

GOOD HISTORY

*Journal
of the
Eynsham Junior
History Group*



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The Journal of the Eynsham Junior History Group

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EDITORIAL

In this edition we have no special theme but some of the work comes from the subject we chose for our history presentation this term. Once again I have to thank members of the Senior History Group, particularly Mrs Doreen Hockedy, and other friends in Eynsham for coming to share their knowledge and experience with us. It was also very good to have a visit from our good friend and support 'Polly' Clifton, and Clarice Moms who was a glove maker. Once again we were able to learn from older members of the community.

Pamela Richards, Senior Member & Editor

VICTORIAN WORKING CHILDREN

This term we looked at working children, mainly in Eynsham, basing our characters on names we found in the 1851 census. In that census we found,

Luke Buckingham (14), a chimney sweep,
William Buckingham (13), a chimney sweep's labourer,
George Brayne (12), a boat boy, Mary Batts (14), a nursemaid,
Thomas Jeffrey (13), a rope maker, Jane Ayres (10) a glover,
James Pimm (10) a baker, James Darcy (14) a harness maker's apprentice,
John Wall (13) a twine maker, Henry Lay (15) a Smith Harrier's apprentice,
Charles Lambourne (13) a ploughboy, Hannah Smith (14) a servant,
and several errand boys and girls. In our research we also learned of very young children working in the cotton mills and in the coal mines. We did find others going to school and we know that the Rev. Bricknell was quite fierce in his keenness that children should go to school but his aim was mainly to teach about the church although probably incidentally children would have learnt to read and write.

We brought all our research together in a short presentation, which we gave to the School and to the members of Eynsham Day Centre. The children particularly enjoyed the latter occasion, which made a fitting finish to our term.

LIFE FOR CHILDREN IN THE LATE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by Alan Hughes

Children who worked on boats could not always go to school because they had to work on the boat, and they were also always on the move. Even when they could go to school, they had problems as most boat-children could not read or write. Work for children was very difficult, because you needed to be quite tall to do some things and children could not reach.

As the population grew, there were more people wanting work. As the pay was not good, men took small boys into the factories with them. If they grew tired, they were beaten by the 'strapper'; if they slept they often fell into the machinery and were usually killed. In 1833, slavery was ended. The bad treatment of boys as sweeps, by masters who found it more expensive to use a long brush than to just push them up a sooty chimney, was coming to an end.

In the first part of Queen Victoria's reign there were a great many poor people in London and the rest of the big towns. Loads of dirty children were to be seen in the streets, earning their living as best they could. Little boys and girls, hoping for a halfpenny, would rush to sweep the road clean for any lady or gentleman wanting to cross the dirty highway, and others would hold bridles of a waiting horse for a penny. By the Thames, small boys nicknamed 'mudlarks' walked into the mud at low time, searching for scraps of metal to sell. Hundreds of those dirty children had never been to school or had a meal in their lives. They spent their days stealing, to make a few pence to take home for their parents living in either a small, broken house or even an alley. There were a great many children who had no homes at all. They slept among wheelbarrows in the great market or under railway bridges. They pleaded for food or even searched dustbins to find something to eat.

In the factory towns at this time, children at the age of six and seven years old worked at the machines from early in the morning until late evening, for a few pence a week. The hours were so long that some even fell asleep from tiredness. Their mothers worked twelve to fourteen hours a day, too, yet there was not usually enough to eat at home, and certainly little warmth or clothing.

To add to this there is a family memory. My mother's grandmother was a child in the 1890s. Her family was rich and she lived in a large house in London. She had lots of toys and a nanny to look after her. She remembered little boys and girls in rags running behind their cab all the way from Paddington to her house (about a mile) in the hope of getting a penny for unloading the luggage. There was a much bigger difference between rich and poor children then than today.

Acknowledgements: *Looking at History* by R.J. Unstead.
Illustrated English Social History by G. M. Trevelyan
Ramblin ' Rose by Sheila Stewart

WORKING IN THE COTTON MILLS – extracts from an enquiry made during Victorian times

They reached the mill about half past five. The water was on, from the bottom to the top, in all the floors, in full movement. The lad heard the burring sound before he reached the portals and smelt the fumes of the oil with which the axles of twenty thousand wheels and spindles were bathed. The moment he entered the doors, the noise appalled him, and the stench seemed intolerable.....

The newly arrived were received by the head manager, and by the overlookers of the respective rooms. They were mustered in the making-up room; the boys and girls in separate divisions. After being looked at, and laughed at, there were dispersed in the various floors of the mill, and set to various tasks. The boy was assigned to a room, over which a man named Smith presided. The task first allotted to him was, to pick up the loose cotton that fell upon the floor. Apparently, nothing could be easier, and he set to with diligence, although much terrified by the whirling motion and noise of the machinery, and not a little affected by the dust and flue with which he was half suffocated ...unused to the stench, he soon felt sick, and constantly stooping, his back ached. He, therefore, took the liberty to sit down; but this attitude, he soon found, was strictly forbidden in cotton mills. His task-master gave him to understand he must keep on his legs. He did so, till twelve o'clock, being six hours and a half, without the

least intermission The moment the bell rang, to announce dinner, all were in motion to get out as expeditiously as possible.Never before did he know the value of wholesome air. He had been sick almost to fainting.



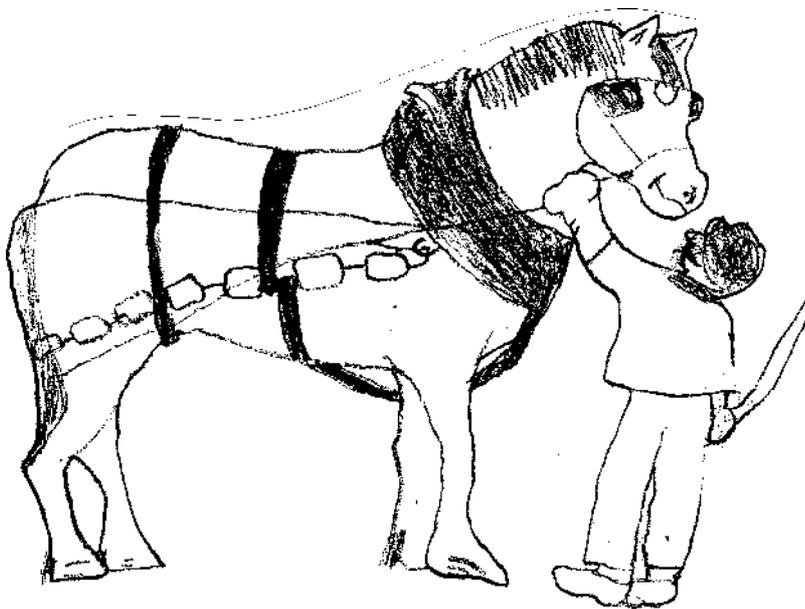
A Victorian spinning mill

GLOVE MAKING

Mrs Clarice Morris came into school to tell us about how she used to make leather gloves. She started in Pritchett's factory in Witney when she was a teenager. The photograph of the glove makers having a celebration was taken at the time of the coronation of George VI May 12th 1936.



Later she worked at home using one of the machines featured in the photograph here.



Drawing by Ryan Weedon

LIFE ON THE CANAL IN VICTORIAN TIMES.

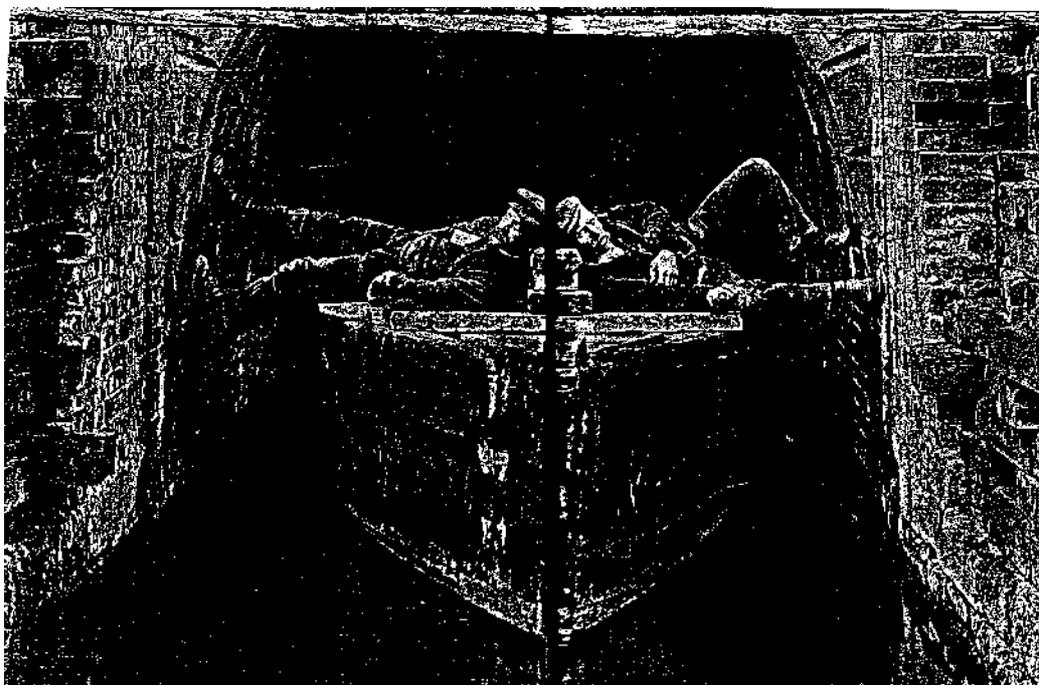
by Matthew Marks.

Here on the Oxford Canal, in 1851, we called our boats 'narrow boats' but on the Lancashire canals they were called 'flat boats'. The boats were pulled by horses.



Canal boat children on the Grand Junction Canal

Steam engines were available but you had to be a rich person to afford them. If you wanted to get through a tunnel you had to undo the horse. Then you would 'leg' through the tunnel. To 'leg' you had to sit on a plank of wood over the side of the boat. Then you moved your legs sideways along the side of the tunnel.



THE DICKENS FAMILY AND EYNSHAM

In our last edition we had an article about the Victorian author Charles Dickens. During the summer Mrs Leslie Gerrans came across a book by his son, who was also called Charles Dickens. This is a *Dictionary of the Thames* printed in 1893. In this Charles Dickens Junior gives his impression of Eynsham. — "Oxfordshire, on the left bank, distant from Oxford about 7 miles, a station on the Great Western Railway, 70 miles from Paddington, the time occupied by the fast trains being 2.1/4 hours. Eynsham is a sufficiently uninteresting little town; situated on a hill, about three quarters of a mile from the river, which is here spanned by a handsome bridge; and, except as a centre for excursions, headquarters for anglers, or a resting place for oarsmen travelling between Cricklade and Oxford, offers no attraction to the visitor. The Church of St. Leonard is an old stone building of considerable size, with a square embattled tower, and presents many varieties of architecture to the examination of the student. The interior, which contains several mural monuments and a brass of 1632 is chiefly remarkable for the arches which divide the nave from the aisles. There are also Baptist and Methodist places of worship in the town. The soil is various and the population about 2,200. FIRE — ENGINE opposite the church. HOTELS — The Swan and Red Lion. POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS Post Office (money order, savings bank and telegraph) opposite the church. Mails from London (via Oxford) 6.48 am., 12.30 pm. Mails for London 10.40 am., 9.00 pm. NEAREST BRIDGES, up, Langleys (or Ridges Weir) foot, about 7 miles, and New Bridge, a mile farther down, Godstow 2.1/2 miles. LOCKS, up Pinkhill, rather more than a mile; down Godstow, near the bridge.

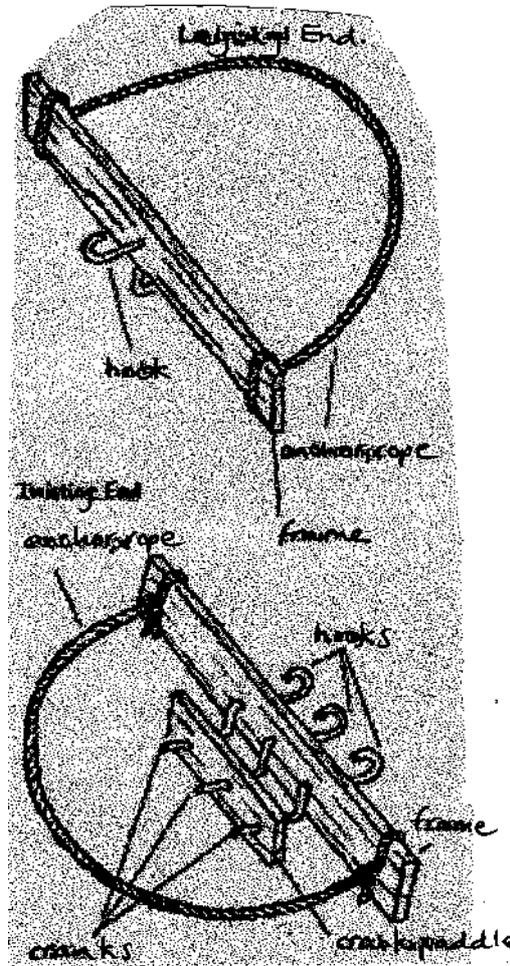
FERRY Bablock Hithe, 3.½ miles. FARES from Eynsham to Paddington, 1st, 12/8. 21/3; 2nd 9/6, 16/-; 3rd, 5/10."

Charles Dickens Junior was born in 1837 and died in 1896. He went to school at Eton and began his working life in Barings Bank. He then had some business enterprise in China which failed. At this point his father took him into his business of publishing a magazine called "All the Year Round".

ROPE MAKING by William Cross

Rope making has been around for many years. Rope machines consist of two things: one that twists three strands of rope the twisting end, and the other which is used to lay the twisted strands together, the laying end.

At the start of rope making, the machines required three people to make a rope. One person was needed to turn the crank, the second to hold the twisting end and the third to move along the three pieces of rope as they were being twisted into one. The first ropes were made of American or Russian hemp.



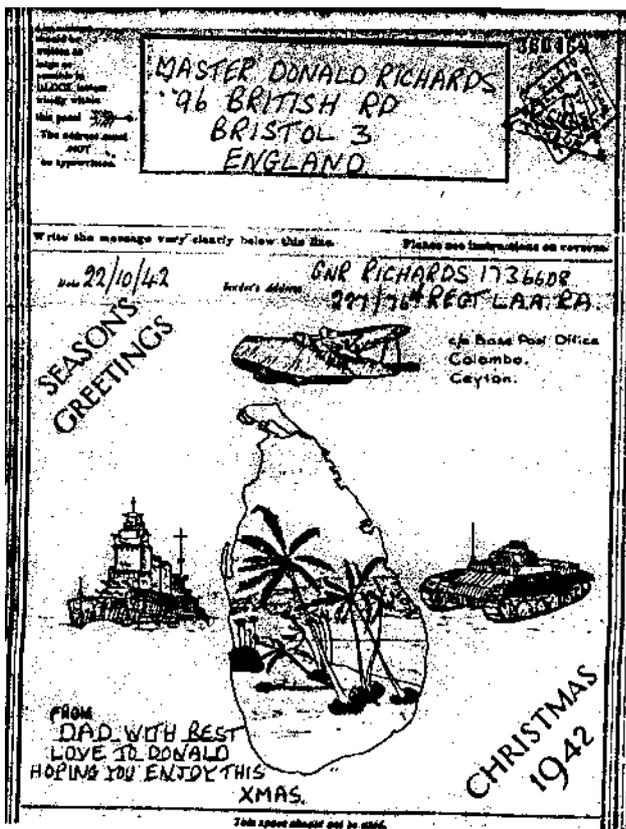
The materials, binder twine, boiler twine, plastic twines, jute twine, yarn twine and plastic bags are what you could use to make rope now. It depends what material you use for what the rope can be used for. If it was needed to pull carts along it would need to be made of twine.

Drawings by William Cross

LETTERS FROM ABROAD

During the war of 1939- 1945 people were urged to save paper and to make economies of various sorts. A form of air-letter was devised to limit the amount that could be written, which also helped to keep people from writing about things they shouldn't. This letter was written to Miss (now Professor Marker), in 1944 from Australia. In the first paragraph of the letter it tells us how long letters took to reach Australia from England.

Today it only takes a few days by air-mail. Also it shows that Mrs Rymill really wanted to tell Miss Marker more than she had room for as she has had to squeeze the last sentences of the letter into the space by the sender's address.



Recently, two 'Christmas cards' were found that had been sent during the war from a father to his son.

Probably this would have been the only direct communication that there would have been between them.



Sadly, it was another two years before Donald's father could be Father Christmas.

A POEM FROM VICTORIAN EYNESHAM

Ten Little Kingdoms

written by Miss J.E. Clarke of Eynsham, in 1889

Recently Mrs Rene Sutton came across an interesting letter in the Winter 1999 edition of This England about a poem the correspondent had found in a copy of Judy, a weekly magazine for Victorian girls, dated 28th August 1899.

As the editor of This England had invited readers to photocopy the poem, we have done just that and perhaps we can solve the mystery.

Should we be able to provide the identity of the poet, we would be happy to contact the magazine. Can anyone provide any information about Miss J.E. Clarke? If you can, please contact the Editor.

Plans for separation grew worse than those before,
Then they asked for two Parliaments, *now* 'tis three or four.
 Only just imagine if Home Rulers had their way,
 This is something like the tale the world might hear one day:

One United Kingdom they fancied wouldn't do,
 So to please some grumbling Irish they split it into two.
 Two little Kingdoms, but then the Scots, you see,
 Claimed their ancient throne and rights, and so there were three.
 Three little Kingdoms, and after that one more;
 For Welshmen claimed a Parliament, and then there were four.
 Four little Kingdoms wouldn't do at all
 One of them was far too big; the others far too small.
 All throughout Great Britain ancient hates revived,
 Cornwall wants to rule herself, and then there were five.
 Five little Kingdoms, but London in a fix,
 Raised the "Southern English" flag, and then there were six!

Six little Kingdoms, alas! the "Home Rule" leaven
 Caused a rising in the West, and then there were seven!
 Seven little Kingdoms; Northmen wouldn't wait,
 But started the Northumbrian state, and then there were eight.
 And all the towns one may visit by the Eastern Counties line,
 Held their own East Anglian Parliament, and then there were nine.
 Nine little Kingdoms; the Midlands people then
 Called a Parliament themselves, and then there were ten!

Ten little Kingdoms never could agree
 How to work together, and so they went free.
 Ten little Kingdoms with constitutions new,
 Ten little Kingdoms always in a stew,
 Ten little Kingdoms too weak to stand alone,
 A foreign nation conquered them — and then there were none!

GETTING CLOTHED IN VICTORIAN EYNSHAM

No doubt the parents of some of the children we have learned about this term would have had trouble in keeping themselves and their children in clothes. Hand-me-downs would have been common but no doubt new things were needed from time to time. The Rev. Bricknell had an answer to the problem. He set up a clothing club, the rules of which are set out below. The regulations seem nearly as strict as those we found for workers in the mills, which we used in an earlier issue.

RULES OF THE ENSHAM CLOTHING CLUB

1. Each *Adult* Member shall pay *twopence*, and every *Child* a penny a week
2. Children will be admitted at *three* years of age, but will not be allowed to continue Members of the Club after *five*, unless they regularly attend the Sunday School.
3. Any Member who shall be guilty of immorality, or neglect of Public Worship, or shall fail to make his or her weekly payment three times in succession, without sufficient cause, shall be excluded from the Club, and lose the benefit of the Interest and Subscriptions, but shall be allowed the amount of *actual payments*.
4. At the end of the year *two-thirds* of the Interest and Subscriptions will be added to the deposits of the *Adults*, and *one-third* to those of the *Children* : the whole will be paid in Tickets for *plain and serviceable* Clothing.

Vicarage, May, 1846.

HOW I SPENT THE QUEEN'S GOLDEN JUBILEE by Matthew Marks

On the Tuesday of the Queen's Jubilee weekend I went with my family to London. In the morning we stood in the Strand and in the afternoon we stood in St. James Park. In the morning I was in the front row and there was a soldier on the other side of the road and we made him laugh three times. It was amazing when the Gold Coach went past with the Queen in. I didn't see much of the afternoon processions because there were lots of people in front. I was in the Mall at the time of the Fly Past. The main planes were Concorde and the Red Arrows. They were my favourite part of the day.

TWENTY QUESTIONS ABOUT EYNSHAM

(The answers can all be found on the Eynsham Community Website).

1. How many 'cairns' are there on the new Abbey Heritage Walk?
2. Are there fewer parking spaces in the Square now that it's been re-vamped?
3. What does the name Swinford (where the toll bridge is) mean?
4. How could you get some Chinese interpreted in Eynsham?
5. Who makes MRI equipment in Eynsham?
6. What is probably the oldest building in Eynsham?
7. Where and when does the Taekwon-do Club do its weekly training?
8. How many people work in Eynsham? What percentage is that of the total population of Eynsham?
9. Who does Bereavement Counselling in Eynsham?
10. How many chiropractors practise in Eynsham?
11. What is the name of the artist Jane Tomlinson's painting of a zebra against a starry sky?
12. In the 1800s, which inhabitant of Newland Street supplied the paper for a publication thought by the Government to be so seditious that two of its workers were arrested and publicly flogged?
13. What does the term 'Food Miles' mean?
14. When the Newlands were formed in 1215, where was Eynsham's original bypass?
15. What were the floor times from the Abbey used for after it was dissolved in 1538?
16. Name two of the main types of trees to be planted in the new Eynsham Wood.
17. How many firms make or sell furniture in Eynsham?
18. How many members are on the Parish Council?
19. What charity would you go to if you wanted help to buy tools, books, instruments, or clothing, when you left school and wanted to enter a trade or profession?
20. What is the name of the local Member of Parliament?

This quiz has been contributed by Mr Adrian Moyes who edits the Eynsham Website. You will see that the Junior History Group wishes all its readers to be familiar with everything that happens in Eynsham. We are now making history.