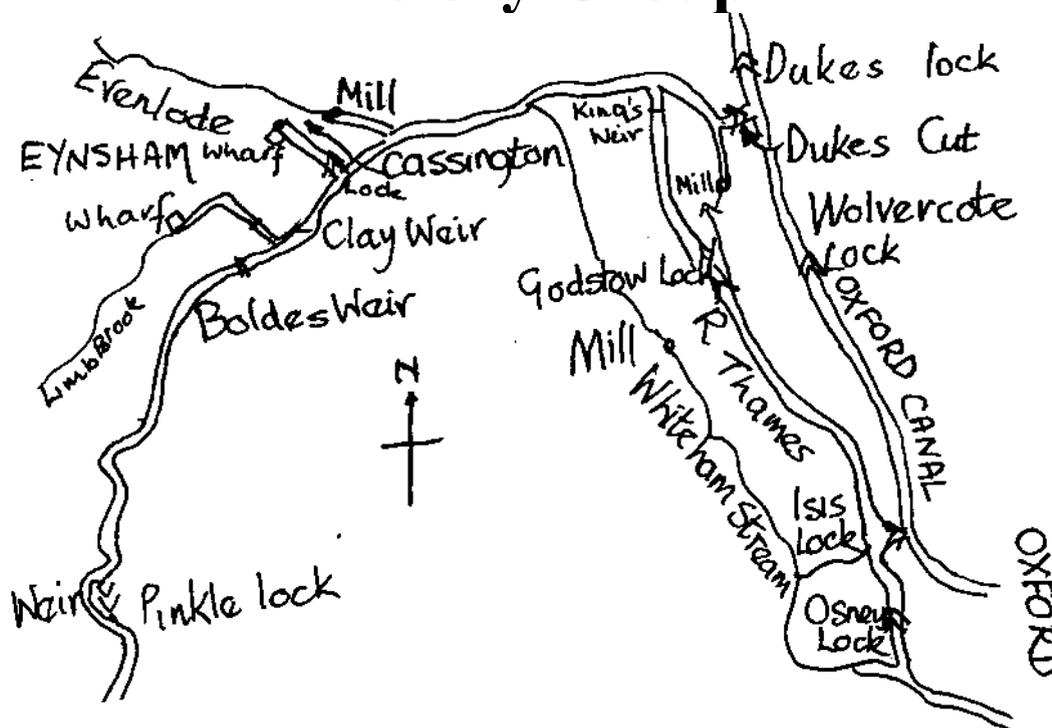


GOOD HISTORY

Journal
of the
Eynsham Junior
History Group



Number 4
Summer 1997

GOOD HISTORY

The Journal of the Eynsham Junior History Group

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Front cover based on a design by Flora Cranmer-Perrier. Title suggested by Claire Winter.
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EDITORIAL

As I was preparing this issue of *Good History* I realised when reading David Luna's contribution that as a group this year we will celebrate our 10th birthday. We have not been active for all those years but for the majority of them, and at the moment we seem to have a particularly enthusiastic membership. Our group also came under the scrutiny of the Ofsted Inspectors and I am happy to report they seem to have been suitably impressed!

Although they may not all have contributed to this issue every member has taken an active part. A party of 15 spoke to the adult Group on the history of Eynsham Public Houses, a talk which was repeated by a smaller number at the Women's Institute's AGM and party. We hope to publish a full version of the results of our research at a later date.

Contributions to this issue have grown out of talks we have heard over the past months, some of them leading members to do their own research on related subjects. A talk on the Anglo- Saxons sparked off an interest in those whom they drove out, the Celts.

Once again there are many people to thank, our Chairman, Mr Keates & the Staff of the Primary School, the Chairman and Secretary of the Senior Group and all those who have kindly come to speak to us or who have helped us with our researches, including the staff at the Oxfordshire Archives.

Pamela Richards, Senior Member & Editor

CHAIRMAN'S LETTER

I have often looked back to my boyhood and wished that I had asked my parents more about their early lives. If they were here now there is so much I would like to ask them. When in 1953 my late wife and I came to live in Eynsham, we wanted to learn about the past story of the village: so together with others we started a Local History Group.

Now, 44 years later, not only is the History Group flourishing and producing an annual Journal; there is also our Junior History Group.

We meet out of school time and hear talks given by the Senior Group members and others, carry out research and have our own news sheet called *Good History*.

This year we have learned about the churches and religious meeting houses (past and present), the important part that the Thames has played in Eynsham History, the Eynsham carriers before trains and 'buses came, and we have done extensive work on the past history of Eynsham pubs. We greatly appreciate the help that parents and others have given.

E. F. Whelan, Chairman

THE HISTORY OF THE EYNSHAM JUNIOR HISTORY GROUP by David Luna

The Eynsham Junior History Group started in the Autumn Term of 1987. The then chairman of the adult History Group was worried that all the members of the group were

rather old and that there were no new younger members. Mrs Pamela Richards, one of the members at that time, and a teacher, was sure that she could get one of the Eynsham schools to join in. The comprehensive school was not interested, so Mrs. Richards went on to the primary school, where she started up the group. For the first two years the group was an afternoon class for eight children, until the new curriculum meant that it had to take place after school. There are currently eighteen members.

The first topic the group ever did was on the Victorians. For each topic, members find information from a variety of sources: their family, interviews, old newspapers, photographs and documents. So far the group has covered a further half-dozen projects, and produced three issues of *Good History*, its journal. The journal was the idea of some of the older girls who stayed on as members after they had left the primary school.

Members of the group also give talks to the school and the adult History Group and produce articles for *The Eynsham Record*. These have been the work both of teams of members and of individuals. Topics have included the First and Second World Wars, the coming of the railway, Eynsham street names and John Paty, a seventeenth-century Eynsham boatman. One member, who had found a 200-year-old coin in his garden, was able to tell the group about its history and get his account included in an issue of *The Eynsham Record*.

ANGLO SAXON POTTERY AND COINS by Jessica Scott

The Anglo Saxons were skilled in making pots. They made them by hand until the seventh century when they learnt to use the potter's wheel. The town of Ipswich specialised in making pottery. The kilns where the pots were baked were discovered in a special area of the town. Pots from there have been found all over East Anglia.

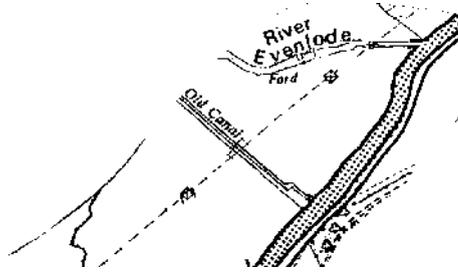
Their coins have often been found buried with objects such as pots. Archaeologists can work out how old the coins are by looking at the writing and pictures on them, and this in turn can help to date the pots. Up to 10,000 pennies could be made from one metal stamp, or die, before it wore out. Very few gold coins have been found. This may be because people took good care not to lose them. Silver coins, called scettos, are far more common.

USING YOUR EYES by David Holland

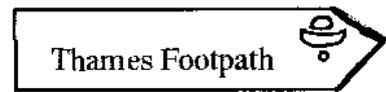
In Queen Street there is a cottage which has a plaque saying "This cottage was restored by the C.P.R.E., Oxon Building Preservation Trust Ltd in 1977". This cottage has a red and blue bricked pattern on the front of it. Perhaps you can notice other buildings in Eynsham with red and blue bricks or plaques. Use your eyes!

**THE JOURNEY OF
THE RIVER THAMES
BY Hayley Blackwell**

The River Thames starts near Cirencester. The Thames twists and turns through woods and fields. There is a path that you can walk along to get from the beginning of the River Thames to the end.



The path has a sign so that you know where it starts. The sign says "Thames Footpath" and has an acorn in the top right hand corner, like this -



The first bridge is called Halfpenny Bridge which is near the start of the River Thames. The first lock is called St. John's Lock. It is near Lechlade. By the lock there is a statue called Father Thames. It is made of concrete.

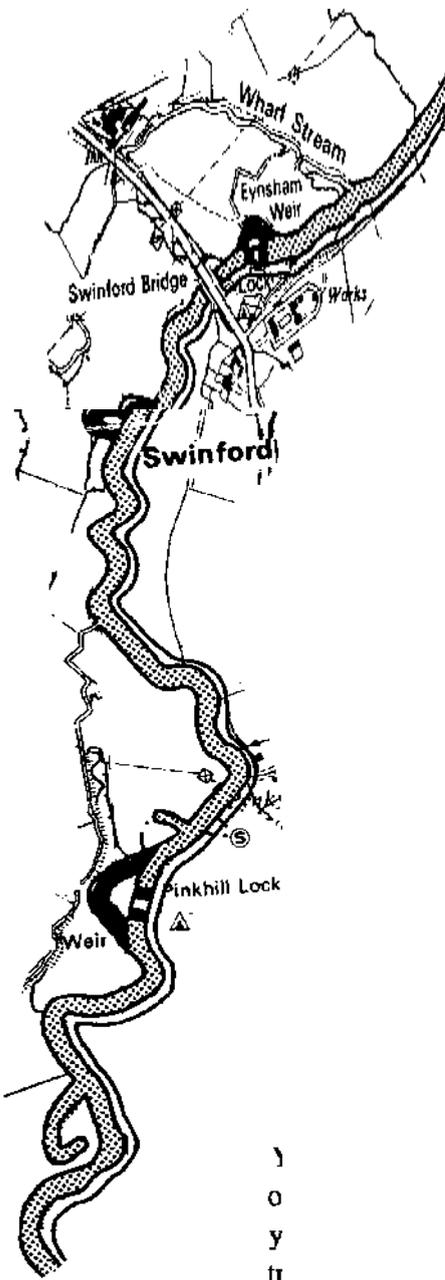
Along the path, at Eynsham, there is a road called Wharf Road. The wharf is not there now, but it used to be there. Along the path are lots of frames, which look like the frames of bins but they are not. They were used a little while ago to put oars and paddles in. There are still some oars and paddles at Pink Hill Lock today. The weir at Swinford Lock has recently been modernised.

Some people nowadays live or have their holidays on barges and narrow boats, but they used to be used to carry coal and other goods. The River Evenlode joins in to the River Thames.

Along the Thames by Wolvercote there is a place called Godstow Nunnery. It was a place where nuns lived. It was like a chapel.

You can some times see herons on the banks of the River Thames. Herons are shy but if you are quiet you can some times see them trying to catch fish.

At the end of the River Thames there is the Thames Barrier. The Thames Barrier stops the river from flooding into the city of London, which it did once. The River Thames ends at Greenwich.



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EYNESHAM WHARF by Flora Cranmer-Perrier

A lease of 1302 mentions a hythe or wharf, situated where the Chil and Limb brooks pass under an arch in the Oxford Road near Swinford Bridge. Here the stream had been widened to make a landing place for barges, and probably deepened to make a navigable channel down to the Thames half a mile away. Cargoes would include hay straw, malt, grain and time. In 1310 and 1331 stone from Taynton quarry near Burford was loaded at Eynsham for the building of Merton College.

The wharf stream was, however, usually too shallow to float a fully-laden boat right up to the wharf. To overcome this a flashlock or swing gate was built a little way up the stream from its junction with the Thames at Bolde's Weir. After a boat had passed through the gate it was closed and paddles or 'rimers' were slotted into position against it to hold back the water. A side stream controlled by a sluice permitted water from the Thames above the weir to pass into the wharf stream; this, together with its natural flow, raised the level sufficiently to proceed up to the wharf.

Bridge over Wharf Stream at Eynsham
showing old balance beam.

NINETEENTH-CENTURY BOATMEN by Elizabeth Mittell

Hathaways were known as boatmen at the end of the nineteenth century and it is possible to trace the name of Hathaway back to the 1841 census but at that time none of the three families were noted as boatmen.

By 1851 there were two Hathaway families in the census. John Hathaway, aged 43, lived with his wife and three daughters in Trap Alley. John was a boatman and his eldest daughter, Elizabeth was a housekeeper. In the same census William Brayne was noted as a wharfinger with two sons. One, presumably the eldest, was a boatman and the other aged 12 was a boat boy.

In the 1861 census John Hathaway is still in Eynsham, working on a boat, with two daughters and a son, Samuel, aged 10. The oldest daughter, Elizabeth, now aged 29, is probably the Elizabeth Humphreys who is married with three children. Although the entry says she is a boatman's wife, no husband is mentioned. Presumably he was away on the boat when the census was taken.

By 1871 the original John Hathaway and family had left.

A SCOUT HIKE ALONG THE THAMES by Sam Scott

Our thirty-two mile hike was from Eynsham to Carterton. It started on the 18th January 1997 and was due to finish on the next day, the 19th. Most of our hike was along the River Thames and we were encouraged to use our eyes.

I noticed the blockhouses which we passed as we walked along. Blockhouses were used in the Second World War. They were to protect people, mainly soldiers, from bombs or gun fire. Some people thought that there would be an invasion coming up the Thames, like the Vikings did, and so they were built against the invaders. In cities there were air-raid shelters.

Computer impression of a blockhouse
by Sam Scott

THE HISTORY OF SOME OF EYNSHAM'S DOCTORS by Alison Retz

Dr Smallhorn was the doctor for Eynsham from 1865 to 1902. He was from Ireland. He married a lady with the name of Gibbons from the village. The village loved Dr Smallhorn very much.

He lived in the High Street in the house which is now called "The Shrubbery" and is lived in by Dr Peterson. This was not only his house but also the doctor's surgery of the time. The part used as the doctor's surgery was the small part that sticks out on the left of the building. You would have to wait outside whatever the weather, for the surgery was very small and did not have a waiting room. There is a building (now a garage) that used to be used as a medicine-bottle wash room. There was also a 'day bell' and a 'night bell' that you could ring for attention according to what time of day it was. The summer house in the back of the garden was used at one time for housing a flower show at which (strangely enough) Dr Smallhorn won a prize.

Another old festival in Eynsham was Hospital Sunday, a day of fundraising for the Radcliffe Infirmary. There is also a note about Hospital Sunday in the Wesleyan Chapel notes of 1885: Raised £4. for Radcliffe Infirmary.

Two years after Dr Smallhorn's death money was raised by the villagers to have a stained glass window put in St. Leonard's church in memory of him.

The next doctor was Dr Cruickshank who came from Aberdeen. He also lived in The Shrubbery and married one of Dr Smallhorn's daughters. Dr Cruickshank was a very strict but devoted doctor. It was not a strange sight to see him in his pyjamas in the middle of the

night going to visit a patient! He died in 1940.

Dr Tighe was the village doctor through the second world war and died in 1952. He was cremated and, being a great fisherman, he had his ashes sprinkled in a Welsh river.

Dr Bolsover from Sheffield was the doctor for Eynsham from 1947. He was extremely popular with the village. He enjoyed golf. During his time as the doctor of Eynsham the surgery was enlarged.

Dr Simpson and Dr Hyde were the next two doctors. Being good friends they both came and retired at the same time. Dr Hyde was also a Primary School Governor for some time.

Next came Dr Ferrier who lived (and still does) in the Gables, Queen St. He was also the visiting doctor to the school.

Now there is a whole team of doctors: Dr Peterson, Dr Stevenson, Dr Binion, Dr Bailey, Dr Coffey, Dr Evans etc. The surgery is now in Conduit Lane.

Dr B. J. Hyde



The Eynsham Surgery, Conduit Lane

THE CELTS, THEIR FESTIVALS AND BURIAL PRACTICES

by Jessica Scott

The main purpose of the Celtic festivals was to ensure a good harvest, so they took place at times of the year that were important for farmers. People gathered together from outlying farms at the tribe's Holy Place, possibly, inside a hill fort, and there was much feasting and merry making. Above all, however, the festivals were religious occasions, and sacrifices were made to the gods to encourage fertility.

Im Bolc (1st February) This festival took place at lambing time and was to celebrate the fact that the ewes were producing milk. Milk was offered to the goddess Brigid, usually in the form of a wooden statue, under a sacred oak tree. The goddess Brigid was associated with the oak and with fire.

Beltaine (1st May) The name of this festival means 'Bel's fire' or 'goodly fire'. It may have been a festival of the god Belenos. At Beltaine the Celts lit bonfires topped by poles symbolising the sacred oak tree. Then Druids drove cattle through the flames to purify them and protect them from disease. The Druids also made sacrifices and prayed to the god for a fruitful year. Beltaine fires were still lit in Scotland in quite recent times.

Lughnasa (1st August) 'Lughnasa' or the 'feast of lug' was a harvest festival connected with a god called Lug in Ireland, Lieu in Wales and Lugus in France. At this festival, people put on a play which the rest of the tribe watched. A young warrior would represent Lug and he would fight a 'giant', probably the tallest member of the tribe, to get food for his men.

Samain (1st November) Samain, the end of summer, was the most important festival of all. It was the beginning of the new year. To make sure they would prosper in the coming year, the Celts celebrated the marriage of the tribal god to a nature goddess. The eve of Samain was believed to be a magic time with many strange events

The Celts believed in life after death. The dead were buried with their possessions so that they would be prepared for the journey to the other world. This is why Celtic graves have proved such a rich store for the archaeologists.

At the burial of a warrior his sword was placed at his side with his wooden shield being placed over his head and body. His spear would have been broken into two pieces as a symbol of his death. No food or wine would be buried with him. A chief would be buried with food and wine, weapons, clothing and jewels. Many royal graves were marked with a great mound of earth called a barrow or tumulus. In northern France and in Yorkshire chiefs have been found buried in their chariots along with the harness of their ponies.

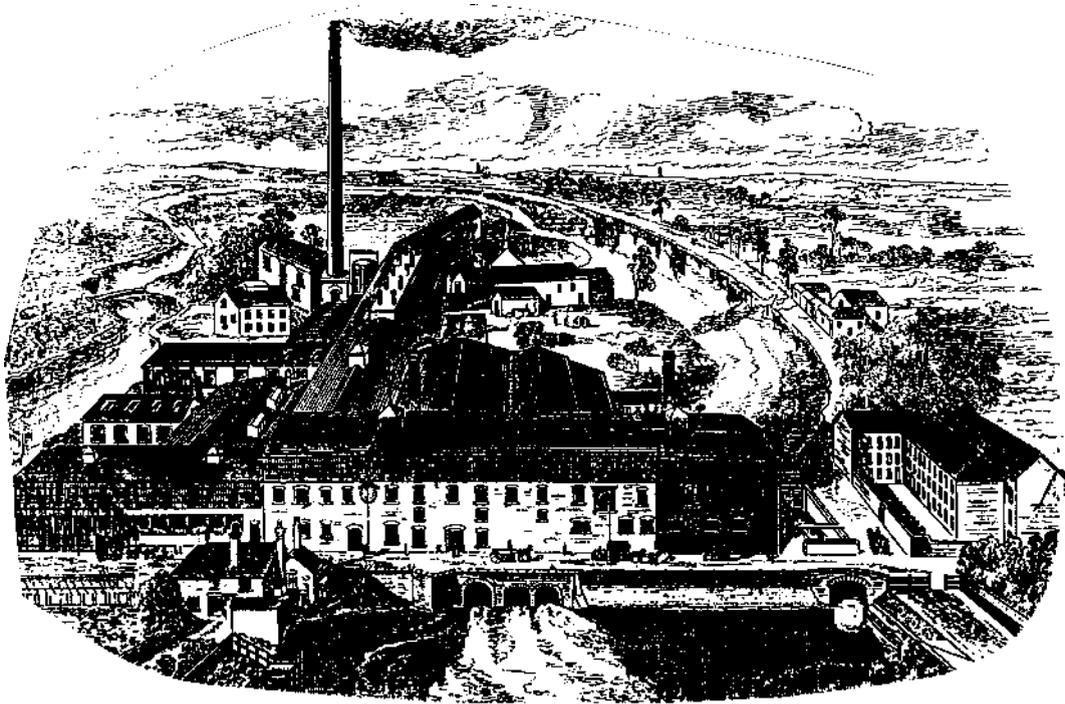
Before burial a chief's body would have been burnt on a funeral pyre and the ashes placed in the wooden box on the burial couch. Large amphorae (jars) of wine and joints of meat, even a whole pig, would have been buried with the ashes to provide refreshment for the chief's spirit.

Some men were just buried in their clothes and with their ornaments. Women were often buried dressed in their best clothes and wearing all their jewellery, with pots of food and drink. The bodies of servants or criminals were disposed of very casually, with no grave at all. They were simply thrown into old rubbish pits and covered with earth!

PAPERMAKING by Jenny Rossiter

According to tradition paper was first made in 105 AD by Ts'ai lun, who was attached to the Eastern Han court of the Chinese Emperor Ho Ti. The material used was probably the bark of the mulberry tree, and the paper was made on a mould of bamboo strips. The earliest known paper still in existence was made from rags about 150 AD. The use of paper was introduced into Europe by the Moors, and the first papermaking mill was established in Spain about 1150 AD.

In England the first paper mill was established in 1495. Eynsham had a mill from 1682 till the end of the 19th century.



St Neots paper mill in 1888, where some Eynsham workers went when Eynsham mill closed

The increasing use of paper in the 17th and 18th centuries created shortages of rags. As a result, many attempts were made to devise substitutes. At the same time, attempts were made to reduce the cost of paper by developing a machine to replace the hand moulding process in paper manufacture.

NOTES FROM JACKSON'S OXFORD JOURNAL by Jack Rossiter

Here are some incidents which occurred in Eynsham in the 18th century.

On the *28th September 1769* three children fell into a gravel pit in Eynsham. Two of the children escaped but one unfortunately died.

On Saturday the *17th September 1776* Jeremiah Smith (shoemaker) died. Some people thought that he was shot whilst he was committing a robbery. He was examined by the following people: Thomas Turner (apothecary), John Rodgers (church warden), Robert Wilsden, Stephen Robinson, Evan Daniel, William Reeve, R. Davis (curate), Stephen Collier (church warden) John Arnatt (overseer), Jeremiah Smith, Senior, (who arranged for the examination), W.Griffin, James Quartermain, John Taylor, William Slatter, John Rusher, Robert Andrews, William Ayers, John Russell, William Keen, James Cox, William Meades & John Constable. None of the twenty-two could find any signs of violence so they testified that he died of a putrid fever. He had been in the care of a Dr Smith of Oxford. He left a wife and 9 children!

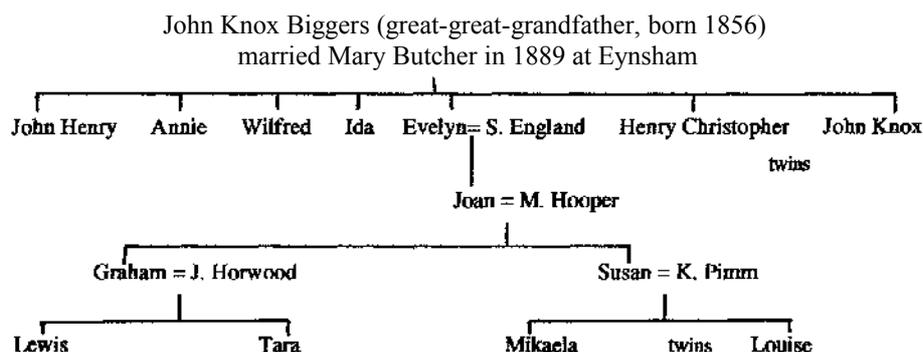
On Saturday the *3rd of May 1777* an inquest was held on Sarah Merrick, travelling woman who accidentally fell into the cellar of a house occupied only by Mr Arnatt's servant. The body was discovered by a person treading on it in the dark! Sarah Merrick had been branded on her hand. People were branded as a sign that they had been in jail for some reason. Sarah Merrick had personally been branded on her hand because she had stolen a shirt and other things from a certain Ann Milsom.

THE BIGGERS FAMILY by Tara Hooper

Members of my family have lived in Eynsham for more than 100 years. This is a family photograph and the family tree. If you read our next publications you will be able to find out more about the Biggers family in Eynsham.



Back row: John Knox Biggers, John Henry (d. aged 14), Mrs Mary Biggers, Annie
Front row: Ida, Evelyn, Wilfred (photograph taken circa 1904)



REPORTS GIVEN TO THE EYNSHAM HISTORY GROUP AT THEIR ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON MARCH 13th 1997

Secretary's Report

During the last two terms, among other things, we have been studying the Thames and its influence on Eynsham. We have had a number of outside speakers. Mr M. Harris came to tell us about the Doctors' Surgery in the past 100 years. Mrs J. Mitchell, an archaeologist, came to tell us about the early settlement of Eynsham. Mr Richards and Mr Green told us about the Thames as it is now and all the walks along it. Mrs Wright came to tell us about some families that had things to do with the Thames and the Wharf Also this term we have given a talk to the Eynsham History Group on Eynsham Public Houses. We are to talk at the W.I. Markets Annual General Meeting later in March. *Alison Retz*, Secretary.

Treasurer's Report

This is the treasurer's report of the Eynsham Junior History Group for the financial year 1996/7.

During the year our income has come from sales of the Eynsham Junior History Group's Good History magazine from which we have made £30.40. We received donations totalling £23.00. Our outgoings have totalled £56.63. This has been spent on the following 12 books for school:

People in the Country; Greek Times; Mary Queen of Scots; Greek World; Religion; Victorians at School; Oxford Children's Ancient History; Victorian Children; Victorian School; Victorian Britain; In the Street; Toys.

At the end of the year we have £40.91 in hand, a reduction of £3.23 when compared with our opening balance. *Jack Rossiter*, Treasurer 10.3.97.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Madam,

I would just like to say how much I enjoy reading your journal "Good History". In the second issue I was fascinated to read that one of your members was related to the wonderfully talented Leonard Rossiter. Perhaps other people in Eynsham might find out that they have famous relatives when they research their family history. If they are not famous then they may have met famous people. One of my great-uncles once travelled in a car with Winston Churchill, the Prime Minister during World War II.

Mr M.J.Harris, Oxford