

The Eynsham Record



Number 27

Note on abbreviations

Bodl.	Bodleian Library, Oxford
Chamb. 1936	Chambers, E.K. <i>Eynsham under the Monks</i> . Oxfordshire Record Society, vol.18, 1936.
Ox.Studies	Oxfordshire Studies, Central Library, Westgate, Oxford
EHG	Eynsham History Group
E.R.	<i>The Eynsham Record</i>
Eyn.Cart.	<i>Cartulary of the Abbey of Eynsham</i> . Salter, H.E. (Ed.), in 2 volumes, Oxford Historical Society, vol.49 (1907) & vol.51 (1908).
Eyn.Cens.	Eynsham census returns at 10 year intervals from 1841 to 1901, transcribed by members of the EHG.
Eyn. MIs	Monumental Inscriptions at St Leonard's, recorded by the Oxfordshire Family History Society, 2002.
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
V.C.H. Oxon.	<i>The Victoria History of the County of Oxford</i>

FRONT COVER

Venetia, Lady Digby. Portrait by Sir Anthony Van Dyke

© National Portrait Gallery

(see Lilian Wright's article on pages 4 to 9)

BACK COVER

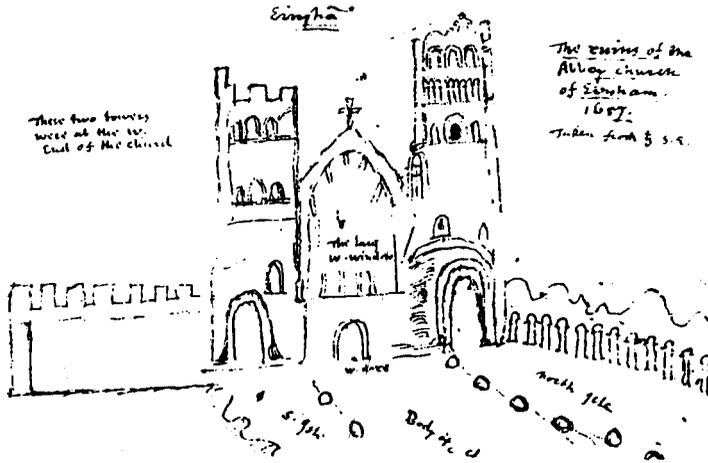
'The Stripling Thames' sculpture by Gwynneth Holt, (later Gwynneth Gordon)

Photograph by William Bainbridge

THE EYNESHAM RECORD

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Journal of the Eynsham History Group



THE REMAINS OF EYNESHAM ABBEY IN 1657. DRAWN BY WOOD

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EDITORIAL

I start on a sad note. During the last year we have lost four of our members, Stanley Green (see obituary overleaf), Michael White, Susan Meredith and Jo Foweather.

The village also owes a debt of gratitude to Ray Edwards, not a member, but the amateur ornithologist who lived in Clover Place and surveyed the bird population in the fishponds area before its restoration. We send condolences to their families.

Referring to the fishponds, on 14 February 2009, at least eight members of the Oxford Blues Metal Detecting Club surveyed the site and unearthed 19 metal objects, almost all to the east of the moated site. Three of the finds, Roman coins, pre-date the Abbey, and nine clearly post-date it. Frustratingly the remaining seven items can't be dated, and none of these has obvious links with monkish activities at the fishponds. Verity Hughes has kindly given for our archives a CD Rom showing these finds and the work in progress on the fishponds area between 2003 and 2009.

In October Lilian Wright gave a talk to our History Group about the 17th century ladies of the aristocratic Stanley family and their Eynsham connections. She was surprised how few people appeared to have heard of Venetia Stanley of Eynsham, one of the greatest beauties of her generation. Since Lilian's earlier article in the Record is out of print, she has re-written and updated her account of this lady. Venetia's portrait by Van Dyke graces the front cover. It is hoped to continue henceforth reproducing colour images on the front and back covers.

Following her talk to the History Group on the Gibbons family of Eynsham, Susan Ganter, a descendant, has written up the history of this long-established family.

John Blakeman continues reporting his detailed research on the names on the Eynsham War Memorial. This year, the men who fell in WWII.

Thanks also to other contributors to this issue.

Stanley G. Green

Stanley, a retired headteacher, was a stalwart of the E.H.G. being our Treasurer from 1985 to 1994 and a committee member for a further four years. He helped to set up at least two of our out-of-town exhibitions, the one on our former railway winning the first prize, A keen gardener he would bring pot plants to brighten up our tables at parties from time to time, and he would challenge us to identify some very unusual objects he had acquired. He was quietly-spoken, self-effacing and very popular. We send our sympathy to his wife Joan who looked after him during his long illness.

ERRATA

In the article on St Peter's Church (Eynsham Record no.25, 2008) the bell-tower (campanile) in Fr Lopes's imagined building is incorrectly called a basilica. The word 'basilica' is in fact the correct name for the envisioned main building with its columned front (p.24).

Thanks to Peter Way for gently pointing out this error.

In my editorial in E.R.no. 26 I inadvertently interchanged Blake Pullen's names. Ed.

Pamela Richards has sent this extraordinary paragraph from a book "Exorcising Devils" by Dom Robert Petitpierre O.S.B, published by Robert Hale, London in 1976. It was brought to her attention by her son-in-law.

"Among my close friends at Merton was the late Gilbert Shaw, afterwards Fr. Gilbert Shaw who became a leading Anglican authority on exorcism and demonic dimension. I had gone up to study chemistry, not theology, but a great deal was changed for me when Shaw, together with the Reverend Hugh Trotter and another priest, conducted a mission at the village of Eynsham and the surrounding hamlets. Although I occasionally lent a hand, in a purely lay capacity, I took no real part in the mission and my knowledge of the extraordinary happenings there derives entirely from Gilbert Shaw. Eynsham lies under an ancient Stone Age site and it appears that a gang of black magicians began activities there. Allying themselves with evil spirits, they attacked Eynsham with psychic force. Shaw and his helpers carried out several exorcisms, the majority of which, I think, were of a minor or antiseptic nature - not all that dissimilar in style or content from the blessing given to a house by a priest when new occupants move in - and their ministrations appeared to be effective."

We believe that this was written in good faith, but doubt that it has any historical validity – note for example the statement that "Eynsham lies under an ancient Stone Age site..."! [Ed.]

VENETIA ANASTASIA STANLEY

Venetia the Beautiful, of Eynsham, A Damask Rose

by Lilian Wright

According to Estrith Mansfield in "Famous Women of Oxfordshire" The little town of Eynsham has the distinction of being the childhood home of one of the loveliest Englishwomen of all time.'

Venetia was the daughter of Sir Edward Stanley, grandson of the 3rd Earl of Derby and Lady Lucy Percy, daughter of the 7th Earl of Northumberland. She was born in December 1600, but in the following year her mother and four of her older sisters died whilst presumably on a visit to Walthamstow in Essex. There in St. Mary's church is a fine monument which gives the family lineage and the inscription:- Sir Edward Stanley/ erected this monu/ment for a testi/monie of his love/wich he bare to/his wife Ladie/Lucie & his four/daughters deceased/.

Venetia's father, Sir Edward Stanley, is buried here in Eynsham. His tombstone is on the floor on the south side of the altar in St. Leonard's, and the inscription when translated reads:-

Here lies Edward Stanley K.B. (the son of Thomas, the son of Edward, Earl of Derby) Died June 18th 1632, aged 69. His daughter Petronilla Stanley placed this here.

Estrith Mansfield writes of Venetia's early years, "Sir Edward Stanley was so inconsolable that as soon as the baby could travel he sent her to the wife of his tenant and cousin of the same name as himself, who lived at what had been Eynsham Abbey. A dilapidated yet lovely house, its rooms and roof were full of fine panelling." She would have found this information in John Aubrey's 'Brief Lives.'

She continues in a more fanciful way, "Here the baby quickly developed into a sweet woman-child, and here while she was scarcely out of babyhood began her immortal love-story. Her guardians at Eynsham were very friendly with Lady Digby of Gayhurst in Buckinghamshire. Her elder son, Kenelm, was often brought over to Eynsham, and the first time he met Venetia the children were attracted to each other.

Kenelm was three years younger. We can imagine him playing the Cavalier to little Venetia all about old Eynsham, exploring the Abbey ruins with their ancient stories; riding about on their ponies in the pleasant open spaces crowned by Hanborough Spire, with a little hawk on Kenelm's fist, the wind from Hanborough Heath in Venetia's liquid gold curls. But before Venetia was high enough to reach more than the fruit on the lowest orchard bough her father sent for her."

This seems to suggest that for much of her childhood Venetia lived in Eynsham. She and Kenelm would have been about six and three when they first played together. In his 'Memoirs' Digby writes "Stelliana {his name for Venetia} being of such age that with her tender hand she could scarcely reach to gather the lowest fruit of the loaden boughs; her father, that yielded daily more and more to his discontents, and fainting under the burden of them which age made to seem heavier, sent for her back to his own house, hoping that by the presence of such a daughter whom fame delivered to excel in all things belonging to a lady of her quality, and that inherited the perfection of her deceased mother, he might pass the rest of his drooping days with some more content. Stelliana had a sweet and gentle disposition but he had not long enjoyed the fruits of his blessed harvest when he was summoned to the Court for the marriage of Elizabeth, daughter of James I ,and Frederick of Bohemia."

From this we could perhaps surmise that Sir Edward Stanley was now living at the Abbey. He had inherited this and the Abbey lands in 1609 on the death of his uncle, so would have been able to provide a home for Venetia. The marriage of Elizabeth and Frederick was in 1613 when Venetia would have been 12 years old. (remember her birthday was in December). Digby in his 'Memoirs' says that her father "was desirous to give his daughter the content of seeing the magnificent entertainments that are usual at such times. And also being glad to let the world now see that fame was nothing too lavish in setting out her perfections ... Stelliana was the jewel that crowned them all"

John Aubrey in 'Brief Lives' writing some 70 years after says "She was a most beautiful desirable creature; and being *matura viro* was let by her father to live with a tenant and servants at Eynsham Abbey in Oxfordshire; but as private as that place was, it seems her beauty could not be hid" Aubrey suggests that it was only at this

time that Digby met Venetia but I think that Digby's 'Memoirs' sound much more plausible. It is to Aubrey that we owe this description of Venetia; "She had a most lovely and sweet-turned face, delicate dark brown hair. She had a perfect healthy constitution; strong, good skin; well proportioned; much inclining to a *bona roba*. Her face, a short oval; dark brown eyebrow, about much sweetness, as also the opening of her eyelids. The colour of her cheeks was just that of the damask rose, which is neither too hot nor too pale. She was of a just stature, not very tall."

R.T.Petersson in his book 'Sir Kenelm Digby, The Ornament of England' which is based largely on Digby's 'Memoirs' writes, "When the whirl of celebrations for the marriage of Princess Elizabeth to Frederick of Bohemia brought this very young and dazzling girl to Court, she was immediately noticed and pursued by several men including both of the Earls of Dorset, Richard and Edward." One might ask what her father was doing at this time to protect his daughter. From the 'Memoirs' she seems to have been in the country under the care of a lady's maid or governess who was bribed by these young men to give them access to her. Kenelm Digby being only ten years old was still at home in Gayhurst but when he was 14 he went with his uncle, a distinguished diplomat later to become the Earl of Bristol, to Spain. Sir John was on a mission to arrange a marriage between Charles, (later Charles I) and the Infanta.

It gave Kenelm a taste for travel which stayed with him all his life. On his return from Spain he came up to Oxford and seems to have renewed his acquaintance with Venetia. When his mother heard of this she did all in her power to prevent them from marrying as she had received rumours from London about Venetia.

She was arranging a marriage for him with a friend's daughter and to delay this Kenelm decided to go abroad again and continue his studies by taking a grand tour of two or three years. Before he went he arranged a last meeting with Venetia where they exchanged tokens of their love. Kenelm gave her a diamond ring and she gave him a lock of her hair which he bound round his arm.

Kenelm went firstly to France and then to Italy. He wrote to Venetia from Florence to say that he was still alive but this letter never reached her.

Reports of his death had been carried to England and had reached Venetia who was very distressed. Other letters never arrived and it was thought that Kenelm's mother had arranged for them to be intercepted. Kenelm knew nothing of this and was amazed and distressed when he heard that Venetia was about to marry. He went again to Spain and then returned to England.

Meanwhile Venetia discovered that her lover was unfaithful and she broke off that engagement. Kenelm and Venetia did not meet again for some time and during this interval Kenelm was knighted by James I. The king wished Sir Kenelm to go with him when he went to France to arrange the marriage of Prince Charles to Henrietta Maria. Venetia showed her abiding love for Kenelm by giving him the money he needed for this. He was so overcome by this that he proposed to her. All their difficulties were forgotten and they were secretly married in 1625. However the marriage was not made public until the birth of their second son. Aubrey says that after her marriage 'this lady carried herself blamelessly'. Kenelm once said, "A man's wife must be nobly descended, beautiful to please him, well formed to bear children, of a good wit, sweet disposition, endowed with good parts, and love him."

The following extract from the 'Memoirs' is interesting for people in Eynsham. "Theagenes went to his lodging where he met with news sent by Stelliana, who had been some time at her father's house in the country, that by a fall from her horse she had been brought home speechless to her chamber and had fallen suddenly into labour of childbirth. This unhappy accident discarded all the discreet preparations that were made for her fit delivery for she had intended to go the next day by coach to London for her lying in. She had remained at her father's all the time that her burden might betray her to curious eyes. So knowing she had vowed to keep her marriage a secret she was delivered of a fair son with the help of a fearful and inexperienced maid. Theagenes came to her aid and she soon recovered her perfect health and strength and the cause of her sickness was not so much as suspected" Perhaps their first child was born in Eynsham.

Venetia and Kenelm had 4 sons -- Kenelm born in 1625, John in 1627, Everard in 1629 (who died as a baby), and George in 1632. Venetia died in 1633 and was buried in Christ Church, Newgate Street, London, where according to Aubrey "Sir Kenelm erected to her memory a sumptuous and stately monument which is utterly

destroyed by the great conflagration" It was said that her death was caused by viper wine which Kenelm had made to conserve her beautiful complexion. He summoned Van Dyck the second day after she was dead to paint his wife before she was 'folded up in her last sheet'." This picture is in the Dulwich Art Gallery. Of this picture Kenelm wrote:- "It standeth all day over against my chairs and table and all night when I goe to my bedside and by the faint light of a candle, methinkes I see her dead indeed. Van Dyck bath altered or added nothing about it, excepting only a rose lying upon the hemme of the sheet."

In the book published for the exhibition in the National Portrait Gallery in November 1982 'Van Dyck in England' Sir Oliver Millar writes about the full length portrait of Venetia, "Digby also conceived, as a further tribute to her and perhaps as a vindication of her reputation, an allegorical portrait, on the scale of life, of which he describes the iconography:- '---as Prudence, sitting in a white dress with a coloured wrap and a jewelled girdle. Under her hand are two white doves, and her other arm is encircled by a serpent. Under her feet is a plinth to which are bound, in the guise of slaves, Deceit with two faces; Anger with furious countenance; meagre Envy with her snaky locks; Profane Love, with eyes bound, wings clipped, arrows scattered and torch extinguished; with other naked figures the size of life. Above is a glory of singing Angels, three of them holding the palm and the wreath above the head of Prudence as a symbol of her victory and triumph over the vices; and the epigram, taken from Juvenal, NULLUM NUMEN ABEST SI SIT PRUDENTIA'. Van Dyck has produced a work which exemplified an important portrait type. The whole image is redolent of Titian .(see front cover)

Venetia was the muse of the poet Ben Jonson and it is fitting to finish this account with a few lines from his long poem 'Eupheme', written after her death.

"Sitting ready to be drawn, What makes these velvets, silks and lawn,
Embroideries, feathers, fringes, lace, Where every limb takes like a face?
This beauty, without falsehood fair, Needs naught to clothe it but the air.
Last, draw the circles of this globe, And let there be a starry robe
Of constellations 'bout her hurled; and thou hast painted beauty's world."

References: -

Estrith Mansfield. Famous Women of Oxfordshire. 1932

John Aubrey. Brief Lives.

Private Memoirs of Sir Kenelm Digby. First Printed, London 1827

R.T Petersson. 1956 Sir Kenelm Digby: The Ornament of England. 1603-1665

Van Dyck in England. National Portrait Gallery. 1982

Ben Jonson. The Complete Poems. Penguin Classics. 1988

From the Oxford Times Friday 23 November 1934

Eynsham Council and Water Schemes

The proposal of the Witney Rural District Council to supply 13 parishes in the area with proper water supplies at a cost of £47,100, to be met by a special rate on the parishes actually receiving a supply amounting to 1s 9d [per household], was the main subject discussed at the monthly meeting of the Parish Council on Tuesday night.

THE EYNESHAM MAP OF 1615

by **Brian Atkins**

In the early 17th century Corpus Christi College, Oxford commissioned a map of its lands around Eynsham. It is on a large scale (1:2500) and in several pieces. Many years ago I made a tracing which I superimposed on a board showing some of the modern roads and features to the same scale. The whole is some 5 feet (east to west) and 4 feet high (south to north) and is impossible to reproduce in any worthwhile way in these A5 pages.

Apart from a single property at the junction of High Street and Queen Street (the site of Lord's Farm and adjacent buildings) which is illustrated with a little sketch, the village itself was not surveyed. This was in the days of strip farming, preserved in some places as 'ridge and furrow', and Corpus owned many such strips widely scattered around the village. These were accurately depicted and labelled CCC (Corpus Christi College), with the two adjacent strips identified by the names of the owners or tenants.

There are some additional notable features on the 1615 map. The road to Cassington after leaving the village is some 190 metres south of, but parallel to, the present road. It crossed a waterway adjacent to Mead Lane ('downgraded' on modern maps to a mere drain) via the Bow Bridge of which there is a little sketch. Further to the east this old road also crossed a north-south stream called the Flam, a tributary of the Wharf Stream, now disappeared.

A Conduit House for delivering water to the village (or in earlier times, the Abbey) is shown at the junction of Clover Place and Back Lane, although many of the houses would have had their own wells. The name survives as Conduit Lane.

A large area known as Conduite Field to the west is the central one of the three principal agricultural areas of the village in pre-enclosure times, South Field and North Field being the other two. Two little drawings represent 'Sitters bushe' and 'Ruffines bushe' respectively by the junction of Witney Road and Old Witney Road and near the site of the layby for the Bartholomew School buses. Clearly these were important features of the landscape and I suspect that despite their names they may in fact have been trees. Another cluster of drawings occur well to the north, and these are labelled 'Lordenes withies' i.e. willows, probably pollarded for basket weaving. The source of the Chilbrook is incorrectly shown as Mrs Hamshire's Well sited approximately in the modern spinney at the end of the Bartholomew School playing field.

To the east, and north of the old Cassington Road were 'Cattes Brayne Farme' on part of which the primary school now stands, and Milne Meadow and Cassington Meadow.

As stated above the map is much too large to reproduce in these pages, and I've attempted what is a very incomplete description in order to give the flavour of a remarkable piece of cartography. If any reader would like to see it, please make an appointment (01865 881677). I am at home most of the time.

THE RECTOR AND THE OLD NATIONAL SCHOOL

by Donald S. Richards

The present private house, known as the Old School House, on the corner of Swan Street and Station Road in Eynsham is where the National School once operated. It dates from 1846, as is recorded in the inscription on the central gable, and happily survives as a memorial to nineteenth-century improvements in education, although in the 1890s the National School was institutionally metamorphosed into a Board Infant School. That the building has survived may in some sense be owing to one of the more notable residents of Eynsham in recent decades.

The resident in mind is Sir Walter Fraser Oakeshott, a man with a distinguished career in pedagogy, scholarship and public service. Born in South Africa in 1903, he returned to England after the death of his doctor father and studied at Tonbridge and Balliol. From 1927 he had a number of teaching posts, culminating in headships at St Paul's School and Winchester. The author of several works on the history of art and on literature, one of his successes was the discovery of a unique manuscript of Malory's *Morte d'Arthur* in Winchester College library. He was appointed Rector of Lincoln College (1953-72) and served as Vice-Chancellor of Oxford University during 1962-4.

A year or so before his retirement Oakeshott's eye had fallen on the old National School as suitable for conversion to residential use. An application (W60/0464) was submitted in August 1969 for the conversion of "the Old Primary School". Since the end of teaching on the site in July 1958, other uses for the building had been proposed.

On 9 August 1960 the Education Committee of the Oxfordshire County Council made an application (W604/60) for change of use of what was called "the Old Infants' School" to a branch library. The owners are recorded as "The Vicar & Churchwardens of Eynsham Parish Church." The vicar at the time was Revd. J.W. Westwood. The map attached to the application shows a single entrance to the site in the wall facing Swan St., where a door still stands, a garden in the south-west corner and, apart from three outhouses along the eastern boundary wall, the main building simply divided into two large schoolrooms. There is no indication that any internal modifications had been carried out. No decision on the application was recorded.

Permission was granted on 1 April 1963 to an application (W162/63) for "change of use from Infants' school to storage and repair of scenery and installation of electricity and raising of doorway." The former use is given as "Infants' School (Disused)." This application was probably made on behalf of the Oxford Playhouse. Subsequently a large shed on the old station site was used for this purpose.

Who knows what other fates might have been in store for the building? Oakeshott's choosing to make it his home for his retirement fixed it as a private residence, which, with some further modifications, it continues to be until now. Oakeshott died at the Old School House on 13 October 1987 and was buried in St Leonard's churchyard (area F, row A, directly east of St Peter's Catholic Church next to the outer wall) alongside his wife who had predeceased him. Their two horizontal slate memorials are side by side. His reads as follows.

In memory of
WALTER FRASER
OAKESHOTT
son of
Walter Field Oakeshott
& Kathleen Oakeshott
and
husband of
Noel Rose
Born in November 1903
Died 13 October 1987

THE HEAVENS DECLARE
THE GLORY OF GOD
THE FIRMAMENT SHEWETH
HIS HANDYWORK

Sources

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, vol. 41 (2004). Pp. 322-3.
Who was who 1981-1990, vol, VIII.
Planning applications, West Oxfordshire District Council

MEMORIES OF CHRISTMAS 80 YEARS AGO

by Daisy Ainsley Grabsky

In Eynsham Christmas for me, my two brothers and three sisters began at the end of October. We would come home from school one day and find our mother preparing to make the Christmas puddings. The big brown earthenware mixing bowl would be on the kitchen table and six white pudding basins nearby. There would be bags of dried fruit all waiting to be washed and dried on trays by the fireplace. My mother would be making and mixing the puddings during the day but she always waited for us all to come home from school so that we could make a wish as we had a go at mixing too. This mixture would be put into the pudding basins and a silver threepenny piece put into each. Then the basin would be covered with a greaseproof-paper and a white cloth and tied around with string. They were then put into a large pan of water and left on the coal stove to cook all night. The next day, when they had cooled down, they would be put on top of my mother's wardrobe and left until Christmas day. Apparently the reason for this was so that they could mature.

On the Saturday before Christmas Eve, we were taken into Oxford to buy our presents for each other. We had each been given a half crown by a great uncle who lived nearby. We would be in Woolworths — each one trying to hide what they were buying from the other.

We always made something by hand for our grandparents and aunts. I remember knitting a white scarf about 50 inches long for my grandma. It had taken me ages to knit. When she died we found it unused still in its Christmas wrapper in a drawer. I thought of all that hard work that had gone into the making of it.

Before Christmas there was always a lot going on at school. We would be learning and singing carols. Each year we would put on a Nativity Play for our parents. In the primary school the teachers used to save all the advertising goods that they received during the school year. On the last day of school before Christmas these things were all shared amongst us. I remember small round tins of Gibbs toothpaste and a toothbrush. There were Magic Papers, where you lit a wick on the side of the paper, the flame would travel all over the paper leaving a picture in the paper. There were also papers that you painted with plain water and a coloured picture would appear. Also games of skill where you had to get small beads into small holes. In addition, we always received colouring books and pencils.

On Christmas Eve we were all busy doing our jobs. There was the cutlery to be

cleaned, the vegetables to be done, the turkey to be stuffed, and minced pies to be made. I always seemed to get the dirty vegetables to clean. We, under the age of 14 years, were not allowed to drink wine. Instead we were given raspberry juice which we would pretend was raspberry wine and stagger around as if we were drunk. Sometimes my maternal grandparents would come with my two maiden aunts from London. Then out would appear my father's home-made wine and all the adults would get very happy!

One thing that was a must on Christmas Eve was the Nine Lessons and Carols from Kings College, Cambridge. We would sing to the carols at the top of our voices while we did our jobs. My father would sit in the front room with the fire blazing as he read the newspapers. The rest of us would all be in the kitchen-cum dining room, -cum everything else room with our mother

One of my aunts always knitted for the girls long woollen stockings. We hated them because they were so itchy but they were very warm in our cold damp winters. These stockings came in very useful at Christmas. Because they were woollen they stretched to take all shapes of presents. We would each hang one at the end of the bed. We were told that Father Christmas would only come if we were fast asleep. We would leave a mince pie & glass of wine in the fireplace for him. In the morning the mince pie and glass of wine would be gone from the fireplace. But Father Christmas had been so quiet that none of us heard him. In the toe of the stocking would be an orange and an apple and a few nuts. In the heel would be a chocolate animal. One of my sisters would make her chocolate last all day but I was greedy and would eat mine up before breakfast.

My eldest sister, May, always hid a candle under her bed and as we woke, we would all creep into her bed.

The candle would be lit and the examination of the contents of our stockings would begin. Our parents must have heard all the giggling and the noise but they never interfered. Our smaller items were in the stockings. The bigger ones we would have after dinner. My grandparents and various aunts and uncles always sent us presents which we knew were not from F.C. as we would be told to send them thank-you letters. At 7 a.m. the church bells would ring out. How I loved them then and still love those sounds today!

After breakfast we all dressed in our Sunday best. My father would have cleaned all our shoes. The turkey would have been put into the oven and the Christmas pudding would have been taken down from the wardrobe top and put on the stove in a pan of hot water to slowly heat up while we were in St Leonard's. We lived next door to the church so at 10 minutes to 11 all eight of us set out for the Service.

remember longing for the Service to end so I could get back home to my presents. But we all knew very well that this was Christ's birthday and that we should honour Him first before we started into Christmas food and presents.

After Church my father usually took us all for a walk so that my mother would have space and quiet to get the dinner ready. Around one o'clock we would all sit down to eat. The crackers would be pulled, we would don our paper hats, and the eating would begin. What a feast it was. The turkey was huge with bacon and sausages all around it. (We only ever tasted turkey at Christmas.) The chestnut stuffing was fantastic, and the dish accompanied by home-grown vegetables, all from my father's allotment, covered with thick brown gravy.

The main course was followed by the Christmas pudding. My mother would carry this in from the scullery. We would all close our eyes and when she told us to open them, there would be the pudding alight with burning brandy. We all searched for the 3d piece. By the time we finished eating it would be time for the King's speech. I remember George V's first talk in 1932. This speech each year was always taken very seriously by my parents and we all had to remain quiet and listen intently. At the end we all stood up and sang the National Anthem. I always had great trouble controlling my desire to laugh.

After dinner we children did the washing up. We always had great fun doing this so it did not seem a hardship. My parents would be sitting in the front room and when we finished we would all go there and be given our other presents. I loved dolls so was very happy to receive another one. I always longed for a doll's pram but I never got one. I always got a book at Christmas and I would start reading that right away. Then I would also get an item of clothing. At six p.m. we would sit down to a tea. How ever did we eat it all? My mother would have made a Christmas cake and a Dundee cake and other small cakes. After tea we would play games for the rest of the evening.

In 1933, my brother Bertie bought a gramophone and we would push the table in the dining area to one side and put on the records and dance. I loved it when my grandparents were there because my grandfather would play wild games with us. He would be on his hands and knees giving us rides and playing murder and hide-and-seek all over the house. Sadly he died when I was nine so in effect I saw very little of him but I still remember him at Christmas. My father never did this so we all thought my grandad was marvellous.

At Christmas we were all allowed to stay up late. We only got to bed when we could stand up no longer, but not before we had something called supper, which consisted of a drink and something more to eat!

Boxing Day was originally the day when one opened one's presents. In Eynsham it was the day when the choir went round the village collecting money for the church. For our family it was a continuation of Christmas Day except that we didn't go to church on this day. There were still lots of Christmas goodies to be eaten up. We would usually take a long walk before lunch then after lunch play with our new toys and games.

Sometimes we would be invited to have tea with my father's uncle Walter and aunt Agnes. They lived in Eynsham quite close to us. He was the brother of my father's mother. It was in their house that I first saw a decorated and lit-up Christmas tree. Uncle Walter would always slip some money into our hands as we were leaving, whispering to us not to tell our aunt. She was a dour Scots lady and we presumed she would not approve of him giving his money away. In the evening we would play games which my uncle would have taught us. We would sit in a circle passing a penny in our hands held behind our backs. Then we would stop passing and put our clenched hands on our laps and the person who was 'it' had to guess who was holding the penny. Another game was 'My Grandmother's Cat'. You each had to describe the cat starting with A and going through the alphabet. It was easy for those sitting at the beginning of the circle but it got very hard for those at the end. Our games were always sitting down ones — I expect they didn't relish six children rushing around their house. Anyway they always gave us a good tea!

On the first Sunday after Christmas we would have a children's service in church at 3 pm. To the service we had to take one of our Christmas presents that would be sent to the Radcliffe Infirmary's children's ward. I found this very hard to do. We had so few presents that I thought they should be collecting for us. I must admit that I always gave the one I liked the least and I just hoped that God would understand!

A NEW OXFORDSHIRE HISTORY WEBSITE

I've recently received an e-mail from a respectable source which will be of interest to all local historians. Ed.

"Dr Kate Tiller has been commissioned by the Oxfordshire Architectural and Historical Society to develop this website, funded by OAHS, the Helen Roll Charitable Trust and the Greening Lamborn Trust. It is hosted by the Faculty of History, University of Oxford. The website is intended to be a single point of reference for those interested in Oxfordshire history. It will bring together guidance, context and information on the sources available and seeks to signpost users to other relevant online resources, repositories and activities. We understand how important the network of local history societies is in promoting history, archaeology and architectural studies in the county and the site includes a web board which will aim to spread information about organisations and activities relating to all areas of Oxfordshire's past. We hope the website will aid recruitment of new members and promote events. Our aim is to launch the website by April 2010 and achieve widespread publicity throughout the county including media coverage.

We would like to publish contact details for all Local History and Archaeological Societies in the county. We also intend to include a county calendar to include a variety of events and see this as an opportunity to showcase the wealth of available talks and other events promoted by local societies. I would stress there will be no charge for this and the site is fully funded. If you would like the details of your society included on the website please complete the attached form and send to oxfordshirehistoryresearch@history.ox.ac.uk or post to me at the below address. If you wish your events schedule to appear in the Oxfordshire local history calendar please send a copy with your completed form.

Electronic communication by e-mail is preferred but it is understood that not all have access to this medium. Once the website has been launched, communication can be made through the 'contact us' section of the site. I will inform you of the launch date and web address of the site in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Shaun Morley

Oxfordshire History website

oxfordshirehistoryresearch@history.ox.ac.uk

Tithe Corner, 67 Hill Crescent, Finstock

Chipping Norton OX7 3BT

-this is the form to be returned if we want to be featured on the new website. Unless there are objections by members soon after publication of this journal (Tel: 881677) I will register the EHG accordingly. Ed.

**Request for information to be included on the
Oxfordshire History Website, sponsored by the
Oxfordshire Architectural and History Society (OAHS)**

(complete the details you wish to appear on the public website)

Name of Society or Organisation:

Name of contact:

Contact details

Full postal address:

Telephone no:

e-mail address:

web site address:

**Additional details of Society or Organisation (e.g.
meeting place, frequency, objectives):**

I acknowledge that the details provided above will be held on the Oxfordshire History Website and available to public view.

Signed:

(if replying by e-mail, that will be evidence of acceptance of the above acknowledgement)

Dated:

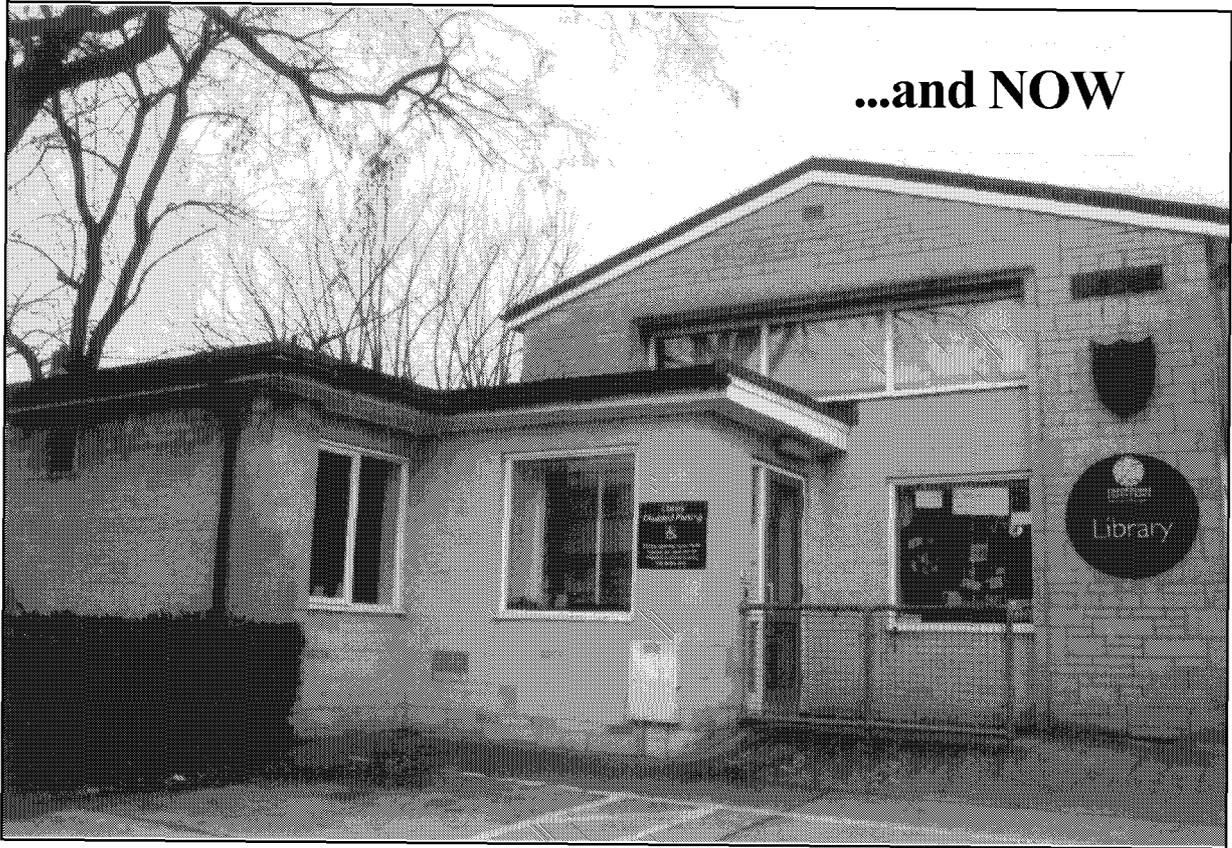
Further information (not for publication on website):

THEN...



**The former Fire Station in Mill Street in 1958
(photo courtesy of Ron Belcher)**

...and NOW



Now the Eynsham Branch Library

EYNESHAM WAR MEMORIALS

by John L. Blakeman

In last years issue (Number 26) of *The Eynsham Record* details of Eynsham War Memorials and of the men from the village who died in the First World War and listed on the Memorials were published. No further information has been received about the men except for Henry Augustus BIGGERS (Harry Biggers) and Frederick John GIBBONS where Susan Ganter has provided additional family details.

A search of the '*Soldiers Died in the Great War*' database resulted in the names of twenty other men with Eynsham connections who died in the War. They had either been born in Eynsham or were resident at the time of enlistment. Nine of these men are known to be listed on War Memorials in other Oxfordshire villages, six others may be listed on one of the Memorials in Oxford and the remaining five, born in Eynsham, were no longer resident in Oxfordshire.

Eynsham men who died in World War 2 are only listed on the War Memorial Cross in the Square and the '*Roll of Honour*' in St. Leonard's Church. The '*Roll of Honour*' was compiled in 1987 and wrongly lists two men (Walter J. WALKER and Graham F. WHELAN) as having died in WW1 when in fact they died in WW2; see below for their details.

NOTE:- The inscription and all names on the War Memorial Cross can be read from the highway outside the railings. The rear elevation of the Memorial is blank. War Memorial details are also on the website - Eynsham Online.

DETAILS OF MEN LISTED

WORLD WAR 2.

Sources of information

OBLI RoH means the book 'Roll of Honour, The Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry 1939-1945' June 2004 Impression. The Oxfordshire Family History Society and J.L. Blakeman have a copy of this book, which also includes list of Prisoners of War, the men wounded etc.

CWGC means Commonwealth War Graves Commission, details obtained via the Internet and do not include any additional 'Certificate' details.

OFHS Monumental Inscription refers to a grave in St Leonard's, and in one case, South Leigh's, churchyard recorded by the Oxfordshire Family History Society. The appropriate record details the grave, its inscription and its exact location in the churchyard.

The Parish Registers of St. Leonard's Church, Eynsham have only been transcribed up to 1900 and therefore family details of men cannot be checked. Also no Census details available.

Lieutenant Henry Cyril GREEN

OBLI RoH, page 35

9th July 1944. North-West Europe 1944/45. Defence of the Odon Bridgehead Le Haut du Bosq

GREEN. Henry Cyril, Lieutenant. 299380. Eynsham, Oxfordshire

"A" Company Platoon Commander. The 43rd Light Infantry.

BROUAY WAR CEMETERY, FRANCE. Plot 111. Row G. Grave 11 *Died of Wounds.*

Roll of Honour. The War Memorial, Eynsham, Oxfordshire.

CWGC:-Agree with above but refers to 1st Batt. OBLI as against its old name *43rd Light Infantry.*

James Charles BAYLISS

CWGC:-BAYLISS, James Charles. Private Hampshire Regiment. 2nd Batt.

Age 30. 3/12/1943. 5511254 Face 32 Medjez-el-Bab Memorial (Tunisia)

Eynsham connection not known at this time.

James BOOKER

OBLI RoH, page 130

5383566Pte. Booker J. PoW Number 19997 PoW Camp Thorn Podgorz

(No details given of where men captured but most OBLI were captured on the retreat to Dunkirk in 1940. Assume James Booker was captured at this time.)

OBLI RoH, page 79 4th Battalion OBLI (Territorial Army)
10th April 1945 **BOOKER**, James, Private. 5383566. Age 27.
BERLIN WAR CEMETERY (1939/1945), GERMANY. Plot 10. Row H. Grave 8.

CWGC:- Agree with these last details.
Eynsham connection to tie in.

Harry Thomas BURDEN

CWGC:-
BURDEN, Harry Thomas. Aircraftman 2nd Class. R A F Volunteer Reserve
Age 19. 25/10/1941 1232978 Son of John & Mary Burden of Eynsham.
Plot 1/1. Grave 133 Oxford (Botley) Cemetery.

Cecil Albert CATTELL

CWGC:-CATTELL, Driver, Cecil Albert. T/220502. Royal Army Service Corps.
8/ 6/1944. Age 36. Son of Clara Cattell.
New Portion, Eynsham (St. Leonard's) Churchyard.
(OFHS Monumental Inscription FG014).

Malcolm Keith CHRISTIE

CWGC:- CHRISTIE, Malcolm Keith. Canadian.
Pilot Officer (Nav). RCAF. 640 (RAF Sqdn).
Age 20. 13/5/1944 J/86094
Son of Joseph Smith Christie and Elsie Lilian Christie of Vancouver, British
Columbia, Canada.
5.D.12 Heverlee War Cemetery (Belgium)

This is the only name on CWGC List that fits. The suggestion is that parent(s) had emigrated to Canada from Eynsham. He may even have been born here.

Herbert James CLARIDGE

CWGC:- CLARIDGE, James Herbert. Fusilier. 14208632
6th Batt. Royal Scots Fusiliers. 13th April 1944 Age 22

Son of Herbert Ernest & Annie Claridge of Witney.
CWGC grave at South Leigh (St. James) Churchyard.
(South Leigh **OFHS Monumental Inscription** B029).
He is listed on South Leigh WW2 Memorial Plaque.

Eynsham connection to resolve. Suggest he was born in Eynsham ?
Noted that his Christian names have been changed round.

Robert DREW

CWGC:- DREW, Robert. Wiltshire Regiment. 4th Batt.
Age 21. 3/ 7/1944 5577207
Son of Mr. & Mrs. W. Drew, Eynsham
X.A.10 St. Manvieu War Cemetery, Cheux (France).

Alfred William John EVANS

CWGC:- EVANS, Alfred William John. Royal Scots. 1st Batt. Private.
Age 32. 3/ 4/1943 5390859
Son of William D. & Elizabeth Evans, Eynsham
Face 4, Rangoon Memorial.

William John HARDWICK

CWGC:- HARDWICK, William John.
Pilot Officer (Flt. Eng). **RAFVR** 428 (RCAF) Sqdn.
Age 20 13/ 8/1944 183072
Son of Harold & Daisy Florence Hardwick of Eynsham.
5.B.14 Hanover War Cemetery.

Thomas Henry HOPKINS

CWGC:- HOPKINS, Thomas Henry.
Sapper. Royal Engineers 593 Army Troops Coy.
16/ 6/1944 1889856
Son of Walter James Hopkins & Mary Hopkins;

husband of Dorothy Helen Esme Hopkins of Eynsham.
Eynsham (St. Leonard's) Churchyard.
(OFHS Monumental Inscription FE015)

NOTE:- This CWGC Grave also includes a Foot Tablet to Signalman Walter J. HOPKINS, brother of the above. HE IS NOT LISTED on Eynsham War Memorial.

CWGC:- HOPKINS, Walter James. Signalman. Royal Corps of Signals.
Malaya Command Sigs. 2346114 Age 27 15 July 1943
Sai Wan War Cemetery, China (including Hong Kong) V.I.E.11
Son of Walter James Hopkins & Mary Ann Hopkins;
husband of Alice Hopkins, of Battersea, London.

Lawrence LAY

CWGC:- LAY, Lawrence Walter. Ordinary Seaman. Royal Navy
H.M.S. Fleur de Lys. Age 24 14/10/1941 P/JX 195566
Son of Walter James Lay and Agnes Lay;
husband of Gwendoline Alice Lay of Woodstock, Oxfordshire.
Panel 50, Column 3 Portsmouth Naval Memorial.

Eynsham connection to be resolved but assume he was born here.

Hubert Francis MAY

OBLI RoH, page 32 1st Battalion (43rd) OBLI.

28th May 1940. British Expeditionary Force, Belgium & France 1939/40. Withdrawal to Dunkirk

MAY, Hubert Francis, Private. 5387558. Age 21. Eynsham, Oxfordshire.
WARNETON COMMUNAL CEMETERY, BELGIUM. Row B. Grave 4.

Killed in Action

CWGC:-

As above but cemetery as WARNETON (WAASTEN) Communal Cemetery.
Son of Ernest William and Margaret Mary May, of Eynsham.

Reginald Frederick QUANTON

CWGC:- QUANTON, Reginald Frederick. Lance Bombardier. Royal Artillery 63 (The Queen's Own Oxfordshire Hussars) Anti-tank Regt.

Age 27 17/11/1944 1462989

Son of Cyril & Ellen Quanton, husband of Barbara Quanton

11.D.9 Overloon War Cemetery

(His father Cyril was one of Eynsham's ropemakers; see *Eynsham Record* no.22, 2005, p.24 *et seq.* and especially p. 29 which carries a photograph of his parents, Cyril and Helen (Ellen) Quanton. ed.)

Arthur Alfred SNOOK

CWGC:- SNOOK, Arthur Alfred. Sergeant (W.Op(Air) RAFVR 218 Sqdn.

Age 22 2/ 5/1944 1380349

Son of Alfred Edward & Elizabeth Matilda Snook of Redfield, Bristol

Row A Coll grave 12-14 Poix-de-Picardie Churchyard

This is the only name on CWGC List that fits. Would suggest parent(s) had moved to Bristol from Eynsham. He may even have been born here.

Ivor William STATE

CWGC:- STATE, Ivor William Gunner. Royal Artillery. 9 Coast Regt.

Age 24 14/12/1943 1427191

Son of Joseph & Annie Elizabeth State of Eynsham

3.M.6 Chungkai War Cemetery.

Walter James WALKER

OBLI RoH, page 71 4th Battalion OBLI (Territorial Army)

10th May/4th June 1940. British Expeditionary Force, Belgium & France 1939/40.

WALKER. Walter James, Private. 5387557. Age 21. Oxfordshire.

THE DUNKIRK MEMORIAL, FRANCE. Column 93. No known grave.

Commemorated by name only.

Killed in Action.

Roll of Honour. The War Memorial, Eynsham, Oxfordshire.

CWGC:- As above but with less detail.

Graham Franklin WHELAN

CWGC:- WHELAN, Graham Franklin. Private. Essex Regiment. 5th Batt.
Age 20 23/11/1943 14558800
Son of Benjamin & Elizabeth Whelan of Eynsham
XV11.D.6 Sangro River War Cemetery (Italy)

(End of Men Listed on War Memorial - World War 2).

There is a Family Grave in St. Leonard's Churchyard which is of interest. Not listed by CWGC as after their records closed and not listed on Eynsham War Memorial.

OFHS Monumental Inscription FG025

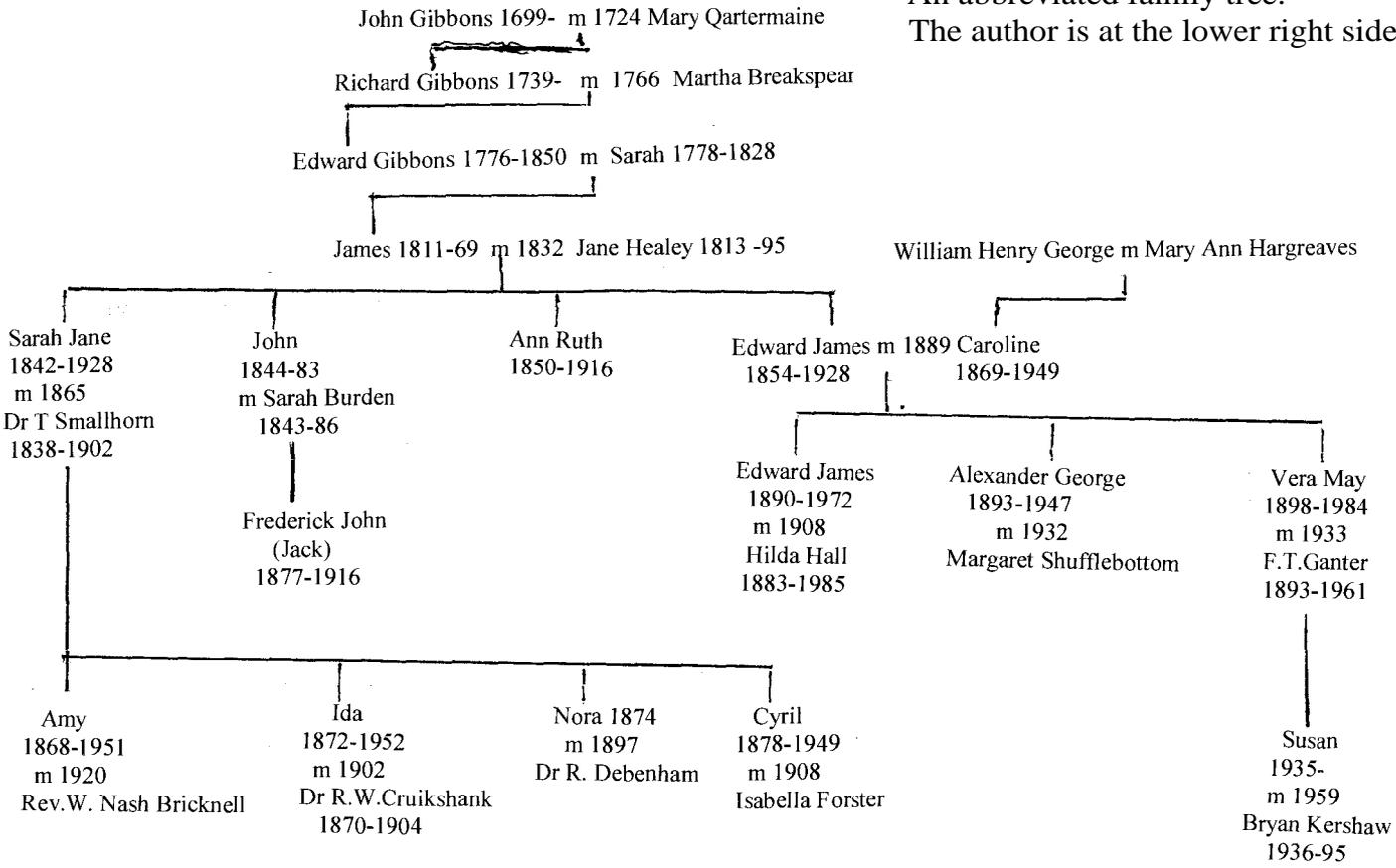
'Beautiful Memories of A darling son Douglas Thomas HALL, Killed whilst serving in H.M. Forces, April 11th 1948, Aged 22 years'

(Son of Peggy HARRIS (formerly HALL) who died May 2nd 1995).



This picture links the preceding and following articles. His name is on the War Memorial for WWI (see E.R. no.26 p32). He is Frederick John Gibbons (Jack) who took over the family business in Eynsham when his uncle became incapacitated, and later emigrated to Australia, enlisted in the Australian Imperial Forces, and was killed in action on the Somme in 1916.

An abbreviated family tree.
 The author is at the lower right side



THE GIBBONS OF EYNSHAM

by Susan Ganter

From the examination of the early records for baptism and burials now available on microfiche the Gibbons family from the early 18th century, if not before, must have lived in Eynsham. They married young and produced large families many of whom died at birth or in childhood. The registers detail at least 46 Gibbons burials in the churchyard up to 1900, but the Oxfordshire Family History Society who recently recorded the monumental inscriptions in meticulous detail found only 12 burials before 1900. This is a problem that many family historians encounter; it can only mean that many burials were in unmarked graves, or that inscriptions have become illegible with age.

We know from the church records that John Gibbons was born in Eynsham in 1699 and he married Mary Quartermaine in 1724. They had nine children whose christenings in St Leonard's were recorded but this was long before the first census, and so we have no knowledge of John's occupation nor that of his immediate family. One of their sons, Richard, married Martha Breakspear in 1766 and they in turn had 8 children. One of them was Edward Gibbons, baptised on 11 December 1776. It seems likely that this was my great-great grandfather Edward Gibbons (despite his age at his death in 1850 being stated as 71, suggesting a birth year of 1779). The upper part of the family tree on these pages assumes the family links between the earliest Gibbons that we know about and my great-great grandfather.

Edward married Sarah (1788-1828), presumably in her parish. They had nine children between 1806 and 1825, one of whom, James Gibbons, was my great grandfather, born in 1811. He lived at 140 High Street, was a church warden and a farmer of 110 acres. He had 16 labourers. He was married in Eynsham in 1832 to Jane Healey and they produced 17 children many of whom did not reach adulthood. The same Christian names keep recurring; in this family for example there were three Roberts. When the first Robert baby died the next boy was given the same name, and so on.

His son, my grandfather Edward James Gibbons, was born on 5th October 1854 *'the day that the Druces set nearly the whole village on fire'*. So it is recorded in Jane Gibbons' hand in the Prayer Book. According to the Victoria County History this fire damaged 'Abbey Farm and houses in Swan Lane, and reach[ed] as far as Queen Street'. He was sent to school at the Military Academy in Cowley, now pulled down, the same school that William Morris attended later on. When his father

died in 1869 aged 58 Edward was called back from school aged 14 to run the family business, which then consisted of a brewery, wine and spirits merchants and some farming. The brewery was in the High Street nearly opposite the Shrubbery. It was sold to Hall's Brewery in 1911 by Ann Ruth Gibbons and Frederick John Gibbons her nephew and was never used as a brewery again. This sale may have included some of the tied houses such as the Britannia later called the Railway Inn, on the corner of Acre End Street and Station Road which James Gibbons built, it is said, in 1850.

Not many of the 17 children of James and Jane Gibbons were allowed to marry. Jane obviously had control over them, possibly because she held the purse strings. In 1887 her son Edward James Gibbons had his jaw broken by a cricket ball. No doubt Dr. Smallhorn, her son-in-law, was in attendance and presumably he was treated in an Oxford hospital or maybe in London. He convalesced in Brighton at the Hotel Metropole and was cared for there by my grandmother Caroline George who had trained as a nurse at the London Hospital. He was married at All Souls Church, Langham Place in London on 9th October 1889. He was 35 and his bride, Caroline George, daughter of William Henry George and Mary Ann (nee Hargreaves) was 20. Caroline had trained as a nurse and worked at the London Hospital for Sir Fredrick Treeves nursing the Elephant Man because he did not frighten her.

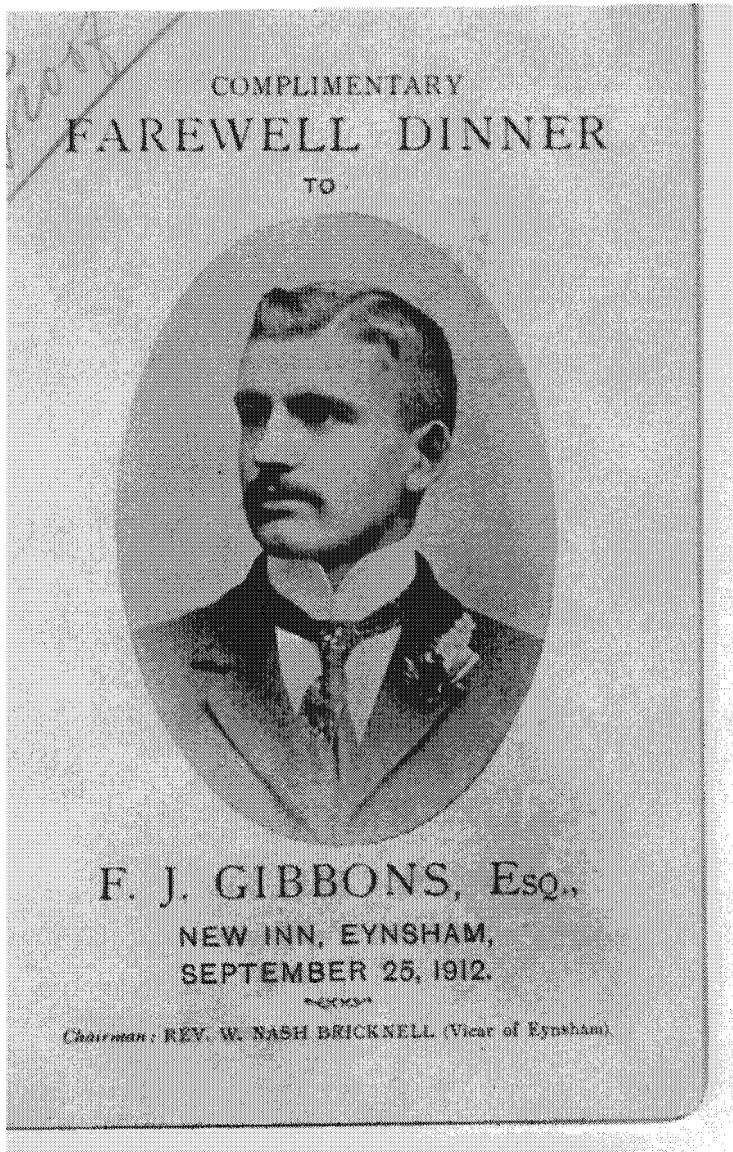
After the honeymoon in the New Forest, they returned to Eynsham and lived at Lynwood, next to the Shrubbery. However, there the only 'convenience' was an ivy covered earth closet at the bottom of the garden. On visiting this she saw a spider and as a result the first Eynsham water closet was installed.

A year after the marriage on September 8th 1890 a son was born to Edward and Caroline. He was called Edward James, after his father. He attended the Grammar School in Woodstock and when he was fifteen in 1905 he began a three-year apprenticeship to the Oxford grocers, Grimby Hughes in the Cornmarket. In 1908 at the end of the apprenticeship the document has appended in handwriting *We the undersigned have much pleasure in stating that the within named Edward James Gibbons junior had during the term of his apprentice given us every satisfaction both in his work and conduct.* In the same year he married Hilda Annie Hall in St. Leonard's church.

Another son, Alexander George Gibbons, was born in 1893. I was told that Edward James was none too pleased to see the new arrival and told the monthly nurse 'you bring him, you take him away'. He also threatened to 'get a gun and shoot him'.



**Jane Gibbons (nee Healey) on her 80th birthday in 1893,
with Edward (Ted) aged 2½**



Jack's farewell dinner before he left for Australia

In 1895 Grandma Jane Gibbons died aged 82 and the family moved to Abbey Street, later renamed Lombard Street, and to the building which I knew as the Board Hotel. In 1899 Edward James senior suffered a further accident. He was returning from hunting and his horse threw him at Bell Bridge on the Stanton Harcourt road. The riderless horse returned trotting into the yard at dusk. There is a tale that a ghost haunts Bell Bridge. Could this ghost have scared the horse? Eventually E.J.G. was found and brought home. He had sustained a fractured skull. This resulted in him being an invalid for the rest of his life, and I assume that he could no longer cope with running the brewery etc. (He died in 1928, aged 74).

His nephew Frederick John Gibbons (1877-1916), was the only son of his elder brother John (1844-1883), a farmer and who had married Sarah Burden (1843--1886) in 1874. Frederick's father died when he was only six and his mother when he was nine. His family knew him as Jack Gibbons. His spinster aunt, Edward's sister, Ann Ruth Gibbons (1852-1916), an invalid, brought him up, and he took on the family business. In 1912 when he was 35 he emigrated to Australia. I have a copy of the menu for a 'Complimentary Farewell Dinner to F.J. Gibbons Esq.', held at the New Inn Eynsham on September 25 1912. He became a store manager in Launceston Tasmania, and in 1915 he enlisted in the 26th. Battalion of the Australian Imperial Forces as a Private and became a Lance Corporal (see p.29) He came back to fight in France with his regiment and was killed in action at Delville, Somme, France on 29th July 1916. I have a copy of a typewritten record of the battle, which is very moving. It sounds as if it was disorganised carnage.

I have obtained copies of letters that he wrote to Auntie Annie (Anne Ruth) who is given as his next of kin, in the last year of his life. These letters are in the possession of the National Archives of Australia. There is no known grave but he is commemorated on the Australian National Memorial at Villers-Bretonneaux France. His name is on the War Memorial by St. Leonard's church and the carved wooden font cover is a memorial to him. (see also details recorded by John Blakeman in E.R. no.26 p.32)

My mother, Vera May, was born in Eynsham on 31st May 1898. Her father was delighted to have a daughter after two sons, and Auntie Ginny, his niece then seventeen and my second cousin, used to tell me that he rushed up to her on the platform at Eynsham station saying, "Jinny, Jinny I have a daughter at last!" The Gibbons children went to school at Miss Swann's in Redthorn House on the corner of Newland Street. My mother enjoyed her time there and often used to tell me of the things that they did like gathering snow to make cakes and nature walks in the

fields. It was obvious that these were very happy days. It was a small school and the Blakes, the Gibbards, and other local people sent their children there. There were picnics at Pinkhill, haymaking, snow cakes, bonfire night and oak-apple day. Later on my mother took the train into Oxford and attended Milham Ford School in Cowley Place, while Alec her brother attended the City of Oxford School.

Some daughters escaped from grandma Gibbons eye and married. Sarah Jane (1842-1928) married a surgeon from Ireland, Thomas Smallhorn, in 1865. The east window in St. Leonard's church is a memorial dedicated to this kind and well loved physician. (See E.R. No 14). They had three daughters - Amy (1868-1951) who became the wife of the vicar, W.Nash Bricknell, Ida Beatrice (1872-1953), who married her father's successor Dr. Robert.Watson Cruickshank in 1902, and Nora (1874-) who married Dr. Robert Debenham; and a son Cyril 1878-1949 who later trained as a doctor. They lived at the Shrubbery in High Street.

Ida Smallhorn studied history at Cambridge and became a school teacher. She was a school manager of the Bartholomew School and Superintendent of the Eynsham Welfare Centre. She was Treasurer and later President of the Eynsham W.I. (See E.R. no 15 p.17) I knew her quite well. She was a kind and considerate doctor's wife as well as a doctor's daughter. She said that very often bills were not sent for medical treatment if it was known that the family was unable to pay. There was no N.H.S. in those days. She gave me all the notes from her record of the History of Eynsham which she wrote for a county-wide W.I. competition in the 1930's. She was interested in the history of the Gibbons family. I feel that I can do no better than quote a letter from Ida Cruickshank to my mother dated 27th November 1951. She would have been 79 years old.

Her address was 21, Apsley Road, Summertown, Oxford.

My Dear Vera,

The family Tree gave me great pleasure. My Mother "Sarah Jane G" [ibbons] died in June 1928 aged 86. So that would mean that she was born in 1842 not 43. I can't remember the date of Aunt Jane's death (Miss Jane as she insisted we children should call her) but it must have been 1904? Or 5?

Auntie Annie was born April 5th. And died I think in 1915.- aged 65. I remember we were all glad she had not lived to hear of Jack's death at Deauville Wood in, (again I think) 1916. These dates we can find on the vault in the churchyard if they are not too moss covered. It is a bother to get the Registers nowadays.

I believe they are kept in the safe in the Church – which means getting the key and permission from the Vicar – and some one to unlock the safe as the Communion Plate is kept there too.

In the old days I used to go to the Vicarage and read them in Mr Bricknell's Study.

I made some copies of entries about the G. family for my 'Annals of Eynsham' and send them for Susan to read. I expect there are a lot more entries of births and deaths in the Registers, which I did not think of sufficient interest to keep.

It is amusing to know the ages of Grandfather and Grandmother G at the time of their becoming parents.

They were fond of the name Robert but what became of No.10 Robert Nov. 30. 1952? I remember Mother telling me about the great fire – she ran to save her doll – while other people saved Grandmamma and the newly born baby Edward James. The doll came before the baby – but one more or less out of 17 wouldn't count – and I am sure she did not have 17 dolls!

I think the Sale [of the contents of Willow Bank] was good considering what a lot of rubbish there was. I got £16 for dessert service - £10 for carpet and Nora got £48 for Tallboy.

I am now getting new bedroom curtains and a chair re-covered on the strength of my wealth. I am more interested in who will buy Willow Bank than how much it will fetch.

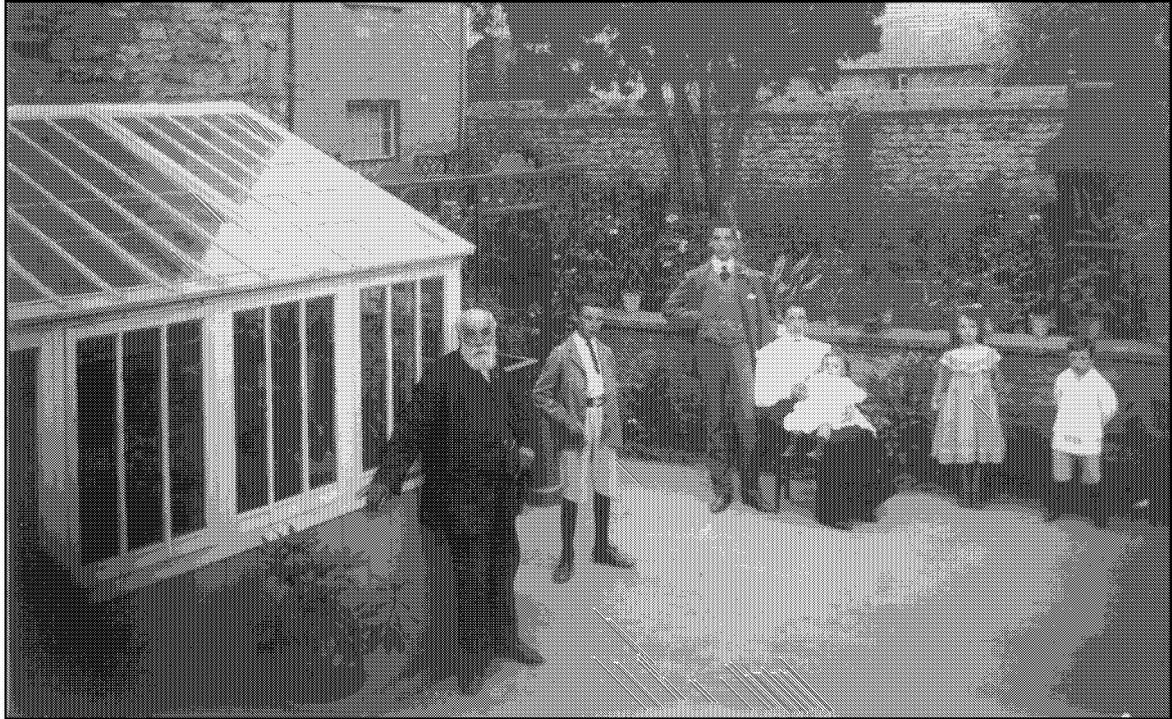
Hope you can wade through all this – Yours with love,

Ida Cruickshank.

When her husband died in 1928 Amy left the vicarage and went to live at Willow Bank, which had been her mother's home. As a child I visited Willow Bank. Aunt Amy said that the willows were brought back from a sprig picked from Napoleon's tomb. She had the family bibles no doubt inherited from her mother and various other family items and it was only after her death in 1951 that they were given to me by Ida. There is a memorial to her in the church. I was then able to begin a family tree and must have sent Ida a copy, which pleased her. Although Ida was interested in history neither she nor Amy looked at the family details written in these bibles which were kept in the dairy, accounting for their poor condition.

My uncle Alexander George went to the Oxford High School and was destined for a university education. He was a Lieutenant in the 2nd Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry now attached to the 170th Company of the Royal Engineers. When the war was over he went to Keble College and then on to study at the London School of Economics. In the 20's like so many others he could not find work. Later he became a schoolmaster.

My mother Vera May Gibbons left Milham Ford School at 13 in 1911. During the war she became a 'Lady Inspector of Munitions'. After the Great War ended in 1918 she helped at home and tried various occupations none of which seemed to suit. She did not like nursing because of 'the smell of blood', nor secretarial because of 'the noise of typewriters' and so on.



**Behind the Board Hotel, Lombard St in 1910.
L. to R. Henry George, Alexander (Alex), Edward (Ted) and Hilda with their daughter
Irene, Vera and Cyril (Vera's younger brother)**

She married my father in 1933 and I was born in 1935, the last grandchild of eight of Edward James and Caroline Gibbons.

Cyril Frances Gibbons my youngest uncle worked in India for Dunlop's for many years and when he returned to England by 'plane in 1939 all his possessions were lost on the H.M.S. Yorkshire which was torpedoed and sunk. He died very suddenly aged 64 in 1967 just a week after my family, all five of us, visited Sussex to see him.

When I knew the Board Hotel it consisted of a small bar with a separate entrance at the left hand side and a shop with a door and jangling bell. Two shop windows were on either side. The shop had a mahogany panelled counter, a brass scale with porcelain plate and brass weights. It sold everything, cartridges, sugar tea, biscuits in glass topped boxes, lard, wines and spirits. Of course sugar, biscuits, butter, etc. had to be weighed out. Groceries did not come ready packed as today. Sometimes I was allowed to go into the kitchen and see Polly Treadwell. She had the most beautiful auburn hair right down her back. When I said this in a talk to the History Group in 1988 she popped up and said she remembered me. She had the most beautiful white hair then and was of course Mrs. Polly Clifton.

What have we inherited from these ancestors? Healthy bodies and long lives. Twins are often mentioned and my girl cousins each produced twins. An interest in gardening possibly. William Henry George my great grandfather had a beautiful garden at the back of the Board Hotel complete with a green house. He let my mother help him when she was a child and she was always keen on gardening as was my grandmother. I still use some of his gardening tools. My cousin Joan trained at Waterperry in the days of Miss Havergal. She interested me in wild flowers and in gardening. She used to run the Brownies in Eynsham I suppose in the 30's. I know this because on a recent visit when I was able to get into St. Leonard's church, the lady with the key asked after her because she had been a member of her Brownie pack. After the war Joan worked in the Botanic Gardens in Oxford. I used to go to help her when I was about eleven or twelve. I hosed down the green houses, cleaned and stacked the flowerpots, and collected and labelled seeds. Sadly Joan died in 2007 just short of 90 years old.

Family history is far more important today than it was when I was young. We were not encouraged to ask questions. It was considered impertinent. And as to how old any one was! I wish now that I had asked more questions and fortunately, although I cannot always remember where I put the car keys, memories of my childhood are still vivid. The world has changed so much in the last 74 years that tales of unheated houses, a bath once a week etc. tend to make people laugh. But it was all true!



The fishponds site showing the metal detectorists's finds
 The cap badge (opposite page) was find no.10. The grid squares are 100m.x100m.
 (mapping by Paul & Verity Hughes)



This Green Jackets cap badge was found by metal detectorist Kevin Gilbey of the Oxford Blues Metal Detecting Club in 2009 at a depth of 7.5 cm. in the fishponds area to the east of the moated site where most of the finds were made. How did it come to be lost in such an unlikely place, and by whom?

EYNHAM HISTORY GROUP

Founded 1959

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

New members are welcome.

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

Officers and Committee members subject to confirmation at the AGM in March
Unless otherwise stated, all addresses are in Eynsham

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Committee members:	Ms S. Eysacker, 12, Orchard Close
	Dr T.C. Jordan, The Barn, Newland Close

