



**THE EYNESHAM RECORD**  
Number 1 – 1984

**Front cover:** Eynsham Cross and the Red Lion in 1878.

Illustration by Percy Roberts on p.137 of Pleasant Spots around Oxford by Alfred Rimmer, published by Cassell, Petter & Galpin, 292pp. 1878

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## NOTES

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# THE EYNSHAM RECORD



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## EDITORIAL

This year the Eynsham. History Group celebrates its twenty-fifth anniversary. To mark the occasion, the Group has decided to produce its own journal; an innovation that some would say is long overdue!

It will be clear from the article on p.35 that the Group has prospered and grown over the years, but its activities have largely centred on its fortnightly meetings with invited speakers. We have listened and learnt; to a lesser extent read and researched; and individual members have from time to time produced written accounts on a range of local history matters, published privately, or by the Parish Council, or in *Oxoniensia*, etc.: But the Group collectively has thus far made little contribution to posterity in the form of the written word<sup>1</sup>.

The Eynsham Record seeks to make good this deficiency. It is intended to publish it annually, providing a regular forum on matters relating to the history of the parish and village. Contributions, ranging from 'snippets' to more extended articles are invited. While some items will, quite properly, aim to be scholarly, they will, we trust, also be interesting - the two adjectives are not necessarily incompatible!; likewise less weighty offerings should seek to be accurate and informative as well as entertaining.

W.G.Hoskins chose as the motto for his book *Local History in England* a quotation of Horace<sup>2</sup> which he translates as "It is a corner of the world above all others which has a smile for me". If we have an affection for the place in which we live, be we members of long-established families or new settlers, our affection will grow in proportion to our knowledge of its origins and history.

Eynsham, a smallish sort of place by most standards, has for its size an extraordinarily rich history. It lies 6 miles to the west of Oxford, in an area of great interest to students of Iron-Age and Roman pre-history; was written about in the Anglo-Saxon

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1. A notable exception is the booklet on the Swinford Toll Bridge, written by Lady de Villiers, and researched and published by the History Group in 1969.

2. 'Ille terrarum mihi praeter omnes angulus ridet.' *Odes*, II, vi, 13-14.

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Chronicle and in Domesday Book; evolved through the centuries as a market town dominated by its Benedictine Abbey; and has been shaped in turn by plague and fire, the Civil War, the inclosures, the railway, and by recent road building and expansion. Today its people, buildings and fields, and the great libraries and museums of the County provide rich, often untapped sources of information if we have the energy and wit to explore. Alan Crossley's article which makes this abundantly clear will, I hope, be a source of inspiration for many years to come.

Eynsham is small enough to instil a sense of belonging to an evolving community; historically rich enough to make the study and recording of the past a rewarding adventure.

F.B.A.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

Thanks are due to our contributors, all but one of whom are members of the Eynsham History Group (E.H.G.); but especially to the 'exception', Alan Crossley, Editor of the Victoria County History (Oxfordshire), who is personally researching the parish for Vol.XII of the V.C.H., for his timely and inspiring guest article (see opposite).

We are indebted to Dr.John Blair of the Queen's College who kindly provided the drawing for page 12.

We thank the Bodleian Library for permission to reproduce the Buckler drawing on page 20.

We acknowledge, with thanks, grant aid from the West Oxfordshire District Council, under its 'Support for the Arts' scheme, towards the cost of publication of this first number of the Record.

Reviewing the first 25 years of the E.H.G., it is clear that we owe a great debt to local institutions such as the Bodleian and Westgate Libraries, the County Museum at Woodstock and the Oxfordshire Archaeological Unit, not only for making their rich resources so readily available to amateur researchers, but also for providing a succession of skilled and willing speakers for our fortnightly meetings. We are indeed very lucky in Oxfordshire!

Thanks to Mrs. Pamela Richards, who urged us some years ago to produce our own journal, and to Mr. David Nicholls for the calligraphy on the cover, and for the facsimile signature on p.30.

# EYNESHAM -- A SUITABLE CASE FOR TREATMENT

by Alan Crossley

A history of Eynsham will be published (probably in 1986) in Volume XII of the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire (V.C.H.), which will cover the southern portion of an ancient administrative sub-division of the county called Wootton Hundred. Although a draft history of Eynsham has been written, there are numerals loose ends, particularly those associated with the architecture of the older village houses, which we hope to investigate in the sunnier. I should emphasise that the V.C.H. account is aimed to provide a useful sum-nary of the main features of the development of Eynsham, together with a guide (through its footnotes) to the basic sources available, but is not expected to supply the 'last word'. Nor could it attempt to do so, since it had to be completed in months, whereas a full examination of the mass of evidence for Eynsham's history might take several years.

Meanwhile, as we press on with Woodstock and the other places in Volume XII, we were delighted to hear that the Eynsham History Group was starting a journal. First, for the selfish reason that we would benefit from the first fruits of that undertaking before our history went to press. Second, because it is right that a long-established society should make its discoveries available in print. Third, because there are few places in Oxfordshire (other than the larger towns) which offer such a range and quality of historical material, enough to keep such a publication going for many years. I thought it might be appropriate in this first issue to say a little about the special qualities of Eynsham's historical sources. Most important of all, perhaps, is the wealth of old maps and surveys of the parish, which provide the essential foundation for topographical enquiry. Of the places we have worked on, only Oxford has been better provided. The earliest maps are a splendid set in Corpus Christi College, showing the college estate in Eynsham in 1615; all the college's strips in the open fields are delineated, there is a beautiful little inset of the college's farmhouse and tenements at the angle of Queen's Street and Oxford Road (Fig.1), and much information on furlong names and plot holders. Then there is a full survey of 1650 (unfortunately without a map), which lists the owners of every house in the village, street by street, and of

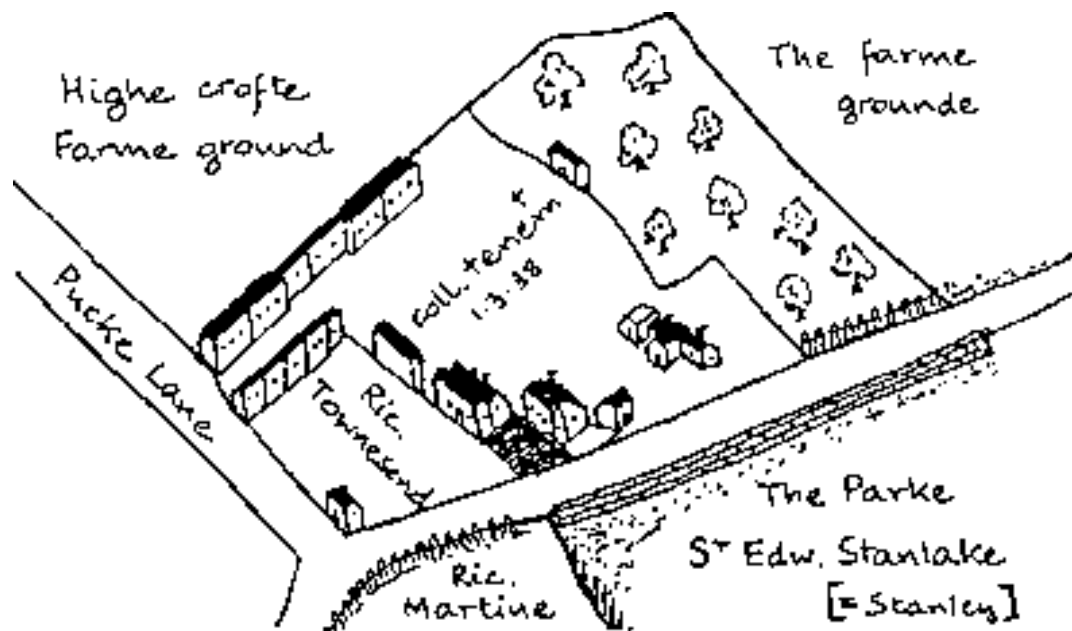


Fig.1 Copy of a small portion of the 1615 map.

every strip in the fields. Until fairly recently only the Bodleian Library version was known, but now in the County Record Office (C.R.O.) is the original 'working copy' kept by the clerk of the manorial court, annotated in a later hand with some names of 18th century owners of the plots described in 1650. In the Blenheim archives is a vast map and survey of the parish in 1762, by Thomas Pride, which is almost identical to Pride's map of 1782 (without survey) in the C.R.O. published in E.K.Chambers' Eynsham Under the Monks. Also in the C.R.O. is a map of Eynsham heath in 1769, drawn just before the first Eynsham Hall was built, and another Pride map of the village and its fields in 1769, showing the houses, strips, and closes owned by the Holloway family, inheritors of a large estate bought up piecemeal by a mid-18th century Woodstock lawyer called Edward Ryves. Then for 1802 there is the inclosure map and award, which shows *how* the old open fields, worked largely from farmhouses in the village, were transformed into the fields and out-lying farms we know today. Again Eynsham is fortunate, for in the C.R.O. along with the award and map (in several versions), are the associated working calculations, showing how the complex valuation and re-allocation of land was actually achieved. In my experience such inclosure documentation is very rare, and would repay further study. Finally, also in the C.R.O., is another important map and survey of the village in 1836, providing a crucial link between the inclosure period (when each numbered plot can be related to its owner) and the great series of available census returns (1841-81) and the familiar large-scale Ordnance Survey maps, which for Eynsham begin in 1881.

I have mentioned only the principal old maps, but there are many others of individual properties, notably a whole series for the Eynsham Hall estate (in Reading University Library), and for Twelve Acre farm (in the C.R.O.), as well as some useful maps and plans of Eynsham farms in auction catalogues of the 19th and early 20th centuries. The advantage of such numerous maps and surveys is that they provide fixed points in the story of individual properties. Most early deeds, and Eynsham has a considerable quantity of these in the C.R.O. and elsewhere, are imprecise about property locations, tending to refer to 'all that messuage or tenement formerly belonging to John Brown'; but for Eynsham we can often identify the property concerned from one of these early maps or surveys. Whereas in most places the tracing of individual houses below manor-house class is rarely possible, for Eynsham's small houses much can usually be discovered: obviously such properties as Elm Farm, which belonged to a college for centuries, are easily traced, but so too are houses like the Shrubbery, Red Thorn. House, or old Wintles Farm, which have no archives of their own, but only a few chance deeds which can be related to the general maps and surveys mentioned above.

Another collection of records lying rather outside the usual range is a series of court books for Eynsham and Newland from the mid-17th to the early 20th century. These (in the C.R.O.) supplement the splendid medieval records for the abbey manor in the Eynsham cartulary and in the Harleian rolls in the British Library. The first of the later court books begins with saw fragmentary mid-17th century accounts, which clearly relate to the sale to local people of the remains of the demolished abbey: interestingly enough, as well as the stone piers and windows and doorposts there was a quantity of bride, perhaps from outbuildings. Through these later court books it is possible, particularly for Newland, to trace properties in great detail: the development of Chapel Yard on the site of a former brewery, for instance, is clearly documented and even illustrated by a plan.

Another collection of great importance is at Reading University, where the papers of the Mason family of Eynsham Hall were deposited. These include a large number of maps, plans, account books, and surveys of the house and estate in the 19th and early 20th centuries, together with earlier deeds. They throw light not only on the development of Eynsham Hall and Freeland Lodge, but on the remarkable farming experiments carried out by James Mason on the vast Eynsham Hall estate. Mason, a mining engineer who had made his fortune in Portugal, was an extraordinary figure, and the family papers would repay much further study.

Eynsham's church history, too, benefits from some rather special material, including some early churchwardens' accounts, soon to be transferred with other Diocesan and parish records from the Bodleian to the C.R.O. The Bodleian has a splendid collection of papers relating to the attractive but rather unfortunate figure of Thomas Symonds, who served as curate and then vicar for nearly 50 years. From the Symonds papers, many of them only recently deposited, one could reconstruct a very full picture of the family life of a quiet, hard-working, country parson of the early 19th century. In great contrast would be the picture reconstructed of his equally well-documented successor, W.S. Bricknell (vicar 1845-88), a vigorous Evangelical much given to litigation and public quarrelling. His strong views and personal eccentricities brought turmoil and scandal to the parish (and indeed the diocese) for decades. Material for his career is scattered through the Diocesan archives, but much more could be found by a careful search of mid-19th century newspapers in the Bodleian or Westgate libraries. I was particularly impressed by the irony of the foundation of Freeland church within Bricknell's parish in 1869: for from the outset the new church was aimed to provide a centre of extreme High Anglicanism - a bitter pill indeed for the Low Church Bricknell to swallow.

Such then are a few of the special collections that for Eynsham supplement the usual sources for parish histories, which will be found chiefly in the C.R.O., the Bodleian, and the Public Record Office in London. Eynsham is rich enough in standard sources, but one aspect deserving particular mention is the wealth of surviving older buildings. I would strongly urge the Group to undertake a proper survey of these buildings, if possible with the advice of an architectural historian, and of course, noting such features as initials and datestones, old beams and so on. Nor should outbuildings be disregarded, for they frequently reveal evidence of small industrial undertakings, and in any case are interesting in themselves. For instance note the unusual, wide, low-pitched roof on the malt-house on the corner of Newland Street and Queen Street, belonging to the Gables (Fig.2). This roof could only be so constructed because it carried a lightweight tarred-paper covering of a type promulgated in the early 19th century by John Claudius Loudon (the Scots entrepreneur so frequently and mistakenly credited with designing the village of Great Tew). The then owners of the Gables were the Swans, who as papermakers had a vested interest in the future of such roofs (which in the event was very short): John Swann had put one on Wolvercote Mill before

1800, and others were put on Eynsham Mill. Certainly this roof at the Gables with its huge span is a fine reminder of such experiments: a fragment of tarred paper may still be seen. Incidentally the Gables itself has at its core a late medieval and 17th century timber-framed house of manor-house quality (builders as yet unknown).



Fig.2 The low-pitched roof on the old malthouse (part of the Gables)

The wealth of evidence from Eynsham does not mean that its history will at once become crystal clear. On the contrary, the place has perversely yielded a succession of problems that seem to defy satisfactory solution. Consider the mass of archaeological evidence (brought together in convenient form in the Sites and Monuments Record at Woodstock Museum) - prehistoric ditches and henges, Roman coins of great numismatic interest (but the site of their discovery apparently not recorded), flints, implements, barrows, Saxon gruben-hauser all over the place - difficult indeed to form any clear picture of pre-documentary times. Again the early documentary evidence is fraught with difficulties. Are the various references Egonesham, Iogneshomme, Incgenesham, and so on, all to the same place, or, as some scholars assert, do some refer to Inglesham, Wilts? Am I right to conclude that Eynsham was the centre of a large and important estate held by members of the West Saxon royal household, the centre of an early 'triple Hundred', the site of an early 'minister' church which preceded the monastery founded by Aethelmaer in 1015?

In the Middle Ages the mysteries proliferate. Where was Tilgarsley, the village wiped out by the Black Death in 1350? Am I right to argue that its likely site is fairly obvious, once we start looking for a large village rather than the small concentration of lumps and bumps that so often characterize deserted medieval village sites? Remember, by the way, that Tilgarsley denoted an area as well as a village - it had its own field system, stretching right across the ancient parish, and as large as Eynsham's own field system. So the phrase 'in Tilgarsley' found in deeds of properties as far apart as Twelve Acre Farm and the fields near City Farm should not be assumed to refer to the village site, but to Tilgarsley township as a whole which was as large as a normal parish).

What about the abbey site? One of your members [W.B.] has done splendid work in locating the surviving remains of the building: but what about the abbey gateway taken in the 18th century by the Duke of Marlborough for 'some business of his at Blenheim'? Am I right in thinking that this was not the main gate in Abbey Street, but a West gate, apparently of the tunnel variety, probably standing west of Abbey Farm on the Stanton Harcourt road? Was it taken by 'Capability' Brown for his gothicization of Blenheim Park in the 1760s? Does any of it survive?

Another problem concerns Abbot Geoffrey (d.1388), an obsessive measurer of ground, whom I think of sometimes, in frustration, as the 'mad monk'. In the printed version of the Eynsham Cartulary you will find examples of his remorseless calculations, notably in a survey of Newlands in 1366, and of a field called Langdale. First he gives exact linear measurements of each plot, then goes on to minuscule calculations of area, descending below acres, roods, and perches, to feet, inches, and even grains (a third of an inch)- all this on an abacus! *How* did he work his geometry and arithmetic? More important, what was the length of his basic measuring stick, the perch or the pole? Anyone foolish enough to get involved with Abbot Geoffrey's calculations will soon find that he was not using a standard perch, the length which eventually became statutory (16.5 feet); nor do his feet, inches, and grains appear to be square measurements, as one might expect in areal calculations. Beware, too, that the printed version is not quite an accurate copy of the original and, more serious, that the clerk faced with transcribing Abbot Geoffrey's conclusions was clearly, and understandably careless.

Am I right to conclude that the pole that Geoffrey carried up and down Newland Street some 600 years ago was 15 feet 8 inches long? What does it matter anyway? Well, if we could be sure, it would enable the reconstruction of an accurate plan of a whole 14th century street layout - probably a unique achievement, which I believe one of your members is attempting [F.B.A.].

The problems of Eynsham do not evaporate with the Reformation. To take one example, Eynsham Heath: for the Middle Ages one struggles to decide how much of it lay within the Royal Forest of Wychwood; for the later period one wonders what kind of coal was exploited there in the late 17th century, and again attracted a London speculator in the 1760s. It was this speculator, James Lacy, co-owner of the Drury Lane Theatre with David Garrick, who suffered the gibe (by Garrick) that 'the pit of Drury Lane is more profitable than the pit of Eynsham Heath'. Lacy or his son Willoughby built the first Eynsham Hall in the 1770s. Did they employ as architect their friend Robert Adam, whom they certainly used to reconstruct their theatre? Are the few surviving 'Adam fireplaces' in the present Hall the original work of the master? The story of Eynsham Hall, so strangely separate from the village even before the A.40 was built, provides many surprises.

A recurrent theme of Eynsham's history was a certain predilection for riot and drunkenness, ranging from armed medieval affrays over rights of common and fishing, to hostile gatherings of over 1,000 people in the churchyard during squabbles with Vicar Bricknell in the 19th century. Live rabbits were dug up and thrown at the lady of the manor on Eynsham Heath in 1696, dead dogs cast into the church in 1862, and sparrows released to disrupt a Methodist meeting in 1822. Presumably, like 'dirty, drunken Deddington', another small town of dubious historic reputation, Eynsham has now become eminently respectable; in any case its riotous past was not really my reason for choosing the title of this article. Rather I chose it because Eynsham, so rich in its history, so richly documented, provides a marvellous opportunity for historical research.

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## ADVENTURE AT HARDWICK MILL

by Eric Gordon

It all began with reading Oxfordshire Mills by Wilfred Foreman, published in 1983 by those remarkable servants of local history, Phillimore's of Chichester. The small waters of the Windrush served no less than 24 mills, just from Taynton to Newbridge. One of them was at Hardwick near Witney. Imagine my excitement when I read of 'Eynsham abbey tombstones', and of *how* they had been 'used to floor the wheel chamber' there (pp.11,109). Salter (Eynsham Cartulary, I, xxiiif.) had recorded the gravestone of John de Cheltenham, Abbot of Eynsham, 1317-30, used again, for somebody else, in 1645, in Elsfeld church, Oxfordshire (see page 16 of this journal). What then was at Hardwick?

William Bainbridge kindly located the mill, now in private ownership. Peter and Patricia Hamilton gave us a warm welcome, and were good enough to let us see what was there. Tony Bradley drove us. And thus three members of the Eynsham History Group had a momentous afternoon. The day was August 31st, 1983.

After seeing some fine pieces of stonework, likely enough from Eynsham abbey, and built into the house itself, we were taken to the old wheel-chamber: the wheel itself has gone, but the mill-stream still flows through the chamber, and then out through a tunnel, arched over with brick and floored with stone. The owners took trouble to stop the stream: and gradually the floor emerged, dark, wet, gleaming and slippery. And there, quite clearly, were substantial remains of an old gravestone, broken into large pieces and, like a jumbled jigsaw, awaiting solution.

Tony Bradley was the first to venture down, and to begin to decipher the stone. In the end all three of us were there, crouching painfully, but seeing and touching a monk's gravestone of nearly 700 years ago. The costly memorial, its shattered pieces, their humble use, the almost ceaselessly flowing waters, the words crying to be read, and slowly perishing, all combined to move us deeply.

Salter did not know of it: Eynsham seems not to have heard of it: but Peter Hamilton showed us a scholarly account of it by W.J.Blair: *An Early Monastic Indent at Hardwick, Oxfordshire*, reprinted from *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, vol.XI, part V, pp.308-311, 1973. As a former member of that

society, and one who some 60 years ago cycled hundreds of miles, to make brass-rubbings, and spent many hours in church at this particular type of devotion, I had my own special fascination!

An 'indent', in this context, is the pattern of shallow, flat-bottomed depressions cut into the top surface of medieval gravestones, and designed to fit the various pieces of a monumental brass. In many churches the brasses have gone, but the indents remain. In monasteries, however, after their 16th century Dissolution, the whole building and all its contents, including memorials, normally became scrap, and were gradually dispersed. The disposal of Osney abbey, for example, makes lugubrious reading (Anthony Wood, City of Oxford, II, 226ff.)

The rubbing of the Hardwick indent, on which Fig.1 is based, shows the surviving pieces put into place. Others probably lie here, but face downwards. The whole slab is likely to have been about 3'6" wide and 9'6" long. It carried a life-sized figure, surmounted by a canopy, with pinnacles, and framed with an inscription. At each shoulder small angels winged the soul heavenwards.

The surviving letters (with normal expansions from standard formulae) give us:

+ HIC: IACET: FR(ATER)...(CVIVS ANI)ME: PROPICIE:TVR: DEVS  
( 'Here lies Brother ... on whose soul may God have mercy' )

The letterer had design problems, disposing of two colons oddly, in the top left-hand corner. Tantalizingly enough, none of the name of the monk can be discerned. Who was he?

That he was a priest is clear from his cope. That he was not a bishop is clear from the absence of a mitre. That he was a monk is clear from his being called 'Brother'. That he was head of his house is clear from the small knobbed head of his pastoral staff, projecting above his right shoulder. In any case it was unlikely that anyone less than the head of a house would have been given such an expensive memorial.

He may have been Prior of Cogges, not far away. But Eynsham abbey, only a mile further off, and very much wealthier, source also of the Elsfield gravestone, is a much likelier candidate. Comparison with other indents, especially at Bottisham, Cambs., and at Weekley, Northants., suggests that this brass may well have commemorated Thomas de Wells, Abbot of Eynsham, 1281-1307 (see Blair, op. cit.).

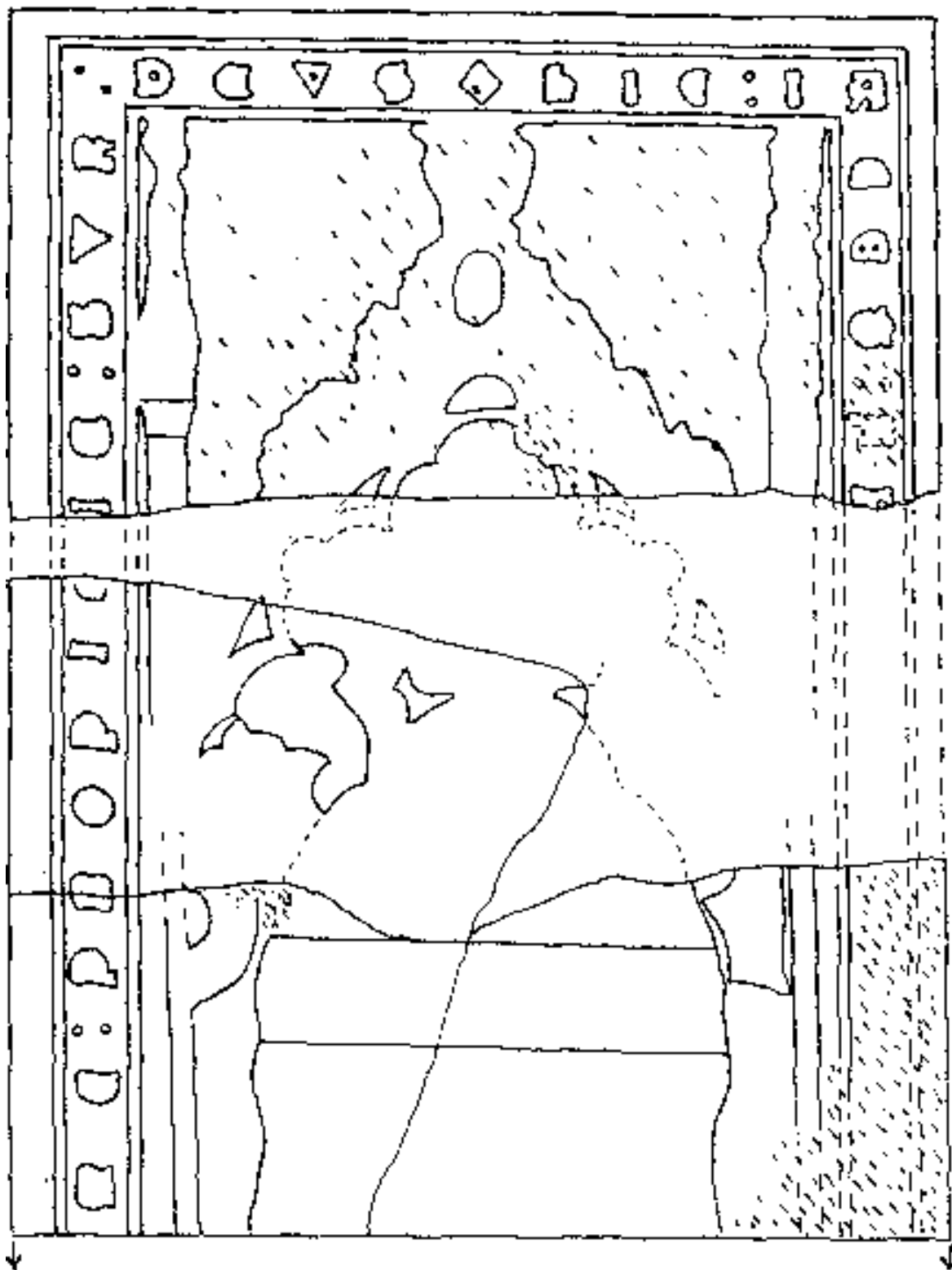


Fig 1 The 'Hardwick' tomb fragments repositioned. Scale 1:10  
The original slab would have been about twice as long.

The main workshops for such memorials were in London. At any given period similar designs would be in fashion, and used again and again. The metal was 'latten', darker and tougher than modern brass, and used in thick plates. Engraving, in 1307, would be bold, simple and deep. The separate Lombardic letters are a feature of the time. It is likely that the memorial lay before the high altar of the abbey church. It is a far cry from there to the mill-stream bed.

Acknowledgements. My thanks are due to Dr.W.J.Blair, to whose article I have freely referred, and especially for providing the drawing for Fig.1.

### 26 YEARS AGO

Travelling to Oxford in 18 minutes or to Witney in 11 minutes?

#### BRITISH RAILWAYS PASSENGER TIMETABLE Summer 1958

<u>DOWN TRAINS</u>		<u>WEEKDAYS</u>				<u>SX</u>	<u>SO</u>	<u>SUN</u>		
Oxford	d.08.10	09.26	12.15	15.35	16.18	18.18	21.50	22.10	22.35	
Yarnton	d.08.10	09.34	12.23	15.43	16.26	18.26	21.58	22.18		
Cassington	d.08.22	09.38	12.27	15.47	16.30	18.30	22.03	22.23	22.47	
Eynsham	d.08.28	09.44	12.33	15.53	16.37	18.36	22.09	22.29	22.54	
South Leigh	d.08.34	09.50	12.39	15.59	16.43	18.42	22.15	22.35	23.01	
Witney	a.08.39	09.55	12.44	16.04	16.54	18.56	22.26	22.40	23.06	
Witney	d.08.40	10.01	12.49	16.10	16.54	18.56	22.26	22.46	23.12	
Brize Norton&B	d.08.48	10.14	13.01	16.20	17.03	19.05	22.35	22.55	23.22	
Carterton	d.08.51	09.40	10.18	13.04	16.23	17.08	19.10	22.39	22.59	23.28
Alvescot	d.	09.44	10.22	13.08		17.12	19.14	22.43	23.03	23.33
Kelmscott&L	d.	09.50	10.28	13.14		17.19	19.21	22.49	23.09	23.40
Lechlade	d.	09.57	10.35	13.20		17.26	19.28	22.55	23.15	23.48
Fairford	d.	10.05	10.42	13.27		17.33	19.35	23.02	23.22	23.55

<u>UP TRAINS</u>		<u>SX</u>	<u>SO</u>							
Fairford	d.06.47	09.15	11.05	12.30	12.38	14.00		18.10	18.15	
Lechlade	d.06.55	09.23	11.13	12.38	12.46	14.08		18.18	18.23	
Kelmscott	d.07.01	09.28	11.18	12.43	12.51	14.13		18.23	18.29	
Alvescot	d.07.06	09.35	11.24	12.49	12.57	14.19		18.30	18.35	
Carterton	d.07.10	08.23	09.40	11.28	12.53	13.03	14.23	16.38	18.34	18.40
Brize Norton&B	d.07.15	08.28	09.45	11.32	13.00	13.09	14.28	16.43	18.39	18.44
Witney	a.07.22	08.35	09.52	11.39	13.07	13.16	14.35	16.50	18.47	18.51
Witney	d.07.28	08.43	09.58	11.40	13.13	13.22	14.40	17.07	18.54	18.55
South Leigh	d.07.33	08.48	10.04	11.45	13.18	13.27	14.45	17.12	18.59	19.00
Eynsham	d.07.38	08.54	10.09	11.50	13.23	13.32	14.50	17.18	19.04	19.06
Cassington	d.07.45	09.01	10.16	11.57	13.30	13.39	14.57	17.25	19.11	19.13
Yarnton	d.07.49	09.05	10.20	12.01	13.34	13.43	15.01	17.29	19.15	-
Oxford	a.07.56	09.13	10.28	12.08	13.42	13.52	15.08	17.37	19.23	19.24

# LOOKING FOR ABBOTS

by William Bainbridge

Indulging in my unbridled passion for seeking out tangible remains of Eynsham Abbey, my activities have met with good fortune and invariable kindness and generosity from owners and custodians. Although, to preserve the privacy of individuals, I have refrained from mentioning names, I feel I can 'tell all' in the case of two semi-private owners, although these accounts may not catch the mildly hilarious preliminaries that led to the 'rediscovery' of the Hardwick slab, a scholarly account of which by Bishop Gordon will be found on page 10.

## Miles Salley; Abbot of Eynsham c.1499-1516

In 1938, long before my obsession engulfed me, I found in Crossley's English Church Monuments an illustration of the tomb of 'Miles Salley, Bishop of Llandaff and Abbot of Eynsham' (like many others he found the name 'Eynsham' difficult to spell, let alone pronounce!), but it was not until 1977 that I visited St. Mark's, Bristol to inspect the tomb, only to find on the first two occasions the chapel door locked. The verger was written to and he kindly made an appointment and allowed me to photograph the monument. To do this entailed squeezing behind the altar in the chancel, which produced less-than-satisfactory slides. In 1978 visits to the 'British Heraldry Exhibition' at the British Museum produced two joyful discoveries. The section displayed of a Parliamentary Processional Roll of 1512<sup>1</sup> showed a portrait and arms of 'Miles Salley, Bish. of Landaffe' walking in procession with other bishops, but not with the abbots, a slight to Eynsham's pride. It is, as far as I can say, the earliest 'portrait' of an Eynsham personality, even though he shares the features of almost all the others in the Roll!(Fig.1a). Likewise the face on his effigy at St. Mark's, where he was buried in 1516, is schematic.

My luck continued in that the arms of 'Bishop of Landaff, the Lord Myles Shelley' were also on exhibition at the British Museum on another Parliamentary Roll, dated 1515<sup>2</sup>, but in this case with no portrait, and the arm are totally different from those of the 1512

a



b



c

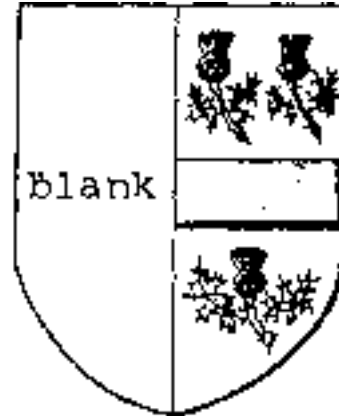


Fig.1 Portrait and arms of Miles Salley  
Bishop of Llandaff, and Abbot of  
Eynsham c.1499-1516.

a & b -- from Parliamentary Roll of 1512

c-- from Parliamentary Roll of 1515

Roll. The blazon of the earlier shield is 'Sable on a saltire engrailed Or a roundel of the first' impaling the arms of the see of Llandaff (Fig.1b); in the later one it is 'Or between three thistles slipped proper a fess Azure', with the arms of the see left blank, presumably through ignorance (Fig.1c). Again no mention of Salley's abbacy (c1499-1516). There is a copy of the 1512 Roll in the Bodleian Library<sup>3</sup>, but here his shield is totally blank. I have yet to inspect a further copy in the Cambridge University Library.

The later shield reminded me of a delicate angel corbel in the County Museum at Woodstock who holds part of a shield showing, above a fess, two charges which look like double cloves - are they meant to be thistles? The fess bears some Gothic characters which may relate to the 'Escutcheon on which are four Saxon letters' mentioned in 1727 by Hearne as being on an 'old stone above the door of one Richard Goddard'. Possibly associated with the arms are those crudely carved on corbels in the roof of Standlake church which show a fess bearing two pairs of annulets conjoined, on a field of eight fleurs-de-lys. Are these charges also misrepresentations?

Incidentally in this roof are two other shields with versions of the same arms on the 'Bartholomew' Room and 6, Abbey Street, Eynsham.

#### John of Cheltenham; Abbot of Eynsham 1317-30

Rather less puzzling was my 'discovery' of the tomb slab of Abbot John of Cheltenham at Elsfield. In Chambers' Eynsham under the Monks, an inscription is quoted<sup>4</sup>, roughly translated as 'Here lies brother John of Cheltenham one time Abbot of this place on whose soul may God have mercy'. This prompted me to go on a visit of investigation, but a thorough search of the church revealed nothing: Not a hassock, not a strip of carpet was left unturned, and not a ring at the vicarage door was answered!. However despondency was lifted by a reply to a letter to the vicar, the Reverend Anthony de Vere, who revealed that the slab was in the vestry, and who kindly suggested a second visit when its door would be left unlocked. Thus Elsfield saw me again, armed with a soft brush, damp sponge and camera, and the slab was found squeezed into a tiny room and covered by table, chair, cupboard and the parish safe, making photography, apart from some small details, almost impossible.

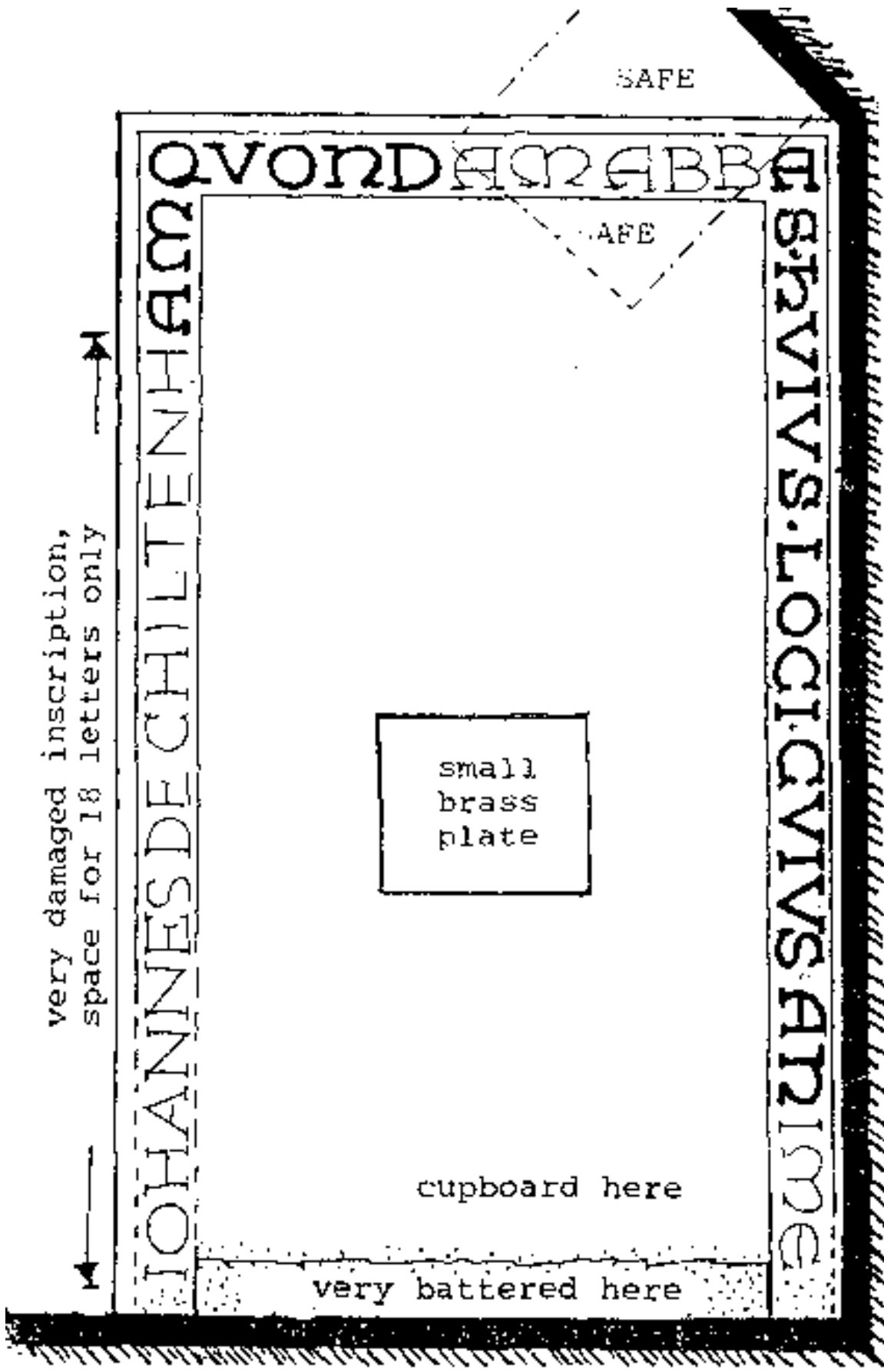


Fig.2 Tomb slab of John of Cheltenham,  
Abbot of Eynsham 1317-30

Fig.2 shows how many indents of the beautiful Lombardic letters are decipherable. The damaged parts, however, are not sufficiently extensive to accommodate the full number of characters in the borders, but this riddle was solved by chance. While researching in the Bodleian for some other project, I happened on J.C.Buckler's drawing of 1820 showing the slab with the inscription intact and as being 'in the chancel of Elsfeld church'<sup>5</sup>. Obviously at some time when the chancel was refloored the slab was brutally shortened to fit into the vestry! The reason why this stone is at Elsfeld is explained by a small brass plate inserted in the centre of the tombstone, which reads:

'IN THE HOPE OF IOYFVLL RESVRECTION RESTETH HERE THE BODIE OF MICHAEL PUDSEY....' whodied in 1645.

It is easy to picture him, finding the slab in the ruins of the Abbey, and trundling the weighty stone across the countryside for his future use. Little did Abbot John foresee the future maltreatment of his memorial.

#### References.

1. British Library Add.MS 22306
2. British Library Add.MS 40078
3. Bodleian Library MS Ashmole Rolls 45
4. HIC.IACET.FRATER.IOHANNES.DE.CHILTENHAM.QVONDAM.ABBAS.HVIVS.LOCI .  
CVIVS.ANIME.PROPITIETVR.DEVS.
5. Bodleian Library MS Top. Oxon. a.66 f237.

Entry in St. Leonard's burial register

1655, May 4. Ursula BURNHAM, suspected witch.

[What an unfortunate name in the circumstances! Ed.]

## **TWO MYSTERIES**

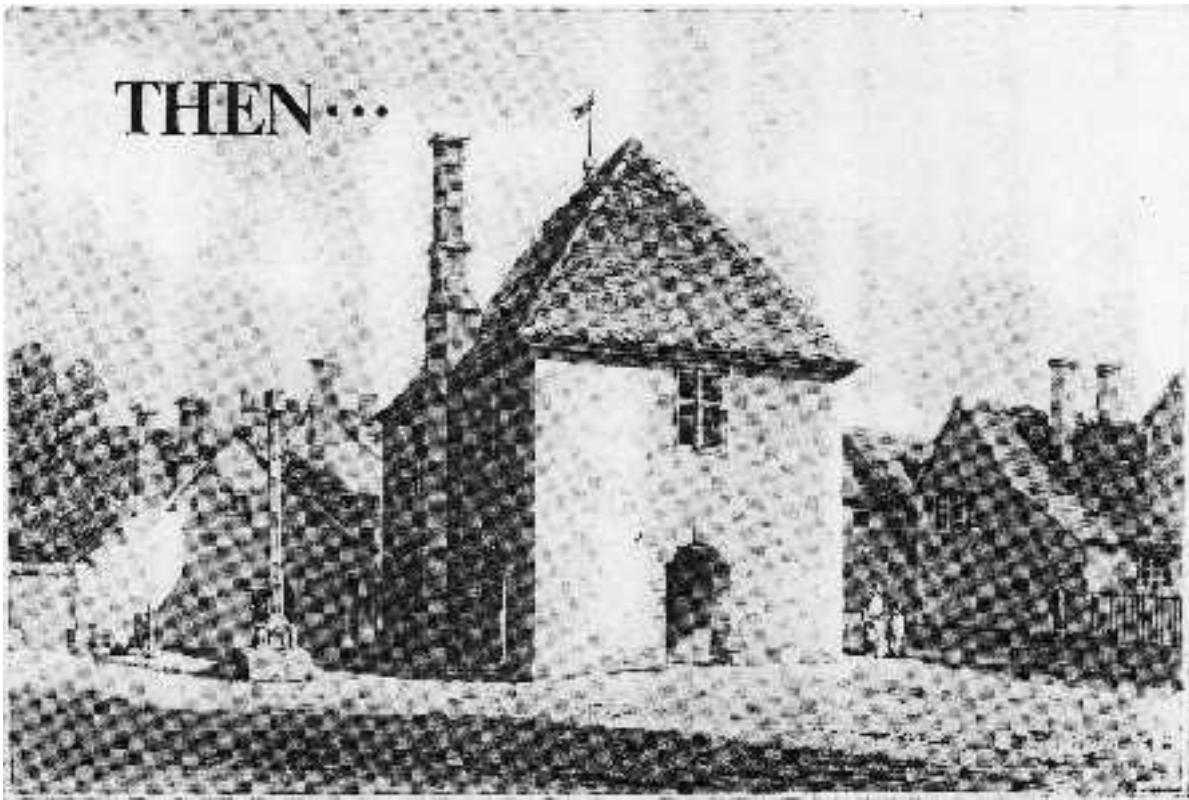
### Where exactly was Tilgarsley?

The site of this medieval village, wiped out or abandoned at the time of the Black Death, 1349/50, is unknown. It probably lies no more than a mile or two from Eynsham. There is no shortage of possible candidates: Freeland, Twelve-Acre Farm, Turner's Green, Barnard Gate, Bowles Farm and several other sites have all been suggested at various times and for different reasons. (See also page 8).

### Where exactly was the Abbey church?

Certainly within the area bounded by Abbey Street to the west, St. Leonard's Church and the High Street to the north, the playing fields to the east, and the Chilbrook with its associated medieval fishponds to the south. But this is a large area. All that we know is contained in some tantalizingly brief and vague 17th and 18th century references to the ruins, and some exploratory trenches made in 1971 (see Bibliography #21) which revealed some building foundations. This intriguing question will, I hope, be dealt with in a future article in the Record.

Happily the site is now preserved within the Conservation Area, and doubtless one day a full archaeological survey will answer the question.



The Market House (Bartholomew Room), Eynsham Drawing  
by J.C.Buckler, 1826.

Copyright: Bodleian Library.

Note especially the open arches and the village  
stocks.



**NOTE:** the images opposite  
have been re-sized to reduce the overall size  
of this .pdf file.

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in print for £1 plus p&p. Contact the Editor  
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or Fred Bennett, 68 Witney Road tel 01865 880659

1584

by Lilian Wright

"Thomas Crispe of Eynsham -- for carting on Sundays in March and August -- sayeth he doeth it yet because he is a common carrier, but hereafter he promiseth to refrayne yet so much as in him doeth lye -- this accepted and the charge dismissed -- this providing that he do not hereafter use such cartinge restituted from excommunication".

This is one of the cases presented to the Archdeacon's Court in Oxford in 1584. These courts had existed as a lower version of the Bishops' Courts in the Middle Ages and their powers had gradually declined. However they were revived under Elizabeth I, and were much employed to maintain church discipline by her trusted archbishop, John Whitgift, who was appointed in 1583.

In Elizabeth's reign Churchwardens became almost like magistrates in their parishes and held enormous power and responsibility. They kept the church accounts, helped to give relief to the poor, organized church 'ales', provided the Bread and Wine for Communion, and kept order in the church and churchyard. They had to maintain the church fabric, provide furniture and books, keep the churchyard fence in repair, and report the misdeeds of the parishioners.

The Churchwardens made their presentments at the two Archdeacon's Visitations to the parishes each year. They were sworn to make truthful answers to all the questions asked, and the enquiries involved everyone - clergy, other church officials and the people of the parish. From misdemeanors reported to the Archdeacon, citations were made. It was then the job of Apparitors to ride round the county to try to find the people involved because the writ had to be served personally. If they had made every effort and the person couldn't be found, then the citation was fixed to the door of the parish church. Any person not appearing on the day was convicted of contumacy and excommunicated. Those who came to the Court, which was held in St. Martin's, Carfax, had first to take the oath, and were then examined by the Archdeacon's principal or Jute who, for most of this period, was Dr. Thomas Glaiser. The Court scribe wrote the answers in the act bock, so that for many cases we have the direct speech of the people involved.

Now for some of the transgressions of 1584! The clergy were not exempt from being reported and in October John Wright, curate of Stanton Harcourt, states that:-

"the quarterly sermons are not in South Leigh chapel but in the parish church; they are orderly kept and in the chapel of late they have had a sermon before Midsummer last, namely by Mr. Emmott, and the Catechism is taught and shall be hereafter so far forth as time and leisure shall serve him".

William Emmott was the Vicar of Eynsham at the time, and it is interesting to find that he helped another clergyman in trouble. By this we also know that he was alive in 1584, so must have died in February 1585 (his memorial is in our church). He features in another case in October where the Churchwardens exercised their duty of maintaining reverence and decency in Church. -- Thomas Peniston said that:-

"the Vicar of Eynsham, at the time specified in the bill of detection, was disturbed at divine service by means of William Stanley, gent. who would not suffer this respondent quietly to sit in his seat which this respondent thinks belongs to his father, because he is half lord of the town, and whereas they have presented 2 seats to belong to the Earl of Derby, my Lord Strange having but half the right of Sir Thomas Stanley, knight (deceased), the other by all reason must appertain to this respondent's father who hath the other half interest."

So we may surmise that the Stanleys lived in Eynsham and worshipped in our church. William Stanley, who was 23 at this time, was the cousin of Sir Edward Stanley whose memorial is by the altar. His father was the patron of a group of actors who performed Shakespeare's plays. By 1595 he had become the 6th Earl of Derby and, in that year, he married Lady Elizabeth Vere. The Queen attended the wedding at Greenwich, and it is thought that 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' was performed for this occasion. As for Thomas Peniston, perhaps he was 'half lord of the town' -- He was the patron at the appointment of Thomas Secheverell, the vicar after William Emmott.

Another disturbance was caused by three Eynsham farmers, William Boulter, Philip Pikes and Thomas Buckingham:

"Upon Lammass Day or Eve last some talk or speech being between this respondent and Philip Pikes having some speech or talk in church touching putting in of cattle into a Lamas ground there passed no other words between them but these or like viz. this respondent saying he should not put in and Philip Pikes saying he would and other words he uttered none."

Later it was denied-

- "that there passed any scolding and unseemly and uncivil speech between this respondent and William Boulter in church or churchyard at any time either in service time or after service, only there was some talk about these grounds and hayning and their meads whereupon they disagreed. "

(Cattle were allowed to graze in the open fields from Lammas, August 1st, which was after haytime, until sowing time).

We were lax in repairing our windows. In 1574 a Herald's Visitation reported several examples of heraldic glass in Eynsham church, but it would seem things were in a sorry state by December 1584.

"To the guardians of Eynsham, for that their glass windows be broken and not presented at the Visitation and have been mending for this twelvemonth and not yet mended".

Perhaps we can assume that the church was furnished with the books and furniture which were necessary, but some churchwardens were reported for not providing a Bible in English and a seat for the minister. There are no reports from Eynsham of bowling, dancing, shooting or gaming in the churchyard, but William Perrie was brought up for-

"that he oweth to the Churchwardens of Eynsham for a load of timber 4s which he promiseth to pay this present night".

In Eynsham the sale of timber marked by the churchwardens at Whitsuntide was a custom continued from the days of the abbey's control, and was a prime source of income for the church at this time and throughout the 17th century.

The churchwardens also had to report on the other people of the parish, and this was not a pleasant task, for they were usually in office only for a year at a time, and there would be plenty of opportunity for reprisal by others later! Everyone had to attend church on Sundays and Holy Days, and receive Holy Communion at Easter if over the age of 16. They were supposed to know by heart the Lord's Prayer, the Ten Commandments, the Articles of Faith, and the Catechism. Although they were not allowed to work on Sundays, they were allowed to play sports and games after the Service. Many, like our Thomas Crispe, were brought before the Court for failure to attend church, and there are some interesting excuses from other parts of the county from two important Oxfordshire trades, wool and brewing. A man from Oxford said that he set his rack (the frame for stretching cloth) on Sunday mornings before Service-

"as do most of the fullers in England, otherwise they cannot keep promise with their customers as there are so few fine days".

John Collie, a brewer, says that he cannot come to church as oft as he would because-

"when he doeth begin to put fire under the furnace, he cannot depart from it neither by day or night until his burden be further, nor any other company that are with him, and by that means is somewhat slack in coming to church as all these of that trade are; but he denies that he absents himself in contempt of the Queen's Laws".

Ringers who enjoyed their bellringing and tried to ring on the eves of Saints' days, which was forbidden, would say that they were ringing for a wedding. They maintained that their ringing on November 17th was for the Queen's Accession -- it was in fact the feast of St. Hugh of Lincoln. This probably happened in Eynsham because here there would have been a special affection for St. Hugh who was made Bishop of Lincoln by Henry II at Eynsham in 1186.

Other Eynsham people mentioned in this book are: William and Joanna Wilkins, Giles Goram, John Day, John Busby, Margaret Grove and Margaret Gibbert. This may be useful to anyone researching family history, as our Parish Registers survive only from the 17th century.

I think the Eynsham churchwardens must have turned a deaf ear to village gossip for no cases of immorality are reported in the 1584 book for Eynsham, yet this accounts for a great number of the cases reported from other parishes. However towards the end occur these two somewhat intriguing entries.

"In December, John Garratt of Oxford reported that, at the request of Mr. Bellingham's man, one Hugh, he went to Dumbleton with a woman great with child, one Margaret, who was brought to this respondent on Botley Hills in the way between Botley and Eynsham, and there the said Hugh did offer this respondent 40s to carry the said woman to Dumbleton and further confesses that the said Margaret told him that Mr. Bellingham was father to the child".

An entry on the next page is as follows:-

"John Foxley, Vicar of Beckley denies that he solemnized matrimony between one John Garratt and Margaret Borne at Dumbleton in Gloucestershire, in Binsey or elsewhere".

Penance was the punishment meted out by the court and, if this was public, it meant that the Vicar read out the details of the fault in church before the whole congregation. The person would then have to ask for forgiveness to God and to his neighbours, and the Lord's Prayer would be said.

This act bock gives us just a tantalizing glimpse of life in Eynsham and Oxfordshire in 1584. All the excuses they thought up then gives them a vitality which enables us to reach back over 400 years, and we can imagine ourselves saying much the same sorts of things.

If you would like to learn more about the Archdeacon's Court, this act bock for 1584, transcribed by E.R. Brinkworth, is in the Central Library, Westgate, Oxford.

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Item in the Churchwardens' Accounts about 300 years ago.

An account of the Church Goods and Utensills taken April 18, 1682.

Imprimis-Two Silver Chalices with Covers.

Item- Three pewter flaggons.

Item- One pewter Bason.

Item- Two pewter plates.

Item- One Carpet for the Communion Table.

Item- Two Towells and two napkins of Holland.

Item- One Holland Table Cloath.

Item- Two pulpit Cushions and one Cloath of Velvet.

Item- Two Black Pall Cloaths.

Item- One Great Church Bible of the Last edition.

Item- Tenn Leather Bucketts.

Item- One Ladder of thirty-four Rounds.

Item- Two Common Prayer Books with a Psalter.

Item- One Surplisse.

Item- One pair of Scales and weights.

A large, stylized cursive signature of John Rogers, written in black ink. The signature is highly decorative with large loops and flourishes.

Vicar  
(facsimile of signature)

The other signatories being Thomas Browne, Thomas Wise, Richard Godwin, 'Thomas Ailing and John Bartholomew.

## NINETEENTH CENTURY EYNESHAM

### Personalised index of the census (and other records)

by Edna Mason

Every ten years householders have to fill in census forms giving details of everybody in their households, so that the size of the population can be known, and estimates made of future social requirements. But when sufficient time has elapsed the information on the forms is an invaluable source for social historians.

The first national census was taken in 1801 and since then every ten years except for 1941. The returns for the first four censuses were destroyed after their contents had been analysed, but since 1841 the forms have been kept, strictly locked away for a hundred years, after which time they are available to the public. So now there are five censuses which can be studied, and which give a great deal of information about the lives of people in the 19th century. The early enumerators were rarely welcomed and, as late as 1841, some still demanded police protection. There are many inaccuracies in an age when only a minority were able to read and write, and names often appear phonetically. 'Fibe' (Phoebe) and 'Hennery' are among the easier variants. But as the censuses progressed they generally became more accurate - and legible - and more information was given. The 1841 census gives only approximate ages and no place of birth; but from 1851 the head of the family was listed first, with his age, marital status, occupation and place of birth. Underneath were all the members of his household with similar details and including their relationship to the head.

The Eynsham History Group became involved with the 19th century censuses after Victoria County History researcher Chris Day suggested some kind of local index based on 19th century records, and OLHA started its programme of transcribing and indexing the 1851 census for the whole county. We decided to start on that census and then possibly to go onto the others, and this work developed into a scheme to put onto a card index everybody mentioned in all the available censuses, and to add information gained from other sources.

For the 1851 census we were able to borrow a film and reader and a team was soon formed to do the transcription. For the other censuses this was not so easy, as the work had to be done in Westgate library, but by then enough interest was aroused for one or two members to agree to undertake the rest of the transcriptions.

Transferring the information to the cards or slips is something which can be done at home, and soon there was a team of about 20 people willing to work on this. Wherever possible, 'slippers' chose a road or part of a road, perhaps because they themselves live there, or are members of a family that lived there in the last century. They then keep to the same area for all the census records. This can prove complicated because the enumerators did not always follow the same route. They might go down one side of the road and back on the other, or cross over several times, and there nearly always seem to have been some houses left out, and dealt with on a second journey. The number of people who moved either to or from the village or into another part of it makes identification of a part of a road difficult, but most 'slippers' do have some families whom they can watch 'grow up'.

The front of the cards is planned so that researchers can pick out individual pieces of information at a glance. So the name and often a brief note of identity goes in the top left-hand corner, with up to five rows of census information across the centre, and the date and place of birth at the bottom. A completed card for somebody who lived in the same street in Eynsham throughout the period of the censuses could look like this:

MANN				
John (S. of Thomas)				
	f 76	1841	Acre End St.	scholar
45	f 93	1851	Acre End St.	farmer's boy
49	f 96	1861	Acre End St.	farm lab.
48	f 80	1871	Acre End St.	hay trusser
46	f 91	1881	Acre End St.	(living with son + d.-in-law)
b. Cassington 1838				

In fact very few people would stay in the same house or road all their lives, and people who moved to different parts of the village will finish with more than one card. So when all the census records have been 'slipped', the cards will be collected together, and the 'slippers' will have to relinquish their areas, but will then take a letter or letters of the alphabet that interests them. The cards will be sorted alphabetically and, where necessary, the information from several cards will be brought together. It should not be difficult to establish that, for instance, the Thomas Smith living with his father in Abbey Street as a 7-year old 'scholar' in 1841, and helping him in his work as a cobbler in 1851, is the same Thomas Smith, now married and with two young children, working as a cobbler and living in Queen Street in 1861.

In order to help with this identification, and to find other details not given in the census returns, we have now started to examine the parish registers. The information they give can be incorporated in a number of ways. The baptismal dates are useful when, as not infrequently happens, there are discrepancies in the ages given in the different censuses. There are a number of children, too, whose lives did not extend to a census year, and who would not otherwise be included. Many people died during the forty years and if, for instance, John Mann had died in 1867, the date of his death would be entered instead of the 1871 census entry. The greatest help from the registers will probably come from the marriage records. Girls who married and stayed in the village can be cross-referenced, and those who left can have a note of their husband's place of residence inserted.

Examination of the parish registers revealed that less than half the century had been transcribed and indexed, so a volunteer was sought (and found!) to continue the transcripts to at least the end of the century. With the information collected by that stage, we should have a good record of all the families in the village. Then other sources can be explored. The Nonconformist records have proved disappointing because, although there were both Methodist and Baptist congregations in Eynsham during the last century, there do not appear to be any personal records. But there are local directories which will be helpful in locating individual houses and families and local newspapers can add items of information.

These can be put on the back of the card, where the layout need not be standardised. Here details can be given of people who married several times - two or three marriages during a lifetime were not uncommon in an age when death often came early - or information collected from people whose families have long been in the village. So we can give background to the facts recorded on the fronts of the cards, and build up a fuller picture of life in Victorian Eynsham.

The project is an exciting one. It involves people who have never researched before and who, now their interest has been kindled, are asking questions about houses, roads, 'their' families, and many other details of village life. We have discovered trades, such as slop-makers and rope winders, that we never knew existed. Old names for closes and lanes that seem to have disappeared have prompted us to search them out, and those of us working on the project are looking at our surroundings with a new and more informed interest. Finally we are assembling a wealth of information which will be invaluable not only to the demographer but to anyone who wishes in the future to research or write about a variety of aspects of 19th century Eynsham life.

### 100 years ago

The early census returns show that large numbers were then employed on the land; 'Ag. Lab.' (short for 'agricultural labourer') being the most common male occupation declared on the returns.

The newspapers of the time may provide additional information.

For instance, 100 years ago, two 'Ag.labs' died as a result of similar but separate accidents - falling off hayricks. In early July 1884, Thomas Styles fell and later died in the Radcliffe Infirmary. A week earlier Edward Viner fell on a Friday, appeared to recover, but by Monday was paralysed. He was taken by cart to the Radcliffe but died on the way at Cassington.

## THE WESLEYAN CHAPEL, EYNESHAM

Origins, 1884

by Brian Atkins

The Eynsham History Group's 25th anniversary party will take place on May 18, 1984 in St. Leonard's Church Hall in Thames Street. By a curious coincidence this building was erected 100 years ago, in the summer of 1884. The following brief account of its origins, as a Wesleyan Chapel, is based largely on a lengthy article in the Oxford Chronicle and Berks and Bucks Gazette of June 7, 1884. I am grateful to Edna Mason for drawing *my* attention to the coincidence and to the newspaper report.

For a year or two Eynsham Methodists had met in the Mission House (?) but, by 1884, this building was no longer large enough for their needs. A site for a new Wesleyan Chapel was sought, £100 was raised locally, and the Connexial Fund *was* approached.

On the morning of Whit Monday 1884, the children of the Wesleyan Sunday School paraded through the village and, in the afternoon, a ceremony took place on a site in Thames Street, acquired at a cost of 200, considered to be 'dear' but 'occupying a good position'. The Chapel was to be 'a brick structure with stone dressings of the ordinary character, with a classroom at the back'; and to be built by Mr. Wilkins of Eynsham at an estimated cost of £487. It *was* to seat 250 people.

Among those present at the ceremony were the clerics Hugh Price Hughes, Macdonald Munro, J.Walton, and J.Bond, and Messrs. James Nix, Josiah Nix, James Boffin, W. Sawyer, Slaughter (Oxford), Brayne (Stroud), Weller (Birmingham), Harris, Danbury, etc.

The formalities began with a hymn and a prayer, followed by a speech by the Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, - "...when we came to Eynsham, we as Methodists were the friends of all and the enemies of none. If we came here, it was not in any opposition to any other kind of Church ...But there were a number of persons in Eynsham who desired that we should come, and who went to no other place of worship, and that was the reason".

The foundation stone was laid by Mr. Weller of Birmingham, and eight memorial stones by other invited guests. 'A number of Sunday School children then came up with purses with various sums, which they laid upon the stone bearing the date. An element of amusement was here imparted into the proceedings by the laying of a number of guinea bricks'.

After a speech by the Rev.J.Bond (who reminded his audience that John Wesley had preached his first sermon only two miles away at South Leigh, but as long ago as 1725), the assembly adjourned to Mr. Blake's barn 'where tea had been provided under the direction of Mr. Boffin, and to which 500 sat down'.

After tea, and exhortations by the Rev. Hughes and the Treasurer, Mr. James Nix, further funds amounting to £225 6s 10d were collected or promised which, added to the £227 2s 7d already obtained, proved more than enough to secure grants promised from the Connexial Fund. It only remained to raise a further £122 10s during the next ten years ... "less money than they would pay for the house they at present occupied at that time".

The proceedings then ended and 'those who had come from Oxford returned by a special train which, with commendable foresight, had been provided for the occasion'.

- - - - -

The building was erected with remarkable speed, and the first service was held on Sept.1; the Rev. Hughes preaching. After tea, Mr. Charles Early of Witney presided at a public meeting which was addressed by Rev. Hughes, Rev. Macdonald Munro, William Phipps, Charles Early, James Nix and others.

In 1979 the Chapel was sold for 6,100 to the P.C.C. for use as St. Leonard's Church Hall; it was refurbished in 1980.

In medieval times Eynsham Abbey was no less anxious to attract benefactions than was the Wesleyan Chapel 100 years ago and is the Parish Church today! In the 12th century Edith D'Oyley, wife of the founder of the great Oseney Abbey, gave to the Eynsham monks one of her 'villeins', together with his wife, children and all his cattle.

Match that, supporters of St. Leonard's Restoration Appeal !

**MEMORIES OF EYNHAM**

Miss Swann's school

by Jean Buttrick (née Sawyer)

Just before the Second World War, I was sent to a private school which was at Red Thorn House on the corner of Mill Street and Newland Street. The name of the teacher who ran the school was a Miss Swann, very much loved by all her pupils. The school had two classrooms. One was called the 'music' room where we spent most of the morning reading and writing. The large one of the two was mostly used for the afternoon lessons. We children had to sit at small wooden desks with little inkwells which had to be filled up with fresh ink every day. In the winter months Miss Swann would light a coal fire in the old grate which did not give out much heat, as I remember being very cold in that classroom. But nevertheless I enjoyed every minute at Miss Swann's school.

The entrance (now bricked up) was at the beginning of Newland Street (Fig.1) and we had to go through the lobby - at that time it was furnished with pegs for coats and hats - then into the small 'music' room. It was a very dark room. In one corner stood Miss Swann's upright piano which had brass candle holders at each side. In the dark winter months she would light each candle which would throw soft shadows over the little classroom.

In the evenings Miss Swann would give piano lessons to local children. In this room the desks were very long so that all of us used to sit together in rows, about fourteen in all. Miss Swann would sit in an old Windsor chair facing us. Sometimes she would read stories such as 'The Wind in the Willows'.

In the summer months we used to have some of our lessons outside in her garden or sometimes up in the orchard. We would all sit under the huge walnut trees, no longer there. In the summer months the small orchard was singly covered all over with little white daisies and golden buttercups, with sometimes a cowslip or two.

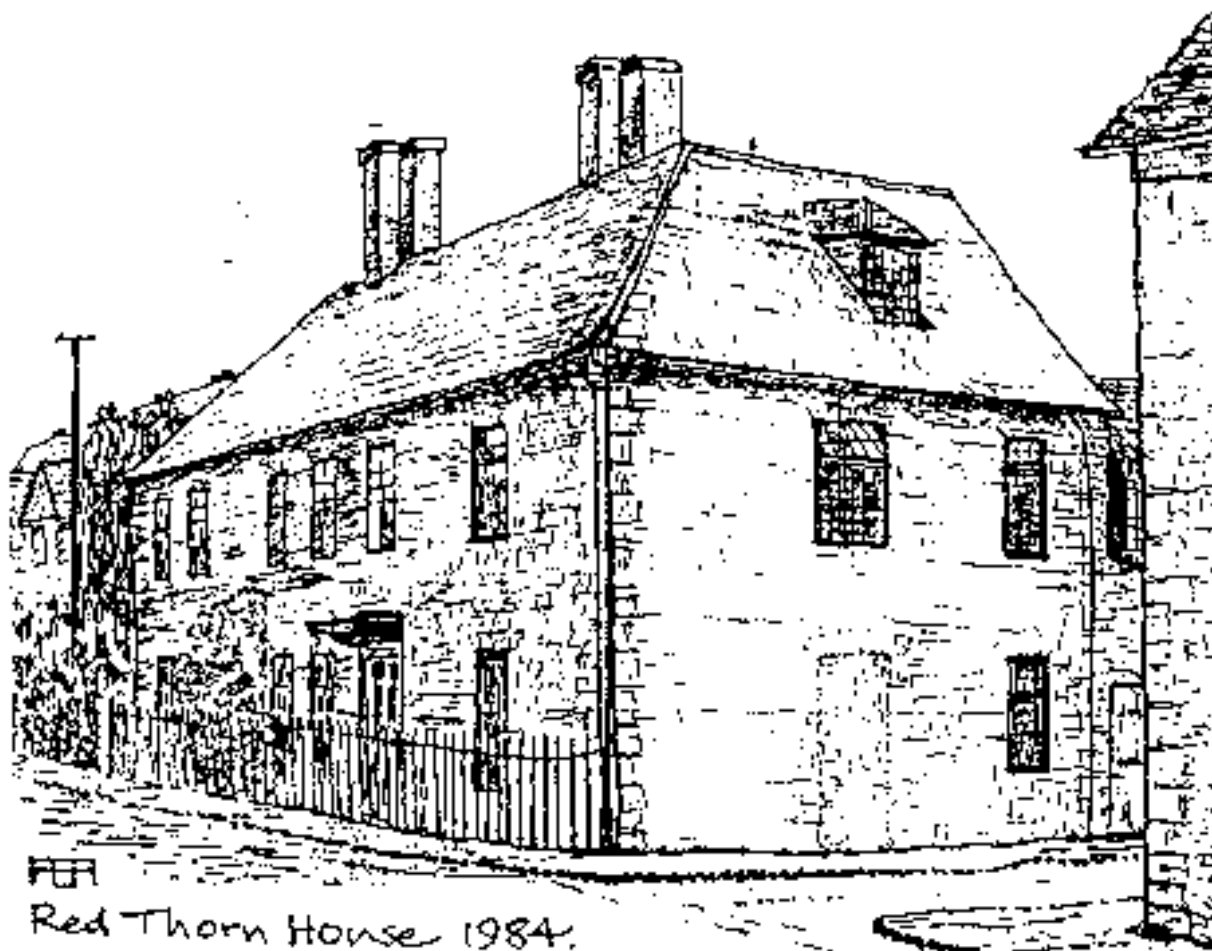
Miss Swann was a small lady and very likeable. She would teach us children all about plants and herbs. Once or twice a year we would go for a ramble. The girls were particularly fond of flowers, birds and insects. The small boys would go bird's nesting, or else

collect mushrooms, sloes or blackberries to take home to their mothers. The thing that I liked was to go around the fields to see how many dog roses I could find, and to pick them. By the time we had got back to school all the petals had dropped off!

In those days we children would glance out of the classroom window to watch Mr. Banting's cows being driven down Mill Street, around the school corner, down Newland Street, and into the farmyard to be milked by the cowman, Mr. Jack Pinker. There was not much traffic at this time, so no-one such worried about the cows, or the carts carrying hay, swedes or dung that were part of village life.

Miss Swann also taught a lot of Eynsham children at Sunday School, and she did a great deal for St. Leonard's Church. On Ascension Day all the children from her school had to go to the Church for a small service and, when it was over, back to the school and try to write down all that the Rev. Smith had told us.

All the children thought a lot of Miss Swann, and she showed great kindness towards them. My family lived in Mill Street then, two doors past Jen's shop (as it now is), so it was not far to walk to school. But the day came when I had to leave, which I did with much sadness. I have to this day wonderful memories of Miss Swann's little school, and of the village as it used to be.



# THE HISTORY OF THE EYNSHAM HISTORY GROUP

by Brian Atkins

Two series of lectures given under the auspices of the Workers' Educational Association in 1950 and 1958 provided much of the inspiration to form a local history organization, which officially came into being in early 1959, apparently with some 20 to 30 members.

On the occasion of its 25th anniversary it seems appropriate to provide a brief summary of the E.H.G.'s own history, culled from old minute books and files carefully maintained by a succession of diligent secretaries!

Over the years, certain of our activities have remained essentially unchanged. These include the fortnightly meetings, usually with a guest speaker, held in September, October, November and December (our 'Autumn term:'), and in January, February and March (our 'Winter') term; and our meeting ground - the Bartholomew School. We have held approximately 280 meetings of this kind, an average of eleven a year, which, for those who enjoy statistical data, *may* be crudely classified into the following groupings:-

Dealing essentially with Eynsham.....	23%
.....with Oxford and/or Oxfordshire..	40%
.....with other parts of the U.K.....	14%
.....with foreign parts.....	87
Other talks, not classifiable geographically.....	10%
Business only meetings.....	5%

Organized outings (excluding 'walks'-see below) have numbered some 75, an average of 3 per year. These have taken place usually, but not always, during the summer months.

Between 1966 and 1969, five theatrical 'outings' were organized, variously to Stratford, to the Playhouse, and to 'Son et Lumiere' productions at Blenheim.

Between 1967 and 1976, seven annual dinners were held, usually in January and, more often than not, at the Swan Hotel. Since 1977, an annual wine and cheese party has replaced the dinner event, and these parties have been held in the sports pavilion and in private homes.

Officers of the E.H.G. 1959-84

<u>President</u>	Mr .H.C.D.Cooper	1974-
<u>Chairmen</u>	Mr .H.C.D.Cooper	1959-74
	Mr .B.R.Streat	1974-80
	Dr .F.B.Atkins	1980-
<u>Vice-Chairmen</u>	Mr .C.B.Jackson	1962-65
	Lady E.de Villiers	1965-69
	Mr .B.R.Streat	1969-74
	Mr .P.Carlton	1974-76
	Mr .A.E.Smith	1976-78
	Dr .F.B.Atkins	1978-80
	Mrs .E.Mason	1980-
<u>Secretaries</u>	Mrs .S.B.Jones	1959-60
	Mrs .S.Howlett	1960-75
	Mrs .J.Smith	1975-76
	Miss H.M.Cooke	1976-
<u>Treasurers</u>	Mr .W.E.Cleaver	1959-74
	Mr .A.H.Richards	1974-76
	Dr .F.B.Atkins	1976-78
	Miss J.Gordon-Cummings	1978-79
	Mr .M.Harris	1979-83
	Mr .G.A.Bradley	1983-
<u>Social Secretaries</u>	Mr .H.E.F.Whelan	1959-60
	Mrs .S.Howlett	1960-61
	Mrs .S.B.Jones	1961-?
	v o i d ?	
	Mrs .Faulkner	1964-75
	Mrs .B.Hastings	1975-

Annually since 1973, the ladies of the Group have decorated a window of the Parish Church for the July Flower Festival.

Group projects have included researching and publishing the booklet on the Swinford Toll Bridge (see Bibliography # 11), and a leaflet of dates (#12); transcribing and indexing the census returns (see article on page 27), and recording the graveyard inscriptions (in progress); and the mounting of a few small exhibitions.

It is clear, however, that the success of the Group over the years has depended almost entirely on the hard work of its Secretaries and Social Secretaries (names overleaf) in making arrangements for speakers and outings. This is time-consuming Labour, requiring imagination and much correspondence and telephoning.

Our subscription has always been very modest, rising (or perhaps falling in real terms!) from 6s per annum in 1959 to £2 per annum in 1983/4. A minimum of formality, and hence of paperwork, has kept costs low, and the main outgoings have been the hire of our meeting room and occasional expenses and fees for visiting speakers.

I referred to organized walks, and these represent one way in which our activities have perhaps most changed. Between 1959 and 1970 (when the Eynsham Society (C.P.R.E.) was founded) the E.H.G. acted as a self-appointed watch-dog on environmental matters. Thus we find members carrying out some 25 walks along local footpaths and other rights of way, and reporting abuses to the authorities. In addition letters were written to M.P.s, the County Council, the District Council, and the Parish Council on a variety of matters such as proposals to develop the Nursery site (1964) and the Vicarage orchard (1967 onwards); and to demolish Red Thorn House (1964) and the last ancient barn in Back Lane (1963). In the case of the barn, at least a carved coat of arms, originally in the Abbey, was rescued and set above the door of the Bartholomew Room at the instigation of the E.H.G., and thanks to funds provided by the late Mr.A.C.Coates, then a member.

Some of the worst horrors that threatened the village failed to materialize, for which we can, I think, take some credit. Other projects went ahead despite the protests of the E.H.G., but it is clear from the minute books that much praiseworthy effort was expended. Since about 1970, the Eynsham Society has rightly taken over this watchdog role.

Now for two or three interesting or amusing items in the old Minute books.

I was surprised to discover that in 1962 we amalgamated with the Long Hanborough Historical Society.

A suggestion by the Parish Council to celebrate, in 1971, Eynsham's first entry into recorded history ("Egonesham" A.D.571; Anglo-Saxon Chronicles) was rejected by the History Group on the chauvinistic grounds that the event was a military victory by the Saxons over the British!

On 18 Nov. 1965, a talk by a Mr. Moss about his work for the blind, was postponed because the school was 'in total darkness owing to a power failure'!

In 1960 the Group discussed the possibility of asking speakers to deposit written versions of their talks. What an archive that would have generated twenty-five years on!

What now of the future? If the Eynsham Record becomes established as an annual publication, we should enhance our reputation in local history circles; and I hope that our own journal will inspire more members to research and Publish - indeed the Record will not succeed unless contributions are forthcoming!

One way in which we should perhaps be somewhat concerned for the future arises from the present age distribution of our membership. Where are the young local historians eager to carry on the torch? Should we not be doing more to attract young adults, even children, as members, and thus to stimulate interest among the next generation?

#### OBITUARIES

##### Miss Margaret Foote: 1899-1983

Margaret Foote, a member of the E.H.G. for many years, had a love for local history, and an especial awareness of the historical importance of her home, Lord's Farm. It is entirely in character that she has bequeathed the latter, with adjacent cottages and barn, to the Oxford Preservation Trust; her Abbey relics to the County Museum at Woodstock; and her history notebooks and files to the E.H.G. The latter include notes taken at about 30 of our meetings between 1959 and 1977.

##### Mr.W.E.Cleaver: 1888-1984

Mr. Cleaver, who came to Eynsham in 1952, was our Treasurer from 1959 to 1974, when he was 85 years old.

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compiled by Brian Atkins

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# EYNESHAM HISTORY GROUP

Founded 1959

The E.H.G. exists primarily to encourage studies in, and to promote knowledge of the history of the village and parish of Eynsham, Oxon, by means of regular meetings (normally at least ten), with invited speakers, during the winter and spring; and occasional outings during the summer.

New members are welcome.

The current subscription is £2 per annum (excluding the Record).

Please apply to the Secretary for further details.

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