

THE EYNSHAM RECORD

Number 3 – 1986

**Front cover: Eynsham's policeman 1863-71.** [see note 1 below]

Thomas Savings, Oxfordshire Police Constable No.16.

He is probably wearing the silver pocket watch and chain presented to him by the people of Eynsham in 1867.

SEE PAGES 27-29

Photographed in 1888 by G. Coles of Oxford.

Courtesy of Sgt.D.J.Talbot and the Thames Valley Police Museum at Sulhamstead, Berks.

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## NOTES

1. Images have been optimised throughout for online viewing. The front cover image on coloured paper was barely usable!
2. Typographic errors in the printed edition, where identified, have been corrected in this digitised version.
3. Errors of fact or interpretation in the original which have since come to light are repeated but followed by an amendment in curly brackets {thus}
4. The pages are not available for printing "as is", though you may copy/paste sections into another document.
5. Back numbers of the Eynsham Record are available in **print** for £1 plus p&p.
6. Contacts:
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7. The Record is now **also available on CD**, for higher resolution images and cross-file searching: please email [eynsham-online@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:eynsham-online@hotmail.co.uk)

# **THE EYNHAM RECORD**

**Number 3: 1986**

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## EDITORIAL

This year we celebrate the anniversaries of the Domesday survey of 1086 and the election in Eynsham abbey of [St.] Hugh as Bishop of Lincoln in 1186 (see pp.3-4). We had hoped, too, to see this year the publication of Vol.XII of the Victoria County History of Oxfordshire in which Eynsham will feature, but it seems that this treat will be somewhat delayed. Perhaps the authors have discovered more to write about than they had supposed!

Our own researches, represented in these pages, continue to span the centuries. Half of this winter's meetings have involved talks given by our own members. It should not be long before the huge task (very much a group project) of indexing the 19th century census returns will be completed. Men, I imagine, the fun can start -analysing the censuses for the age, gender, occupation and mobility patterns of our Victorian predecessors.

It appears now that, after some struggles, we have succeeded in 'saving' for the village the abbey stones in the old vicarage garden: And this story will be told when the exercise has been safely concluded.

Eynsham's buildings are shortly to be professionally assessed for purposes of revising the 'listed buildings' registers. If any readers would like to call to the attention of the consultants any less obvious internal or 'rear-of-building' architectural feature they consider worthy of listing, would they please contact our Secretary as soon as possible.

The Record received favourable reviews in the journals of the Oxfordshire Local History Association and the Oxfordshire Family History Society. At the time of going to press we are asked to send copies to the prestigious Harvard University Library, Mass. U.S.A!

F.B.A.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks are due to all contributors; for articles, which often represent the fruits of long labours, and for 'snippets', which are no less welcome and which help to make a more attractive and varied presentation.

Mrs. Carlton's article on P.C.Thomas Savings would hardly have been possible without the most generous help from Sgt. D.J.Talbot, Curator of the Thames Valley Police Museum at Sulhamstead, who has provided photographs, negatives and photocopies of documentation. Permission to reproduce one of these items on the front cover is hereby acknowledged.

Mr.D.E.Wixey of the Eynsham Fire Brigade kindly made possible the photograph on p.18 by posing himself and both engines on a Sunday afternoon!

We thank Lens of Sutton for permission to reproduce the photograph on p.22.

## OBITUARIES

### MISS IDA MAY HOPKINS 1893-1985

Miss Hopkins's childhood memories of Pinkhill and Eynsham at the turn of the century were published in the Record last year. They form a delightful and charming account. Teacher, musician, Methodist and stalwart of the Women's Institute, she was also a member of the E.H.G., and attended meetings until a few years ago, even through crippled with arthritis. F.B.A.

### MRS. MILDRED HARRIS 1907-1986

Harris is, of course, an old village name, but the Harrises of queen Street are the local history enthusiasts. I remember Mrs. Harris's late husband as the most consistent of attenders at our meetings in the '70s. It was his collection of locally-found coins that Mrs. Harris so proudly talked to me about and loaned for cataloguing last year. Our condolences to her daughter, June, who continues the family's interest in village history. F.B.A.

# ANNIVERSARIES

In 1986 Eynsham historians celebrate both a 900th anniversary of national importance, and an 800th anniversary having a particularly local flavour.

## ST. HUGH OF LINCOLN (1140-1200)

This year Eynsham celebrates the octo-centenary of a day in June 1186 when Hugh, Prior of the Charterhouse of Witham, Somerset, was elected Bishop of Lincoln in Eynsham Abbey. Through the writings of Abbot Adam of Eynsham, his chaplain and biographer, we know of the reknown in which St. Hugh was held throughout France and England for his lifelong battle against corruption and tyranny. His activities have been thought by some historians to have influenced actions leading to the signing of the Magna Carta.

Joan Weedon.

## THE DOMESDAY SURVEY 1086

### Translation of the entry for Eynsham

The Bishop of Lincoln holds Eglesham [Eynsham] himself and the monk Columban from him. 15½ hides belonging to this church. Land for 18 ploughs; he found as many. In lordship, land for 2 ploughs.

Now in lordship 3 ploughs.

3 men-at-arms with 34 villagers and 33 smallholders have 15 ploughs.

A mill at 12s. and 450 eels; meadow, 255 acres; pasture, 100 acres; woodland 1½ leagues long and 1 league and 2 furlongs wide; value when stocked 25s.

The value is and was £20.

[modified from: John Morris. Domesday Book, Oxfordshire, p.6. Phillimore, 1978.]

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As part of a national project, organized by the B.B.C., 1st year pupils at the Bartholomew School have recently carried out a modern 'Domesday Survey' of the parish. The study has included such matters as today's population, land use and amenities. The project leader was Alex Holmes. The results are to be combined with those from other schools to form a B.B.C. Schools video.

Information kindly provided by Mr.Gerald Goldstone.

# A MONASTIC POT-POURRI

In the Middle Ages ... preachers and homilists were always warning people - especially women - about the dangers of elaborate coiffures. One woman from Eynsham arrived late at Mass because she had spent so much time dressing and the Devil clambered into her hair in the shape of a spider....The consternation can be imagined. The usual antidotes of exorcism and holy water proved useless and the fiend was not removed until the local abbot had held the Sacrament before her.

Extract from The Owl's Watchsong - a study of Istanbul by J.A. Cudden. Barrie and Rockcliff, London. 1960.

William Bainbridge

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We have in the Oseney Cartulary a charter, hitherto unknown, which shows that in the confusion of Stephen's reign [1135-54] Eynsham claimed the possession of Holy Trinity, St.Clement's and St. Mildred's ... (in Oxford). We do not know on what the claim was based, but it is so weak that when, about 1142, the parties were summoned to the presence of the Bishop of Winchester, at that time legate, that he might try the case, the abbot of Eynsham failed to appear.

Extract from Medieval Oxford. by H.E.Salter, Oxford Historical Society, 1936.

William Bainbridge

"The abbot's sister," complained the monks of Eynsham to Bishop Atwater [in 1520], "dwells in the precincts and is very burdensome to the monastery." She and several of her relations are said to be kept at its expense.

Extract from English Monks and the Suppression of the Monasteries. by G. Baskerville. Jonathan Cape. 1937.

Rev. F.J.Bacon

# EYNESHAM CHARTERS

## 2. Provision for retired abbots

(Eynsham Cartulary, no.452: Peckham's Letters, no.609)

by Eric Gordon

Abbot Adam, of Eynsham, was deposed from office in 1228 (see Eynsham Record, no.2, 1985, pp.4-9). What became of him?\* If he had behaved scandalously, he might have fled, or been expelled, or perhaps demoted to some distant and dependent priory. It seems, however, that he had been incompetent in business-management. If such was the case, he was probably allotted special quarters in Eynsham abbey, and allowed to remain. We may perhaps compare John of Stanton, prior of Daventry, who retired (though not in disgrace) in 1281 and was given quite a suite there - 4 'rooms' (camera, solarium, cellarium, capella), adjoining one another, with a separate entrance, and under the monks' dormitory (Rolls and Register of Bishop Oliver Sutton, 1280-99, ed. R.M.T. Hill, II, pp.xix, 10-13: Lincs.Rec.Soc.43). Abbots, by this time, enjoyed a higher standard of living than the ordinary 'cloister-monks'. Adam would have accommodation distinct from the abbot (to one side) and from the rank and file (to the other). It is not hard to imagine the potential tensions, inherent in such a situation, within the confines of a monastery-wall.

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\* One standard authority makes a slip. It says that at his deposition Adam became 'a monk of Crowland'. (Heads of Religious Houses: England and Wales: 940-1216, eds. D.Knowles, C.N.L.Brooke & V.C.M.London, Cambridge, 1972, p.49). They refer to a footnote in the printed edition of Walter de Coventry (Rolls Ser. 58a, 1872, p.xli, n.2). But the note itself was quoting the as yet unprinted Barnwell Chronicle (College of Arms, Arundel MS 10, folio 110 verso). And the Barnwell Chronicle was saying that Nicholas, Adam's successor at Eynsham, was 'a monk at Crowland'. [Adam abbas de Eynsham ob multas et varias causas a domino episcopo Lincolniensi et conventu suo eidem objectas deponitur, cui subrogatur vir venerandus prior Frestoniae Nicholaus nomine, monachus Croylandiae. (Freiston priory, Lincs., was a dependency of Crowland abbey)].

All we know about Adam's condition comes from two royal orders of 1233. One gave him a general safe-conduct: clearly he was still travelling about. The other excused him from attendance in person at shire and hundred courts, in connection with the manor of Rollright (probably Little Rollright). He must have been allocated the revenues of Eynsham abbey's manor there. A bailiff would manage it for him. (Calendar of Patent Rolls, Henry III, 1232-47, Pub.Rec.Office, 1906, pp.14,16).

A settlement with one of Adam's successors, John of Oxford (abbot of Eynsham 1268-81), indicates the type of arrangement thought appropriate. John was probably in a better position for haggling: clearly he was a hard nut to crack!

This is written, that all may know, that since Brother John of Oxford, late abbot of Eynsham monastery, had of his own free will resigned from office, and since we, Oliver, by divine permission bishop of Lincoln, had by our letter bidden the next abbot and the convent of that place to weigh up all proper considerations, and to deal with the matter of making due provision for the said John, discussing it with each other and with him, and then to acquaint us with their decisions, and since the said abbot and convent, handling the said provision, had in the end been completely unable to agree upon a firm arrangement, as to what should be done, they submitted themselves totally and unconditionally to our decision, despatching to us, to receive our decision, two of their fellow-brethren from the same monastery, representatives specially appointed for this business, with letters patent confirmed by the seals of the abbot and convent, whilst the said John made a personal appearance on his own behalf, expressly agreeing to accept our decision in the matter. We therefore have taken into account the resources of this monastery, and have weighed up all the circumstances and living-conditions of the said John, which are relevant to this business, and now, ever-mindful of the presence of God, we bid that provision in this case be as follows: to wit, that the said brother John may, for the duration of his life, have for his dwelling those premises, with their outbuildings, within Eynsham monastery, in which Nicholas, aforetime abbot of the same monastery, was accustomed to dwell during his lifetime:

let him also have continually with him, as companion, one fellow-monk from the convent, assigned and brought to him by the abbot then in office:

likewise let him have one squire (scutiferum), or clerk (clericum), in place of a squire, and one servant(garcionem), who can together provide him with essential services:

the same John shall also have, for his personal sustenance, from the abbey store-room, day by day, in bread and in beer, the allowance of two monks, to wit, two loaves per day of monks' bread and four gallons of conventual beer:

and for his kitchen and other personal needs he shall receive ten marks sterling from the manor of South Stoke, at two annual term-ends, to wit, five marks from the annual render at St.John Baptist's day, and five marks from the render at Christmas Day, the first term-end of this arrangement being the feast of St.John Baptist, in the year of Our Lord, 1281:

and the fellow-monk who is his companion shall receive from the house, in such food, drink, raiment etc., as is essential for his sustenance, precisely the same amount as any other monk in the said monastery:

whilst the said squire and servant shall likewise, in all necessities, receive exactly the same amount as the squires and servants of the abbot:

the same John shall also have from the house, in addition to the aforesaid, pottage, salt, fuel, straw, and other minor things of this kind, whatever are essential to him, but unreasonable to elaborate one by one here:

together with those he shall have eight pounds of wax each year for his candles, a sufficient and dignified amount for himself and his attendants, in so far as reason determines their need.

Now if any ambiguity arises, with regard to these our decisions, or any obscurity, we by these presents expressly reserve its clarification or interpretation to ourselves and our successors.

And because it is our opinion that for a monk to live otherwise than under obedience is not only blame-worthy but ridiculous, we understand that the said John must live under obedience to whomsoever is for the time being abbot of Eynsham.

And with all our might we adjure both the abbot and John himself, in the Lord, that the abbot, as John's deserts demand, fail not to show him kindness and goodwill, and that Brother John himself, to the utmost of his power, study to deserve the abbot's goodwill.

And, what is more, towards each and every one in the convent, as much as in him lies, let him preserve the bond of charity undamaged: and this we urge upon all in the community, that they do likewise towards him.

Now, that this present directive of ours may be given absolute strength and security, we have caused our seal to be affixed to these presents.

Given at Walden, in Essex, on October 23, in the year of Our Lord, 1281, in the second year of our episcopate.

[from the Latin of Salter, Eynsham Cartulary, I, pp.303f: Charter no.452]



The cowl-tweaking devil is still  
very much alive!

From a misericord  
at New College, Oxford  
by courtesy of the Warden and  
Fellows.

Drawing by Gwynneth Gordon

Three years later things were not going well at Eynsham. The archbishop of Canterbury makes an official visitation. The bishop of Lincoln had probably called him in. He takes careful note of everything and writes back. John of Word had become a focus of worldliness and dissension within the abbey. He entertained too lavishly: he drew too heavily upon the abbey-stores: he was little in evidence at the

abbey-prayers. Archbishop John Peckham's letter is eloquent by its silences. Here it is:

Brother JOHN,

by divine permission humble servant of the church of Canterbury,  
primate of all England:

to our beloved sons ... the abbot and convent of Eynsham, in the  
diocese of Lincoln:

greetings to you, and grace, and benediction.

We write about certain matters, which we lighted upon in your house during our recent visitation as archbishop and metropolitan. They are directives which were made by our venerable Brother Oliver, by God's grace lord bishop of Lincoln, concerning the position of Brother John, your erstwhile abbot.

When they were made, they had seemed to be a matter of compassion. And we do not think that the said lord bishop had any other thought in mind. But now that we have looked at the present state of your monastery's affairs, and paid careful attention to the general situation, both of things and people, we have decided that that earlier arrangement must be modified, and that by our authority as archbishop we must decree as follows:

The said Brother John shall continue to have a companion-monk, carefully chosen and assigned to him by the abbot, and changed at least once a year: but the 4 loaves and the 4 gallons of beer, the customary (though not unwasteful) allowance for himself alone, must in future suffice for the companion-monk as well.

On Lord's days, however, and other festival occasions, health permitting, he shall not receive anything to eat in his own room: he shall eat with the other monks in the refectory, both Morning and evening, unless perchance the abbot on such days has caused him to be invited to his own lodging: and, precisely as the remainder of the monks in the house, he shall not eat neat on those days, save by licence of the abbot. For it befits life by the Rule that even greater integrity and more rigid abstinence is demanded of that man to whom more authority is given by his holding the office of abbot.

Now, concerning the money counted out to him, let him be content with 100s. per annum for other necessities, paid in equal portions, at the same term-ends at which he used to receive 10 marks.

As far as firewood is concerned, however, and straw (paleas), and cheese, and butter, these he is to receive from the common store.

And no secular person is to eat with him, except with the abbot's special permission. And this prohibition is to apply even more strictly when it is a case of permission to eat meat with him.

Now the remains from his table are all to be taken off to the abbey's store of alms for the needy.

Furthermore, he himself, together with his companion-monk, is to take part, like the rest of the monks, in the day-offices, and in the night-office as well. And although absence from the night-office may be excused him, because he has to go out through the precincts (per clausuram), absence from the day-offices, except with a legitimate excuse, will certainly be blameworthy, and possibly a matter for damnation, because of the accidie and sloth which are entailed.

Now his squire (armiger), nay rather his clerk (clericus) -for having a clerk more befits an upright religious life, whereas having a squire smacks more of worldly emptiness and pleasure-is to eat with the abbot's household with those of his own standing, and his servant likewise with the abbot's servants. And apart from the constraint of sickness or other urgent need, no other allowance is to be made to them.

And the said clerk (or squire, if, which God forbid, he has a squire), whensoever he is not occupied with attentions to the said Brother John, is to be subject to the abbot's bidding, for the conduct of abbey business, within or without the house ...

Farewell, in Christ and the glorious Virgin. Given at Notley, 10 November, 1284, in the sixth year of our consecration.

[from the Latin of Peckham's Letters, Rolls Ser., 77c, 1885, pp.843-5, no.609: letter sent from Notley (or Nutley) priory, Bucks. (not Essex, as in index to R.S.77c): Peckham himself was a strict Franciscan: the remainder of the letter urges closer oversight of official expenses outside the monastery.]

Brother John, abbot of Eynsham only three years earlier, was now being made to 'toe the line'! And the monks would find a fresh dimension in the ancient words of their nightly Compline: Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may to devour: whom resist, steadfast in the faith.

# **Paid in full**

**—after  
775  
years**

## **A MISTRESS; AND FRESH LIGHT ON A MYSTERY!**

**by Lilian Wright**

After the publication of the first volume of the 'History of the University of Oxford', I tried to find answers to some of the questions raised last, year in the note 'Paid in Full - after 775 years' (Eynsham Record, 2, pp.20-21, 1985) which dealt with the payment by the Treasury in 1984 of £33.08 to the University in settlement of an account which had involved Eynsham Abbey.

It had nothing to do with St.Scholastica's Day, nor/and the deaths of two Oxford students in Eynsham. It started with the episode in 1209 when an Oxford student murdered his mistress and fled, whereupon the Mayor and town officers hanged two innocent students. As a result other students and masters left Oxford and settled in Cambridge and Paris, and because of a Papal interdict (King John's quarrel with Pope Innocent III) nothing could be settled.

However in 1214 the Papal Legate formed a plan by which masters and scholars could return to Oxford. The Bishop of Lincoln was given powers to reinforce ecclesiastical discipline over town, masters and students, and was particularly asked to appoint a Chancellor to have authority over the masters. The town was ordered to pay 52s. a year for ever for the use of poor scholars, and was required to provide a free dinner for 100 of them on St.Nicholas Pay (December 6th). The distribution of the 52s. was to be made by the Abbot of Oseney and the Prior of St.Frideswide acting on the advice of the bishop. This was, in effect, the beginning of the University Chest because the 52s. was

the University's first regular income. In 1240, the then bishop of Lincoln, Robert Grosseteste, instituted a loan chest. The annual income of of 52s.(plus an annual 16s., by now paid in lieu of the free meal), were put into an actual chest which was kept in St.Frideswide's Priory. Any student needing an interest free loan had to pledge a security worth more than the loan. If the loan was not repaid within a year, the University kept the pledge and this was sold to raise more money.

It is still not clear why the disbursement passed from St. Frideswide's Priory to Eynsham Abbey, but presumably it was on the orders of the Bishop of Lincoln.

Reference: The history of the University of Oxford Vol.1 The early Oxford schools. J.I.Catto (Editor). Clarendon Press. 1984.

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That formidable stranger, the " American weed," as it is called (*Anacharis alsinastrum*), obtained a strong footing here —if, indeed, such a method of domiciling could be applied to a plant that seemed to be independent of roots or ground-hold at all ; for though, unhappily, like couch-grass, it grows from a small fragment, it grows on the surface of the water. It had not been introduced into England for more than ten years when it threatened almost to destroy the whole system of internal navigation. Frequently the traffic of slow rivers was obstructed, the currents of minor streams impeded, and isolated ponds were even filled up. Some parts of the Thames, especially near Eynsham, were only traversed with difficulty.

Extract from Rimmer, Alfred. Pleasant spots around Oxford. Cassell, Petter & Galpin. 1878 p.138.

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# THE "FEARFULL FIER AT ENSHAM", WHIT MONDAY 1629

by Jeremy Gibson

One of the staple sources for local historians, the records of Quarter Sessions, survive in Oxfordshire only from 1687. A calendar of the records from the Easter Sessions 1687 to the Trinity Sessions of 1689 is published in Oxfordshire Justices of the Peace in the Seventeenth Century, by Mary Sturge Gretton (Oxfordshire Record Society, Vol. 16, 1934).

What may easily be overlooked (the book has no index) is that Mrs Gretton discovered a Justice's clerk's book of examples of cases, made for his own use as a student in the early seventeenth century. The book, entitled on the cover "Papers concerning Eynsham" is in the Bodleian Library, MSS. Top. Oxon., c.118, where the catalogue more correctly describes it as a Formulary for the use of a J.P. Mrs Gretton transcribes and quotes a number of the examples in Chapter 2 of her book, pages xxx-xlv. However, despite its title, most of the cases cited relate to Standlake and Brighthampton ('Britlington'), and only one directly concerns Eynsham. It may be supposed that the book itself came from an Eynsham attorney's office.

The one Eynsham case is included as an example of 'A Licence to Beg, after a Fire' (pp. xl-xlii), and was chosen because it gave the whole series of connected permissions, even to the Lord Chancellor's vigorous comment upon the last one. The four documents read:

(A) "To the right Ho<sup>ll</sup> Thomas Lord Coventree L<sup>d</sup> Keeper of the greate Seale of Engl.

The Humble petition of R : G. W : P. R : C. S : G. G: W. T : C. T : N. A : H. Em: G. S: W. M : M. & R : H. Inhabitants of Eynsham in the Countie of Oxford.

Shewing that by a late suddayne and fearfull fier happening at Ensham aforesayd the 25th day of May last past not only their dwelling houses together w<sup>th</sup> the greatest parte of their household stuffe come and other necessaryes, but allso divers barnes, Stables, & other out houses, were utterly consumed and burnt downe to the ground amounting in the whole to 976<sup>li</sup> or thereabouts, to their utter undoeing as by the Certificate of his Mattes Justices of that Countie at the last quarter Sessions at Oxford there held the second day of June last appeareth.

They humbly pray that yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>pp</sup><sup>s</sup> would be pleased (according to yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>pp</sup><sup>s</sup> wonted and honorable favor towards others in like distress) to grante yo<sup>r</sup> honors warrant

for his Ma<sup>tes</sup> Pattentes for a protection for a Collection in such Counties & places as yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>pp</sup>e shall thinke fitt and proportionable to so great a loss. And they, their Wives and Children shall dayly pray for your hono<sup>rs</sup> happiness."

(B) " Eynsham fier on Whit Monday 1629.

howses		bays	<i>li</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
1	Ric : Grant lost	17	160	0	0
2	Ric : Castle lost	7	100	0	0
3	George Watkins	15	180	0	0
4	Tho : Napkyn lost	12	80	0	0
5	Emm Gardner	2	10	0	0
6	Michael Moore	6	40	0	0
7	William Parrett lost	20	200	0	0
8	Steven Gomme	6	66	13	4
9	Tho : Cope lost	3	30	0	0
10	Adam Hering lost	7	60	0	0
11	Steven Wigfall	1	10	0	0
12	Rob Hinkes	5	40	0	0

The bays of buildings lost amounteth to the number of 101 bayes.

The whole loss of buildings & goods as it was valleded by Surveyo<sup>rs</sup> amounted to the somme of – 976<sup>li</sup>–13<sup>s</sup>–4<sup>d</sup>"

(C) " To the right Ho<sup>ble</sup> Thomas L<sup>d</sup> Coventree, L<sup>d</sup> Keeper of the great Seale of England.

The humble Certificate of divers Justices of the peace for the Countie of Oxon whose names are heereunder subscribed that one R : G. W : P. R : C. S : G. G : W. T : C. T : N. A : H. Em : G. S : W. M : M. & R : H. of Ensham in the said Countie of Oxon being of honest life and good conversacion, who heeretofore lived well, & maynteyned their charge & were helpfull to others in their necessitie, by casualtie of fier wch hapned on Whit Monday last being the 25th day of May last, between the hovers of 8 & 12 of the Clocke in the forenoone, had their dwelling houses w<sup>th</sup> their barnes stables, & out houses conteyning on the whole 101 bayes of howseing utterly consumed and burnt, & the most parte of all their householdstuffe, besides divers quarters of Wheate, barley and other grayne the whole loss amounting to the some of 976<sup>li</sup> 13<sup>s</sup> 4<sup>d</sup> at the least. By w<sup>ch</sup> untymlly accident they are altogether become unable to maynteyne themselves, their Wives and children, & much less to reedifie thaforsaid buildings, Unlesse yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>pp</sup>e Clemencie in such case used be to them extended by granting his Ma<sup>ties</sup> lettres pattentes for some Collection to be made on their behalfe in such Counties of this Realme as to yo<sup>r</sup> Lo<sup>pp</sup>e shall seeme fitt Whose poore distressed estate we humbly leave to yo<sup>r</sup> Lopp<sup>s</sup>

grave consideracion & so rest

from the quarter Sessions of the Peace holden at Oxford for the said Countie the second day of June Anno Domini 1629.

Yor Lo<sup>pp</sup>s to be commanded

Henry Lee Jo : Prideaux Ric : Oxon Jo Standard Tho : James

Hugh Barker Fr : Gregory Ed : Brounker Jo : Martyn

George Box deputy Clerke of the peace  
of the County of Oxon."

(D) "Before I grant a Collection I wilbe certified wch of the petitioners are poore, wch able and wealthy, & what interest they had in these howses wch should be rebuilded, & whose the inheritance of the howses are, for I doe not meane that rich men's losses shalbe made good out of a common purse

June 30 1629.

Tho : Coventry C"

Mrs. Gretton continues: 'This Eynsham Petition .... had its basis in the Vagabonds Act, 1 Edward VI, c.3, which runs thus:-

"Provided alwaies and be it enacted that it shallbe lawfull to the Lorde Chauncellor of Englande or the Lord Kepar of the greate Seale for the tyme being at their discretions to graunte Commissions under the great Seale of Englande to everie or any parsone or parsons that hath or shall have his or their Howses or Barnes burnt, or suche losses, to gather the relief and charitie of other for their ayde and helpe of his or their losses decaye or hyndraunce as in tymes past hath byn used ; anny thing conteyned in this Acte notwithstanding."

Such application to the Lord Chancellor, through the Court of Quarter Sessions of the County in which the fire took place, was the statutory procedure in regard to fires that involved losses of £100 or more. In such cases the Brief, when granted by the Lord Chancellor, allowed the sufferers to beg over a large area.

As yet I have not examined the original manuscript book in the Bodleian, but as Mrs Gretton appears to have quoted only a selection of the examples in it, there may well be others that relate to Eynsham that would be worth extracting by some Eynsham historian for publication in the Eynsham Record.

[There is, in fact, one more; see next page. Editor]

## **A note on the preceding article: by Donald Richards**

The collection of documents in the Bodleian Library, to which Mr. Gibson refers, does indeed contain one more piece connected with Eynsham - a copy of what appears to have been a licence issued to another individual who had suffered from a fire. There is no year given, but it is possibly of the 1620s. The wording demonstrates that however vivid the descriptions of the fire disasters, they cannot be thought of as particular to one incident. We are dealing with formulaic language.

### "Richard Sambache of Eynsham for fire"

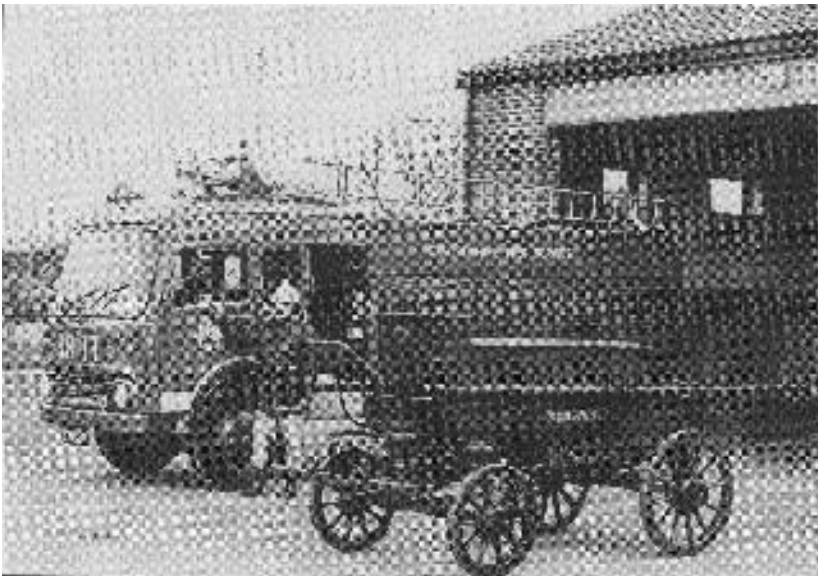
"Whereas the bearer hereof Richard Sambache bath heertofore been known & reputed amongst us to be a man of honest life and conversation who by his hard labour and industry hath carefully mayntayned himselfe and his family having fouer small children to bring up, And whereas upon the Twentieth day of this instant month of November there hap-pened a nest suddaine & fearefull fier w<sup>ch</sup> begain in some back pte of his dwelling house he himself being then from home & not any one of his household knowing how or by what means or from whence it should come it fortun'd that not onely his dwelling house but also all his goods household stuff & certeyne cattell to the vallew of Twentie pounds were utterly consumed and burnt to ashes, he being not onely left harbour-less & destitute of habitation but also w<sup>th</sup>out means or any releif at all whereby he might or should succour & releive his family whereby they are like miserably to perish. In tender consideration whereof Wee whose names are hereunto subscribed [names not, in fact, given] well waying and knowing the premisses doe not only make bold to certifie unto all the Kings Ma<sup>te</sup> loving subjects to whom it shall or may apperteyne but also desire & request y<sup>ou</sup> as in Christianity w<sup>e</sup> ought to have a feeling of one & others miseries, That yo<sup>u</sup> would be pleased, to extend yo<sup>r</sup> charitable contribution towards the releife & great losses of this bearer for w<sup>th</sup> he shalbe ever bound to pray for yo<sup>r</sup> healthes & preservations and wee rest thankfull both ready and willing to assist any poor<sup>e</sup> brother afflicted in this kinde." [MS.Top.Oxon. c.118, fol.5a].

**.....AND ON THE SUBJECT OF FIRES .....**

GREAT FIRE AT EYNESHAM, Thursday 5 October 1854.

".... skittle alley, brewhouse, outhouse of Queen's Head, (landlord Mr.Bridges), workshop adjoining, stable, hovel, kitchen, carpenter's shop, two waggons, cart (Mr.Druce's) occupied by Charles Pirm. House (Mr.Morris painter) in Queen Street, 3 cottages (do.), 2 cottages (Mr.Akeman). large barn saved containing £10,000 worth of wool belonging to Mr.W.Shillingford, wool stapler."

[Newspaper extract]



Eynsham's old horse-drawn, hand-pumped fire engine, last used in 1939, and restored by the Eynsham fire brigade ca. 1970. Beyond is Mr.D.E.Wixey with the modern engine, and the corner of the new fire station.

Mr. Wixey is thanked for his help in the production of this picture, taken 23 February 1986.

## AN EYNHAM FIRE IN 1696

by Donald Richards

I have had the opportunity of seeing in advance Jeremy Gibson's article (see pages 14-16), in which he brings to our notice the documents from the Quarter Sessions Rolls published by Mrs. Gretton, and in particular some information about a great fire of 1629 somewhere in Eynsham. At the end of the same century there was another large conflagration but this time the original papers of the Quarter Sessions specify the location of the fire - Newland Street.

Much the same procedure was followed in both cases. There was a petition, presented by some of those who had suffered as a result of the fire, and this was accompanied by a statement certifying the extent of the losses. The aim was to seek permission for the sufferers to beg from the charity of their neighbours. In the 1629 fire the petition was directed to the Lord Chancellor, apparently because the value of the losses exceeded £100, but in this 1696 case, although this was again true, there is no indication that the request was passed on to the Lord Chancellor.

Here is the text of the documents, which may be found in the Oxfordshire Quarter Session Rolls for Easter 1696 (reference: QS/ 1696 Ea/28). First the petition:

"To the right Worshipfull, his Ma.<sup>ties</sup> Justices of the Peace of the County of Oxon in Sessions assembled."

"The Humble petition of Margarett Potter widdow William Pentigrass and several others poore Sufferers of the Towne of Ensham in the said County of Oxford

Most Humbly Showeth"

"That on the twelfth day of this Instant Aprill there happened at Eleaven a Clock at Night a very sudden fire in Ensham aforesayd which in two houres time all or most parte of the Towne being in bed consumed the dwelling houses of yo.<sup>r</sup> poore Peticon<sup>ers</sup> and alsoe of William Hickman Phylipp Pearson poore Labourers with all or most of theyr household goods together with the barne and Stable of one George Devall and Severall of his goods and the Corne and goods of Robert Butler in a Barne rented by him of one Hart the loss whereof amounts to two hundred

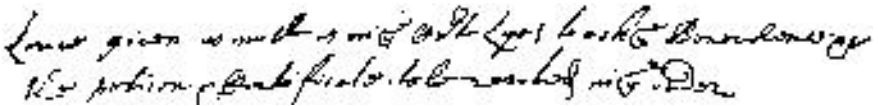
seaventy six pounds sixteen shillings and eight pence being thirty baye of building besides Harts barn as by a Certificate und<sup>er</sup> ye hands of Robert Perrot Esq. y<sup>e</sup> Minister Churchwardens & most of the Inhabitants of Ensham aforsd hereto annexed appeares."

"That the poore Sufferers whose houses were consumed have noe place to put their heads in but in Charity at present nor noe money to build againe and have been antient Inhabitants there And the others whose Goods and buildings were consumed by reason of this greate losse are rendred unable to build againe and Supporte themselves and familyes without the Charitable assistance of good People."

"Wherefore your Petitioners<sup>rs</sup> humbly prayes [sic] yo<sup>ur</sup> Worppes to Consider their Deplorable Condidion & give them liberty as much as in yo<sup>ur</sup> Worppes lyes to aske the Charitable benevolence of all good People to enable them(?) to Supporte themselves & familyes from perishing & to built up such necessary houseing again as their necessity requires."

"& yo<sup>ur</sup> Petitioners<sup>rs</sup> shall ever pray"

[There follows, in a different and very cursive hand, the minuted decision of the court]



"Leave given as much as in y<sup>e</sup> Court Lyes to ask ye Benevolence of the pa[r]ishion[ers] (?) & Certificate to be recited in y<sup>e</sup> order."

Attached to the petition is a separate piece of paper containing the certificate of the losses incurred:

"Wee, whose names are hereunto subscribed, Inhabitants of the parish & Towne of Ensham in the County of Oxon doe hereby Certify that upon Easter Day last past, being the twelfth of this instant April, about Eleaven of the Clocke in the night, there harmed a Sudden and lamentable fire in our sd Towne of Ensham, in a street there Called Newland street, which beginning att the house of one Thomas Keckwood, in the space of lesse than two hours, consumed not only the dwelling house of him the sd Thomas Keckwood, but the dwelling houses also of Margaret Potter Wid: William Pentigrasse Labourer William Hickman Labourer, Philip Peirson Labourer, and also the Stable and Barne of George Devill Husbandman, together w<sup>th</sup> the

housing of others who doe not desire their names to bee herein inserted, the whole losse of the sd housing being thirty bays of building, is computed att £163-18s-00d as will bee made appear by the oaths of Richard & John Ayrs Carpenters, & Richard Pangburne & John Lord Masons who have carefully vewed the same and Together with the Corne and other Goods of Robert Butler Jun: & together w<sup>th</sup> most of the household Goods and Utensills of the sd Sufferers valued att £104-18-8 as by the particular of the sd Losses w<sup>ch</sup> are Ready to bee tenderd and by the oaths of the sd Sufferers will bee made appear By Reason of which sd Losses most of the sd Sufferers are utterly disenabled to Rebuild their houses, or support their families wi<sup>th</sup>out the charitable Benevolence of good and well disposed Christians. In Witnesse whereof wee have hereunto sett our hands this twentieth day of April Anno Dom 1696."

The signatories, listed in two columns, are John Rogers (the Vicar), George Castell, John Saywell, John Bartholomew, Thomas Browne, James Quaterman, William Wise (an Overseer), John Godwin, Thomas Lock, Richard Brookes, John Pashell, Richard Castell, Richard Godwin, John Ayrs, Richard Ayrs, George Knapp, Thomas Hancock, Thomas Wise, John Lock, John Allmond (an Overseer), Nicolas Merry, John Wise, John Wastie, January Cracklow, William Cracklow, Richard Wastie, Thomas Means, John Quaterman, Francis White, Nicholas Hart, Robert Butler Senior & Charles Hearnse (?).

In the left margin, written by one of the Justices of the Peace, is:

"I do believe what is here certified to be true. Robt. Perrot"

The expertise of two masons and two carpenters was used to evaluate the building losses. The other losses were detailed separately but no statement of them survives. It will be clear that the total of these two sums, £268-16s.-8d., is £8 less than the sum mentioned in the petition. Presumably the lower sum was the result of a more accurate later evaluation. In the case of the 1629 fire, it is claimed that 101 bays of building were destroyed. Twelve houses were involved, but the total of bays included barns and outhouses. As for the 1696 fire, 30 bays were lost.

But what is a bay? It is surely not that part of a facade covered by one gable end. That would mean a quite horrifying loss of property. A 'bay', it seems, can also mean a measure of 24 feet (that is from a 1679 source), or 'a division of a barn or other building, generally from 15 to 20 feet' (New English Dictionary). If one works out the sums, that is still a great deal of property. Is it just a coincidence that both fires happened on 'holy days', Whit Monday and Easter Day?



Eynsham railway station looking west (in the 1950s?). The buildings (background to foreground) are the goods shed in Cotswold stone (ca. 1861); the 19-lever signal box (ca. 1892); the original timber-built station building (ca. 1861, extended 1878/9); and a later corrugated iron shed. The livery was predominantly green. The wooden platform on the left, with its shelter, were added when the wartime passing loop was constructed in 1944.

Information from Jenkins, S.C. The Fairford Branch. Locomotion Papers no.86. Oakwood Press, 1985. Photograph copyright Lens of Sutton, Surrey.



The modern scene, taken 23/2/86 from the centre of the roundabout at the junction of Station Road and the southern by-pass. The goods shed is in process of demolition. The station building may suffer the same fate. Eynsham's new fire station is out of picture to the left.

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

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## **DREADFUL DOINGS ON ENSHAM HEATH**

**Quarter Sessions report by Pamela Richards**

**Date-line 6 June 1696**

At the quarter sessions today, 6 June 1696, Ursulah Jourdan, the wife of Thomas Jourdan, Esq., Lord of the Manor of Ensham, gave evidence before the Justices of the Peace concerning the riot that took place on Ensham Heath on Saturday 23rd May last. She told the Justices that she was riding on horseback on the heath when she was 'told that a great number of persons were there assembled in order to destroy or pull down a house her husband had built upon the heath and to do other mischiefs to her husband's estate there'. She said 'she saw several persons, some with guns, some with staves, some with pick axes and other weapons in a riotous and violent manner to the number of two or three hundred as she guessed'. She added that some of the persons were behaving 'in a menacing manner' but they 'forbore entering upon any action till one William Stocke came down'.

## **MOB CHOPT UP CONEYS**

He 'went up to the multitude and headed then and they then went to the Coney berries [known as rabbit burrows in some areas] and with their mattocks and shovels they dug up the berries, took out the Conyes, chopt some of them in pieces and then threw them at' Mistress Jourdan. Then being 'in great fear of her life or some bodily hurt from the multitude' she withdrew to her husband's house. Someone had 'held up a paddle against her, or other like weapon as if he would strike her on the head or other part of the body' but she did not know his name. Here she felt some security and the crowd seemed somewhat pacified until they were informed that she had sent for Justice Parrott to come and 'command the Peace'. Then 'they cried out that they did not care a pin for him or to that effect!!'. Then they had threatened her again saying 'that if the doors were not opened to then they would break it open'. Mistress Jourdan's fear was so great that she was forced with some persons within doors 'to present charged guns against then to keep than off', particularly when they had 'pulled two spars out of the windows'.

## A SECOND RIOT

Apparently a crowd had also gathered on the 29th of the said month and went towards the said berries and she had 'heard a horne blowne which as she understood was to assemble the multitude' and on that occasion she had seen 'Hugh Whitacres, a servant to the said Stocke at the Berries among the other multitude digging at the Berries and taking out the conyes!' Mistress Jourdan's evidence was corroborated by William Ward of Wytney, servant to Thomas Jourdan, who had been accompanying Mistress Jourdan on the 23rd. He said he thought the man who threatened Mistress Jourdan with a stave was one Pen of Northleigh. He also named one Reeves of Hanborough as being among the rioters.

Thomas Lardner, who had seen about 40 or 50 persons gathering on the Heath on 23rd May, went to acquaint Thomas Jourdan that he feared a riot, and thereupon he was sent to Justice Parrott to desire him to keep the Peace of his Majesty when one William Stock threatened him with a stick and told him that the multitude would certainly kill him and pull down Thomas Jourdan's house. He also named Thomas Caulcott, John and Bartholomew Wise, Thomas Reeves, Mr. Blaye, Thomas Brooke, William Ayres and his son William, John Reade, George Hart, John Bevin, Thomas Quarterman, Mr. Harris of Coome and John Pokins. He named William Smith of Eynsham as the horn blower.

All the above accused as well as Robert Reading and Edward Hartley, labourers of Stonesfield, John Foreshaw and Richard Lay of Cassington, George Bolton a butcher, Richard and Thomas Waston, William Scarborough, John Campden, John Collier, Thomas Pritchard and his son, Thomas Jourdan blacksmith, and Thomas Ward gardener of North Leigh, Sam Springwell, John Twilly, Thomas Haynes a glover, Robert Campyn, and Richard Jenkins were all fined £40.

## THE LEGAL POSITION

As is well known the laws concerning the digging up and destruction of coneyes, and their berries, are well established, and the behaviour of the crawl was a matter to be taken seriously. The law plainly states that a warren is a 'place privileged by prescription or grant from the King and none can make a warren and appropriate the creatures that are ferae naturae, without licence from the King' although 'a warren may lie open and there is no necessity of enclosing

it, as there is of a park'. It also states that whereas 'if any person offend in a free warren he is punishable by the Comm Law and by Statute, if anyone enter wrongfully into any warren or chase, take or kill any conies without the consent of the owner he shall forfeit treble damages and suffer three months' imprisonment'. Only if conies run out of a warren and eat up a neighbour's corn does anyone have the right to kill conies from a warren not on his own land.

It has not been possible to establish what sparked off this riot but there has been speculation as to whether the conies from this particular warren have been destroying crops or if common land around the burrows had been enclosed, thus preventing those who had a mind to from snaring or trapping the conies. There are now a number of houses built on Eynsham Heath, some having been there since at least 1650, but it may well be that Thomas Jourdan's attempts to enclose land have made him a particular target for attack. If Mr. Jourdan has dug out this warren on common land then he might be guilty of 'making holes in the land' but 'the commoners may not kill the conies but are to bring their action for they may not be their own judges'.

## IN TROUBLE BEFORE

It has also come to light that certain of the rioters have been in trouble with the authorities before. Thomas Reeves, with two others, was fined £5 at the Michaelmas Quarter Sessions of 1691 for beating and slandering Elizabeth the wife of James Budd of Handborough and for being a COMMON drunkard.

Presiding at the Trinity Quarter Sessions were Sir Edmond Warcupp, Sir Robert Shepheard, Thomas Napier Esq., Henry Ayleworth Esq. Dr. of Lawes, and Robert Parrott Esq., five of his Majestie's Justices of the Peace in the county of Oxford.

References: Jacob's New Law Dictionary of 1782  
Cunningham's Law Dictionary 1765  
Chambers, E.K. Eynsham under the Monks. Oxf. Rec. Soc. 18, 1936

**THOMAS SAVINGS**  
**EYNSHAM'S POLICE CONSTABLE 1863-1871**

**by Eileen Carlton**

Legend in the Berry family of Bristol had it that their maternal grandfather, P.C. Thomas Savings had, whilst living in Eynsham, 'attacked single-handed, a bunch of highwaymen'; and, in consequence of this deed, had been presented with an English silver lever pocket watch made by Rowell of Oxford and inscribed "Presented to P.C. Savings by the inhabitants of Eynsham as a mark of respect, 1867". Still ticking, only the watch remained as evidence, and the Berry family wrote to Eynsham Parish Council in 1967 to ask if they had any record of the incident (Eynsham Record, 2, 1985, p.10).

In 1867, however, the parish council did not exist. Instead the affairs of the parish were regulated by the Vestry and chaired by the then Vicar, the Rev. William Simcox Bricknell J.P. Vestry Minute Books disclose only routine procedures in connection with the church and the poor rates, election of church wardens, upkeep of the highways and other civil duties, and one would not expect to find such a record therein. In 1967 then, the parish council asked the Eynsham History Group to make enquiries. Whether or not this met with any response and with what result we do not know.

Thames Valley Police have a number of nineteenth century records, by no means complete, at Sulhamstead. As a result of recent enquiries they have made an independent search and have been so kind as to send photocopies of P.C.Savings's documentation. These include his physical characteristics, postings, service record, and even two photographs (one featured on the front cover). They were not able to find any mention of highwaymen.

I have also made a study of all the cases relating to Eynsham recorded in the Quarter Sessions Papers for the period 1851 to 1875. In no case was highway robbery mentioned. Since the railway had appeared on the scene in our area by 1861, and because the roads were in very poor condition, most people embarking on long journeys at that time would have travelled by rail. P.C.Savings's name, however, appears in the Quarter Sessions records in connection with Eynsham in many cases between October 1864 and November 1871. These were mainly crimes of poaching, stealing, assault, drunkenness, vagrancy, trespass and wilful damage.

**P.C. Thomas Savings**

(Eynsham period in bold face)

- 1834 Born at Watereaton, Oxfordshire  
ca. 1855 married Hannah  
ca. 1856 daughter Ellen born at Kidlington  
ca. 1857 son Thomas born at Kidlington  
1858 living at Clifton, nr. Deddington, and working as a labourer with the G.W.R. Railway Police.  
1858 28 Oct. appointed as Police Constable 16, with the Oxfordshire Constabulary Force.  
1858 12 Nov. sworn in, and attached to Banbury Police Division  
1859 19 Dec. promoted to 2nd class constable  
ca. 1860 son Anthony born at Great Tew  
ca. 1862 daughter Anne born at Great Tew 1863  
24 Aug. promoted to 1st class constable  
**1863 26 Nov. attached to South Wootton Division; stationed at Eynsham**  
**1864 7 Oct 1st reference to him at Eynsham is Petty Sessions records**  
**ca. 1864 daughter Fanny born at Eynsham**  
**1865 18 Sept. promoted to merit class constable**  
**1866 son William born at Eynsham**  
**1867 Nov. Presented with a silver watch & chain by people of Eynsham**  
**1867 daughter Celia born. Buried at Eynsham aged 1, on 31.10.'68**  
**1868 daughter Emily born at Eynsham**  
**1870 wife Hannah buried at Eynsham**  
**1871 2 Nov. Last reference to him in Eynsham in Petty Sessions records**  
1872 9 Jan. attached to Bullingdon Police Division  
1873 10 Sept. Absent without leave for 8 hours. Reprimanded and cautioned!  
1888 Photographed by G.Coles of Oxford (see front cover)  
1891 Retired from the police force, with a pension of £48 19s 4d. per annum. Photographed.

[Sources: Thames Valley Police Museum records at Sulhamstead. Courtesy of Sgt.D.J.Talbot: 1871 census returns for Eynsham: Eynsham Parish Records: Oxfordshire Petty Sessions Records]

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Editor's note: Page 10 of Eynsham Record, 2, 1985, which inspired Mrs. Carlton's research, erroneously states that Savings does not appear in the census returns for Eynsham. He is in fact recorded in the 1871 census as a widower, aged 36, living with six of his children at the 'Police Station' in Acre End St.

Eynsham was a very poor village in the mid-nineteenth century. Many of its inhabitants were agricultural labourers with large families by our standards. In 1850, at Banbury, such married labourers were receiving a wage of only 9s. per week, unmarried ones as little as 3s. There was little competitive industrial activity to cause wages to rise. Farmers were themselves poor, some were bankrupted. George and Jane Elizabeth Bowerman, butchers, farmers and cattle dealers of High Street, Eynsham, for instance, became bankrupt in 1867. This failure was attributed to 'losses on farming, insufficiency of profits, badness of trade and domestic expenses'. So it is not surprising that the petty crime rate was relatively high.

Much petty crime, then; no highwaymen! Nevertheless we cannot suppose that the inhabitants of Eynsham lightly made a presentation of a watch without good cause. Jackson's Oxford Journal for 1867 throws light on the matter. An entry for Sat. Nov. 30th reads as follows:-

EYNSHAM. A silver pocket watch and chain have been presented to Police Constable Thomas Savings in testimony of the diligence and success with which he has discharged his official duties during a residence in Eynsham of nearly four years. The amount required was raised in small sums by subscription to which the principal inhabitants of the parish contributed.

The photograph of Savings reproduced on the front cover, and a later one (ca.1891?), both show a watch-chain prominently displayed. It seems likely that he was proud of his presentation for the rest of his life.

Less than a month before, on November 9th, Jackson's Journal had reported the trial of some Eynsham poachers:-

Petty Sessions, Nov. 9th 1867, Bampton East Division:-

'Richard Brooks, William Buckingham, Ebenezer Wall and Edward Bennett, all of Eynsham, Labourers, were charged with entering on land at Eynsham in the occupation of Mr. Frederick Gulliver in search of game on the 13th ult. Brooks, Buckingham and Wall were each fined with costs 14s.3d. or 14 days imprisonment. [The official Quarter Sessions report elaborates "... fined 2s.6d. Costs to Thomas Savings 11s.9d. in each case"]. The case against Bennett was dismissed.'

Perhaps then it was this this event that triggered the idea of a presentation by the villagers. Whether this was so or not, there can be little doubt that the award was in recognition not of a single act of heroism, but of diligent and successful service over a number of years.

Highwaymen? I think I can hear the echo of a ghostly chuckle!



**Fig.1 "Gran'papa's house" 54, Acre End Street, Eynsham**

# "GRAN'PAPA'S HOUSE"

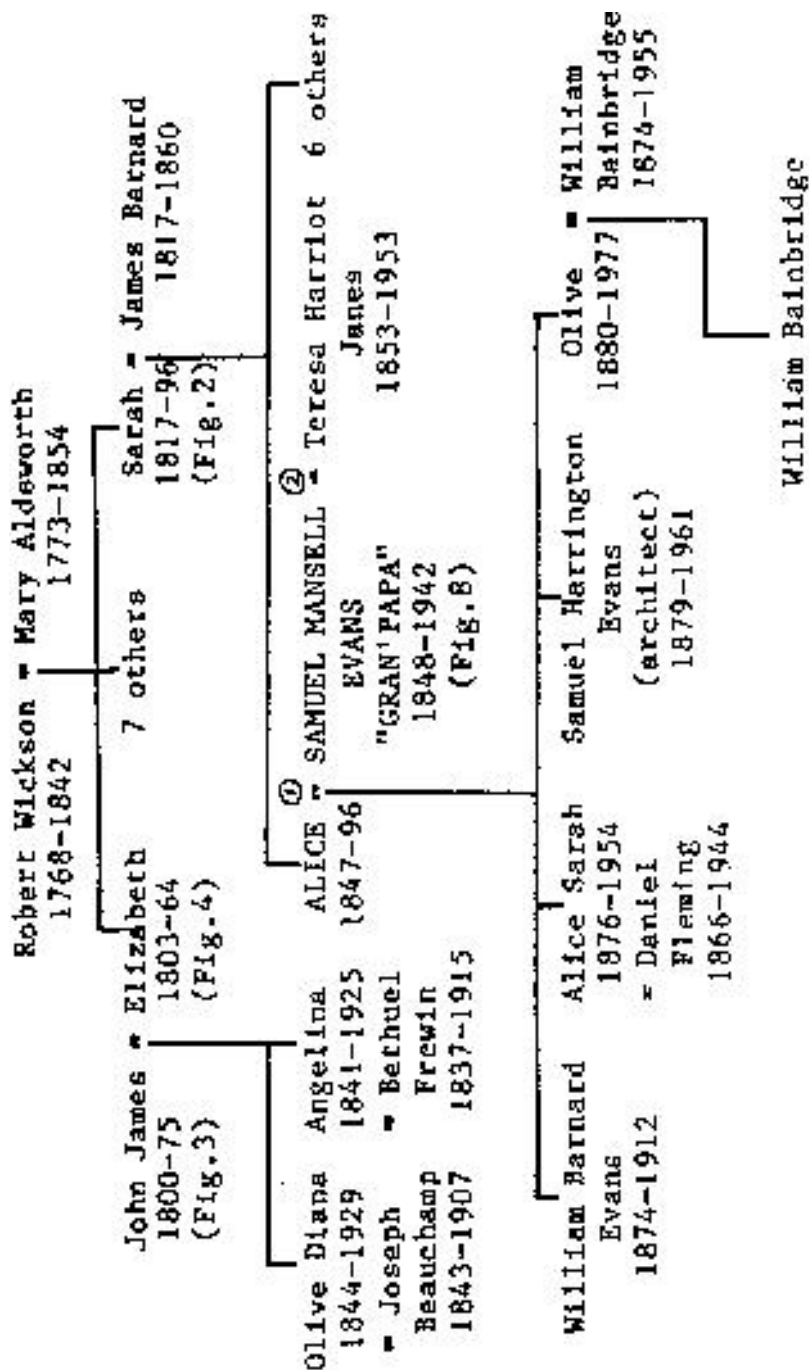
by William Bainbridge

Readers are asked to forgive the rather nostalgic title of this account of one of Eynsham's most interesting old houses (Fig.1), but in my mind it will be forever thus, even though my grandfather died as long ago as 1942.

My association with the house must date from 1908 when my parents first displayed me to fond grandparents, though at the time I could hardly have been aware of the occasion's importance. Visits were repeated every year as my parents spent three month's leave in England until World War I forced them to abandon their home in France and settle in Britain, variously in the North or in London. Thereafter my visits to Eynsham were less regular, but I spent many happy childhood days being spoilt in Acre End.

The family's connection with the house started even before June 20 1872 when my great-grandmother, Sarah Barnard, born a Wickson at Stanton Harcourt in 1817 (Fig.2), bought the property from the Druce family to prevent her brother-in-law, John James, 1800-75 (Fig.3) - her sister (Fig.4) was already dead - and their daughters, Olive Diana (m. Beauchamp) and Angelina (m.Frewin) being turned out of house and have owing to mortgage difficulties [see family tree, page 32]. The property then stretched from Acre End to the back lane (now Conduit Lane) as it did for some years after 1946 when it was sold to Philip Blake; subsequently the top garden had Coalville House built on it.

The surviving deeds of the property date back to 1723 when the will of 'Stephen Brinton the Elder, yeoman of Eynsham' was granted probate. Other later documents mention his widow Elizabeth (1739); another Stephen Brinton (1759); also at the same date John Harris and Elizabeth his wife, of Long Hanborough; yet another Stephen Brinton (nephew - 1783); Nathaniel Robinson and Thomas and Robert Day (1801); John James, yeoman (1804-25); Thomas James and wife and Jeremiah Clarke and wife (1850). John James obtained a mortgage from Robert Druce in 1852, Edward James who had a mortgage from Elizabeth Arnatt (1861), a sale to John James (1864), and the additional mortgage for John James to Joseph Druce (1864) led to the purchase by Sarah Barnard mentioned above. In 1825 the property was portioned into several interconnected plots as can be seen in Fig.5, which shows a courtyard, six dwellings and eight gardens, strangely not adjoining their respective cottages.



**DRAMATIS PERSONAE**

Sarah Barnard, a Londoner, never occupied the property as a permanent home, but she used it for holidays or for letting to relatives and friends. In her will she left it to her surviving daughter, Alice (Barnard) Evans, who unfortunately predeceased her in 1896 by exactly five months, the estate then devolving on her four grandchildren, William Barnard Evans (1874-1912), Alice Sarah Fleming (1876-1954), Samuel Harrington Evans (1879-1961), and Olive Bainbridge, my mother (1880-1977). As none of the children wished to live in the house, it was decided that their father, Samuel. Mansell. Evans (1848-1942) and his second wife Teresa Harriot (Janes) (1853-1953), should take up residence on his retirement in 1904. During the interim, round about 1900, the Beauchamp and Burden families were tenants at separate times while their respective houses were being rebuilt. Mrs. Gertrude (Burden) Lambourne remembers her stay quite clearly.



**Fig. 2 Sarah (Wickson) Barnard. 1817-96**

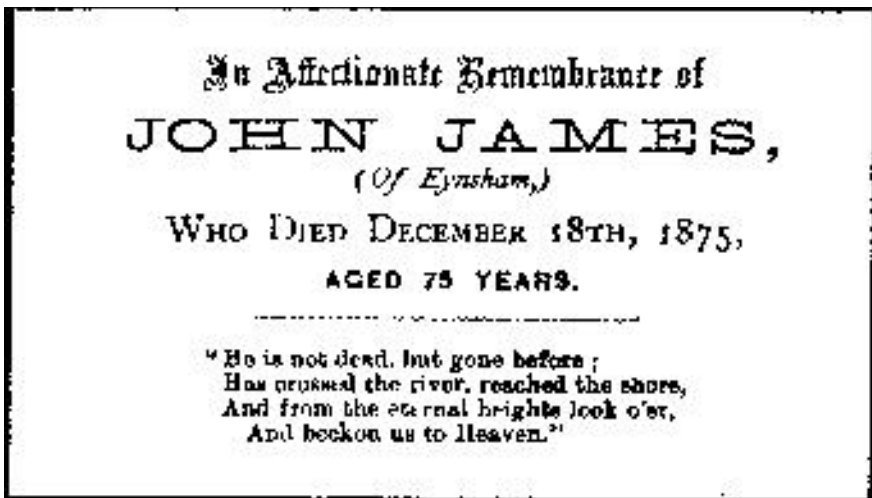


Fig. 3 Memorial card of the unfortunate John James: 1800-75



Fig. 4 His wife, Elizabeth (Wickson) James: 1803-64.  
An early resident

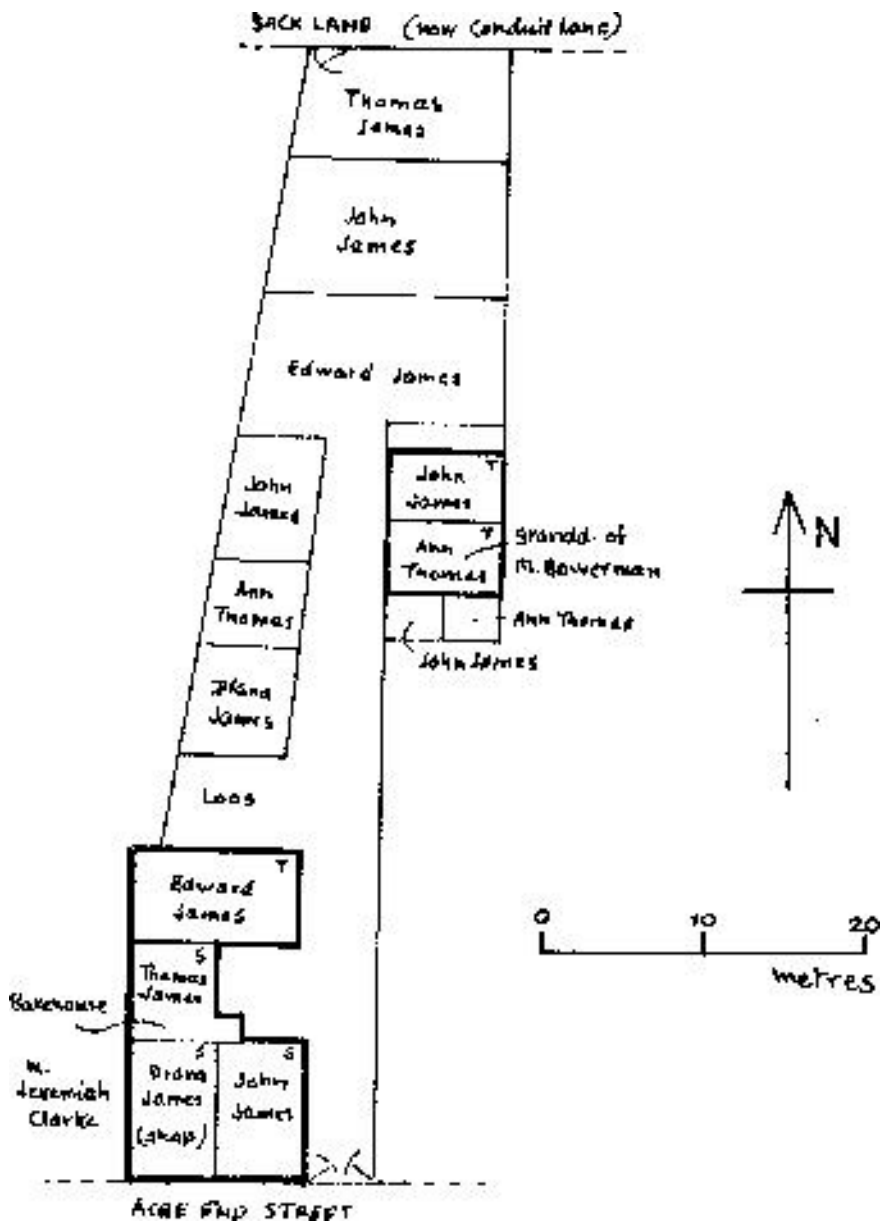
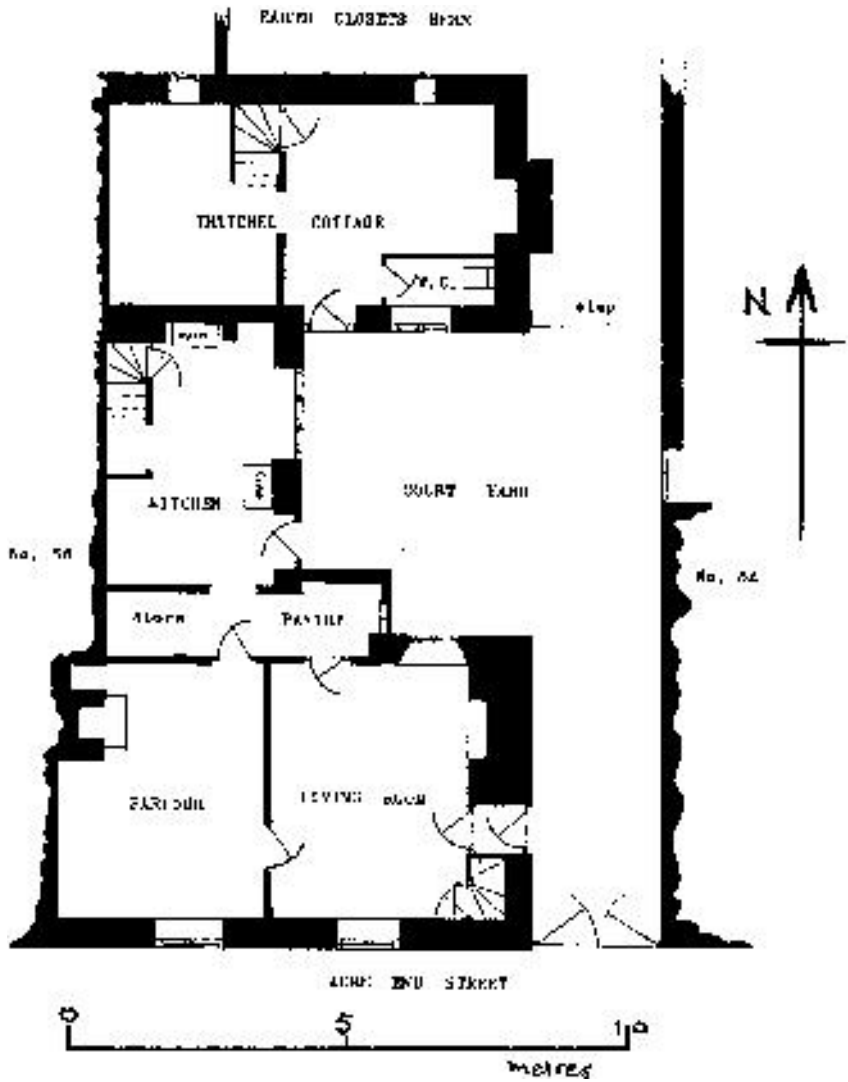


Fig. 5. Block plan of the property: 1825



**Fig. 6 Ground floor plan of the house, extant until 1982.**

Based on plan of ca. 1930 by S.H.Evans, with corrections by W.Bainbridge in 1984.

The two thatched cottages in the upper garden had been demolished by my time and the whole area turned into one large garden. To me, a town dweller, all was a delight, not only because it was filled with prolific bushes and trees - gooseberries, black, red and white currants, raspberries, apples and pears, but by especially-remembered Victoria plums, luscious to a degree, from a tree espaliered on the flanking How barn wall in the N.E. corner. There were also clumps of crisp rhubarb from which an indulgent grandfather allowed unrestricted sampling. However the greatest joy of all was the rabbits in two enclosures, one on the site of the vanished cottages, the other along the back wall, each containing a battery of hutches. There were rabbits of all sizes and colours, ranging from huge floppy-eared Belgian hares down to my own little black Peter, so cherished that eventually my love proved too much, and one morning I found him dead. At that time I was a keen reader of Beatrix Potter, so that the adventures of Peter Rabbit and his friends in Mr. McGregor's garden became very real to me, especially when I carelessly left a gate open and one or two inmates escaped among the cabbages - even then I was not scolded. The chickens in their run did not thrill me; the novelty of finding their eggs soon palled, and I conceived an aversion to their evil, beady eyes, scratchy feet, and above all to their unsanitary hindermost feathers!

In earlier days this heaven was darkened by obligatory daily visits behind the lilac trees to a range of earth closets, one of which had a seat for an adult, and alongside, at a lower level, one for a small child. When a proper water-closet was installed in the 1920s all was joy, even though it was not erected in the main house - "not really healthy" according to my grandmother - but in the thatched cottage. This still entailed an open-air trip whatever the weather, but it became a kind of adventure in contrast to previous odorous ones. Another novelty for me was the lack of a bathroom; we bathed in front of roaring kitchen fires in a tin hip-bath brought in from the cottage. The range, polished like jet, had a little tap alongside on a tank, but its inadequacy was supplemented by large sooty kettles from the hob. Similarly new to me was the ritual of lighting the oil lamps and moving them wherever you went. Going to bed up the twisting stairs meant carrying a lighted candle which cast strange shadows on canted ceilings and walls. Although the house had many dark nooks and corners it was a warm friendly place (although a young cousin thought otherwise!). Electricity came later and the magic was gone; it all became prosaic and almost like home.

The plan of the premises as I knew them (Fig.6) is based on one by my architect uncle Harrington, with details and corrections from memory. The pantry was half-timbered with an infilling of whitewashed brick, but the rest of the buildings were of random-coursed Cotswold stone, the main and kitchen blocks being roofed with rugged Stonesfield slates, and the cottage heavily thatched, as can be seen in a view of the courtyard (Fig.7). All the casement windows were iron-framed with 'butterfly' catches and having leaded panes with a wealth of original 17/18th centuries glass, iridescent with age, bubbles and ripples - real museum specimens and the last full set in the village.



**Fig. 7 The thatched cottage in the N.W. corner of the courtyard in 1943.**

Unfortunately they were all swept away and replaced by wood 'housing estate' frames during recent (1982) modernization. It will be noted (Fig.6) that the outer eastern wall of the dining room, which contained a conventional Victorian fireplace, is thick enough to accommodate a lobby and stairs further along, and which must have concealed an inglenook bricked up for 19th century comfort. The similar fireplace in the parlour must also have hidden a more modest one. These two living rooms were overfurnished by outsized pieces, relics of more spacious London days. A massive sideboard and equally generous table almost filled the dining room. Meals were laid at one end of the latter, leaving the dark green chenille cloth exposed at the other.

The parlour, equally crowded, had a large mahogany bookcase filled with the works of Dickens and Scott, bound volumes of 'improving' magazines, and best of all a two-volume History of England with many steel engravings and some hand-coloured plates of costume and heraldry, which inspired my interest in these subjects. From the ceiling hung a bacon-rack, perhaps dating from the time when Diana James had a shop here (Fig.5). The first floor of the main house was reached by a narrow, twisting staircase masquerading as a cupboard, as did the other two stairs at the rear. The landing was spacious, hung with ancestral oil portraits (Fig.2), and led into two bedrooms, each with a large brass bedstead. The next flight ended in the middle of the first of two attic bedrooms, both of which had similar beds whose crisp white sheets were as snowy as the whitewashed walls, rafters and sloping ceilings. To this day I use some of these sheets embroidered with 'S.B.', fine examples of Victorian quality. A peculiarity of these two attics was that they shared one dormer window, but the inner attic in which I slept had an additional casement overlooking the mossy tiles of the kitchen block.

There was an unsuspected and exciting dungeon-like cellar, reached by a trap door under the carpet of the parlour, and used to store the potent fruit wines made by my grandfather in the thatched cottage. The cellar was dimly lit by means of a pavement grating which attracted stray coins and trinkets dropped by children and others, necessitating the tiresome chore of moving carpet and furniture. The grating can be faintly traced under the present pavement asphalt. The upper windows of the kitchen block and cottage were so low that one was obliged to kneel on the floor to look out. Their four rooms were used for storage of boxes and trunks, piles of 'Architectural Reviews', and best of all some red boxes filled with lead soldiers, bandsman, cavalry and four-

horsed gun-carriages; these I was allowed to play with on the strict instruction "Be very careful with them - they belong to your uncle Harrington!" Alas, sometimes a soldier lost his head in battle, but was hurriedly healed by a matchstick inserted in the holes of neck and shoulders! Also stored in these treasure rooms was a tin magic lantern, box-like, with a chimney and lit by an evil-smelling kola-oil lamp. Shows were given in the kitchen, a sheet serving as a screen on which were projected highly coloured slides, so much more exciting than the black and white cinema films of those days. The performance always ended with the 'movies' which included Vesuvius erupting, a ship tossed in a billowing sea, a windmill with revolving sails, but the piece de resistance was the slide of a fat man asleep with open mouth into which a mouse could be made to run.

In April 1982 Mr. J.Bolton, after the death of his father, kindly allowed me to inspect the property and take some photographs. Its neglected state was very saddening, for the thatched cottage had lost its upper floor and was re-roofed with corrugated iron as was part of the kitchen block; the parlour floor had collapsed into the cellar; and some of the back windows were boarded up. The garden was overgrown, but still contained the iron arch under which my parents posed for a wedding photograph in 1905. Mr. Bolton allowed me to purchase the stone trough from the pump as a souvenir, and this now graces my garden.

**DEATH OF MR. S. EVANS**  
The death occurred on Friday of Mr. Samuel Evans aged 93, at his home in Acre End, Eynsham. By his death Eynsham loses its oldest inhabitant. On retiring from business in London, he came to Eynsham nearly 40 years ago. Up to a few years ago he took a prominent part in local affairs. For many years he served on the Parish Council and was also Overseer, School Manager and Charity Trustee. The interment took place at Highgate, London.

Oxford Times

6 Mar1942

**Fig. 8 Obituary notice  
of S.M.Evans ("Gran'papa")  
Oxford Times, 6 March, 1942**

My grandfather, still remembered by some older inhabitants, was very well liked (Fig.8), although his wife has been described to me by one of them as 'hoity-toity'. To me, however, she was always kind, although a trifle strict, not approving for instance of my playing with 'village children'. Nevertheless I can now confess that neither her disapproval nor the low wall between the gardens prevented a happy two-way traffic between myself and Willy and Amy Beauchamp next door!

# EYNESHAM MORRIS DANCERS BETWEEN THE WARS

by Keith Chandler

Morris dancing has long been an important feature of working-class life in the village. Although the earliest dateable reference to an indigenous dance team occurs as late as 1856<sup>1</sup>, evidence strongly suggests a tradition which extends back into the 18th century<sup>2</sup>. There is a considerable amount of documentary evidence, in the form of manuscripts, newspaper accounts, photographs and paintings, for example, which relates to the period prior to 1914. It is perhaps surprising, then, to find rather less source material dealing with the Morris dancing between the wars. This situation has, however, now been rectified to a great extent by a recent flurry of activity involving collecting memories and reminiscences from many villagers<sup>3</sup>. The fruits of that research form the basis of the chronological outline of performance presented here.

For many decades prior to 1914 a set of young men were annually performing the Morris dancing at Whitsun and Christmas. At the outbreak of hostilities many of these men enlisted and a cessation of the Morris dancing night, as happened in many other communities, legitimately have been expected. Many men who had been dancers in earlier sets were, however, still living and continued to perform, at least sporadically, throughout the wars<sup>4</sup>. Shortly after the war had ended the Morris team was reformed, under the stimulus of Lady Mason of Eynsham Hall, a group of younger men being taught the steps and figures by veterans William "Buff" Russell (born 1862), Frederick Harwood (1863), Charles Clements Hedges (1875)<sup>5</sup> and Edward "Feathers" Russell (circa 1872)<sup>6</sup>. The group included "Buff" Russell's sons Sidney (1897) and Cecil (1905), George Jeffrey (1896), Ernest May (1902), Edwin Harris (1900), George Watkins and Daniel Ayers. Ernest Edwards (1900) was the musician, playing melodeon and mouth organ, and, following the retirement of "Feathers" Russell, Billy Betterton (1895) was the 'fool'. To what extent the four older men named above were active during this period we cannot say, although Harwood is remembered as being the dance leader and calling the figures for the other dancers to follow<sup>7</sup>, and "Buff" Russell is unlikely to have passed up an opportunity to dance, considering his enthusiasm a decade later.

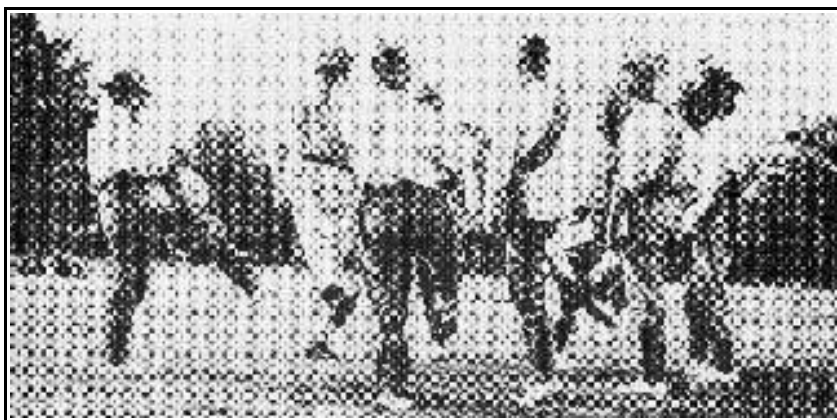
The venues at which this set performed were substantially the same as those exploited by the pre-war set: a walking tour which, on Boxing Day at least, encompassed an early morning visit to Eynsham Hall, followed by visits to local villages and performances at many of the larger houses in Eynsham itself, including the Gables and Newland House. Other venues recalled by older dancers and observers included Blenheim Palace, Cassington, Freeland, North Leigh and Witney. A newspaper account which refers to Christmas 1923 speaks of the Morris Dancers giving 'the villagers and surrounding villages their usual annual display'<sup>8</sup>, while another, from 1925, reports that:-

This ancient Eynsham custom was kept up on Boxing Day, when a party of Morris Dancers exhibited their skill in Eynsham and surrounding districts. Early in the morning they paid a visit to Eynsham Hall, where they were well received.<sup>9</sup>

The team continued to dance throughout the decade until around 1930. The reasons for the abandonment of the custom are complex, but include a problem of recruitment. Ada Gardner recalled that "one year they wasn't able to get a side and that's when it flopped, 'cause the youngsters wouldn't pick it up"<sup>10</sup>. From this we may infer that the performance of Morris dancing may have appeared, to some men at least, anachronistic during the lean years of the nineteen-thirties. There were also some problems over finances. The last time they danced, "Buff" Russell counted the money and declared that there was less than there should have been<sup>10</sup>. Subsequently the smocks, originally donated by Lady Mason, were sold. Sid Russell wrote in 1937 "the smocks we had 7 years ago have gone, never thought they would be needed again after dying out so long"<sup>11</sup>.

Although this team, which we might legitimately term 'traditional', ceased to perform, Morris dancing continued to be taught to children, both at the local school and at meetings of the Boy Scout troupe. Thus the celebrations associated with the Silver Jubilee of George V in 1935 included 'Morris dancing and acrobatics by Scouts Dornier and Blunt'<sup>12</sup>. Sid Russell told Keith Green that the adult set had also danced at this date, but in view of his comments in the letter quoted above, this seems unlikely<sup>13</sup>. Interest was engendered by a visit to "Buff" Russell of two Morris dance researchers from London in the autumn of 1936, and in February of the following year Sid Russell wrote to one of these men, Kenworthy Schofield, stating "I am trying to revive the Dancing, also the Poetry of the old

Eynsham Mummings"<sup>11</sup>. Lady Mason stepped in once again to offer encouragement and the Morris Dancers performed at the Coronation festivities in May, 1937. From this date until 1939 the side danced at many venues, both locally (Fig.1) and as far away as London. Morris dance teams from Cambridge and Springhead, Dorset, visited the village for joint shows, and strong links were forged with another recently revived traditional team, the Abingdon Morris Dancers. The line-up of dancers during these two years appears to have been remarkably stable, consisting of "Buff" Russell, Sid, Cecil and Bert Russell (this latter born 1907), Percy, Arthur and Phil Lambourne (1903, 1908 and 1913 respectively) and Jack Drewitt. Music was again provided by Ern Edwards on melodeon, and also on occasion by Cecil and Sid Russell, both of whom played the harmonica. The second war halted the performances of this, the final incarnation of the traditional Eynsham Morris Dancers.



— Fig.1 Eynsham Morris Dancers at Abingdon, 1938 —

The Morris dancing created diversion for both the dancers and the audience. Many informants have stressed how little the village offered in the way of recreation during the inter-war period, and recall the pleasure derived from seeing the Morris dancers in action. For the performers themselves there was the added attraction of food, alcohol and a little cash, donated by satisfied patrons, during a period when all three items were scarce. In addition, the kudos received by the dancers from admirers must have created in their minds a degree of elevated status. These factors, coupled perhaps with the satisfaction of maintaining a long-standing tradition within the village, contributed towards the continuation of a custom which had, by 1939, long since disappeared in all but a handful of local communities.

## References and notes

1. Oxford Chronicle, 17 May 1856, p.8.
2. Further details can be found in [Michael Heaney] Eynsham Morris, a booklet published by Eynsham Morris Dancers in 1983.
3. Information has been extracted from the collections of the following researchers: A.D.Townsend (ADT), David J.Russell (DJR), Keith Green (KG), Michael Heaney (MH) and Keith Chandler (KC). I am grateful to all the villagers who have given freely of their memories in the past four years. I would be delighted to hear from anyone who can provide me with any material (memories, photographs, documents, etc.) concerning the Morris dancers or the Mummings, or who can correct any errors which may have crept into this work. I can be reached at 5, Evans Road, Eynsham (tel: Oxford 880385).
4. Interview with Mrs.Tom Brooks, 2 June 1982 (KC); Interview with Mr.Hopkins, 2 April 1982 (MH).
5. Hedges was baptised as Charles Clements Masters, an illegitimate son of Ann Masters, on 7 July 1872. His mother later married a man named Hedges and he assumed his stepfather's surname. He is well remembered in the village as "Clemmy" Hedges.
6. Interview with Ernest May, 3 December 1981 (KC).
7. Interview with Ada Gardner, 12 June 1981 (ADT); Interview with Ernest May, 2 June 1982 (KC).
8. Oxford Chronicle, 4 January 1924, p.22.
9. Oxford Chronicle, 1 January 1926, p.8.
10. Interview with Ada Gardner, 12 June 1981 (ADT).
11. Letter from Sid Russell to Kenworthy Schofield, 9 February 1937, in the Kenworthy Schofield MSS, Vaughan Williams Manorial Library, Cecil Sharp House, London.
12. Cutting from the Oxford Times, reporting on the celebrations held on 6 June 1935, shown to me by Jim Evans, 2 June 1982.
13. Interview with Sid Russell, date unknown (KG).

## THE MAJOR

by Mary Oakeley

My father, Major Edward Francis Oakeley, was born in 1870, the year of the Franco-Prussian War. He was educated at Clifton College, a member of Oakeley House, named after his uncle Edward, who had been c of the first house-masters at the school. My father then went on to Sandhurst, joined the South Lancashire Regiment, and fought in the Boer War, entering Ladysmith with the first British troops. After his return, the regiment was ordered to India, and he retired in 1904, wishing to spend more time with his family. After living in Wiltshire for a time, and having the lease of his house ended because he was a Liberal, he bought 'The Gables' in 1913, first making sure that it was not haunted!

During World War I my father was in the Record Office in Warwick, and biked home (42 miles) each weekend. After the war he became a Magistrate, Church Warden and District Scout Commissioner.

As a magistrate, he biked to Witney courthouse each Friday and sat with Mr. Early and several others. None of them drove cars, and so motorists abruptly slowed to thirty miles an hour when passing Witney! Except on Sundays, he was nightly on duty in the hall of 'The Gables', signing papers for those who did not want their children vaccinated, sorting out family quarrels, and signing arrest warrants. It was also his task, with Dr. Cruickshank, to certify lunatics - a duty which he hated. At one time he was asked to be High Sheriff, but declined since it would involve witnessing executions.

Together with Mr. Sawyer, who was the Peoples' Warden, my father ruled the church. Woe betide the choirboys who ate the apples put out for Harvest Festival; the teenagers who chattered, but were instantly silenced; and people whose attendance at church was only minimal! Sidesmen, cleaners, choirboys, even the Rev. Mr. Bricknell, were kept up to the mark, and the church ran like clockwork.

This was the heyday of the Eynsham Boy Scouts, with Mr. Harris the Scout Master, and "Boss" Perkins as Assistant. My father, with memories of Baden Powell in the Boer War, was very interested in the movement and encouraged the Eynsham troop with their Fife and Drum Band, their efforts to build a hut, and their long-distance camping



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