

# THE EYNSHAM RECORD



Number 18 – 2001

## NOTES

1. Images have been optimised throughout for online viewing.
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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### Note on abbreviations

Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford.
Chambers, 1936	Chambers, E.K. <i>Eynsham under the Monks</i> . Oxfordshire Record Society, vol.18, 1936.
E.H.G.	Eynsham History Group.
<i>E.R.</i>	<i>Eynsham Record</i> .
<i>Eynsham Cart.</i>	<i>Cartulary of the Abbey of Eynsham</i> . Salter, H.E. (Ed.), (1 and 2) in 2 volumes, Oxford Historical Society, vol.49 (1907) & vol.51 (1908).
Gordon, 1990	Gordon, Eric. <i>Eynsham Abbey: 1005-1228</i> , Phillimore, 1990.
O.S.	Ordnance Survey.
Oxon. Archives	Oxfordshire Archives, (formerly Oxfordshire Record Office)
P.R.O.	Public Record Office.
<i>V.C.H. Oxon.</i>	<i>The Victoria History of the County of Oxford</i> .

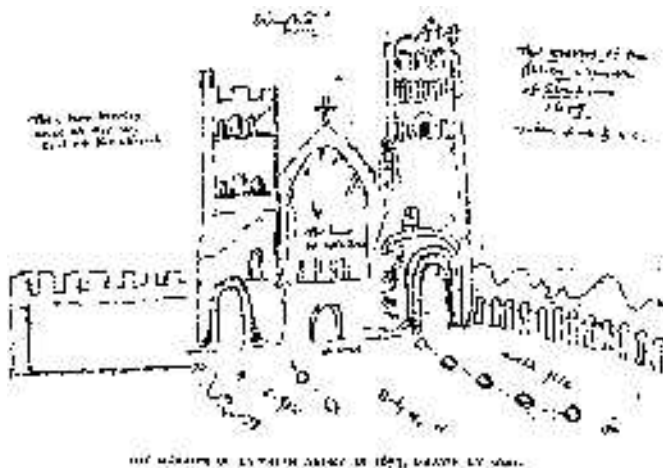
FRONT COVER:

The magnificent acacia tree in the garden of The Gables, a gift, it is thought, from William Cobbett to James Swann: see Joan Weedon's article on page 5.

## THE EYNSHAM RECORD

Number 18: 2001

Journal of the Eynsham History Group



ISSN 0265-6779

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## EDITORIAL

The front cover picture and first article deals with just a single two-hundred year old tree (and its historical connotations). Further on you will encounter an Eynsham apple breeder, credited with 14 named varieties; and, as an end piece, a note about the recent planting of some 9000 trees to the north of the village.

These conjunctions, all dealing with trees, have arisen by chance; as did last year's number which happened to carry three pieces dealing in different ways with the Thames at Swinford.

I have never solicited contributions on a specific theme, so it seems that we continue to have an abundant source of potential material for this journal.

Once again, many thanks to all named authors. Of those mentioned only indirectly hereafter, special thanks to Iris Wastie, Baron Brain, Jean Buttrick and Martin Harris who will be aware in their contributions.

Picture acknowledgements to the O.C.C. Photographic Archive (p.10), and to Martin Harris (p.20).

Last year the Eynsham History Group was awarded £5000 of Lottery Funds towards a project to create an 'illustrated' walk around the precinct of the Eynsham Abbey site. The project is now well advanced. It involves a team of professionals, including Alan Hardy, archaeologist with the Oxford Archaeological Unit (OAU), Lauren Gilmour and John Lange, museum curators, John's father, Harry Lange, graphic designer, and David Pendry of W.S. Atkins.

The monograph on the OAU's excavations on the Abbey site, flagged in last year's number, has been delayed, but is confidently expected this year.

Those with research interests should know that the Oxfordshire Record Office (formerly Oxfordshire Archives) is relocated in St. Luke's Church, Cowley, which has been handsomely converted for the purpose, and is much more user-friendly -it even has its own cafe.

## OBITUARIES

### **Mr E. F. Whelan 1911-2000**

Ted and his wife, Hilda, came to live in Eynsham in 1954 and soon became part of the community. They had married in 1936 and celebrated their golden wedding anniversary in 1986, three years before Hilda died. Her death came as a great loss to Ted, but their shared understanding of children, although they had none of their own, gave them the opportunity to start a new life.

He had already helped at the Acre End Playgroup and in wondering what he would do with himself he volunteered to help with 'reading'. Accepted and trained he soon joined Eynsham Primary School where within a short time he made himself a much loved and respected member of the community.

With Hilda he was a founder member of the Eynsham History Group, and he was its first Social Secretary in 1959. It was not surprising that he was welcomed as Chairman of the Junior Group. His personal experiences and his careful research were an inspiration to the children and an encouragement to me. He helped to found the *Good History* journal. He also co-operated with the Junior History Group in writing articles for the *Eynsham Record*. In his papers he left research work that can still be used and built on. He will be greatly missed.

Pamela Richards.

### **Alec Chalmers 1907-2000**

The History Group has lost one of its staunchest and most respected members.

Alexander (Alec) Chalmers died on 12th November 2000. Public acknowledgement of his distinguished military career (he was awarded the MC in 1944, eventually rose to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel in the Gloucestershire Regiment, and was appointed OBE in 1953) has been made, for example, in the obituary of 28 November 2000 in *The Telegraph*.

In Eynsham he gave valuable service to the community. We in the History Group will remember his never-failing cheerfulness, his thoughtful concern for others, and his booming voice when he put questions to visiting speakers. Many will cherish the picture of his top-hatted progress, seated on his invalid 'chariot', through the Eynsham streets to the wedding of his granddaughter last summer.

Donald S.Richards

## **Edward Stanley ('Pat') Carlton 1908-2000.**

After a career in accountancy and banking, with an interlude during WWII when he served as a Flight-Lieutenant in the Air-Sea Rescue branch of the RAF, he and his wife Eileen settled in Eynsham. Both of them contributed to research on Eynsham's history.

His article, *Margaret Foote's Passport: Escape from Germany in 1914*, published in these pages in 1993, is a fine example of historical enquiry, not dredged from dusty archives, but recording a fascinating episode in the life of a contemporary Eynsham lady which he took the trouble to discover and publish. Pat was our Vice-Chairman from 1974 to 1976.

Brian Atkins

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A message from the Chairman.

I am pleased to announce the appointment of Dr Brian Atkins as President of the Eynsham History Group in recognition of his long standing work. Before our previous President, Bishop Eric Gordon, died in 1992, he confided to Joan Weedon his great appreciation of Brian's work for the Group and for local history. He said he hoped we realised how valuable Brian's contribution had been to our organisation. Recently Brian has worked very hard for the illustrated walk around Eynsham Abbey precinct which will come to fruition shortly. Many have appreciated his work for the Eynsham Record (which I hope he will continue to edit for many years to come), and his encouragement for all to write up their researches and reminiscences. On a personal note, he has also provided me with much help and support in my local history researches. Brian has been Chairman of the Oxfordshire Local History Association for the past ten years.

Martin Harris  
March 2001

## **ABBOT JAMES**

James of Ramsden became Abbot of Eynsham Abbey in 1414 and ruled the Abbey with its extensive lands for the next 17 years. The Benedictine Abbey was under the Bishopric of Lincoln and, when James was installed, had for centuries been a powerful force in the area. The Abbey itself was an impressive building with gilded wainscots and ceilings, coloured glass and a decorated chapel, all set in a well stocked garden with fishponds and farm buildings. The Black Death had decimated Oxfordshire in 1349 and even in James's time tenants were still hard to find, so more and more land had to come under the direct care of the Abbey -including the major holdings in the Wychwood area.

James was also important in keeping law and order. King Henry had granted to the Abbey the right to hold a court to tax tenants, to settle property disputes, and to erect a gallows on which to hang thieves taken on the Abbey lands. During his time as Abbot a long-standing dispute with Lincoln over the sale of Abbey materials was finally settled and the Bishop's Visitor was able to report that "all points had been settled" . An Abbot with many skills.

This piece was written by Mrs Holly Deans of Ramsden as part of a millennial exhibition organised there, and for which we loaned some Abbey stones.

## WILLIAM COBBETT AND THE ACACIA TREE

by Joan Weedon

The cover illustration is of the fine old Acacia tree which grows in the garden at the Gables with its decoration of mistletoe. At the time the tree was planted the family of James Swann, owner of Eynsham Mill, lived at the Gables. James's brother, John, operated Wolvercote Mill until his death in 1807 and was supplier of paper for William Cobbett's *Weekly Political Register*. Members of the Swann family were dear to Cobbett: In May 1806 Cobbett wrote asking John Swann to accompany him to Honiton where there was shortly to be a Parliamentary election. "... I wish to know what sort of chance I should stand against him. Pray write immediately, I know no man on earth I should so soon have with me as you."

Cobbett (1762-1835) was one of the foremost political agitators of his time, a man always on the side of the underdog. He believed that the labourer was 'worthy of his hire', and he opposed many of the cruelties of the age, including transportation for theft, and the separation or transportation of orphaned children. In America, where he lived for some years, Cobbett became aware of the rapid growth of the False Acacia Tree (or Black Locust); he brought seed to England and grew many thousands of his 'locusts'. In his book, *Rural Rides*, Cobbett writes of one landowner buying thirteen thousand trees and comments that "they are always free of insects and pests".

On hearing the news of John Swann's death in June 1807 Cobbett wrote "I loved and respected Swann most sincerely. He was a man after my own heart, so wise in his principles, independent in his mind and frank in his expressions ... kindness I never knew surpassed ... I know enough of his goodness to make me deeply to regret the life of him for as long as I live. I am very glad that Mr Swann's brother [James] is to succeed him in the business. I hope that as long as God shall please to grant me the power of writing, my paper will come from someone of the family."

Following his brother's death, James Swann continued to supply paper to Mr Hansard, printer of Cobbett's *Weekly Register*. Hansard also used James Swann's paper for his own Parliamentary record. In 1809 Cobbett's clerk, Mr J Wright, wrote to James that "Hansard is enquiring the cost of Swann paper whether you would regularly supply him and what he might charge to sell it again. I sent no answer but it appeared to me that it would not be desirable that our printer should be in the habit of selling the Register paper".

By 1817 the price of the Register had been cut and its circulation had risen to 40-50,000 copies per week. At Governmental level there was considerable anxiety; two distributors of the Register were publicly flogged. There was a suspension of Habeas Corpus and Cobbett retreated to America, where he continued to conduct the publication of the Register. In 1819, when the suspension of Habeas Corpus was not renewed, Cobbett returned home bringing with him the bones of Thomas Paine.

Cobbett's seed farms at Kensington and Barnes flourished and by 1827 he was "winning fame as a planter and improver of woodlands". The Acacia tree at The Gables is known to be about two hundred years old and it would seem to be an unassailable fact that Cobbett presented it to the Swann family: The tradition that he did so came through the family to Miss Gertrude Swami, schoolteacher and friend to many local children, who died in 1964<sup>1</sup>.

Tradition may, however, occasionally transform into myth for, overheard by a passer-by in the village, not so long ago, was the information that "It was planted by William the Conqueror, you know!"

*References and sources (see inside front cover for abbreviations)*

*I. E.R.*. no.1, 1984, pp.33-34 & *E.R.*no.16, 1999, front cover & pp.28-31.  
Cobbett/Swann letters. Bodl. Eng. Hist. c33.  
M.L.Pearl, *William Cobbett, a Bibliographical Account of his Life*, 1953.

# CRICKET IN EYNESHAM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

by John Golby

There is a generally accepted view that by the middle of the nineteenth century the game of cricket was well-established and one that was played and watched by all classes in England. In 1835 it was reported that a county match between Nottingham and Sussex attracted a crowd of some 20,000<sup>1</sup>. In the following decade, William Clarke, who had started life as a bricklayer, was the captain of an All-England XI that toured the country in 1846. At a lower level of cricket, there are many stories of farm workers playing in the same team as the squire of the village. The social historian G.M.Trevelyan quotes an unnamed writer who observed that 'noblemen, gentlemen and clergy' were 'making butchers, cobblers and tinkers their companions.' He also pointed out that as early as 1746 when Kent beat an All-England team by 111 notches to 110, the captain of the Kent team was the gardener of another team member, Lord John Sackville. This led Trevelyan to conclude that cricket was an important harmoniser within communities, and he even went so far as to suggest that, 'If the French *noblesse* had been capable of playing cricket with their peasants, their chateaux would never have been burnt.'<sup>2</sup>

Whether the cementing qualities of cricket were that strong is open to considerable doubt, and it does suggest that the writer was hankering after an idealised *Merrie England*, rather than setting the evidence in a rapidly industrialising and urbanising country with all the attendant problems that these changes brought. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that in some parts of the country, especially in parts of Kent, Surrey and Sussex, cricket was very much 'the people's game'<sup>3</sup> But was this the case in Eynsham?

One of the first references to the game of cricket being played in Eynsham is to be found in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* for 20 October 1849. The paper reported a game played between the marrieds and the unmarrieds in the village, and went on to state that after 'a well-contested match'

...the competitors, with many of their respected friends, dined together at the Swan Inn. The dinner and wines were of a first-rate character, and the way in which they were served was highly creditable to the respected master of the establishment: the evening passed off most harmoniously, and it was hoped that this manly game would be well supported another year, as many of the respectable inhabitants of the parish have signified their intention to do so.

Although sports competitions between marrieds and unmarrieds were part of a rural tradition and an integral part of village life, the newspaper's emphasis on respectability, and the facts that the meal was held in the most prestigious inn in the village and that the match was played on Wednesday starting at 10 a.m. suggest that the cricketers came from the more affluent section of the community.

Earlier in the same year, 1849, a cricket team from Eynsham went to Witney to play a team there - a game that Witney won by an innings and 66 runs. Again, after the match the players retired to an inn, the Marlborough Arms, 'where an excellent dinner was provided ...and a pleasant evening followed.' <sup>4</sup> It has not been possible to identify all the players from the Eynsham team who played this match against Witney, but it included W.Day (a farmer, who also gave his occupation as a timber merchant); T. Whitlock (boot and shoe maker from Mill Street); E.Burden (blacksmith from the High Street); A. Green (tailor also from the High Street); and G. Pimm (carpenter and joiner from Abbey Street).

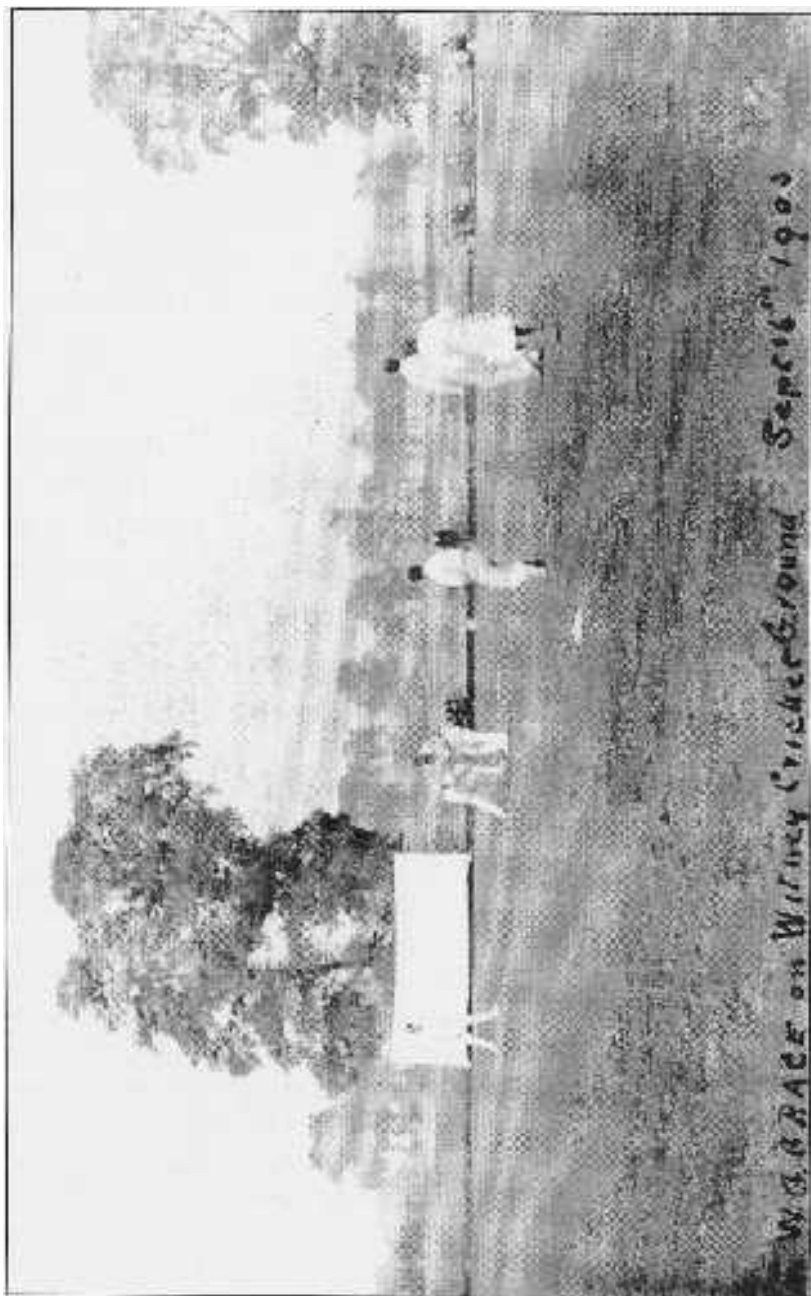
These two examples suggest that at this particular time around the middle of the nineteenth century, cricket in Eynsham did not conform to the picture presented of a game played by all, but was a game dominated by the tradesmen and farmers in the village. Eynsham is not an isolated example in this respect. Fortunately a rulebook for the Henfield, Sussex, cricket club dated 1837 has been discovered and the various rules suggest a relatively affluent and respectable membership. For example, the membership was 5 shillings per annum; matches were played on Wednesday or Monday afternoons, and any member "degrading" himself by getting drunk before the game would be fined 2s 6d.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, from these examples it cannot be assumed that the same can be said for other cricket teams in other parts of the county or the country. Also, it would be foolish to go to an extreme and conclude that cricket was not played by working men and boys in Eynsham at this time. Very much depended on when they had spare time, and the games that were played were most unlikely to be organised and played on such a formal basis as the games played by the Eynsham cricket team. Most probably much of the cricket that was played in the village was along the lines of that described by a contemporary living in the village of Pudsey in Yorkshire. There, so the writer states, the game 'was played mostly in the lanes or small openings in the village - with a tub leg for a bat, made smaller at one end for a handle, a wall cape, or some large stone, set on end for a stump ... and a pot taw or some hard substance covered with listing and sometimes sewed on the top with twine or band.' <sup>6</sup> Obviously more informal games of cricket would not be recorded in the local newspaper and the informal nature of these games means that there is virtually no likelihood of written records having been kept.

As the century progressed there was throughout Britain a tremendous expansion in the participation in, watching of and the organization of a wide variety of sports including cricket. As one astonished foreign visitor remarked when he visited England in 1900, 'All is sport in England It is sucked in with the mother's milk'.<sup>7</sup> Eynsham was no exception. By the end of the century the village possessed, as well as a cricket club, societies devoted to a range of sports, including football, quoits and draughts and, perhaps surprisingly, there was a ladies golf club in existence. The social composition of the membership of the cricket club appears to have been extended during this period and it was no longer dominated by trades-people. One possible reason for this is the important role played by the development of the local paper mill during these years. The mill had been taken over by the Wakefield family in 1872 and by 1891 it employed 26 women and 48 men. The managing director was Stephen Wakefield and significantly, in the context of cricket, Stephen Wakefield was a keen cricketer.

Stephen Wakefield was a member of Eynsham Cricket Club and played in the opening game of the 1891 season.<sup>8</sup> However, his enthusiasm for the game was such that in that year he encouraged the formation of a cricket team composed of employees from the paper mill. One of the new club's first fixtures was on Saturday, 4 July 1891 against, as *Jackson's Oxford Journal* put it, a "strong" eleven of the Eynsham Cricket Club. The match resulted in a comprehensive defeat for Eynsham C.C. Mr Wakefield led the paper mill team which also included two Scotsmen who had come to work at the mill, George Thomson, the foreman, and Duncan McKenzie, a clerk. But the team also included skilled and unskilled workers from the mill.

Clearly, the mill team was a more than competent side and later on in the season when the paper workers visited Cassington, they defeated the home team by a wide margin.<sup>9</sup> Significantly, the officials of Eynsham Cricket Club took advantage of this talent and during the rest of the season, as well as Stephen Wakefield, a number of workers from the paper mill also played in the Eynsham Cricket Club thus making it much stronger. In early July when Eynsham entertained and defeated Witney Cricket Club, two of the players from the paper mill were included in the team.<sup>10</sup> The following month, on 6 August, Eynsham played their 'old opponents' Oxford City 2nd XI at the Hertford College ground and in a 'well-contested game' lost by only 20 runs. On this occasion the Eynsham team included the mill manager, Stephen Wakefield, Albert Lyford, a paper finisher, William Basson, a paper maker, and William Walker, a paper mill operator.<sup>11</sup>



The legendary W.G. Grace batting at Witney in 1903. Not Eynsham, and not the 19<sup>th</sup> century, but an ideal illustration for this article! Picture courtesy of Oxfordshire County Council Photographic Archive

It has only been possible to trace the occupations of a few of the men who played for Eynsham Cricket Club in the 1891 season but it is clear that the social composition of the club was much wider than it had been forty years earlier. Active members of the Club included, as well as Stephen Wakefield; the railway station master; an insurance agent; a publican; two brothers, the sons of a local farmer; a painter and decorator; an assistant schoolteacher; a hay binder; a labourer from the paper mill; a paper finisher; and a paper maker.

The following season Eynsham Cricket Club did reasonably well and it was not until the middle of June that the team met its first defeat.<sup>12</sup> The input of players from the paper mill certainly contributed to ensuring that the village cricket team was not only more formidable but that it was no longer dominated by the trades-people of the village. Of course this is only a small sample of occupations and it would be interesting to compare it with the occupations of cricketers in other parts of the country. Unfortunately very little research has been done in this area but one extensive survey has been undertaken in the area of Stirling in Scotland. In this survey Neil Tranter traced the occupations of some 982 sportsmen of whom 177 were cricketers. Of these 177 men, the majority of players came from the skilled working class, and a third came from small business, clerical groups, teaching and landed interests. However, only 6.8% of the cricketers who were traced were men in unskilled occupations. The Eynsham sample is really too small to compare, although perhaps one can conclude that one reason for the number of skilled and unskilled workmen in the cricket team was the existence of the Eynsham paper mill.

Unfortunately, in 1893 the paper mill closed. The relatively poor rail links and the importation of foreign paper were major reasons for the closure, although the sudden departure of Stephen Wakefield under scandalous circumstances was certainly a contributory factor. The effect of the closure on the employment opportunities for the people of Eynsham must have been severe but perhaps, paradoxically, the cricket team did not suffer too badly. At the start of the 1893 season a number of new young members were recruited. They came from a variety of occupations - a hurdle maker, cloth maker, joiner's apprentice, mason, and two agricultural workers - were among the new players. The team met with considerable success and at the annual dinner held at the Red Lion on 11 October the secretary was able to report that of the eleven matches that the club had played during the season, they had won nine, lost one and tied one.<sup>13</sup>

## References

- 1.W.Howitt, *The Rural Life of England* (1844, p.529)
  - 2.G.M.Trevelyan, *English Social History* (Longmans, 1947, p.408)
  3. See for example, D.Underdown, 'Regional Cultures? Local variations in Popular Culture during the Early Modern Period' in *Popular Culture in England, c.1500-1850*, ed. by T.Harris (Macmillan, 1995, p.42)
  - 4.*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 30 June 1849
  - 5.J.Loweson and J.Myerscough, *Time to Spare in Victorian England* (Harvester Press, 1977, p.125)
  - 6.Cited in Hugh Cunningham, *Leisure in the Industrial Revolution* (Croom Helm, 1980, p.115)
  - 7.R.McKibben, 'Work and Hobbies in Britain, 1880-1950' in *The Working Class in Modern British History*, ed. by J.Winter (Cambridge University Press, 1983, p.132)
  - 8.*Witney Gazette*, 2 May 1891
  - 9.*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 15 August 1891
  - 10.*Witney Gazette*, 18 July 1891
  - 11.*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 22 August 1891
  - 12.*Jackson's Oxford Journal*, 2 July 1892
  - 13.*Witney Gazette*, 21 October 1893
-

## THE OLD MANOR HOUSE, EYNSHAM, OXON.

by the late Hugh Cooper

(Originally published in *Oxoniensia*, vol.19, 1954 with two illustrations not reproduced here; and what the VCH Oxon. has to say on the subject.)

This building which occupied the south-east corner of Carfax [Carfolds] at Eynsham was demolished in December 1954. It was only after demolition had started and when the central chimney had been taken down to first floor level that I obtained permission to examine the building, but the owner's architect Mr O.H.Nuttall kindly allowed me to have a copy of his original survey.

The building was L-shaped. One block 46' x 17' ran from south to north, and had at its northern end another block 19' x 40', which faced the prolongation of Acre End Street, and formed one corner of Carfax. Judging from the character of the work, and a fair quoin at the north-west corner, the former is the earlier.

A shilling of Queen Elizabeth and several carved stones evidently from the abbey which were found in this part would suggest that its erection took place immediately after the Reformation.

According to 19th century deeds the building was known as Shepherds Close, and this suggests that it occupied the site of the medieval sheep market. There is however a popular tradition that it was the Manor House, and further research may confirm this.

The fact that the south wing was in alignment with the eastern side of Mill Street suggests that in the days of the abbey that street ran in full width up to the abbey gateway, which would have made it a truly noble way instead of the mean lane now perpetuated by the encroachment of the later northern block of the house.

The south block was divided by a central chimney stack, having on the ground floor a great fireplace with traces of a projecting hood, and on the first floor a stone fireplace with moulded arch and aumbry in reveal of late 15th century or 16th century facing south. The upper floor had long been removed from the southern half of this block, so it was impossible to guess its character. The northern half was formed of stuccoed stud walls overhanging on the western side with a further projecting oak-moulded window of Jacobean character. On its eastern side was another four-centred moulded-arch fireplace of the late 15th

century or 16th century. The whole was roofed with Stonesfield slates and at least one arched brace truss, concealed by a horizontal plaster ceiling.

The character of the fireplaces suggests they may have come from the abbot's lodging or guest house. On the ground floor was one or two square-headed mullioned and transomed windows of stone. These were moulded in two orders and were probably coeval with the building.

The date of the building of the north block is quite uncertain but it was evidently remodelled in the 18th century when given formal double-hung windows, dormers with good mouldings and a deep plaster-covered cornice.

Latterly the front was marred by the insertion of a projecting modern shop window. Internally all the doors had bevelled panels. The only wall of the original structure that remained was the western gable of the north block.

Of the carved stones found, a 15th century door moulding, a vault-springer of the same date and perhaps from an oriel or cloister, and a column drum have been deposited in the church. The most interesting fragment, a very late Norman zig-zag voussoir has disappeared: its character was most unusual as a link with a 13th century manor, somewhat reminiscent of work at Glastonbury.

**Extract from the V.C.H. Oxon. vol 12 p.110 b, 1990.**

On the site of the Co-operative stores was a building once known as the old manor house, rebuilt in 1954 <sup>78</sup>. In the 19th century its owners still received from the lords of the manor a rent charge of 5s. which in 1535 the abbey paid to Thomas Blackman and was later paid to his heirs <sup>79</sup>. The Blackmans were prominent in Eynsham from the later Middle Ages until c. 1600, frequently acting as manorial officials; in 1574 the family claimed arms <sup>80</sup>. The building, aligned with Mill Street and Abbey Street, was evidently an encroachment on the original square, and the residual payment and the tradition of manorial status suggest that it may have been the court house of the medieval manor. The Blackmans' successors by the mid 17th century were the Greens, and by then the building was the Green Dragon <sup>81</sup>. It ceased to be an inn in the late 18th century and later included a shop and a bank. When demolished in 1954 it comprised an L-shaped building of rubble and stone slate, incorporating fragments of abbey masonry. The earlier wing, on Lombard Street, contained a central chimney and fireplaces of the 16th century or earlier and part of the block was timber-framed and jettied, with a moulded wooden oriel of four lights with mullions and transoms. The east-west wing was refronted in the 18th century.

*References*

78. Cooper Oxoniensia xix. 146-8; Chambers p.69. For illustration, Bodl.MS. Top. Oxon. c. 487

79. Valor Eccl. (Rec. Com.) ii. 207; PRO., C 66/2619, m. 27; Bodl. G.A. Oxon.b.85a, no.30 (sale cat.1862)

80. Chambers, 42; Oxon. Visit. (Harl. Soc.v), 193

81. ORO Palm. IV/1 (plot 29 in Mill Street)

For 20th century views of the north aspect of the building when it was a bank, and later a shop, see 'Then & Now', *E.R.* no.7, 1990.

# Eynsham and District Almanac,

**1898.**

## **LOCAL INFORMATION.**

Relieving Officer and Registrar of Births and Deaths—Mr. J. HARRIS. Overseers—Mr. T. LASLETT, Mr. W. H. WEBB. Assistant Overseer—Mr. J. ANDERSON. Collector of Income and Assessed Taxes—Mr. W. SAWYER. Postmaster—Mr. H. A. HOWE. G.W.R. Station, Station Master—Mr. C. FAULKES. Clerk to Bartholomew and other Charities—Mr. J. RAVENOR. Clerk to Parish Council—Mr. J. ANDERSON. Clerk to Eynsham School Board—Mr. J. RAVENOR. Carrier to Oxford and Witney—Mr. E. HARRIS:

## **Friendly Societies.**

Independent Order of Oddfellows, M.U., Lodge Room, Swan Hotel.	Secretary
MR. H. J. GREEN.	
Ancient Order of Foresters, Court House, Red Lion Hotel.	Secretary
MR. F. HIORNS.	
Eynsham Permanent Benefit Society, Club House, Swan Hotel.	Secretary-
MR. H. J. GREEN.	
Hampshire Friendly Society.	Secretary—MR. A. BLAKE.

## **Various Clubs, Societies, &c.**

Eynsham Horticultural and Cottage Garden Society. Secretary—M<sup>r</sup>. H. G. GREEN.  
,, Cricket Club. Hon. Sec.—MR. E. J. GIBBONS.  
,, Quoit Club, Swan Hotel. Secretary—MR. G. WOODWARD.  
,, Volunteer Fire Brigade. Captain—MR. G. WOODWARD.  
,, Nursing Association. Hon. Sec. and Treasurer—MRS. SMALLHORN.  
Primrose League. Ruling Councillor — MRS. SMALLHORN. Secretary — MRS. R. WINTER.

## Eynsham Almanac.

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### Local Information (continued).

Eynsham Parish Council. Chairman—Mr. F. GREEN.

„ School Board. Chairman—Mr. E. STOKES.

District Councillors—Mr. ARTHUR. BLAKE, MR. C. WATTS.

## Churches and Chapels.

### PARISH CHURCH.

Vicar—Rev. W. N. BRICKNELL.

Church Wardens—Mr. ALFRED BLAKE and Mr. H. GREEN.

Clerk—Mr. F. PIMM.

Organist—Mr. H. PEAKE.

Sunday Services, 11 a.m. ; 6 p.m.

### CATHOLIC APOSTOLIC CHURCH (Mill Street).

Minister—Rev. W. GRANT.

Services—Sunday, 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. ; Monday, 6 a.m. ; Thursday, 7.m. ;  
Friday, 6 a.m. ; Saturday, 5-30 p.m,

### WESLEYAN CHURCH (High Street).

M i n i s t e r s — v a r i o u s .

Services—Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.

### BAPTIST CHAPEL (Abbey Street).

M i n i s t e r s — v a r i o u s .

Services—Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.

### BRETHREN'S MEETING ROOM (High Street).

Services—Sunday, 11 a.m. and 6 p.m.

## LORD BRAIN OF EYNSHAM

by George Adams

This is a very brief biography of a leading internationally renowned physician. In his obituary which, most unusually, covered six columns on three full pages of the *Lancet* in 1967, his degrees and honours were summed up as follows:

'Dr Russell Brain was knighted in 1952, became a baronet in 1954, and was created a baron in 1962. He was elected F.R.S. in 1964. He was an honorary fellow of New College, Oxford (1952), and had honorary degrees from the Universities of Oxford, Durham, Manchester, Southampton, Belfast and Wales; he was an honorary fellow of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh, the Royal College of Physicians of Ireland, the Royal College of Surgeons of England, the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons of Glasgow, the Royal Australasian College of Physicians, the American College of Physicians, the College of Physicians of South Africa, and the Faculty of Radiologists. He was President of the Association of Physicians of Great Britain and Ireland in 1956, of the Association of British Neurologists in 1960, and of the International Society of Internal Medicine in 1958. He was an honorary member of American, French, German and Spanish neurological societies and of the Swiss Academy of Medicine. He gave Rede, Eddington, and Linacre lectures at Cambridge, the Riddle lecture at Durham, the Bryce lecture at Oxford, and the Osler Oration in Canada. At Oxford, in 1961, he was awarded the Osler medal.'

This is a truly remarkable catalogue of distinction awarded to an outstanding medical statesman, but the most intriguing feature of it to me, and I hope to this Group, is that the title he chose when he became a peer was Baron Brain of Eynsham. Why Eynsham? We have checked the entries in the D.N.B., Who's Who, and I have been through Monk's Roll and various obituary notices: there is frequent reference to his love for Oxford and close associations with it but we have failed to discover what, if any, he had with our village. Was there an ancestral connection? Although there were Brains (and Braynes) living in the village throughout the 19th century, trawls through the parish registers and census returns fail to make any clear link between Lord Brain or his father and these families. Recent correspondence with his son and heir, the second Lord Brain of Eynsham, has revealed more remote ancestral links with the area. The family has been traced back to 1570 and Thomas Brayne of Ascott-under-Wychwood. His descendants in the direct family line lived variously at Chipping Norton, Finstock, Charlbury, and Church Hanborough, but the local connection was broken

sometime in the late 18th century, when Thomas Brain, who had been born in Church Hanborough, moved to Reading.

There his great-great-grandson, Walter Russell Brain was born in October 1895. His father was a solicitor, and immediate forebears included an architect, a farmer, and a bootmaker who was also a magistrate. He was a quiet, rather shy boy and grew up with the capacity to read quickly, with implacable industry and methodical handling of facts. At Mill Hill school he studied classics being destined, by his father, for the Law (although he wanted to do science) In 1914 he entered New College which he thoroughly disliked. [Would he have approved, one wonders, of this article appearing in a history journal? Ed.]. He joined the Friend's Ambulance Unit in 1915 and met a VAD, Stella Langdon-Down, who was to become his wife, and who encouraged him to take evening classes which led on to taking his first MB. He returned to New College in 1919, this time to read medicine, married Stella in 1920, and qualified via the London Hospital in 1922. He had an early interest in psychiatry, but was advised by one of his teachers to study neurology first, and never looked back. His Oxford D.M. came in 1925, Fellowship of the Royal College in 1931, and, in 1950, he was elected President, an honour he held for seven years.

Obituaries from many friends and colleagues pay tribute to Lord Brain's many-sided genius - his intellect; his reputation world-wide as a clinical neurologist; the unremitting flow of original papers, reviews and books - medical, philosophical, literary and poetic; his speed in extracting the essence from lengthy papers or committee business; his skill in using this ability as president or chairman of so many societies or committees. He is described as having a natural shyness, a seeming aloofness, which masked a real interest in people, their thoughts and their happiness, but he inspired great affection amongst his many friends with his sympathetic eyes, a slow and ready smile, and a happy humour and boyishness which was a delight for those who knew him.

So was it a family relationship that acquainted him with Eynsham, or, perhaps nostalgic recollection of happy visits to one or other of its thirteen pubs in 'the good old days' as a New College undergraduate? Who can tell? Maybe we shall never know, but at least he should be listed amongst Eynsham's famous men.

The first Baron Brain of Eynsham died in 1966 in his home - the house that Galsworthy imagined Soames Forsyte building for Fleur - where, in such spare time as he allowed himself, he had enjoyed gardening and bird-watching.



A view looking east along Bitterell, towards Wytham Hill, in the mid-1970s, before development. Note the old barns to the right, later converted to a residential property. (Photograph courtesy of Martin Harris)



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

Back numbers of the Eynsham Record are available in print for £1 plus p&p.  
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## THE DAY TOMMY HARRIS MET WINSTON CHURCHILL

by **Martin Harris**

(based on an interview with his kinsman in the 1990s)

During World War II, Eynsham's Tommy Harris (1905-1999) was coming home on leave from the army. He'd managed to get as far as Headington and was walking along the road, thumbing a lift when, as he recalled:

"... and this big car pulls up. This chauffeur pulls up by the side of me and said, *'Where do you want to get to soldier?'* I said *'Witney way'*. This old bloke in the back with a cigar said *'Witney? I'm sorry, I'm going to Woodstock'*. That was Winston Churchill.

*'Will you give me a lift as far as the next roundabout?'* *'Get in boy!'* he said, and I sat by the side of his chauffeur and the old chap in the back said *'I'm going to Blenheim.'* And I rode with Winston Churchill in the war. There was no talking. He'd got his papers all over the shop in the back of the car. He'd done it for the sake of giving me a lift"

The Daimler car then dropped Tommy off at the Woodstock roundabout.

"That was wonderful to ride with a man like that, cos he was a man!"

## FREDERICK WILLIAM WASTIE (1857-1937)

### EYNESHAM APPLE BREEDER

by **Brian Atkins**

The complex history of the origins of the wild apple (in Asia), its 'migration' and evolution westwards, mediated by travellers and their animals travelling along the Silk Road, is the subject of much current academic research.

Once 'discovered', the apple attracted the attention of early gardeners and breeders in temperate climates where it flourishes. By means of establishing nurseries, techniques such as grafting and cross-breeding, and marketing, some 2000 named cultivars have been developed world wide.

Of these, which are described in *The Book of Apples*<sup>1</sup>, no fewer than 14 were bred by F.W.Wastie of Eynsham.

The Wastie family, traced back, so far, to one Richard Wace (1557-1632), has been meticulously researched by Mrs Iris Wastie of Cumnor<sup>2</sup>. More than twelve generations of Richard's descendants have lived within only a few miles of his grave at Stanton Harcourt, and it is the Eynsham branch that is of particular interest in this article.

One of Richard's sons, Richard II (dates unknown) had a son (Richard III, 1640-81) who married Joan Green of Stonesfield in 1666. They raised a family in Eynsham which included Richard IV (1668-1747). Thus was the Eynsham Wastie dynasty founded. Between 1653 and 1900 no fewer than 41 Wastie burials are recorded in the Parish Records. Iris Wastie has provided 31 pages of detailed research on the Eynsham Wasties, who variously were 'yeomen', ferrymen, gloverers, stonemasons involved with the building of Swinford Bridge, shoemakers, etc. But this is not a family history journal, and I must get to the point, which deals with a particular scion of the family.

Frederick William Wastie was born in Myrtle House, Mill Street on 29 February 1857. His great-great grandfather William Wastie (son of Richard IV) had a house on part of the land in the 1740s, but Myrtle House in its present form probably dates from after 1767 when the family acquired the main part of the site. This branch of the family continued to own the property until modern times<sup>3</sup>.

There, listed in the 1861 census, were his parents James Wastie (1826-75) a master mason, and Mary, born in Banbury in 1826, and their children Fanny (5), Frederick (4), and Jane, (1). Twenty years later Frederick (24) was an unmarried

builder still living in Myrtle House with his widowed mother, and younger siblings, Jane (21), Francis (14) and Amy (11). I don't know when he forsook bachelorhood and started breeding children, and gave up building in order to breed apples, although some more research involving, for example, the 1891 and the (shortly to be released) 1901 censuses could resolve these questions. What is known is that his wife was called Peggy; his son, Fred, continued to grow apples commercially; and that he probably had a daughter called Jennifer (see below). He died in 1937.

His orchard was almost certainly to the west side of Queen Street, towards the northern end, an area now built over.

Here follows a list of Wastie's named varieties, taken from *The Book of Apples*, including the parental crosses involved. For each variety this book also gives much highly abbreviated technical information for the would-be nurseryman, such as vigour of tree, picking times, storage times, and whether the fruit is of the dessert or culinary type, omitted here.

### **Oxford Beauty**

Gascoyne's Scarlet x Scarlet Nonpareil.

Beautiful clear red flush. Sweet, lightly flavoured white flesh.

### **Oxford Conquest**

Blenheim Orange x Court Pendu Plat.

Large. Sharp, chewy flesh, mellowing by Jan. to rich, sweet-sharp taste.

### **Oxford Hoard**

Stunner Pippin x Golden Russet.

Develops quite intense rich, sweet-sharp taste, lots of fruit; rather like Stunner Pippin.

### **Oxford Sunrise**

Cox's Orange Pippin x Lane's Prince Albert.

Plenty of savoury acidity, yet some delicacy of flavour; crisp, juicy.

### **Oxford Yeoman**

Blenheim Orange x Lane's Prince Albert.

Refreshing, crisp & juicy, cooks to slightly sharp but bland puree.

**Eynsham Challenger**

Blenheim Orange x Lord Derby.

Large. Cooks to cream purée, lightly flavoured, quite brisk.

**Eynsham Dumpling**

Blenheim Orange x Sandringham.

Large. Cooks to lemon purée, but little flavour.

**Jennifer**

Duchess Favourite x Beauty of Bath.

Sharp, firm cream flesh; low on juice and flavour.

**Jennifer Wastie**

Ribston Pippin x Barnack Beauty.

Sweet, little acidity; chewy, white tinged green flesh.

**Old Fred**

Allington Pippin x Court Pendu Plat.

Sweet, moderately juicy, crisp, but lacks interest.

**Peggy's Pride**

Allington Pippin x Golden Spire.

Refreshing, crisp, juicy, but little of the flavour of the parents.

**Red Army**

Chatley's Kernel x Worcester Permain. Sweet, but

moderate flavour.

**Sergeant Peggy**

Blenheim Orange x Gloria Mundi.

Large. Finn, sweet, but little acidity or flavour. Insipid cooked.

**Caudal Market**

Lane's Prince Albert x Hambleton Deux Ans.

Quite juicy, sweet, crisp. Cooked, keeps shape, but poor flavour.

Of the names he chose, 'Peggy' and 'Sergeant Peggy' were after his wife, and 'Jennifer' and 'Jennifer Wastie' may have been a daughter. He had a son called Fred, so 'Old Fred' seems to refer to himself.

Five of his varieties were crosses with the famed Blenheim Orange. This magnificent fruit, originally known as Kempster's Pippin, was raised by George Kempster, a tailor whose cottage garden abutted Blenheim Park. It is unclear whether he planted a pip or whether it self-seeded from a tree in the Park in 1740. It acquired its present name when the palace gardener introduced the fruit to the Duke of Marlborough's table in 1811. In addition to Wastie's varieties where the Blenheim Orange is one of the 'parents', he is also credited with a named 'discovery', the 'Red Blenheim', a more highly coloured form of the Blenheim Orange, which he spotted on an old tree at Welland, Malvern, in Worcestershire.

None of Wastie's apples have survived commercially, although some of his trees may remain to be discovered in gardens anywhere in the country since his fruit enjoyed much popularity in their day. Many of his varieties may have been preserved in the National Fruit Collection at Brogdale in Kent. It would be good if one or more of these could be planted in the new 13-acre woodland being established to the north of the village. The intention is that the central glade will incorporate "locally distinctive fruit trees" (see p.40) and what could be more fitting candidates than Wastie's apples?

Wastie was not the only Eynsham apple breeder! In 1917 one E. Corry Hanks raised:

**Corry's Wonder**

Beauty of Stoke x possibly Lane's Prince Albert.

Crisp, sharp, fruity. Cooks to cream purée, quite brisk, well flavoured in Dec.

*References and sources (see inside front cover for abbreviations)*

1. Joan Morgan & Alison Richards. *The Book of Apples*. 1993. Ebury Press ISBN 009177759-3
2. Iris Wastie. *The History of the Wastie Family of Oxfordshire*, privately published, 2000.
3. V.C.H. *Oxon*. vol. 12 p.113.

Census returns for Eynsham

Eynsham Parish Records

## A 19TH CENTURY SWINFORD FARM ACCOUNT BOOK

by Pamela Richards

When 'Ted' Whelan was an active member of the Junior History Group, he put us in touch with Mrs Hilda Cornish, née Franklin, who kindly sent us some photocopies of part of an Account Book which she had inherited. After Mr Whelan's death Mrs Cornish loaned me two account books from Swinford farm and in this article I want to deal with the older of the books which is mostly concerned with the workings of the farm. The other book is of later date and deals with household accounts and needs to be dealt with separately.

The leather-covered book (12cm x 18cm) is entitled *Swinford Book January 28 1837*. At least, I assume that is what is written as only the 'Bo' of the second word is there, the rest of the cover being torn. There are 75 pages, some still blank, with evidence that at least two pages have been cut out. Inside the cover is a printed list of the "Stamps" necessary for *Bills & Promissory Notes, Receipts, Foreign Bills of Exchange and Bonds* .. On the second page is an Almanac for the year 1836 "being a Leap Year", followed by a Pocket Companion or Ready Reckoner. This is "*Correctly showing, at one view, the Price of Grain (at a given Price) on every Quarter, Sack, and Bushel, in proportion, from £10 to £30 per load*". I found this useful in checking some of the calculations in the accounts.

The accounts are written in a haphazard manner and strangely, although it is entitled 1837, the first accounts in the book are dated 1836. Other entries for 1836 come after some for 1837, entries for 1837 and 1838 are jumbled and there is little indication whether the money recorded is going into or out of the account.

Mrs Cornish believes that during the period covered by the Account Book a John Hedges was the tenant farmer, the farm being owned by the Earl of Abingdon. It is also thought that he was buried in Cumnor churchyard. A number of men with the name John Hedges are buried there, but many of the 'Hedges' gravestones as recorded by the local history team are illegible regarding dates. At no place within the book does it actually say to whom the book belongs. On the first page of the book a loan is recorded "*Borowd [sic] of J Hedges the sum of £10. 0s William Smith Freeland next Saturday month 1836 Dec 28th*". This is then crossed through, presumably meaning that the debt was repaid. This would suggest that the subsequent accounts are those kept by John Hedges. The earliest entry in the book is dated January 30th 1836 and the latest date July 3rd 1841, which leads to a mystery.



According to the 1841 Cumnor census, Swinford Farm was then inhabited by William Franklin, aged 40, farmer and his family. At the same time the only John Hedges living in Cumnor was a farmer, aged 90. Can we assume that the farm changed hands just before the census or was William Franklin a sub-tenant farmer living at Swinford while John Hedges remained in Cumnor? Hedges also seemed to have a connection with farming activity at Wytham.

Most of the accounts refer to quantities of grain or farm livestock and payments for labour. There are also some dealings in the lettings of property.

On St Thomas Day, 21st December 1836, there is an entry "*Let Robt Ford the Malthouse & Cottage at Ensham att £17 per year*", and on the same date, "*Let Robt Ford the meeting house at 2s 6d per wicke at Ensham*". In the 1841 census a Robert Ford was living in Mill Street. He is described as a grocer and at that time was 51. From the Parish Registers we know that he was born in 1789 to Jonathan and Sarah Ford and married by licence to Hannah Warner of Stanton Harcourt in 1813. Although they had a number of children none of them appear in the Parish Registers so it is possible that Robert Ford was a member of a non-conformist church. The Baptists had established a small meeting room in a barn behind the White House in Mill Street in 1808<sup>1</sup>. However the present Baptist chapel was built in 1818 so that it may be that Robert Ford had sympathy with another breakaway' sect. This may have been the Wesleyans or the Primitive Methodists who, like the Baptists, are known to have used the meeting room <sup>2</sup>.

From various entries it is clear that Swinford was a mixed farm. In 1836 the account of William Smith, of Freeland, stood at £26 6s. 0d. and, although he himself was a farmer it appeared to be for quantities of wheat and peas bought, the amounts being referred to as "received". In this account 1 quarter of peas was valued at £1 16s. 0d. and 1 quarter of wheat at £1 18s. 0d.

The price of wheat was considered to be a good indicator of the economy of the country. Before the Napoleonic Wars the average price of wheat was £2 5s. per quarter, rising during the period of 1810-1815 to £4 16s. a quarter. By the 1830s prices were beginning to return to their pre-war levels<sup>3</sup>, which can be seen from these accounts. By the middle of 1837 Mr Hedges was getting £2 9s. a quarter for his wheat.

There are also entries for the sale of "banes" [beans], barley, hay, straw and oats. There were also sheep, pigs, cattle and horses on the farm.

*Oct. 1 1836 Charles Parker Recd. two sheep & one lamb £4 0s. 0d.*

*Oct. 29 1836 Sold, Brian Louch of Cassington 30 Sheep £41 0s. 0d*

In 1837 wool from the sheep was sold to Mr Shillingford, the Woolstapler, who lived in Queen Street, for £54 15s. 0d. by a calculation which I failed to unravel.

*Mar. 4 1837 Cash of Mr Moore for 2 pigs £4. 6. 0.*

*Sep. 13 1837 Received from Barrett for 3 dead cows £1. 10. 0.*

*June 27 1837 Paid: 2 B[ushels] banes for horses 10s. 6d.*

Grain was sold in bushels, sacks, quarters and loads. A load or "wey" was made up of 5 quarters, 10 sacks or 40 bushels. A quarter of grain equalled 8 bushels and 1 bushel equalled between 55 and 60 lb. depending on the region of the country.

From these accounts it is difficult to work out the rates of pay for the labourers on the farm. In 1843, a few years after these accounts, the average agricultural wages were 8s per week <sup>4</sup>. Over the summer and early autumn 'James' receives £80 'for labour' between June 17th and September 12th 1837. This works out at approximately £6 10s. 0d. per week which seems an inordinately large sum of money in comparison with *July 29 paid sheep shearers 7s. 6d.* It leads to speculation whether 'James' was a sub-contractor employing a gang of workers. Could it have been William James, aged 55, Sheaf/Stook maker(?) living in the Square, Eynsham according to the 1841 census? Another item on October 2nd 1837 is *Paid the servants wages £4 10s. 0d.* but no period of time is mentioned.

In *Eynsham Record* no.8 Edward Hibbert gave a history of Eynsham's postal service, but one thing he did not really deal with was the practice of the recipients having to pay postage on letters. Until adhesive stamps were introduced the amount of postage paid or to be collected was generally written in black or red respectively on the front of the letter. In 1840 when the penny post was introduced by Rowland Hill the first postage stamps were issued. Stamps as well as stamped letter sheets and envelopes were placed on sale for public use to facilitate postal operations and in particular to bring an end to the system of collecting postage on delivery. Rowland Hill had produced his plan for sending letters at a uniform rate of 1d. per 1/2 oz. irrespective of distance in 1837, but it was not until January 1840 that the Act of Parliament was passed and the stamps introduced on 6th May of that year.

In this account book we find a number of examples of payment for letters on delivery. The payments seem to have been influenced by weight and distance.

*March 23rd 1836 Letter from London 8d.*

*March 30th 1836 Letter from Legacy Office London 8d.*

*April 21st 1838 Letter from Witney 5d.*

*May 17th 1838 Letter from London 11d.*  
*September 25th 1839 Letter from London 10d.*  
*June 10 1840 Letter from London 9d.*

This last is an interesting entry as by this date adhesive postage stamps had been introduced and as the letter was coming from London one would have thought that such stamps would be easily available.

Other items which caught my attention in scattered entries for 1838 were:

*January 28th Books at Oxford 9s. 0d.*

*April 21st : Journey to London to see Mr Parker respecting Mr Dutton £2. 0. 0.*

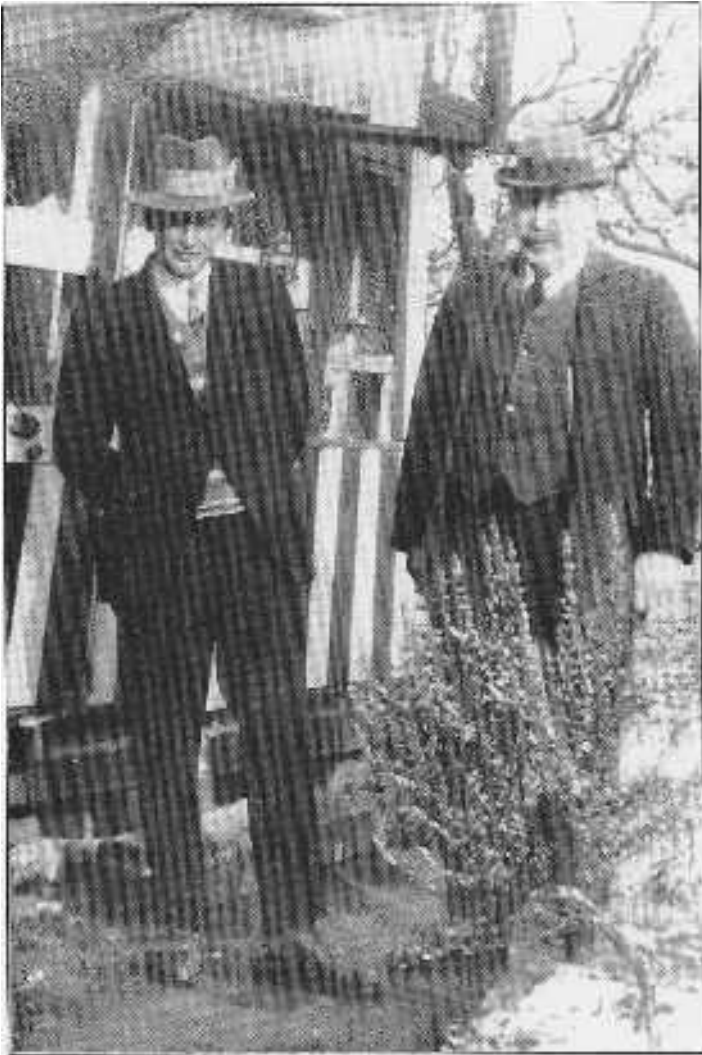
*July 4th Paid Andrews Indenters [sic] £2. 2s. 0d.*

I assume that "Indenters" is a poor spelling of "Indentures" which would be needed by an apprentice.

The more one reads through this little book the more questions there are to ask, but sadly there seem to be no absolute answers, just a lot of speculation about the people behind the named entries.

#### *References*

1. *E.R.* no.13, p.9.
2. Oxon. Archives, NM2/12/F/1.
3. Nicholas Mayhew, *Sterling: the Rise and Fall of a Currency*. Allen Lane, 1999.
4. *Ibid.*



Herbert "Baker" Caves (right) and his son-in-law Mark Crawford, Eynsham's policeman during World War II. They are standing by Caves's pigeon loft in Mill Street. Pigeons were a shared interest.

## **HERBERT "BAKER" CAVES 1880-1962, AND HIS FAMILY**

**by Joan Townsend (née Crawford)**

My grandfather, Herbert Caves with his wife, Bertha and young daughter, Ena (who was to become my mother) came to Eynsham from his birthplace, Kempston, near Bedford, in 1912.

"Baker" Caves, as he was popularly known by all the village and surrounding district worked at Hall's bakery<sup>1</sup> until his retirement in 1948, except for a period of voluntary service with the 2nd Volunteer Regiment, Oxfordshire & Buckinghamshire Light Infantry.

For part of his time in the bakery he acted as an unpaid 'baby-sitter', keeping an eye on Ann and Bridget in the bakehouse, the younger of the two in a bread basket - not allowed these days!

He played a very active part in village life. As a founder member of the Eynsham British Legion, he organised a campaign to purchase its first standard, and carried it to St Leonard's Church for the Dedication Service. During the 1939-45 war he collected the numbers and addresses of servicemen from the village to send them a Postal Order, value 2s 6d., from a fund of the British Legion for Christmas comforts, for which many were very grateful. We knew all the houses he called at, because even for some time after the war, his dog, Judy, would still pause, perhaps for a tit-bit!

He was also a founder member of the Eynsham and District Pigeon Club. I can often see him sitting under the plum tree awaiting the birds' return, to clock them in. Often the 'share out' supper was held at the old house in Mill Street, which was a celebration and receiving of cups and certificates. One of his pigeons won the 'Coming of Age Race' in 1943, and I still own the cup. Until he passed away in 1962 a pigeon loft was kept for him. It was this interest which brought together his daughter, Ena, my mother, and Mark Crawford, my father, and their courtship and marriage in 1930.

During the war my Dad, Mark Crawford, was village policeman. He was known by the village lads as B\*\*\*\*y Biscuits, but was greatly respected. We had quite a lot of catapults at home in the sideboard which he had confiscated from the lads. He had a large beat covering Eynsham, Stanton Harcourt, South Leigh and Barnard Gate, all by bike and on foot (no panda cars in those days!)

One little anecdote. He told Mum that he was going to Barnard Gate one evening near Christmas and that there had been some chicken rustling at one of

the farms and he had to go to investigate. In the meantime we had gone to bed and the air raid siren had sounded, which we did not hear. At that time the police had to stay on duty until the 'All Clear'. Mum, waking up in the early hours was concerned about his safety and got up to go to the telephone in the Square to ring the H.Q. at Witney, and met him in The Tuer as the 'All Clear' sounded. He never again told her where he was going to on duty.

After the war he continued as a Special Constable, rising to the rank of sergeant, and still doing many duties in the village, one being leading the Carnival parade.

Like his father-in-law, he too was an active member of the British Legion as standard bearer. He won many competitions, and for several years was the County standard bearer, taking the Eynsham standard to the Royal Albert Hall for the Festival of Remembrance many times. Both 'Baker' Caves and Mark Crawford were awarded the Legion's Gold Badge for the work they had both carried out.

Mum, Ena Crawford, was also very active, a long serving member of the Women's Institute and also its Eynsham President. During the war she organised the Red Cross Penny a Week' fund with her band of many willing helpers collecting from door to door around the streets of the village, and at village fetes in Mrs James's garden at the 'Grange'. Weekly dances were held in the Institute for the soldiers from the sugar beet factory and the airmen from Stanton Harcourt, not to mention the local populace. One tune I well remember was 'In the Mood', Glenn Miller's signature tune. Loads of sandwiches were made, stacked in washing trays and carried into the hall. Many people contributed to this event. Christmas bazaars were held. One particular lady, Mrs Adderley, who lived in part of the old Malt Shovel pub, knitted and made wonderful toys, quite a joy for a child to receive in those days. I think that much of the material came from a small clothes factory along the Witney Road. Through all these efforts, more than a thousand pounds, a lot of money in those days, was sent. For her efforts on behalf of the Red Cross, she was invited to a royal garden party at Buckingham Palace.

We were all members of St Leonard's Church, Grampy being a bell-ringer and sidesman. Both Grampy and my Dad had half-muffled peals rung on the day of their funerals. I was married in St Leonard's in 1953. Oh! what happy memories I have of my early life in the village.

1. For other references to "Baker" Caves, see the articles in E.R.. no.16 by Ann Seal and Anne Wrapson starting on p.36 and p.39 respectively.

## THE FANTASY PRESS

by Peter Way

In 1951, just 50 years ago, Oscar Mellor set up a small press in 'Thrayspine', the furthest from the road of the then six (now three) terraced dwellings between the toll bridge and the Oxford Water Works. He was an artist and intended to subsidize his painting by printing. There was no electricity available so the press was a hand-operated machine, an Adana T/P48. In an article *Memoirs of the Fantasy Press* by John Cotton in *Private Printer and Private Press* No 1 Feb. 1968 we are told that:

'the cottage had two main rooms downstairs: one large one used as a living room cum studio; the other was a kitchen with a side walled off as a bathroom. The press had taken over the kitchen and the stove had gone in with the bath which served as a useful dining table by placing a wooden top over it ... upstairs where as well as walls hung with paintings were the sheets and piles of pages of the latest Fantasy Press productions spread over the bed and the chairs and every other raised surface in the room.'

In 1955 a larger treadle machine, a Pershke Crown Folio platen was bought.

Friendship with Michael Shanks, then President of the Oxford University Poetry Society, produced poems for printing and in 1952 a series of pamphlets began to appear as Fantasy Poets: from 1952 to 1954 thirty-five of these were produced and sold for ninepence each. The first pamphlet consisted of seven poems by Elizabeth Jennings, and among the other poets who were printed were George Steiner (no 8), Geoffrey Hill (no 11), A. Alvarez (no 15), Thom Gunn (no 16), Anthony Thwaite (no 17), Donald Davie (no 19), Philip Larkin (no 21), and Kingsley Amis (no 22). Each pamphlet had six or seven poems in it.

In addition to the thirty-five pamphlets, six booklets, each consisting of between nine and nineteen poems, were printed annually under the title *Oxford Poetry*, from 1953 to 1958. Individual collections of poems by fourteen poets were also printed in soft covers between 1953 and 1962, notably *Poems* by Elizabeth Jennings, *The Necklace* by Charles Tomlinson, and *The Evans Country* by Kingsley Amis.

A few hardback editions were also undertaken: in 1954 *Fighting Terms* by Thom Gunn, later reprinted by Faber and Faber, *A Form of Words* by George Macbeth, and the *Elegies of Ovid*, translated by Christopher Marlowe in a limited edition of 170 copies of which only 99 were printed.

**ELIZABETH JENNINGS** was born in 1926. A recent graduate, she now lives and works in Oxford. Her poems have appeared in 'World Review', 'Poetry Review', 'New English Weekly', 'Spectator', 'New Statesman', 'Outposts', and in John Lehman's first broadcast of 'New Soundings'.

This publication is the first of a series to be issued by the Oxford University Poetry Society, the writers featured being, in most cases, undergraduates. It is intended to appeal, not only to those concerned purely with the excellence of poetry, but also to those interested in the thoughts and techniques of the newest generation of English writers - the generation who grew up in wartime. Interest in the ideas of this generation is now perhaps more widespread than ever before; we therefore hope that the circulation of this series will not be confined to our University.

Editors: Michael Shanks  
Oscar Mellor

Designed and printed by Oscar Mellor and Roger Smith at  
Swinford, Eynsham, Oxon.

The introductory page of the first number of 'The Fantasy Poets',  
with the Eynsham imprint.

By publishing over some ten years many poets who went on to become leading figures later, Oscar Mellor did a considerable service to literature. It is always greatly encouraging for new writers to see their work in print and thereby to be able to share it with a wider public. Several of these first productions are now collectors' items, notably Thom Gunn's *Fighting Terms*, Philip Larkin's 1954 poems (the no 21 being included in 1955 in *The Less Deceived*) and Kingsley Amis's 1954 poems (the no 22 being included in 1956 in *A Case of Samples*).

*The Fantasy Poets* are a part of Eynsham's post-war history as well as of English literature generally.

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#### Editor's Note

For some reason, or probably by chance, Eynsham has had links with the publishing and printing profession from time to time for hundreds of years.

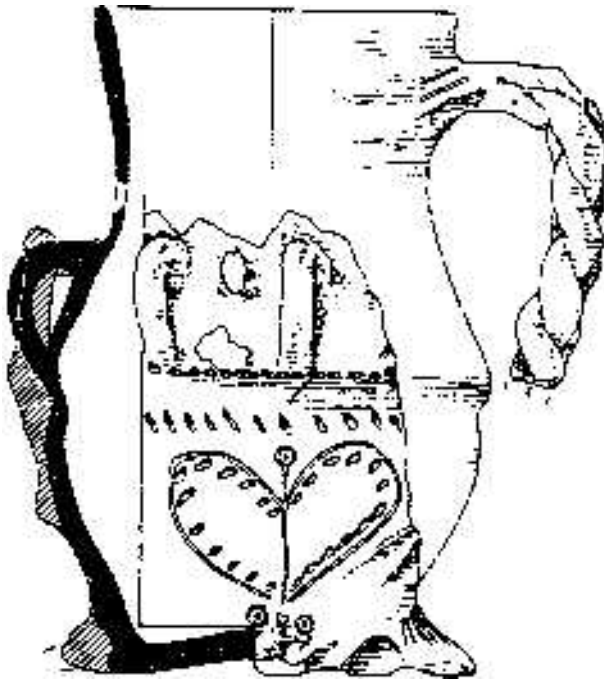
Michael Sparke, born here in the 16th century, became an important London publisher and bookseller in the 17th century, bequeathing a considerable sum for the maintenance of a free school in the village.<sup>1</sup>

John Danter (1565-1599), son of an Eynsham weaver, became a master printer in London. Despite his short life he printed a vast quantity of interesting books.<sup>2</sup>

As is well known, in the 19th century Eynsham's mill on the Evenlode was producing quality paper used not least by the Oxford University Press for its Bibles, and by William Cobbett for his *Weekly Political Register* and by its successor *Hansard*.<sup>3</sup>

#### References

1. Donald S. Richards, *E.R.* no.7, pp.19-21, 1990.
2. Judith K. Rogers, *E.R.* no.12, pp.3-8, 1995.
3. Joan Weedon's article in this number.



Portion of a decorated jug (and its conjectured reconstruction), unearthed by the Oxford Archaeological Unit on the site of Eynsham Abbey.

## **An Eynsham School Song, by Mr E Sharpe**

**as recalled by Mrs Maureen Clapcott (née Morgan), although she says  
"perhaps not quite precisely"**

At Eynsham School two heroes have we,  
Hurrah for Raleigh and Drake,  
Bold adventurers on the sea,  
Hurrah for Raleigh and Drake.

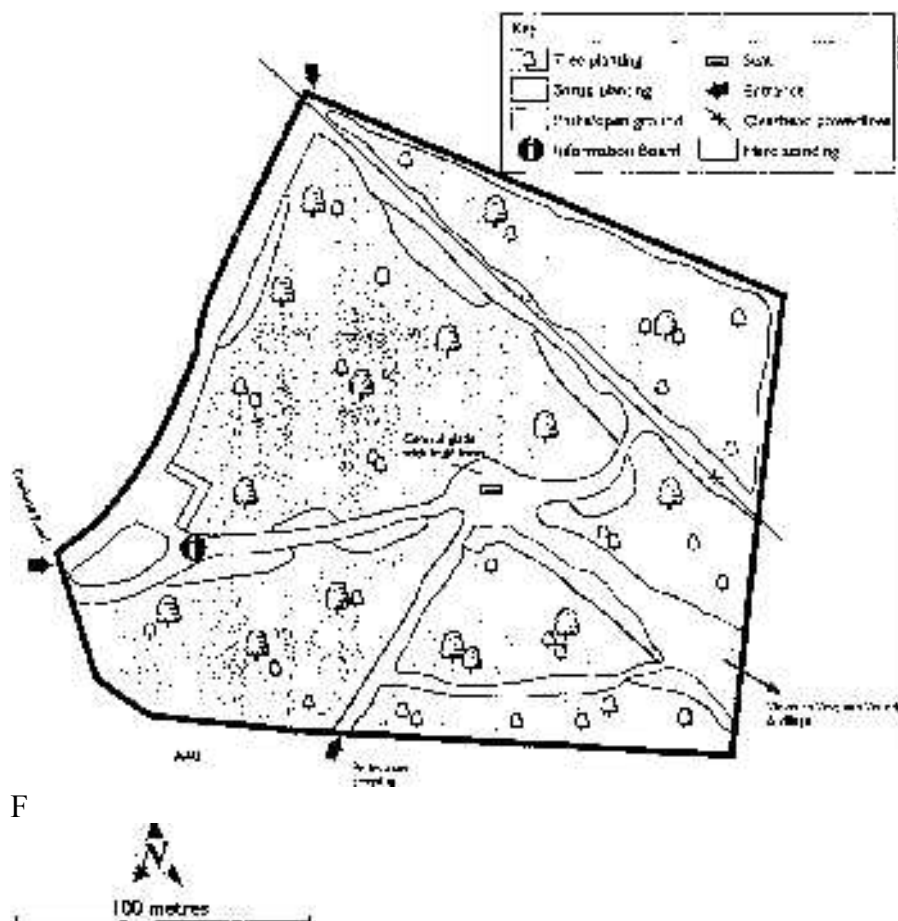
Here's to Raleigh and here's to Drake,  
We'll win more points for our team's sake,  
Here's to Raleigh and here's to Drake,  
Hurrah for Eynsham School. *[This is the Chorus]*

Raleigh was famous for courtesy,  
Hurrah for Raleigh and Drake,  
He bore potatoes over the sea,  
Hurrah for Raleigh and Drake.

*[Chorus]*

Drake no Devil nor Spaniard feared,  
Hurrah for Raleigh and Drake,  
Bold Drake he singed the King of Spain's beard,  
Hurrah for Raleigh and Drake.

*[Chorus]*



## A NEW WOOD

During the morning of 9th December last year, hundreds of villagers donned their boots, grabbed a spade, crossed the A.40, and planted a couple of trees each on a 13-acre field opposite the Evenlode restaurant. The site had been bought by The Woodland Trust as part of its 'Woods on your Doorstep' project, to create 200 new woods around towns and villages in the country by the millennium. In fact Eynsham's was the 200th!

Most of the 9000 trees planted are broad-leaved species such as oak, ash and field maple, wild cherry and crab apple, all of which grow well in the area and were abundant in the ancient Wychwood Forest which extended more or less to here.

Other trees and shrubs to be planted along the edges of the paths and rides include disease-resistant elm, walnut, bullace, hazel, spindle, hawthorn, blackthorn, buckthorn and wild privet. Some areas of hazel are intended to be coppiced to meet the demands of local craftsmen for their hurdles, thatching spars, pea sticks and so on.

The central glade (see plan opposite) will include a 'group of locally distinctive fruit trees', and it would be good if one or more of F.W.Wastie's apple trees could be resurrected to this end (see pp. 23-26).



# TUCK'S POST CARD

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By Appointment

Thomas Stanger, was the younger son of  
Gavin and succeeded the throne as the fifth of  
his father in 1625. He was crowned at 13 but in  
1628 was 14 four years later. He was the only  
king to be crowned at 14, and the first  
English king buried in Westminster Abbey.

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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, Oxfordshire, by means of regular meetings (normally at least ten), with invited speakers, during the winter and spring; and occasional outings in the summer.

**New members are welcome.**

Please apply to the Secretary for details of meetings and subscriptions.

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Printed by Parchment (Oxford) Ltd  
Printworks, Crescent Road, Cowley, Oxford, England OX4 2PB  
email: parch2000@cs.com      www.PrintUK.com