

GOOD HISTORY

**Journal
of the
Eynsham Junior
History Group**



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The Journal of the Eynsham Junior History Group

CONTENTS

Page

| | |
|--|----|
| • Editorial | 2 |
| • Thomas Becket by Rosalie Meyer | 3 |
| • Another view of Thomas Becket by Alan Holland | 4 |
| • Illuminated Letters by Francesca Doldge | 4 |
| • An Illuminated Letter by Sabrina Wood | 4 |
| • Eynsham Abbey by Daniel Doyle | 4 |
| • Some notes on the 2004 Tsunami by Marcus Li | 5 |
| • The Tsunami and the Animals by Scot Webster | 5 |
| • My Experience of the Tsunami by Vivien Hughes | 6 |
| • Another Tsunami by Scot Webster | 6 |
| • V.E.Day 1945 | 7 |
| • My Gran's Memories of V.E. Day by Emily Taylor | 7 |
| • Random Memories of V.E. Day | 8 |
| • Memories of V.E. Day 1945 by Prof. Margaret Marker | 9 |
| • A Special Firework by the Editor | 10 |
| • The Domesday Project: | 11 |
| • Church Hanborough by Nicola Crozier (1985) | 11 |
| • A Memory of the Domesday Project by John Masters | 12 |
| • A Prayer of Thanks by Victor Chapman | 12 |

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Front Cover: The Square, Eynsham, May Day 2005. Photo: D.S.Richards

EDITORIAL

In this issue we have gathered up some of the things we have discussed and worked on during the year. In the autumn we started to think of what we might do to contribute to the millennium celebrations to mark the foundation of Eynsham Abbey in 1005. We also revisited our study of the life of the monks after the Norman Conquest and looked at the Abbey's connection with Henry II and his relationship with Thomas Becket and Hugh of Lincoln.

Immediately after Christmas we were taken up with a study of the tsunami, which occurred in the Indian Ocean on December 26th 2004. We considered its effects and looked at previous tsunamis, which have occurred throughout history.

While one group was preparing for our presentation on the life of Aelfric, the Teacher, another group, with Professor Marker, studied the history of South Africa and the changes which had occurred there in relationship to the progress of history in Europe.

We have also drawn on some of the memories of our friends and relations of V.E. day 1945. A recent survey revealed that many children nowadays have no idea what V.E. day was, so it seemed appropriate for us to bring the event to people's attention, particularly as it is now 60 years since 1945.

We have also been able to discover some of the work done by pupils in the school twenty years ago. We have used some of this work in this issue together with a brief memory of one of those who took part. We hope that others who took part in the Domesday project in 1985, will contact us and tell us what they remember of the work they did.

Thomas Becket by Rosalie Meyer

Thomas Becket lived from 1118 to 1170 and in 1162 he became Archbishop of Canterbury. He was Chancellor to Henry II, and he took large taxes from the Church. The King then added Archbishop of Canterbury to his duties to help Henry cut back on the Church's powers, which threatened his rule.

Then Thomas resigned as Chancellor to defend the church. The King and Thomas became enemies and in 1164 Thomas fled to France. Six years later Thomas made up with the King and returned to England. However, he excommunicated the Bishop who had supported the King. Henry was very angry and said: "Who will rid me of this turbulent Priest". Four knights went and murdered Thomas in Canterbury Cathedral. Henry II denied he had any involvement.



A pilgrim badge, believed to represent Thomas Becket, as shown on a kneeler in St Leonard's Church.

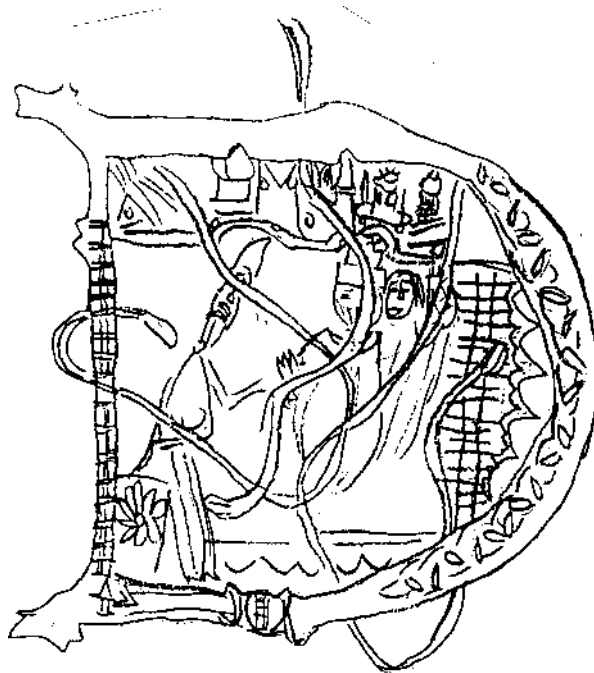
Another View of Thomas Becket by Alan Holland

[Alan from the East Wing played the part of Becket in a production we did at school]

Thomas Becket was a jolly good fellow. He had loads of money because the church was rich. He went to church and prayed at the church because he was a follower.

Illuminated Letters by Francesca Doldge

Illuminated letters were used by people to draw attention to special letters. They were the first kind of decorated writing. Often the letters are in a box which is drawn around the letter. It is bigger than the other letters and has decoration all round it.



A letter from 'The Book of Wisdom from the Winchester Bible, copied by Sabrina Wood

Eynsham Abbey by Daniel Doyle

Eynsham Abbey was a Benedictine order, and was founded in 1005 on the site approximately south of the present parish church. At its height the abbey would have housed about forty monks with numerous other lay workers. Part of the monk's rule was manual labour. The monks had land to the south of the abbey where they established the fishponds. The abbey buildings were demolished over a period of time although fragments still exist including those that were incorporated into later Eynsham houses. A beautiful arch, possibly from the door of the old abbey is now positioned inside St. Leonard's church above the entrance.

Some notes on the 2004 Tsunami by Marcus Li

More than 109,000 Indonesians have been buried and a further 127,000 are listed as missing. At the time of writing it is nearly two months since this dreadful thing happened. The probability that more survivors could still be found is about 3%. Humans have been known to survive in certain conditions.

But what of the people who are missing? Will their bodies ever be found? They may not be, as many would have been washed out to sea.

The main impact of the tsunami, which occurred on 26th December 2004, was felt on the western tip of the Indonesian island of Sumatra and the closest inhabited area to the epicentre of the earthquake was devastated by the tsunami.



The Tsunami and the Animals by Scot Webster

When the Tsunami happened in the Indian Ocean, surprisingly no animals were killed. Unlike humans, animals have a sixth sense which means that they seem to know when danger is coming before it even happens. All the animals ran or flew to the highest parts of the land. Eventually, their owners noticed something was wrong, but by then it was too late for many. The giant waves were upon them. Perhaps it is always handy to have a pet with you and notice its reactions!



My Experience of the Tsunami by Vivien Hughes

On 26th December 2004, my family and I were in Kenya, Africa, sitting in the burning sun, bobbing along in a speed boat on the calm, clear water, not expecting a life-killing tower of water to approach.

When everybody had climbed out of the coral-filled water, we all dried ourselves and headed back to the beach. On our way home, Sarah, Mum's friend, got a text message from her mother. She asked if Sarah was O.K. I wasn't really listening, so I only caught a few words, such as, O.K., struck, and one word I didn't understand then was tsunami. I ask Mum what a tsunami was. She said it was a huge tidal wave. I asked her why she was talking about it earlier, and she said that Sarah's Mother had said that a tsunami was coming.

When we got back I still wasn't sure what was happening, so I just followed everyone else. I ran next to Vanessa and everyone followed us to the top of the enormous water tower. The grown-ups had heard on the radio that the tsunami would arrive at 6 o'clock and be 8 metres high. The water tower was about 20 metres tall and about 5 metres wide, with about 120 steps inside.

We waited and waited, and listened to the radio, but nothing happened. I felt kind of worried that I might die, but I also felt very excited to see a huge 8 metre tall wave.

At about 7 o'clock it was getting dark and nobody was sure what to do. Vanessa's Mum, Sarah, kept saying to go down, it must be over by now. My Mum was not sure about going down yet. Vanessa's Dad, Tony, volunteered to go down to the beach to check if anything had happened. He talked to some fishermen, and they said it was already over, and the tide had come in and out three times in half an hour, getting bigger each time. It was so small because the reef we had visited earlier in the day broke it into three tides.

Later, the fishermen said they had caught some really strange fish that they said had floated in over the reef. The fish got over the reef but luckily the tsunami didn't. I think that's why it is called a 'barrier reef'.

Another Tsunami by Scot Webster

In 1607 there was a tsunami in England. When the waters came, people thought it was a huge tidal wave, which had come up the Bristol Channel.

There seemed to be huge mountains of water, as all of us saw on the television with the recent tsunami. People were so shocked by it they tended to be taken over by the water while they were still looking at this great big wave. It moved too fast for them to run away. Some people survived, like the old man who was floated along on his bed.

It took about 5 hours for both sides of the River Severn to be covered from Bristol to Gloucester to a distance of 6 miles and down as far as Barnstaple. Over 2,000 people were said to have drowned.

The date is not really clear and there is in the church at Kingston Seymour in Somerset a plaque, which says that it came 5ft up the church walls and lasted for 10 days in January 1606. There may be confusion because until 1752 the legal New Year started on March 25th. With many historic documents it can be very confusing trying to work out the exact year things happened because of this.

V.E. Day 1945

The Daily Telegraph of Tuesday May 8th reported the end of the war in Europe as follows: "This is VE-Day. The war in Europe is over. After five years and eight months "complete and crushing victory" has, in the words of the King, "crowned Britain's unrelenting struggle against Nazi Germany."

The war in Europe actually ended at 2.41.a.m. on 7th May when General Jodl, German Army Chief of Staff signed his country's unconditional surrender at the school house in Rheims which was General Eisenhower's head-quarters. The celebrating began when the news came out on the 8th.



Winston Churchill broadcasting the news of the end of the war in Europe from Downing Street

My Gran's Memory of V.E. Day by Emily Taylor

My Gran lived in Abbey Street when she was a young girl. In 1945 the family next door to Gran's house managed to get hold of a damaged parachute. Both families worked hard cutting many triangles to make bunting. Some were dyed red, some blue and they joined them together into a long length of red, white and blue bunting. Several neighbours allowed the line of bunting to be fixed to their bedroom windows and the bunting crossed Abbey Street about 6 to 8 times. It looked lovely!

To celebrate the end of the war there was to be a large bonfire in the Square. Mr Hoskins from Abbey Farm and his workers collected a large high wagonload of wood. As the tractor drove down Abbey Street the load was so high that the bunting was being pulled down. Someone shouted to the tractor to stop and the bunting was

rescued – the tractor carried on and the bunting fixed again. The bonfire was great fun. It was between the war Memorial and the gate into the Red Lion garden. Everyone was so happy that the war had ended.

**Random Memories of VE day 1945 gathered at the Day Centre, Eynsham,
on 9th May, 2005**

..... I was still at RAF Benson on duty and I remember we had celebrations on the airfield.

..... I was in Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) and news only filtered through. Our war still had time to run.

..... I was in Oxford and I remember people throwing things out of windows and a celebration party at the Ministry of Food Club.

..... I was at Rivenhall in Essex. I was in the navy but attached to the RAF. I certainly remember celebrating!

..... I wasn't in the services because of my eye-sight but I remember being in the centre of Grantham. All the pubs were open but there was an unfortunate incident. The street lighting at that time was from gas-lamps. One of the entertainments was a tug of war and somehow the rope got entangled with one of the lamp posts and it was pulled down causing a gas leak which rather put an end to the fun and games.

..... I was in Germany with the Cold Stream Guards Tank Corps. We heard the news but we were told that the next day we had to go into the next village to secure it. We were warned that the area had been heavily mined. We formed up with large gaps between each tank and proceeded with caution. Sadly, the tank in front of mine hit a mine and the tank was blown up killing the five men inside. There were no celebrations for us.

..... I was also in Germany, in Bremen. The one thing I remember is that we raided the local Brewery!!

..... I had just had a baby and I remember feeling sorry that my husband was not there to see his new child.

..... I was in Palestine with the 1st Infantry and we had a delayed homecoming.

..... I remember being sent home from school at lunch time. There was a special service and I was chosen to sing the solo. I think it was 'O for the Wings of a Dove'.

..... I was with the Navy in AFHQ, Caserta. I remember the church bells ringing and people shouting, while I was typing out notices of posthumous awards.

..... I remember going round Northampton trying to find some beer so we could celebrate.

..... I was in Bermuda with the Cable and Wireless taking birthday and other personal messages.

..... I was home on embarkation leave waiting to go out to Japan where the war was still going on.

..... They took my mother's piano down to the Square outside the Red Lion which seemed to be open all day. Ladies took down refreshments and a good time was had by all.

..... The bonfire which was in the Square caught the roofs of the cottages alight and the Fire Brigade had to be called to put it out. One 'happy' man climbed up the cross, singing, and people danced and sang 'Knees Up, Mother Brown'

Another Memory - from Mavis Hopkin. [Thomas Sutherland's contact]

On VE day I was travelling from the Isle of Wight where I had been on holiday. When we got home people were dancing and singing in the streets.



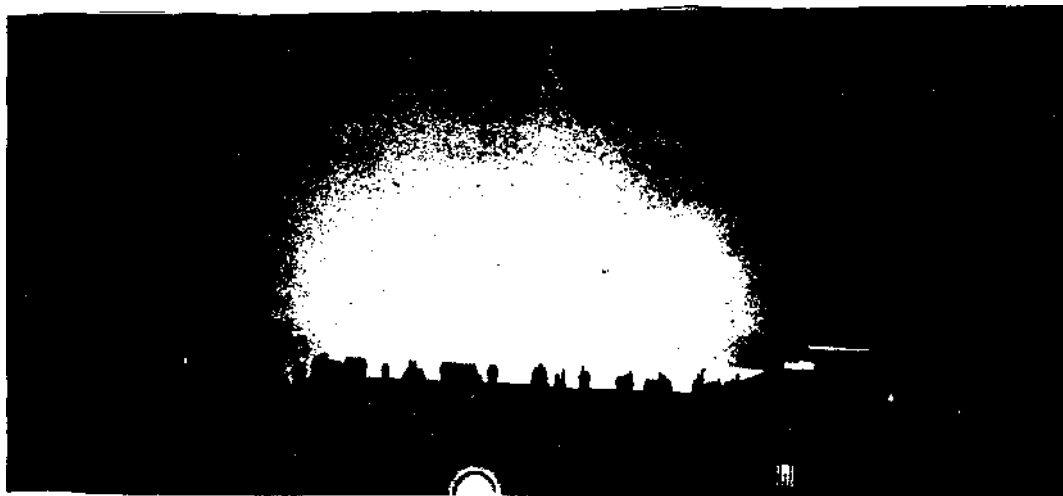
Memories of V.E. Day 1945 by Professor Margaret Marker

I had left my home in Putney, London in August 1939 and returned only in April 1945. The period between had been spent in the heart of the English countryside, in the vicinity of Bristol, in the Mendips and then in Hertfordshire. My maternal grandparents lived with us and my grandmother's sisters came over each holiday from Watford, where they taught, to spend time with us free of air raids. I had been privileged to live in an extended family, a situation increasingly rare even at that time.

My memories of VE Day are tied up with having returned to London, to an urban environment, which I hated, to a home I scarcely remembered, to being reduced to a nuclear family, which felt totally strange. In addition I had had to adjust to a new school, much more high-powered than the one I had attended for the past two years.

My Father arrived back from work on the Friday evening to tell us that our sector of Putney would celebrate with a bonfire and fireworks at the side of 'Bumpy Road' (officially Upper Park Fields). Bumpy Road was unmade as it still is today. That Saturday evening we stayed up late and walked to the bonfire, which was huge.

The fireworks were good. Blackout had been enforced for the past five and a half years so bonfires at night and fireworks were special! That is all I recall but I know the adults were delighted that the war in Europe was over.



Bonfires lighting up the London skyline A

Special Firework by the Editor

How the victory was announced, I cannot remember but I do remember what I did with my friends and our neighbours when we celebrated the end of the war in Europe.

We had a holiday from school so the usual 'gang' got together to have a day of fun. I had moved around quite a lot during the war, starting off in Bristol, moving to Clevedon on the coast of the Bristol Channel to live with my paternal grandparents, for a while. Then we moved to a bungalow in New Street, Clevedon. This was a very new road, which had not been 'made-up' and the houses faced a disused railway line – a perfect playground for children. There were two terraces of 1930's houses with a detached bungalow between them. We had moved to the bungalow so that my mother could help a wheelchair-bound lady while her son was away in the army. The 'gang' were all the children who lived in that street, ranging in age from about 15 to 4 or 5.

On that special day the older boys said they had heard from other boys that you could get manganese powder from the munitions works and they were off to get some. We followed them into town and later we returned triumphant with our haul. With help from fathers we then made a large bonfire on the old railway track and mothers busied themselves making cakes and other goodies for our evening party. Once the fire was going well the boys throw the manganese on the fire and there was a splendid white light. No doubt quite dangerous but we thought it was wonderful.

As our bonfire was dying down it was suggested that we should go into the Triangle by the Clock Tower in the town, where there was an official bonfire and fireworks. It was all very exciting, particularly as it meant that we were staying up very late! Then one of the fathers called us together and said he had got hold of one firework and that we should return to our own bonfire and let it off there. So we did. It was a very special firework.

The Domesday Project

In 1085 nearly a hundred years before Henry II came to Eynsham William of Normandy ordered a survey to be made of the lands and property of the people of England as it was then. This record was called the Domesday Book and was finished by 1086. In 1985 a group of children from Eynsham Primary School took part in the project launched by the BBC to make a similar survey but involving schoolchildren as those making the assessments. Just recently some of the results of this 1985 project has come to light and been passed to the Group. The editor recognises many of the names of those taking part and it seems appropriate that 20 years on some of this material should again see the light of day.

The school project did not set out to make a survey of Eynsham but of Freeland and Church Hanborough. At one time these places were part of the parish of Eynsham and still parts of Freeland are considered to be eligible to benefit from the Bartholomew Charities.

The purpose of the survey commissioned by William I was in order to see just how much money he could get from taxes but the modern survey was to give people an idea of what life was like in 1985. Twenty years on we can look back on that time.



Church Hanborough by Nicola Crozier (1985)

On Tuesday 2nd July 1985 we went in the minibus to Church Hanborough with Mrs Jones. First we drove in to the car park. A lady was there to show us around. Her name was Mrs Gibson. The first thing we saw was an old gate house. There were also two newer ones. There were a few sheep in the graveyard. We then went into the church. Above the door there was a picture of St. Peter. It was a Norman stone carving. In the pillar there were little bits of glass put in to stop the pillar crumbling. There was a little window up near the top of the staircase. On the ground there was an old clock which hadn't got a face. There were hassocks on the floor which were all hand-made. There was a big wooden pulpit. In the church there is a kitchen. We sat down where the church warden sits. Opposite the seats there was an organ. It had two mirrors so that the organist can see the vicar. Outside the church there were some grave stones with the name Wastie on them. Wastie was an old family. We did not see the pudding stone but there is one on the village green. Around the area of Church Hanborough there were not many facilities. The chair we were sitting on had

engraved on it "Queen Elizabeth the 2nd June 1977". 1977 was the year that Queen Elizabeth had her Silver Jubilee. Behind the chair there was a dry stone wall. It was called that because it was built with no concrete to hold it together. We then went on a little walk. We hadn't walked far when we saw a post box and a telephone. Next to the telephone there was a bus stop. When we looked at it the best name for the services was infrequent. The main places it went to were Witney, Woodstock and Oxford. Then we walked back to the mini-bus. Opposite the car park there was a pub called the Hand and Shears.

[The Editor was able to contact one of those taking part in the project in 1985 and got the following response.]

"What a blast from the past. There was I, bouncing my 11-month old daughter on my knee and I get a phone call from my Mum to say that Mrs Richards, a former teacher from Eynsham Primary School, is trying to get in touch about a project I was involved in 20 years ago! Rather intrigued, I returned the call, and discovered it was the Domesday Project that I vaguely remember having something to do with. I was then asked to write a few lines about it. (It felt as if I was back at school). After looking over the work, it did bring back some memories. I remember measuring the hedgerow length, height and width, and finding all kinds of life within and identifying it. The main thing I remember about the project was the 'height-of-technology' laser discs the information was going to be recorded on. They were impressive DVD style discs about 12" in diameter and the latest gadget to have. I have never seen one since. I also remember something about a time capsule being put together to include lots of everyday items such as a newspaper and current information. I don't know what happened to it after that."

John Masters aged 31.

In our last issue we featured the life of Mabel Chapman who, with her husband Victor, was a staunch Baptist. In thanks for what we wrote Victor Chapman has sent us the following prayer.

A Thought for the Day
Lord, when each thought enters my heart
Let me think always how great thou art.
May you hear what God has to say,
And follow his leading all the way
This will bring more joy
And bring blessing in your employ
May God be with you minute by minute.
Then you will have his blessing within it,
As you are guided by his Spirit. Amen.

by Victor Chapman aged 93.