

THE EYNSHAM RECORD



Number 21 – 2004

NOTES

1. Images have been optimised throughout for online viewing.
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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}
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7. The Record is now **also available on CD**, for higher resolution images and cross-file searching: please email online@eynsham-pc.gov.uk

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> .

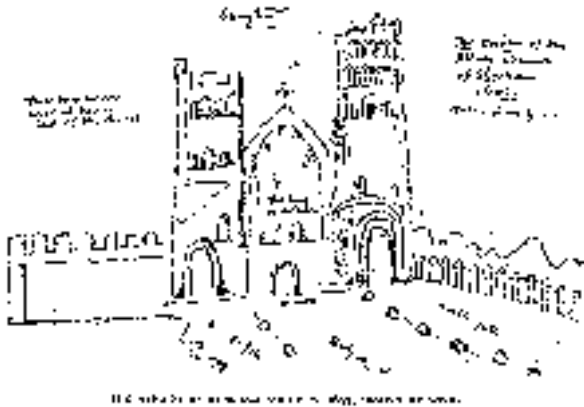
FRONT COVER

Oblique aerial photograph of Eynsham weir, lock and lock-keeper's house, looking downstream.

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EDITORIAL

Next year will be the millennium of the founding of Eynsham Abbey in 1005, and the EHG held an open meeting in the Village Hall on 29 October to invite ideas for celebrations from organisations and individuals. Suggestions included a meeting with invited speakers, a play, an exhibition, organised walks around the Heritage Trail, a project involving the Abbey fishponds, a dedicated section on the community website, themed floats at the Carnival, the theme for the Flower Festival, and several more.

The EHG already has plans to host a meeting and organise an exhibition of artefacts found on the site. A play is being written; and the Parish Council has applied for Lottery funding for the fishponds project.

Doubtless some, if not most, of the suggested events and projects will materialise. Although the foundation year of 1005 is certain, there is no known day within that year, so celebrations could take place at any time during 2005. The EHG could act as a clearing house to help ensure that venues or dates don't clash. Publicity should involve the local press and radio, the village's website (www.eynsham.org), the *Roundabout*, and the *Eynsham Echo*.

We should make the most of 2005!

Father John Tolkien (a son of the author) died in January of last year. He came as the Parish Priest to St Peters in 1987 when he was 70, and retired in 1994 at the age of 77. He was very interested in and supportive of the archaeological excavations being conducted at St Peter's in the early 1990s, and it is sad that he didn't live to read the definitive results of that research, recently published*. An obituary notice in the *Roundabout* of March 2003 by Raymond Elliot tells us that he was unusual in having a street named after him in a previous parish, and a building (the Tolkien Room) named after him in his final parish.

*Hardy A, Dodd A. & Keevill G.D. *Aelfric's Abbey: Excavations at Eynsham Abbey, Oxfordshire 1989-92*. Oxford Archaeology, 2003

VENETIA

by Peter Way

In his *Brief Lives* (1680), John Aubrey writes of Venetia Stanley (1600-1633), wife of Sir Kenelm Digby:

'Venetia Stanley was daughter of Sir Edward Stanley. She was a most beautiful desirable creature; and [being of mature age] was let by her father to live with a tenant and servants at Eynsham Abbey (his land, or the Earl of Derby's) in Oxfordshire; but as private as that place was, it seems her beauty could not be hid. The young eagles had espied her, and she was tractable and sanguine ...'

Aubrey adds a footnote: 'At the west end of the church here were two towers as at Wells or Westminster Abbey, which were standing till about 1656. The rooms of the abbey were richly wainscotted, both sides and roof.'

(lute-song)

**Where the abbey was, twin-towered,
Within its walls embowered
Her burning beauty flowered.**

**Nowhere secure to hide her:
Young eagles soon espied her.
Bright-eyed the passing rider.**

**All roses fade and every leaf,
The chiming bell, and even grief,
Rhyming as it does with brief.**

A HISTORY OF THE RIVER THAMES AT EYNSHAM

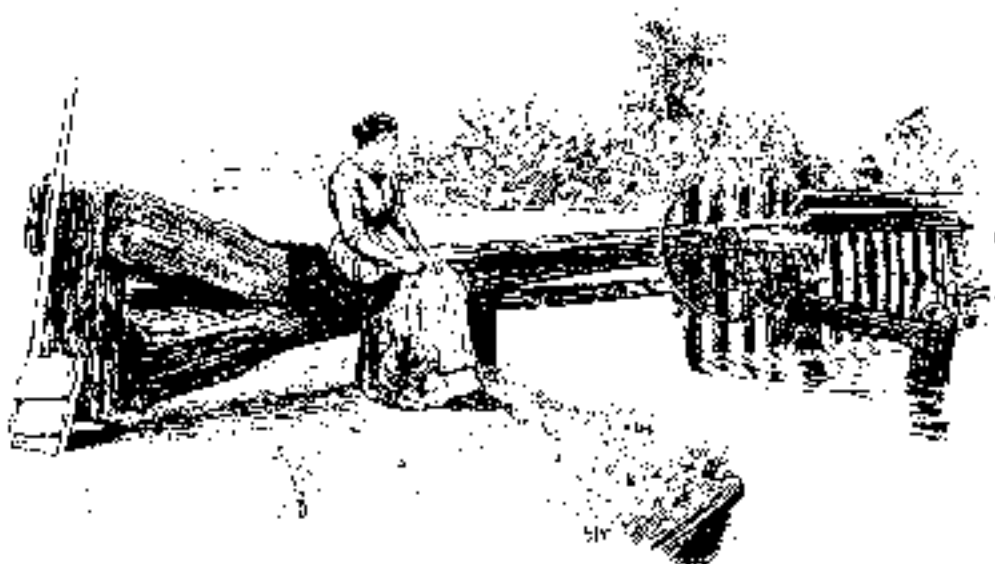
by Maureen McCreadie

[Bill and Maureen McCreadie have been Eynsham's lock keepers for more than 33 years. Bill was appointed M.B.E. in 2003, and they retire this year. Since 1995 Maureen has edited Roundabout, the monthly magazine of the three Eynsham churches, and for a number of years she has organized the sale of cream teas at the lock at weekends during the summer, the proceeds going to a variety of charities]

First time visitors to Eynsham Lock often ask the question "Why is it here?" The simple answer is that, like all 44 locks on the River Thames, it is here to enable the safe passage of boats up or downstream by by-passing the weir. It follows that the next question is "Why is there a weir?" To this question there is no one simple answer and we need to go back a long way in time to seek out some of the reasons for weirs.

In all probability the river that we know as the Thames was flowing prior to the great upheavals and earth spasms that took place around 30 million years ago, upheavals that at one end of the scale formed the majestic Alps and then with their outer ripple effect pushed up the clay-covered chalklands of the Thames Valley to form ridges rather than mountains. Nevertheless these great forces must have played a tremendous part in the formative years of the Thames Valley. The Ice Age which began in this region around 2 million years ago naturally influenced the development of our river and it is likely that the Thames rising in what we now know as the Cotswolds, would have had swampy areas, brisk channels of flowing water, gravel banks and pools of water on a course some 20 miles north of the present channel. Then it had no estuary of its own; for a million years ago it was a tributary of the Rhine and it was only as the ice moved south that the course of the Thames as we know it today was formed.

Archaeological evidence suggests that possibly as long ago as three hundred thousand years before Christ, man was roaming the Thames Valley. By the Middle Stone Age man was becoming more adept at making tools and it is possible that crude rafts or hollowed-out tree trunks enabled the river valley dwellers to 'get afloat'. At this time the flow of the Thames was entirely natural resulting in many shallows around which the heavy dug-out canoe would have to be carried, so the lightweight coracle was developed using the whippy young branches of willow and hides. These one-man fishing boats are usually associated with Wales where they are still in use today, but for early man they were ideal for



Eynsham weir: a picturesque 19th century drawing by Percy Roberts



A Frank Packer photograph, undated
(courtesy of the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies, Central Library, Oxford)

fishing any waters. The current slogan of the Waterways section of the Environment Agency '*the Thames your river for life*' has always been true. Early man lived beside it because it provided water for himself, his animals and later the deposits from flood waters fertilised the soil for growing crops. Around Swinford it is likely that Celtic settlers lived on and farmed the floodplain in the summer months retreating to Beacon Hill as the floods rose in the autumn and winter. The river provided food in the form of fish, not only caught from simple boats but later trapped by the building of weirs at places where the river was shallow, and certainly by Roman times the Thames was well established as a highway for commerce.

Early weirs were constructed not only to catch fish but also for milling and navigation. A miller needed to build up a good head of water, directing it into a leat to keep his mill wheel turning, and for this large volumes of water were required. This meant that often, rather than lose his head of water, a miller would keep barges waiting for days until it suited him to let them through 'his' weir. Navigation weirs were usually constructed at the lower end of a set of shallows so raising the depth of the river for some distance above, the distance between weirs being governed by the fall of the river bed, locally about twenty inches to the mile. They were built mainly of timber, turfs and brushwood in two parallel rows with the space between filled with stone, turfs and other local material. There was no way of regulating the flow of water to enable vessels to pass through the weirs, except by means of a central span of 15 to 20 feet fitted with removable timber paddles kept in place against a beam by the pressure of upstream water. When a barge needed to pass upstream, the paddles were removed and the barge, lifted by the release of the pent up water, was then hauled by rope and manpower through the gap in the weir. Coming downstream the barge was carried through the opening by the released flush (or flash) of water, thus giving rise to the name 'flash lock'. Progress in either direction was slow and the passage through the weir meant that the reach above it would virtually be emptied and the process of building up a head of water would have to start all over again.

Until 1350 the jurisdiction of the river belonged to the Crown and in the eleventh century Edward the Confessor proclaimed that mills, fisheries and other works that might hinder navigation should be removed. Since fish and flour were of vital importance to the local riverside populations, this and subsequent similar orders by later monarchs were totally disregarded. Future navigability of the Thames would be achieved by breaking up the river into reaches and making each reach deep enough to enable barges to operate without grounding. To a certain extent, millers were already doing this even if it was for their own ends and not

that of navigation! There was a third interested party, the riparian owner whose riverside lands and fish traps would often be unseasonably flooded by the flash of water released for the passage of a vessel.

The answer to the problem of how to be fair to all interested parties came in the form of the pound lock, the type in use at Eynsham and all other lock sites on the Thames today. The pound lock is a chamber with pairs of mitred gates at each end, a design conceived by Leonardo da Vinci about 1495, and this method of moving vessels from one reach level to another uses far less water than flashing a barge through a weir and does not flood the adjoining land. The earliest locks were built at Iffley, Sandford and Swift Ditch, Abingdon by the Oxford-Burcot Commission in the late 1620s, but it took another 300 years to create a navigable waterway between Cricklade in Wiltshire and the tideway. It was not until the formation of the Thames Conservancy in 1857 that work began in earnest culminating in the building of Eynsham Lock and Kings Lock (the next lock down stream), the last pound locks to be built on the river in 1928.

So what had been happening at Eynsham and Swinford during all these centuries of flash locks and arguments. Hilaire Belloc in his book *The Historic Thames* refers to 'the Roman town of Eynsham' suggesting perhaps that the Thames at Eynsham would have been used as a method of transporting goods in Roman times but sadly there is no evidence to support this theory, there was no Roman town here!. However, we know that by the 14th century building stone from Taynton was being taken by wagon to Eynsham and thence by river and used at Merton College, Oxford (1310-78) and at Windsor Castle (1358-68). By about 1539 there was a weir built across the shallows in the river at Eynsham about 100 metres downstream of the present weir, probably built by the monks to catch fish. At that time it was known as Bolde's or Swithin's Weir. Eynsham has an important role in the history of Thames transport. The Journal of the Railway and Canal Historical Society Vol XIV No. 3 July 1968 contains an extremely interesting article about Eynsham which begins "It is curious that scarcely any book about the River Thames makes more than a passing reference to Eynsham.Thames historians seem unaware that Eynsham was for at least six centuries a trading port on the upper Thames with its own connecting waterway and wharf...." In the days of Eynsham Abbey much coming and going would be on the river. Two Eynsham watermen are named 'Robert Navigator' and Robert le Rower' as occupiers of tenements next to the waterway. Eynsham Wharf was built at the confluence of the Chil and Limb Brooks (where the Talbot Inn now stands). The wharf continued to flourish long after the dissolution of the Abbey and bargemasters Richard Townsend and John Pate were both men of 'Aynsham'.

Stone from Taynton Quarry was loaded at Eynsham Wharf for the rebuilding of London after the Great Fire in 1666. These barges would then return with sea-coal. In 1650 the wharf was known as 'Bitteralls' and access was through 'Bitterall Lane', (later Mead Lane) from the Cassington Road. A good account of the history of Eynsham Wharf appeared in *Eynsham Record* no. 17 but it is interesting to note that trade ceased at the Wharf in 1925, only three years before the construction of Eynsham pound lock.

In 1795 'Bolde's Weir' on the main river which was owned by Lord Abingdon was in such a poor state that he was told that he could not collect any more three shilling tolls from passing boats until it was repaired. In the mid 19th century the state of the river above Oxford was causing many difficulties for navigation due to lack of dredging and flooding due to inadequate weirs. Boats coming off the Oxford Canal via Duke's Cut had to pay the Bolde's Weir Keeper two shillings and ninepence per boat for a 'flask' (or flash) of water. In 1852 a survey found "Ensham Weir in a state totally unfit to pass barges, and the waterway very inadequate to pass floods". George Treacher, (Surveyor of the Thames Commissioners) stated "It is obvious ... that whatever may be proposed will not have its full effect, unless a systematic management of the drawing of the several weirs from one end of the district to the other be enforced." This system was eventually introduced and it is still in use today. However there were no immediate improvements so when a Royal Commission examined the state of the Thames in 1866, proposals were put to them for discontinuing navigation above Oxford except for the part connecting Duke's Cut with Eynsham Wharf Stream. A new weir, designed for river control, was not built until 1886 by the Thames Conservancy on the site of the present weir which was last rebuilt in 1993. Prior to the building of the pound lock in 1928, larger boats still passed up or downstream on a flash of water through a single beamed gate at one side of the weir operated by a uniformed lock keeper. There was a timetable for operating flashes: for Eynsham it was at 5 pm on Mondays and 8 pm on Thursdays. Smaller craft could pass at any time using the boat rollers which allowed craft to be hauled over the weir without a flash of water.

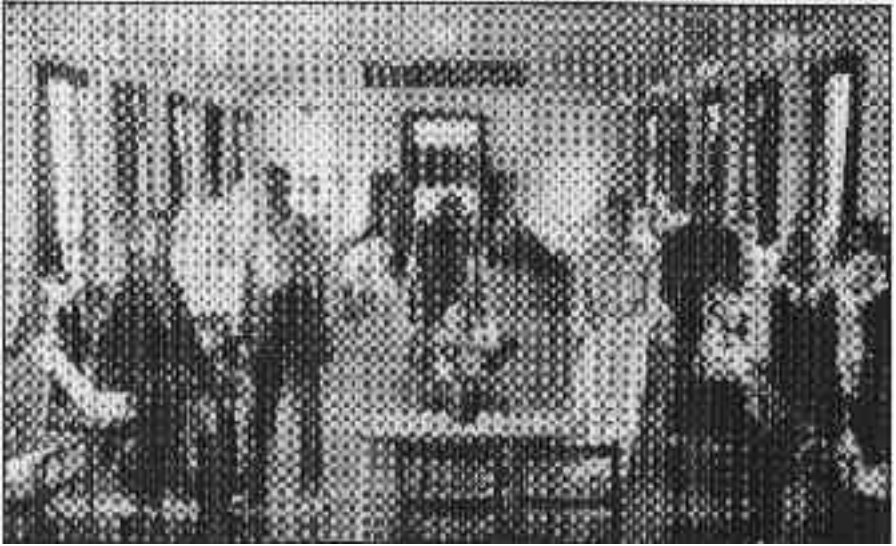
Lock and weir-keeping seems to have been a very casual occupation before the time of the Thames Commissioners but it was not until several years after the whole river came under the jurisdiction of the Thames Conservancy that lock and weir keeping became a regular, paid occupation. Thacker in *Thames Highway II* refers to a Henry Taunt visit to this area in 1872 when Pinkhill Lock was in a ruinous condition and did not have its own lock-keeper. A Mr. R Treadwell was appointed in 1866 to take charge of the river between New Bridge and Kings Weir

at 52 shillings per month and lived in the lock house close to the bridge at Eynsham. When he died in 1881 he was succeeded by his son. Records show that lock-keepers often died in harness and were succeeded by another member of the family. Sadly there are also many references to drownings of both lock keepers and members of their families and the old Eynsham Weir was the scene of a family tragedy when a visitor drowned himself and his two children. 'Eynsham Weir Order Book' found in the loft of the current lock office gives some insight into the keeper's life at the beginning of the 20th century. The orders were handwritten into the book by John Laurie, Chief Inspector. Keepers were instructed to keep the water at Head Water, but in times of flood were allowed to let fall below! During the last flood at Eynsham the Head Water level went up to 34" above. When the river was rising or falling, keepers were instructed to take water levels every hour from 7 am to 7 pm and "upon occasions of heavy water (and at any other time) to inspect their weir (or water) during the night and in the early morning." Other duties included removing dead animals from the river and collecting live specimens of fish which could be suffering from cancer for an association that had been formed to experiment with these fish. On the other hand they were forbidden to kill or trap otters. Keepers were entitled to 7 days paid leave annually and a further 7 days at intervals, "provided such leave involves no cost to the Conservators." Qualified substitutes had to be named! There was also a uniform issued which "must be worn as a whole and not in part when the wearers are on duty." However this did not have to be worn for dirty work or winter gardening. Keepers' pay has never been generous and many early employees supplemented their income by selling garden produce or refreshments. However this was not always favoured by the Conservators: "It has been noticed that certain lock and weir keepers appear to spend much time in dispensing ginger beer and other refreshments to the public and I have been directed to place a check on the practice. Lock and Weir Keepers are reminded that their first duty is the management of their lock and weir."

However this did not mean that a lock keeper's wife could not provide refreshments and Clyde Eddy in 1938 writes in his book *Voyaging down the Thames that at Eynsham* "A lock has long since replaced the weir and on a sign hanging before the lock keeper's house was the magic word TEAS." "Thin slices of buttered bread, jam, lettuce, cake and a pot tea with milk and sugar served to me in the parlor of the house." Mr Eddy then examined the engraved plate of a large clock and discovered that it had been presented to the lock keeper on his retirement from the Royal Navy. He was told later that all but one of the Thames lock keepers were former Navy men, the one exception was ex-Army. When the current Eynsham lock keeper joined the Thames Conservancy in 1966 this was

still a common practice although ex-police officers had also joined the ranks of men who had their pensions to supplement the meagre pay of a lock keeper. It was only as more young men with families became employed that a stand was made for a modern pay structure and conditions, including better housing. This was not really achieved until the early 1980s under Thames Water and after the demise of the Thames Conservancy.

Eric de Mare in his 1952 publication *Time on the Thames* includes a wonderful observation by the King's lock keeper of the time (King's is our next door neighbour). "The life is healthy and though it gives fairly hard work in the summer, in winter there is time enough to develop one's personal interests, for one is off duty by sundown." "A well built cottage and an adequate garden are provided free ... pay can be augmented by running a tea garden, selling garden produce, making boating or fishing accessories." "For a nature lover, a poet or a philosopher, fond of quiet things, could there be a better way of living than to be a lock keeper on the Upper Thames?" There are some aspects of lock keeping at Eynsham about which this romantic description is still appropriate but not for much longer, I fear. The 21st century Thames lock keeper will have little time to stand and stare as he wrestles with ever increasing mounds of paperwork and regulations and draws up business plans to raise the profile of his lock as well as the money to carry out these plans.



The ward in Hut D; and a group of patients and nurses - the author is the nurse on the left.

AN EYNHAM STUDENT NURSE IN HUT D - RADCLIFFE INFIRMARY, 1940

by Daisy Ainsley Grabsky

Daisy Ainsley was born and raised in Eynsham. Her parents Herbert William and Beatrice Kate both died in 1965 and lie together in St Leonard's churchyard. In these pages she has already described her childhood memories of Eynsham Fair in the 1930s (E.R.no.12); the Catholic Apostolic Church (E.R.no.16); and childhood games which were played in the village (E.R.no.17). Here she describes her experiences as an 18-year-old at the Radcliffe Infirmary after Dunkirk.

One morning in the middle of June I was summoned to the Sister's office. She told me that I had to go at once to Leopold Ward. I was given no reason why. As I entered the main corridor of the hospital I became aware of a stream of stretchers being pushed along by soldiers. I reached the door of Leopold Ward at the same time as two soldiers were trying to negotiate a stretcher through it. In those days the doors didn't open and close automatically but had to be held open, which I did. As the stretcher passed me the young soldier on it noticed the name of the ward written above the door. "Ach! Leopold" he cried and lifted his head and spat on the floor. One of the stretcher-bearers explained, "He's a Belgian". "Well", I replied, "He doesn't like his King very much now, does he?" On the 28th May, King Leopold of Belgium had ordered his army to lay down their arms, as he no longer felt that the Allies could win and his people were not very happy about that.

It was then that I learned that all these men on stretchers were Dunkirk survivors. They were arriving in a state of shock from Pembury Hospital in Kent, which was acting as a clearing station. The men were bewildered and many seriously injured. My immediate job was to assist in admitting the patients. Leopold Ward was a 40-bedded ward and all the beds were soon filled up. They were very apprehensive and so thankful to be with us. Many would have to have very serious operations.

After they had been admitted I was sent to help one of the doctors to change some of the dressings. One of the patients was a French soldier who had had half his buttocks shot off. He was in great pain. Most of the French and Belgian soldiers could speak no English. It was decided to ask the University to help, and

eventually we had enough people fluent in French for all the wards. I was not yet 19 years of age and I saw many unpleasant sights that day.

During the next few days the patients were sorted out by rank, nationality, condition and medical care needed. At the beginning of the war four huts, Huts A, B, C, and D, had been built in the hospital grounds.

On July 21st I was transferred to Hut D which was now a military ward. The patients were either orthopaedic or surgical and most of them were up and mobile and waiting to be fit enough for discharge. They were all Dunkirk survivors. I worked there for two very happy months. These soldiers were excellent patients. We nurses were told to keep them happy and I'm sure we did. Those who were mobile were always willing to help the nurses lift heavy patients, and push round the tea trolley. We never talked about Dunkirk or their experiences in France and Belgium.

They had all been seen by an army doctor who regularly visited them and they would have discussed their worries with him. Each week the senior army medical officer came round. All the patients who were mobile had to stand to attention at the end of the bed and the others had to sit to attention in the bed! His task was to talk to each patient, review his case and discharge as many *as* he could. It was a few weeks before it dawned on me that his task was to send as many as he could back to their regiments as soon as possible. The soldiers never seemed to complain about this. In fact they often stated that they wanted to get back to have another go at Jerry! I felt that with men like this we surely could not lose the war.

That summer was glorious. Each day we would push the beds out on the lawns and the patients would spend the day in the sun. We had so much fun with them and I loved every minute. The Sister was young and newly trained - so different from some of the old ones on some of the other wards. The Staff Nurse was a charming and lovely person, and I was lucky to work with her later on another ward. Also we nurses all got on so well together I think we must have been chosen for our cheerfulness. One day when the Commanding Officer was doing his rounds he remarked to the Sister that he was very pleased with the patients' progress on the ward. She replied, "It's because my nurses keep them all so happy".

Some very funny things happened. One day both the wife and the girlfriend turned up to visit a patient at the same time. This ended up with the pair of them having a fist fight at the end of his bed, and I was sent to separate them. This I managed to do without getting too knocked about. One patient named Scott discovered that we were both related to a family in Barnard Castle in Yorkshire,

and since we were not allowed to tell the patients our first names he always called me 'cousin Dot', so that the staff never seemed to know to whom he was referring.

There was a wonderful man called Harris from Birmingham. I couldn't understand a word he said. I had never met anyone from Birmingham and it seemed as though he spoke a foreign language.

There were also two Australians on the ward. Their names were Snooks and Windsor. Snooks was from Hobart and was to have an operation on his head after which I was told to keep a detailed record of his state of consciousness. Every movement, every twitch had to be noted and recorded on his chart. His pulse and respiration rates, temperature and blood pressure were recorded every quarter of an hour. When he regained consciousness his degree of disorientation had to be recorded. To do this for eight hours with only a break for lunch was very tiring. Nowadays nurses have machines to do all of this for them. He eventually made a full recovery.

One afternoon as I was going off duty he asked whether he could take me to the pictures. The military patients were allowed out in the day if they were fit enough. We were always being told on the radio that we should make these people from other countries as welcome as possible so I thought there would be little harm. The film we went to see was "Gaslight" starring Anton Walbrook and Diane Wynyard.

Private Snooks bought me a box of "Black Magic", the first box of chocolates I had ever had for myself. Since it was such a pleasant day we walked slowly back to the hospital chatting away to each other.

The next day I was summoned to the Matron's office. "Nurse", she said, "You were seen yesterday leaving the cinema and brazenly walking along St Giles' with a soldier who is a patient in this hospital. You know the rules - nurses must not fraternise with patients". Now I can become quite brave when I think I am being treated unjustly. I bristled. "Yes", I replied, "and what is wrong with that? I have nursed this man for several weeks. I know he is a married man with children. I went with him to the cinema because he is lonely and in a foreign country, and we are always being told to be nice to these people who are helping us in our war effort". I paused for breath. "That's enough nurse", she said, "Go back to your ward and don't let it happen again".

Now there is a sequel to this. In 1942, soon after that time, my brother Cyril was in Alexandria, Egypt where his ship, HMS Ajax had docked. One evening he was in a pub with his mates when one of them called out, "What are you drinking,

Ainsley?" An Australian soldier approached the group. "I heard one of you is called Ainsley". They introduced him to my brother. "You wouldn't by chance have a sister at the Radcliffe Infirmary, Oxford, would you?". Yes it was Private Snooks. My brother wrote to say that he could not get away from me even in Egypt. Apparently they had a pleasant evening together and then went their separate ways, and I never heard of Private Snooks again. He probably fought with the Eighth Army at Tobruk. I hope he survived the war.

By August and September the Battle of Britain was in full swing and we started admitting wounded airmen. Many of the Dunkirk soldiers had been sent home on compassionate leave. I said farewell to Hut D on September 15th and was sent to the Male Accident and Orthopaedic Ward on night duty.

R.D.C. IGNORES PIGS (February 1905)

The R.D.C. did well to ignore the complaint respecting the keeping of pigs within a certain distance of a dwelling house in Eynsham. It was proved that the pigsties were in a clean state and there can be no doubt whatever that when the by-laws were made, they were intended to be used only when fifth reigned supreme. If all the by-laws of all the councils in the kingdom were carried out to the strict letter life would not be worth living. It is all very well to have these laws in hand, to put into execution when circumstances require it, but not at the promptings of some petty spite. How many farm houses are there in the Rural District within 80 feet of a pigsty, doubtless hundreds, and yet no human being was ever injured by it.

An Eynsham-related extract from *Edwardian Witney 1901-1910* by Charles & Joan Gott, Mill House Publications Witney 2002 (based on the *Witney Gazette*)

FREDERICK GUY BROWNE (LEO BROWN) IN EYNESHAM

by John Golby

In his article on 'Melodrama and Drama at Eynsham Station' (*The Eynsham Record*, Number 8: 1991), Don Chapman recounted the events of the hold-up and robbery at Eynsham Railway Station in the early hours of 5 December 1927. As robberies go, it was a fairly unsuccessful one. The intruders were unable to open their main target, the station safe, and they eventually made off with the stationmaster's typewriter, a 120lb case of tobacco and several parcels. Indeed, the robbery would not merit much further space except for two factors. First, one of the robbers knew Eynsham well and had lived in the village for a number of years before the outbreak of World War I, and, second, both robbers had been involved in the shooting and murder of a policeman in Billericay, Essex, just nine weeks before the Eynsham robbery.

The murder of a policeman at any time provokes the anger of the public and the close attention of the media, and the murder of Constable Gutteridge of the Essex Constabulary was no exception. The arrest, a couple of months after the Eynsham robbery, and the subsequent trial and execution of the two men attracted enormous attention not only in 1928. Since then the trial of Browne and Kennedy has been the focus of attention of many jurists and crime writers.¹

The two criminals were Frederick Guy Browne, commonly known as Leo Brown, and William Henry Kennedy. Browne was born in Catford, Essex in 1881. His trade, so he claimed, was that of an engineer. For a while he lived in Eynsham with his widowed mother and brother and ran a bicycle repair shop which at one time was named Brown Brothers. Don Chapman, citing *The Oxford Times* of 4 May 1928, states that his stay in the village ended when 'he left Eynsham under police escort in 1910.' Knowing Brown's police record, this may well have been correct, but Browne was soon back in the village living at a number of addresses although his periods of residency were interspersed with fairly lengthy stays in a number of His Majesty's prisons. For although Browne's main business activity was buying and selling bicycles, he was not averse to acquiring some of the cycles illegally, altering their appearance and then selling them on to unsuspecting purchasers.

Browne, in fact, possessed a lengthy criminal record. In 1910 he had appeared at Abingdon police court accused of carrying firearms. The following year, when *Kelly's Directory* lists Leo Brown as a cycle repairer, with premises in the High Street, Eynsham, he, together with Frank Betteridge, of St Clement's, Oxford

(another cycle dealer) was remanded in custody for stealing an electric cycle lamp valued at 8/6d from a bicycle left outside a house in the Iffley Road. Browne, by this stage was a figure well-known to the local police and perhaps it was not surprising that whereas Betteridge was later granted bail, Browne was not.

When the two men appeared at Oxford City police court on 14 November 1911, Browne declared that stealing the lamp had "nothing to do with us. My brother gave me that lamp about ten months ago." He explained his presence in the Iffley Road on the night of the theft by saying that he was trying to find a man named Hunt, who, he had been told, had a motorbike for sale. This statement was strongly contested by one of the witnesses. But what really sealed Browne's fate was that while on remand, a prison warder who had searched Browne discovered a loaded six-chamber revolver underneath his leggings. As a result both men received a sentence of one month's hard labour for stealing and a further two month's hard labour for possession of a firearm.²

Browne could not have been out of prison for long before he was soon appearing again before the judiciary, this time at the Quarter Sessions in Aylesbury in April 1912, to answer a charge of burglary of a shop in Bletchley on the night of 22 March. Apparently, some time in the previous months, Browne must have fallen out with his brother, who had left Eynsham to manage a fishmonger's shop in Bletchley. It was this shop that Browne was alleged to have burgled on the night of 22 March. Among the property stolen were a motorbike, some clothing and nearly £9 in cash.³

It did not take the police long to suspect Browne of the crime. Incriminating evidence was provided by Ernest Harris, the Eynsham carrier⁴, who told police that Browne had asked him on the morning following the burglary to deliver a motor bicycle frame to a Mr Timms in Oxford. The frame was recovered from Timms' residence and the police then visited Browne's premises in Eynsham 'which consisted of two cottages, one in which he lived, and the other used as a workshop.' Browne refused the police access to his home and workshop until a search warrant was produced. In the ensuing search various remaining parts of the motor cycle were discovered. Browne was charged and taken to Oxford Police Station and from there he was transferred to Bletchley. It was while on this journey that Browne was reported to have told his escort, 'I don't care if I get five years, someone will have to pay for it. I do not think it wrong to rob anyone better off than yourself. You were a bit too quick for me this time, I made a mistake in sending the frame to Timms. I shall know better next time and shall have a motor-car and get further away. I have had a very good run, and it won't work out much for what I have done.'

The jury found Browne guilty and sentenced him to twelve month's hard labour. But within weeks, or perhaps even days, of his release, Browne was in further trouble. By this time he was residing at 62 Queen Street, with a young man, Aubrey Martin, and his mother and sister and running his cycle business from that address.⁵ On this occasion, it was alleged, Browne and Martin stole a bicycle outside a house in Botley Road on 26 March 1913. After changing the wheels, repainting the frame and removing a mark distinguishing the bike (which was the property of the Great Western Railway Company), Martin rode the bike to Witney market-place to be auctioned. It was bought for 18/- by a builder, Ernest Taylor, from Kencott. Soon after, as a result of "information being received", the police collected the bicycle from Taylor's house and Browne was arrested. An expert from the company, which supplied bicycles to the G.W.R, visited the premises at Queen Street and identified the lamp, handlebars, brake fittings and the gear case as belonging to the stolen bike. When confronted with this evidence Browne's first response was to deny any knowledge of the bicycle and maintain that he was not in Oxford on the night of the theft. Later on, after he had been charged, Browne, while still denying that he had stolen the bike, did suggest to the police that 'if you can get me bail I can tell you who did, and who it is having your bicycles, for which I get the credit.'⁶

At the hearing at Oxford City court on 22 April, it was clear that Browne's reputation had gone before him. When the prosecutor stated that Martin had been in Browne's employment for around three years, *The Oxford Times* reported that the clerk queried "That is, when Brown has been at home?" This observation was received with laughter in the courtroom.

Browne then handed in a statement pleading that Martin should not be detained and, as for himself; "I hope you will let me off as I have booked my passage abroad." Martin was granted bail but, understandably, Browne was not.

It was decided that the case should go before a jury the following month at the Oxford Easter Quarter Sessions. Browne conducted his own defence and pleaded not guilty. He claimed that a young man had come to the house in Queen Street and pleaded with him to buy the bike as he needed the money urgently. Browne was at first reluctant but then agreed to put it up for auction the following day at Witney. It was only later, he claimed, that he discovered that the bike was stolen. As for his whereabouts on the night of the theft, Browne stated he was in Queen Street, with Martin and his mother and sister. He had written to Mrs and Miss Martin to come to court to give evidence on his behalf but Mrs Martin was an invalid and her daughter worked in London and they were unable to attend. When asked by the recorder the name of the man who sold him the bike, Browne

refused to do so, and claimed that he did not call this man as a witness because he did not know where he lived, although "he might have been able to find him if he had been allowed bail."⁷

The verdict of the jury was that Martin, whose only role appeared to be that of taking the bike into Witney to be auctioned, was found innocent and discharged and Browne, while found not guilty of stealing, was found guilty of receiving a bike knowing it to be stolen. So Browne embarked upon another sentence of 12 month's hard labour. But that was not the end of Browne's appearance at the Quarter Sessions. The next case to be tried was that of another Eynsham man, Frank Rowland, aged 30, who although giving his occupation that of a butler, was known to have worked for Browne at his cycle shop in Eynsham. Rowland was indicted for stealing a bicycle outside a house in Wellington Square, Oxford and then selling it on to a gentleman living in Sunningwell Road. Rowland strongly protested his innocence and asked that Browne "who knew something about it" be called as a witness. Browne admitted that it was he who sold the bike but for the first time, and perhaps the only time in his career, he provided himself with a strong alibi. He claimed that he had bought it from a Mr Sterling who had previously been convicted for theft and who was now dead having committed suicide in his prison cell. Partly as a result of this evidence and after long consideration by the jury Rowland was found not guilty.

It was after his release from prison in 1914 that Browne finally left Eynsham. He went to work in London where he married a girl whom he had first met in Eynsham in 1910. Briefly, the rest of his short career, which is well documented, consisted of numerous other scrapes with the law. He was conscripted into the army in 1916 and served for a while with the Royal Engineers. But within a short time he was in the courts again and received a sentence of ten months and was discharged from the army.

After his release he worked in a garage at Clapham and then, in 1922, he moved to Eastwood, near Southend. But it was not long before Browne was under arrest again. By this time he had graduated from stealing and selling bikes to stealing, altering, and making illegal insurance claims on allegedly stolen cars. For these crimes Browne ended up in the Central Criminal Court and was sentenced to four year's penal servitude. The first part of his sentence was served in Parkhurst but he proved a violent prisoner and at one stage he spent 57 days on bread and water as he refused to undertake the "hard labour" part of his sentence. As a result he was transferred to Dartmoor prison and it was there that he first met Kennedy, a man who also had a long criminal record involving indecent exposure, theft and housebreaking. They agreed on release that they would work

together in London. Browne opened a small garage at Clapham Junction early in 1927 and it was then that they both embarked on a series of almost weekly robberies mainly at railway stations (Tooting in October, Eynsham and Boron in Hampshire in December) and the theft of cars, mostly in the Essex area. It was on one of these outings, after they had stolen a car in Billericay, that they were stopped by Constable Gutteridge. According to the testimony later provided by Kennedy, it was Browne who drew a revolver and shot the policeman and then shot him again in each eye while he lay wounded in the road.

The hunt for the killers of Constable Gutteridge went on throughout the autumn of 1927 and it was only when a spent cartridge found in a car stolen by the pair matched that from the revolver which shot the Constable, were Browne and Kennedy arrested. Kennedy, very soon after his arrest in an attempt to exonerate himself, made a statement claiming that although he was with Browne on that particular night, the murder of the policeman was entirely the work of Browne.

Although throughout their trial Browne declared his innocence, claiming that he was at home on the night in question, a claim that was supported by his wife and landlady, both men were found guilty and on the morning of 31 May Browne was executed at Pentonville Prison while Kennedy underwent the same fate at Wandsworth Prison.



Frederick Guy Browne (alias Leo Brown) of Eynsham and his waxwork, which was on display with that of Kennedy in Madame Tussauds' Chamber of Horrors from 1928 to 1965.

There is no doubt that Browne was a habitual criminal. Nevertheless, many jurists have expressed concern at the way in which the trial at the Old Bailey was conducted, especially in relation to the prosecution of Browne. First and foremost, there is criticism of the judge who allowed Kennedy's confession, in which he placed all the blame on Browne, to be read to the jury. Secondly, that the two men were not permitted to be tried separately and, thirdly, that the extensive coverage by the media before the trial made the defence of the men extremely difficult. Indeed, as the years have passed there have been a number of doubts about the justness of the verdicts and on the present-day Essex Police website it questions whether Browne was guilty of the murder as "subsequent researches have suggested that Kennedy may have in fact acted alone."⁹

References and sources (see inside front cover for abbreviations)

1. See, for example, *Famous Trials 3*, ed. by James H.Hodge (Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1951), and Jenny Ward, *Crime Busting Breakthroughs in Forensic Science* (Blandford, 1998)
2. *The Oxford Times*, 18 November 1911.
3. The details relating to the burglary and arrest of Browne come from *The Oxford Times*, 20 April 1912.
4. *The Eynsham Carrier*, by his great grandson, Martin Harris, is in *E. R.* no.12, 1995, pp.9-16.
5. In 1901 a family by the name of Martin was living at 62 Queen Street according to the 1901 Census Enumerator's Book.
6. *The Oxford Times*, 26 April 1913.
7. *The Oxford Times*, 10 May 1913.
8. See, for example, the chapter by W. Teignmouth Shore on "Brown and Kennedy" in *Famous Trials 3*, pp. 13-42.
9. www.essex.police.uk/memorial/roll-gut.htm. Also, see in particular Christopher Bery-Dee and Robin Odell, *The Long Drop* (True Crimes, 1993) who argue the case for Browne being innocent of the murder.

EYNSHAM PLAYING FIELDS' CARNIVAL

SATURDAY, AUGUST 25TH.

Tug of War Tones of eight Catch weights
Entrance Fee 4/- per team.

Entries together with fees can be made to any of the
Committee— Mr. J. Titchell, Mr. C. Hill, Mr. H. Brooks,
Mr. J. Green, Mr. J. Nash, Mrs. A. E. Green, or

W. T. HANES, Carnival Secretary.

A notice inviting entries for the 1939 Eynsham Carnival



The single-storey garage in High Street, with its bizarre mock-Tudor frontage, faking a taller building, like a Hollywood film set. The site used to be a smithy, but when it became a garage, the owners, Harry and Charlie Bolton, erected the frontage, which survived for more than 50 years. (Photo of 1965, by Blake Pullen, then owner of the shop to the right)



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

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file searching: please email online@eynsham-pc.gov.uk

THE REVD WILLIAM SIMCOX BRICKNELL

by Lilian Wright

The report of his death and a fulsome obituary in *Jackson's Oxford Journal* may be a strange introduction to a brief biographical article on this forceful and controversial character. They seem to have been written by someone who knew him well, and form a basis for further investigation.

Jackson's Oxford Journal 26 May 1888

Death of Rev.W.S.Bricknell.

On Monday last [May 21st] after a few days severe illness, the Rev.W.S.Bricknell MA of Worcester College, City Lecturer and Vicar of Eynsham died at the Vicarage at the advanced age of 82. He was the son of an old citizen Mr. Alderman T. Fox Bricknell, who filled the office of Mayor in 1804 and 1818. He was appointed City Lecturer in 1843, Vicar of Eynsham in 1845 and made a County Magistrate in 1847.

The Reverend Gentleman was in early life a great contributor to the theological discussions which occupied the minds of Oxford men half a century ago. His first publication was a letter to Philip Pusey Esq. on the grievances of Church Rates, published in 1837 when he was acting as Curate of Grove, near Wantage. In the same year he published a *work* to his parishioners on their duty to the Church in the present crisis.

In 1841 the candidature of the Rev. Isaac Williams for the Professor of Poetry brought from him two letters to the Rev.E.B.Pusey entitled "Is there not a Cause?" and "Horae Canonicae [Canonical hours], the Liturgy as it is, or the Liturgy as it was", and another in answer to the Rev. John Keble on "Resignation and lay Communion". In 1841 the "Tracts for the Times" brought out a pamphlet on "Auricular Confession", another on an attempt to elucidate the theology of the Rev.Isaac Williams from numbers 91 and 86 of the original series; and a third on Tract 90 and Ward's "Ideal of a Christian Church". This reached a 5th edition. His greatest work was "The Judgement of the bishops on the Tractarian Theology". In 1850 he published a letter to the bishop of Exeter on the "Charitable Hypothesis" in reply to his Lordship's letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury.

And as those who attack others generally lay themselves open to attack, we find him in dispute about the parish of Grove, which he continued to hold with Eynsham. In 1857 he printed "An affidavit in the matter of an enquiry touching

the arrears in stipend claimed to be due from him as Perpetual Curate of Grove to the Rev. James Stewart Gordon Crammer, the licensed stipendiary of Grove", and a letter to the Bishop of Oxford in reference to the complaint made against the Vicar of Eynsham that the Services in the Parish Church were held at unusual hours, conducted in a hurried manner etc., and lastly, a reply to the Bishop of Oxford's answer to the above complaint in 1858. In his later years he has been engaged in the compilation of a new hymnal which is in type awaiting publication. He is almost the last survivor of those engaged in those unhappy theological controversies which embittered the lives of so many good men, and impeded the work of the Church among the masses of the people.

His remains were deposited in Eynsham Churchyard on Friday, but we defer an account of his funeral until next week.

Jackson's Oxford Journal 2 June 1888

Funeral of the Rev. William Simcox Bricknell.

On Friday senn'ight [last week], soon after mid-day, the remains of the above well-known and respected clergyman were deposited in a vault close to the Church of Eynsham where he had long officiated.

The Burial Service was read by the Rev.C.J.H.Fletcher, brother City Lecturer and Rector of Carfax, in which Church the deceased had worshipped and ministered for more than 70 years. There are citizens alive who well remember him as a boy accompanying his father, Alderman Bricknell to the old Church during his Mayoralty in 1818, the year before the present Carfax Church was built, and he was one of the few survivors who were present at the opening of the new edifice.

The funeral was an entirely, united, parochial one. It was attended by the whole of the schoolchildren of Eynsham, the members of the two Benefit Societies wearing the emblems of mourning on their official wands, and by a very large assemblage of his parishioners and neighbours, and we failed to observe one house that showed not some token of respect felt by the inmates [sic] of their departed Minister.

Beautiful wreaths were placed on the coffin by his bereaved and loving widow and other members of the family; from Dr Smallhorn, his medical attendant, the Eynsham Railway Officials, the servants of the Vicarage and other friends. Chief mourners were his son the Rev.R.Nash Bricknell, Vicar of Salford, and his

grandson the Rev. W. Nash Bricknell of Lincoln College. The Church was densely filled with a sympathising congregation who joined in singing the hymn 'Rock of Ages'. The organist played "The Dead March" in *Saul*.

His death breaks the honourable connection for more than a century of the name of Bricknell with our civic annals as we find his father took part in Municipal affairs, became a subscriber to the Blue Coat Boys' School in 1789 and was three times elected Chief Magistrate of the City, 1808, 1818 and 1828. He was chosen Alderman in 1813.

Mr. Alderman Bricknell built the large mansion, Littlegate House, standing in its own grounds and extensive gardens, along what was then the clear Mill Stream, and surrounded by pleasant meadows. It was afterwards occupied by Mrs. Eykyn and Mr. Josiah Nutt the schoolmaster. The poet could thus speak of it

"A place there is, where silver waters flow
As crystal clear, the bottom clear below,
A stream producing neither mud nor weeds,
Nor airy rushes, nor the spiky reeds"

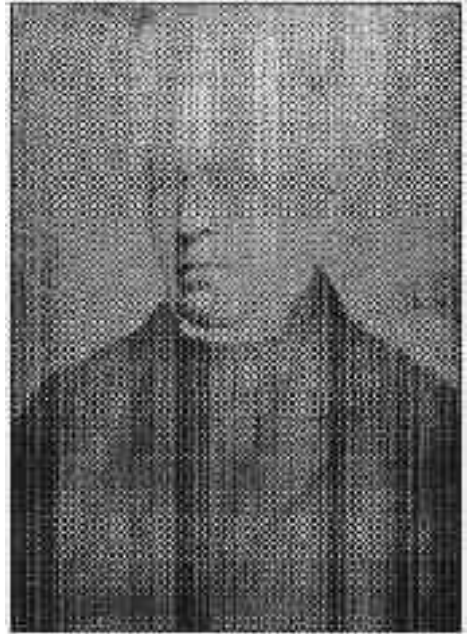
On or near its banks was St. Thomas House, residence of the City Member, Paradise House, Littlegate House and Bishop King's Palace in St. Aldates. The site of Littlegate House is now covered with cottage property of St. Ebbes and Holy Trinity, and the Trill Mill Stream is a covered drain or stopped up. It is a singular coincidence that in early [sic] Saxon times the Church of St. Ebbes and 2 mills on the Trill Mill Stream and meadows were given to Eynsham Abbey and that after nearly a thousand years its late Minister should have been born on this property and so again have connected the two paradises together.

The late Warden of Wadham, Dr. Symons, for many years a City Lecturer prided himself on having the appreciation of 'rising genius' and two of those earlier to come under his influence were Cardinal Newman and Mr. Bricknell. His aged widow has the consolation of knowing how heartily his labours are now appreciated as she must have felt for many years past that his laborious devotion to his parochial ministries and firm adherence (sometimes thought more than firm) to what he conscientiously believed to be the path of duty, richly deserved it. The new hymnal now awaiting publication will be valued by many as a monument of an earnest Minister and we are told is likely to become popular for its own merits.

Funeral arrangements by Mr. Badcock of Queen Street.

William Simcox Bricknell,
Vicar of Eynsham 1845-88.
(Photograph courtesy of Oxfordshire Record Office)

The graves of Revd. W.S.Bricknell
and his wife Elizabeth
(née Skillicorne) - *right*;
and of his grandson, W.N. Bricknell
Vicar of Eynsham 1893-1928,
and his second wife Amy
(nee Smallhorn), daughter of the
village doctor -*left*- in St Leonard's
churchyard.



The father of William Simcox Bricknell was Thomas Fox Bricknell who was born at Evenlode in Gloucestershire, the fifth of the nine children of William Bricknell and Mary (nee Bawell) who had married in 1757. Thomas was baptised in 1762. On 30 August 1804, by which time he had built Littlegate House and was Mayor of Oxford, he married Sarah Simcox at St Ebbes. We do not know how they met. He was 42; his bride was 21. The witnesses were William and Jane Bricknell, brother and sister of Thomas.

William Simcox Bricknell's mother, Sarah, was born in 1783, daughter of Thomas Green Simcox of Harborne, Staffordshire, who inherited from his uncle, Thomas Green, a nail-maker and JP who bought the Manor of Harborne and built Harborne House. Sarah is in the 1851 Census for Eynsham, a widow of 68, living with her son William Simcox Bricknell at the Vicarage. She had a brother, the Rev. Thomas Green Simcox who lived at Harborne House until his death in 1877. (From 1911 this was the residence of the Bishops of Birmingham). He became one of the Patrons of the Eynsham Living.

William Simcox Bricknell was Thomas and Sarah's first child, born at Littlegate House, Oxford and baptised at St. Ebbes on 19 March 1806. (His brother George Simcox Yeates Bricknell was baptised in the same church on 19 June 1807). He went to Worcester College, matriculating in 1822, and gaining his degree in 1826, at the age of 20. At that time there were no Theological Colleges and he could not take an ecclesiastical appointment until he was 25. We have no record of what he did during those years but by 1833 he was at Grove near Wantage. The civil parish of Grove was created in 1835. The parish was required to supply its own church and graveyard. The Provost of Worcester at this time, Dr Richard Lynch Cotton was said to have been instrumental in having one built, and this appears as the first of several Memoranda at the beginning of the Grove Registers.

"The Church of St. James in this parish was consecrated August the 14th 1832, and the Burial Ground attached to the same August the 21st 1833 by the Lord Bishop of Salisbury."

Another Memorandum is in Bricknell's hand.

"The Revd. W. Simcox Bricknell MA was licensed to the Perpetual living of Grove, by Richard, Lord Bishop of Oxford on the 17th day of December 1836 and read himself into the same having made the necessary declaration during the time of Divine Service on the Sunday following.

James Mark and Henry Church, Churchwardens

The Archdeaconry of Berkshire which previously formed part of the Diocese of Salisbury was annexed and united to the Diocese of Oxford"

Yet another Memorandum gives a description of the new church and states that a grant was obtained from the "Incorporated Society for Promoting the Enlargement, Building and Repairing of Churches and Chapels"

Bill Fuller in Part 3 of his work *An Artist's Walk through Old Grove* says that there were at least three former churches in the vicinity of the Village Green and two vicarages have existed before the present one. Bricknell's church was demolished in 1900.

On 16 July 1833 William Simcox Bricknell of Grove married Elizabeth Nash Skillicorne at Salford near Chipping Norton. The witnesses to this marriage were William Nash Skillicorne, Anna M. Skillicorne (her brother and sister), G.S.Y. Bricknell (his brother) and John Talbot Rice. The officiating clergyman was Edward Rice, Dean of Gloucester. Perhaps her father who was Rector of Salford wanted to perform his traditional role, but he may have been ill; he died in the following year at the early age of 56. The Bricknell family knew the Skillicorne and Nash families. Elizabeth's aunt, Elizabeth Nash, had married another William Bricknell in 1814. These family connections were discussed in *The Eynsham Record* no.6 "An Oxfordshire Clerical Family".

It was from this time, after he and his wife had settled at Grove and he had begun his ministry in a newly-formed parish, that he started his publications in support of the Evangelicals and against The Oxford Movement. The titles of some of these are given in his obituary notice.

On the 5th of November 1838 a son was born to William and Elizabeth at Cheltenham. It would seem that Elizabeth had gone to stay in the more comfortable surroundings of her family, probably with her sister Anna Maria. This baby was baptised at Grove almost six months later and the entry in the register presents something of a mystery.

1839 23 April BRICKNELL Michael Nash son of William Simcox, Incumbent of Grove and Elizabeth Nash, born at Cheltenham 5 November 1838. Godparents: Revd. the Warden of ----- College, Revd. the Provost of ----- College, A.M. Skillicorne.

I have not seen the original entry, only a transcription, but I would have expected Bricknell to make this entry himself. And yet, in all subsequent records, this their only son is known as Richard Nash Bricknell, and why were the names of the Colleges of the two Godfathers not written? Of the Colleges of the time, All Souls, Merton, New and Wadham had Wardens; and Oriel, The Queen's and Worcester had Provosts. Worcester was Bricknell's College and he (and

Newman!) had much impressed the then Warden of Wadham, a fellow City Lecturer. The Godmother is probably the baby's aunt, Anna Maria Skillicorne.

In 1845 the Rev. Thomas Symonds died at Eynsham and Bricknell was appointed Vicar. (The Patrons of the Living were now Elizabeth's brother, William Nash Skillicorne, and the Rev. Thomas Green Simcox, Bricknell's uncle). In 1843 he had been appointed a City Lecturer at St. Martin's Church at Carfax (now demolished, except for the tower), which gave him a central pulpit to expound his views. He would have been a much more influential figure preaching to an Oxford congregation at St. Martin's than to the villagers at Eynsham so it is not really surprising to learn that he rushed his services in Eynsham in order to get to Oxford. In his younger days he may have gone on horseback, later perhaps in a carriage, and in his last years by train.

When he came to Eynsham he still retained the Perpetual Curacy at Grove by saying that he lived at the Vicarage there for four months of the year. He was responsible for paying the Curate at Grove, but proposed to keep some of the money himself until the Bishop objected. Samuel Wilberforce had become Bishop of Oxford in the same year as Bricknell came to Eynsham. He was a reforming bishop and made it his business to look into all aspects of parish life. He had frequent clashes with Bricknell as can be seen from the Bishop's Letter Books and reports in the Press, some of which have been noted in *The Eynsham Record*. I think that by 1862 the bishop was realising that he couldn't win, for this is a letter he wrote to Bricknell in August that year "I think the writer of the enclosed letter would be a very useful man at Grove and that he might probably take it till something else offered and so be ready to make way for your son. He is an Evangelical clergyman."

The son, Richard, is included in the 1861 Census for Eynsham, aged 22 and described as unmarried and a theological student. His first curacy was at Kendal in Westmoreland, but he took over at Grove in 1864 and was later Rector of Salford where his grandfather had been Rector. He died in 1890, aged 52, only two years after his father, and not having completed his degree. I had not realised before that Bricknell had 'founded' the church at Grove and so wished to control its development for as long as possible. Perhaps he thought in 1838 when his son was born that he would 'inherit' Grove.

More will be discovered and written about Bricknell's time in Eynsham, but I hope this article will give some idea of his background and the influence of events of the time on his character. He came from a wealthy family, as did his wife, but he was known to be "careful" with his money and not above depriving others. But

what other influences? - a sickly son? his widowed mother, Sarah. living with him at the Vicarage while he was still in his forties? There is still scope for further research.

Sources (see inside front cover for abbreviations)

Jackson's Oxford Journal May 26 and June 2 1888

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Acknowledgements

To the staff at the Centre for Oxfordshire Studies, Oxford, especially Helen Drury.

"TO THE USE AND BEHOOF OF ..."

A conveyance of 1832

by Brian Atkins

When E.K.Chambers wrote his book *Eynsham under the Monks* in 1936 his home was 'Hythecroft' the site of a tannery in medieval and later times, at the end of Tanners Lane. On pages 87-88 Chambers gives a history of the property, citing among others, the Hythecroft title deeds. Presumably these are now in the hands of the present owners, and I have not seen these, other than one splendid conveyance of 1832 which has been acquired by Dr Jonathan Ferrier of 'The Gables'. This has been framed (24" x 17") and carries the full text with all the legalistic jargon current at the time, transcribed below, following some explanatory notes.

The conveyance deals much with the Day family. There were Days in Eynsham as early as 1560, and "on 16 August 1713 Thomas Day, tanner, bought from William Quartermaine of Eynsham two pieces of ground known as the Nursery and the Lime Pits". Soon after, on 14 September of the same year Thomas married Frances Follet in St Leonard's, and on 15 July 1716 their son Thomas was baptised. This is the first Thomas to be mentioned in the conveyance. In due course this Thomas and his wife Catherine had sons Thomas, baptised 9 March 1760 and Robert, baptised 22 November 1761. The elder son died in 1811, apparently childless, and his "Brother and Heir at Law" Robert inherited. Robert himself died in 1831 and the property passed to Ann Day. She is noted on the back of the document as Miss Ann Day, so she was not Robert's wife, but probably his daughter (She may have been a Mary Anne Day who died in 1871 aged 63, so born about 1808). In any event Miss Ann Day, who had inherited a not inconsiderable property in 1831, clearly did not want it, and sold it to Samuel Druce for £1120 in the next year.

[The preamble]

Manor of Newland in the Parish of Ensham in the County of Oxford.

The Court Baron of the Honorable Thomas Parker Lord of the Manor held in order for the said Manor on Friday the Ninth day of November One Thousand Eight Hundred and thirty five Before George Davenport Gentleman Steward of the said Manor.

Homage sworn by William Brain, John Burden, Emanuel Jarvis

It is thus enrolled [in a different hand]

At this Court came Ann Day one of the Customary Tenants of this Manor (by James Swann of Ensham aforesaid Gentleman her Attorney lawfully authorised by virtue of a Power of Attorney under the Hand and Seal of the said Ann Day for that purpose bearing date the first day of August last past) and in open Court in the, presence of the Homage aforesaid in consideration of the sum of One Thousand One Hundred and Twenty pounds to the said Ann Day paid by Samuel Druce of Ensham in the County of Oxford Gentleman as the full consideration for the purchase of the Hereditaments after mentioned did surrender by the Rod into the Hands of the Lord of the said Manor by the Hands and acceptance of his said Steward according to the Custom thereof **All that** Capital Messuage or Tenement lately erected and built on the site of One Cottage within the said Manor with the Tan Yard Orchard and Garden thereunto belonging held by the yearly rent of three shillings and one penny formerly in the possession of Thomas Day (Father of Robert Day) and late of the said Robert Day Together with all Houses Outhouses Edifices Buildings Barns Stables Orchards Gardens Courts Yards Ways Timber and other Trees advantages and Appurtenances whatsoever to the same belonging or appertaining or reputed or known as part thereof **Also all that** plot or piece of Land containing two Acres and twenty six perches situate in the North field of Ensham aforesaid being an Allotment awarded on the inclosure of the Parish of Ensham aforesaid in lieu of the Commons belonging to the said Cottage Bounded on the North East by an Allotment of the President and Scholars of Corpus Christi College in Oxford and Thomas Wilsden their Lessee on the South East by an Allotment late of the said Thomas Day and Robert Day awarded to them in lieu of Freehold on the South West by an Allotment late of James Lord the Elder awarded to him in lieu of Copyhold late of William Castell And on the South West by an Allotment late of the said Thomas Day and Robert Day awarded to them in lieu of Copyhold late of William Brain (to which premises the said Robert Day was admitted Tenant as Brother and Heir at Law of Thomas Day at the Court Baron held in and for the said Manor on the twenty ninth day of January One Thousand Eight Hundred and Thirteen) **To the use and behoof** of the said Samuel Druce and his Heirs for ever by the rents customs duties and services therefore due and of right accustomed **And** the said Samuel Druce being present here in Court prayed to be admitted Tenant to the said Premises To whom the Lord of the said Manor by his said Steward granted seizin thereof by the Rod

To have and to hold the Premises aforesaid with the Appurtenances unto the said Samuel Druce and his Heirs forever at the will of the Lord according to the custom of the said Manor by and under the rents customs duties and services therefore due and of right accustomed to be paid done and performed and the said

Samuel Druce hath given to the said Lord a fine for such his admittance and is admitted Tenant accordingly and hath sworn his fidelity.

Examined Geo Davenport Steward of the said Manor

The reverse of the conveyance carries a very brief summary by George Davenport as follows.

Dated 9th November 1832

Miss Ann Day to Mr Samuel Druce. Surrender of a Capital Message, Tan Yard and premises in the Manor of Newland, and Mr Druce's admission.

Sources (see inside front cover for abbreviations)

The conveyance itself with thanks to Jonathan Ferrier for drawing it to my attention and loaning it for a transcription to be taken.

Chambers, 1936, pp.87-88

Eynsham Parish Records

The Monumental Inscriptions at St Leonard's Church recorded by the Oxfordshire Family History Society

THE MYSTERY OF MARTHA JENKINS

by Pamela Richards

It was while Ted Whelan was helping me with the Junior History Group that he was shown some extracts from an account book by Hilda Cornish whose father, Mr Franklin, used to farm at Swinford. When we first looked at the extracts we thought they were from the farmer's wife's account book but after Ted's death Mrs Cornish lent me the whole book and it soon became clear that this was not the case. Mrs Cornish believed it to belong to the housekeeper at Swinford farm but I do not think this is true either.

Miss Jenkins herself gives an introduction to her account book, which at one time seems to have belonged to another member of her family, one Thomas J.F.Jenkins. On a page towards the back of the book is written

"Under the Will of my late uncle John Jenkins I receive the sum of £40 per annum paid quarterly May, August, November, February, due first of each of these months paid into Coutts and added to my account there. This annuity paid also into Coutts after the fifth January, April, July, October, viz. £25.8s.4d paid after the fifth of the above named months (quarterly) £6.7s.1d Also £15. per annum under the Will of the late John Jenkins paid half yearly into Coutts, June & December. These last two annuities also cease at my death. This last is not duty free the two former are" (Fig.1)

The first thing that took my notice was that she was banking at Coutts. Even at that time this was quite an up-market bank. Then as I looked closer at her expenditure I felt convinced that Miss Jenkins was no housekeeper. Nicholas Mayhew of the Ashmolean Coin Room felt my doubts were justified when he helped me work out the approximate comparative values of her money.

With annuities of £86.15s.5d (in rough figures about £4,830 today) her average expenditure was about £68 (about £4080). However, this was not a young lady and over 1906/7 she was obliged to spend £158.4s.0d. (over £9,000) for medical attendance and periods in St. John's Hospital, the Blackheath Home and Duchess House, which all seem to have been in London.

The account book starts in 1899 and finishes in 1920. The last few years suggest that her health was failing. Her expenditure gives a very good picture of her interests, her health, her clothes and what she liked to eat and drink.

She did a lot of travelling by rail around Oxford, towards London and the area of East Grinstead, and trips to Banbury, Brighton and Birmingham. She seems to

Kingfisher
each 1/2

Kingfisher
January 8 2
February 2 1
March 1
April 1 1/2

Under the Hill of the late
Aunt John Jackson's house the
stone of the 1st of Jan. 1847
The first of the stone with the face
with the date 1847 is in the
thin thickness of the stone
The stone is in the wall
also into the wall of the house
of January April July October
1847 8 14 21 28 after the 1st of
the stone is in the wall of the house
of 7 14 21 28 after the 1st of
under the Hill of the late
John Jackson's house the stone
of the 1st of Jan. 1847 is in the
thin thickness of the stone
The stone is in the wall
also into the wall of the house
of January April July October
1847 8 14 21 28 after the 1st of
the stone is in the wall of the house
of 7 14 21 28 after the 1st of

travel in some comfort. There are payments for her box, to the porters and to servants at the venues where she stays. She also mentions tram fares. I believe most of the tram rides were in Oxford or London. She records a trip on the steamer to Oxford and back, and a journey by omnibus to Norwood.

She also had an interest in culture. There are trips to the Royal Academy between 1903 and 1908 and to Blenheim. She doesn't appear to read a great deal. There are few purchases of books but this may have been because her eyesight was not good. She is frequently having her spectacles seen to. I noticed several payments to Batemans, the opticians, in 1899. The firm started in Reading and today has a shop next to Boswells in the Cornmarket in Oxford.

In the years from 1899 to 1905 there are entries for the theatre and for concerts. She visits various exhibitions and flower shows. She obviously enjoyed flowers as can be seen by the purchase of cut flowers throughout the account book.

She seemed to have been a great letter writer, although sadly, there is no indication to whom the correspondence was addressed. There are many entries for stamps, notepaper, cards and envelopes. On May 29th 1899 she pays 1s.3d for a registered letter and stamps. Envelopes cost 2d in 1900 but there is no indication how many she purchased.

It is also the era of the telegram. She also bought quite a lot of postal orders. On July 24th 1913 she bought nibs and pencils for 4s. ½d. She was still buying stamps and envelopes in her last entries in 1919.

Clothes and materials are interesting entries. In September 1899 she bought and had made up dress material for the cost of £4.4s. 1d. In the same month she bought net for a 'fall' (1s.4d). This was a net, which was worn on a hat or bonnet, which fell down in front of the face. She also bought shoes at 3s.6d and boots and gloves at 5s.5d.

The number of entries for the purchase of gloves is surprising. In 1899 there are no less than six and in January 1900 it starts again. There is no indication what the gloves were made off. However, throughout the book there is an interesting collection of various materials. Lace, silk, tulle, chiffon silk, velvet, calico, flannel, muslin, burnt silk, alpaca, jet net, gimp (a type of silk), serge, jersey, satin, flannelette, sateen, broche silk, and jap, Holland, bouche lace; guipure, nansook, tussor, delaine, hessian and fur, together with all sorts of trimming and frilling and ribbons and braids. She also bought 'osprey 5/2 and other curled feathers. Does this suggest that she was at one time a milliner?

In the year 1904	
Wagon - West in black & white	£ 7 10
Northgate	2 2
Medical Attendance	11
	£ 25 11
July 23 to August 27	£ 5 11 11/2
August & September	3 5 2
October	3 14 7
November	4 4 3
December	5 1 4
1905 & 1906	£ 22 7 4
St. John's Hospital - Hambro	23 11
St. John's Home - South	26 5
Widow's Pension to Mrs	5 16
1906	£ 53 1
Belgrave Park Home	12
St. John's Hospital	£ 4 4
Medicines	1
	£ 17 11
St. John's Hospital	10 10
St. John's Hospital 1907	5 5
St. John's 1906	2 8 7
	6 4 2
St. John's	2 2
	£ 46 6

There is little mention of other ornamentation but in 1903 Miss Jenkins purchases a chatelaine. This was an ornamental appendage worn by ladies at their waist and was supposed to represent a bunch of keys. It consisted of a number of short chains attached to a spindle or belt or bag. Chatelaines came back into fashion in 1883 and were often used as a bag to carry scissors etc. for use with sewing. This all points to a lady who sewed but what she sewed is still a mystery.

There are several purchases of a '*cross-over*', which seems to be an item of clothing worn by elderly ladies to keep their chests warm. She buys vests and bodice slips. She has her nightdresses made and towards the end of her life her dress-making has become less expensive. The material costs 10s.11 ½d. and the making of it is 4s.6d. She also from time to time has a skirt turned. She shopped at Elliston & Cavell, a store once familiar to Oxford shoppers.

She did not omit charitable giving. There are regular entries of '*church*', usually 1s., for the collection one assumes. In 1899 she contributes 3s.6d. to the 'War Fund' (the Boer War) as well as paying her annual subscription to the R.S.P.C.A. of 5s.1d. (about £15). This continued until 1905. She frequently gave to missionary organisations. It was also her habit to give a 'Christmas box' to the postmen. In 1913 she seems to have become interested in the Church Army and was a regular purchaser of their Gazette. Similar to the Salvation Army this voluntary Anglican organisation of lay workers was founded in 1882 by Wilson Carlile (1847-1942) and was given to social and moral welfare, particularly for fighting troops, providing 'tea and sympathy'. Its headquarters were in Blackheath and it is speculative to think that Miss Jenkins may have taken notice of the organisation while she was staying in Blackheath. She also gave 1s. to the Belgian Fund, which was collected in Oxford in November 1914.

This does not seem like the life of a housekeeper and all through her accounts she is paying quite a high rent for her accommodation. In 1899 she is paying 9s.3d. a week and this seems to be varied by moving around. In 1900 she records '*May 26th Rooms and Washing 10/5d*'. Her washing bill varies so this must depend, as one would expect, on the amount of washing done, but it is a regular item.

Practically the last entry in her book is '*November 27th 1919. Miss Jenkins to Mrs Burgin £1.7s. 6d for rent, board & fires*'.

Her food purchases represent a fairly balanced diet but one may detect a sweet tooth and although not a spendthrift she did enjoy good quality food, making a number of purchases at Grimby Hughes, a well-known Oxford grocery store of the past.

Two other groups of expenditure are that on alcohol and that on medicines. Her main tipples were Gin, Brandy and Whisky. Wine and Port also feature in her list of purchases over the years. In 1902 she spent £2.13s.0d. (£159) on alcohol and in 1918 she spent £13.5s.7d. (£795).

As for medicine, she refers to the Eynsham chemist Howe's bills in 1899 and 1900, and pays Dr. Smallhorn, the Eynsham doctor, £1.2s..2½d. in January 1901. This seems to be a period when she was staying in Eynsham. In June 1899 she makes a journey to Eynsham for 2s.3d. and pays Eynsham servants 11s.6d. As for her health problems it would seem from her purchases of Lithia and Tamar Indian that she had gout as these were both used for cases of this problem. In August 1901 she bought Lithia and cocaine for 1/6d, cocaine being used as a pain-killer at this time. Other problems were dealt with by the use of Zam Buc, an embrocation, cascara and serum There are many visits to doctors and dentists.

But who was this lady? She was apparently cultured but at times her addition and spelling are wayward. It seems that the book illustrates the final twenty-one years of her life and I believe that she is Miss Martha Matilda Jenkins, who when she opened an account at Coutts in 1897 was living in Wisboro' Green, Billingham, Sussex and who died on 7th December 1921 and whose death was registered in Witney recording her age as 91. Probate was granted on 2nd January 1922 being sworn at £243 (about £14,500 in today's money). I believe that she was probably a distant relative of the Franklin who were farming at Swinford, this conclusion being supported by Hilda Cornish's recollection of some documents she remembers seeing.

Whoever she was I thank her for providing an insight into the life of a lady living at the beginning of the 20th century.

Acknowledgement:

Tracey Earl, Archivist, Coutts & Co. London.

SWINFORD PUMPING STATION, 1934

by Brian Atkins

The prolonged drought last summer reduced water levels in the Farnoor reservoir to the point where permission was sought to extract an extra supply from the river. But seventy years ago it was the needs of a growing population and demands for greater purity that led to the construction, by the City of Oxford Waterworks, of the Swinford Pumping Station .

This was inaugurated by Lord Desborough on Thursday, 28 June 1934, and an account of the project is given in a booklet of 27 pages (anonymously written), published by the company to accompany the opening.

The first part recapitulates the complicated history of Oxford's water supplies from the early 17th century involving, in turn, collection and storage at Hinksey with pipes to the city centre, conduits and fountains (1615); extraction from the Thames near Folly Bridge and distribution to the principal streets of the city (1694); the Hinksey Pumping Station, involving an exchange of land in Eynsham (ca.1855); Headington Hill Reservoir (1878) and a supply area enlarged to include South Hinksey, Cowley, Headington, Iffley, Wolvercote and Littlemore; a new inlet pipe from the river above King's Weir to Lake Street thence to Hinksey (1885)

Between 1909 and 1933 the total quantity of water pumped at Hinksey increased from 625 to 1,065 million gallons per year, and once again demand was outstripping supply.

A report to the Council by the City Engineer gave it as "his deliberate opinion that ... provision should be made for: (a) a supply of water far in excess of that available under the present system (b) proper filtering and storage capacity to deal with the new water obtained (c) increased engine and pumping power (d) new rising main or mains (e) increased high level storage". The Council adopted this resolution subject to independent corroboration. The firm of Sir Alex Binnie, Son & Deacon, Chartered Surveyors in London, concurred and were appointed to work with the City Engineer by an Act of Parliament of 1928.

The design and construction of the new works at Swinford took six years and were opened in 1934.

The project involved extracting water from the Thames just upstream from the toll-bridge to be screened (removal of coarse matter) and then to a 'raw' water chamber in the basement of the engine house (the largest building on the site).



From there it was lifted by low level pumps to be mixed with a tiny amount of a solution of aluminium sulphate which would aid the coagulation, precipitation and filtration processes and thence to the precipitation tanks where a complicated system of baffles retarded the flow in order to deposit the bulk of the impurities on the bottom of the tanks.

The top water was then drawn off to the filters - consisting of carefully graded layers of filtering media, mainly quartz sand - in the next building. This pure water was then returned to an upper chamber in the engine house to be chlorinated and now "pure and wholesome" pumped through a 22" rising main to the Beacon Hill Service Reservoir.

Since this can't be seen, being roofed over, it deserves some detailed description. Occupying an area of 1.85 acres on the hill it has a capacity of 10 million gallons. It is 363 feet long, 222 feet wide and 25 feet deep. A series of columns support arches which support the roof. This massive structure is of concrete, the floor and walls in contact with the water being lined with asphalt. From Beacon Hill the water is fed by gravity under the city to the (then) new Headington Service Reservoir.

The various buildings at Swinford are extremely handsome as can be seen in photographs in the 1934 booklet. They were grouped symmetrically on an east-west axis and built with sand-faced bricks of a rich brown shade with reconstructed Clipsham stone dressings. Handmade flat tiles were chosen for the roof.



The total cost of all these new works was £225,780 of which those at Swinford and Beacon Hill, involving four different contractors, was £160,000.

Clearly these new works were capable of dealing with the current demand but it was confidently predicted that they could cater for the expanding needs of the 20th century, a prediction which proved way off the mark. Within 20 years or so plans were being drawn up for a major new project at Farmoor, and in 1962 the first civil engineering contracts were placed for the reservoir complex there, to be inaugurated on 29 September 1977.

What effect did this have on the Swinford plant? Firstly the river water was now not to be extracted near the toll-bridge directly to Swinford but from Pinkhill and into the Farmoor reservoir. Some of this 'dirty water' is then fed to Swinford for treatment. Additional water is purified at Farmoor and transferred via a separate pipe to Swinford - all to be pumped to Beacon Hill for onward distribution. (I'm told that 'our' stretch of the river supplies water to places as far afield as Swindon!).

The work currently in progress at Swinford largely involves the installation of more modern purification systems than those available in the 1930s.

As an interesting footnote, the firm of Sir Alex Binnie, Son & Deacon, the engineers involved in the 1930s, after some name changes, became Messrs. Binnie & Partners, the consulting engineers who designed and supervised the Farmoor project in the 1970s.

Sources

Inauguration of the Swinford Pumping Station, Thursday, 28 June 1934, published by City of Oxford Waterworks (booklet kindly loaned by Dr Bryan Hyde)

Information from Maureen McCreadie

Leaflets published by Thames Water Vales Division in 1977

Farmoor - a multi-purpose reservoir complex

Farmoor Reservoir - Open Day 1 October 1977

A NEW LIBRARY AT EYNESHAM, 1924

by John Golby and Brian Atkins

At a time when the Friends of Eynsham Library are working to raise money for an extension to the existing library in Mill Street, it is worth remembering that Oxfordshire County Council has been providing a library service in the village since 1924. Below is an item from *The Oxford Times* of 28 November of that year referring to the new Eynsham library which, at that time, had 62 members.

Free library. Through the beneficence of the late Mr Carnegie [Andrew Carnegie, the great philanthropist], the Oxfordshire County Council were enabled to establish a free library in Eynsham some three months ago. As is usual in rural districts, the population is somewhat conservative with new institutions, but a quite satisfactory response has been made, and the library now boasts of 62 members and additions are made weekly. This is very encouraging for those who voluntarily accepted the care and control of the library, and to whom the thanks of the readers are due. The tastes of the devourer of modern fiction, the reader of classics and semi-classics and the student are catered for, and further, it should be noted by those to whom it is of interest that any book may be obtained from headquarters for a period of one month on requisition being made.

Unfortunately the newspaper piece doesn't tell us where this new library was located. What is known is that at some period up to 1951 it was in the house next to the Co-op owned by a Mrs K. Howard. Volunteer librarians were Mrs K. Howard, Mrs Tretthewy (the headmaster's wife), Miss K. Hellings, and Miss M. W. Philcox.

In 1951 it was relocated in the Bartholomew Room and was formally opened on 4 September by Mr R Hooper, Chairman of the Parish Council. The County Librarian, Miss C. Stanley-Smith was present. Previous volunteers were thanked. The library had now expanded to include 1000 books, and Mrs Grace Anderson had been appointed as the first paid librarian. Opening hours would be Thursdays 3-4p.m. and Fridays 7-8p.m., a mere two hours a week. Even allowing for the fact that Mrs Anderson would have had some duties outside these opening times, this was surely only a part-time job.

In 1970 the library was moved again to a building, now demolished, on the site of the new Scout Hut presently under construction, and then to its present location in Mill Street when the Eynsham Fire Brigade moved to new premises near the former railway station in the early 1980s.

The library has thus had a succession of homes, at least four, since its beginnings eighty years ago, but new technologies come along - more computers are to be installed for example- in a building already filled to capacity. We hope that the library (which includes the EHG's collections) will stay in its present home, near the centre of the village. Space for expansion on the site has been identified; architect's proposals for a three-stage programme drawn up; and the 'Friends of the Library' are raising money towards this expansion project, yet to be approved by the County Council Library authorities, and, of course, the necessary planning permissions from WODC .

Sources

The OxfordTimes, 28 November 1924, and 5 September 1951
Information from Moyra Philcox and others.

Plus ca change ...?

TOLLGATE OUTDATED (March 1910)

The question arises of doing away with the tollgate at Eynsham. We believe that it is the unanimous opinion that this relic of by gone days, when our ancestors took things more easily than we do, should be abolished.

In these days of motors, and the increasing value of time, a tollgate is just a public nuisance. Surely the County Council could pay a lump sum to the owner to stop charging tolls. The longer they delay, the bigger will be the bill.

An Eynsham-related extract from *Edwardian Witney 1901-1910* by Charles & Joan Gott, Mill House Publications Witney 2002 (based on the *Witney Gazette*)

EYNSHAM 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.

President: Dr F.B. Atkins, 8 Thornbury Rd. Eynsham
Chairman: Mr M. Harris, 150 Westminster Way, Botley
Vice-Chairman: Mr D.S. Richards, 6 Abbey St. Eynsham
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