

**Constance Louisa Mary Hawtrey**, (compiler) *A Jericho Scrapbook: Inside an Oxford Community Saved from Destruction*, Oxford: Jericho Living Heritage Trust, 2025, annotated and with appendices by Mark Davies, 201pp, £15, available from the Last Bookshop, Walton Street, Oxford.

This book is dedicated to Tony Joyce (1929-2023) former Chair of the Jericho Living Heritage Trust and a true champion of Oxford's heritage in all its varied forms.

Many years ago, in a conversation with an archivist, who had just received a folder of photos of the local town from the 1990s, I had emphasised to me the importance of archives and of records of how areas develop. The archivist argued that people didn't appreciate the value of recording how your town and specifically your high street looks at present. He recommended photographing your local shops, and making a record of your usual routines even if they seem boring and every day to you, because in fifty years (or even in fifteen years with how quickly areas develop now) no one will remember and social historians will value the insight. *A Jericho Scrapbook* proves his point. It is an interesting record of how Jericho grew from flat meadowland to a community of workers living beside the Oxford University Press, and covers the arrival of the iron and brass foundry and the importance of the church and schools in the community, alongside people's own memories and stories.

*A Jericho Scrapbook* was created by Constance Louisa Mary Hawtrey for a competition in 1955. The original is made up of oral histories, commentaries, street plans, photographs, illustrations and printed ephemera. The preface explains that Mark Davies came across the scrapbook in the 1990s and quoted from it in his canal publications, before fellow writer Catherine Robinson finally had the opportunity to transcribe the whole thing during the Covid-19 lockdown, important work as Hawtrey's work is now very fragile. Davies explains their book is published to mark seventy years since the scrapbook was made and two hundred years since building started in earnest in Jericho, with Oxford University Press purchasing a building plot. Davies' notes are thorough and either add further information or question Hawtrey's claims, adding to a resource which will be of considerable help to local researchers.

Hawtrey's book starts by acknowledging how close the area came to being redeveloped and the community lost in 1953, including claimed words of support from John Betjeman that it would be 'wanton cruelty to obliterate a community', although Davies' notes at the back of the book record an inability to support this link to Betjeman. It is curious that Ms Hawtrey initially claims to be unable to discover the origin of the name 'Jericho', though later acknowledges "Alas, the first reference ever made to 'Jericho', as far as can be ascertained, is found under the date 1668 in Anthony Wood's *Life*: 'At Jericho Gardens'". So she does not seem impressed that the name may have been inspired by 'a place of refreshment'! After another particularly wet January and February in 2026, with flooded fields and the Thames bursting its banks, as it did in January and February 2025, I read the "the whole district in the eighteenth century was liable to flooding during the winter months" with a wry smile and thinking that nothing changes! Though I am exceedingly glad that we no longer have to worry about it being "infested with footpads and highwaymen"!

Under the chapter 'The Coming of the Press', Hawtrey declares "September 1826 marks the birth of the Jericho of today." The book contains a logo that states 'Celebrating Jericho 200 1825 – 2025' and the first edition of this book was published in 2025. However here we have a claim of a different year of origin! Davies explores this further in the notes, assuming

Hawtrey based this on housing available beside the Printing Office in September 1826. However, he points out that Thomas Mallam was planning to auction plots of land in August 1824, so the idea of the district actually formed a couple of years earlier. Davies notes that this also challenges the theory that Jericho only developed as a result of the arrival of the Press in July 1825.

There is a considerable amount of the book given over to the history of the local churches of St Thomas, St Paul and St Barnabas. With reference to St Thomas the Martyr, Davies confirms that the site outside the city walls was given to the Osney Abbey around 1182-89, challenging Hawtrey's statement it was founded in 1141 (he does a good job of clarifying it was not connected to Stephen's siege of Express Matilda). The section 'A Matter of Urgency: Wanted, a District Church' explains that the "large increase of the, for the most part poor, population in a district remote from their parish church (St Thomas)...in a condition of moral and spiritual darkness", going on to explain how money was raised to build a new church, which would be St Paul's, consecrated in 1836. Then there is the insight that "it was at the suggestion of Mrs Combe that Thomas Combe built St Barnabas", giving a nod to the creation of the next important local church. I give a talk on local connections to the two William Morrises, so I found the pages on Thomas and Martha Combe and the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood interesting. Thomas Combe had taken over the general management of the University Press by the 1840s. The Combes met John Everett Millais and then, through him, William Holman Hunt, and would go on to collect artworks by the group. It made me smile that the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood affectionately referred to Mrs Combe as 'Mrs Pat', short for 'Patriarch' (as Davies explains in his notes).

Unexpected overlaps between current day news stories and historic incidents occur a few times in the book. For the last few years there have been discussions on childhood vaccinations and there is currently an outbreak of measles in London. So it is fascinating from a historical point of view to read about 'Mr Bristow of Begbroke', who used to receive "a succession of patients at his house at Jericho near the city where they are carried through the disease of small-pox with the utmost safety by his approved and successful method." This method was inoculation, which, the writer explained, had been introduced by "Lady Mary Montague from the East." Davies gives further information on Abraham Bristow and Lady Mary Montague and their small pox inoculation, learnt from Turkey, and that it was later superseded by Jenner's vaccine. Later there is a reference to an outbreak of measles and how the adults try to deal with it: "Measles are very bad in this parish. I find parents are most careless in sending their children to school while they have measles in the house...I have commenced using disinfecting fluid in the school". So diseases and their prevention will always be a hot topic in communities.

There are many sections on schooling and I personally loved the statement that "The binding of this Scrapbook, was a task which was carried out by the senior boys", an insight which highlights the link between the local school and the Oxford University Press, with students taught bookcraft, then many going to work at the Press after leaving school. This particular section is beside a lovely photo of school children crossing the canal by boat to go the bathing station! There are some gorgeous, coloured plates of different maps of Jericho between the Notes and the Appendices. They chart how the land use changed and the area developed. The maps and plans date from 1769 (the earliest map on which the name 'Jericho' appears), 1827, 1829, 1868 and 1850.

The first appendix gives more detailed information on Jericho Garden, Jericho House and Walton/Jericho Farm. Then there is an appendix on William Carter and his connection to Lucy & Company, via his apprenticeships, and then moving his iron foundry and setting up a new foundry and iron works by the canal in Jericho. The final appendix shines a little on the original author Constance Louisa Mary Hawtrey, detailing her early life in Shanghai, her family's Irish and religious connections, and her studies at St Hilda's College, where she was one of only ten or eleven women in her year in 1904. She left with School of History Honours in 1907, as degrees weren't available for women until 1920, enabling her teaching career. Davies notes that it's not certain if Hawtrey lived in Oxford when she created the Scrapbook, but she was living in Berkshire by 1959. Davies comments on the fact "she was deeply religious – the numerous vicars in the family and her emphasis on faith in the scrapbook testify to this", which is definitely something that I also picked up on.

In conclusion, *A Jericho Scrapbook* provides an interesting insight into the development of the low lying meadows into a Victorian suburb and on to a vibrant residential district of Oxford. There are some stats and figures, but mainly recollections and personal stories from the people who lived there or remembered incidents. Any person carrying out research into the history of their family or house will find this an invaluable source of information, and newer residents might enjoy the insights into the streets that they now live in. I personally remember visiting Oxford in 2003 and being invited to Freud's, as it was then, for tea and cake and being struck by how gorgeous the converted church was. I realise now that this was the St Paul's that I have just read about, built on land near the Printing Office. I feel certain other people with a fondness for Jericho will enjoy the stories.

***Marie-Louise Kerr, April 2026***