

# THE EYNSHAM RECORD



Number 20 – 2003

## 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.
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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.   |
| O.R.O.               | Oxfordshire Record Office (formerly Oxfordshire Archives)  |
| P.R.O.               | Public Record Office.  |
| <i>V.C.H. Oxon.</i>  | <i>The Victoria History of the County of Oxford</i> .  |

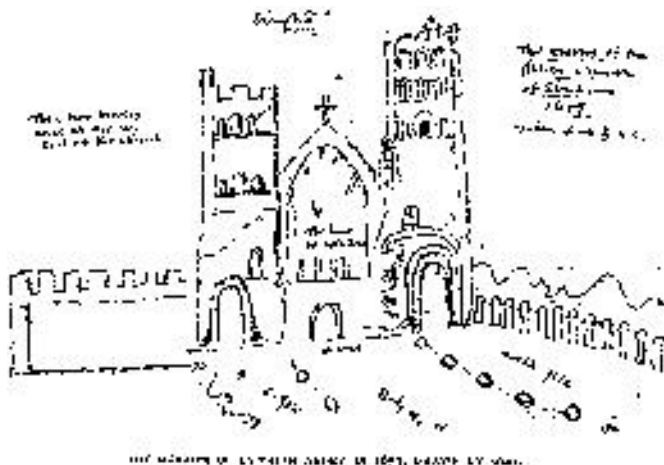
FRONT COVER

St Leonard's Church nave, looking west. Monochrome drawing by J.C.Buckler, ca. 1830. (Bodleian Library: Top.Oxon. a.66 f257)

## THE EYNHAM RECORD

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## EDITORIAL

A lot of rescuing and recording has been going on recently. We finally found a solution to the problem of the Abbey stones we rescued from the old vicarage in 1985 (see p38). Members of the Oxfordshire Family History Society have completed the monumental task of transcribing and photographing the monumental inscriptions at St Leonard's (see p. 14). The results of their labours may be consulted in the library (print-out on the open shelves; CD-ROM with illustrations in the EHG's cupboard). Members of our Group are currently transcribing the 1891 and 1901 census returns for the parish. Eynsham has its own website, where the history section is especially strong (see p.18). We are also re-sorting the late William Bainbridge's vast collection of slides, many of which, of course, are to do with the village. We had an illustrated talk on the subject very recently and another is to be planned.

At least three of the articles that follow thus deal with near contemporary goings-on, but they all have historical validity. And, as someone once said, "Even yesterday is history".

Thanks, as ever, to all contributors.

## **REPAIR OF THE ANNE BEDWELL MONUMENT, ST LEONARD'S PARISH CHURCH, EYNSHAM**

**by Joan Weedon**

In the nineteen eighties, during a major renewal and restoration of the fabric of St Leonard's church, it was discovered that one of the Rogers family memorials in the south aisle was becoming unsafe. When the monument was taken down it was apparent that cramps at the top of the inscription panel had completely corroded and that there were no fastenings remaining to tie back the top of the monument to the wall. A conservation report dated May 1987 described the monument as 'comprising an inscription panel set upon corbels with wing brackets to either side. There is a plain apron below the inscription panel. In the upper half of the inscription panel a portrait medallion is flanked by cherubs' heads and surrounded by a wreath of flowers.' It was noted that the top of the monument, the 'pediment', had been missing for many years.

The memorial was dedicated to Anne Bedwell who died in 1728 aged 22, a granddaughter of the Reverend John Rogers, the Restoration vicar who served in Eynsham from 1665 to 1715. Two wall monuments had been hung in the south aisle on the same day in 1732; the monument to the east was dedicated to the vicar's son, Dr John Rogers, a noted cleric, sometime tutor to the young George II, and vicar of St Giles, Cripplegate, who died in May 1729. Anne's mother, Christian, together with Dr John's widow, Lydia, requested permission to have the two monuments placed in the south aisle in 1730.

Following the dismantling of Anne's monument, pieces of the stonework were placed in the churchyard behind the east end of the church, and some in the mower shed to the west.

The late Bishop Gordon was aware that the Bedwell monument was the only artwork in St Leonard's church to be mentioned in Pevsner's *'Oxfordshire'*: When, in 1990, a parishioner mentioned that it was possible that the inscription panel was being damaged in the shed, Bishop Gordon took the initiative to have all the pieces removed and placed safely, by kind permission of Doctors Kate and Jonathan Ferrier, in an outhouse at their home.

The late Mrs Katherine Esdaile, acknowledged doyenne of church monuments, had described the Anne Bedwell memorial in Piper's *Shell Guide to Oxfordshire* of 1938 as a 'pretty monument', which established the fact that it was complete at that time. In 1990 Bishop Gordon consulted further expert opinion and was unanimously assured that the head on the medallion was a portrait of Anne

Bedwell, was of a high standard and should be conserved. Pieces of the memorial were examined for traces of a sculptor's signature but none could be found.

Notwithstanding that Bishop Gordon was then aged eighty-five, he organised a fund-raising committee with the intention of ensuring the restoration and return of the monument to the church. Initially some hostility was encountered to the venture, when a leaflet seeking donations was delivered to all subscribers to the *Roundabout* (the churches' magazine). The eventual response, however, was heart-warming; the sum of £4982 was subscribed by Eynsham residents and their friends. Members of the committee, Lilian Wright and Mary Oakeley, delivered copies of the leaflet to all outlying areas and to businesses on the trading estate. The promises of two large grants, one from the Council for the Care of Churches and another from St Andrew's Preservation Trust were also received.

Following tenders sent to four sculptors, Mr Michael Eastham was appointed conservator for the project. (Mr Eastham has recently been responsible for the removal of the St Frideswide shrine in Christchurch Cathedral to a site beneath the Burne-Jones window).

By 1993 the inscription panel was repaired, reassembled and restored to the south aisle. A well-attended re-dedication service was held in June 1993. Bishop Gordon had died in 1992 but not before he had very gladly received promises of monetary aid sufficient to cover the costs of restoring the inscription panel, i.e. £5,300.

At the initial meeting of the committee Bishop Gordon had predicted that a temporary timber top might, eventually, have to be provided for the memorial, while searches continued for a record of the original design. Dr Ingrid Roscoe of Leeds University, at that time a prominent and active member of the Church Monuments Society, commented that the design of the monument owed a great deal to James Gibbs. Local searches commenced to locations where medallioned monuments might be found. Cathedral walls and aisles were investigated. At Worcester Cathedral a remarkably similar memorial (of the Rea family) turned out to be the work of a much later foreign mason. At Mickleton the medallion memorial there was signed by Peter Scheemakers. St Helen's church at Abingdon had walls almost covered in Bedwell memorials but none bore any similarity to the Eynsham monument. In reply to a plea for information made in *Country Life*, Sir Howard Colvin, the expert on 18th century memorials, telephoned to say that he thought the design very influenced by those of James Gibbs.

Unusually for Eynsham, no-one in the village appeared to possess a photograph of the particular area of the south aisle in which we were interested. Mrs Jean

Buttrick, the late Mrs Whitlock and the late Joyce Morris did recall the appearance of the top of the monument; they described a 'broken' triangular top with scroll-work on the ends of the diagonals, a wreath of flowers in the centre and the whole surmounted in the apex by a cherub. Members of the Diocesan Committee were uneasy about consenting to the design, as described by the three parishioners, since we remained without a record. Lilian Wright and I hastened to the Ashmolean Museum to investigate the beautiful sketches in James Gibbs's pattern books. Sadly, we could not find a replica, although there were many similar memorials.

Our searches in other directions, however, revealed the information that a John Deval, born in Eynsham in 1701, son and grandson of churchwardens of St Leonard's church (for one of whom there is dedicated communion plate of 1720) was, in 1732, working from a yard in Portland Street, London. Deval was a master mason, responsible for the Foundling Hospital, work on the royal palaces and, later, on the Mansion House for James Gibbs. Anne's mother and her aunt, the Hon. Lydia Rogers, were also living in London. Would they have commissioned Deval, knowing of his skill and his connection with the church at Eynsham? Attempts to find Deval's records or a record of the monument, which entailed enquiring at seventeen Record Offices, museums and -preservation societies, all failed. Mrs Esdaile's many sketches and notes of church monuments are now in the Huntington Museum, California; unfortunately they have not yet been indexed.

Deval is recorded for work (a chimney-piece) at Hovingham Hall, and in Harewood House he 'did many of the marble chimney-pieces, the finest being in the Music Room'. At Woburn Abbey there is a Deval fireplace and a chimney-piece, and carving at Greenwich Palace. There does seem to be some confusion with work carried out by Deval's son, John Deval the Younger: The latter's most famous work is at Cliffe Pypard in Wiltshire where his 18 feet high monument commemorates a philanthropic carpenter, Thomas Spackman. Rupert Gunnis in his *Dictionary of British Sculptors* states 'Deval deserves greater recognition than he has had hitherto for he was undoubtedly a fine artist in the best English tradition.'

A great deal of time seemed to have been spent on what seems to have been a futile search. By 1998 Bishop Gordon's committee had been much reduced for we had lost the Bishop, his wife Gwynneth Gordon and Mary Oakeley. Following Sir Howard Colvin's visit to St Leonard's church in 1997 a decision had been taken to work towards the provision of a plain triangular pediment, as approved by Sir Howard. The late Mr H.C.D. Cooper, an architect and sometime President of the

Eynsham History Group, in a note written to a cousin in 1964, had defined the marbles of the monument as Carrara and Devonshire (further defined by Mr Eastham as Petter Tor). The cost of providing a pediment in such marbles, to a design by Susan Nelson of Folly Bridge Workshops, had risen to £10,000. Since this quotation was not acceptable, Mr Eastham suggested that a timber entablature could be provided for the sum of £2950 + VAT. With the aid of good friends, also the St Andrew's Preservation Trust and the Friends of St Leonard's Church, in April 2002 the renovation of the Anne Bedwell Memorial was finally completed. We were unable to obtain approval from officers of English Heritage who believed that 'the paint effect, and natural material would be in such close contact that the timber pediment is likely to be a pale imitation of the natural material% therefore the top has been erected as a temporary measure - just as Bishop Gordon predicted, so long ago.

#### *Reference and sources*

1.National Monuments Record (Dept of the Environment, list of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest. Districts of Ryedale, W. Yorkshire & N.Wiltshire) The British Architectural library (Sir William Chambers's papers)

The inscription on the Anne Bedwell monument begins with a verse adapted from an 'Ode to Elizabeth L.H.' by Ben Jonson -

*In a Vault near this doth lye  
As much Virtue as could dye  
Which when alive did vigour give  
To as much Beauty as could live*

It continues-

Mrs ANNE BEDWELL

Who departed this life/ The 29th of December 1728/ aged 22 / She was the daughter of Thomas BEDWELL gent/ by Christian his wife daughter of the/ Rev Mr John ROGERS deceased/ Late Vicar of this Parish.

She has left behind her a Sorrowful Mother/ Who waits with patience till God shall/ Please to call her to her Dear Child/ Which by the merits of her Saviour/ She hopes to Obtain/ And in Memory of her hath caused/ The said Vault to be Built and/ This Monument to be erected.

**This piece by Joan Weedon is written on behalf of the remaining members of Bishop Gordon's Committee - Lilian Wright, Stanley Green, Peter Way and herself.**

# ROPE-MAKING IN EYNSHAM

by Doreen Hockedy

Ropes have been used since early times to haul heavy loads or later as plough lines for horses to pull ploughs, corn drills and harvest carts. They were also used on ships as rigging or as mooring lines and on smaller boats or barges for mooring or for pulling the barge by horse along the tow path beside the canal or river.

They can be made of fibres from several plants. Hemp, which is an annual herbaceous plant (*Cannabis sativa*) is a native of West and Central Asia. It is grown especially for its cortical fibre and is used for making cordage and also woven into stout fabrics. Jute is processed for its fibre from the bark and is made into cordage and textiles. The fibres may reach 10 feet in length and are separated by soaking. It is grown commercially in Bengal and Bangladesh and imported chiefly from Bengal. Its name is from the Sanskrit word 'juta' and means 'braid of hair'. Sisal is a strong durable white fibre of the West Indian agave (*Agave sisalina*) and is used for cordage. Sisal was a former seaport of Yucatan in south-east Mexico.<sup>1</sup>

In Great Britain rope-walks (long yards for twisting ropes) and rope-spinning sheds existed in earlier days from Penzance in Cornwall to Glasgow in Scotland, and from Hawes in Yorkshire to Haverfordwest in Wales. Some still exist at Chatham and Hawes and the remains of others are everywhere in seaports and in towns and villages all over the country.

In Eynsham there appear to have been at least two rope-walks in the 19th and 20th centuries, although there may have been more. The first mention of rope-making in a document was of Thomas Wall, a rope-maker of Eynsham, who leased some land between Acre End Street and Back Lane (now Clover Place) from the owner, Mrs Harriet Fowler, widow, of St Neots in the county of Huntingdon. Thomas Wall paid her a yearly rent of £16 and also had to pay £200 in fire insurance to cover the property which already contained a rope-walk. Late in the document it is agreed that Thomas Wall may "erect a rope shed on any part of the premises for the more convenient carrying on of his said business as a rope-maker"<sup>2</sup>. Thomas Wall's grandson, Ebenezer Wall, bought the land from the then owner Thomas Shrimpton of Oxford, bookbinder, in 1855. Thomas Shrimpton had bought the land in 1847 from William Fowler, ropemaker of Olney in the county of Hertford and Sophia his wife, descendants of Harriet Fowler. Thomas's wife was Hannah Wall, daughter of Thomas Wall<sup>3</sup>. The 1855



Fig.1. The rope-walk house, No 92 Acre End Street.

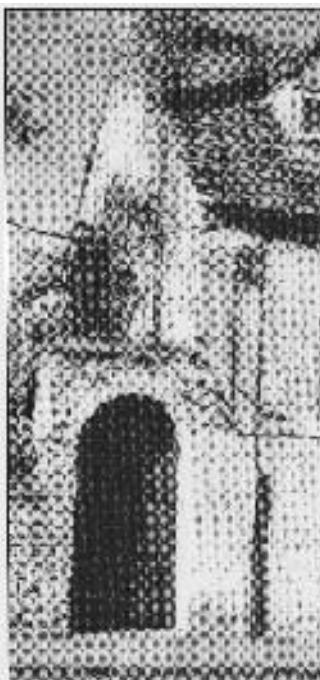


Fig.2. No 80 Acre End Street; the garden gate beyond which Cyril Quainton had his rope-walk.

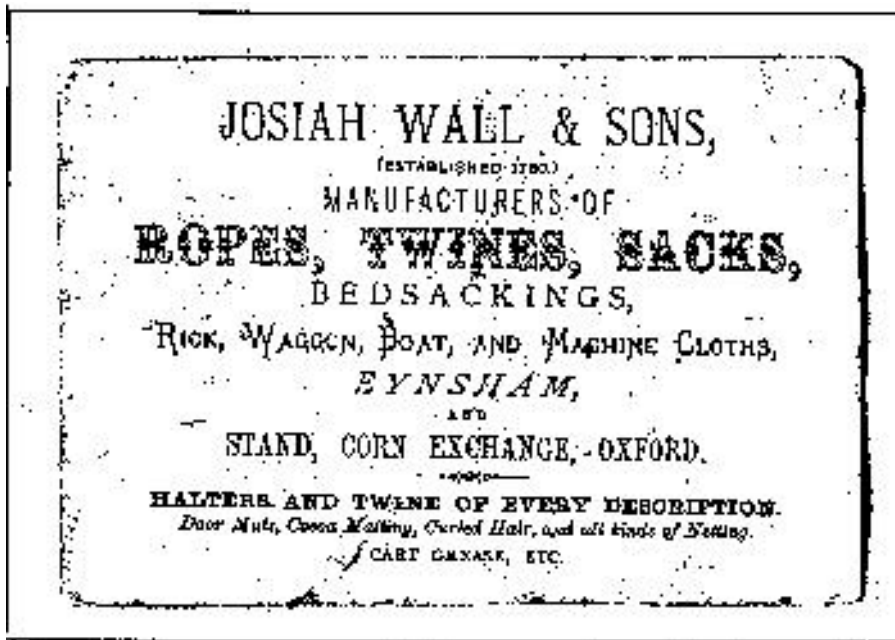


Fig.3. Josiah Wall's advertisement..

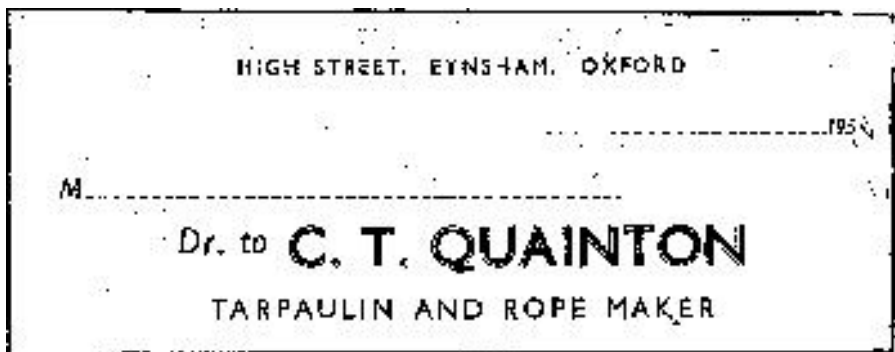


Fig.4. Cyril Quinton's billhead in the 1950s. No 80 Acre End Street was then part of the High Street.

document states that Thomas is selling to Ebenezer Wall of Neithrop near Banbury in the county of Oxford, Rope and Twine Manufacturer, the land, house and other buildings for £550, namely a "messuage or tenement with the workshops, stables, sheds, garden, orchard or ropewalk" and "that close piece or parcel of land or ground containing two acres one rood and three perches adjoining the road leading from Ensham to Southleigh in the County of Oxford. All which said premises are situate ... in the parish of Ensham ... and were formerly in the occupation of Mary Wall [widow of Thomas Wall] and since of Josiah Wall and Company" <sup>4</sup>. Ropemaking on this site appears to have continued until possibly 1920 or later, by the Wall family, as Lionel Wall, ropemaker of Acre End Street, Eynsham, is mentioned in Kelly's Directory of Oxfordshire for that year <sup>5</sup>. This site is now behind 92 Acre End Street (Fig.1). Also Lewis Wall, ropemaker, was in partnership with George Shillingford in the Eynsham Sack Company based at Acre End House close by until about 1900 <sup>6</sup>.

There was another rope-walk at 80 Acre End Street (Fig.2), owned by Cyril Quainton, who had been taught rope-making as a young man by James Wall, son of Josiah Wall, when he lodged there at the end of the 19th century <sup>7</sup>. Cyril Quainton became a saddler and harness maker, and later a tarpaulin and ropemaker in the 1930s until the 1950s (Fig.4).

These two rope-walks probably made a variety of ropes, but the one at 80 Acre End Street concentrated on plough lines and ropes for canvas tarpaulins, needed by the local farmers and later some industries, whereas the company at 92 Acre End Street was a larger business with three sheds for spinning and drying the rope, and made a variety of rope products, as shown in the trade card of Josiah Wall - "rope, twines, sacks, bedsackings, rick, waggon, boat and machine cloths, halters, door mats, cocoa matting, curled hair [horsehair for upholstery] and all kinds of netting and cart grease"(Fig.3). Josiah was listed as a twine manufacturer in the census of 1851. He also had a stand at the Corn Exchange in Oxford. His claim that his company was established in 1780 is not yet proven, but if so that family of rope-makers was trading for at least 140 years.

Various other members of the Wall family also took part in rope-making, in Eynsham, Banbury and Burford. Other people in Eynsham, ranging in age from Thomas Masters, age 8, of Newland Street, labourer at the rope factory (1851 census) to William Baker of Mill Street, age 69, rope-spinner (1841 census) were part of this trade. All of these and several more who crop up in the census returns from 1841 to 1901 may have worked on this site, and I hope to find out more about these workers as well as the owners in due course.

How was the rope made? First the fibre - hemp, jute or sisal - had to be purchased. In 1814 William Lovett, then aged 14 and later famous as a member of the Chartist movement, began his apprenticeship as a rope-maker in Newlyn near Penzance. In his autobiography he describes carrying the heavy hemp. "Our rope-yard being some distance from the town [Penzance] I had, in common with others, to carry to it heavy loads of hemp for our daily supply of spinning". The hemp was imported from Russia and Manila (Philippines) to Penzance as part of the Baltic trade, with coir fibre for the crab fishery<sup>8</sup>. These loads might come by sea, river, canal or later rail, depending on where the rope-making business was situated. Cyril Quainton used the Belfast Rope Company for his supplies of twine in the 20th century. In many towns and villages there are roads named 'The Ropewalk', which were usually adjacent to a wharf to which the twine was brought.

The wharf in Eynsham was beside the 'Talbot Inn' on the Wharf Stream, a tributary of the Thames, now disused, but it served for nearly 700 years from 1302, to receive and distribute goods to Eynsham, Witney, Burford, Oxford and beyond, and to send items from Oxfordshire to other parts of the country<sup>9</sup>.

The rope would have been spun and twisted in the rope-yard or spinning shed into three, five or seven strand rope. Harold Quainton, Cyril's son, describes his father's rope-making in his reminiscences:

"He had been taught [rope-making] in his early life by an old Navy man named Jim Wall, who used to live with my grandmother at 80 Acre End Street ... He fitted up his rope-making jack at the top of the garden ... and depending on the length of the rope, the other end of the twine was attached to what father called a donkey, a heavy piece of timber about 6' long, 9" wide and 4" thick, with two small iron wheels, about 6" in diameter fitted at the front. Above this was a stout upright wooden post, with an iron handle fitted at the top for turning a hook to which twine was attached. Sometimes the donkey was weighed down with a half cwt. weight. When the jack was turned the attached twines started to twist up and this would pull the donkey gently along. There were normally three lines of twisted rope about 1/4 inch to 3/8 inch thick, depending on the thickness of the rope required: these were attached to the jack and went cone shaped to the hook on the donkey. My father then used a dolly - a piece of hardwood about 6" long and 4" in diameter, slightly tapered at one end, with rounded grooves cut into it to take the twisted twine. Father would position the dolly near the hook on the donkey with the three twisted twines in the dolly grooves. Now the moment had arrived to make the finished rope, leaving the dolly with the donkey gently moving along behind" (Fig.5).

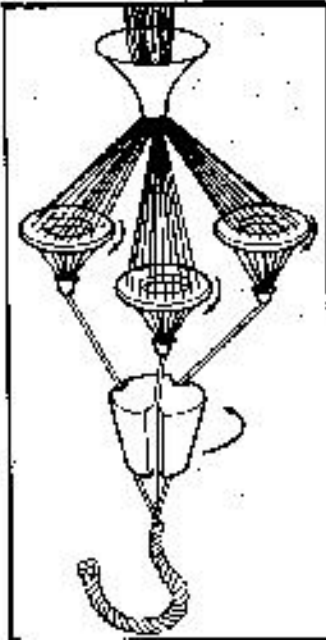


Fig.5. The essential element in rope-making. Fibre passes through the conical dolly to be spun into (in this example) three strands by clockwise rotation. These strands are then combined into the final product by spinning anticlockwise.

(Illustration from *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 15th edition, vol.10 p.176).

These ropes were mainly used for plough lines. Later in the 1930s 'Cyril Quinton rented the loft of The Jolly Sportsman and made canvas tarpaulins for which he made "the holding down ropes ... splicing the ends of the ropes after passing them through the brass eyelets" <sup>10</sup>. According to William Quinton, Cyril's youngest son, his father used to use a cow's horn to splice the end of the rope. Both Harold and William turned the jack as children.

Albert Ovenall recalled that "Jim Wall [who later taught Cyril Quinton] at the ropewalk (at 92 Acre End Street) often earned a penny with Bob Wall, one of them turning a wheel in a little shed at the top of Clover Place and the other feeding the fibre. Often the rope was so long that it stretched right down the rope-walk and across the road in Acre End Street. The rope was made in three, five or seven strands depending on thickness" <sup>11</sup>.

This shed was one of three between 92 Acre End Street and the present 20a Clover Place. The diagram shows the layout of these sheds in 1903 when Henry Ayres bought the land from Ebenezer Wall. The distance from Acre End Street to

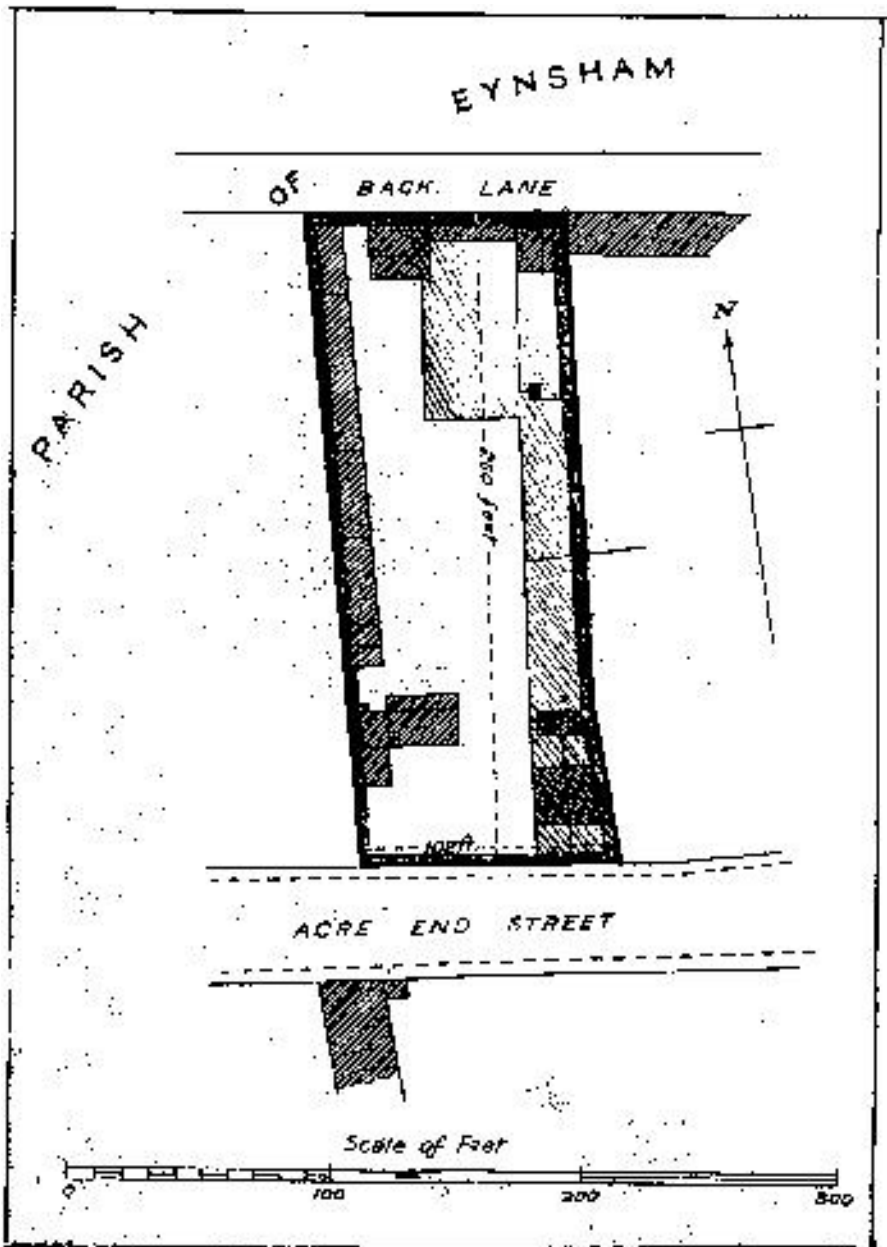


Fig.6. 1903 plan of No 92 Acre End Street.

Back Lane (now Clover Place) was 250 feet, and the rope-walk may have been where the present driveway is, to the east of 'the Ropewalks' cottage, extending north through the present bungalow gardens to the west of where 26 Clover Place is now built (Fig.6).

The three sheds, of which the first is still in the garden of 92 Acre End Street, the middle one being formerly in the garden of 22 Clover Place, and the third where 20a now stands may have been used for spinning, drying the rope, storage of tools, twine and other products to be sold<sup>12</sup>.

Rope-walks can vary in length from comparatively short rope-yards in gardens such as those in Eynsham to much longer avenues at seaports such as Portsmouth where the rope-walk was about one fifth of a mile long. Further investigation may give more detail of these rope-walks and others which may have existed in Eynsham.

*References (see inside front cover for abbreviations)*

1. Oxford Illustrated Dictionary (1976) vol.1 pp. 785 & 914 and vol.2 p.1583
2. Indenture of 27 January 1812 between Mrs Harriet Fowler and Thomas Wall (now owned by George & Doreen Hockedy)
3. Indenture of 5 May 1847 between William and Sophia Fowler and Thomas Shrimpton (owned as above) and research by Yvonne & David Howarth. David is descended from Thomas Wall
4. Indenture of 27 March 1855 between Thomas Shrimpton and Ebenezer Wall (owned as above)
5. Martin J.Harris *The Changing Faces of Eynsham* Book 2 (1998) page before the introduction
6. *Kelly's Directory of Oxon* (1883) quoted in *VCH Oxon* vol XII p.140
7. Census of 1891 and article by Harold Quainton in Mollie Harris *From Acre End: Portrait of a Village* (1982) p.107
8. William Lovett's autobiography *Life and Struggles of William Lovett in his Pursuit of Bread Knowledge and Freedom* (first published 1876) 1967 edition p.8; Crofts in *The Cornishman* 22 & 29 March 1883 quoted in Peter Laws *The Industries of Penzance* (1978) p.16 (all courtesy of the Morrab library, Penzance)
9. Peter H. Chaplin *The Thames from Source to Tideway* (1982) p.49; Robert Hamilton *19th century Trade War*, *ER* no.17 (2000) p.6
10. Mollie Harris *ibid* pp.108 & 109
11. Mollie Harris *ibid* p.67
12. Indenture of 29 September 1903 between Mr Ebenezer Wall and Mr Henry Ayres (owned by George & Doreen Hockedy) which contains the plan.

## TRANSCRIBING MONUMENTAL INSCRIPTIONS AT ST LEONARD'S CHURCH

by Alan Simpson

It is an overcast morning in early summer; a biting north-east wind is blowing from Wytham Hill; yet in the churchyard at St Leonard's a group of people are standing, kneeling and lying in contorted poses whilst peering intently at the grave stones. Why would anyone behave so strangely? The answer is that they are members of the Oxfordshire Family History Society (OFHS), who are transcribing the inscriptions on the stones. (In fact, the St Leonard's transcript is now complete, so you have missed your chance of viewing this bizarre sight!). The purpose of this article is to explain a little of what was involved.

There is a wealth of useful genealogical information to be found on the monuments in our churchyards. The phrase 'Carved in Stone' is normally used to indicate permanence. Sadly where gravestones are concerned, this is far from the truth. Many churches fall into disuse and graveyards are abandoned. In others, older stones and kerbs are removed in the interests of easier mowing. Even in sensitively maintained churchyards such as St Leonard's, the effect of climate and wear on the soft local stone can mean that stones become unreadable after a time. In some cases this can be less than 100 years. Surprisingly, very few graveyards have been systematically transcribed in the past. Where records have been made they are often limited to just a few graves, of local 'notables'. There is now a national effort being made to record as much as possible, before it is too late. At the local level this is being organised by the family history societies and in Oxfordshire, OFHS have several teams working on different graveyards. To date about half the parish churches in the county have been completed.

At St Leonard's, there have been a number of previous transcription attempts. In 1825 the bibliophile and antiquarian Sir Thomas Phillipps embarked on an ambitious scheme to 'publish' an alphabetic catalogue of all Oxfordshire's parishes, based on manuscripts in his collection<sup>1</sup>. This was to include details of a few 'important' monuments within each of the churches and churchyards. Like many of his projects it never came to fruition and only a few copies of one volume, covering parishes A to E (including Eynsham) were ever printed. Several of these are now in the Bodleian Library and there is a photocopy available on the open shelves at the Oxfordshire Record Office.

In 1909 the vicar and churchwardens<sup>2</sup> produced a hand-written register of names and locations for graves in the graveyard, based on the recollections of

James Martin, who had been sexton of the parish for 20 years. The task was undertaken as there was no existing record of the graves. The register was not completed as James Martin died in the autumn of 1908, "before he could recall to memory every case". There are a total of 999 entries, the majority of which relate to the "New Ground", whilst 146 relate to the "Old Ground". From a comparison with our present transcript, "Old Ground" would seem to be the northern end of the graveyard nearest the church, extending slightly beyond the line of the present east-west path, whilst "New Ground" is the area beyond this to the south. Burials in "New Ground" seem to have started around 1869 - not to be confused with the more modern extension of the graveyard even further to the south, which was opened in 1938.

When the 1909 register was made, numbered metal marker plates were provided for each grave, corresponding to numbered entries in the register. The latter also makes reference to a corresponding plan which unfortunately has not been located. A very small number of these markers have been found during the present transcription and are noted where this is the case. So few have been found that we suspect the majority may have been removed in the enthusiasm to collect iron in the Second World War<sup>3</sup>. Only one of the surviving markers is still on its original grave.

In 1981 the Eynsham History Group (EHG) embarked on a project to transcribe all the graves in the churchyard. A start was made with the more modern graves in the new southern extension where burials started in 1938; but the task proved daunting, was not completed and the results have not been published. The EHG gave OFHS access to the transcriptions and mapping that had been carried out as part of this initiative. This work has been incorporated in our present transcript, although all the graves have been re-visited, since in many cases additional family members have been added to the inscriptions in the intervening years.

In 1986 during restoration work in the chancel, several previously hidden gravestones were revealed on the floor. Donald Richards took the opportunity to transcribe these fully and his work was published in the Eynsham Record<sup>4</sup>. He had earlier researched one of the wall monuments set in the wall of the north aisle<sup>5</sup>. Some of these stones are still visible and these have been photographed and included in the present transcript.

The moving force behind the present transcription was Brian Wilsden who had previously been involved with OFHS teams transcribing at Garsington and Cuddesdon, and was now keen to tackle Eynsham where a number of Wilsden graves were to be found. The bulk of the work took place during 2000 and 2001

with a team consisting of (in alphabetical order) Louise Gawn, John Lowe, David Ludlow, Coral Pill, Alan Simpson, Judith Wildsmith, and Brian Wilsden and his wife Carol. Towards the end of 2001 Brian and Carol emigrated to New Zealand, which is why it fell to the present author to finalise the transcript for publication.

When working in the churchyard, we met many villagers and others from further afield who had come to visit the graves of their relatives. All were most friendly and appreciative of the work we were doing. A frequently asked question was "Which is the oldest gravestone?". The oldest readable stone we found in the graveyard (as distinct from the church itself) dates from February 4th 1648 and commemorates someone with the initials 'RC.' This predates the earliest surviving burial register, but from nearby stones of a similar style we deduce it to be for a member of the Castell or Castle family, almost certainly the Richard Castell mentioned in an early issue of the *Eynsham Record*<sup>6</sup> who wrote his Will that year. The practice at the time seems to have been to place two identical stones with initials and a date at the head and foot.

Within the church itself are found the monuments to the 'great and the good'. These are frequently much more ornate and, of course, better preserved than those in the churchyard. The oldest such at Eynsham is a brass plate commemorating William Emmot, vicar of the parish, who died in 1584. Another impressive tomb to be found to be found in the chancel is that of Sir Edward Stanley, who died in 1632. This includes two metal plates, one with the inscription in Latin and the other with the family's coat of arms.

Modern computers and word-processing software have greatly eased the task of collating, checking and correcting the work of a team of transcribers. The end result is more easily published and can be made available to researchers world-wide in the form of microfiche. In the Eynsham transcript we have taken technology a stage further. Modern digital cameras make it practical to photograph every grave and the resulting illustrated transcript can be distributed in the form of a CD. This technique was pioneered in the transcript of the Horspath M.I.s released early in 2002, and Eynsham is the second graveyard and church to be published in this format. A copy of the printed transcript (without the photographs) is to be placed on the open shelves in the local library, and the full version in the form of a CD in the EHG's archive there (accessible on application to the librarian). The CD or microfiche versions may be purchased from OFHS at a modest price<sup>7</sup>.

My thanks to all those who took part in this work and gave their support and encouragement to it. I hope the resulting transcripts will be worthy of their efforts and be useful records for historians and genealogists in the future.

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

1. *Oxfordshire Monumental Inscriptions, from the MSS of Anthony Wood Dr Hutton, and Mr Hinton*. Evesham, 1825. [Hinton was probably the Revd James Hinton of New Road Baptist Chapel, Oxford, who was Eynsham's non-resident Baptist pastor in the early 19th century]
2. Revd. W. Nash Bricknell (vicar 1893-1928), Harry Green, Col. Edward F. Gosset (churchwardens), *unpublished volume*
3. [This suggestion is not supported by the fact that all the iron railings in the village, unusually, survived the war - a mystery still to be explained! Editor]
4. Donald Richards *Gravestones in the Chancel of St Leonard's*. *ER*. no.5 (1988) pp.35-38
5. Donald Richards *Looking for a Hay in a Bookstack* *E.R* no.4 (1987) pp.30-31
6. *ER*. no.3 (1986) p.15.
7. Purchase details. Fiche by post from Miss J.Wildsmith, 85 Downside Road, Headington, Oxford, OX3 8JJ or email [fiche-sales@ofhs.org.uk](mailto:fiche-sales@ofhs.org.uk). CD by post from Dr H.J.Kearsey, Windmill Place, Wmdmill Road, Minchinhampton, Stroud, GL6 9EE or email [cd-sales@ofhs.org.uk](mailto:cd-sales@ofhs.org.uk). For current prices see website [www.ofhs.org.uk](http://www.ofhs.org.uk).

See also Joan Weedon's article in these pages on Anne Bedwell's memorial in the church, and accounts of the tombstones of three Abbots of Eynsham, Thomas de Wells (1281-1307), at Hardwick Mill, John of Cheltenham (1317-30) in Elsfield Church, and Miles Salley (1499-1516) in St Marks, Bristol in *E.R.no.1* (1984) pp.10-18.

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## HISTORY ON THE EYNESHAM WEBSITE

([www.eynsham.org](http://www.eynsham.org))

by Adrian Moyes (Webmaster)

The thing about the WorldWideWeb is that it's so new that many people don't know how to use it yet. When historians of the future look back to today, they'll surely laugh at our feeble attempts to use this amazing device. But we've got to make a start - and we have. At one end of the spectrum, the British Library is struggling to work out how to archive Websites for future historians - and at the other end, we in Eynsham have made a start too.

The Eynsham Community Website has been going for three years now. It has nearly 140 pages and gets about 6,000 visits a year. It is 'hosted' in the village by Oxford Macintosh Solutions - for free, like everything else on the Website. Basically it's a handy way of making available information about Eynsham (including its history and the activities of the EHG) - and also of enabling people to make available their own knowledge or research on Eynsham's history. Our Website started as as an illustrated Web version of the Eynsham Directory, but gradually it's getting more and more pages which go beyond details of clubs, or facilities like bereavement counsellors or Chinese interpreters. And lots of these additions concern history.

There is a potted history of Eynsham, a series of virtual tours of the main streets with pictures and details of the history of some of the buildings, a list of books on Eynsham, a history of Eynsham Lock, a page on the new Abbey Heritage Walk, and details of forthcoming talks to the EHG and lists of articles in the current and next *Eynsham Record*.

There is also a page on how to trace your family tree and make contact with friends or family which has already begun to generate some oral history (see Cherwell Lodge on the Newland Street page), and we hope to expand on this.

Like all Websites, we have links with others of interest, for example those dealing with country houses and villages nearby (although sadly those dealing with Winston Churchill at Blenheim, Dylan Thomas and John Wesley at South Leigh, William Morris at Kelmscott and Alexander Pope at Stanton Harcourt have all recently gone off-line)

There are plans for a page on the Swinford tollbridge, for more streets in the virtual tours section, for a series on pubs (based on *Good History* by the Junior History Group), for another series on factories in Eynsham (sugar beet, of course,

gas, lemonade, carpets, magnets, ring-binders, etc.) and some one-offs on items such as false acacias (building on Joan Weedon's article in *E.R.* no.18), the old salt route from Droitwich, and the mammoths in the gravel pits at Stanton Harcourt. We are also working on putting the contents pages of all the past *Eynsham Records* on the Website so that they can be searched.

In general terms, we hope to use the Website as a way of interesting more people in Eynsham's history, perhaps interesting them enough to join the Group, and become historians themselves.

But the Website is not just a forum for a few; everyone can use it and anyone can contribute to it; it is, above all, Eynsham's *Community* Website. We need ideas on subjects, and also contributions, snippets of oral history, informal stories and memories of the village. Please send them to us.

We also need imagination. How fascinating it would be for local historians of today it is impossible, the Abbey in its heyday had had a Website - or Cobbett, or Eynsham Mill, the sugar beet factory, John Bartholomew's first school..... So, we now have a Website; what would future historians wish that we had put on it? What sort of picture would the current Website give of Eynsham if that was all the evidence they had? History is about looking back, but historians ought also to record the present in ways most useful to future generations. This requires imagination.

If you do want to contribute ideas, words or pictures, contact Adrian Moyes at [adrian@eynsham.org](mailto:adrian@eynsham.org), or tel: (01865) 464021.

If you don't have access to the Web, the Eynsham Community Website is available free at the library.

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The Market Square. A Howe postcard sent in 1912 by William Bainbridge's architect uncle, Samuel Harrington Evans (1879-1961) to Miss Mitchell, 9 Holbein House, Sloane Square, London: "Shall be back at Paddington 7.20 p.m. of the clock on Monday next. This is 'our' Town Hall"



The Market Square, newly laid out in 2002. The plaque to the left of the Market House entrance commemorates the new design.

**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.  
Contact the Editor Brian Atkins, 8 Thornbury Road tel 01865 881677 email  
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or Fred Bennett, 68 Witney Road tel 01865 880659

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 EMERALDS AND THE SCARLET RUNNERS: WOMEN AND ORGANISED SPORT IN EYNSHAM***

**by John Golby**

Up until the outbreak of the First World War organised sports were largely the preserve of men. While Eynsham possessed successful men's football and cricket teams who entered various local leagues, there are only a very few accounts of women and girls in Eynsham participating in sporting activities and then not in any organised way and usually in the privacy of the family garden or grounds, or as schoolgirls at their various public schools. Margery Blake (née Deane) born in 1892, recounted how as a girl her auntie taught her to play golf and she also played tennis 'at our farm, sometimes at Dr and Mrs Cruikshanks', at City Farm, and at Bury's at nearby Stanton Harcourt'. Ida Hopkins, born a year later than Margery, was also the daughter of a local farmer and she learnt to play tennis and hockey as a pupil at Witney Grammar School <sup>1</sup>. Both Margery and Ida came from the more affluent families in the village and while sports for girls were being encouraged in public and many grammar schools, for the bulk of the girls in Eynsham attending the local elementary school, the only physical exercise they would undergo was the occasional gym lesson. (Interestingly, but not surprisingly, when during the First World War efforts were made to provide sports for girls working in the munitions factories, it became clear that "they had never been accustomed to take part in team games, or indeed any form of exercise for pleasure.")<sup>2</sup>

Whereas early in the century doubts had been expressed by many men and some women about the wisdom of girls and women participating in strenuous sports, by the end of the Great War there was a strong current of opinion that healthy exercise could only be beneficial to both sexes and that it should be vigorously encouraged. The 1918 Education Act endorsed this view and during the 1920s there was a marked expansion of healthy leisure activities for women.

This trend can also be observed in Eynsham, although here, as in most other places, it was the middle class girls and women who participated in these activities. For a few years at least, in the 1920s, Eynsham had a Ladies Games Club. The first reference to the sporting activities of the club came in a report in the *Witney Gazette* for 25 November 1920 which announced that 'The young ladies of Eynsham have started a Hockey Club and already much progress has been made. They practise on Saturday afternoons and hope soon to be in match form.' In the next few months they played a number of hockey matches including a game played on the men's football ground between marrieds and singles. The

singles won the game 6-2 but both teams fielded two men to make up the numbers.<sup>3</sup> Towards the end of the season, in April, Eynsham ladies played Clanfield Ladies and, although Eynsham lost 6-0, the *Witney Gazette* complimented Eynsham 'upon the great progress they had made in the club's first season.' The report also added that the Club was now turning its attention to cricket and the girls were hoping to play the men's eleven on the Eynsham cricket ground.<sup>4</sup>

The report was correct and during the summer of 1921 the club played a number of cricket matches, winning games against Freeland, Church Hanborough and Wytham.<sup>5</sup> The *Witney Gazette* of 3rd September praised the Eynsham ladies in giving a good account of themselves during the season and added that 'the matches are watched by an interested group of spectators. Since the beginning of the season considerable improvement has been made in batting, fielding and bowling ...' The report ended with the rather condescending remark that 'there are evident signs that the Ladies will soon show something like mastery of the game.' However, what makes this report in the *Gazette* of 3rd September of particular interest is that the newspaper printed the names of the girls and women in the Eynsham team that played against and beat Wytham.

Miss Irvine, Miss Cruikshank, Miss S.Blake, Miss England, Miss E.Woods, Miss E.Biggers, Miss V.Woods, Miss E.Betterton, Miss I Day, Miss G.Woods, Miss R. Skinner.

Although not all the names of the players have been traced, it is clear that the social composition of the team consisted largely of members of the more prominent families in the village. Miss Cruikshank was the daughter of the village doctor; Sybil Blake, the daughter of a local farmer; Miss Biggers, the daughter of the bakers in the village and Miss Irvine, a local schoolteacher. All the reported matches were played on weekdays or in the school holidays which suggests that the team did not consist of working girls or women.

It appears that by the summer of 1921 the Eynsham Ladies Games Club was thriving, so much so that it was divided into two sections - juniors and seniors. The juniors, most of whom were under fifteen years of age, gave themselves the title of the Emeralds and the seniors adopted the name of the Scarlet Runners. The secretary of the club was Lottie Pimm and towards the end of September the Emeralds held a badminton tournament which was won by the doubles pair of Freda Bennett and Norma Hanks, with Beatrice Calcutt and Vera Pimm as runners-up.<sup>6</sup>

During the 1921-22 hockey season both the Emeralds and the Scarlet Runners put out teams playing local opposition. In fact, the numbers within the Emeralds section was such that on at least a couple of occasions they were able to field a second eleven. Indeed, one of the second eleven games was against the Scarlet Runners, the latter winning narrowly by two goals to one.<sup>7</sup>

Both the junior and senior teams had a fairly full fixture list and a game played by the Scarlet Runners in Eynsham towards the end of December 'drew a large number of spectators'<sup>8</sup> In January the Emeralds went to the Alexandra Ground, Summertown to play the Oxford Etceteras 2nd XI and drew 1-1, the Eynsham goal being scored in the very last minutes.<sup>9</sup> This must have been one of the highlights of the Emeralds' season but another was a match played in Eynsham 'on the ground of the Scarlet Runners' against Witney Grammar School in February. Both the Emeralds and the Scarlet Runners had played matches against Witney Grammar School earlier in the season and both had lost, but the match in February ended in a 0-0 draw. The report in the *Oxford Times* pointed out that this was 'a considerable improvement between the two clubs, when the Witney girls won by six goals to one'. And the report added that the Emeralds played 'a very keen and energetic game, and have immensely improved in tackling, hitting and dribbling' although 'the forward line still has something to learn in regard to combination and passing.'<sup>10</sup>

With the establishment of the Club there was a need to raise money for equipment and travelling expenses. On Boxing Day 1921 the Scarlet Runners organised a whist drive and dance at the National School in aid of the Ladies Games Club. The vicar, the Reverend William Nash Bricknell acted as M.C. and nearly £7 was collected. The Emeralds also played their part and on the following Tuesday and Wednesday used the National Schoolroom to put on an entertainment consisting of musical sketches, a playlet and a recitation.<sup>11</sup>

For a short time, it appears that these sorts of entertainment became annual events. Early in the new year of 1923 the Emeralds made use of the new Institute to put on a pantomime, 'Cinderella in Toolaroo'. Mrs Tretheway, the local headmaster's wife, was the stage manager and the cast was headed by Miss Marjorie Harris as Cinderella and Vera Pimm and Beatrice Calcutt as the ugly stepsisters who, so the *Gazette* reported, played their roles 'very amusingly' and then gallantly added, 'the two sisters failed to ascertain the tradition of "ugliness" ... but they made amends by an admirable simulation of tyranny and jealousy.' The Scarlet Runners' contribution to raising money was to organise for the following week a varied entertainment of songs and playlets, and piano duets. All the proceeds went to the Ladies Games Club.<sup>12</sup>

The Emeralds and the Scarlet Runners both fielded cricket teams during the summer of 1922 but accounts of their matches are few in number. In May the *Oxford Times* reported on an accident on the cricket field when a lady from London who was playing in a game for the club, 'in the act of batting, stumbled and, in falling, broke her leg'. In the following month the club played an Eynsham older gentleman's cricket team and won, and on the following August Bank holiday the Emeralds played the Scarlet Runners on the men's cricket ground. It was a festive occasion with both teams wearing fancy dress. The Scarlet Runners won and after the match the teams retired to the School for tea.<sup>13</sup>

After this date, there is very little that can be learnt from the newspapers about the Ladies Games Club. In April 1924 and December 1925, the Scarlet Runners held whist drives and dances in aid of the Club. Both events, so the newspaper reported, were successful with the vicar acting as M.C. at both<sup>14</sup> but there are no reports of similar activities on the part of the Emeralds. Indeed, after December 1925 the newspapers carry no reports at all about the Eynsham Ladies Games Club.

So what happened to the Emeralds and the Scarlet Runners? There are a number of possible explanations. It could be that the Clubs by 1923 were so successful and running so smoothly, that the secretary felt there was no need to send reports to the local papers, or the local newspapers adopted new policies and because of lack of space, did not print reports on the activities of the Club. The weakness of these explanations is that surely there would be occasional events which would have been worthy of mention in the press and which the Games Club Would want to see reported. If this is correct then the other conclusion is that the Ladies Games Club, including the Emeralds and the Scarlet Runners, gradually folded up around the middle of the 1920s. Perhaps the driving forces behind the Club lost interest or moved out of the village. For example, Sybil Blake married in 1922 a Harold Butherway and went to live at his home in Biggleswade.<sup>15</sup> Also it is more likely that some of the young Emeralds, as they became older, lost their initial interest in playing hockey and cricket and it became increasingly difficult to scrape together enough players for matches. The histories of clubs and organisations in most villages are invariably ones of years of success followed by decline or closure and perhaps the Ladies Games Club follows this pattern.

Nevertheless, for a couple of years at least, the Eynsham Ladies Games Club was extremely active and there may have been more girls and women playing organised sports in the village in the 1920s than there are today.

(If any readers of the Eynsham Record know of mothers, grandmothers etc. who were members of the Eynsham Ladies Games Club do please get in touch with the editor.)

1. Mollie Harris, *From Acre End* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1986), pp.33 and 90.
2. Richard Holt, *Sport and the British* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), p.118.
3. *Oxford Times*, 18 February 1921 and *Witney Gazette*, 5 March 1921.
4. *Witney Gazette*, 23 April 1921.
5. *Witney Gazette*, 2 July 1921 and *Oxford Times*, 8 and 29 July 1921.
6. *Witney Gazette*, 24 September 1921.
7. *Witney Gazette*, 13 January 1922.
8. *Oxford Times*, 30 December 1921.
9. *Witney Gazette*, 27 January 1922.
10. *Oxford Times*, 24 February 1922.
11. *Oxford Times*, 30 December 1921 and *Witney Gazette*, 31 December 1921.
12. *Witney Gazette*, 5 and 12 January 1923.
13. *Oxford Times*, 26 May, 30 June, & 11 August 1922 and *Witney Gazette*, 30 June 1922.
14. *Oxford Times*, 25 April 1924 and 11 December 1925.
15. *Witney Gazette*, 23 June 1922.

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The following 'snippets' are taken from Christine Bloxham's book *May Day to Mummings: Folklore and Traditional Customs in Oxfordshire*. The Wychwood Press, 2002.

*[concerning Whitsun festivities, which included 'Lamb Ales']*

Eynsham ...held a Lamb Ale on Trinity Monday, where Mrs Bryan Stapleton wrote in *Three Oxfordshire Parishes* that the prettiest girl was chosen as the Lady, and after catching the lamb she rode, gaily dressed, on the front horse of the team which brought the Lamb home. Sarah Stayt, who died in 1840, was the last 'Lady'. (p.169)

*[concerning Oak Apple Day]*

In Eynsham in the 1970s Hugh Cooper went up the tower each 29th May to place an oak spray including an oak apple up there. (p.136)

*[concerning Easter frolics]*

In Eynsham in the mid-20th century faces were sometimes painted on the Easter eggs, and cochineal was often used for dyeing. (p.43)

# The Old Farm Eynsham, near Oxford

XVI CENTURY COTSWOLD STONE RESIDENCE  
In Need of Renovation



**FOR SALE BY AUCTION**

on

**WEDNESDAY, 18th OCTOBER, 1972**

**at 3.30 p.m.**

at

**THE TOWN HALL, OXFORD**

## ARTHUR HITCHCOCK (1863-1942)

### OF EYNHAM & GROVE

#### His race with the Wantage tram

by Nigel Hammond

Arthur Hitchcock was born in Eynsham in 1863. He moved to Grove, north of Wantage, in the 1890s and married a Grove girl named Julia Barwick. Together they lived in a row of thatched cottages in the village main street, known as Kent's Row. Arthur found employment on the Great Western Railway but in 1895, when thirty-two years old, suffered a sad accident on the line that resulted in the loss of a leg.

Railway work and most forms of manual labour were now impossible, so Arthur Hitchcock set himself up as a chimney sweep. He took himself round the district, initially by self-propelled cart and buying a donkey called Jim to haul himself, his brushes, brooms and rods. The vicar of Grove, the Revd Stanley Howard, was good enough to allow Hitchcock to pasture his donkey next door in the vicarage orchard.

It was during the summer of 1923 that E.C.Float, an amateur artist from London, was taking a holiday at Grove's Bell Inn. Over the bar one evening, Float was told the engaging story of the village chimney sweep's so called *race* with the local steam tram. It appealed to Float's imagination and he made Hitchcock the hero of a cartoon showing donkey and cart racing the somewhat sluggish Wantage tram. (This was the first steam tramway in England inaugurated for passenger transport in August 1876. It got under way in 1877). He gave the original drawing to the Bell, where it was displayed for many years.

Apparently Hitchcock was travelling home along what is now the A338 alongside which the connecting tramway ran from Wantage Road Station to Wantage town centre, some three and a half miles distant. The truth of the *race* is that Jim the donkey was startled by the overtaking tram's sudden appearance and took fright. Hitchcock's efforts to halt the bolting animal were in vain, which gave rise locally to an embroidered tale of donkey and cart racing the tram and beating it. This story, graphically assembled by E.C.Float, shows Hitchcock's wooden leg thrust out over the front of the donkey cart.

Publication of the cartoon entitled optimistically, 'An Actual Fact', contained a short, descriptive verse:

*A curious race has come to pass  
Between an engine and an ass;  
The Wantage tram, all steam and smoke,  
Was beat by Arthur Hitchcock's Moke.*

Thousands of these cartoon postcards were printed, finding their way to the corners of the globe. The card is still in print at the Vale & Downland Museum in Wantage, where there is also a permanent exhibit about the tramway.

When he died in 1942, Arthur Hitchcock was then the oldest member of Grove branch of the Royal Berkshire Friendly Society. Hitchcock's wife Julia had died some fifteen years previously in 1927, although five daughters and three sons of the marriage survived Arthur.

[The assertion that Arthur Hitchcock was a native of Eynsham comes from a newspaper obituary, and is supported by an entry in a Grove census return where his birthplace is given as 'Ensh...'. Although I haven't been able to corroborate this from the parish register of births or earlier census returns for Eynsham it is too good a story to ignore! Ed.]



## **BELGIAN REFUGEES IN OXFORDSHIRE 1914**

### **A POSTSCRIPT<sup>1</sup>**

**by Pamela Richards**

While on a trip to America last year I got into conversation with a young lady in a motel just north of Los Angeles. Her accent was not American and I assumed she was an Englishwoman on holiday. However, during the course of the conversation, I discovered that, although she was at that time working at the Getty Museum, her family did indeed live in England, but more to the point for me her grandparents had come to England from Belgium at the time of the first World War. Her grandfather was a carpenter and had come from the same region as those Belgian artisans who had come to Oxfordshire in 1914. She told me he had been taken to work on aeroplane frames.

At the beginning of the First World War the Royal Flying Corps could muster only some hundreds of aeroplanes. By the conclusion, four years later in 1918, when the Royal Air Force was formed, many thousands of aircraft had been produced.

Fortunately, the simplicity of the designs and the mainly wooden construction of the machines allowed these production figures to be achieved by subcontracting work to industries (external to the aircraft industry) which were expert in working with wood.

Hence carpenters, joiners and furniture makers were sought out and charged with mass producing aeroplane components, which were then sent to the main factories for final assembly. The construction employed in these early aircraft is sometimes referred to as 'stick & string'. The 'stick' being high-grade spruce, probably imported from Canada and chosen for its lightness, strength and resilience. The 'string' was wire for bracing purposes.

The body or 'fuselage' of the aeroplane was generally of rectangular section, and made of spruce strips - rather like a box kite. The wings were built around one or two wooden 'spars' which ran from wing tip to wing tip. These features were beams which provided the strength of the wing. Light wooden 'ribs' were then attached to the spars at intervals along the span to provide the desired cross-sectional shape of the wings. The whole fuselage and wing structure were internally braced with wire. Finally, the complete structure was covered with linen to form the external shape, which was then painted with 'dope' to shrink the fabric and produce a drum-tight waterproof skin.

So, the techniques used in making those early aircraft were well within the capacity of anyone used to working in wood, and the manpower resource enabled the massive demand for aircraft during the First World War to be met. It is not surprising that the craftsmen from Belgium were welcomed so enthusiastically.

1.Pamela Richards. Belgian Refugees in Oxford and Eynsham. *E.R* no.19 pp. 21-28, 2002

Acknowledgement: My brother-in-law, C.J.Richards for technical information

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Further to Joan Weedon's article in no 18, some of us have wondered why Cobbett and his contemporaries called the false acacia (*Robinia pseudoacacia*) the 'locust tree'.

Adrian Moyes has sent the following extract from *Field Guide to Trees and Shrubs of Britain*, Readers Digest Nature Lovers Library, London, 1981, p.174.

'Double confusion surrounds the locust tree or false acacia. In the first place, the locust upon which John the Baptist is said to have fed in the wilderness were probably the fruits of the carob or locust bean - not of this locust tree which belongs to a different genus. The two trees acquired similar popular names because their seeds are alike. Furthermore, neither tree has anything to do with locusts - in the eastern Mediterranean the same Greek word came to be used for the insect and for the carob pod simply because they looked somewhat alike.

Nowadays, the locust tree is less common in England than it was in the first half of the 19th century. At that time the radical journalist William Cobbett, author of *The English Gardener*, advocated the use of its hard wood for the pegs once used to fasten together the timbers of ships. Cobbett made a handsome profit from buying the trees from nurserymen and selling them to planters and speculators; but by the time they were ready for exploitation, iron was superseding timber in shipbuilding. [I read elsewhere that he sold 30,000 seedlings to one landowner! Adrian]

The tree's generic name honours the 17th century gardener Jean Robin, who obtained seeds of the tree from America and grew trees from them in the Jardin des Plantes in Paris.'

## EYNHAM'S VEXATIOUS VICTORIAN VICAR

by Lilian Wright

*The vestry's effectiveness on the governing body of the parish in the 19th century was reduced by its division into two factions, one supporting the vicar, W.S.Bricknell, the others led by a farmer, Joseph Druce, who was frequently the parish churchwarden. Bricknell was supported by prominent villagers such as James Gibbons, farmer and brewer, the Shillingfords, woolstaplers, and grander but more remote figures such as WE.Taunton of Freeland and the owners of Eynsham Hall; Druce's party included William Swann, papermaker, James Sheldon, maltster, and the brewer C.A.Goodwin. [V.C.H. Oxon. vol. 12 p.146]*

Some of these people appear in the following extracts from *Jackson's Oxford Journal*. To be able to picture these events you have to realise that the interior of the Bartholomew Room was not as it is today, but as it was as recently as the 1960s. Steep rickety stairs led from near the entrance on the ground floor, and access to the upper room was an old, worn, painted wooden door. The floorboards were rough and gnarled and heating in winter was provided by an open fire.

*Jackson's Oxford Journal* Saturday April 16 1864

Woodstock Petty Sessions April 12

Before Col. the Hon. R.C.H.Spencer, C.E.Thornhill and H.L.Gaskell Esq.

Rev.W.S.Bricknell, C.A.Goodwin, John Ham, C.Hiorns and E.Goodwin.

This case excited considerable interest, it being an alleged unlawful imprisonment of the Rev.W.S.Bricknell, by the defendants, at a vestry meeting, held at Eynsham on the 4th inst. The following evidence was given:-

The Rev.W.S.Bricknell sworn - I am Vicar of Eynsham. On Monday the 4th inst., I attended a parish vestry in the Bartholomew School Room. The vestry was held in pursuance of an adjournment, by myself as chairman, of a previous vestry on Monday, March 28. I presided as chairman at both vestries. I commenced the business on the 4th inst. by stating the object for which the meeting was convened, viz., the election of waywardens. Mr George Bushnell nominated Mr John Arnatt. The defendant Hiorns then interrupted the proceedings by stating that I had made a false entry in the minute book, and insisted that no business should be done until I had given up the book. I declined to do so, as the book was in my possession for the proper business of the meeting. I asked again "Will any ratepayer nominate a waywarden?" Someone answered, "Mr Bushnell has already nominated Mr John

Arnatt". Defendant Hiorns said, "There is always some fool to spoil the work." I asked if anyone would second the nomination of Mr Arnatt. Mr James Gibbons did so. Mr William King then nominated, and Mr Frederick Gibbons seconded, Mr Samuel Druce. I enquired, is any other candidate proposed? No reply being given, I declared Mr J.Arnatt and Mr S.Druce duly elected waywardens <sup>1</sup>, and made an entry to that effect in the minute book, which I signed as chairman. I then requested any ratepayers who wished to sign the minute book to do so, and to inspect the books if they pleased. After waiting a considerable time for this purpose, and no one coming, I closed the book, and declared the business of the meeting at an end. Upon attempting to leave the room, I was prevented by several parties, more especially by the elder Goodwin, John Ham, and Hiorns who declared that they would have the minute book from me before they allowed me to go. I made a subsequent effort to leave, but was unsuccessful. The elder Goodwin fastened the door, and his son kept his back to it.

The business of the vestry was over by 11.30, from which time until three o'clock I was detained in the room by the defendants against my will, and subjected to much annoyance, the defendant Hiorns repeatedly calling me "The great I am of Eynsham" notwithstanding my remonstrance against the blasphemy of such an expression. At three o'clock I was liberated by the arrival of police officers, who had been sent for from Woodstock.

James Gibbons sworn - I am a farmer at Eynsham. I am also one of the churchwardens. I was present at the vestry on the 4th of April. Attempts were made to liberate Mr Bricknell, but all the defendants assisted to prevent his leaving the room; they also jostled Mr Bricknell, or rather came into contact with him.

Thomas Savings sworn - I am a police constable at Eynsham. On Monday, April 4, I was sent for by Mr Bricknell to the Bartholomew School Room at Eynsham. When I arrived there, Mr Bricknell called upon me to get him out of the school room; there were a great number of people there. The defendant, Edward Goodwin, was standing at the door inside the school room, so that Mr Bricknell should not come out. Mr Moms, Mr Ham, and the other Mr Goodwin surrounded Mr Bricknell; they said they would not use any violence to Mr Bricknell, but he should not leave the room until they had possession of the rate-book [as I understood]. Mr Bricknell tried to get out, but being overpowered, could not do so, and my strength not being sufficient, I sent to Woodstock for two police-constables. At three o'clock Inspector Coates and another constable arrived there. He was then liberated. I did not see either of the four defendants present fasten the door. I was let in and out of the room when I wanted to do so.

Inspector Coates sworn - I received a note from Mr Bricknell to request my attendance at the school room to protect him. I went there. Mr Bricknell said he wished to leave, and did so immediately. Mr Goodwin afterwards asked me if I was aware what I had been doing. I replied "I am quite aware". He said that Mr Bricknell was gone away with the parish books under his coat, and I had rescued him from their custody, and they should proceed with an action.

The defendants stated that they had been arrested by warrant at ten o'clock that morning, consequently were unable to obtain legal advice, and therefore should offer no defence now.

The defendant Mr Hiorns observed that they had been taken under great disadvantage, having been taken into custody by the police, in pursuance of a warrant of which they were unacquainted until a few hours before the meeting. He would most strongly observe that no personal violence whatever was offered to Mr Bricknell, who had possession of their minute book, and was determined to leave the meeting and take the book with him. Mr Bricknell held the book in a particular manner, so that those who might wish to sign it would have been obliged to reach over his shoulder for that purpose; their only object was to obtain possession of the minute book, to which they considered themselves entitled. With regard to his making use of the expression "the great I am of Eynsham", no blasphemy was intended.

Mr Bricknell intimated to the Bench that if the defendants would make a public apology he would not proceed further with the case.

This they declined to do. The defendants then entered into their own recognizance of £50 each, and one surety of £25 each, to appear and answer the charge at the next Quarter Sessions.

[The following episode is taken from transcriptions of events involving Bricknell in local records made by Eileen Carlton and Mary Franklin]

*Jackson's Oxford Journal* Saturday June 24 1865

A charge of assault was preferred against the Rev.W.S.Bricknell, Vicar of Eynsham, and Mr James Gibbons, churchwarden of the same place, by Mr Swann of the same parish. It appears that the alleged assault took place at a meeting of the Trustees of the Eynsham Bartholomew Charity School on Thursday 1 June. A cross summons was also obtained by the defendants against Mr Swann, and as the case caused considerable excitement in Eynsham and neighbourhood, a number of

persons were present to hear the case. Mr Millward of the Oxford Circuit was Counsel for Mr Bricknell and Mr Gibbons.

Mr Swann's evidence was as follows:- Mr Swann, having been elected to fill the office of Chairman of the meeting, objected to the fact that Mr Bricknell had already altered some minutes in the Minute Book. Mr Swann caught hold of the pen and drew it down the writing, when Mr Bricknell seized the book, and Mr Swann by the collar at the same time and said he would not have the book mutilated. While Mr Swann was seated, he was seized and dragged by Mr Bricknell and Mr Gibbons towards the stairs. Upon Mr Swann's endeavouring to escape, he was struck by the Vicar and forced towards the north-east window. At this juncture, Mr Pinfold, the only other occupant of the room, left to get assistance. Mr Swann was then struck by Mr Gibbons and he then received more than 10 blows and was bleeding considerably. When they heard assistance coming, Mr Bricknell and Mr Gibbons left the room. Mr Swann took out a summons the same day.

Evidence was then given by Mr G.Pinfold, Henry Spencer, medical practitioner, Thomas Savings, police constable, and William Buckingham. The Vicar and Mr Gibbons also gave evidence.

Mr Mallam, representing Mr Swann, then addressed the Bench and considered that it was proved that an assault had been committed upon Mr Swann, but the Magistrates, after the absence of a few minutes, decided that no assault had been committed, and therefore dismissed both cases; they were of the opinion in the first place that Mr Bricknell did not intend to take away the minute book from the Chairman, but only to prevent its being injured, and it was wrong of Mr Swann to attempt to erase the minutes that had been made, as it was evident that they would have had to have been entered in the book and from the evidence given it was proved that Mr Gibbons only struck a blow, and that was made in the heat of the excitement, and therefore did not amount to an assault.

The Magistrates expressed a hope that this would be the last case of the sort they should be compelled to hear between the Vicar of Eynsham and his parishioners.

One last comment on this case, again from *Jackson's Oxford Journal*:-

We understand that the Trustees of the Bartholomew School have in a most liberal manner come forward and undertaken to pay the whole of Mr Swann's expenses in the late proceedings at Woodstock between him, the Rev. W.S. Bricknell and his late churchwarden, Mr James Gibbons. The Trustees do this to

show their regret at his having experienced such gross treatment while acting as Chairman at the meeting of the 1st of June last. [It would appear that the Trustees believed Mr Swann, and Mr Pinfold must have thought that he required medical assistance at the time]

***Reference and notes on the participants***

1. Waywarden or Surveyor of the Highway was an unpaid parish officer appointed by the parishioners to survey the highways three times a year and organise the statute labour that was provided by landowners to repair the roads, or else collect any commutations [John Richardson, *The Local Historian's Encyclopaedia*]

George Bushnell: Kiln Farm, Barnard Gate, brickmaker & farmer of 104 acres. For Bricknell and his bricks see *ER.* no.9 (1992) pp. 46-49.

John Arnatt: High Street, farmer of 303 acres.

Charles Hiorns; Newland Street, butcher

William King Acre End Street, farm bailiff.

Samuel Druce; farmer, maltster and land surveyor.

John Ham; postmaster, National Schoolmaster and assistant overseer.

Thomas Savings, village policeman. See *ER.* no.3 (1986) pp. 27-29 & front cover illustration.

George Pinfold; Acre End House land owner and owner of houses.

Henry Banks Spencer; medical practitioner. See *E.R.* no.15 (1998), p.8.

William Simcox Bricknell was Vicar of Eynsham for 43 years (1845-1888). He has appeared in 14 of the 20 issues of this journal, and will doubtless feature in many more.

Further details of his life and family relationships are being discovered which will be used for a biographical article.

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## RESCUING STONES FROM EYNESHAM ABBEY

by **Brian Atkins**

As is well known, following the Dissolution of Eynsham Abbey in 1538, the site was fairly rapidly pillaged and recycled locally. Lead and roof tiles, timbers and floor tiles would have been reused, but are now unidentifiable. But the greatest bulk of the Abbey, of course, consisted of stone, and Eynsham villagers, being some miles away from exposed bedrock, used it as a handy quarry for building or repairing their properties. As early as 1657 all that remained above ground was the ruined west wall of the Abbey Church, the 'melancholy' scene crudely drawn but eloquently described by Anthony Wood.

Within the next 100 years all the buildings above ground had gone, and in many places even the footings had been dug out, leaving what the archaeologists call 'robber trenches'. We can be confident that many tons of all this 'loot' were incorporated in the various buildings in the old part of the village. Rough-hewn stones may not be identifiable, but some carved items still visible in their walls are important evidence. Very few, if any, of these have been used with any sense of their historical or aesthetic value. They are placed randomly, many sideways or upside down, in a way that suggests that the builders were only concerned with the construction in hand.

But there were others, too large, ornate or awkward to be useful in a vernacular construction. Some found their way into private hands, but it appears that by the late 19th century by far the largest collection had been assembled in the garden of the Vicarage. An undated postcard indicates its extent, and shows a dividing wall between the front and back gardens into which some of the smaller but important items had been set.

In the 1950s the Vicar, the Revd J.W.G. Westwood donated a number of the detached stones to the County Museum in Woodstock, and for a number of years two of these were on display there.

In 1980 William Bainbridge published a leaflet entitled *Visible Remains of Eynsham Abbey*, in which he recorded all the stones of which he was aware - he was an assiduous antiquarian and little would have escaped his notice by that time.

When in 1985 the old vicarage in Mill Street was sold to BUPA for a training centre BUPA wished to be rid of the remaining material, and on behalf of the EHG, I made the arrangements, which involved a planning application and listings by Daphne Aylwin of the WODC (who sadly died soon after), and the



## A weight off their minds!

A BIT of old Eynsham has finally got on the move.

After two attempts to shift ancient stones from the former Eynsham Abbey had to be called off because of bad weather, dedicated private local historians eventually managed to take them away.

Dr Brian Atkins, left of picture, Dave Parsons, centre and Bill Smith are pictured loading one of the stones on to a van.

The stones, some of which weighed six hundredweight, are part of the remains of the

Abbey, which dated back to Saxon times but was dismantled during Henry VIII's dissolution of the monasteries.

They had been kept at Eynsham vicarage. But the vicarage has now become a private house, and so members of Eynsham History Group decided to transfer them to St Leonard's Church.

About 150 stones from the Abbey have been discovered in Eynsham. Many have been incorporated into the structure of later buildings

Oxford Mail: 25/9/1985

removal and transport of the stones to a suitable location. But where should that be? Pending a comprehensive solution, a door arch believed to have been connected with the Abbey has been placed above and inside the main entrance to St Leonard's Church; a few carved items are now in the wall of the lobby of St Peter's Church; and I have housed other small items, too interesting and fragile to be left to the elements, for nearly twenty years. The larger items were moved to a new concrete pad to the east of St Leonard's Church. There matters rested for some years. When St Leonard's decided to build lavatories on this area, the big stones were removed to the carpark at St Peter's Church, where they were dumped haphazardly on the edge of the carpark. Then again matters rested in limbo.

In the meantime the Oxford Archaeology Unit (now renamed Oxford Archaeology) had carried out excavations on part of the Abbey site, the strip of St Peter's churchyard, now incorporated into St Leonard's graveyard<sup>1</sup>. Despite the post-Dissolution predations the Unit discovered a number of subterranean walls that had not been robbed out and are now re-interred. They did remove some 800 stones for further research, after which these were stored at Marcham for potential incorporation into the County Museum store at Standlake. A number of the best carved pieces were chosen, but the majority were of insufficient importance to the Museum (they have space problems), but yet too interesting to be dumped.

What was to be done? I think the seminal idea came from Martyn Brown, County Museums & Heritage Officer. It was to kill two birds with one stone (I nearly wrote 'two stones with one bird') - to use the Eynsham and Marcham material creatively in the form of information cairns around the Abbey precinct.

Developing and achieving this idea required a working party which consisted of (in alphabetical order).

Brian Atkins (representing the EHG)  
Lauren Gilmour (County Museum Services)  
Alan Hardy (Oxford Archaeology)  
Harry Lange (freelance artist and designer)  
John Lange (Museum of Oxford)  
David Pendery (W.S. Atkins)

(The presence on the working party of the first three of the above is self evident from what has gone before, but the others deserve an explanation! John Lange lives in Eynsham with a special interest in the project, and is the Curator of the Museum of Oxford. His father Harry Lange was the award winning Artistic Director of Stanley Kubrick's famous film "*2001, A Space Odyssey*". Harry designed and drew the plaques (text supplied), giving his services free. He rightly

claimed his out-of-pocket expenses, and promptly returned them in the form of a donation! The Eynsham branch of W.S. Atkins (no relation) offered their services free in the person of their senior architect David Pendery who obtained WODC planning permissions, liaised with Leadbitter's (see below) and gave his professional help in other ways).

The priorities, without which no progress could have been made, would be to raise the necessary funds and help in kind (see Appendix 1); and permissions to build our cairns on four separately owned pieces of land (Appendix 2).

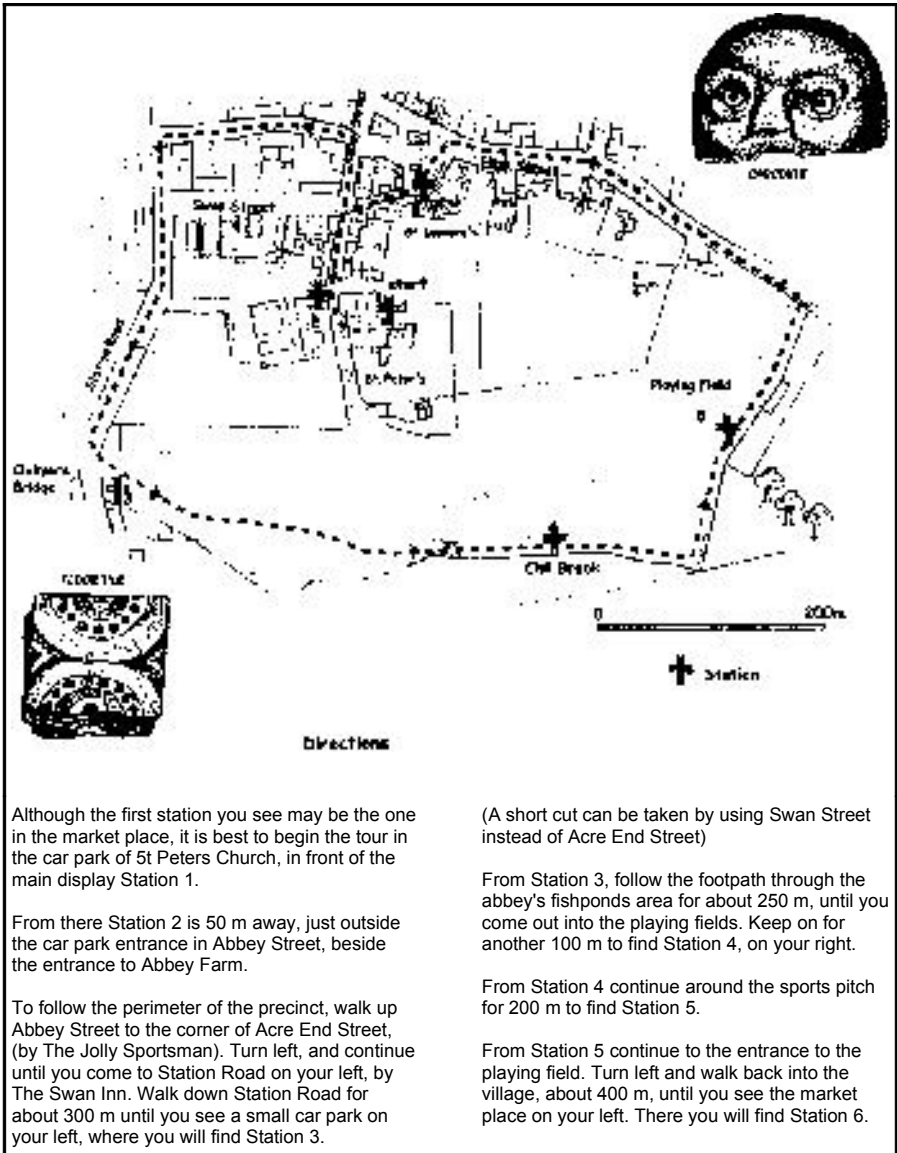
The construction work was carried out by Leadbitter's, in the persons of master craftsmen, Chuck and Roy Leacock, supervised by Les Days. All the labour costs were provided free.

The final step has been the publication of a descriptive leaflet on what we have called "Eynsham Abbey Heritage Trail" which will be made available within and beyond the village.

1. A succession of project leaders, R.A. Chambers, Graham Keevill and Alan Hardy have provided regular progress reports in these pages; and both a major monograph, 'Aelfric's Abbey: Excavations at Eynsham Abbey, Oxfordshire, 1989-1992' and a more light weight summary 'Eynsham and its Abbey' will be published very soon by Oxford Archaeology.

Appendix 1. The project has cost £7400, all raised by the EHG, by far and away the most expensive project the Group has been involved with to date. The funding has come from (in order of quantity) from  
HLF Lottery Award (Funds for All) £5000 (award of 2000)  
Eynsham History Group £700 (includes interest earned on earmarked funds)  
Oxfordshire County Council £557 (grant of 1984)  
West Oxfordshire District Council £500 (contribution of 2002)  
Eynsham Parish Council £400 (grant of 2003)  
Mr Harry Lange £200 (donation)  
Abbey Properties £50 (sponsorship)

Appendix 2. These helpful landowners were  
National Playing Fields Association, and their local managers  
WODC and Eynsham Parish Council  
St Peter's Church  
Mr W.S. Hoskins



Part of the leaflet that describes the circuit around the Abbey precinct and the locations of the 6 stations/cairns.

# 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 Programme Secretary for details of meetings.

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
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