICT
OF THE N.A.L.U. IN 1873-4

(Based on *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, *passim*)

(All branches are situated in Oxfordshire, unless otherwise stated).

Ambrosden	Fulbrook	Salford
Ascott-under- Wychwood	Garsington	Shilton
Asthall	Hanborough	Shipton-under- Wychwood
Barrington (Great) (Glos.)	Haseley (Great)	Somerton
Beckley	Headington	Spelsbury
Benson	Heyford (Upper)	Stadhampton
Bicester	Hook Norton	Standlake
Binford	Horspath	Steeple Aston
Blackthorn	Islip	Steeple Barton
Bladon	Kiddington	Stokenchurch
Bledington (Glos.)	Kidlington	Stonesfield
Bletchington	Kingham	Stow-on-the-Wold (Glos.)
Brize Norton	Kirtlington	Sunningwell (Berks.)
Broadwell (Glos.)	Launton	Swerford
Burford	Leafeld	Swinbrook
Caulcott	Lewknor	Tackley
Chadlington	Littlemore	Taynton
Chalgrove	Longborough (Glos.)	Tetsworth
Charlbury	Lyneham	Wallingford (Berks.)
Charlton-on-Otmoor	Milton (Great)	Warborough
Chilson	Milton-under- Wychwood	Watlington
Chipping Norton	Minster Lovell	Wendlebury
Churchill	Moreton-in-Marsh (Glos.)	Westcot Barton
Combe	Nettlebed	Weston-on-the-Green
Condicote	North Leigh	Wheatley
Cumnor	Oddington	Witney
Dorchester	Ramsden	Wootton
Drayton	Rissington (Great)	Yarnton
Enstone	(Glos.)	
Eynsham	Rollright (Great)	

(87 branches: 78 in Oxfordshire, 7 in Gloucestershire,
and 2 in Berkshire).



The N.A.L.U. in Oxfordshire

I

MINUTE BOOK
OF THE OXFORD DISTRICT
OF THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS'
UNION

(Nuffield College, Oxford, MSS of the late G. D. H. Cole)

[This is a stiff bound and now somewhat battered exercise book of 106 quarto leaves; several leaves were at some time torn out at the end of the book. On the inside of the front cover is written: 'Milton Agricultural Labourers' Union Established April 16th 1872 Minute Book'. The book is not foliated. Minutes were recorded by the three successive Secretaries of the Oxford District, Joseph Leggett, Edwin Ford and Thomas Bayliss, whose periods of office were 1872-4, 1874-5, and 1875-9 respectively. The District's Office was at first in rented premises in Botley Road, Oxford, but in spring 1875 moved to Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford, where it may have been located in the premises which the then Secretary, Bayliss, occupied for his business as a newsagent (p.99).

The book passed from Thomas Bayliss to his son the late Mr. W. J. S. Bayliss of Headington, a printer's reader. The latter sold it to the late Professor G. D. H. Cole in 1939; Professor Cole in 1952 deposited it in Nuffield College Library, to which he later presented it. The Oxfordshire Record Society is grateful to the Librarian of Nuffield College for permission to print the text of the minute book.

The minutes were often written up hastily during the course of a meeting; Leggett soon forsook pen for pencil, but Ford and then Bayliss returned to the use of ink (pp. 39, 69). Leggett soon ceased to have the minutes signed by the chairman of the next meeting, but Ford remedied this omission (pp. 33, 71). Ford's and Bayliss' spelling was often erratic, and as the minute book shows the grammar of all three men was liable to lapses. Words which form the stock vocabulary of minutes, such as 'adjourn', 'delegate', 'executive', 'postpone', 'reference', 'representative', 'rescind', and 'unanimously', and even 'present', 'propose' and 'write' sometimes defeated

successive secretaries and appear in the minutes in unexpected guises; and many other words are strangely spelt.

Throughout this volume *sic* has been used to denote all misnumberings but only the stranger misspellings. Words supplied by the editor are printed within square brackets.]

April 16th 1872

The first Meeting of this Society was held on Milton Recreation Ground when the Rules were read and after some discussion 50 joined as members, the meeting quietly broke up after giving three cheers for the Union.

J. Leggett Secretary¹

Committee Meeting April 20

Members present on the Committee²

John Holly [<i>sic</i>] Lineham	Wm. Tripp Lineham
Charles Cox Shipton	Wm. Wright Shipton
James Mills Milton	Wm. Barnes Milton

¹ The Rules were considered and altered according to the intentions of the Union.

² A public Meeting was ordered to be held on the Recreation Ground Shipton for the purpose of reading & explaining the Rules of the Society.

¹Joseph Leggett was born in Windsor, Berkshire, although his wife came from Milton-under-Wychwood. He himself had lived in Milton at least from the end of the 1850s and at the formation of the union was aged about 35. By trade he was a carpenter and at the time of the establishment of the union was employed by Alfred Groves, carpenter and builder, of Milton. See *Oxford Chronicle*, 18th May 1872, and 1871 Census Return Milton-under-Wychwood (P.R.O., R.G.10/1456).

²All of the committee members except for William Barnes were farm labourers; Barnes was a woodman. The committee ranged in age from about thirty-one to fifty. When the union later became concerned with emigration two of the members left England for Wellington, New Zealand, on *The Mongol*, sailing on 24th December, 1873. The two emigrants were James Mills, who travelled with his wife and three children, and William Tripp, who was accompanied by six members of his family. I am indebted to Mr. R. Arnold for details of the emigration of Mills and Tripp to New Zealand.

April 25th Charles Cox in the chair¹

A Public Meeting was held on the Recreation Ground Shipton after the Rules were read a large number joined the Union from different parishes, an excellent feeling prevailed among the men who quietly dispersed to their homes.

Chairman Charles Cox

April 29th Charles Cox in the chair

Members of Committee present

John Holly [*sic*], Wm. Tripp, David Rathbone Lineham

Charles Cox, Wm. Wright Shipton

James Mills, Isaac Castle² Milton

Wm. Harding Taynton

Mr. James Mullis Treasurer³

Jos^h. Leggett Secretary

1 After the Subscriptions from the branches were received and handed over to the treasurer the Rules were reconsidered and a number ordered to be printed for distribution among the members of Society.⁴

2 A Special Rule was to be considered which should apply to the harvest season.

3 A discussion took place on the price to be paid for overtime and it was unanimously agreed to stand as in Rule 4.

¹Charles Cox, at thirty-one, was the youngest member of the committee and was employed as a farm labourer. At the time of the 1871 Census his eldest son, aged 10, was employed as a plough boy.

²Isaac Castle was to be an active supporter of the union movement for most of the 1870s. He did not apparently live in Milton at the time of the 1871 Census of Population, since his name does not appear in the Return for that village but in the 1874 Electoral Register for Oxfordshire he was entitled to vote on account of his ownership of 'freehold houses'.

³James Mullis was a baker by trade and was aged about twenty-seven. (1871 Census Return for Milton-under-Wychwood.)

⁴According to *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 11th May, 1872, the rules included demands for a nine-hour-day, with extra payment for overtime and Sunday working; the overtime rate was to be 4d. per hour. No 'able-bodied man (was to) take less than 13 shillings a week' as a basic wage rate. These demands were later amended and some union branches specified 16s. per week as a basic minimum wage. See, for example, Pamela Horn, 'Christopher Holloway: an Oxfordshire Trade Union Leader', *Oxoniensia*, xxxiii (1968), 127.

4 The Secretary was ordered to convene Meetings in different villages around Milton the Expenses to be paid out of the Society's Funds.

5 A Resolution was passed that all labourers within six clear weeks shall pay their entrance fee and 2d. per week from the commencement of the Union after which time provision will be made by the Committee for labourers joining the Society.

signed Chairman Charles Cox

Committee Meeting May 7

Charles Cox in the Chair

Members of Committee present

Isaac Castle, James Mills (Milton)

Tho Smith, Charles Cox, Wm. Wright (Shipton)

John Holly [*sic*], David Rathbone (Lineham)

Mr. James Mullis Treasurer; J. Leggett Secretary

1 The Secretary having received a letter from Mr. Edwin Russell¹ Secretary to the Warwickshire Agricultural Labourers Union, containing an invitation to join in Union with them as a branch and also kindly offering their assistance to this Union by coming amongst us and pleading the cause of the Union, the Committee ordered the Secretary to request of the Trustees and Minister, the use of the Primitive Methodist Chapel Milton for the purpose of holding a Meeting of delegates from the Branches, such Meeting to be held when Mr. Arch or other Friends shall be amongst us, who shall consider the best means for promoting the Interests of the Union.²

2 The Secretary to correspond with Mr. E. Russell with regard to the desirableness of forming a National Union.

3 That in view of impending circumstances the monies already received shall not be invested in any Bank until further decision of the Committee.

¹Russell was a tradesman and Methodist local preacher from Harbury in Warwickshire (Pamela Horn, *Joseph Arch*, p. 44.)

²Joseph Arch (1826-1919), then President of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union, visited Milton-under-Wychwood on 1st July 1872, accompanied by Edwin Russell. About two thousand labourers and their families attended the meeting, according to *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 6th July, 1872.

4 Should any Member of Society be discharged from his employment on account of his connection with the Union the Secretary shall have power to grant a sufficient sum of money to enable any Member to go elsewhere for employment.

5 The Committee allowed the Secretary's expenses for time and travelling as charged in the Society's book of Expenditure

6 That in the event of Mr. Arch coming amongst us hand-bills shall be circulated in the neighbourhood announcing the same and the meeting to be covenen [sic] on the Green at Milton.

7 Meetings have been held in several villages and towns in the Neighbourhood with more or less success.

Signed Chairman John Hollyock

Committee Meeting May 18

Members present

Isaac Castle, James Mills, Milton.

Charles Cox, Wm. Wright, Thos. Smith, Shipton.

John Hollyock, David Rathbone, Lineham.

Mr. James Mullis Treasurer

J. Leggett Secretary

1 Resolved that the Delegates be summon'd to meet on Thursday 23rd May at 7 o'clock, p.m., the place of meeting to be at the Secretary's House.

2 Resolved that Wm. Wright of Shipton go with the Secretary to Little Barrington to hold a Public Meeting on Monday the 20th May, also the Secretary shall have power to employ any member of Society (who may be discharged from their work on account of the Union) for such purposes as may further the Interests of the Union.

3 Resolved that a Public Meeting be held on the Village Green Shipton on Teusday night at 7 o'clock.

4 Resolved that a Delegate be sent to Wellesbourne on Monday May 20th to invite Mr. Joseph Arch to come to Milton the expenses of the Delegate shall be defrayed from the Union Funds.¹

¹According to the *Royal Leamington Chronicle*, 25th May 1872, Charles Cox represented the Milton Union at the Wellesbourne meeting on 20th May; it was noted that at that date the Milton Union had 13 branches and over 500 members.

5 Resolved that Minute 2 passed by the Milton Branch Committee be considered right and proper and that it be carried out by the Society to the best of its ability.

6 Resolved that Charlbury be not received at present as a branch of this Union and the money of the three Members on the Books be returned and their names erased.¹

7 Resolved that 3 Trustees be appointed who shall be security for the monies invested in an approved bank, such Trustees to be appointed if possible at the first Delegate Meeting.

8 Resolved that a Subscription be made by the Members of this Union for the benefit of the Secretary such subscription will be considered as an expression of Sympathy for the Secretary in his efforts to promote the Interests of the Union.

9 Resolved that the Secretary be allowed the sum of £1-4-0 for his services from May 7th to May 18th.

10 The Secretary was ordered to get 3 benches made for the use of the Society.

Resolution 8 be further considered at Delegate Meeting.

Signed Chairman Charles Cox

First Monthly Delegate Meeting

May 23rd 1872

Charles Cox in the Chair

1 The Minutes of the preceding Committee meetings were read and passed.

2 The Question of Members being in arrears was deferred for further consideration until next Delegate Meeting.

3 Resolution 8 of Committee Meeting May 18th was unanimously adopted and ordered to be carried out by the 11th of June and presented to the Secretary.

4 Proposed by John Finley seconded by John Timms that labourers entering this Union as Members shall pay one shilling entrance fee and the weekly payment as before.

Amendment

Proposed by George Smith seconded by Edward Harding that the entrance Fee remain as before but that each Labourer on entering pay back four weeks subscriptions.

Majority for amendment.

¹The reason for this decision is not clear and no explanation is given. A branch was later established at Charlbury and was certainly in existence by 1874.

5 Proposed by David Rathbone seconded by Edward Harding that the time for a day's work in harvest time be 13 hours allowing 2 hours out of the 13 for meals, and that 4 shillings per day be the harvest wage without beer and 6d. per hour for overtime.

unanimous

6 Proposed by David Rathbone seconded by George Smith that no member of Society shall be borrowed from one farm to another if such borrowing should hinder the employment of Labourers in the Union.

7 Proposed by Isaac Castle seconded by Edward Harding that 2 Delegates be sent to the National Congress to be held at Leamington on Wednesday & Thursday, 29th & 30th May, the Secretary J. Leggett to go with them and the expenses to be paid out of the Union Funds.

8 A Motion was made to the effect that a Strike should be made throughout the Union, but the general feeling was that no strike should be made but that members should do their best to obtain their price; no members when lock'd out shall resume work again until they obtain the Union price 13/-.

Names of Delegates present

Milton	Isaac Castle	
Shipton	Charles Cox	
Lineham	David Rathbone	
Westcote	John Simmonds	
Taynton	Edward Harding	Minute 5 to be amended
Fulbrook	John Pills	
Swinbrook	Robert Eagle	
Ascott	Eli Robinson	Signed Chairman
Kingham	John Finley	Robert Eagle ¹
Burford	George Smith	
Minster	Wm. Cox	
Asthall	Saml. Neville	
Leafield	Danl. Wiggins	
Bledington	Richd. Bond	

¹According to an entry in the Baptismal Register of Swinbrook for 25th February, 1872, when Eagle's daughter was baptised his occupation was that of an engine driver. His address was South Lawn, Taynton. Eagle's name does not appear in the 1871 Census, however, at either Swinbrook or Taynton.

Committee Meeting
June 1st 1872

Isaac Castle in the Chair

1 Proposed by C. Cox seconded by James Mills that 9 shillings per week be allowed to each man thrown out of employment on account of connection with the Union, so long as he may be out of work, but should any member resume work again and should he finish his job or leave his employ from his own choice he shall receive half pay 4/6 per week and every member being discharged on account of his connexion with the union shall report himself to the Secretary of the Union and shall bring a certificate signed by the Secretary Treasurer and Delegate of the Branch to which he belongs.

carried unanimously

2 Proposed by C. Cox seconded by John Hollyock that this Union be joined to the National Union as a district, having Leamington as the centre.

unanimous

3 Proposed by David Rathbone seconded by Wm. Wright that £20 be remitted to the Funds of the National Union.

unanimous

4 Proposed by Isaac Castle seconded by C. Cox that John Callcutt serve on the Committee, also that Charles Cox be employed in extending the Society and assisting the Secretary for another week.¹

Signed Chairman D. David Rathbun

Committee Meeting June 8th 1872
David Rathbone² Chairman

1 In consequence of Joseph Grenaway of the Bledington Branch, having obtained money from the Secretary of the Union, to the amount of 5 shillings, he having reported himself as being discharged from his work on account of the

¹John Callcutt (or Calcutt) was an agricultural labourer from Milton-under-Wychwood and was aged about forty-one.

²David Rathbone may have been the David Radbourne of Lyneham shown as a thirty-nine-year-old agricultural labourer in the 1871 Census Return.

Union, which report was considered unsatisfactory, the Committee of Bledington was therefore requested to examine the case and if right it shall be allowed, if not, he shall refund the money or be expelled from Society.

2 Prop. by David Rathbone seconded by John Callcutt that any member in arrears 1 month shall be fined 1 penny and if 2 months in arrears shall be expelled, unless retained by special permission of the branch Committee.

3 The sum of £20 were remitted to Mr. E. Rusell of Harbury Secretary to the Warwickshire A. L. Union, the money to be invested as part of the National Union Funds.

4 The Treasurer to invest £10 in the P.O. Savings Bank in the following week.

Committee Meeting June 13 1872

Charles Cox in the Chair

1 Pro^d. by John Hollyock sec^d. by Wm. Tripp that Minute 2 June 8th be amended as follows that any Member in arrears 1 month shall be fined 1d. in arrears 2 months 2d. and in arrears 3 months may be retained or excluded at the discretion of the Branch Committee.

unanimous

Fredk. Churm of Burford applied for money to enable him to go to Newport in Wales allowed 5/-.

Saml. Millen of Burford applied for help he having been out of work 9 days and being in want of money allowed 10/-.

Charles Rook Spelsbury having applied for money on account of being discharged from his employment through his connection with the Union was allowed 9/- on condition that the application was satisfactory, the Secretary of Chadlington Branch to ascertain the circumstances.

Fredk. Duester Lineham applied for relief having been out of work for some time and his wife being ill was allowed 7/-.

Wm. Alden Milton applied for relief he being in want of necessaries allowed 3/-.

Members appointed to serve on the Executive Committee [*sic*.]

Isaac Castle, James Mills, John Callcutt, Daniel Howse

Milton

Charles Cox,	Wm. Wright,	Thos. Smith,	Hy. Smith
			Shipton
John Hollyock,	Davd. Rathbone,	Wm. Tripp	Lineham
George Guy			Fifield

Committee Meeting June 21st 1872

9 Men from Kingham branch applied for money to enable them to go to Runcorn in Cheshire, 4 applied on Saturday June 15th and 5 on Monday, 17th.

The Secretary went to Leamington on Monday 17th June to confer with the Secretary of the National Union, as to the future mode of proceeding, also to obtain advice respecting the Minster Branch¹ turning out on strike on the 18th June, advised that the men should turn out and be supported, the Branch turned out as ordered, and the employers came to the Union terms with the men who then resumed work again, one employer held out until night of the Tuesday when he came to terms with the men.

The Men in the Oddington branch requested of their employers the Union price and hours which was agreed to without any strike.

Proposed that a part of the Funds of this Union be invested in the Shutford [*sic*] Old Bank in the names of 3 trustees.²

Proposed that a Fund be raised to defray incidental expenses such fund to be raised by an equal levy on all the members of the Union in this district.

Pro. by D^d. Rathbone sec^d. by J. Callcutt that Minute 1 of June 1st be amended as follows that payment to men lock^d. out shall cease so soon as a member resume work such case to be decided by the Branch Committee.

Delegate Meeting 27th June, 1872

1st Proposed by John Hollyock sec^d. by James Mills that Robert Eagle be President for the Year.

Unanimous

¹I.e. Minster Lovell.

²Oxford Old Bank, High Street, Oxford was probably the name intended.

2nd Pro^d. by Henry Hemming sec^d. by Edw^d. Harding that a Levy of 3 pence should be made on each member throughout the District Wootton Branch excepted.¹

3 Pro. by Chris^r. Holloway² sec^d. by James Mills that Wootton Branch give notice to their employers for an advance of wages (viz.) from 11 shillings to 16s.³

4 Application of Charles Marls(?) of Kingham for money to send his wife and family to Runcorn in Cheshire, not allowed.

5 The Delegates were desired to inform their respective Branches that no Borrowing be allowed from one Farm to another.

6 The discussion on the Harvest Wage was postponed until the next Delegate Meeting.

7 Resolved that the Secretary Joseph Leggett and Henry Hemming Little Barrington shall act as delegates to advocate and organize in this district their movements to be directed by the Executive Committee of N.A.L.Union.

8 Pro^d. by Edw^d. Harding sec^d. by Henry Hemming that the sum of £30 thirty pounds be remitted to the Funds of N.A.L.Union.

Unanimous

9 Pro^d. by John Hollyock sec^d. by Wm. Cross that fines for Members being in arrears shall stand as in Warwickshire Rules.

10 The Discussion on Members in arrears receiving Benefit to be postponed until next delegate Meeting.

11 Pro. by Henry Hemming sec^d. by John Simmonds that

¹This was intended to support members either on strike or locked out in a dispute at Wootton. For details of the Wootton dispute see Pamela Horn, 'Christopher Holloway'. . . *Oxoniensia*, xxxiii (1968), and 'Farmers' Defence Associations in Oxfordshire, 1872-74', *History Studies*, i, no. 1 (May, 1968), 64-67.

²Christopher Holloway (1828-95) was born in Wootton (Oxon.) and was an agricultural labourer and Methodist local preacher. In 1864 he was appointed a trustee of his local Chapel and in 1870 is recorded as attending Local Preachers' meetings in Oxford held in connection with the Oxford Methodist Circuit. From late 1873 Holloway was involved in emigration to New Zealand, acting as an emigration agent and by 1880 he had also set up as a shopkeeper in Wootton. See Pamela Horn, *supra*.

³In practice the demand for higher wages by Wootton unionists had been put forward on 22nd June, before formal permission had been granted.

Charles Cooper of Kingham be allowed 9/- in consequence of being lock'd out 1 week.

Unanimous

12 Application of Joseph Hope and Walter Burden both of Chadlington for money to go to Barrow in Furness Lancashire allowed 15/- each.

13 Application of Fredk. Huckin Chadlington, being in distress through illness, allowed 6/-.

14 Charles Rook to receive 9/- through being lock'd out 1 week at Spelsbury.

15 Pro^d. by Fredk. Bartlett sec^d. by Charles Pearce that the Secretary J. Leggett receive £2-2-0 for his service to the Union.

Unanimous

16 Delegates Present

Milton	James Mills	Chadlington	Anthony Pratt
Westcote	John Simmonds	Kingham	John Finley
Bledington	Joseph Clark	Leafield	Danl. Wiggins
Taynton	Edwd. Harding	Burford	[left blank]
Churchill	Charles Pearce	Fulbr[ook]	[left blank]
Oddington	Philip Gorton		
Minster	Fredk. Bartlett		
Wootton	Chrisr. Holloway		
Swinbrook	Robt. Eagle		
Barrington	Hy. Hemming		
Lineham	John Hollyock		
Rissington	Wm. Cross		

Robt. Eagle
Chairman

Delegate Meeting July 25th 1872
Robert Eagle in the Chair

1 Branches Money received and accounts settled.

2 Pro. by Rt. Eagle secd. by Ed^d. Harding that any member not in arrears more than 1 month shall be entitled to benefit.

Amendment

Pro^d. by Hy. Hemming sec^d. by Chris^r. Holloway that any member in arrears shall not receive any benefit.

Carried

3 Pro^d. by Hy. Hemming sec^d. by George Smith that the sympathy of this meeting be conveyed to the Wootton Branch lock'd out and also this meeting pledges itself to support the Branch so long as they are locked out and that every delegate do their best to raise Subscriptions for their support.

4 Pro^d. by Henry Berry sec^d. by Philip Gorton that Kiddington Branch be desired not to give notice to their employers for an advance on their wages until the notice for harvest be given.

Unanimous

5 Pro. by Henry Berry sec^d. by George Smith that 5/- per day be the wage for harvest time the hours for labour to be 13 hours, 2 hours to be allowed for meals.¹

Unanimous

6 The Secretary to be allowed to advance money to members willing to migrate.

7 Resolved that a Committee be formed who shall decide upon the allowance to be made to members about to emigrate this Committee to be formed of Members of the Executive Committee the Secretary to have power to summon the Committee when necessary.

8 Names of Executive Committee elected at this Meeting.

President Rt. Eagle

Secretary J. Leggett

C. Holloway	Wootton
H. Hemming	Barrington
Danl. Phipps	Broadwell
James Mills	Milton
Charles Pearce	Churchill
John Simmonds	Westcote
Thos. Harris	Newland
Wm. Cross	Rissington
Rd. Scrivens	North Leach
Anthony Pratt	Chadlington

¹However, at a meeting on 23rd May (see p. 31) the committee had decided on a harvest wage of '4 shillings per day . . . without beer and 6d. per hour for over-time', the hours of labour also amounting to 13 per day with '2 hours . . . for meals'. By July the delegates clearly felt that their bargaining strength had grown and they were, therefore, able to demand the higher rate.

9 The Application of James Payne not allowed.

10 Application of John Phipps of Sherborne allowed 15/-.

11 Application of Danl. Wiggins Ford Wells allowed 9/-.

11 [*sic*] Application of Rich^d. Day injured and unable to work for 14 days allowed 10/-.

12 Pro. by Chris^r. Holloway sec^d. by James Mills that the Secretary be paid a Salary of £1-1-0 per week.

Unanimous

13 Resolved that the Delegates from the branches be paid 4/- per day for attendance at the delegate meetings.

Robert Eagle Chairman

[Delegate Meeting] August 29 1872

Robert Eagle in the chair

1 Minutes of Delegate Meeting July 25th read and passed excepting minute 13 which is proposed for further discussion at next Committee Meeting on Sept. 26.

2 Proposed by Hy. Hemming seconded by Danl. Phipps¹ that the allowance to Emigrants belonging to the Union shall be decided after consulting the National Executive Committee.

3 The general opinion about the day for the inauguration of the Oxfordshire district of the N.A.L. Union was that the 18th October would be suitable.

4 The Question of paying men who may be discharged after harvest to be deferred until after the next Executive Committee Meeting at Leamington.

¹Daniel Phipps had started life as an agricultural labourer in Broadwell; indeed, this is the occupation attributed to him in the 1871 Census Return for the village. But by the early 1870s he had apparently become established as a small tenant farmer, and because of his support for the Union was deprived of the holding by his landlord. He was forced to move several miles away (to Moreton-in-Marsh) before he could again set up in business. I am indebted to Mr. Phipps's granddaughter, Mrs. Dorothy Wallis of 34 Benson Road, Headington, Oxford, for this information. See also Pamela Horn, *Joseph Arch*, p. 71.

October 23rd
District Meeting held in Council
Chamber Oxford Town Hall¹

C. Holloway in the Chair

1st Monies of the Branches taken.²

2 Genl. Secretary read Rules of the National Union.

3 Names of Branches, Delegates and No. of Members.³

4 Resolution prop^d. by Mr. Eggleton seconded by Mr. Davis, Barton that this meeting of Delegates representing various branches of Agricultural Labourers in the County of Oxford fully adopt the principle of National unity and agree to affiliate with the National Agricultural Labourer Union.

Unanimous

5 For Oxford district

Milton

Lineham

Westcote

6 Oxford the centre prop^d. J. Barton sec^d. by G. Brogden.

Amendt. prop^d. Mr. Eggleton sec^d. by John Gibbard that Woodstock be the centre. Amendment lost.

7 Election of Chairman prop^d. by Mr. Waring sec^d. by John Barton that C. Holloway be chairman. Carried.

8 Secretary prop^d. by Mr. Dumbleton sec^d. Geo. Clark that Jesse Cox be.

Amendment G. Brogden sec^d. by J. Adams that J. Leggett be Secretary.

Mr. Cox withdrawn.

¹Joseph Arch, the Union president, was among those in attendance. At a crowded public meeting held in the Town Hall in the evening the labourers were joined by a number of middle-class friends, including Professor J. E. T. Rogers, T. H. Green, and the Rev. W. B. Duggan, vicar of St. Paul's. Professor Rogers (1823-1890) was a political economist of King's College, London and Magdalen College, Oxford. In his speech to the meeting he declared that: 'If the labourers wished to improve their condition they must combine, and he knew of no combination that had been so temperate or so hopeful as this one.' *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 26th October, 1872 carried a full account of the meeting.

²From this point the minutes were recorded in pencil.

³According to the *Oxford Chronicle*, 26th October, 1872, 'there were 60 delegates assembled at the conference, which represented the voice of nearly 5,000 labourers.'

9th Treasurer Prop^d. by Mr. Barton sec^d. by Thos. Newman
that G. Banbury¹ senr. pro. tem. Unanimous

Executive Committee [23rd October 1872]

1 Prop^d. by Mr. Hines sec^d. by Davis, Barton that J. Adams,
Upper Heyford serve.

Pro. by S. Waring sec^d. J. Adams that J. Davis serve.
Unanimous

Pro. by J. Timms sec^d. by Mr. Eggleton, I. Castle Milton
in.

Pro. Charles Slatter sec^d. by Hines, Joshua Cripps of
Bletchington.²

Prod. by Hines sec^d. by Dumbleton that Jesse Cox
serve. Unanimous.

Pro. by Mr. Banbury sec^d. by Brogden that Mr. Eggleton,
Brize Norton.³ Unanimous

John Holly[ock] sec. by Mr. Eggleton that Mr. Barton
serve. Unanimous.

Pro. by Mr. Harris sec^d. John Farbrother that Charles
Cross Hook Norton.

Pro. by G. Kempson sec^d. by John Simmonds that Daniel
Phipps serve. Unanimous.

3 [*sic*] Consultation Committee Mr. Banbury Junr.

4 First Executive Meeting to be held.⁴

Isaac Castle	9/-	Mr. Moorby	7/9
John Hollyock	8/-	Fredk. Green	7/9

¹Gabriel George Banbury (1815-1911) was a prosperous draper of Oxford Street, Woodstock. He had been a Methodist local preacher from 1835 and was also a convinced Liberal. He was elected mayor of Woodstock in 1899 and 1900, and an alderman in 1903. See also Pamela Horn, 'Methodism and Agricultural Trade Unionism in Oxfordshire: The 1870s', *Proceedings of the Wesley Historical Society*, xxxvii (1969), 69.

²Cripps was a Primitive Methodist local preacher and at the time of the 1871 Census of Population was employed as a railway labourer.

³Joseph Eggleton was aged about forty-nine and was of independent means.

⁴The list relates to the delegates attending the meeting and the sums of money mentioned are presumably expenses they incurred in this connection.

John Simmons	9/-	James King	
John Pills	9/-	Pearce ¹	9/4
Fredk. Painton(?)	9/-	Mathew Jeacock	7/9
John Timms	9/-	Henry Harris	8/9
Charles Pearce	8/-	John Gregory	8/10
George Bridge	8/-	Charles Slatter	5/8
Joseph Boulter	9/-	Joseph Turner	8/9
Fredk. Bartlett	7/6	Thos. Wiles	9/6
David Tibbets	8/-	John Gibbard	11/-
George Kempson	10/4	Wm. Collet	5/3
Wm. Cross	10/-	Alfred Hall	10/-
John Barton	4/-	John Farbrother	9/6
Thos. Berry	9/-	Charles Smith	8/-
Ed ^d . Isom	9/-	Stephen Waring	8/-
George Brogden	6/-	Charles Cross	10/6
Danl. Phipps	10/4	Thos. Skelton	11/-
Elijah Webb	6/9	Wm. Dumbleton	6/-
John Hyatt	6/9	Charles Cripps	5/-
Richd. King	6/9	Spencer Johnson	8/-
Saml. Cooknell	8/4	Jesse Cox	4/-
James Davis	6/-	Joseph Eggleton	7/6
		James Adams	7/-
		Wm. Hines	4/-
		Joshua Cripps	5/3
		Thos. Newman	6/-
		George Clark	5/3
		Hy. Hemming	8/4
		C. Holloway	4/-
		J. Leggett	4/-

pay £2-0-0

£1-0-0

£1-0-0

£1-0-0

Executive Meeting Oct. 29th
Committee Meeting Town Hall

1 That the Secretary and Treasurer shall each have a vote,
pro. by I. Castle, secd. by J. Cripps. Majority for.

¹J. King Pearce came from Wardington in north Oxfordshire and at the end of 1872 was appointed secretary of the Banbury district of the National Union which was set up on 8th November. He remained district secretary until the spring of 1875 when, following criticisms of his handling of union affairs, he resigned and shortly afterwards emigrated to New Zealand. See, for example, *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 23rd January and 24th April, 1975.

2 Pro. by J. Eggleton secd. by J. Adams that 5 be a Quorum.
Unanimous.

3 Pro. by J. Barton secd. by Eggleton that a house be provided for the use of the Secy. and for the Committee and as offices for the genl. use of the District.

Unanimous.

4 Pro. by I. Castle 2nd. by Eggleton that the offices be left to the choice of Chairman & Sect. the rent shall not exceed £25.

5 Pro^d. by Jesse Cox, 2nd. by I. Castle that the Secy. receive 30 shill. per week as Salary.

6 Pro. by J. Adams, 2nd. J. Eggleton that £1-0-0 be allowed to Secy. as compensation for use of House.

Unanimous

7 Pro. by Mr. Banbury secd. by Eggleton that the Secy. keep a minute record of travelling expenses and present the same before each Executive Committee meeting for their sanction.

8 Pro. by J. Barton 2nd. by I. Castle that one delegate be employed for the present.

9 Prod. by J. Cox, 2nd. by J. Cripps that the delegate be paid £1-0-0 per week as Salary. Unanimous.

10 Minute 7 be for Delegate.

11 Pro. by [C.] Cross, 2nd. J. Adams that the Secy. appoint all meetings for the district.

12 Pro. by J. Adams 2nd. by J. Eggleton that 1 m[onth] notice shall terminate the agreement between the officers and the Committee. Unanimous.

13 Pro. by J. Barton, 2nd J. Eggleton that Rules for the district be considered next Committee Meeting, unanimous.

14 Pro. by J. Barton, 2nd. by Danl. Phipps that any members in arrears shall not be eligible for benefit. Unanimous.

15 Pro. by J. Adams, 2nd. by J. Eggleton that when there is no option left between leaving the Union and employment all members of Union continuing in such employ after the notice has expired shall be held to have excluded themselves from Membership and shall be only readmitted at the discretion of the branch Committee.

16 Pro. by J. Eggleton, 2nd. Cross that boys be not taken as members under 13 years of age. Unanimous.

17 Pro. by Charles Cross, 2nd. Mr. Banbury that Question of old age be postponed until next Committee meeting, in the meantime the Branches to get the opinion of their Members.

18 Pro. by J. Eggleton, secd. by Dl. Phipps that members being discharged from their employment on account of connection with the Union and being by the Union sent to constant employment should he leave such work by his own choice he shall not be allowed to come on the Funds again except by special vote of the district committee.

Unanimous.

19 Pro. by Danl. Phipps, 2nd. by J. Barton that any member discharged for connection with the Union shall immediately report himself to the Branch Secretary.

20 Pro. by J. Eggleton, 2nd. by I. Castle that the men at Somerton should not be paid their claim but should receive 1 week's pay each. Unanimous.

21 Upper Heyford claim allowed.

22 The claim of Headington not allowed.

Executive Committee

Jesse Cox	4/-
J. Adams	6/-
J. Cripps	5/3
J. Eggleton	6/6
C. Cross	9/6
Dl. Phipps	9/3
I. Castle	7/10

November 26

1 The minutes of last meeting passed.

2 Propd. by J. Cox secd. by J. Davis that the Committee think it not expedient for the Secy. and Treasurer should not have a Vote.

3 & 4 The Secy. reported that a House suitable for offices and dwelling, at a rental of £13 per year exclusive of rates, an agreement was read between Landlord & Tenant.

5 Prod. by Jesse. Cox, secd. by I. Castle that until District rules are formed, men shall not be taken over the age of 60.

Amendment

J. Adams, [secd. by] Joshua Cripps that 55 be the age.
majority for.

Pro. by C. Cross, 2nd. by J. Eggleton that Alfred Hall of Watlington serve as a member in the room of J. Barton who is afflicted.

carried

The Secy. and delegate were instructed to proceed to Gt. Milton and organize a Committee for the branch existing there.

The application of Wm. Suffrey, Kidlington, not allowed, the Secy. to write to the man.

Pro. by James Adams, secd. by I. Castle that a circular be prepared and issued to each branch each month.

Pro. by James Adams, secd. by James Davis that the claims of 2 men in Witney Branch be allowed.

carried

A letter was read from Chadlington stating that the men had received notice from their employers for a reduction of wages, the men in consequence have given a week's notice to leave their employment, not having (given due notice)¹ consulted the District Committee their notice cannot be entertained, could not be.

Pro. by James Adams, 2nd. by J. Davis.

unanimous

The Heyford Claims

1 man to Barrow-in-Furness 15/- on condition of repayment as soon as possible.

2 men's claim allowed.

The claim of Islip man was allowed.

The Secretary purchased 6 windsor chairs and 1 elbow for the price of £1-1-0, sanctioned by the committee.

prop. by J. Adams, secd. by J. Davis that the cash be paid.

unanimous.

Isaac Castle	8/-
D. Phipps	9/4
C. Cross	9/6
J. Eggleton	6/6

¹These words were crossed out in the manuscript.

J. Adams	6/-	
J. Davis	6/-	
J. Cox	4/-	
J. Cripps	5/3	£2-14-7

3rd Executive Meeting—Decr. 25

C. Holloway in the Chair

1 Prod. by J. Eggleton, secd. by J. Davis that Minute 4 amendment to Do remain as it is until further notice.¹

2 Prod. by I. Castle, 2nd. by C. Cross that Wheatley branch be affiliated with the Oxford district.

unanimous.

3 The Secy. reported that he had paid Mr. Tuffrey fare 7/6 on condition that he refund if he should return within six months.

Approval.

4 The Circulars were printed and approved of.

5 The bills for office requisites were approved.

6 Pro. by J. Eggleton, secd. by J. Davis that 6 more windsors be purchased for the use of the office and the coals necessary shall be paid for, allowed for this month 7/6.

unanimous.

7 Pro. by J. Eggleton, secd. by Joshua Cripps that a sub committee be formed for the consideration of District Rules, the committee to consist of the following members: Ex. Com. Secy., Chairman, Jesse Cox, Joshua Cripps to meet at Mr. Banbury's, Woodstock.

8 Pro. by J. Eggleton, secd. by Isaac Castle that a balance sheet shall be brought out to the end of this year and in future that the same be issued Quarterly.

8 [*sic*] Pro. by Jos. Cripps, secd. by C. Cross that Mr. Banbury junr. and Mr. Brotherton be auditors for the District².

¹Minute 5 of the previous meeting must be meant.

²William Brotherton was a wholesaler, owning a warehouse in Oxford Street, Woodstock for boots and shoes, gloves, trunks, boxes, etc. He was thus a near neighbour of the Banbury family.

9 Pro. by Jesse Cox, 2nd. J. Eggleton that Middle Barton remain in the Oxford district.

10 Pro. by J. Eggleton, secd. by Joshua Cripps that the instructions from the National Ex. be carried out in the district.

11 The Secretary to write to Heyford and instruct the men that the Union will help the men to migrate to be supported until they can be sent away.

12 The claim of Somerton men allowed.

13 The claim of Witney not allowed.

14 Shilton claim not allowed.

15 Headington not allowed.

16 Littlemore man emigrating.

17 Eynsham branch allowed.

D. Phipps	9/4
I. Castle	8/-
C. Cross	9/6
J. Eggleton	6/9
J. Davis	6/-
J. Cox	4/-
J. Cripps	5/3
D. Hall	9/-
Jas. Bull	4/-

Thos. Herbert allowed 3 weeks £1-7-0

Mr. Holloway¹ £3-4-6

January 21, 1873

1 Read Minutes of last meeting and passed.

2 Gave Financial Report.

3 Paid Money to Treasurer.

4 Case of lad, Hampton Poyle.

Proposed by J. Eggleton, secd. Isaac Castle that the Secy. be instructed to write to Leamington respecting Jonathan Perrin, discharged from his employment Mr. Stevenson

¹Christopher Holloway had been carrying out delegate work for the union and the payment was presumably in respect of this.

(John) Hampton Poyle, the Lad to be protected by the Union.¹

Unanimous.

5 Proposed by J. Adams, secd. by J. Eggleton that Jonathan Perrin be relieved until his case is settled.

6 Rule 1 was read and passed

2 passed.

3 passed.

4 passed.

5 passed.

6

Pro. by I. Castle, secd. by J. Eggleton that boys be at half price from 13 to 18.

Amendment

Jas. Adams, secd. by C. Cross that the age be from 13 [to] 17. majority for, carried amendment.

Rule 7 passed

8 passed

9 passed

10 passed

11 passed printed

12 passed

13 passed

14 passed

15 Pro. by J. Eggleton, secd. by Jas. Adams that members on admission shall be supplied with a copy of the

¹The case was eventually heard before Bullingdon Division Petty Sessions on 15th February, 1873. According to the account in *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 22nd February, 1873: 'Mr. John Stevenson, farmer of Hampton Poyle, was charged by Jonathan Sperins, agricultural labourer, with wrongful dismissal, and the complainant claimed £1 8s. wages, etc. Mr. Overill, solicitor, of Leamington, was instructed by the National Agricultural Labourers' Union to appear on behalf of the complainant, who had been in the defendant's service about three-quarters of a year. At Michaelmas last an agreement was entered into for twelve months, at 6s. a week until June and 7s. a week during the remainder of the time. On Sunday, the 12th of January last complainant was removing some manure, when defendant complained to him of the manner in which he was doing it, and told him that he must go somewhere else if he did not do his work properly, and also said that he would kick him off his premises, and kick the Union out of him. Complainant consequently left. Defendant denied that he ordered complainant off his premises, but said that he told him he should not sleep in his house. The magistrates after a short consultation, decided that the complainant should be paid the sum of 10s. and the contract cancelled.'

National Rules, also a copy of District Rules and a Card of Membership.

Unanimous.

to be headed by the Ex. Com. and officers of District.
The rules to be submitted to the National Executive for their approval and then to be printed to the number *of 6,000*.

The journey of John Berry, Heyford to be paid for.

Propd. by Js. Adams, [2nd] J. Cripps that Bladon be formed as a branch. Carried.

Pro. by J. Adams, secd. by I. Castle.

1 The old Members be assisted and the Amount to be decided by the Branch Committee.

2 The Claim of Oddington man allowed.

3 The Claim of Thos. Turner, Milton, allowed one week 9/-.

4 The Claim of P. Hiorns, Handborough 4/4.

Shipton Friday night.

5 The Hook Norton claim allowed, 1 week pay 9-0.

Brize Norton, Mrs. J. Faulkner 5/-.

February 18th

Minutes read and passed.

Lawyer Bill to be paid.

Jonathan Perrin not to be allowed any more lockout pay.

Wm. Wiggins to be sent to Manchester.

Minster claim: Prop. by J. Eggleton, 2nd by J. Cripps that it be allowed 1 week.

Unanimous.

Shipton man's fare to be paid.

Chad[lington] not allowed.

Crawley claims not allowed.

Milton case to be *protected*.

Wootton case to be written about.

Charlton on Otmoor was formed into a Branch, the Secy. to go to Islip.

Broadwell to wait the decision of the Committee.

Westcote Branch to give notice for a rise of 2/- per week, one month's notice, pro. by J. Eggleton, secd. by I. Castle.

The Secy. be instructed to receipt all monies over £2-0-0 with a stamp.

Pro. by J. Eggleton, secd. D. Phipps that the Secy. shall write to some members to assist in holding public meetings for the next month.

Unanimous.

Pro. by Jesse Cox that the Delegate's salary be raised to 25/- per week.

Prod. by J. Eggleton, secd. by Jas. Adams that it be 24/- per week.

Unanimous.

Pro. by C. Cross, secd. by J. Cripps that Mr. Eggleton be paid his expenses.

Isaac Castle	8/-	16/-
D. Phipps	9/4	
C. Cross	9/6	
J. Adams	6/-	
J. Eggleton	7/4	6/-
J. Cripps	5/3	
J. Cox	4/-	

Write to J. Simmonds.

Mr. Gearing a [? Favour] of $\frac{1}{2}$ yd. blue.

James Hawkins, Swerford 4/- to Warwickshire.

March 18

Secy. should visit men lock^d. out at Broadwell.

Pro. by I. Castle, secd. by J. Eggleton that members be paid 2 shillings for each night's services, travelling to be allowed extra.

Auditors prod. by J. Adams, secd. by J. Cox that Mr. J. Banbury and Mr. Brotherton be auditors.

unanimous.

Pro. by J. Eggleton, 2nd. by J. Cox that the auditors & Secy. be empowered to provide more suitable Books for the management of the District.

Pro. by J. Adams, secd. by C. Cross that any branch requesting a rise in wages should make it known to the district Secretary previously.

carried.

Pro. by J. Cox, secd. by C. Cross that T. Wiggins be repaid the *money he paid and be excluded from the Union*.¹

Pro. by C. Cross, secd. by D. Phipps that the 2 men and 1 foreman Lineham be fined 5/- each engaging in work where men are locked out at Lineham and cautioned for the future. The Secy. to write about the men signing farmers agreements. Pro. by J. Eggleton, secd. by J. Cox that the District delegate meeting be held at Woodstock.

unanimous.

Pro. by J. Eggleton, secd. by I. Castle that George Brogden of South Leigh be member on the Ex. Committee.

unanimous.

Pro. by J. Cox, secd. by I. Castle that Bletchington Branch request a rise of 2/- per week.

I. Castle	8/-	T. Wiggins	5/4
D. Phipps	9/4		
C. Cross	9/6		
J. Adams	6/-		
J. Berry	1/-		
J. Cox	4/-		
J. Eggleton	7/4	2/-	
J. Cripps	5/3		

April 15th, 1873

Pro. by J. Eggleton. secd. by D. Phipps that W. Hine [*sic*] shall not be employed as a delegate.²

¹These words were underlined in the manuscript.

²William Hines was the son of John Hines, a Bicester chimney sweep, and was baptised on 22nd December, 1839. He followed his father's occupation, becoming a chimney sweep first in Bicester but later (by the 1860s) in Oxford. Viscount Samuel, *Memoirs* p. 14 described him in the 1890s as: 'By occupation a college chimney-sweep, keeping also a herbalist's shop, his real interest was in politics and his hobby the organization of public meetings in the villages around Oxford. He was a radical reformer, of the type that had made the Chartist movement in a previous generation, and was impelled by a deep bitterness against the injustices of the social system.' Although Hines had taken part in Union meetings at least from October, 1872, his radical views seem to have upset the more cautious labourers. Nevertheless he retained his interest in agricultural labourers' trade unionism at least until the early 1890s. See Pamela Horn, 'The Farm Workers, The Dockers and Oxford University', *Oxoniensia*, xxxii (1967).

Pro. by J. Cripps, secd. by G. Brogden that each delegate be a Bona fide (working-man)¹ labourer.

unanimous

Pro. by J. Eggleton, secd. by G. Brogden that the Ex. Com. meet at 10 o'clock and any member failing to do so shall be fined at the discretion of the Committee.

unanimous

Pro. by J. Eggleton, secd. by G. Brogden that the Secy. be instructed to obtain the service of a Solicitor to defend the case of the Ascott man.²

Prop. by D. Phipps, secd. by J. Cripps that D. Wheeler be allowed 7/- for migration from Derbyshire to Yorkshire.

Prop. by G. Brogden, [2nd by] I. Castle that Mr. (?) Harber be supported in obtaining his wages.

The Secy. and Chairman and Treasurer and Mr. Godden to make arrangements for the delegate meeting at Woodstock.³

Prop. by J. Cox, 2nd by J. Adams that the delegates be paid out of the District working Fund.

The Heyford claims to be allowed 4 days.

Union men going to Wootton.

Rd. Wilkins, Brize Norton to be allowed 1 week's pay, 9/-.

Caleb Heritage, Henry Smith, Hook Norton to be allowed one week's pay each, lock out.

Mr. Gerring, Shipton on Cherwell discharged and employed 3 women (?)winnowing, and instead of raising their wages has raised 6 Hours per week.

The men in the employ of Lord Valencia rose [*sic*] the men

¹These words were crossed out in the manuscript. The change was significant.

²This may have referred to a dispute over piecework payment for spring hoeing. According to an account in the *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 21st June, 1873 six men were involved but one, Stephen Jennings, who had been employed for eleven years, was dismissed under particularly harsh circumstances. He 'had been used to have a perquisite of one ton of coals at Christmas, for which he paid after the next harvest; he had the ton of coals last Christmas, but did not have the chance of paying for them after harvest, for upon settling for the hoeing, the whole of his money, (26s.) due to him was stopped, and poor Jennings had to go home to his wife and children without any and 2½d. in debt.' Jennings later migrated to the North.

³J. Godden was a Woodstock glove manufacturer and a member of the Union's Consulting Committee.

1 shilling per week making thirteen he gave 2 men notice on Sunday, April 6.¹

John Butler and Charles Lammers, Yarnton, claim allowed 3 days & 2 days.

Thos. Dee, Hook Norton to be migrated.

Isaac Castle 8/- 2/-

D. Phipps 9/4

C. Cross 9/6

J. Adams 6/-

J. Cox 4/-

J. Eggleton 7/4 4/-

J. Cripps 5/3 2/-

G. Brogden 6/-

Delegate Meeting [? May 1873]

1 Chairman gave an account of Union.

2 [Left Blank]

3 1. Proposed that I. Castle	40 ²
C. Holloway	52
J. Adams	24
Jesse Cox	27
D. Phipps	19

Amalgamation versus Federal.³

That this delegate meeting think it necessary to form a sick benefit and superannuation society* and that the delegates be instructed to press the same on the attention of the National Congress.

*in connection with the Union.

¹Arthur (Annesley), 11th Viscount Valentia (1843-1927), lived at Bletchington Park, Oxon., and owned just over 7,000 acres (3,207 in Oxon.)

²This was probably a ballot to elect the district chairman for the next year.

³During 1872 and 1873 there was considerable discussion in union circles as to the desirability of adopting a federal form of organisation which would allow greater district autonomy. In November, 1873, an independent Federal Union of Agricultural and General Labourers was formed by smaller unions in Kent, Lincolnshire, the Soke of Peterborough, etc. who disliked the idea of domination by the Leamington headquarters of the National Union. Oxfordshire, however, played no part in the formation of the Federal Union, although, as will be seen, at a later date some of the county's union leaders gave the concept of federalism their blessing.

Pro. by J. Eggleton that the weekly con. be $2\frac{1}{4}$ [d.] per week the $\frac{1}{4}$ [d.] to be appropriated to the branch expenses.

Pro. by W. Hine that the settlement of disputes.

Pro. that a balance sheet be issued to each Branch once a quarter.

Pro. that no branch shall ask a rise of wages and a shorter hour.

David Chilton	5/-	Stadhampton
Thos. Phelps	7/-	Chalgrove
Wm. Vernon	6/6	Watlington
George Wright	4/-	Ramsden
George Franklin	4/-	Leafield
George Williams	4/-	Stonesfield
George Bedden	3/3	N. Leigh
Jas. Bull	5/3	Wheatley
John Harris	5/3	Horspath
George Bridges	5/3	Kingham
Wm. Duester	5/3	Rissington
John Jackson	5/8	Chipping Norton
Wm. Dumbleton	3/3	Weston
Isaac Castle	5/7	Milton
D. Rathband	5/7	Lineham
T. Callcutt	6/3	Churchill
J. Eggleton	6/7	Brize Norton
G. Mason	7/3	Hook Norton
C. Cross	7/3	Swerford
G. Kempson	7/9	Oddington
J. Tidmarsh	7/3	Gt. Rollright
Thos. Newman	3/3	Kidlington
John Coster	4/3	Cumnor
Amos Cook	5/9	Bledington
Wm. Collett	3/3	Kirtlington
Wm. Wakefield	3/3	Enstone
George Clark	3/3	Tackley
Wm. Greenaway	6/3	Dorchester
Hy. Edginton	3/3	Charlton
John Timms	4/5	Ascott

Wm. Hine	4/9	Beckley [<i>sic</i>] ¹
Thos. Cox	4/9	Headington
Henry Boulter	5/7	Burford
Jos. Tuckwell	5/7	Swinbrook
John Simmonds	6/3	Westcot
J. Beckley	3/3	Islip
J. Duffield	5/3	Littlemore
J. Howse	5/3	Haseley
J. Pills	5/7	Fulbrook
Thos. Harris	3/3	Witney
Ed. Cook	4/3	Minster
Ed. Elmore	3/3	Steeple Aston
Dd. Tibbets	4/5	Chadlington
Stephen Taylor	7/9	(?) Longham
D. Phipps	7/9	Broadwell
John Hicks	6/9	Launton
Jacob Blencoe	6/9	Bicester
J. Cripps	3/3	Bletchington
J. Adams	3/7	Heyford
C. Wilsdon	5/3	Gt. Milton
W. Clark	3/3	
E. Launchbury	3/3	Coombe
E. Smith	3/3	Bladon
J. Allen	6/4	Tetsworth
J. Cox	3/3	Ex. Com.

May 13 Ex. Com.

Minutes read.

Finance report.

Pro. by J. Cox, sec'd. by J. Adams that men taking the places of other men shall be fined 5/- each *whether day or piece work*.

Stanton St. John Deferred.

Pro. by J. Eggleton, sec'd. by G. Brogden that the Secy. attend the Thame County Court.

Prop'd. by I. Castle, sec'd. by J. Adams that the 3 men be paid one week's pay each and be assisted to migrate.

Littlemore man emigrating allowed.

Horspath claim not allowed.

¹There would appear to be some confusion here as Hines represented the Headington branch of the union. In all, the names of 55 delegates are recorded.

Dorchester claim, J. Eggleton [proposed] C. Cross 2nd., not allowed.

Baldon lock out, 17 men, Secy. to investigate.

Stonesfield men to [be] fined if they go into places of Lock out men.

The Leafield men's claim not allowed.

The Secy, was instructed to visit Enstone and advise the Committee to wait a fortnight.

Pro. by J. Adams, secd. by G. Brogden the delegates be paid six shillings per day each and travelling expenses and Lodging.

The Secy. directed to write to Sibford Ferris to W. H. Harris. The district Committee instructed the Sec. to visit the Weston branch Com. and consult them on the case of a member now in prison, sentence of expulsion deferred.

Bucknell case to be [? deferred].

The district Secy. is instructed to get Circulars and send to each branch for raising an emigration fund for the Oxford district, requested to send in subscriptions not later than 1st July.

D. Morris, Wootton not allowed.

Milton anniversary to be held on Tuesday May 20th.

Isaac Castle	8/-	
D. Phipps	9/4	
C. Cross	9/6	
J. Adams	6/-	2/-
J. Cox	4/-	
J. Eggleton	7/4	
G. Brogden	6/-	2/-
J. Eggleton ¹	£2-10-10	
S. Waring	2/-	

June 10

Secy. to visit Dorchester and Benson.

Abel Smith of Heyford.

Pro. that the Longborough men be paid one week's claim and be assisted to migrate.

¹Eggleton was carrying out delegate work for the district and presumably the payment was made in respect of this.

Pro. by J. Eggleton that R. Bond of Bledington be paid one week's pay.

Pro. by J. Eggleton, secd. by G. Brogden that the legal expenses of Josiah Timms and David Beal be met to the amount of ten shillings.¹
majority.

Isaac Castle	8/-	2/8	3/6	3/10½	12/-
D. Phipps	9/4				
C. Cross	9/6				
J. Adams	6/-	2/-			
J. Cox	4/-				18/11
J. Eggleton	7/4			11/6	
G. Brogden	6/-				
J. Cripps	5/3				
C. Holloway		3/4			

July 8th

Minutes read and passed.

Pro^d. by J. Eggleton secd. by Jesse Cox that this meeting approves the course taken by the Dist. Secy. with the members at Longborough who were Locked out.

unanimous

Pro. by Isaac Castle, secd. by Brogden that the Secy. pay to the Treasurer the whole of monies [*sic*] received from the Branches, and be allowed to hold £15-18-2 to meet current demands.

Pro. by J. Eggleton, secd. by J. Cripps that no member receive benefit from the special emigration Fund unless he has previously subscribed to the Fund.²

Unanimous

Prop^d. by J. Adams, secd. by I. Castle that the Secy. be empowered to get Subscription papers with headings for

¹Timms and Beal (or Beale) had been charged on 7th May with attempting to coerce a labourer in the employ of George Rogers of Hook Norton in order to cause him to quit his work. Both defendants pleaded not guilty, and were discharged for want of sufficient evidence.

²According to the *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 12th July, 1873, subscriptions amounting to £45 18s. 2d. had been received for the emigration fund.

special emigration Fund and one or more be sent to each branch.

carried.

Pro^d. by D^l. Phipps, sec^d. by C. Cross that each subscriber to the special [fund] emigrating and having subscribed to the Fund 1/- shall receive 10 shillings each subscriber of 6d. emigrating shall receive 5/-.

carried.

Pro. by D. Phipps, sec^d. by G. Brogden: The Sec. be instructed to await the decision of the Gt. Rissington branch Comm^{ee}. in the case of boy locked out.

Pro^d by D. Phipps, sec^d. by J. Cox that Ben^m. Jordan of Lineham Branch be paid nine shillings and have his contributions refunded.

carried.

Pro^d. by J. Eggleton, sec^d. by D. Phipps that the 3 men of Watlington branch who claimed pay on account of a dispute between them and their employer, be not allowed, the Committee having considered they violated Rule 10.

Pro. by I. Castle, sec^d. by J. Eggleton that the Islip claim be not allowed.

The 2 old men of Islip Branch to have their cons. refunded.

The Secy. be instructed to relieve the Weston men locked [out] and assist them to migrate.¹

Pro. by G. Brogden, sec^d. by D. Phipps: The Secretary be instructed to proceed to Witney and investigate the case of G. Pickett, Newland Coggs.

J. Eggleton, 2nd. J. Adams: The Secretary is justified in paying the 2 men Haseley Branch make a week's claim for lock out pay.

¹The partisan *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 12th July, 1873 described this dispute in the following terms: 'At Weston-on-the-Green (Oxford district), on Friday, upwards of 30 labourers left their work under the following circumstances: a fortnight before they sent a request to their employers for 15s. per week, or 14s. with overtime extra. At the end of the fortnight two of the farmers gave the 15s. The others declined to do so, saying the men might leave if they liked. Taking them at their word, 32 men left, and were preparing to migrate and emigrate with such resolution that the farmers soon came to their senses, and on Wednesday they wanted these men back at 15s. They received 15s. a week last year for the haymaking, and this year, thinking possibly the pressure of the Union was not now quite so strong, wanted to get them for 14s. The labourers will see from this instance what they might expect if they were to give up their Union, as a few have done here and there, having temporarily profited by it.'

The secretary to inform Charles Ward, South Newington Banbury that no tradesmen can receive benefit from the labourers' Union.¹

approved.

Pro^d. by C. Cross, secd. by J. Adams that the Secy. procure a book for the use of each Branch in case of lockout, strikes and migration.

approved.

I. Castle	8/-	
D. Phipps	9/4	
C. Cross	9/6	
J. Adams	6/-	4/- Steeple Aston & Somerton
J. Cox	4/-	2/-
J. Eggleton	7/4	15/-
G. Brogden	5/-	J. Simmonds 2 nights 4/-
J. Cripps	5/3	C. Slatter 1 night

August 5

G. Pickett to be relieved 10/-

Advanced to J. Morbey on Acct. of Fine 10/-

Pro^d. by Joshua Cripps, secd. by C. Cross that all monies be sent in to the district.

Pro^d. by Isaac Castle, secd. by D. Phipps that the Emigration Fund be closed on the 25 August.

Pro^d. by J. Eggleton, secd. by I. Castle that the Secy. be instructed to get professional assistance in the case of William Pratley, Ascott.²

¹The *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 12th July, 1873 pointed out that: 'Tradesmen who have joined the Union cannot make any claim to benefit, but are considered as honorary members.'

²An account of this case appeared in *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 23rd August, 1873, in the following terms: 'On Wednesday, 13th, we had the unpleasant duty of attending at the Petty Sessions, Chipping Norton . . . on account of a petty squabble at Ascott, on the 24th July, . . . William Pratley was summoned to appear for an alleged assault upon P. C. Yeals. The prosecution was conducted by Mr. Wilkins, solicitor, of Chipping Norton; Mr. Stone, barrister, of London, appeared for the defendant. Evidence was given by an old man and two boys that Pratley kicked the constable; while, on the contrary, two men gave evidence that Pratley was not near enough to kick the constable. Mr. J. Leggett and Mr. Godden gave evidence as to the origin of the disturbance.' The magistrates then retired but as they 'did not agree in their opinion, the case (was) dismissed.' Union support was clearly a great help to members in cases of this kind.

Pro^d. by I. Castle, secd. by J. Eggleton that the man at Kingham be allowed 3/6.

Pro^d. by J. Eggleton, secd. by J. Cox that Stow be incorporated with Broadwell.

Write to Launton.

Write to Leafield.

Write to Benson to sue the employer in the County Court.

Oddington Wednesday week.¹

Marquee provided and Public Tea. Tickets 9d. Tickets obtained of Mr. G. Kempson.

I. Castle	8/-	
D. Phipps	9/4	
C. Cross	9/6	
J. Adams	6/-	
J. Cox	4/-	
J. Eggleton	7/4	meetings £2-10-6
J. Cripps	5/3	meetings 2/-
J. Berry	1/-	to Heyford Station

Sept. 2nd

Pro^d. by J. Eggleton, secd. by D. Phipps that in consequence of Mr. Arch visit to America, the emigration fund to be left open until further notice.²

unanimous

That the Bill of Shaen & Co. be paid.³

Pro^d. by J. Eggleton, secd. by J. Cripps that £200 be sent to the National Funds.

In the case of Watlington men locked out the case being reconsidered on appeal from the branch Committee, allowed.

Pro. by J. Adams, secd. by J. Cripps that the men at Stadhamp-ton be allowed one week's pay and be migrated.

Pro^d. by D. Phipps, secd. by J. Eggleton that the members of Committee be paid five shillings each for attendance on Committee this day.⁴

¹The entry related to a public tea meeting to be held at Oddington.

²In the autumn of 1873 Joseph Arch spent almost three months touring Canada and the U.S.A. in order to examine the suitability of these areas for settlement by union members who wished to emigrate.

³The bill related to legal charges incurred by the union.

⁴The higher payment was probably made because it was harvest time.

D. Phipps	10/4
C. Cross	10/6
J. Adams	7/-
J. Cox	5/-
J. Eggleton	8/4
J. Cripps	6/3

C. Holloway £2-12-0d. + 5-10½

Sept. 30th

Minutes read and passed.

Pro. by I. Castle, secd. by C. Cross that the emigration Fund be closed at the end of October.

Pro^d by J. Eggleton, secd. by I. Castle that the annual meeting be held at Oxford on Teusday Octr. 28 in the Town Hall if it can be obtained.

Resolved to invite Mr. Taylor, Mr. Ward, Mr. Collings Birmingham, Mr. Reid, Iffley, Mr. Godden, Woodstock. G. Allington, Mr. G. G. Banbury, Mr. Howard Evans, London.¹

Resolved that a vote of thanks be tendered to the Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer.

Pro^d by J. Eggleton, secd. by Jesse Cox that members be on the books 2 clear months.²

Pro^d by J. Eggleton, secd. by I. Castle that Emmanuel Drinkwater and Solomon Beesley of Bletchington Branch be allowed 2 days pay each on acct. of lock out.

unanimous

¹The list of guests included Henry Taylor (1844-1919), the General Secretary of the National Union, W. G. Ward, a somewhat unbalanced Herefordshire landowner who passionately supported the union in its early days and claimed to 'thirst for the blood of the farmers', Jesse Collings, a Birmingham businessman and close friend of Joseph Chamberlain, and Howard Evans, a London journalist and land law reformer.

²This meant that 'new members (must) be on the books two clear months before they (were) eligible for the benefit of migration'. *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 4th October, 1873. The provision was clearly designed to prevent men from joining the union for a week or so and then migrating at union expense.

I. Castle	8/-
D. Phipps	9/4
C. Cross	9/6
J. Cox	4/-
J. Eggleton	7/4
J. Cripps	5/3
G. Brogden	6/-

October 28th

Propd. by J. Eggleton, secd. by C. Cross that Ben^m. Jordan have his money refunded.

Pro. by J. Adams, secd. by J. Eggleton that Rule 12 be amended.

Pro^d. and secd. that Rule 6 and 10 be amended.

D. Phipps	9/4	
C. Cross	9/6	
J. Cox	4/-	
J. Eggleton	7/4	4/9
J. Cripps	5/3	
G. Brogden	6/-	
J. Adams	6/-	

Delegate Meeting October 28th 1873

Proposed by J. Eggleton, secd. by ——— that the report be adopted and printed and circulated in the branches.¹

Moved and secd. that a vote of confidence be given to the Secy. and Delegate.

unanimous.

Pro^d. by John Jackson, secd. by G. Williams that C. Holloway be Chairman for the district.

unanimous

Amendment pro^d. by John Berry.

¹In his report, Joseph Leggett pointed out that when the Oxford district had affiliated to the National Union in October, 1872, it had comprised 42 branches and 2,500 members; by October, 1873, these figures had risen to 62 branches and 3,800 members. Leggett also noted that although there had been no dispute during the harvest, with the onset of winter men were 'being discharged, and wages lowered in many of the branches. It is now for you to consider whether or not (at the present price of the necessities of life) we should be justified in resisting a reduction.' *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 8th November, 1873.

Pro^d. by J. Eggleton, secd. by D. [left blank]

Pro^d. by [left blank] Mr. Banbury be treasurer.

A vote of thanks to the retiring Committee.

Pro^d. by S. Waring that a vote of thanks be accorded to Mr. Brotherton and Mr. Banbury as Auditors for the past year.

Pro. by Lewis Taylor that Thos. Cox 14¹

Pro. by G. Williams that Isaac Castle 17

John Simmonds 15

George Brogden 13

Wm. Hine 17

C. Holloway 40

Rd. Willet 9

J. Eggleton 31

Pro. by Lewis Taylor that emigration be adopted [Secd. by] J. Duffield.

Watlington ²	13/-	Milton	13/-		
Heyford	13/-	Kingham	11/-	12/-	
Leafield	12/-	13/-	Kidlington	12/-	13/-
Ramsden	12/-	13/-	Tackley	12/-	13/-
Gt. Haseley	13/-	14/-	Steeple		
Shilton	12/-	13/-	Aston	12/-	13/-
Charlton	12/-	13/-	Bledington	12/-	13/-
Kirtlington	12/-	14/-	Westcote	13/-	
Stadhampton	12/-	13/-	Broadwell	13/-	
Brize Norton	12/-		Oddington	13/-	15/-
Wheatley	13/-	14/-	Longborough	11/-	
Benson	12/-		Swerford	13/-	14/-
Cumnor	12/-	13/-	Hook		
Charlbury	12/-	13/-	Norton	13/-	
Witney	12/-	13/-	Taynton	13/-	14/-
Chadlington	13/-		Burford	12/-	13/-
Churchill	12/-	13/-	Asthall	12/-	
Tetsworth	12/-	13/-	Weston	12/-	13/-
Beckley	12/-	13/-	Ascott	13/-	
Launton	12/-	13/-	Gt. Rissington	12/-	
Littlemore	13/-	14/-	Handborough	12/-	13/-
Horspath	14/-	16/-	N. Leigh	12/-	13/-

¹This was possibly a ballot to elect the district delegate.

²This list is probably one of wage rates.

Lineham	13/-		Stonesfield	12/-	16/-
Chipping Norton	13/-		Bladon	12/-	14/-
Coombe	12/-	13/-	Yarnton	12/-	
Bletchington	12/-	13/-			
Headington	12/-	13/-			
Kiddington	12/-	13/-			
Enstone	12/-	13/-			
Salford	13/-				
Islip	12/-	13/-			

Pro. by G. Williams that C. Holloway be delegate.
unanimous.

Prod. by J. Eggleton, secd. by Ed. Harding that the delegate receive 30/- per week and maintain himself 21 [votes].

Amendment that S. Waring secd. 25/- and all found 26 votes.

G. Mason	8/-	8d.	
G. Franklin	6/-	8d.	
W. Ensor	4/-	8d.	
T. Newman	4/-	8d.	
J. Bull	6/3	8d.	
T. Callcutt	7/-	8d.	
I. Heath	9/11	8d.	
J. Bridcutt	8/2	8d.	
J. Tidmarsh	8/3	8d.	
W. Dumbleton	5/2	8d.	
S. Waring	5/2	8d.	
Wm. Slayt (?)	7/-	8d.	
W. Bridge	7/-	8d.	
W. Bursell	7/4	8d.	
J. Harris	6/-	8d.	
W. Cox	6/6	8d.	
J. Berry	5/6	8d.	
G. Franklin	5/8	8d.	
J. Pratley	5/4	8d.	
G. Williams	4/2	8d.	10 cards
J. Jacksons	7/-	8d.	30 cards paid
Mark Bedding	5/2	8d.	
Fredk. Tripp	6/4	8d.	
John Timms	6/4	8d.	

James Mills	6/4	8d.	
Rd. Benfield	6/-	8d.	
Ben ^m . Hale	7/-	8d.	20 cards paid
Gt. Haseley	6/10	8d.	
Stadhampton	6/10	8d.	
Witney	6/8	8d.	
F. Lambourn	6/4	8d.	
Steeple Aston	5/-	8d.	
Bletchington	4/-	8d.	
Charlbury	6/-		
Ed. Landberry	4/-	8d.	
W. Wright	7/-	8d.	
J. Mayo	4/-	8d.	50 cards paid
J. Burborough	4/-	8d.	
Rd. Medcroft	5/-	8d.	
W. Temple	7/8	—	
Hy. Edginton	5/-	8d.	
J. Coster	5/-	8d.	
Ed. Berry	4/-	8d.	
J. Pitts	9/4	8d.	
J. Simmonds	10/-	8d.	
Hy. Boulton	9/4	8d.	
Rd. Willett	10/-	8d.	
Ed. Harding	9/4	8d.	
M. (?) Duffield	6/-	8d.	
G. Kempson	11/6	8d.	
L. Hopkins	11/6	8d.	
J. Gibbs	4/-	8d.	
D. Phipps	3/-	—	
T. Cox	6/-	8d.	
J. Eggleton		8d.	

[25th November 1873]¹

Moved and secd. that the minutes be passed.
unanimous.

Resolved that B. Jordan be reimbursed his money.

Resolved that the District Income and Expenditure be printed on the next Balance sheet.

¹Date supplied by *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 29th November 1873.

Pro. that W. Hine of Headington is not eligible to represent this district at the Annual conference.

Resolved that Mr. Eggleton be chairman during Mr. Holloway's absence.¹

Resolved that G. Brogden of South Leigh come on the Committee in the room of J. Simmonds.

Pro^d. by S. Waring that J. Eggleton be delegate.

Amendment Pro. by J. Pitts that secd. by J. Simmonds that a National delegate be appointed during the absence of Mr Holloway.

amendment carried.

Mr. Hilliard²

Resolved that the member at Watlington be allowed 10/- paid at twice.

Resolved that Forms be printed and used in the district for the repayment of migration money returned.³

J. Eggleton	7/4	2/6
J. Simmonds	8/8	
J. Duffield	4/-	
S. Waring	7/-	
W. Dumbleton	5/-	2/6
J. Pitts	8/4	

[? December, 1873]

Resolved that J. Eggleton assist the district Secretary in holding meetings during the next month.

¹Early in November Christopher Holloway had been recruited as an emigration agent by the New Zealand Government. He relinquished his union offices so that he could escort a party of labourer emigrants to New Zealand on 24th December, 1873. He set off from Plymouth in the steamship *Mongol* with five hundred labourers and their families, and was to remain in New Zealand until November, 1874, collecting information on that country's suitability for settlement by unionist emigrants. Whilst he was away he was paid a subsistence allowance of 25s. per week for his family, plus £1 per day to cover his own travelling expenses, etc., during the time that he was touring New Zealand. See Pamela Horn 'Christopher Holloway . . . , *Oxoniensia*, xxxiii (1968).

²William Hilliard was the name of the National Union delegate who succeeded Holloway as Oxford district delegate.

³According to the *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 29th November, 1873, members had now to be 'on the books six clear months' before being eligible for migration assistance.

Resolved that Mr. Arch be requested to attend a meeting at Burford also at Oxford and Watlington and Bicester.

Resolved that the Secretary attend at Yarnton in consequence of complaint being made with regard to the conduct of T. Cox and that he be invited to attend, and the Secy. to report upon the result at the next committee meeting.

Resolved that the claim [of] James Smith of Watlington cannot be allowed.

Resolved that the case of W. Ensor be not allowed.

The Secretary be instructed to go to Condicote and make arrangements for forming a branch.

The claim of member at Chadlington not allowed.

Resolved that Hy. Edginton of Charlton Branch and John Tidmarsh be requested to serve on the district committee.

Resolved that Thos. Savidge of Enston Branch to the amount of ten shillings be being in distress.

carried.

Wm. Dumbleton	5/-	
J. Pitts	8/-	
J. Duffield	4/-	
S. Waring	7/-	
J. Eggleton	7/4	9/-

[? January 1874]

The District Secretary announced his intention of emigrating to New Zealand and in consequence gave notice of resigning his office as District Secretary.¹

Secretary to request Mr. Arch to lecture in the district for one week.

Proposed by J. Jacksons, secd. by W. Dumbleton that Mr. Edwin Ford be secretary for this district until October, 1874.²

Resolved that Mr. Ford be paid 30/- per week and travelling, refreshment and lodging extra when out from the office.

unanimous

¹Leggett left for New Zealand at the end of February, 1874; he was accompanied by his wife and seven children. The Leggetts settled in Canterbury.

²Immediately prior to the Oxford district appointment, Ford had been acting as union delegate in the Banbury district, to which he returned as district secretary early in 1875.

Mr. Ford to begin work in the district on Monday, 26 Jany.
Resolved that £10 be given to the District Secretary from the district working fund.

Resolved that the lad at Moreton-in-Marsh be paid two weeks pay for lock out.

Mr. Ford at Weston on the Green on Thursday week.

Wednesday 18 Minster, Thursday 19 Feby. Stow.

John Pitts	8/-
Wm. Dumbleton	5/-
J. Jacksons	9/6
S. Waring	8/-
H. Edginton	5/-
W. Duffield	4/-
J. Eggleton	7/4

[(?) February, 1874]

The claim of member South Leigh not allowed.

J. Smith of Watlington allowed 2 weeks' pay, the other two cases dismissed.

The Kirtlington men to be supported.

The claim of Moreton in Marsh.

The claim of Ascott member not allowed.

Resolved that Weston Branch request a rise in wages to 15/- per week give a verbal notice first and if not acceded, give a written notice to the employers.

Resolved that Chip^s. Norton defer giving notice for a rise in wages until their Committee has met on the matter.

Resolved that John Bartlett of Ascott branch be allowed 2 weeks' pay and he be requested to get employment or he can have no further claim on the Funds.

Proposed that Rd. Willett be requested to serve on the Committee.¹

John Pitts	8/-
Wm. Dumbleton	5/-
J. Jacksons	9/6

¹Richard Willett came from the village of Great Rissington and at the time of the 1871 Census he was aged 48 (P.R.O. R.G.10/2654). His occupation at that date was given as Methodist local preacher, but he no doubt had additional employment—probably as an agricultural labourer. Willett later became chairman of the Oxford district.

S. Waring	8/-
H. Edginton	5/-
J. Duffield	4/-
J. Eggleton	5/-
John Timms	5/6

[17th March 1874]¹

Proposed that a £80 be remitted to general fund Leamington.
2 purposed that the Uper Heyford man have one week's lock out pay.

3 wright to J. Elder about the man going to America for full explanation.

that Cumnor Branch be written and advised to ask for 14/- per week.

Mr. Ford be requested to wrigh to the Execitive Leamington about Mr. Arch labouring a week in the Oxford District.

Purposed that B. Packsford son be allowed 18/- as a grant on account of Lock out with caurtion [*sic*].

alsoe advise Westcott to ask for 15/- per wk.

Enstone ask for a rise of wage up to 15/- per week.

purposed that Gt. Rissington branch ask a rise 14/- per week.

resolved to engage Mr. Baylis [*sic*] for one month salory 24/- per week.²

John Pitts	9/-
J. Duffield	5/-
R. Willett	10/4
H. Edginton	6/-
S. Waring	8/-
W. Dumbleton	6/-
Isaac Castle	9/-
J. Jacksons	10/6

¹Date supplied by *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 21st March 1874. J. Eggleton was in the chair.

²Thomas Bayliss (1848-1939) was born at Brailes, Warwickshire, the son of a farm worker. Although his very earliest working life was spent in a Wednesbury iron foundry, he had moved into agriculture and to Oxfordshire by the 1860s, his name appearing as a local preacher on the plan of the Oxford Methodist circuit from 1865. He seems to have become involved with the agricultural trade union movement from its early days; thus *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 1st February, 1873, reports that at a union meeting at Bodicote on 23rd January he demanded the extension of the franchise to the rural householder. At the beginning of 1875, Bayliss was to become secretary of the Oxford district.

Minutes¹ of Committee Meeting held April 14/74

1 Proposed by Mr. J. Jackson, sec. by Mr. Waring that Mr. Ford write again to exetive at Leamington in reference to Mr. Arch coming into this district.

2 Pro. by J. Eggleton, sec. by J. Jackson that the Lad at Enstone has one week's lock out pay. Wm. Nicholls Enstone.

3 Proposed by J. Jackson, sec. by R. Willett that the man at Chilson have the 3 weeks lock out pay which the committee deam him justly inittled to as he migrated under the old rule.

4 Proposed by Mr. W. Dumbleton, sec. by Mr. Waring that J. Duffield be one of the delegates to the Leamington May Council.

Names Mr. J. Eggleton
 Mr. I. Castle
 J. Duffield

5 Refer to the Minute Book as to Oxford Delegate to the May Counsall.

6 Proposed by Mr. J. Eggleton sec. by Mr. J. Duffield that a vote of confidence be sent to the Leamington exetive to the effect that this District can place confidence in Mr. Arch, Mr. Taylor and the executive committee and will do to their utmost to uphold their Funds and that this minute be sent to the *Chronicle*.

7 Proposed by Mr. I. Castle, sec. by H. Edginton that we consider the matter of helping to refund the expences incurred by Mr. Vincent in the case of Libal with the vicar of Hockham.²

8 We raise and remit to Leamington £87-3-1 which we have collected as lock out fund.³

¹From this point the minutes were recorded in ink.

²The case concerned the ditribution of charity coals at Hockham, Norfolk. In an article on 5th July, 1873, the *Labourers' Union Chronicle* (which was owned by J. Matthew Vincent of Leamington, the N.A.L.U. treasurer) wrongly alleged that the vicar took a tith of the charity coal. The libel case was eventually heard at Norwich Assizes at the end of March, 1874. Vincent, as proprietor of the *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, was required to pay £100 damages. See *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 5th July, 1873, 13th December, 1873 and 4th April, 1874.

³The money was to help fellow labourers locked out by the farmers in the Eastern Counties. Altogether perhaps 6,000 unionists were locked out in this dispute, as an attempt was made to destroy the union movement in that part of England. The worst affected districts were in Suffolk and Cambridgeshire. In all, the central funds of the Union provided £24,432 10s. 7d. for the various districts affected by the dispute which lasted from March to August, 1874.

9 Proposed by Mr. Jackson, sec. by Mr. Duffield that we remit £50 to Leamington.

10 J. Pitts	9/-
J. Duffield	5/-
R. Willett	10/4
H. Edginton	6/-
S. Waring	8/-
Wm. Dumbleton	6/-
I. Castle	9/-
J. Jackson	10/6

3-3-10

Committee Meeting held May 13th 1874.

Mr. J. Eggleton in the Chair.¹

1 Resolved that the Minutes of the last Committee Meeting be adopted. Agreed.

2 Proposed by Mr. Waring, sec. by Mr. Castle that Mr. Ford write a very ergant letter requesting Mr. Arch to visate this district as early as conveanent.

3 That John Edginton who have made an applection for lockout pay be allowed two weeks pay and that a letter be written to him to the effect that he ought to have applied as soon as he was out.

4 That Mr. Ford write to Mr. (?) Hutt to inform him that we cannot allow anything for the sick man. Hoping that they will help him out of the incedtial [*sic*] funds.

5 That we refer back to the Minutes to see what was the cost of Delegates to the May counsal last year so as to know how to act this year.

6 That 10/- be paid to the married man and 5/- to the single man at (?) Standlake. Sanders and Hale.

7 Proposed by Mr. Eggleton, sec. by Mr. Castle that Mr. Ford be directed to look out for an office suteable for this district that is nearer to the city of Oxford.

¹An optimistic report of this meeting was sent to the *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 16th May, 1873: 'Notwithstanding so many migrating and emigrating, our numbers and contributions are steadily increasing. No less than £188 have been spent this year in emigration alone. Our contributions for this month amount to £138 3s. 1½d.; the subscriptions for this month's lock-out £129 11s. 7½d.'

8 That Mr. Ford use his own discreasion as to the Piddington Lockout having the rule in view.

9 Proposed by S. Waring, sec. by R. Willett that in case the Farmer at Milton should take his case to a higher court this committee will render its assistance to the man who he prosecutes.

carried.

10 That we pass off the matter in referance to the vicar of Hockham v. Vincent for a short time till the lock out is abated.

11 The finances was considered to be good.

12 Mr. Willett proposed Mr. Castle seconded that the travling and other expences be considered satisfactory.

Carried.

13 Apply for Mr. Taylor, G. Secr. for Enstone July 20 or 22 for Tea Meeting and Demonstration.

14. Proposed by Mr. Waring, sec. by Mr. Dumbleton that we hold our next committee meeting on Monday, June 8th instead of Tuesday. And it was further agreed that after that date we hold our committee on the Wednesday instead of Tuesday.

John Pitts	9/-
J. Duffield	5/6
R. Willett	10/4
H. Edginton	6/-
S. Waring	8/-
W. Dumbleton	6/-
I. Castle	9/-
J. Jackson	10/6

Joseph Eggleton¹
Chairman.

Minutes of Committee Meeting held June 8, 1874.

Mr. Joseph Eggleton in the Chair.

1 Resolved that in future we hold the committee meeting in future on Wednesday instead of Tuesday.

2 That Mr. I. Castle, and Mr. J. Eggleton be the delegates to the meeting at Leamington on June 9. And also that Mr.

¹This is the first Chairman's signature since June, 1872.

Ford attend to render any assistance they may require.¹

3 That the delegates' expences stand over till the next Committee Meeting.

That Sowden at Watlington be allowed one weeks pay more.

4 That the young man at Westcote be fined 5/- for surplanting [*sic*] another.

5 That Mr. Castle inform the men at Shipton that they cannot be excepted only on conditions that they pay up all arrears due since they joined the Union.

6 That in case Mr. Castle should be sued for erecting his marquee on the Milton green this committee will support him.

7 That we except Mr. Taylor's proposition to hold a demonstration in Oxford on Friday next.

8 That the Weston-on-Green branch be supported in case of a lock out.

John Pitts	9/-
John Duffield	5/6
R. Willett	10/4
H. Edginton	6/-
S. Waring	8/-
I. Castle	9/-
J. Jackson	10/6
W. Dumbleton	6/4

3-4-4 [*sic*]

Joseph Eggleton
Chairman.

Committee Meeting held at Oxford July 8th, 1874

J. Eggleton in the Chair.

Resolved

1 That Mr. Addams [*sic*] Headington be written to explaining why Mr. Arch cannot attend this District.²

¹When the Oxford delegates attended the annual council of the N.A.L.U. they claimed a total membership of 3,000 for their district (*Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 13th June, 1874).

²Arch was, of course, engaged at this time in raising funds to support the labourers locked out in the Eastern Counties and had no time to engage in tours to promote ordinary union business. See Pamela Horn, *Joseph Arch*, pp. 102-109.

2 Write to Mr. Steede telling him we cannot do anything for him under the circumstances specified in his letter.

3 That Enock Morris be allowed two weeks Lock money with the understanding that he will have to remove away, as no more money will be allowed by the Committee.

4 That J. Berry be allowed 5/- for his Day's Expences to Oxford about Law Sute.

John Pitts 9/-

R. Willett 10/4

S. Waring 8/-

John Duffield 5/6

I. Castle 9/-

J. Jackson 10/6

H. Edington 6/-

W. Dumbleton 6/-

That 2 weeks each be given to each delegate in the harvest time.

John Berry 5/-

Joseph Eggleton
Chairman

Committee Meeting held at Oxford Sepr. 2, 1874

1 That the Secretary be instructed to write to Kingham Branch respecting a reduction of wages.

The Committee resolve to suport them against any reduction below twelve shillings per Week.

2 That the three Bletchington men be allowed the Lock out money applyed for.

The Committee have desided to carry on the District buisness as they have done previously. Purposed by John Pitts, seconded by Mr. Dumbleton and carried unanimously.

3 Resolved to allow special help for large families emigrating. The resolution only to apply for the presant time.

4 That the Man and family at Kidlington be allowed the Union allowance to enable him to emigrate to Canada.

5 Proposed by I. Castle, sec. by R. Willett that a note be writen to the treasurer of the Wendlebury branch asking him to be more careful in future in attending the committee meeting and taking charge of the money.

The Annual Meeting

6 That the Annual meeting of the district be held at Oxford, the Secretary to select the place of meeting.

7 Proposed that we retain the sum of £7 from the sum collected for the lock out to help pay working expences.

8 That we remit no money this time to Leamington in consequence of a great demand for emigration money.¹

9 Resolved to (?) appropriation the Money collected at meetings to Emigration purposes.

Joseph Eggleton
Chairman

John Pitts	9/-
John Duffield	5/6
R. Willett	10/4
H. Edginton	6/-
S. Waring	8/-
I. Castle	9/-
J. Jackson	10/6
W. Dumbleton	6/-
	£3 4 4

Committee Meeting at Oxford Sept. 30 1874

1st Resolved that the Secretary and one of the Delegates wait upon Mr. Dore to ascertain when the Town Hall can be obtained for the anual meeting.

2nd Purposed by I. Castle, seconded by S. Waring that George Fulety be allowed two week lock out money.

3rd That the Secretary be instructed to acquaint small Branches that unless they have 50 members they will not be

¹The enthusiasm of district officials for emigration cannot be doubted. Thus Joseph Eggleton, in a note on the subject which appeared in the *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 22nd August, 1874, declared: 'Pull away, brothers. Good ships will be ready to bear you to beautiful lands beyond the river.' And at the district conference held on 28th October, 1873, a resolution was passed: 'That in the opinion of this meeting, in order to effect our purpose, it is desirable to encourage emigration as much as possible, migration being very temporary and inefficient in relieving the labour market.' Emigration was clearly a more permanent way of disposing of local labour surpluses, since if men were sent to other parts of Britain there was always the danger that they would return to their villages if they did not like their new environment; the Horspath branch minute book gives examples of this.

entitled to send a delegate to the annual meeting and will do well for two or more villages to join in selecting one suteble [*sic*] person to represent them.

4rd [*sic*] Purposed by J. Jackson, seconded by H. Edginton that Hunt of Shipton be allowed one weeks Lock money if he sustains any loss of time on act. of Emigration to New Zeland.

5 Resolved that Wm. Puddle be allowed £1 15 0 out of the fund Collected for Emigration purposes.

6 Resolved that Wm. West be allowed £2 10 0 out of the temperory Emigration fund. Paid.¹

	£	s.	d.
John Pitts		9	0
Richd. Willett	10	4	
John Jackson	10	6	
John Duffield	5	6	
Henry Edginton	6	0	
I. Castle	9	0	
Willm. Dumbleton	6	0	
Stephen Waring	8	0	
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	3	4	4
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Thomas Bayliss
pro Charman [*sic*]

Committee Meeting held at Oxford October 28th 1874

1st Resolved that the Anual Meeting be postponed untill the services of one of the National Delegates can be obtained for that meeting.

2nd Resolved that the Secretary be instructed to acquaint

¹According to the *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 10th October, 1874, the Oxford district had spent £69 7s. on emigration during the month of September alone. A report in the edition of 7th November, 1874, estimated that the October figure had risen to between £70 and £80. 'About 70 souls left Oxford station on Thursday morning en route for New Zealand, making in one week no less than one hundred out of this district alone. A large number will go on or about the 17th of November . . .' Finally, in the *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 12th December, 1874, a figure of £654 3s. was suggested for district expenditure on emigration during the preceding twelve months.

the small Branches of the desirability of joyning with another small Branches to send a Delegate to the annual meeting.

3rd Resolved that the Railway fair [*sic*] to Plymoth [*sic*] be payed [*sic*] for those Union Men with Familys [*sic*] who were put back on Act. of the vessel being full.

4th Desided [*sic*] by the Committee not to alow [*sic*] Richd. Merry of Wootton any Lock out money as the Migration Money which he received has not been repayed [*sic*].

5 Resolved that J. Pinfold be allowed Lock out pay until the time of his Embarkation.

Joseph Eggleton
Chairman

I. Castle	9	0
R. Willett	10	4
J. Jackson	10	6
J. Duffield	5	6
H. Edginton	6	0
J. Pitts	9	0
W. Dumbleton	6	0
S. Waring	8	0
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Committee Meeting Oxford November 25th 1874

1st Resolved that Mr. Ball be kindly invited to attend the Anual [*sic*] Meeting in conjunction with Mr. Arch, also Mr. Mitchell.¹

2nd Resolved that the Railway fair of Wm. Ayres of South Leigh be payed to London.

3rd Resolved that James Peachey of Churchill be payed the sum of 5/- for Railway fair on act. of attending Emigration Buisness.

¹George Ball was a Lincolnshire labourer who took a very active part in N.A.L.U. affairs becoming for a time union vice-president. George Mitchell was a Somerset man who had established himself as a marble merchant in London. However, he retained his interest in country life and was closely identified with the National Union for many years. See Pamela Horn, *Joseph Arch*, pp. 187-189.

4 The Secretary be instructed to wright to Leamington to inquire as to whether the petition is to be a District one or one for each Branch.¹

5th That the Secretary be Instructed to inquire of the Warwick District as to the working of the Land Scheme they have adopted.²

6th Resolved that the matters to be Discussed at the Anual meeting be made known through the Chronical, the program will consist in the usual buisness of the District, the Land question, the assimalitaion [*sic*] of the Borough Franchise with the Counties, also the Rules of the Sick Club will be read, also discuss about Management of Branches. Delegates work for winter.

7th Resolved that Manuel Smith be payed 2 weeks Lock out pay 18/-.

8th Resolved that Alfred Thornet be allowed his Railway fair to Mount Sorrell.

9th Resolved that a Members Meeting held at Milton and a Public Meeting at Shipton early as possible.

William Dumbleton	6	0
I. Castle	9	0
S. Waring	8	0
John Jackson	10	6
Henry Edginton	6	0
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Joseph Eggleton Chairman.

¹The petition related to a demand for the extension of the franchise to the rural householder.

²The idea of the union making available land for co-operative farming or allotment cultivation by its members was one which had appealed to a number of labourers from the early days of the National Union. In October, 1874, the Warwick district decided to set up its own scheme and to inspect a farm which was offered for sale at the village of Claverdon. Despite this initial enthusiasm, however, nothing came of the plan—perhaps for lack of finance or because of opposition from the National Executive Committee in Leamington, who tended to have little sympathy with this sort of vague and financially weak proposition. For a discussion of the agricultural unions and proposals for co-operative farming see Pamela Horn, *Agricultural Labourers' Trade Unionism in Four Midland Counties, 1860-1900* (Unpublished Leicester University Ph.D. thesis, 1968), chapter V.

District Committee Meeting held Dec. 23/74

Present: J. Eggleton, I. Castle, J. Jackson, H. Edginton, F. Bolton, S. Waring.

That a letter be wrote to Wendlebury to ascertain the facts of the case respecting G. Maycock leaving his employ in consequence of a reduction of wages.

Resolved that the 3 men at Chilson be paid one weeks lock out with a letter of caution respecting the future.

Resolved that T. Edge of Morton be allowed one more week's lock out and a letter to be wrote to the effect that he will not be elegable for more.

That a Book be pecured [*sic*] to keep the a/c of each branch seperate.

That the same auditors be appointed for next year, viz. Mr. J. Banbury and Mr. Brotherton.

That in future the office remain open from 9 a.m. till 4 p.m.

That the sum of 2/6 be given to the post woman by way of Christmas box.

That 150 bills containing the regulation of the district office be printing for the guidience of district.

That Mr. Ford be allowed to have one of the mapps of Canada.¹

Mr. J. Eggleton	8/4
„ I. Castle	9/-
„ H. Edginton	6/-
„ F. Bolton	6/4
„ S. Waring	8/-
„ J. Jackson	10/6
„ J. Duffield	5/6
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Joseph Eggleton Chairman

¹In the report of the annual meeting of the Oxford district which appeared in the *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 26th December, 1874, it was noted that Thomas Baylis had been appointed district secretary and Edwin Ford had been elected to the post of district delegate. J. Eggleton and H. Edginton were to represent the district at the next Annual Council of the National Union; G. G. Banbury continued to act as district treasurer.

Committee Meeting held Jan. 20/75

Present: Mr. Banbury, J. Eggleton, F. Bolton, H. Edginton, D. Rathbone, J. Jackson, J. Duffield. Mr. S. Waring sent a note that he was ill.

Mr. Castle late.

1 That we send an applection to Leamington for the sum of £15 to clear up the working expences. Carried.

2 That the man at Spelsbury who has betrayed his fellows be fined 5/- or have his name taken of the book. Carried.

3 That a letter be written to Mr. Taylor asking if he will attend 3 Meetings in the district one at each of the following places Bicester, Witney and Chipping Norton. Carried.

4 That an exchainge of Delegates be allowed for special occasions. But the same only to take place one week per month and that the District making the applection pay the traveling and Lodger's expences incurred.

5 That 5 cwt. of coal be allowed for office from Michealmas till Lady day.

The summer to be considered in future.

F. Bolton	6/5
J. Eggleton	8/4
I. Castle	9/-
H. Edginton	6/-
J. Jackson	10/6
J. Duffield	5/6
D. Rathbone	9/-

2 14 9

Committee Meeting held Feb. 17/75.

Present: Mr. Banbury, Mr. Eggleton, I. Castle, J. Jackson, D. Rathbone, H. Edginton, F. Bolton, J. Duffield. S. Waring being ill could not attend.

Mr. J. Banbury Consultive.

1 That a letter be wrote to Mr. (?)Robjohn asking for a (?)letter of the expences incurred at Witney at Mr. Taylor's Meeting.

2 That the Secretary be instructed to attend the Sale at the Three Cups Inn¹ and see who is the purchaser of the house in Hythe Bridge St. And that he be instructed to take it if possible if the rent is not to extravegent.

3 That we pospone the discussion of the sick benefit society for one month in the mean time a note be written to each branch asking for their decision on the point.

4 That this committee agree to except the resignation of Mr. Ford. But think that the National executive did not act quite so courtiously towards the Oxford District Committee as they ought in the matter.²

5 That we are willing to take Mr. E. Dickens for one month on trial on conditions that the National pay his wages for the time and this district his traveling and Lodger's expences. At the expireation of the Month the Committee will decide in referance to employing him perminantly.

6 That a letter be written to those Branches which has not sent in their contributions asking them to do so in future regularly.

7 That the committee of the Chipping Norton branch be reccommended to ask for not more than a rise of 2/- per week, making their wages 15/- per week.

8 That in case any branch wishes either Anneversary and Special Meetings be requested to inform the district secretary of the time they would prefer it so that arrangements can be made for a supply of speakers.

9 That Mr. J. Banbury be empowered to take what steps are necessary to make the district a/c properly balance. And that he be also empowered to get proper books to keep each branch a/c seperate.

F. Bolton	6/5
I. Castle	9/-
H. Edginton	6/-
J. Jackson	10/6
J. Duffield	5/6
D. Rathbone	9/-

¹The Three Cups was a hotel in Queen Street, Oxford.

²As a result of the resignation of J. King Pierce from the secretaryship of the Banbury district, Edwin Ford was appointed the new secretary of that district. (*Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 13th February, 1875).

Committee Meeting held March 17/75

Present: J. Eggleton, D. Rathbone, I. Castle, S. Waring, F. Bolton, H. Edginton, J. Duffield, J. Jackson. And Mr. G. G. Banbury, Treasurer.

Resolved

1 That the Weston branch be advised to aske [*sic*] for an advance of 2/- per week the rule to be adeared to in the matter respecting notices &c.

2 That the expence of removing from Botley Rd. to Hythe Bridge St. be paid by the district.

3 That the committee of the Oxford district wishes to know if the resolution passed at Leamington March 1 refers to emigration to any parts. If so this committee entres their protest against it and will abide by the former regulations until after the general council or it will prove very injurious to this district.

4 That this district wishes to ask the National Executive wether they wish to restrict or encourage emigration as this district committee is of openion that it will. And they are further of an openion that a commission ought to be allowed to the Secretary and Delegates and they therefore recommend that the N. executive reconsider the matter.¹

5 That this district committee thinks that the National executive ought when they pass important resolutions to transmit the same to the districts for their guidance.

6 Prop. by I. Castle, sec. by F. Bolton that no person entering this district be allowed any benefits until he is a full paid up member for six months and that no one be readmitted untill all arrears are paid up.

7 That we employ two delegates in the district.

¹The point at issue here was the decision of the National Executive Committee that in future the commission paid by colonial governments to district secretaries and other officials for emigration work should be incorporated in the general emigration fund of the union and not retained by the individuals concerned for their own benefit. At the Annual Council of the N.A.L.U. held in May, Bayliss moved a resolution: 'That a portion of the commission on emigration be given to the district secretary', and he described at length the additional administrative work which emigration entailed for the district secretaries. However, other delegates objected to his proposal and the decision went against him. (*Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 29th May, 1875.)

8 That Mr. Dickens be engaged for the Oxford District at 24/- per week.

9 That we request that the annual Council hold its Meeting at Oxford in May, 1876.

10 That we have a Sick B.S. in this district, the same to be started at once.¹

11 The Secretary write to the branches who wish to start the S.B.S. be invited to hold a meeting at Oxford as soon as convenient each branch must pay its own delegate expenses, as no expenses [can] be paid out of the union.

F. Bolton	6/5	
I. Castle	9/-	
H. Edginton	6/-	
J. Jackson	10/6	attending at Basingstoke
J. Duffield	5/6	H. Edginton 13/6
D. Rathbone	9/-	
S. Waring	8/-	

	2	14	5
Basingstoke		13	6

3 7 11

Committee Meeting held April 14/75

Present: I. Castle, J. Jackson, J. Eggleton, H. Edginton, F. Bolton, J. Duffield, D. Rathbone, S. Waring. Mr. C. Holloway and Mr. G. G. Banbury.

Resolved

1 Proposed by J. Eggleton, sec. by I. Castle that this committee after carefully considering the new regulations and taking into consideration the injustice that it would inflict

¹The Oxford district committee did eventually register their own benefit society with the Chief Registrar of Friendly Societies and according to the *English Labourer*, 14th November, 1875, it had a membership of 80, and a capital of £25 at district headquarters. Nevertheless, it does not appear to have had any real success. Indeed, as will be seen, a minute book entry for 12th April, 1876 gives the impression that the society had not even been formed, when a resolution was passed that if the N.A.L.U. itself did not introduce a sick benefit society 'the Oxford district will do so.' Yet, according to its official registration number and the membership figure quoted, the district *already* had a society.

upon some members resolve to remain or adhere to the old regulations till the annual Council with respect to the other new regulation this Committee agree.

2 Proposed by I. Castle, H. Edginton that the bill of fare for G. Whitehead be referred back to Leamington for settlement.

3 That after the next quarter we give in our income and expen. of the working expences quarterly.¹

4 Resolved

That Mr. I. Castle be the third delegate to the annual Council at Birmingham.

5 That T. Bayliss also be elected as a delegate to the annual Council.

6 Get Mr. Taylor for Westcote the final week in June.

7 Prop. by J. Jackson, sec. by S. Waring that we send an application for Mr. Ball for a fortnight.

8 Prop. by J. Jackson, sec. by J. Eggleton that we invite Mr. Arch for a week into this district as soon as possible.²

Mr. Bolton	6/5	J. Duffield	5/6
„ Jackson	10/6	S. Waring	8/-
„ Edginton	6/-		
„ I. Castle	9/-		
„ Rathbone	9/-		

Committee held May 12/75

Present: J. Eggleton, I. Castle, H. Edginton, F. Bolton, J. Jackson, D. Rathbone, J. Duffield, S. Waring and Mr. G. G. Banbury, Treasurer.

Resolved

1 Proposed by H. Edginton, sec. by J. Duffield that the secretary write to Mr. Berry at Heyford to make inquiries as

¹In a brief account of this meeting which was sent to the *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 24th April, 1875, an optimistic note was struck: 'The finances were improved, and all matters looking bright. The district now numbers 100 branches, with 3,307 members. It is hoped that when the summer closes we shall be able to report 5,000 at least.'

²Arch visited Charlbury, Oxfordshire on 16th May, and preached a sermon in the Primitive Methodist Chapel there. The event was described in the *Labourers' Union Chronicle* for 22nd May 1875 as 'a red letter day for Charlbury and the villages round for miles'.

to the amounts collected for the defence in the case of Coggins, Adams and others.¹

2 That we throw open the gate to all persons who have ceased to be members of the union for 3 month so that they may enter on paying 1/- entrance fee. That the delegates at the Council vote for this.

3 Prop. by Mr. I. Castle, sec. by J. Jackson that the secretary write Mr. Brassey and ask for the Loan of the park for a demonstration on or about the 2 of July.²

4 That we aske the Nat. Ex. Com. for a grant of £40 for district and £15 for working expences.

F. Bolton	6/5
J. Jackson	10/6
H. Edginton	6/-
I. Castle	9/-
D. Rathbone	9/-
J. Duffield	5/6
S. Waring	8/-

Committee Meeting held June 9th/75

Present: J. Eggleton, I. Castle, H. Edginton, F. Bolton, D. Rathbone, S. Waring, J. Duffield and Mr. G. G. Banbury, Treasurer.

1 Proposed by S. Waring, sec. by H. Edginton that a grant of £2 0 0 be given to the men at Upper Heyford that are

¹James Adams, John Berry, the Upper Heyford branch secretary, and eight other labourers were charged by Richard Coggins of Upper Heyford with causing damage to oats and peas in a field in his occupation, by walking through the field. The labourers maintained, for their part, that they were following the line of a public footpath which Mr. Coggins had ploughed up. The case was heard before Ploughley Division Petty Sessions on 16th April but was dismissed, the Magistrates deciding that the defendants had thought that they had a 'perfect right' to walk through the field in the way they had done, and they had not done so 'with a wilful intention.' *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 24th April, 1875. The labourers' case was argued for them by a Leamington solicitor, who had presumably been engaged by the National Union.

²Heythrop Park is meant. Albert Brassey (1844-1918) was the youngest son of the famous railway contractor and the brother of the first Lord Brassey; he was a Conservative in politics. He was High Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 1878, and Mayor of Chipping Norton 1898-1901. He owned 5,000 acres in Oxfordshire and Heythrop Park was the centre of his estate. See Ernest Gaskell, *Oxfordshire Leaders: Social and Political (n.d.)*.

members of the union in the case of Coggins and Adams and Others.

2 That we defend John Hill at Chipping Norton in the breach of contract case. But that we only engage to defray the expence of a solicitor.¹

3 Prop. by J. Eggleton, sec. by I. Castle that the secr. write to the Spelsbury branch to inform them that this committee will support them if they respectfully aske for an advance of 14/- per week. If that support is needed.

4 That the secr. be empowered to advise the Great Rollright branch respecting an advance of wages. But that we cannot support them in asking for more than 15/- per week.

5 That H. Edginton, J. Eggleton, G. G. Banbury, and I. Castle form a sub committee to meet when business requires.

6 That this ex. committee hears with deep regret the statement that angry recriminations where made at the Birmingham Council by the chief officers of the union against each other and trusts that mutual respect and confidence in each other will for the future be manifested by the officers of the Union.²

7 That the secr. write to a few of those branches that have not sent in their money asking them to do so in future promptly.

8 Prop. by I. Castle, sec. by S. Waring that the next ex. com. meeting be held in 2 months from this date.

9 Prop. by S. Waring, sec. by D. Rathbone that the expences of Delegates be recd.

¹John Hill, a labourer from Churchill, was summoned by his employer, J. H. Hambridge, 'for absenting himself from his service on 23rd of May last', and the case was heard before Chadlington Division Petty Sessions on 15th June. According to the account of the proceedings given in *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 19th June, 1875, 'Mr. H. C. Wilkins appeared for the prosecution, and Mr. E. Morten, barrister, instructed by Messrs. Shaen, Roscoe and Massey . . . for the defendant. On the examination of Mr. Hambridge it appeared that defendant had been hired for more than twelve months, but that there was no contract in writing. The hiring was therefore bad, and the case was dismissed.'

²Disagreements had arisen among the National Union leaders as to the best way of running their organisation, and in June J. Matthew Vincent, the N.A.L.U. treasurer, decided to form a breakaway union, the National Farm Labourers' Union, which would have as its prime purpose the acquisition of land for distribution among members as allotments or small holdings. The two rival organisations then conducted a bitter press campaign against one another, each accusing the other of corruption.

10 That Mr. Arch be invited to attend a Tea and public meeting at Tackley between Hay time and Harvest.

F. Bolton	6/5	J. Duffield	5/6
H. Edginton	6/-	S. Waring	8/-
I. Castle	9/-		
D. Rathbone	9/-		13/6

1	10	5
	13	6

2 3 11

Committee Meeting held Aug. 4/75

Present: J. Eggleton, H. Edginton, S. Waring, D. Rathbone, J. Jackson, J. Duffield and Mr. G. G. Banbury.

Prop. by J. Eggleton, Sec. by H. Edginton that a full Statement of the facts in the case of Cooke and Buckingham of North Leigh be sent to the ex. com. at Leamington asking them to give the matter full consideration and also asking them to support the case. Mr. Edginton to support the same.

Carried.¹

2 Prop. by H. Edginton, sec. by S. Waring that in case the Nat. Ex. will not take up the above case that the Secr. get a circular printed appealing to each branch for subscriptions.

Carried.

3 Prop. that the next committee meeting be held in two month from this date. Application to be made for the Town Hall for Wednesday, Oct. 27/75.

4 Prop. by J. Jackson, Sec. by S. Waring that the Nat. Ex. be informed that Mr. Dickens has offered to except the fortnight's Salary offered by the said committee and retire after the end of this week.

¹The case apparently involved a dispute over rights-of-way. Thomas Bayliss, the Oxford District Secretary, wrote to the *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 22nd June, 1875 appealing for financial support: 'A member of the North Leigh Branch has been put to very heavy expenses in defending a road case, which has been tried four times, In each case the same person was defendant and won three of the cases. The last time he was not so successful, and therefore his expenses are very great. Each member of the branch has contributed 1s. . . . and they would feel very grateful if each branch would only send them 1s. each or 1s. 6d., which would greatly help them.'

5 Prop. by H. Edginton, Sec. by S. Waring that letters be written to each branch which have not sent in their contribution informing them that by withholding their contribution they are disqualifying themselves for sending a representative to the anual meeting and that their contributions must be sent in not later than Sept. 24 or they will be disqualified for sending a representative to the anual meeting in Oct.

6 Prop. by S. Waring, Sec. by J. Duffield that this committee desires to record its unabated confidence in the Nat. Ex. Committee and desires to express their sympathy with them in the trying circumstances that they have of late been called to pass through.

7 Prop. by J. Eggleton, Sec. by J. Jackson that the rule in respect to the admittance stand open till the annual meeting.¹

8 Prop. J. Eggleton, Sec. by H. Edginton that a harty vote of thanks be given to J. C. Cox Esq. for his able Services in this district.²

9 Prop. by S. Waring, Sec. by J. Eggleton that in case the Warwick district write to this district wishing them to join them in asking for a council that the Secr. write them to the effect that he cannot think of asking for any such a thing and especaly at this unsettled time, seeing the result of their delegates' meeting.

10 Prop. by J. Jackson, Sec. H. Edginton that Mr. Eggleton be allowed Half pay untill the committee meets again in two month from this date.

H. Edginton	6/-
D. Rathbone	9/-
J. Duffield	5/6
S. Waring	8/-
J. Jackson	10/6

I 19 -

¹According to the *English Labourer*, a newspaper established by the friends of the National Agricultural Labourers' Union in June, 1875, this minute referred to Rule 13 of the Sick Benefit Society, which had laid down 31st July as the final date when members over forty years of age could enter the Society; the new resolution extended this deadline to the annual meeting of the district, which was to be held in November, 1875.

²J. C. Cox was a Derbyshire landowner and magistrate who had supported the National Union from its early days. See Pamela Horn, *Joseph Arch*, pp. 81-85.

Ex. Committee Meeting Sept. 29/75

Present: I. Castle, S. Waring, J. Eggleton, H. Edginton, J. Jackson, J. Duffield.

1 Proposed by J. Jackson, sec. H. Edginton that the sum of £2 be given to Buckingham in the North Leigh case and that circulars be sent to branches asking them to render a little aid. The money to come from the Emigration fund.

2 That a meeting be held at Littlemore to start a new Branch.¹

3 Prop. by J. Jackson, Sec. by S. Waring that the following be elected to represent the district, viz. H. Edginton, T. Bayliss, I. Castle and J. Adams.

4 Prop. by J. Jackson, Sec. by J. Eggleton That it is the opinion of this committee that in future the Nat. Exe. Committee consists in not less than 7 unpaid officials.

5 Prop. by H. Edginton, Sec. by I. Castle that this committee expresses its confidence in the two Secretaries and it is their opinion that Mr. Taylor should remain as heretofore.²

6 Prop. by I. Castle, Sec. by S. Waring that branches who have for 3 months paid 10/- per month be allowed a delegate.

7 Prop. by Mr. Eggleton, sec. by H. Edginton that Mr. Banbury be invited to preside at the annual meeting.³

8 Proposed by J. Eggleton, Sec. by J. Duffield that the Secr. write Mr. J. Cockbill of Long Compton to inquire if he has engaged to serve any district and if not would he allow himself to be nominated for the Oxford District at their annual meeting.⁴

9 That the district Secretary be invited to remain in his office for another year.

¹This was clearly to *revive* a branch which had lapsed. *Jackson's Oxford Journal* 3rd August, 1872, describes a union meeting at Littlemore which was addressed by 'Mr. J. Barton, of Iffley, secretary of the Littlemore branch of the Union.'

²Some of the National Union's critics had alleged that Henry Taylor, the General Secretary, was not carrying out his duties satisfactorily, and that the appointment (in 1874) of an assistant general secretary had stemmed from this. The post of assistant was seen as an unnecessary drain on union funds.

³The annual meeting of the Oxford district was held early in November at the Town Hall; a membership of 3,600 was claimed (*English Labourer*, 13th November, 1875).

⁴This was in respect of the office of union delegate. In the event the position went to J. Spencer.

I. Castle	9/-
H. Edginton	6/-
J. Duffield	5/6
S. Waring	8/-
J. Jackson	10/6

I 19 -

First Committee Meeting of new Committee Nov. 24/75
 Present: S. Waring, I Castle, G. Bedding, H. Edginton, R. Duffield [sic Willett], J. Grimsly, Mr. Eggleton was also present. W. Dumbleton and T. Rouse late.

1 Moved by I. Castle, Sec. by J. Grimsly that R. Willett be Chairman of the committee for the encuing year. Carried.

2 Pro. by I. Castle, Sec. by S. Waring that the circulars printed be sent to the branches and that the matter be made known to the dist. in the *English Labourer*.

3 Pro. by I. Castle, Sec. by G. Bedding that the sum of 18/- be given the man in connection with the Filkins branch, being 2 weeks releif.

4 That printed regulations and instructions be sent to each branch for the guidance of the branch secretary in relation to sending in contribution, &c.

4 [sic] Moved by G. Bedding, Sec. by H. Edginton that we engage Mr. Spencer on the old scale. But that the Secretary be authorised to make arrangements with him with a view to his coming to reside in or near Oxford. The expences of his removing and the House rent to be paid. The Committee desire also to make alterations in respect to expences.

5 Pro. by S. Waring, Sec. by W. Dumbleton that the Gas be layed in the house if it can be done for £3.

6 That the Sub committee consist of Messrs. G. G. Banbury, J. Banbury, I. Castle, H. Edginton, and the District Secretary also that the exe. committee meet when required, the matter of calling them together [to] be left with the Dist. Secr. An inventory of the office furniture.

'That the book shelf be purchased for the office at 10/-'

I. Castle	9/-
R. Willett	10/6
J. Grimsly	7/-
H. Edginton	6/-
T. Rouse	6/6
G. Bedding	6/8
S. Waring	8/-
W. Dumbleton	6/1

2 19 9

Committee Meeting held Feb. 16/76

Present: R. Willett, W. Dumbleton, S. Waring, I. Castle, G. Bedding, T. Rouse, J. Grimsly.

1st Proposed by W. Dumbleton, Sec. by Grimsley That this committee unanimously expresses its strong wish that the request of the Members of the Shipton branch be granted and requests the Dist. Secretary to without delay to [*sic*] communicate with the Nat. Ex. Committee asking them permission to allow the request and if necessary to support the case.

2nd Moved by G. Bedding, Sec. by J. Grimsly that the secr. frame a resolution on the subject of migration for the annual council.

3 Pro. by G. Bedding, Sec. by J. Grimsly that the Sub committee be requested to meet at the earliest opportunity to draw up a prospectus for the Co-operative Land Society.

I. Castle	9/-
R. Willett	10/6
J. Grimsly	7/-
H. Edginton	6/-
T. Rouse	6/6
G. Bedding	6/8
S. Waring	8/-
Wm. Dumbleton	7/1

3 0 9

Committee Meeting held April 12/76

Present: I. Castle, R. Willett, J. Grimsly, G. Bedding, T. Rouse, H. Edginton, S. Waring, W. Dumbleton, and Mr. Banbury.

1 Proposed by H. Edginton, sec. by W. Dumbleton That a letter be written to the Committee of the Shipton branch requesting them to meet the Dist. Sec., Mr. I. Castle and others after the Milton Meeting to consider the dispute in their branch.

2 Proposed by S. Waring, Sec. by J. Grimsly that the further consideration of the co-operative farm be adjourned till the next Meeting of this Committee.

3 That in the event the Nat. Ex. Com. do not introduce the Sick B. Society the Oxford District will do so.

4 That this Executive is of opinion the holding of the Annual council the same week as the demonstration in London will not admit of sufficient time for the proper consideration of the important matters that will come before it and would suggest that the council should begin earlier in the week than Thursday, say Tuesday or Wednesday the following week.

5 That a bill be sent to Leamington for the expence of the secretary in going to Leamington to meet the Committee.

5 [*sic*] Proposed by J. Grimsly, sec. by S. Waring that the central office be removed to London.

6 The Dist. Secretary's expences [to] be paid to the Demonstration at London, May 24/76.¹

7 Prop. by S. Waring, Sec. by W. Dumbleton that we nomenate two men for the Nat. Ex. Committee at the Annual Council.

8 That Mr. I. Castle and Mr. Bayliss be nominated for the Ex. Committee.

¹This was a demonstration in favour of franchise extension. All of the Oxford district delegates were requested to wear a 'bit of blue, either on the hat or in the coat'. Royal blue was the N.A.L.U. colour. (*English Labourer*, 20th May, 1876). Blue was in many constituencies the Liberal Party colour; uniform party colours are a 20th century development, even now incomplete.

Jas. Grimsly	7/-
T. Rouse	6/6
S. Waring	8/-
H. Edginton	6/-
W. Dumbleton	6/1
I. Castle	9/-
R. Willett	10/-
G. Bedding	6/8

2 19 9 [*sic*]

District Committee Meeting held June 7/76

Present: I. Castle, R. Willett, J. Grimsly, S. Waring, T. Rouse, H. Edginton, W. Dumbleton, and G. Bedding.

1 Proposed by G. Bedding, Sec. by H. Edginton that a letter be wrote to the central committee in respect to the Milton playground asking them to support the case providing the Local authorities interfere to prevent the meeting being held.

2 Prop. by G. Bedding, Sec. by W. Dumbleton that the Sub Committee meet at Woodstock in eight weeks from this date. Have an eye to Good Templar Demonstration.

3 Prop. by I. Castle, sec. by G. Bedding that we exchange with the Cirencester District for one month with Delegates.

4 Prop. by J. Grimsly, sec. by S. Waring that W. Dumbleton be defended if he is summons to leave his cottage and garden.¹

H. Edginton	6/-
J. Grimsly	7/-
T. Rouse	6/6
S. Waring	8/-
W. Dumbleton	6/1
I. Castle	9/-
R. Willett	10/6
G. Bedding	6/8

2 19 9

¹This related to the eviction of William Dumbleton, the Weston-on-the-Green branch secretary, by Lady Bertie. Dumbleton was said to have lived in the cottage for sixteen years, and the *English Labourer* for 29th July 1876, reporting the case, attributed Lady Bertie's action to her dislike of the Union.

Committee Meeting held Sept. 27th 76

Present: R. Willett, I. Castle, G. Bedding, J. Grimsly, T. Rouse, H. Edginton, S. Waring, W. Dumbleton and Mr. G. G. Banbury.

1 Moved by H. Edginton, sec. by S. Waring that we postpone the annual Dist. Meeting till the month of March, 1877.

2 Moved by J. Grimsly, sec. by H. Edginton that Joseph Russen and John (?) Johnsey be allowed a solicitor in the case they are about to take to the County Court to sue there employer for a debt of wages.

3 Prop. by S. Waring, sec. by J. Grimsly That this committee feeling that the wages in the branches are much too low will support the men in strong branches against any reduction when there is a prospect of fighting it out successfully.

4 That this committee is of opinion that an Extra Delegate for 6 or 8 weeks would be a great advantage to the district and the union in general. They not being in a position to employ such delegate for want of funds request that the Central Committee allow us such to be paid by them. The said Delegate to commence his duties at once.

5 That this Committee is sorry that for some time past they have been unable to manage the District on the one fourth. They however have full confidence in their officers and at present see no possibility of reducing their exp. lower. They have good reasons however for hoping that as the District is fast regaining its former strength that they will shortly be in a position to defray all working expenses with the fourth allowed.¹

S. Waring	8/-	I. Castle	9/-
J. Grimsly	7/-	R. Willett	10/6
T. Rouse	6/6	G. Bedding	6/8
H. Edginton	6/-		
W. Dumbleton	6/6		

¹Each union member paid a weekly subscription of 2¼d.; ¼d. was retained by the branch, and one quarter of the remainder (i.e. ½d.) was for district running expenses. The rest of the subscription was sent on to the central funds in Leamington.

Committee Meeting held Dec. 22nd 1876

Present: I. Castle, R. Willett, J. Grimsly, G. Bedding, H. Edginton, W. Dumbleton, S. Waring, T. Rouse, Mr. G. G. Banbury.

1st Prop. by H. Edginton, G. Bedding that the annual meeting be held at the latter end of March in the Town Hall and that a public meeting be held at night. That a Delegate from the Nat. Ex. be invited and that the District Secy. arrange for other speakers &c.

2 Pro. by H. Edginton, sec. by S. Waring that Mr. G. G. Banbury be invited to take the Chair at the business meeting.

3 Prop. by I. Castle, sec. by J. Grimsly that Counciler T. H. Green be invited to take the Chair at the Meeting in the Town Hall in the evening and in the event Mr. Green cannot the Dist. Secrv. make the best arrangements possible.¹

3 [*Sic*] That Circulars be issued to the branches inviting them to send Delegates. The circular to say that important questions will be considered such as the S. Benefit Society, and resolutions from branches to reach the D.S. 3 days before the A. meeting.

4 Prop. by I. Castle, Sec. G. Bedding that branches which have for 3 month past sent in 30/- to the funds be allowed a delegate, being 10/- per month, to the annual Council and that the small branches be united together so that 2 may elect a delegate instead of Electing one each.

5 That a letter be wrote to Higgs from the Committee to the effect that in case he is discharged the Committee will support him.

6th Prop. by I. Castle, sec. by J. Grimsly that the man at Kirtlington cannot be releved but the Committee wd. assist him to migrate.

7 Prop. by H. Edginton, sec. by G. Bedding that Saunders at Chilton cannot be allowed.

8 That the man at Sydenham have 2 weeks lock out given him.

9th Prop. by I. Castle, Sec. by S. Waring that C. Hawkes of Gt. Rissington be allowed a week lock out pay.

¹Thomas Hill Green (1836-1882) the philosopher; he was educated at Rugby and Balliol College, Oxford, where he became a fellow and tutor in 1860. He was Whyte professor of Moral Philosophy, 1878-82.

10 That the Treasurer be instructed to apply to Leamington for a grant of £50 being £30 for Relief, Mig. &c. and £20 for Dist. Working Expenses.

S. Waring	8/-	W. Dumbleton	6/6
J. Grimsly	7/-	I. Castle	9/-
T. Rouse	6/6	R. Willett	10/6
H. Edginton	6/-	G. Bedding	6/8

Committee Meeting held March 20/77¹

Present: R. Willett, I. Castle, G. Bedding, J. Grimsly, H. Edginton, W. Dumbleton, T. Rouse.

Moved by H. Edginton, sec. by G. Bedding that the a/c be got out up to Dec. 30.

Moved by I. Castle, sec. by H. Edginton that Caulcott be permitted to form a branch by itself from Heyford.

Moved by I. Castle, sec. by W. Dumbleton that the Chilton man be paid 2 weeks Relief.

Moved by G. Bedding, sec. by J. Grimsly that the sec. write and get information about the man discharged for refusing to work a half hour more.

Moved by G. Bedding, sec. by Grimsly that with a view to save expences the Committee is of openion that when the Delegate is in the District he should endeavor to walk from and to his appointments when the distance is not more than 6 or 8 miles.

¹On the following day, 21st March 1877, the annual district meeting was held in the Workmen's Hall, St. Clement's, Oxford. 'Sixty-one delegates assembled, representing eighty-nine branches and about 3,000 members.' Joseph Arch attended and spent a considerable time explaining the provisions of the National Sick Benefit Society. 'He said that the ex-committee was determined to form a society that would be worthy of the support of the labourer. . . . A resolution, moved by Mr. H. Edginton, and seconded by Mr. J. Grimsley, was unanimously carried, adopting and approving the principles of the National Sick Benefit Society; also that steps be taken to raise a benevolent fund to assist over-age members who cannot enter sick benefit societies. A petition for the extension of the franchise was adopted' (*English Labourer*, 31st March, 1877).

J. Grimsly	6/-	H. Edginton	6/-
G. Bedding	6/-	W. Dumbleton	6/-
R. Willett	6/-	T. Rouse	6/-
I. Castle	9/-		
			<hr/>
			18/-
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	18		
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	2 5		

Committee Meeting held May 9th 77

Present R. Willett, G. Bedding, J. Grimsly, M. Driscoll, J. Styles, H. Edginton

1st Proposed by G. Bedding, sec. by J. Styles that R. Willett be elected Chairman of Committee.

2nd Prop. by T. Rouse, Sec. by J. Grimsly that R. Willett be nominated for the Exc. Committee.

3 That a sub committee consisting of Messrs. G. G. Banbury, J. Banbury, I. Castle, H. Edginton and the Dist. Secry. be appointed.

Committee Expences [*sic*]

R. Willett	10/6	T. Rouse	6/6
G. Bedding	6/8	J. Grimsly	7/-
H. Edginton	6/-	J. Styles	6/8
M. Driscoll	7/6		
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Committee Meeting held Aug. 2nd 1877

Present: R. Willett, I. Castle, J. Grimsly, T. Rouse, H. Edginton, M. Driscoll, J. Styles, and Mr. G. G. Banbury.

1st Moved by J. Styles, sec. by I. Castle that the Dist. Offices attend at the different village and the 3 Boroughs in

the dist. during the next fortnight with a view of ascertaining the no. of voters whose names are illegally on the list.¹

2nd Moved by I. Castle, sec. by J. Grimsly that a similar course be adopted in regard to the delegate during the harvest as was last year.

3rd Moved by M. Driscoll, sec. J. Grimsly that the Delegate receive the 1/- per week since the conference in London commenced May 15th 1877.

4th That this Committee excede to the suggestion made by the General Secretary on behalf of the Nat. Ex. Committee and agree to make a change in the Dilegate. The secretary be instructed to communicate this to the said Committee and inform them that Mr. Spencer will continue his work till the end of the week ending August 11th. Mr. Spencer will then expect to remain at home the same time as other delegates in harvest for which time we the said Dist. Committee agree to pay his salary.

5 Prop. by J. Styles, sec. by J. Grimsly that we request that Mr. J. Cockbill be sent to this Dist. in exchange.²

R. Willett	10/6	M. Driscoll	7/6
J. Grimsly	7/-	I. Castle	9/-
T. Rouse	6/6	J. Styles	6/8
H. Edington	6/-		
	<hr/>		<hr/>
	£1 10		£1 3 2
			£1 10
			<hr/>
			£2 13 2

¹Most of the N.A.L.U. leaders were strong supporters of the Liberal party—and this applied equally to the Oxford district. Although rural householders were not to receive the vote until 1884, farm workers living within a borough had been enfranchised by the 1867 Reform Act. Periodic attempts were, therefore, made by the district officials to make sure that those eligible to vote were on the electoral register. Thus an entry in the *English Labourers' Chronicle*, 18th August, 1877, notes: 'The district officers have been engaged during the week helping to get the register of voters in the borough of Woodstock in as good a state as possible. All members of the N.A.L.U. and friends of progress for the boroughs of Woodstock, Wallingford and Aylesbury are requested to examine the register of voters and ascertain if their names are on properly, and if not, go to the overseers and get it put right.'

²John Cockbill was originally an agricultural labourer from Long Compton, but from quite early on he was active as a union delegate. He was aged about forty-seven when he received the invitation from the Oxford district. Later he was to set up as a smallholder in Minster Lovell, on a four-acre allotment. Pamela Horn, Leicester University Ph.D. thesis (1968), p. 277.

Committee Meeting held Sept. 21st 77

Present: Messrs. Willett, Castle, Bedding, Rouse, Driscoll and Edginton. Also Mr. John Banbury.

Also a Deputation from Nt. Ex. Committee consisting of Messrs. Ball and Boulton.¹

1st Moved by J. Grimsly sec. by I. Castle that the Committee approve the steps taken by the Dist. Secy. in securing a office for the district at a cost of £16 per annum to include firing and gass and office attendance and that the notice on either side be one months.

R. Willett	10/6	G. Bedding	6/8
J. Grimsly	7/-	M. Driscoll	7/6
T. Rouse	6/6	I. Castle	9/-
H. Edginton	6/-		

Committee Meeting held Nov. 21st 77

Present Messers. Willett, Castle, Edginton, Bedding, Grimsly, Driscoll. Also Mr. G. G. Banbury.

Moved by Mr. Driscoll secd. by Mr. Grimsly that the Secretary at once communicate to the central ex. and request that their promise sd. be carried out in relation to the chainge of Dilegate and that Mr. J. Cockbill be sent into this District at the end of the present month.

Moved by Mr. Castle, Sec. by Mr. Driscoll that the Secretary make arraignements for holding the District annual meeting as early as possable in March, about the Second Thursday.

Moved by Mr. Castle and Seconded by Mr. Edginton that Mr. G. G. Banbury be asked to preside at the business meeting in connection with the annual Dist. Meeting. That a public meeting be held in the evening and that the following Gentlemen be asked to take part in it Mr. G. Mitchell of London, Mr. Arch, Mr. H. Evans London and any other Local gentleman that may be fourthcoming. The Secretary to arraigne for a Chairman.

Moved by H. Edginton, Sec. by Mr. Bedding that each branch that have sent in 30/- during the quarter ended previous to the Annual Meeting send one delegate to the same

¹George Ball was the Lincolnshire-born vice-president of the Union and Thomas Boulton was secretary of the Banbury District.

and in the case of small branches two of them to unite together to send one.

[Expenses]	£1	3	2
	£1	3	6
	<hr/>		
	£2	6	8

Moved by M. Driscoll, Sec. by Mr. Castle that in case of emergency the treasurer be instructed to sign the application for money from Leamington in confirmation with the Dist. Secretary.¹

Moved by Mr. Castle, Seconded by Mr. Edginton that the Dist. Secretary write at once to Leamington to ascertain if it is customary to pay union men who emigrate to South Australia their fare when the Government do the Same.

R. Willett	10/6	I. Castle	9/-
J. Grimsley	7/-	G. Bedding	6/8
H. Edginton	6/-	M. Driscoll	7/6

Committee Meeting held March 13 1878

Present: Messrs. G. Bedding, H. Edginton, J. Grimsley, T. Rouse, M. Driscoll, Willett and Styles.

Moved by H. Edginton, sec. by J. Grimsley that J. Blacowe of Bicester receive 3 weeks relief.

Moved by Mr. Driscoll, sec. by J. Grimsley that the last part of Clause (a) in rule 10 in respect to nomination of candidate for the Ex. Committee be considered at the annual assembly tomorrow.²

¹A rubber stamp mark on the page immediately above this minute bore the legend: 'T. Bayliss, Wholesale and Retail Newsagent, Stationery, &c. Hythe Bridge Street, Oxford.'

²According to an account of the annual meeting which appeared in the *English Labourers' Chronicle*, (now the union newspaper) forty-eight delegates attended, representing from 2,000 to 2,500 members. In his report, Bayliss pointed out that the 'district officers had by the direction of the committee assisted in the registration of Woodstock and the other boroughs in the district, so that they were now in a fair way for success. Some attention had also been paid to the election of Churchwardens, and several working-men had been returned as the result. The report concluded by urging on the delegates the necessity of promoting Emigration, and pointing out the advantages offered by South Australia, particularly to single young men, who were taken out by steamers in 40 days . . .' The district accounts showed that in the preceding year £9 16s. 8d. had been spent on emigration, and £32 os. 7d. on migration within the United Kingdom. The district had remitted £535 3s. 11d. to Leamington and had retained for its own management expenses £182 9s. 9d (*English Labourers' Chronicle*, 23rd March, 1878).

J. Styles	6/4½	R. Willett	6/-
G. Bedding	6/-	T. Rouse	6/-
M. Driscoll	6/-	H. Edginton	6/-
J. Grimsly	6/-		
			<hr/> 18/-
	<hr/> £1 4 4½		
	18		
	<hr/> £2 2 4½		

Committee Meeting held April 24th 1878

Present: G. Bedding, J. Akers, R. Willett, L. Taylor, M. Warner, J. Grimsley, S. Waring, and Mr. J. Banbury.

Moved by G. Bedding, sec. by J. Grimsley that Mr. R. Willett be chairman of committee for the ensuing year.

Moved by L. Taylor, sec. by J. Grimsley that if the Ex. Committee claim the right to call a special District assembly the notice calling the same shall state that such other business as shall be called for shall be taken up and considered and resolutions passed thereon and in case the ex. Committee refuse to append this to their circulars the Dist. Secretary be instructed to issue circulars to each branch informing them that such will be the case.

3rd Moved by G. Bedding, sec. by S. Waring that Mr. H. Taylor be invited to preside at the special District assembly.

3 [*sic*] Moved by J. Akers, sec. by S. Waring That after hearing the Statement made by the Dist. Secretary and confirmed by a Committee Meeg. of the district Much has been sown in the District by the Dilegate Mr. Cockbill considered that a change is imperatively necessary in the interest of the Dist.

Mr. Taylor	6/8	Mr. Akers	9/8
Mr. Grimsly	7/-	Mr. Waring	7/8
Mr. Bedding	8/7		
Mr. Willett	10/6		
	<hr/> £1 10 9		
			<hr/> 17 4
			£1 10 9
			<hr/> 2 7 1

Signed Richard Willett Chairman.

Special Committee Meeting held May 3 78

Mr. Willett in the Chair. Present: J. Grimsly, L. Taylor T. Rouse, J. Akers.

Minute of previous meeting was read and confirmed.

A Conversation took place as to the advisability of having a delegate in the Dist. The general opinion expressed was in favour of not doing so.

Proposed by J. Grimsley, Sec. by J. Akers that 25/- be allowed to the Milton branch to defend a member.

May 3rd 1878

A Special District Assembly. Mr. Arch in the Chair.¹

Proposed by J. Calcutt, Milton, sec. by F. Goodwin, Wheatley that T. Bayliss be elected secretary. A great deal was said by nearly all delegates present in respect of the above resolution all concurring in the opinion that the present Dist. Secretary be reelected.

The Resolution carried unanimously.

Moved by J. Styles, sec. by J. Akers that the resolution appointing delegates to the annual council be rescinded.

Delegates to the council

T. Bayliss	29
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R. Willett	16
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J. Tidmarsh	14
-------------	----

Mr. R. Willett to the Ex. Committee

Moved by J. Styles, sec. by L. Taylor that Mr. Banbury in connection with the Dist. Secretary obtain the facts of the Bladon Vestry case and submit the same to the Ex. Com-

¹According to the account in the *English Labourers' Chronicle*, 11th May, 1878: 'About 40 delegates were present. Mr. Arch was elected to preside . . . The Chairman in opening the proceedings said that it was not necessary for him to say very much . . . as the matter for which the meeting had been called was very simple . . . Mr. J. Calcutt, Milton branch, proposed and F. Goodwin of Wheatley Branch, seconded, that Mr. Bayliss be re-elected secretary. The matter being thrown open Mr. Bayliss made a statement in respect to the results of his inquiries into the complaints that were made at the annual assembly. He said that the result was that he could not find any foundation for the complaints to rest upon . . . Several delegates followed, each one stating that they had no cause of complaint whatever, against the secretary. . . . ultimately Mr. Bayliss was unanimously elected secretary.' Cockbill, the former delegate, seems to have been the prime cause of the discontent shown at the annual meeting.

mittee requesting them to take councils opinion thereon. On the Resolution of J. Caulcutt a resolution was adopted in favour of a resolution protesting against the Government policy.¹

Moved by R. Willett, seconded by J. Grimsley that the district try the experement of not having a delegate for at least three months.

Proposed by C. Holloway, sec. by H. Edginton that the appointment of a delegate be left till the annual Councils. The amendment is carreid.

Committee Meeting held Sept. 19th 78

Presant: G. Bedding, J. Grimsley, J. Akers, S. Waring, M. Warner, L. Taylor. Mr. R. Willett unable to come in consequence of Contract work. Mr. J. Banbury.

Mr. J. Grimsley in the Chair.

Proposed by S. Waring, secd. by L. Taylor that Mr. Morris be employed on the Oxford District part time and That he remain in the District 3 weeks at a time. Carried.²

Proposed by L. Taylor, Secd. by J. Akers That after carefully looking through the balance sheet issued by the Center for the quarter ending June 30th 1878 This Committee are fourced to come to the Conclusion that some steps must be taken to so alter or amend the constetution of the union so that the Dists. will have more controle of the funds raised therein.³ They further notice that an important meeting of

¹This referred to the Government's role in the dispute between Russia and Turkey over the fate of Bulgaria. The N.A.L.U. supported the line taken by Mr. Gladstone in his 1876 pamphlet 'The Bulgarian Horrors and the Question of the East', which condemned the policy of the Conservative Government. For a discussion of the N.A.L.U.'s part in this agitation see Pamela Horn, *Joseph Arch*, pp. 131-135.

²George Morris was to remain district delegate almost until the Oxford district itself ceased to exist as an independent unit, early in 1879. He came from the Spalding area of Lincolnshire.

³At the annual council of the N.A.L.U. held in London towards the end of May, Bayliss had made clear his dissatisfaction with the running of the Union. According to a report in the *English Labourers' Chronicle*, 15th June, he 'confessed that if he were to say he was satisfied with the union as it existed at present he would be saying that which was hardly true. He did not want federalization . .

Dist. Secretaries and Delegates is announced in Norfolk for the beginning of Oct. next.

Having regard therefore to the unsettled and unsatisfactory state of affairs appoint the following a sub committee to meet at Woodstock immediately after the said Conferance of Officers in Norfolk and that the said sub Committee be empowered to join with other Districts if necessary in Calling a Special Council. Messrs. G. G. Banbury, J. Banbury, Grimsley, Bedding, Waring, Taylor, Akers & Dist. Secretary.

Carried unanimously [*sic*]

The Secretary layed before the Committee a statement of what had been don in relation to the Hook Norton branch changing from Oxford to Banbury District.

Prop. by L. Taylor, Secd. by J. Grimsley that J. Blencowe of Bicester receive two weeks Releif. Carried.

Proposed by L. Taylor, secd. by J. Akers That a circular be drawn up by the secretary and sent to each branch asking them to inform the District Committee whether they would be favourable to the starting [of] a Sickness benefit Superannuation and Widows Society for the District on such prinapcles as will bring it within the reach of all Members of the union who are sound in helth.

L. Taylor	6/8	J. Akers	9/8
J. Grimsley	7/-	S. Waring	8/-
G. Bedding	6/8	M. Warner	7/9
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£2 5 9

Committee Meeting held at the Dist. Office Jan 15th(?) 1879

What he should be glad to see, however, was a thorough inquiry, in order to see if they couldn't discover a more excellent system than the one they were trying now. . . . He therefore moved: "That a Select Committee be appointed to inquire into the best mode of improving the N.A.L.U., and submit the same to the consideration of the Council." ' After discussion, a vote was taken and the motion was approved by 36 votes to 15. A five-man committee was then appointed, comprising Joseph Arch, George Mitchell, Henry Taylor, John Banbury (a Consultative Committee member from the Oxford district) and W. R. Cremer, a Radical politician and supporter of trade unionism. Cremer was also a founder of the Workmen's Peace Association and in 1903 he was to be awarded the Nobel Peace Prize.

Presant: Messrs. R. Willett, J. Grimsly, J. Akers, G. Bedding, M. Warner, L. Taylor, T. Rouse. Mr. Morris and Mr. J. Banbury.

A long discussion took place on the circular and relating to the Central sistem of Government in which Messrs. Bayliss, Morris, J. Banbury, Rouse, Bedding, Taylor &c. [took part], and the following resolution was adopted.

Proposed by G. Bedding, Sec. by J. Akers That this Committee is of openion that the Central Sistem of Government in our union has completly failed to exercise a wise and judicious Management of the funds under its control and is convinced that Federation is the only effectual means to remedy the evil and instructs its represantatives at the Special Council to do all in their power to obtain this sistem of Government.

Carried unously

Prop. by T. Rouse, Sec. by L. Taylor That in case the sistem of Federation be not adopted by the Special Council the Secy. be instructed to call a Special District assembly.

Carried.¹

¹These deliberations arose out of proposals put forward by the special committee investigating the running of the N.A.L.U. Ten specific changes were suggested in regard to the organisation of the Union and a Council meeting of the N.A.L.U. was to be called in London towards the end of January to consider them. The suggestions were: '(1) That the Annual Council be abolished, and that the management of the Union be vested in a Council composed of 15 members (exclusive of the President and Vice-President) . . . (2) That this Council shall meet annually or oftener if urgent business requires . . . but shall have no power to make, amend or alter rules, except once in three years, and then only at the request of two-thirds of the Union voting. (3) That from this Council an Executive Committee, to consist of five members, beside the President and Vice-President, shall be chosen by the Council. (4) That the President, Vice-President, and General Secretary, shall be elected and their salaries fixed by the votes of members in the Branches. (5) That the District Annual Assemblies shall be abolished. (6) That the District Committee shall consist of five members, from whom a Chairman shall be appointed by themselves, and meet quarterly; three to form a quorum. (7) That the district officers be elected and their salaries fixed by the members in the Branches in the same way as the Council is elected. (8) That in no case shall the total expenses incurred for the use of district office, including rent, taxes, lighting, and firing, exceed £8 per annum. (9) That five per cent on the Trade Contributions remitted to the District Secretary annually, be given to the Branch Secretary (in addition to the sum he already receives from the management fund) for his services. . . . (10) That the number of delegates be reduced to three, exclusive of the President and Vice-President.' It was hoped by these means to cut total expenditure by £2,000 a year.

Prop. by G. Bedding, Sec. by J. Grimsly That provided it is found necessary for the Dist. Secy. Mr. Bayliss to start a paper in the intrest of the District This Comttee. will render him all the moral support in its Delegates power and bear the expence of a Free circulation for 2 weeks.

T. Bayliss, G. Morris, R. Willett be unaly. elected to the Special Council.

Proposed by L. Taylor, sec. by J. Grimsly that Mr. L. Clark, the Bucks. Dist. secy. be asked to preside at the Special Dist. Assembly on the 28th. Carried.

Moved by G. Bedding, J. Akers that the circulars containing the answers to the Resolutions be not sent to Leamington.

Prop. by J. Grimsly, sec. by G. Bedding that G. Bond of Bledington receive 5/- Relief.

Payment			
R. Willett	10/6	J. Grimsly	7/-
T. Rouse	6/6	M. Warner	7/9
L. Taylor	6/8	G. Bedding	6/8
J. Akers	9/8		
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Committee Meeting held at the Dist. Office,
Hythe Bridge St. Feb. 26 1879

Presant: Messrs. R. Willett, L. Taylor, M. Warner, J. Grimsly, T. Rouse, J. Akers, S. Waring, G. Bedding. Also Messrs. J. Banbury, Morris and (?) Collier.¹

1 Proposed by G. Bedding, Secd. by S. Waring That this committee fully approve the course adopted by its representatives Messrs. Willett, Morris & Bayliss at the Special Council in London in advocating Federation.²

Carried.

¹This may have referred to Robert Collier, a former Leamington draper who was now acting as General Secretary of the N.A.L.U.

²When the Special Council of the N.A.L.U. opened in London on 21st January, Leonard Clarke of Buckinghamshire proposed that Bayliss should take the chair instead of Joseph Arch, the Union President. This proposal was defeated by 36

2 Proposed by L. Taylor, sec. by J. Grimsly That the $\frac{3}{4}$ of the contribution be sent to the center at once.

Carried.

Prop. by G. Bedding, sec. by J. Akers

That Seeing it is impossable for the District to work on the one fourth we dispence with a delegate.

Moved by G. Bedding, Sec. by J. Grimsly

That this Committee deeply regret that in consequence of the State of the funds they are unable to employ Mr. Morris as delegate in the District any longer and hereby expresses their thanks to him for the services he has rendered the union in the district.

Carried

Moved by G. Bedding, secd. by M. Warner that $\frac{3}{4}$ of the contrebuton be left in the District. Carried (only one who did not vote).

Proposed by M. Warner, Sec. by L. Taylor.

That the arrangements of Mr. Arch's meetings be left to the Ex. Committee who shall arrange for his work with a view to a reduction in expences.

Carried unanimously

Moved by S. Waring, secd. by L. Taylor that we send for a grant of £40 from the center.

Carried.

Moved by Mr. Willett, sec. by S. Waring that the Secy. be

voltes to 11. Bayliss then moved that as 'the resolution of the Committee entirely altered the constitution of the Union, (he) submitted the following as a further amendment: "That in the opinion of this Council the present system of central management of the N.A.L.U. has failed, that the changes proposed are unsatisfactory and dangerous in the extreme, and that the only satisfactory system of management is that of federation."' He claimed that 'if the Oxford district had stood alone they would have now had as much money in their possession as the whole Union had.' Heated discussions resulted from the resolution but in the end it was rejected by 35 votes to 19. Bayliss and Willett then called a special meeting at the Liberal Hall, Oxford, on 28th January to explain their actions to delegates from the branches within their own district. Bayliss declared that 'the best course was for the district to take its affairs into its own hands, at least for the time being; at the same time contribute a certain percentage to the Central Fund.' The Minute Book makes no mention of this meeting at all. *English Labourers' Chronicle*, 25th January, 1st and 8th February, 1879.

empowered to call the annual District assembly at the most convenient date.

Carried

Mr. Willett	10/6	J. Grimsly	7/-
T. Rouse	6/6	G. Bedding	6/8
L. Taylor	6/8	M. Warner	7/9
J. Akers	9/8	S. Waring	8/-
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		1 13 4	
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Committee Meeting held at the District Office, April 3rd 1879
 Present: Messrs. R. Willett, G. Bedding, J. Akers, L. Taylor, T. Rouse, J. Grimsly. M. Warner.

The Minutes of the previous meeting was adopted.

A long discussion took place relative to the present position of the union in which all appeared to agree as to Justness of the action of themselves in advising the delegates as to what they should do in regard to Federation.

The discussion then turned on the land question and several spoke in favour of having Land in connection with the union.

Prop. by R. Willett, Secd. by J. Akers

That this Committee accepts with regret the resignation of Mr. Bayliss as Dist. Secretary.

Prop. by L. Taylor, sec. by J. Grimsly that the assembly be held on the last Wednesday in April next 30th.

Signed Richard Willett Chairman.

R. Willett	10/6	J. Grimsly	7/-
T. Rouse	6/6	G. Bedding	6/8
L. Taylor	6/8	M. Warner	7/9
J. Akers	9/8		
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Committee Meeting held May 2nd 1879¹

Present: Messrs. R. Willett, S. Waring, J. Akers, J. Grimsly, G. Bedding, L. Taylor, T. Rouse, and Mr. John Banbury.

Prop. by G. Bedding, sec. J. Akers

The report as read by the Dist. Secretary be adopted.²

Prop. by S. Waring, Sec. by L. Taylor

That the Special Emigration Fund be left in the hands of Mr. G. G. Banbury who shall pay any clames made upon it.

Prop. by S. Waring, Sec. by J. Akers

That J. Grimsly have his eight days pay for relief due.

¹This was to be the last committee meeting of the Oxford district as an independent unit. Later that day the annual meeting of the district was held at the Liberal Hall, Oxford, with 22 delegates in attendance. Joseph Arch, who was also present, was voted to the chair. Bayliss read the annual report but this was rejected by the delegates 'on the grounds that it contained a censure on the Executive Committee for not having supported the taking of land in the district', and also that it advocated the principle of federation. A resolution was then unanimously adopted that there should be one secretary only for a joint Oxford and Banbury district—and this was to be the Banbury district secretary. A committee was elected for the combined districts and of the seven men chosen only one—William Dumbleton—had previously served on the committee of the old Oxford district. G. G. Banbury ceased to be district treasurer and his son, John, withdrew from the office of auditor (*English Labourers' Chronicle*, 10th May, 1879).

²After Bayliss severed his connection with the N.A.L.U. he and Leonard Clarke of Buckinghamshire formed a new union to be known as the National Land and Labour Union, but it had small success. However, he continued his business as a newsagent in Hythe Bridge Street—coupling it first of all with an agency for emigration and later with a coal merchant's business. But by the mid-1880s he had disposed of these businesses, and in about 1890 took up an appointment as Liberal Party agent for the Horncastle division of Lincolnshire—a position he held for twenty years. He died in Oxford on 24th April, 1939, aged 91—the last survivor of the original union leaders. Although his union career ended at the beginning of the 1880s, he remained an active Methodist local preacher until well into his eighties, and preached at Rose Hill Methodist Church, Oxford, in 1934, when just over 86. See obituary in *Oxford Mail*, 26th April, 1939.

2

MINUTE BOOK OF THE HORSPATH BRANCH OF THE NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LABOURERS' UNION 1873-4

(Bodleian Library, MS. Top. Oxon. d. 533)

[This has embossed on the front cover: 'National Agricultural Labourers' Union Branch Minute Book', and was of the standard type issued by the Union to its branches. The entries printed here fill most of the first six leaves; for the miscellaneous contents of the rest of its 87 leaves, see note to p. 117. The handwriting (presumably Benjamin Surman's) is poor; spelling errors are reproduced in the printed text.

The book passed from John Harris, the branch's delegate to the Oxford District, to his son Mr. C. W. Harris, a Horspath builder, who through the agency of Dr. W. O. Hassall generously donated the book to the Bodleian in 1966, having inscribed it 'Given by Charles William Harris Horspath 1966 & was My Father's Book']

Horspath Branch,
Oxford District.
March 3rd 1873.
Members of Committee
Garsington

Edward Boswell
Wm. Cherry
Jas. Woodards
Jas. Cherry

f.1 Chairman Henry Harris¹
Treasurer William Surman²
Secretary Benjamin Surman³

¹In 1873 Henry Harris was a forty-eight-year-old gardener. This and the following descriptions are all based on the 1871 Census Returns (P.R.O. R.G.10/1433).

²There was more than one William Surman in Horspath, but all were employed as agricultural labourers.

³Benjamin Surman was a fifty-two-year-old agricultural labourer.

Members of Committee

- 1 James Robinson
 - 2 Charles King¹ Henry Surman
 - 3 Bartholemew Cooper
 - 4 William B^m. Surman
 - 5 Charles Morris
 - 6 Joseph Hinton
 - 7 James Surman
- Delegate John Harris²

f.1^v 1873 Horspath

On Monday March 3rd the Secretery of the Oxford district of the Labourers N.A.L.U. formed the Horspath Part of the Littlemore Branch of the N.A.L.U. into a seperate Branch, numbering fifty four Members.

March 11th 1873 the first Meeting of the Horspath Branch of the N.A.L.U. met at William Surmans to Pay their Monthly Contributions which amounted to £1 15s od., three new Members Entred the same Evening, one Man and two Boys. It was agreed that Each Member should pay an additional three Half Pence to Pay for the Books that will be required to keep the Accounts of the Horspath Branch and if any money over and above Paying for the Books, to Pay the Contributions of a Sick Member.

March 8th the Committee and Members of the Horspath Branch held a meeting at Wm. Surmans to Consider upon the

- f.2 Men in the employment of Messer J. Eeley, M. Surman and B. Herman, working two Shillings per week, under Mr. J. Chillingworth's day Men and three Shillings per Week lower than his Cattle Men, it was Unimaniously agreed to at the said Meeting, that the men in the employment of Messrs. J. Eeley, M. Surman and B. Herman have refused to work under the Rate of Wages Paid by Mr. J. Chillingworth after Proper Notice have been given to their Masters.³

¹This name was struck through.

²John Harris was a forty-year-old agricultural labourer.

³John Chillingworth, aged 29, in 1871 farmed 360 acres at Horspath and employed 20 men and 7 boys; James Eeley, aged 47, farmed 240 acres, employing 10 men and 3 boys, while Michael Surman, aged 51, farmed 110 acres and employed 6 men and 4 boys; Bernard Herman employed 5 men and 1 boy. A fifth farmer in the parish, Thomas Brownsell, who in 1871 occupied 170 acres and employed 4 men and 3 boys, is not mentioned in the minute book.

After consulting the Secretary of the Oxford district, a Notice was served on Mr. J. Eeley and Bernard Herman, the Men got their Wages rose.

March 17th. Jas. Robinson, Wm. Surman, Chs. King. and Fred Surman Boy made an application for assistance to migrate, into Leistershire, they were sober and industerious young men, good Paid up members of the Horspath Branch of the N.A.L.U.

1874. Febr. 6th. Paid Jas. Moore the sum of nine shillings for one week wages, on acct. of R. Pethers sinking his wages one shilling per week for joining the union.¹

f.2v March 17 [1873]. Henry Surman applied for assistance to be sent into the North, which was granted him, but he Returned home on the following Friday March 21².

March 21. Thos. and Jas. Surman made an application, to be assisted to migrate into the North.

On Wensday March 26 Mr. Holloway called unexpected in the Evening, to go to Garsington to get up a Meeting, but owing to being late in the Evening and unknown to any of the Horspath Members and Garsington People it was decided to put the Meeting off for a fortnight.

On Tuesday, Apl 8 Thos. Surman Returned from Leicester-shire.

On Wednesday, Apl 9th Fredk. Trafford was assisted to migrate into Leicestershire for Labour.

Returned Home on Saturday July 5.³

f.3 Apl 5 Henry Surman was Discharged from the Horspath Branch of the N.A.L.U. for under working a Fellow Member of the Union and getting Money of the Union to migrate into Leicestershire on March 17th & Returned Home on the 21 of the same Month.

April 8th. the Second Meeting of the Horspath Branch N.A.L.U. was held at Wm. Surmans to Pay their monthly contributions which amounted to £1-14-11d., three new Members Entred two men and one Boy.

¹This entry had been added later in what was evidently a blank space in the minute book.

²There were at least two Henry Surmans in Horspath in 1871; one was a forty-eight-year-old shepherd and the other a sixty-year-old thatcher.

³Added later.

Tuesday, April 22nd. A meeting was held at Garsington. 30 Members joined the Horspath Branch N.A.L.U. Mr. J. Holloway and Mr. Duffield Presided.¹

April 25 George [] was discharged from work for joining the Union.

Apl. 27. Jas Robinson, Wm. Surman junr, Willoughby Surman Returned Home to Horspath from Leicestershire.

1873

Decr. 22. Paid three Pence for Postage for a Quantity of New Rules.

30 Dec. for Paper and Stamp in writing to Mr. Leggett for Cards &c.

1874 Feby. 6. Held a meeting at The Chequers Inn, Horspath. Messer Eaggleton and Ford presided.²

f.3v 1873

June Contributions for Sick Members. B. Surman and W. Juggins

Thos. Hedges	6	Henry Trafford	6
Wm. Hedges	6	Chs. Morris	6
George Hedges	6	F. Trafford	6
Jas. Horn	6	Ths. Smith	6
Thos. Harris	6		
Jas. Harris	6		
John Harris	6		
Ripe	6		
Price	6		
Bath. Cooper	6		
Jas. Surman	6		
Wm. Palmer	6		
Josh. Hinton	6		
Wm. Surman	6		
Henry Kimber	6		
W. Surman	6		
John Horn	6		

¹The Garsington branch did not have a very long life, however, for an entry in the *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 3rd April, 1875, notes: '26th March—Garsington. The branch was found as sheep without a shepherd, the secretary having left them. Efforts will be made shortly to get them into the fold again.'

²These three entries were added later.

f.4 [*Left blank*]

f.4^r 1874

June 6. A Meeting was held at Wm. Surmans Treasurer and a subscription Raised for the Purpose of Paying the expenses to send a Delagate to Aylesbury on Wensday June 10th to take into Consideration the establishment of a Sick fund.

f.5 [*Left blank*]

f.5^v 1873 Penny Contributions to Pay P.O.O. for sending Members Contributions to District Secretary &c &c

August

Jas. Harris	I	Jas. Surman	I
John Harris	I	Chs. Morris	I
Wm. Harris	I	Henry Trafford	I
Chas. Harris	$\frac{1}{2}$	Ben Surman	I
Wm. Surman	I		
Wm. Hedges	I		2s. 3d. ¹
Josh. Moore	$\frac{1}{2}$		
John Cooper	$\frac{1}{2}$		
Wm. Cooper	I		
Fred Scott	I		
Jas Robinson	I		
Geo. Hedges	I		
John Moore	I		
Jas. Moore	I		
Wm. Palmer	I		
Geo. Morris	I		
Wm. Surman	$\frac{1}{2}$		
Henry Surman	I		
Jas. Horn	I		
H. Kimber	I		
Josh. Hinton	I		
Wm. Surman	I		
Bath. Cooper	I		
W. Surman	I		
Thos. Harris	I		

¹The half-penny contributions applied to the juvenile members of the Union, i.e. those aged 13 to 17 years of age.

August 26 [1873] Paid Wm Surman Treasurer 1. 5 for
P.O.O. orders for sending Contributions to J. Leggett
District Secatery N.A.L.U.

10d. for Stamps and Paper for Writing Purposes.

1874

Jas. Horn	1	Fred Scott	1
Wm. Surman	1	Henry Trafford	1
Henry Harris	1		
Henry Kimber	1		2. 10.
Robt. Kimber	1		
Henry Surman	1		
John Cooper	1		
Wm. Surman	1		
Wm. Cooper	1		
Wm. Holder	1		
Wm. Surman	1		
Bath. Cooper	1		
Steven Surman	1		
Ben ^m . Surman	1		
Will ^m . Surman	1		
Wm. Palmer	1		
George Hedges	1		
Thos. Harris	1		
Wm. Hedges	1		
Jas. Moore	1		
Thos. Hedges	1		
Chs. Morris	1		
Thos. Cooper	1		
Jas. Harris	1		
Fred. Trafford	1		
John Moore	1		
Joseph Moore	$\frac{1}{2}$		
Henry Moore	1		
George Morris	1		
Josh. Hinton	1		
John Harris	1		
Wm. Harris	1		
Chs. Harris	$\frac{1}{2}$		

1874

Jan'y 13 Paid Wm. Surman Treasurer 1s. 5d. for P.O.O. send Money.

Feb'y 10th Paid W Surman Treasurer for P.O.O.

Stamps, Paper, Postage for Rules &c &c

June 2nd Paid Wm. Surman 2s. 1½d. for Post Office Order for sending Money to Secty. Ford.

Collection for Wm. Surman Treasurer who had accident and got his arm much hurt

B. Surman	1 0
J. Scott	6
W. Surman	6
Thos. Harris	6
Chs. Morris	6
Ellen Morris	4
John Harris	6
Eliza Harris	3
Jas. Horn	6
James Harris	6
Henry Surman	6
Wm. Surman	6
Wm. Holder	3
J. Surman	6
Henry Trafford	3
Thos. Cooper	6
Henry Kimber	6
Jas. Robinson	6
Robt. Kimber	6
Sam. Harris	6
Fred. Trafford	6
Bath. Cooper	6
Steven Surman	6
William Surman	6
Wm. Palmer	6
John Cooper	6

f.6 1874

April 7th Contributions to Support Lock Out in the Eastern Counties

Members of the Horspath Branch of the N.A.L.U.

	d.				
Wm. Surman	6	6	6		
Jas. Surman	6				
Henry Kimber	6	3	3	3	
Thos. Harris	6	6	3	6	
Wm. Harris	6	3	3		
John Harris	6	3	3	6	6
Wm. Surman	6	1s. od.	6	6	
Wm. Holder	6	3			
Josh. Moore Boy	6				
Jas. Moore	6	6	6	3	
John Moore	6	6	6		
Wm. Smith	6	1½	1½		
Bath. Cooper	6	3	3	6	6
George Morris	6	3	6	3	6
Fred Scott	6	6	3	3	6
John Cooper	6	6			
Wm. Cooper	6				
George Hedges	6	6	3		
Wm. Hedges	6				
Jas. Horn	6	6	3	6	
Henry Surman	6	6	6	6	
f.6v Wm. Surman Boy	6	2			
Wm. Palmer	6	6	6		
Thos. Hedges	6	1d.			
Jas. Harris	6	3	3	6	6
Josh. Hinton	6	6	6	6	
Henry Trafford	6	3	6		
Chs. Morris	6	3	3½	6	
v Wm. Surman	6				
Henry Harris	6		9	6	
Benj ⁿ Surman	1s.	6	6	3	6
Fred Trafford	6	3	6		
John Wait	6				

Jas. Robinson	6	6	3
Robt. Kimber	6	6	
Chs. Harris Boy	6	2	
Thos. Cooper	6	6	
Steven Surman	6	6	3
Willoughby Surman	6		
Henry Moore	6	6	3
Wm. Elderfield	6		
Samuel Harris	6	6	6

1874. Mr. E. Richardson on Sunday May 17 presided over a meeting that was Held on the Village Green Horspath. Procession to Church afternoon service.

Revd. Bramley Preached. Collection 14s. 10d. was given to Lock Out and 4[s. ?] to Incendetal [*sic*] Expenses.¹

¹No further entries were made in the minute book concerning the activities of the Union itself, and the branch probably faded out later in 1874 or during 1875. An entry in the *English Labourer*, 5th February, 1876, notes that on 28th January a meeting had been held 'in the parlour of the public-house' at Horspath, with William Hines of Oxford in the chair. 'The room was nearly full of men, women, and youths, who paid the utmost attention. The men here intend to start again with a will; several have gone from this place to Queensland and are doing well.' A further entry, in the *English Labourers' Chronicle*, 23rd February, 1878, observed however, that although a meeting held in the middle of February had been 'well attended', the men were 'not in Union only a few.'

But if the minute book was not concerned with Union matters, its remaining pages were filled with a variety of jottings, including full details of the local charities. And an anonymous entry for March 1875 records: 'Attended Vestry Meeting to Protest against the Vileany carried on by B. Herman against the aged Poor when in the office as Guardian the Poor tottering old People bent down with age, were compelled to tramp to and fro for 3 hours on the Vilege Green all weathers till the Releving Officer one of the greatest vilens on Earth, come to Pay them the Paltry allowance. I am pleased to say regime was altdred from the time I attended the Vestry Meeting.' Other entries related to alleged offences committed by boards of guardians, and there was a note: 'Abolish the Property Qualification, and then instead of Villens and Barndoor Savages we shall have working men sitting on Boards of Guardians to look to the administration of the Poor Law. The Tories are responsible for all workhouse Scandles, to vote for the Tories is to insult the Wounded Poor of the Working Classes' (f.27).

3

RULES OF THE OXFORDSHIRE AND ADJOINING COUNTIES ASSOCIATION OF AGRICULTURISTS 1872

(*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 3rd August, 1872)

This Association has been formed in accordance with the resolutions passed at two largely-attended meetings of agriculturists, held at the Corn Exchange, Oxford, on the 13th and 20th of July, to meet, especially, the difficulty that has arisen in consequence of the attempt to force upon employers the rules of 'The Warwickshire Agricultural Labourers' Union.'

A meeting of the members, a large number being present, was held on Saturday last at the Roebuck Hotel. Mr. J. Rowland presided, and a Committee was elected.¹

The following Rules were agreed upon, and the next general meeting was fixed for Saturday, August 10, at the Roebuck Hotel, at half-past three o'clock:—

- I. The Society shall be designated the 'Oxfordshire and Adjoining Counties Association of Agriculturists', its object being to protect the interests of the employers of agricultural labour.
- II. Members shall pay an annual subscription of 10s. due in advance.
- III. No member shall employ a labourer belonging to a Union, unless he is already a hired servant.
- IV. No member shall engage a labourer without a character from his last employer.
- V. The Association shall take legal proceedings, if necessary, to protect the servants of its members from intimidation or annoyance.
- VI. The management of the Association shall be vested in a Chairman, Vice-Chairman, Secretary, and Committee, all of whom shall be elected annually at a general meeting.

¹John Rowland was a landowner from Hollybank, Wootton. In August, 1879 his daughter, Elizabeth, married the Reverend Robert Francis Kilvert, writer of the famous diary. W. Plomer (ed.), *Kilvert's Diary* (London, 1964), 5.

- VII. At either a general or a Committee meeting seven members must be present to constitute a quorum.
- VIII. In the absence at a meeting of both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the members present shall elect the Chairman for that meeting from among themselves.
- IX. A special general meeting may be called by the Chairman, the Committee, or, upon receipt of a requisition signed by seven members stating its object, by the Secretary.
- X. A member wishing to propose a new rule, or to alter or rescind an old one, must give written notice to the Secretary at least a week previous to the general meeting at which it is considered.

CORRESPONDENCE
OF

GEORGE WALLIS AND HUGH HAMERSLEY 1873-4
(Bodleian Library, MS D.D. Ducat Hamersley a.1, bundle 10)

[The Ducat-Hamersley Papers were deposited in the Bodleian in 1951. The Oxfordshire Record Society is grateful to Colonel J. Ducat-Hamersley of Pyrton Court House for permission to publish the text of the letters which follow].

1 George Wallis¹ to Hugh Hamersley², 5th March 1873
Old Shifford,
Bampton,
Farringdon [*sic*].
March 5th 1873

Dear Sir,

Will you kindly pardon the great liberty I take in writing to you.

I cannot doubt that you feel with us great regret that the good feeling which has, till last year, existed between farmers and their labourers should be so thoroughly swept away by outside agitators. Although matters have remained in a tolerably satisfactory state through the winter, now that the days are lengthening the Union is busy and the old discontent showing itself. The men cannot now complain of being

¹George Wallis farmed 430 acres at Old Shifford and employed ten men, six women and three boys. He was clearly a farmer of some importance; as the *Oxford Chronicle and Berks. and Bucks. Gazette*, 15th August, 1874, pointed out, his valuable flock of Oxfordshire down sheep had won for him 'prizes amounting to upwards of £1,000' at various agricultural shows during the 'last few years'. At the time he wrote the letter he was aged about thirty-eight.

²Hugh Hamersley (1813-84) of Pyrton Manor, Oxford, was Chairman of the Quarter Sessions, High Sheriff of the County in 1840, and Chairman of the Committee of Visitors at Littlemore Asylum from 1858 to 1878. He was also a deputy lieutenant of the County. See obituary in *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 8th November, 1884. Wallis may have written to Hamersley not only because he was a prominent landowner but also because at the dinner of the Watlington Farmers' Association in September, 1872, he had referred to most of the Union men he had seen as 'a lot of loafing fellows, such as they saw hanging about the market towns', and had shown himself fairly hostile to the union movement generally. See *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 21st September, 1872.

underpaid for they certainly never before received such wages at this time of Year.

My reason for writing is to ask if we cannot induce the landowners of Oxfordshire to take the matter up in some way.

After all, it is in the end a landlord's question. Let any gentleman read "The Labourers Union Chronicle" and he will then see what the leaders of the movement mean.

There our men are told week after week, that the land belongs to the peasantry and that the present owners have no right to it. There they are promised the land if they will combine.

Need we wonder at anything they do when such revolutionary doctrines are read in every public house and nearly all the Cottages in the County. I always thoroughly disliked combination either amongst masters or men but when we are treated in this way I see no way of battling with such treatment but by combination amongst ourselves.

In Norfolk a meeting has been held at which Lord Walsingham presided & last week at Shrivenham in Berkshire Lord Barrington took the chair at a meeting on the same subject.¹ Surely something may be done in Oxfordshire.

You are doubtless aware that last summer an Association was formed at Oxford. That Society has not generally succeeded I believe because we had no gentleman of influence amongst us & therefore we could not secure a large number of

¹Thomas (de Grey), 6th Baron Walsingham (1843-1919) of Merton Hall, Thetford, was a substantial landowner, possessing in Norfolk and Yorks. about 19,200 acres. In the early 1870s he was president of the Norfolk Farmers' Defence Association and described the Union as 'a nuisance disseminating false principles and theories producing discontent and setting class against class' (*Cambridge Chronicle*, 27th June, 1874). On his own estate he 'set to work to favour the non-unionist . . . and would have no interference from unions in disputes between master and men.' In 1874 he became a patron of the so-called 'National Farmers' Defence Association' which was established with headquarters at Leamington—allegedly as a rival to the N.A.L.U. The promoter of the scheme was 'Dr.' James Phillips, who even in 1873 had been active in collecting funds for so-called defence associations. Unfortunately later events demonstrated that the farmers who supported him had been duped and that no such organization really existed. Phillips was sentenced at Warwick Quarter Sessions in October, 1874, to twelve months' imprisonment for obtaining money under false pretences. Lord Walsingham had meanwhile discreetly withdrawn from the affair. See Pamela Horn, Leicester University Ph.D. thesis (1968), 190. George Barrington, 7th Viscount Barrington (1824-86) was lord of the manor and principal landowner at Shrivenham; he owned, in all, about 6,400 acres.

members. In my own immediate neighbourhood it did good service and many of the farmers here were members.¹

There are some members of our Association who think a Society can be formed which would secure the support of the Landowners and bring in a large number of members.

By dividing the County into districts (say The Highway Districts) and getting members from every Parish they hope to be able to form district Committees which should in case of any considerable difficulty or unreasonable demand on the part of the labourers, meet, and determine what should be the maximum daily wages that should be paid in that district. It is expected that over a considerable part of Oxfordshire the men will on April 1st demand 16/- per week & it is alleged that they have agreed not to work under. If they can by combination demand 16/- why not 26/-. We are naturally anxious to have some organisation to meet such demands. May I ask do these suggestions at all meet your views? I know that I can mention the subject to no one in the County who can give such advice and influence as yourself. Feeling this coupled with the *great* necessity there is for something being done has made me write at such length.

Again apologising for the liberty I have taken.

I am,

Dr. Sir,

Your very respectfully,

George Wallis

2 Hugh Hamersley to George Wallis, 7th March 1873 (Copy)
Pyrton.

March 7 1873

Dear Mr. Wallis,

The labour question is the most difficult that Farmers and Landlords acting with them, can have to deal with: but I am persuaded that the only chance of keeping clear of complication and probably a dead lock is that every employer should be free to make his own arrangements with his

¹For an account of the 1872 attempts to form a farmers' defence association see Pamela Horn, 'Farmers' Defence Associations in Oxfordshire, 1872-74; *History Studies*, i, no. 1 (May 1968). Wallis had been a member of the committee of management of this earlier association (*Oxford Chronicle and Berks. and Bucks. Gazette*, 3rd August, 1872.)

men, have as much piece work as possible done by agreement, which can be enforced before Magistrates, the law of the land being as yet, stronger than Union law—and employ such men only as are needed for the regular work at the best terms that may be—it is a troublesome system requiring thought and firmness on the part of employers, but the best commercial arrangement that can be made under the circumstances. Poor law relief should be limited to the old, sick and helpless all others should be required to take on themselves the responsibilities of independence. If the men should combine, as has been the case in some trades Unions, (but not as yet, so far as I have heard, by any farm labourers union) to require that all men, whether good, or bad should be employed at a fixed price, and that none should work, unless it were so, it would be an insupportable tyranny and must be resisted: business could not be conducted on such terms. We must remember that a lock out of agricultural labourers would be very different to that of any other interest at all times injurious, but if it should occur at seed time or harvest, fatal to the year's success. Injudicious combined action on the part of Farmers to settle a rate of wages would be not unlikely to lead to such a collision. The public generally would suffer but not to the same extent, as the markets of the world are open to them.

I have given you freely my opinion: others may not agree. I am speaking only for myself.

Believe me,

Very truly yours,

H.H.

3 George Wallis to Hugh Hamersley, 8th May 1874
Old Shifford,
Bampton
Farringdon.

April [*sic*] 8th, 1874.¹

Dear Sir,

You once very kindly replied to a letter I wrote you at the time The Agricultural Labourers' Union was started.

¹The date stamp on the envelope suggests that this letter was written on 8th May. See also *Farringdon Advertiser*, 16th May, 1874.

I now take the liberty of enclosing a copy of the rules of an Association formed at Farringdon last Tuesday, of which T. L. Goodlake Esquire. is President.¹ You will see that it is *defensive*. I know that a year & a half ago [*sic*] you were opposed to any combination amongst landowners and farmers, but I think it possible your views may be now modified on the subject.²

At that time it was somewhat generally supposed the Union would die out, at any rate it was not expected to become so powerful.

Although Unionists are now quiet in our County, it is of course because they have such a struggle in the Eastern Counties. We now thoroughly feel the need of some organisation amongst ourselves and we are anxious to extend the Association as wide as possible.

We think such an Association as this will do a great deal to prevent "strikes".

It will certainly tell the Executive Council at Leamington that we are not to be dealt with in detail. That if they order a few men to "Strike" they may have hundreds thrown on their hands at a week's notice.

¹Thomas Leinster Goodlake (1829-93) of Wadley, Berkshire, was chairman of Faringdon bench of magistrates, of the board of guardians and of the highway board; he became an alderman for the county of Berkshire following the establishment of County Councils under the 1888 Act. During the last thirty years of his life he was blind—"the result of an accident in his youth". See obituary in *Oxford Chronicle and Berks. and Bucks. Gazette*, 10th June, 1893. Mr. Goodlake was described by a friend of the N.A.L.U. as 'one of the bitterest opponents of the Union that England could produce.' Pamela Horn, *Joseph Arch*, p. 82. For an account of the formation of the new defence association see Pamela Horn, 'Farmers' Defence Associations in Oxfordshire, 1872-74', *History Studies*, i, no. 1 (May 1968).

²The anxiety of some farmers when faced with N.A.L.U. agitation is perhaps indicated by a letter, dated 28th April, 1874, written by 'A North-Oxon Farmer', in *Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 2nd May, 1874. In this he declared: 'Two years' forbearance is enough; it is now time for *action*; not combined action to keep down wages, but action in *self-defence*—action forced upon us by a most malignant combination without a parallel; . . . It remains then with the *farmers themselves* to determine whether half-a-score of men sitting at Leamington—men holding very extreme views respecting real property—shall fix, every spring seed-time, the exact area over which the strike, authorized and ordered by the Union, shall extend. . . . There *must* be defence associations co-extensive with the Union; and there *must be* a *Federation* of Associations . . . We are now receiving very bad treatment from various sources; if we remain *passive* and *disunited* any longer we shall deserve it all, and much more . . .'

I detest combinations either among masters or men, but we can now only fight the Labourers Union with its own weapon. I am sure there is no name in Oxfordshire the Association would value so much as yours.

Again apologising for the liberty I have taken & thanking you for your past kindness.

I am,

Dr. Sir,

Your very respectfully,

(Signed) George Wallis

[Enclosure]

The Berks, Oxon, Wilts, and Gloucestershire Farmers'
Defence Association

RULES

- 1 That its members consist of Owners and Occupiers of Land.
- 2 That the objects of the Association shall be: to frustrate exorbitant demands on the part of the Labourers' Unions; to encourage the employment of non-Union men; and to prosecute in any case of intimidation, coercion, &c., by Unionists.
- 3 Each member, being a Landowner (as equally interested with tenant Farmers in resisting the demands of tyrannical combinations) shall pay an equal (voluntary) pound rate with the Occupiers, on all lands let to members of this Association, and also on all lands farmed by themselves, but not on Residences, Pleasure Grounds, Woods, Cottages, &c.
- 4 Each member, being an Occupier, shall pay an equal (voluntary) pound rate on his assessment to the Poor-rate.
- 5 That a General meeting shall fix the amount in the pound of the rate to be collected.
- 6 That the sum to be so raised be collected by the Secretary, and paid to the credit of the Association.
- 7 That a "General Purposes Committee" be appointed at a General Meeting, not exceeding twelve members, of whom five shall form a quorum.

- 8 That such Committee meet at Faringdon, at least once a month, for the transaction of the ordinary business of the Association.
- 9 That in the event of any wages dispute arising between any member of the Association and his labourers, he shall at once, through the Secretary, inform the General Purposes Committee of the fact, who shall in the first place, be empowered to settle such dispute; but in the event of their not feeling competent to deal with the matter, shall call a General Meeting to decide on the course to be pursued.
- 10 In the event of the labourers employed by any member of this Association "striking", the employer shall, on the order of the Committee, be entitled to two-thirds of the loss he may sustain in consequence of such strike, from the funds of the Association.
- 11 All Union men (not being hired servants) employed by members of this Association may, by an order of a General Meeting of the Association, be locked out.
- 12 In the event of a general lock out, the losses of members shall be met by payments *pro rata*, as far as the funds of the Association will permit.
- 13 That the amount any member may be entitled to shall be assessed by four members of the Association, two to be appointed by the Committee, and two by the member claiming.
- 14 When the four members are unable to agree, the President shall decide between the parties appointed to assess the compensation claimed.
- 15 The Secretary shall, at any time, call a General Meeting, on receiving a written requisition, signed by five members of the Association.
- 16 That each member shall, with all the means at his disposal, assist other members in times of recognised difficulty.
- 17 No member of this Association shall knowingly employ any labourer who has been discharged by any other member for gross misconduct, of which the Committee has been informed.

18. The General Purposes Committee may, by an order of a General Meeting, if necessary, be appointed to fix the maximum amount of daily wages for certain districts.
- 19 Any surplus funds remaining may, at the end of every year, be invested.
- 20 A paid Secretary shall be appointed, who must be a Solicitor.
- 21 An account shall be opened with the County of Gloucester Bank, at Faringdon.
- 22 All cheques must be signed by the presiding Chairman and two members of the Association, and countersigned by the Secretary.
- 23 All subscriptions shall be paid in advance, during the month of May in each year, and no member shall be entitled to any payment whose subscriptions shall be in arrear of one month.
- 24 A balance-sheet shall be prepared by the Secretary and laid before the members at an annual meeting.
- 25 A President, Vice-President, and General Purposes Committee, shall be elected at every Annual Meeting.¹
- 26 Members shall be elected by the Committee, at their monthly meetings, upon one month's notice being given by a proposer and seconder, in writing, to the Secretary.
- 27 All questions shall be decided by a majority of votes, and in the event of an equality, the presiding Chairman shall have a second, or casting vote.
- 28 That in the event of the General Purposes Committee deeming it necessary to increase the funds in the hands of the Bankers, they shall at once call a General Meeting for authority to demand a rate in the pound from every member.
- 29 It shall be competent for the Association to make grants to similar Societies for the benefit of their members, at a Special General Meeting to be called for that purpose.
- 30 Any member infringing the above Rules shall lose all rights of membership, and forfeit his payments, after an investigation by the Committee.

¹At a meeting held at Faringdon early in July 1874, T. L. Goodlake was confirmed in the office of president of the Association and George Wallis became vice-president (*Faringdon Advertiser*, 11th July, 1874.)

4 Hugh Hamersley to George Wallis, 12th May, 1874 (Copy)
Chatham, May 12, 1874.

Dear Mr. Wallis,

Many thanks for your letter and the copy of rules of the Association which you have sent me. I am sadly afraid that if rules 11 & 18 were to come into operation the struggle between Employers and employed would be much prolonged, and the Farming interest would suffer most in the end. The men would emigrate in large numbers and so limit supply to demand. Those remaining in this country would be in a position to demand higher pay than is now demanded. We have at present no serious difficulty in our neighbourhood although it is a chosen field for agitation. Circumstances may perhaps occur in which having kept myself free from all combinations, I may be of use in assisting to bring about a good understanding and free commercial action between Master and Man—and I can only say that I would not spare time or power if such were the case.¹

H.H.

¹Hamersley's lukewarm response seems to have been reflected in the experience of the Association elsewhere. During the harvest season no meetings were held, and when they were resumed on 6th October, it is clear that overall support was too weak to permit it to continue; this second attempt at combination by Oxfordshire farmers thus died quietly away.

5

EXTRACTS FROM INCUMBENTS' ANSWERS TO THE BISHOP OF OXFORD'S VISITATION QUESTIONS FOR THE ARCHDEACONRY OF OXFORD 1875, 1878, 1881

(Bodleian Library, MSS. Oxf. dioc. 4 papers. c. 341, c.344
and c. 347)

[In all, about 240 parishes in Oxfordshire (including Oxford itself) submitted returns to the Bishop (J. F. Mackarness) on these three occasions; the extracts which follow are the only ones which refer to agitation among farm workers, and were answers to two particular questions put on each occasion. The articles of the visitation were dated 15th February 1875, 5th March 1878, and 21st March 1881; those of Mackarness' first triennial visitation were dated 5th February 1872, and the answers were required too early in that year to evoke any references to agitation among farm labourers.

The returns are printed in the alphabetical order in which they are bound; the incumbents' names are given in brackets after the name of the parish].

Clergy Answers of 1875

Q.13 How many of your adult Parishioners are habitually absent from Church? What is the number of the whole population under your charge? Has the attendance at Church during the last three years decreased?

Q.22 Is there any other matter which you think it expedient to bring under the Bishop's notice?

AMBROSDEN (Charles E. Bagshawe)

Q.13 Very many since the Labour Strike, they go no where. 850. Steadily increased till last year, when the Labour League began their pernicious work.*

*I am a great advocate for the men being paid, *what they are worth*; but not high wages, and all spent in pleasure, & drink. There is more Sabbath breaking, & Poaching than ever we had before. "An honest day's work & an honest day's pay"—

which they will get, if they will *only* work is my motto for them. 60 men have allotments under me, and therefore I know something about them.

BAMPTON (Edward G. Hunt)

Q.13 I cannot answer the first part of the question. Many, I regret to say, go to no place of worship. The total population, by last Census, was 1515: but it must have diminished considerably. The attendance on Sunday morning and evening is decidedly good—often very good. The working men absented themselves perceptibly during the time of the strike but are returning.

WESTCOTE BARTON (Edmund L. Lockyer)

Q.13 1. I think about one third of the gross population.
 2. About 230. It fluctuates.
 3. Yes—materially since the Labourers Union commenced the attacks upon the Clergy and Church.

CHESTERTON (William F. Fortescue)¹

Q.13 Many are irregular—some very irregular—but I only know *one* who never comes.

The whole population is 335.

Yes it has decreased ever since the Union has been rampant—but it now increases a little again.

EASINGTON AND CUXHAM (John D. Pigott)

Q.13 Above half—160—Decreased—in consequence of a spirit of insubordination and disaffection towards employers and clergy being roused by inflammatory speeches & publications of the N.A.L.U.

FIFIELD WITH IDBURY (M. Talmage)

Q.22 1. The sad defect in the Act Regulating the Employment of Children. It makes no provision for the enforcement of its penalties & only a few conscientious Farmers pay the least attention to it. Should not the Policeman report the

¹The *Labourers' Union Chronicle*, 25th July, 1874 showed its hostility towards Fortescue in a report on Chesterton: 'The clergyman has busied himself in order to crush the Union; if the labourers did not like it they could leave the church. He also gave himself the trouble to ransack the *Chronicle*, to find out all the wrong words, and then told them to his congregation.'

frequent transgressions to the Board of Magistrates? The poverty of the parents (wherever there are large families) & the greed of the Farmers are too strong obstacles to be overcome by the persuasions of the Parson.

2. The mischievous effect of the Labourers' Union Chronicle. It slanders the Clergy and indeed every class of Society, it is circulated on the Saturday so as to furnish reading for the Sunday. The Church has provided no antidote in any new form to meet the new evil.¹

HOOK NORTON (John R. Rushton)

Q.13 It is hardly possible to answer this question accurately; but *One Half* of the adult Parishioners, I think, if not more, are now habitually absent from Church. The Population at the Census 1871 was 1259. The attendance at Church has decreased within the last three years, *especially since the formation of the Agricultural Labourers' Union.*

KIDLINGTON (John P. Lightfoot)

Q.13 A large proportion of the Labourers.

Population 1500

(I think the attendance is less since the Labourers' strike—others attribute the diminished attendance to an alm's collection every Sunday, which however has been successful—in the amount of alms.)

KIRTLINGTON (Thos. K. Chittenden)

Q.13 The greater part—

about 600 including dissenters.

Yes,, very much since the Labourers' Union was first established.

MILTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD (William Stockdale)

Q.13 I cannot tell,

about 1100.

Slightly on account of Emigration and A.L.U.

¹In 1874, when the *Labourers' Union Chronicle* assumed the sub-title of 'an independent Advocate of the British Toilers' Rights to Free Land, Freedom from Priestcraft, and from the Tyranny of Capital', the alienation which existed between Church and Union was further aggravated. The fact that many of the N.A.L.U. leaders were Nonconformist local preachers contributed to the situation. The Bishop of Oxford, for his part, complained at the Church Congress in October, 1873, of the hostile attitude of the N.A.L.U. towards the clergy.

NOKE (I. Sanders)

Q.13 Perhaps three Labourers: one aged man, several women having young families.

Population numbers 134.

The Laborers not so regular since their "Union" arose.

SHILTON (H. W. Dix)

Q.13 200—3 chapels and no resident vicar for 100 years.
298.

Yes, since strikes but improving.

SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD (Henry Barter)

Q.13 I do not know.

800.

It decreased for a time owing to the Agricultural Union but has increased considerably since the Mission in November last.

SWINBROOK AND WIDFORD (M. M. Lamb)

Q.13 About 30 habitual absentees.

Total population 240. Congregations have considerably fallen off since the formation of Agricultural Union and the propagation of its literature.

WENDLEBURY (George D. Bowles)

Q.13 About 12 or 14. Total popn. 189. The attendance of the labourers has *decreased*, owing to the Agricultural "Strikes".

WESTON-ON-THE-GREEN (William J. Dry)

Q.13 About 36, under 400. Since the Agricultural Labourers' Union *my* attendance has *sadly decreased*, three years ago the Church was quite filled but now there are many empty benches—the women however have returned, and I see *some* signs of improvement amongst the men.

Clergy Answers of 1878

Q.12 How many of your adult Parishioners are habitually absent from Church? What is the number of the whole population under your charge? How many of them are known as professed Dissenters? Has the attendance at Church during the last three years increased?

Q.22 Is there any other matter which you think it expedient to bring under the Bishop's notice.

ALKERTON (Benjamin Smith)

Q.12 Population 169. More absent since the rise of Agricultural Unions. Dissenters too numerous amongst labourers. Primitive Methodists. Very consequential and self-opinionated. Congregation at Church much as usual—yesterday 55 & 64.

STEEPLE ASTON (John H. Brookes)

Q.12 Whole population about 820.

309 adult Church goers. 9 bedridden and infirm. 21 professed dissenters. 4 Roman Catholics. 75 adults who seldom or never come to Church.

Attendance has increased during the last 3 years. It is now something like it was before the agricultural Labourers' difficulty. I believe the figures in answer to question 12 are proximately accurate.

Many attend both Church and Chapel.

CHESTERTON (William F. Fortescue)

Q.12 4 Men are habitually absent from Church, but their wives & families all come—some half dozen are most irregular.

The population who look on themselves as under my charge, are 350—I have no *professed* dissenters.

The attendance at Church has increased during the last three years: & the Union influence which affected us for a time has quite disappeared.

HANBOROUGH (Richard W. Higgs)

Q.12 The whole population 1000. I feel some difficulty in returning an exact answer to this question. I think I might venture to say that nearly $\frac{1}{2}$ are Dissenters (*Wesleyans*), but they *disallow their being Dissenters* and come frequently to Church. The attendance has *not* increased, but rather the *contrary*, during the last 3 years, a fact to be accounted for, I

think, *beyond all doubt*, by a great deal of ill feeling that has been stirred up in the Parish by the *Labourers' Union*.¹

HANWELL (Vincent Pearse)

Q.22 Many of the people here are *Unionists* and applaud the abuse heaped upon *the Church* &c. by agitators holding forth every now & then on the village green. These Unionists often attend Church but I fear they are thoroughly disaffected towards the *powers that be*. The harm done also by a certain class of newspapers is incalculable.

KIRTLINGTON (Thomas K. Chittenden)

Q.12 Very many.

about 650

a certain few.

I think it has, since the Union is *waning*.

SHILTON (Henry W. Dix)

Q.12 200

298

about 100

increased during the last year the effects of the strike seeming to wear off.

SHIPTON-UNDER-WYCHWOOD (Henry Barter)

Q.12 About 100, but I do not know how to ascertain this accurately as I am too short-sighted to depend on my observation & can only get information at second hand.

800

about 50 adults.

No records of numbers have been kept but we have more now than at the time of the Labourers' Union Agitation.

Clergy Answers of 1881

Q12. (a) What is the number of the whole population under your charge? (b) How many of them are known as professed Dissenters? (c) Has the attendance at Church during the last

¹Shortly after this Higgs was to be in dispute with local union members over the appointment of a churchwarden. *English Labourers' Chronicle*, 8th June, 1878.

three years increased? (d) If there has been any decrease, to what cause do you attribute it?

Q.14 Is there any other matter which you think it expedient to bring under the Bishop's notice?

ALKERTON (Benjamin Smith)

Q.12 (a) 150
(b) About 30
(c) Decreased owing to dissatisfied spirit amongst labourers stirred up a few years ago & kept alive by Sunday Newspapers &c.

TOOT BALDON (James C. Ross)

Q.24 The *still existing* ill feeling of employed agst. employers in a *few* cases: e.g. Labourers declining to support a medical Club proposed for *their own good*, under the idea that "it would *save the farmers the rates*, and *we're not* going to do *that*."—A serious matter in the present agricultural depression.

WESTCOTE BARTON (Edmund L. Lockyer)

Q.12 (a) The last Census about 250—now probably somewhat less. (b) About one half. (c) The Attendances at Church much about the same. (d) Increases prevented by the influence of Dissent in the neighbouring Parish—and the hostility of Labourers Union.

KINGHAM (S. D. Lockwood)

Q.12 About six hundred.
about 150 are dissenters, of these a considerable portion attend the Church services frequently & occasionally.
I shd. say the attendance has not decreased in the last 3 years but it is not nearly as good as 7 or 8 yrs. ago. The reason is to be found in agitators & cheap mischievous newspapers and pamphlets & general discontent.

KIRTLINGTON (Thomas K. Chittenden)

Q.12 a. about 700.

b. a small proportion, say 5 or 6 per cent.

c. No!

d. The Parish has never recovered the effects of the Labourers' Union.¹

¹The anti-Church campaign waged by some of the unionists alienated even those clergy who had been initially sympathetic to the Union movement. Thus the Rev. H. C. Ripley, vicar of Minster Lovell, told the Royal Commission on Agricultural Depression 1879-82 (Q.64,584): 'My opinion . . . was that Mr. Arch was an honest man, and wished to benefit the agricultural labourer, and . . . if he had adhered to that one object with a single eye, without mixing it up with class and abusing the Church, and making it a nail upon which to hang an attack upon the Church, and to speak against the gentry, nobility, and landed proprietary, the sympathy of England would have been aroused.' Mr. Ripley was examined on 9th February, 1882. (Parliamentary Papers, 1882, Vol. XIV.)

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