

# THE EYNESHAM RECORD

Number 8 – 1991

## NOTES

1. Images have been optimised throughout for online viewing.
2. Typographic errors in the printed edition, where identified, have been corrected in this digitised version.
3. Errors of fact or interpretation in the original which have since come to light are repeated but followed by an amendment in curly brackets { thus }
4. The pages are not available for printing “as is”, though you may copy/paste sections into another document.
5. Back numbers of the Eynsham Record are available in **print** for £1 plus p&p.
6. Contacts:
  - (a) the Editor Brian Atkins, 8 Thornbury Road tel 01865 881677 email [brian@fbatkins.free-online.co.uk](mailto:brian@fbatkins.free-online.co.uk)
  - (b) Fred Bennett, 68 Witney Road tel 01865 880659

### Note on abbreviations

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

FRONT COVER: Medieval horseman with bow.  
Lead ornamental plaque found during the Eynsham abbey site excavations.  
True size 3.5 x 3.5 inches.



The  
Eynsham  
Record

Number 8: 1991

Journal of the Eynsham History Group

I S S N 0 2 6 5 - 6 7 7 9

Published by the Eynsham History Group

©All material in this publication is copyright

## CONTENTS

Editorial, acknowledgements and obituaries.....	1
Richard II's cloak.....	3
Eynsham Abbey Excavations: Further Progress by R.A. Chambers.....	4
Eynsham's Postal History. by Edward Hibbert .....	10
Eynsham ca. 1863: For whom the Bells didn't Toll by Brian Atkins .....	18
THEN and NOW	22/23
Thomas Symonds and the Charity School by Donald S. Richards .....	24
Melodrama (1927) and Drama (1960s) at Eynsham Station by Don Chapman .....	30
The Martin Memorial in St Leonard's Eynsham; a link with Jane Austen. by Lilian Wright.....	37
R.A.F. Eynsham. by Peter Davis.....	42
The new Victoria County History of Oxford (Vol. 12).....	44

## EDITORIAL

1990 saw the fulfilment of all the hopes expressed in last year's editorial.

1. Bishop Eric Gordon's book, *Eynsham Abbey, 1005-1228*, was published by Phillimore, just in time to appear on the retail market, and for subscribers to receive their copies, before Christmas. It would be presumptuous for an amateur local historian to attempt a review of such an important work, so I intend to compile, for the next *Record*, a selection of excerpts from reviews in the professional journals when these become available. In the meantime, keep an eye on the *Oxford Times* and the OLHA journal for forthcoming and more readily accessible reviews.

Our President apologizes that the publication and distribution of his book, and family health problems during the winter, have interrupted his flow of articles dealing with the Abbey's Charters. His readers look forward to a continuation of the series next year.

2. Volume 12 of the Victoria County History, Oxfordshire, also duly appeared in print (in October). Like Bishop Gordon's book, this will be an essential source. It is referenced several times already in these pages, and some facts and figures and a first impression of the volume are provided on pp. 44-46.

3. Excavations by the Oxford Archaeological Unit of part of the Abbey site have proceeded well, and will continue for the foreseeable future. Mr R.A.Chambers reports the latest progress on pp. 4-9.

The replacement market cross, commissioned by Eynsham parish council and carved by Kidlington stonemason, Bill Brown, was erected in the Square in February. It features, with its predecessor, as 'THEN & NOW' on pp.22-23.

The Eynsham History Group, which has had another successful and eventful season, will host the autumn meeting of the Oxfordshire Local History Association on Saturday, 19th October, when the theme will be 'Eynsham Abbey'.

Some organizations and publications are cited so frequently in this journal that, in order to save space, I propose to use some more or less standard abbreviations as set out on the inside of the front cover. My apologies if this number is not always consistent in this regard. A house style is gradually evolving, and I should be grateful for any comments or suggestions for improvement.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All contributors are thanked for the continuing supply of interesting and well-researched articles. I single out for special mention non-local authors, R.A. Chambers for his latest report on the Abbey site excavations, and Peter Davis of Witney (see "RAF, Eynsham", pp. 42-3). We are indebted to Sue Chapman for her 'Then & Now' photographs of the market cross(es).

Assistance from other individuals and institutions is acknowledged on the appropriate pages.

Sadly we record the deaths of two of our members.

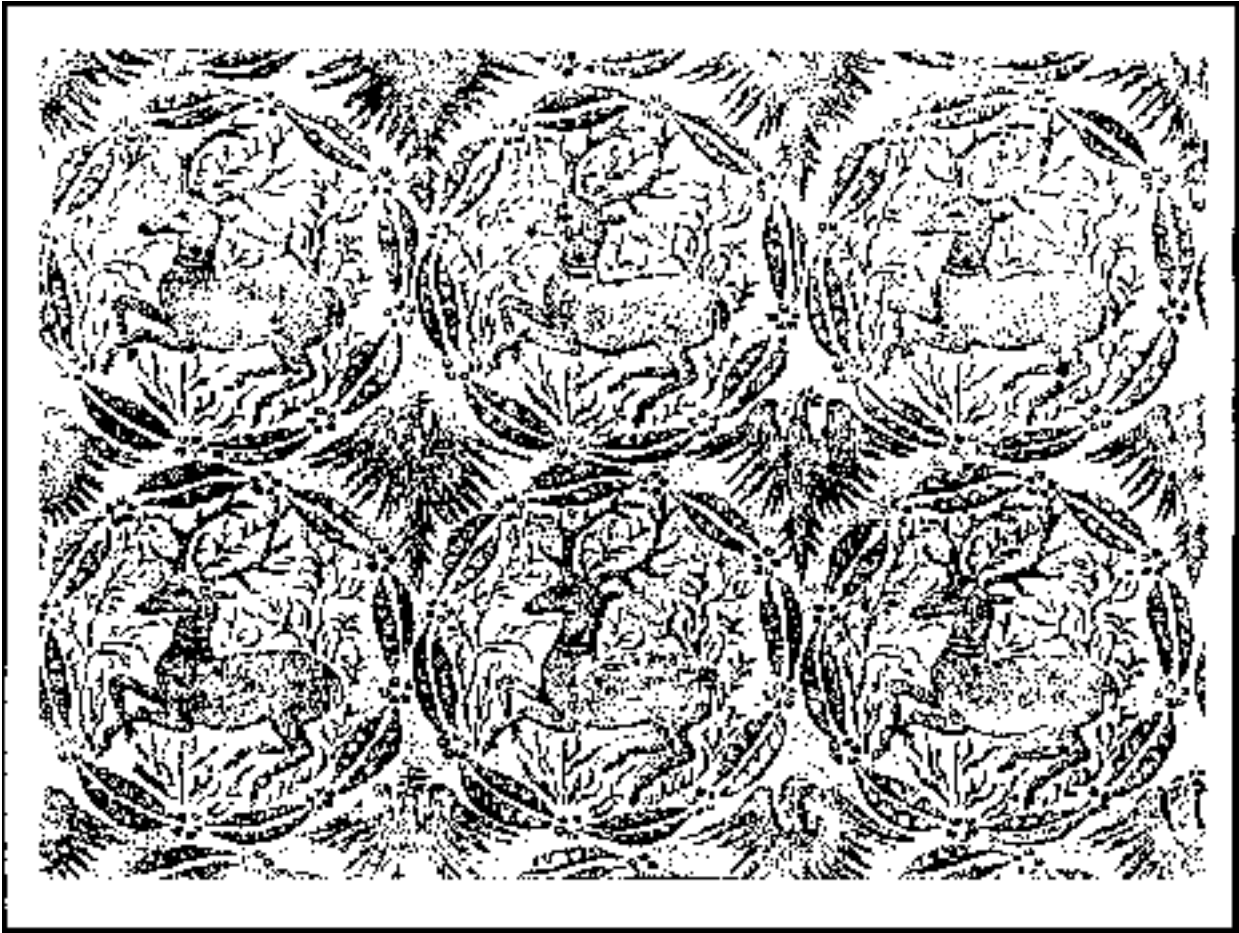
### **Mr G.A. Bradley**

Tony Bradley was a principal lecturer at Christ's College, Liverpool until his retirement to Eynsham in 1982. In eight all too short years he became widely respected, and made many friends. He was an enthusiastic member of the E.H.G. and its Treasurer in 1983-4. In Joan Weedon's words he was 'a gifted theologian and a strong ecumenical presence'. When Bishop Gordon's book was in preparation, Tony was one of the first to be sent a draft for his wise comments. Sadly he died before publication. The village is a poorer place.

### **Revd. F.J. Bacon**

John Bacon died in early 1991. Like Tony Bradley, John's years among us in Eynsham were all too few, and made a nonsense of the conventional idea of 'retirement'. In John's case he continued his ministry in Eynsham and Cassington, and leaves many grateful parishioners and friends. He and his wife have been staunch supporters of the E.H.G., and we send our condolences to Margaret and the family.

## A PLEASING FANCY



A 1990 Christmas card (gold on a red background), inspired by the design on the cloak of Richard II in the 'Wilton Diptych', National Gallery, London.

Edward Hibbert, who sent me this card, wondered if Richard might have worn this cloak at Eynsham. Perhaps in 1389, when the bakehouse was repaired in advance of one of his visits? We shall never know, but it is a pleasing fancy!

The bird of prey depicted here, and on some of the surviving floor tiles from the abbey, are similar in design. (Editor)

# EYNESHAM ABBEY EXCAVATIONS: FURTHER PROGRESS

by R.A.Chambers

In my introduction to this site in the last *Eynsham Record* (No.7, pp.3-6, 1990,) I outlined the excavation objectives and speculated on what might lie beneath the soil in St Leonard's churchyard extension. Since then archaeological excavation has gone some way towards meeting those objectives. My speculations on the potential of the site have (for once) been justified. The archaeological remains on this site have now been shown to be of local, national, and indeed international interest. In particular Eynsham is emerging as the key site for the archaeology of the Anglo-Saxon period both within the Upper Thames valley and regionally.

The 1989 assessment was funded from the Oxfordshire County Council annual grant to the Oxford Archaeological Unit. On the basis of the evidence found during the assessment, English Heritage decided to fund the excavation of those areas of the Church of England and Roman Catholic churchyards where future grave-digging will eventually destroy the archaeology.

Since January 1990, excavation has shown that the remains of the late Anglo-Saxon Benedictine abbey (1005-c.1066) survive below the larger medieval abbey (c.1109-1538). There are also the remains of substantial early and middle Saxon buildings which apparently represent the domestic elements of the middle Saxon minster and earlier royal centre. Also, for the first time in the Oxford region, there is an opportunity to recover pottery from securely dated middle Anglo-Saxon deposits. A coin-dated circular cesspit represents the first deposit excavated in this area which can be dated with confidence to the mid 8th century, and pottery and good environmental material have been recovered from the domestic debris with which the pit was partially backfilled. In addition, a fragment of wall face from the above ground structure of a major timber-framed building has been found, for the first time in England. Finds reflecting the wealth of the late Anglo-Saxon monastic site include a fragment of a finely carved elephant ivory panel from a casket, and an unfinished walrus ivory figure of a saint, originally from a crucifixion scene (Fig. 1).

Comparatively little survives of the Norman and medieval Benedictine abbey founded ca.1109 on the site of its late Anglo-Saxon predecessor. After the Dissolution in 1538 there followed three centuries of methodical and thorough robbing of all reusable building materials, from stonework for house-building to floor tiles for road-mending. Even the massive wall foundations were quarried for their stone.



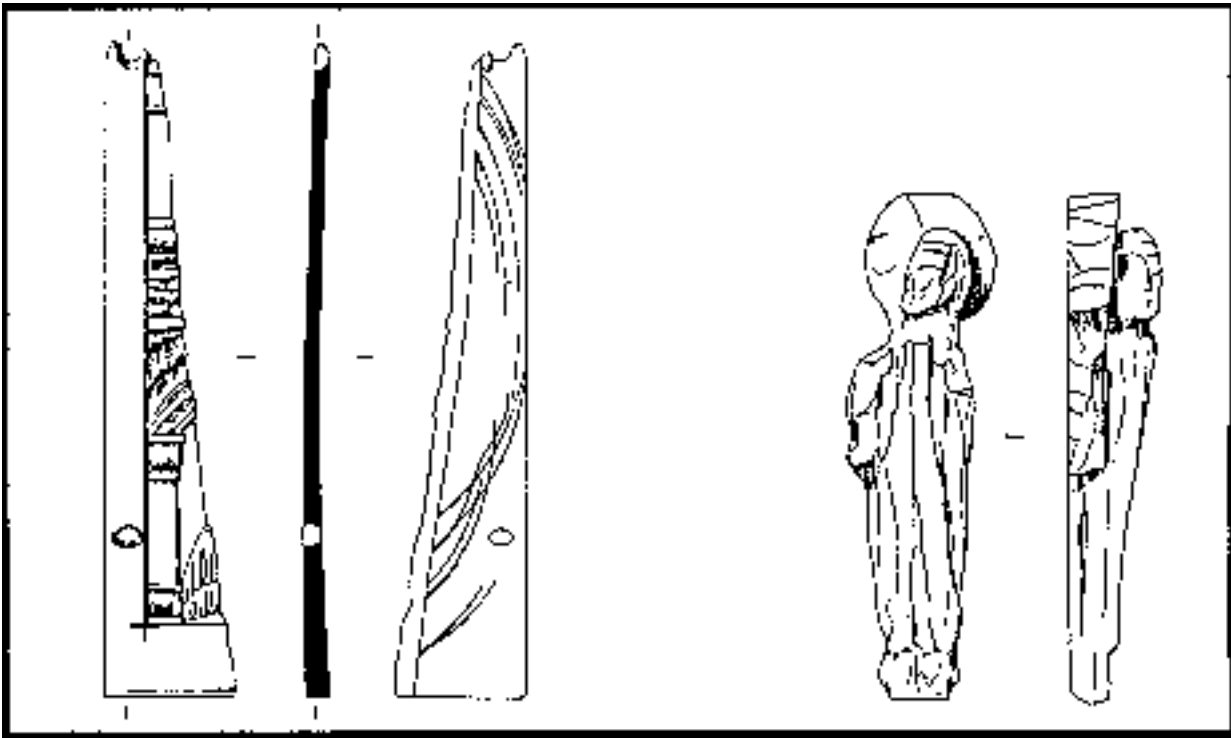


Fig. 1: *left* Fragment of decorated elephant ivory panel from a Saxon casket, probably of continental origin. xl

*right* Walrus ivory figure of saint, originally part of a crucifixion scene. xl

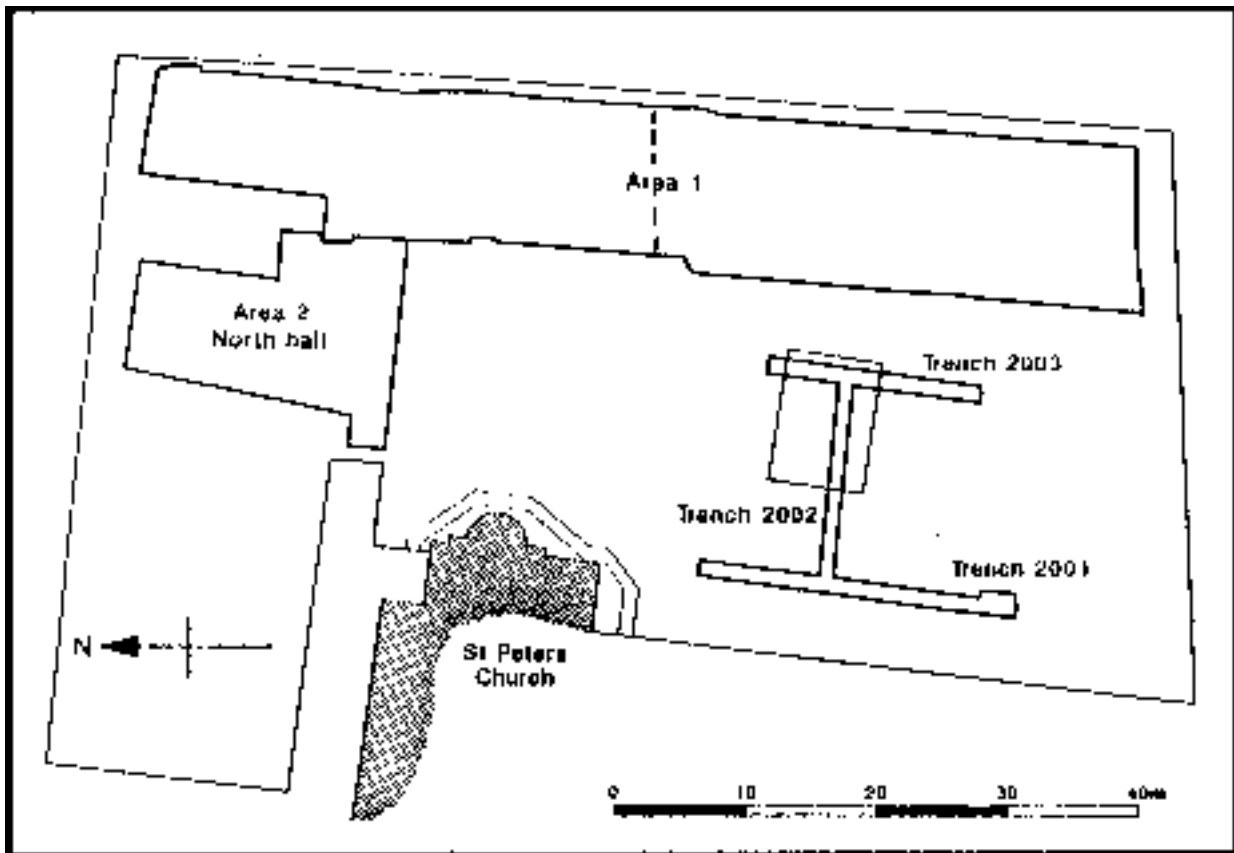


Fig. 2: The site. (The phase plan - fig.3 - deals with the northern half of area 1).

## Summary of phases of occupation, uncovered in the northern half of St Leonard's churchyard extension. (Fig. 2)

Although residual Neolithic flint blades have been found on the site, the early E-W ditch (4.0m wide and 2.0m deep) probably represents a substantial Bronze Age monument (Phase 1). A second large, possibly Bronze Age, ditch was discovered beneath the eastern edge of the excavation. After the ditch sides had stabilised and become overgrown, Late Bronze Age-Early Iron Age domestic debris from an adjacent but as yet undetected settlement accumulated in these ditches. The area was not occupied again until the early Saxon period, but two Roman coins and several sherds of 1st-4th century pottery show that occupation was not far away. A general pre-Saxon spread of gravelly homogeneous soil suggests cultivation, either Iron Age or Roman.

A sunken featured building and some post pits 15m to the south belong to the early Saxon reoccupation of the site (Phase II). This building, backfilled with domestic waste, was later cut by a N-S palisade trench (Phase V). The circular cesspit (Phase III), whose backfilling is dated to the mid-8th century by two coins, is almost certainly later than the Phase II post pits.

An extensive and long-lived hearth area comprising many individual hearths beside or superimposed on each other lay on an apparently cultivated soil, suggesting an earth-floored building with a central hearth on an exact W-E alignment. No other trace of this building was found. Although shown *as* Phase IV on the plan, this may have been part of the earliest post-Roman occupation on the site. Indeed the precise relationships between the N-S boundary trench (Phase V), the hearth area (Phase IV) and the circular cess pit (Phase III) are unclear.

The 8th century cesspit filling settled to leave a depression into which a section of the daub superstructure of a timber building collapsed (Phase VI); the impression of the timber framing surviving within the daub, which was of mortar rather than clay. The building represented by this wall face may be associated with a short alignment of possible post pits and several larger pits to the S, and may also have been associated with the N to S boundary ditch (Phase V).

By the later Anglo-Saxon period building remains had become more substantial. A timber building left an interrupted cill beam trench and a large cesspit (Phase VII). It is conceivable that this building was a lean-to against the inner wall of the S range of the next building phase (Phase VIII), although the beam slot was not parallel to the S wall.

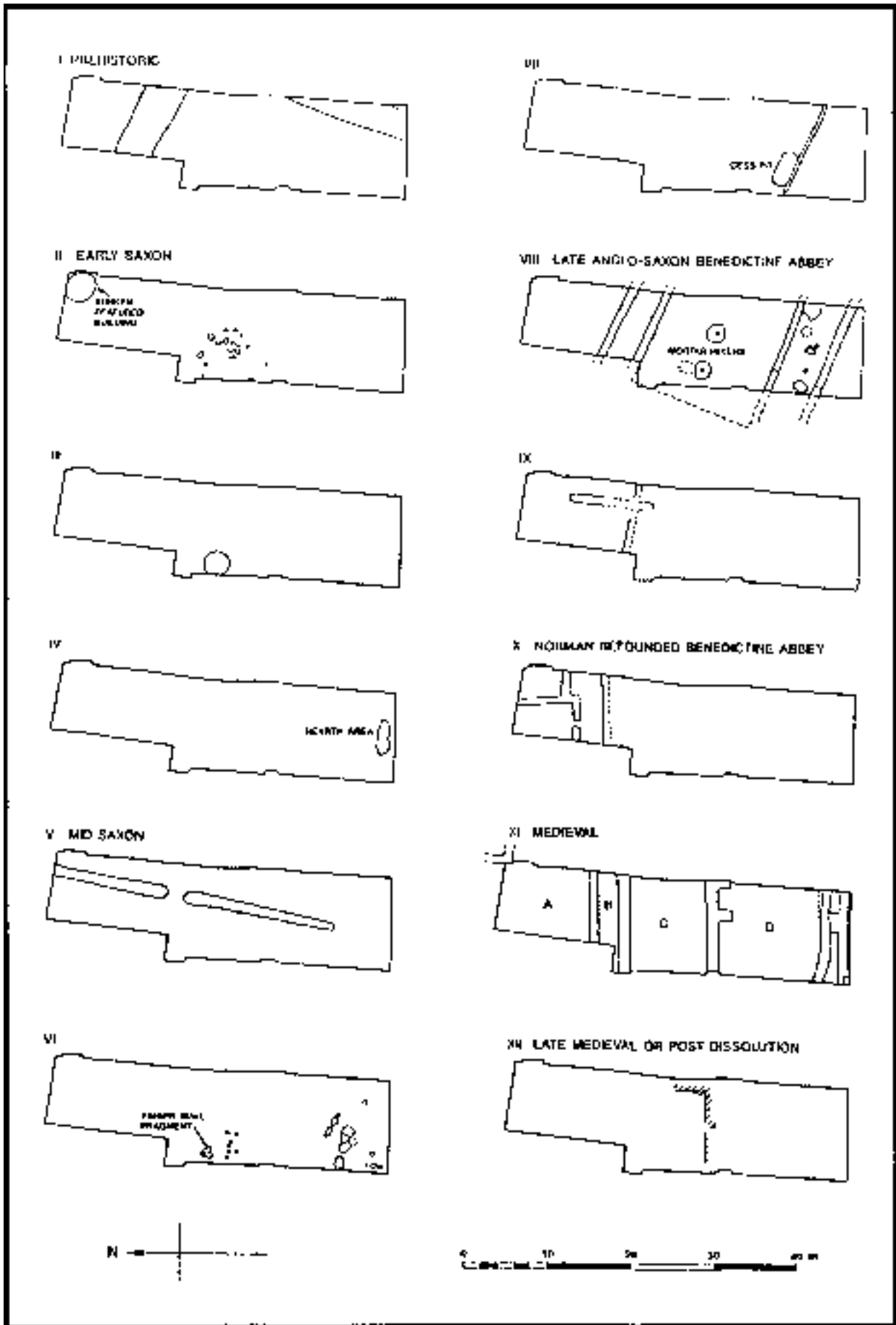


Fig.3: Preliminary phase plan to April 1990 of the northern half of Area 1 of Fig.2.

The late Anglo-Saxon Benedictine abbey, whose foundation received royal confirmation in 1005, appears to be represented by a range of substantial stone buildings, some of which were rendered inside and out with a buff lime wash (Phase VIII). The bases of two circular mortar mixers similar to three from middle Anglo-Saxon levels in Northampton were used in the construction of these buildings (Fig. 4).

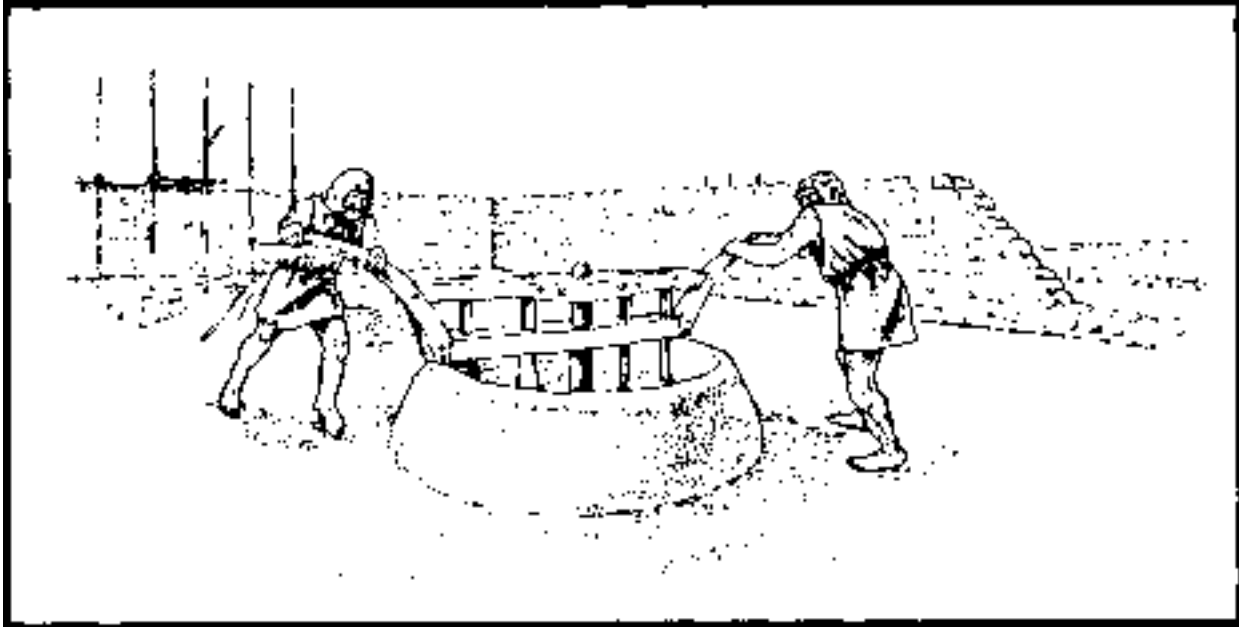


Fig.4 Reconstruction of late Anglo-Saxon mortar mixers used in building the early 11th century Benedictine abbey.

Following the Norman Conquest of 1066, the monks fled and the abbey was deserted. For the next 40 years the Eynsham Abbey story is linked with Stow in Lincolnshire (see Gordon G.E. *Eynsham Abbey:1005-1228*, especially Ch. 13-16, Phillimore, 1990). Phase IX is difficult to interpret, but it may represent a first attempt to reoccupy the abbey site following a decision of Bishop Bloet of Lincoln in 1093. In 1109, however, when Henry I confirmed the re-endowment of the abbey, it was described as still lying in ruins (*desolatam & dissipatam*).

The early 12th century rebuilding of the abbey appears to have begun in earnest with the shallow foundations of temporary, possibly timber, buildings to the S of the ruined church (Phase X).

Although Anthony Wood's sketch of 1657 seems to show only alterations and additions to the Norman abbey church, we now know from excavation that at least some of the buildings to the S were demolished and replaced during the medieval

period. Phase XI represents medieval abbey buildings which appear to have been built or rebuilt in the late 12th-early 13th century. Little can be concluded about the foundation plans of these buildings until a more comprehensive picture is produced by further excavation to the W later this year. The area A is still tentatively interpreted as the great cloister, although the corner of a stone structure has been discovered in the extreme NE corner of the excavation site. D was a garden throughout the life of the medieval abbey and a curved path led through it against the N side of another range of buildings. Little of the fabric of the medieval abbey was left in the excavated area which had been thoroughly robbed of all usable stone, tile and flooring materials.

The plan of Phase XII shows the remnant of an area of stone paving within a shallowly founded drystone-walled building. This may be a small post-Dissolution agricultural building erected within the robbed remains of the medieval structure.

### More recent work

The entire length of the St Leonard's churchyard extension has now been excavated. The southern half, (not shown in Fig. 3), revealed a complex of drains and cess pits, the remnants of a sequence of lavatory blocks likely to have served a building which may have been the abbot's lodging. This building lay immediately S of the garden excavated last spring, and began life as a Norman hall. The uneven bare soil floor of its larger medieval replacement suggests a hall over a ground level undercroft. The medieval builders had not taken sufficient account of the patches of soft ground created by the pits and ditches of earlier occupation, and part of the W wall of the later hall had been subjected to extensive underpinning. The sequence of lavatory blocks, each with a cesspit and a drain for the washing facilities, appears to have improved in structural quality as each successive block was built progressively nearer to the hall.

By the late 14th or early 15th century a lavatory block was built into the W end of the hall with a stone-lined cesspit of truly palatial proportions. This cesspit, cleaned out and partially rebuilt after the final demise of the abbey in 1538, continued in use into the 17th century, suggesting that this was retained as part of the private manor house. The layers of grey soil representing the Anglo-Saxon occupation have proved to be a continuation of the sequence recorded in the northern half of the trench. The soils were all laden with domestic refuse. Occasional post pits and an area of burning suggested the former presence of lightly founded buildings, but the slight nature of these buildings and the destructive activities of later generations on this continuously occupied part of the site have left us no clear plans.

The excavations continue.

# EYNESHAM'S POSTAL HISTORY

by Edward Hibbert

Before 1635 there was no official postal service for the general public. The post was for Government and Royal mail only. Anyone wishing to send a letter either had to find a traveller going in the right direction or bribe the King's Messenger to take it in the Royal mail. The wealthy could, of course, send a letter by a servant or a private messenger. In 1635 Charles I opened the King's Post to the public, but the service was disrupted by the Civil War.

On the Restoration in 1660, Henry Bishop was made Postmaster General and gave his name to the world's first postal date stamp. The Bishop Mark was a circular one, divided horizontally, one half indicating the month by two letters (but not the year), and the other half the date in the month when the letter was received in the sorting office in London. Before the introduction of cross posts in the 18th century all letters from a Post Town on one of the six great Post Roads to a destination served by another of the Post Roads had to go through London. So a letter from Eynsham to Lichfield, for example, would go first to Oxford, then to London, where it was stamped with a Bishop Mark, and from there on to the Chester Post Road to Lichfield. Postage would be calculated on the distance involved and the number of sheets of paper, two sheets doubling the postage rate. The letters were carried by 'post-boys' riding horses between post stages, usually inns, the innkeeper being required to provide fresh horses. After leaving Eynsham from Oxford the post-boys, and later the mail coaches, would call to change horses at Staple Hall Inn, Witney, where there was stabling for 40 horses. The Swan Inn in Acre End Street, Eynsham, was also enlarged in the 19th century to meet the needs of increased coaching traffic, and had stabling for 36 horses when bought by Samuel Druce in 18441.

The medieval route for travellers from Oxford to Eynsham was via Binsey and Wytham<sup>2</sup>. No doubt the first post-boys would ride with the mail over Wytham Hill, crossing the river Thames by the ford at Swinford. The hazards of travel by this route are illustrated by John Wesley, writing in his Journal of his journey from Oxford in January 1764 to preach at Witney.

*'Between twelve and one we crossed Ensham Ferry. The water was like a sea on both sides. I asked the ferryman, "Can we ride the causeway?" He said, "Yes, sir; if you keep in the middle." But this was the difficulty, as the whole causeway was covered with water to a considerable depth; and this in many parts ran over the causeway with the swiftness and violence of a sluice. Once my mare lost both her fore feet, but she gave*

*a spring, and recovered the causeway; otherwise we must have taken a swim, for the water on either side was ten or twelve feet deep; However, after one or two plunges more, we got through and came safe to Witney'*<sup>3</sup>.

Jeffery's *Map of Oxfordshire* (1768) is one which shows the road from Botley going over Wytham Hill to the ferry at Swinford and on to 'Ensham'.

Swinford Bridge, built by the fourth Earl of Abingdon, was opened in 1769 and enabled mail coaches, which were introduced on 1784, to cross the river at Swinford. Mail coaches did not pay tolls and the armed guard was supplied with a horn to alert the toll keeper of the approach of the coach and to ensure that the toll gate was open so that the coach did not have to stop. The mail coaches ran to a strict schedule and could not afford any delay. An early print shows a mail coach speeding through a village, the postmaster in his nightcap exchanging mails with the guard while leaning out of his bedroom window (Fig.1). A typical mail coach of 1786, as advertised in the Bath Chronicle, carried four inside passengers, '*outside and children in lap half price*'.

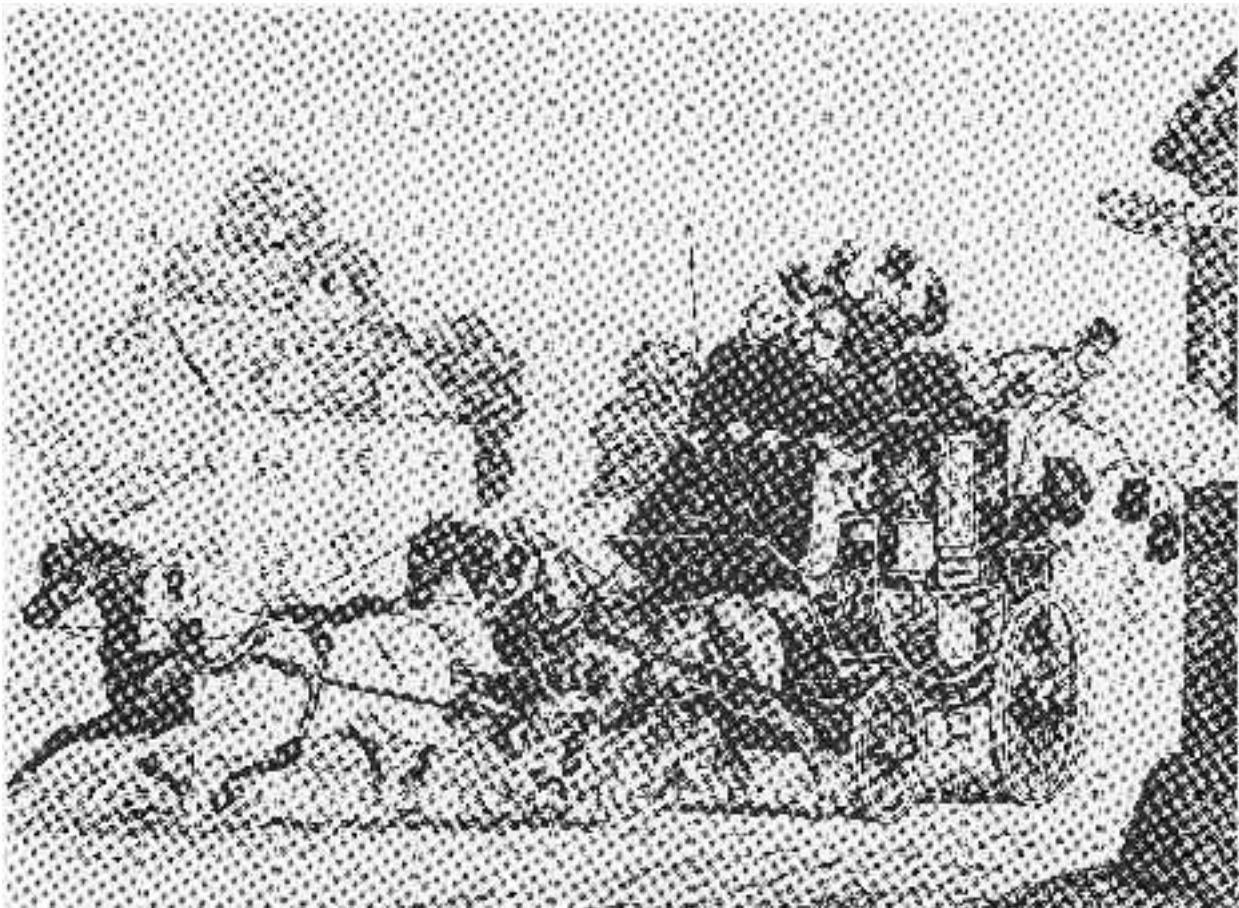


Fig.1 The Bath to London mailcoach in the very early morning. The guard is exchanging bags with the postmaster at his bedroom window without stopping the coach. Reproduced by permission of the Post Office Archives.

The coaches had difficulty negotiating the steep hill at Wytham, which was also a haunt of highwaymen, and extra horses had to be supplied. Sometimes passengers would be asked to help the horses up the hill by getting out and walking. However, Jackson's *Oxford Journal* for 20 January 1810 reported plans to build a new road from Botley to Eynsham 'avoiding the present hill'.

In 1784 Mileage Marks were introduced in order to facilitate the calculation of the postage rate to London, which depended on the mileage involved. Eynsham was calculated as 62 miles from London, and a very rare handstamp 62 ENSHAM (in one line) has been recorded in use between 1802 and 1804 (Fig.2). Eynsham was not a Post Town and it is not known whether this mark was applied at a post office in the village or at the post office in Oxford on mail received from the village.

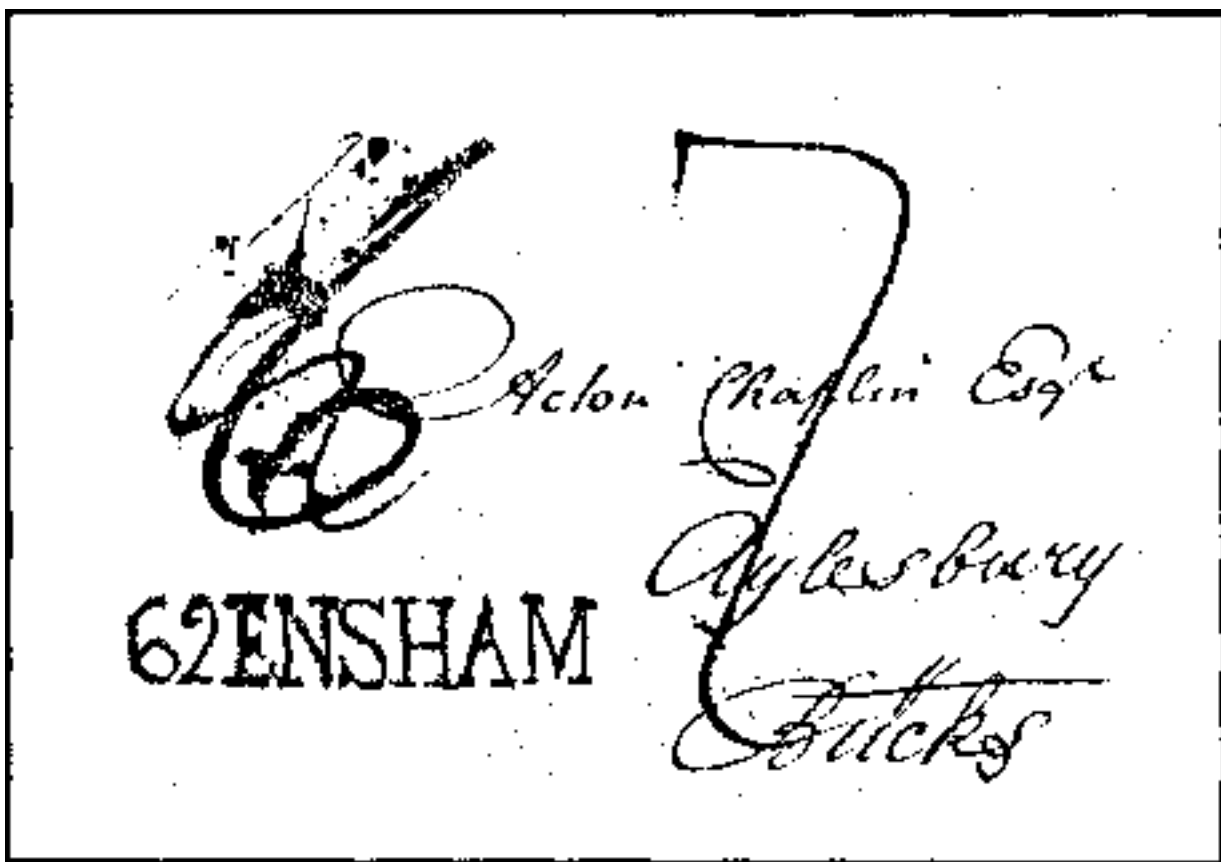


Fig. 2. Rare cover of 1802-4 with the hand stamp **62 ENSHAM**.  
**62** was the calculated mileage to London on which the postage rate was charged.



Eynsham became a sub-Post Office under Oxford for the Penny Post in 1835. The village postmaster was then Joseph Foster, who was also master of the Charity School<sup>4</sup>. He worked long hours at his Post Office in the Square, having to receive the mail from London which arrived at 3.50 a.m., and despatch letters for Cheltenham and the west by the same coach. The night mail arrived from Cheltenham at 11 p.m. when letters were sent on to Oxford and London<sup>5</sup>.

The Oxford Penny Post was set up about this time. Before the Penny Post, letters had to be collected from the main Post Town, but in the 1830s for an extra ld. letters would be delivered to or collected from what was called a Receiving House in the village. Eynsham is one of the few that are known in the Oxford Penny Post area<sup>6</sup>. I have a copy of a letter sent from Ensham (sic) on 27 August 1838 to Daventry handstamped 'Oxford Penny Post' and marked 8d. for the postage from Oxford to Daventry. The writer says, *'I have not yet heard from the Person that I am expecting to take the Living....you shall have the answer immediately I get it though I fear that you will not receive it by Thursday as it is two days Postage from this Place'*. In January 1840 a uniform rate of postage of ld. was introduced for the whole country, followed on 6 May 1840 by the world's first adhesive postage stamp, the famous Penny Black.

When Joseph Foster retired, Ann Foster took over as postmistress. She is described in the 1841 census return as a grocer and draper and aged 35. Her shop and Post Office was in the Square on the main road from London to Cheltenham and Wales. I have a letter of 1844 from Stanton Harcourt to Marlow which went via Oxford and 'Ensham' and bears an early type of Eynsham postmark, a double ring with no Y and no date (Fig.3a). This postmark has also been recorded with the Y in Eynsham.

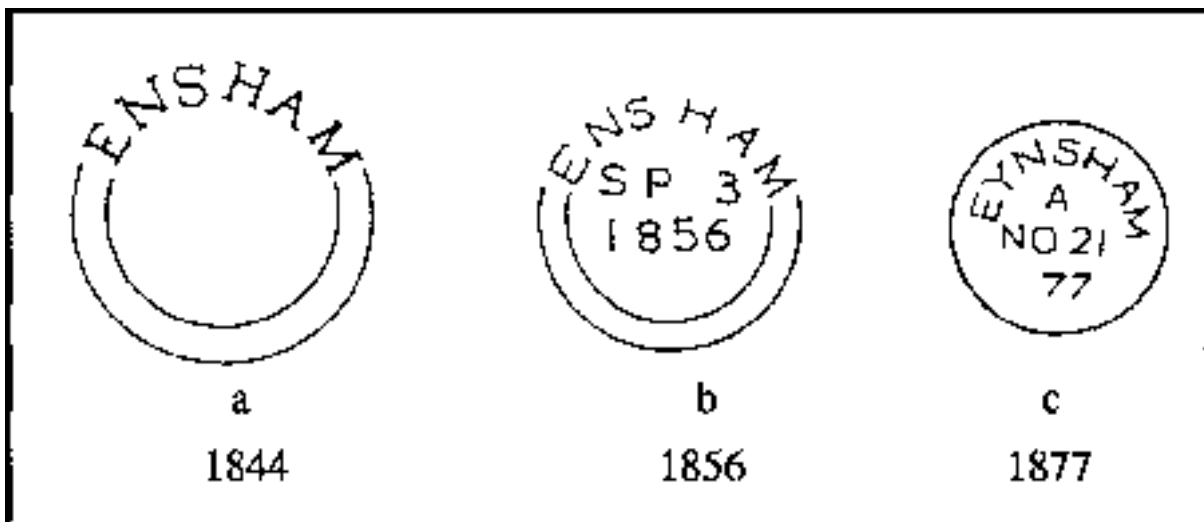


Fig. 3. Some 19th century Ensham/Eynsham postmarks.

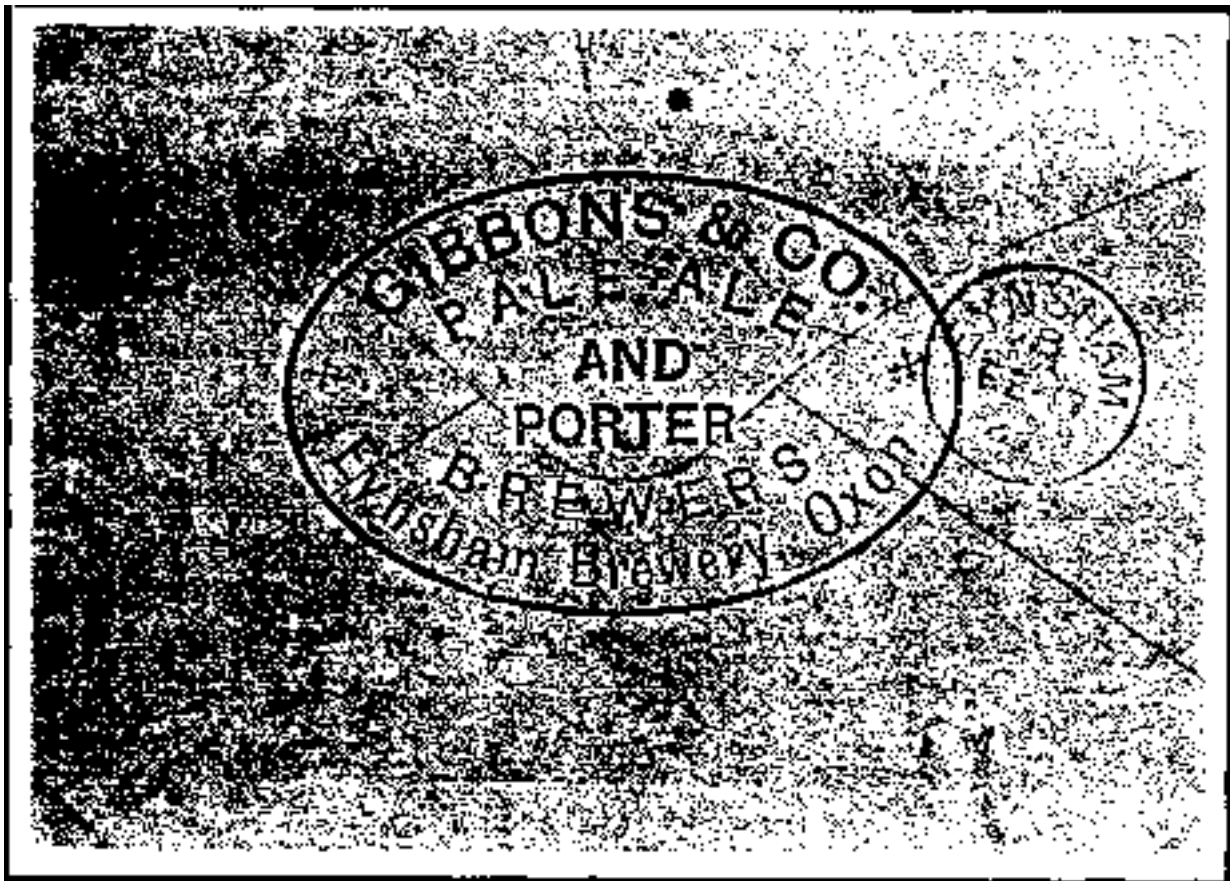


Fig. 4. Cover of an 1887 letter from the brewers, Gibbons & Co. of Eynsham to their solicitors in Oxford.



<b>PARCEL POST.</b>  <b>EYNSHAM (EFE)</b> <b>(Under Oxford)</b>	<b>X. LIST.</b> Letter and number	S.	D.
		Postage.	
FOR POSTAGE STAMPS.		Fee paid on Registration.	
		<b>OFFICE STAMP.</b> 	

Fig. 5. Parcel post label of 1896. (EFE) after EYNSHAM was an early postcode.

Hunt's *Oxford Directory* of 1846 contains the following entry:

Post office, Ensham.

Receiving house at Ann Foster's.

Letters delivered at 7a.m., despatched at 11 p.m., box closes at 9; but letters may be posted until 10, by payment of one penny extra.

Letters posted after 9 p.m. can be found handstamped '**TOO LATE**' !

The 1854 Directory shows Ann Foster still as Postmistress, but the Post Office had by then moved to Acre End Street.

On 14 November 1861 Eynsham Railway Station was opened. Oxford Station had been opened in 1844 and the days of the mail coach were over. The population of Eynsham was then 2,096, and the Post Office began to expand. A Post Office Savings Bank was opened in the village in December 1861. The Postmaster in 1863 was John Ham, described as a bookseller and stationer and schoolmaster of the endowed school.

John Ham was succeeded as Postmaster in 1869 by Charles Smith, a baker. An interesting cover of 1887 (Fig.4) dates from his time. He was followed in 1895 by Henry Albert Howe, a chemist and stationer. The sub-Post Office 'under Oxford' (see Parcel Post label of 1896 - Fig.5) was then in Acre End Street next to the Mansard House. This was on the main road from London to South Wales and was also convenient for the railway station in Station Road. Mr Howe had a long day; he had to sort the mail, which arrived at 5.45 a.m., 11.55 a.m. and 5 p.m., and see to the despatch of letters at 12.20, 7.15, and 9 p.m. The wall Letter Box in Newland Street was cleared three times a day - at 12.10, 6.55, and 8.55 (Sundays 1.10 p.m.)<sup>7</sup> Henry Howe was succeeded as Sub-Postmaster by his son, Alfred William Howe, who in 1921 moved the Post Office to premises a little to the west now occupied by the chemist's shop.

Reminiscing in Mollie Harris's book *'From Acre End - Portrait of a Village'* Ernest Ovenall, who was born on 1893, said:

'I took a job as a post-boy with Mr Howe who kept the post office and was also chemist to the village...My first job every day was to meet the mail at six o'clock in the morning. This was brought in a mail cart from Oxford in a horse and trap. Mr Howe the postmaster was well over sixty at the time, but was always up to sort the mail. I delivered letters to Swinford (and cleared the letter box there), Stroud Court, Pinkhill Lock, and then over the river - I fell in more than once on slippery mornings - to Pinkhill farm, then back across the fields. Course I had to push my bike much of the way.

'After that it was back to work in the shop. We should have finished work at 7.15 pm, but I had to stay till eight in case there were any messages (telegrams) to deliver.

'The messages came by Morse code. There was a real delivery boy, but he left at 7.15 because of his age. Then I was on duty every other Sunday for two hours and got a cup of cold coffee for it. The pay was six shillings a week for eighty-two hours.'

The photograph of the staff of the post office (Fig.6) includes Albert Dance, whose daughter said that he had to deliver letters in Eynsham, Stanton Harcourt and Sutton *'walking all the way of course'*.



Fig. 6. The post office staff under Alfred Howe. *Back row, left to right:* Herbert Evans, Risby Coombs, Teddy Smith, Chris Brooks. *Front row:* Albert Dance, Alfred Howe (postmaster), postman Barson.

Photograph and caption by courtesy of Mollie Harris

In 1937 Bevan Mathew Pimm took over the Post Office, which was moved to his shop opposite Biggers, the bakers, in the Square. He employed Kath Anderson, who had worked in the Post Office for Mr Howe until his death. Mr Pimm also worked for

Pimms, the builders, but he was engaged full time in the Post Office from about 1953. He also worked long hours, starting at 5 a.m. to sort the mail and finishing late in the evening, often not until 7 or 7.30 p.m., and 10 p.m. on Saturdays. When he retired in 1965 his son Stephen, who had helped in the Post Office, took over as Postmaster until 1966 when the Post Office moved to its present building in Mill Street.

### *References*

1. *V.C.H. Oxon.* xii, p.108.
2. John Blair. Thornbury, Binsey: A probable defensive enclosure associated with St Frideswide. *Oxoniensia*, Iiii, 1988, p.8.
3. *The Journal of the Rev. John Wesley.* Edited by N.Curnock. Standard Edition, 1909- 16, Vol.5, p.44.
4. See also a reference to John Foster, the schoolmaster, at the end of Donald Richards's article, pp. 24-29.
5. Pigot & Co's Commercial Directory 1830.
6. G.F. Oxley *The English Provincial Local Posts 1765-1840.* The Postal History Society, 1973.
7. Kelly's Directory of Oxfordshire 1907.
8. Mollie Harris. *From Acre End - Portrait of a Village.* Chatto & Windus, 1982, p.45.

### *General source*

R.M. Willcocks. *England's Postal History.* Publ. by the author, 1975.

---

To-day (March 15) my L<sup>d</sup> Dupplin called upon me again, and informed me, that one Richard Goddard (who is a Tenant of the Duchess of Marlborough at Eynsham) hath over the door of his House an old Stone, supposed to have come from the Abbey of Eynsham, upon w<sup>ch</sup> is an Angel. holding an Escutcheon, on w<sup>ch</sup> Escutcheon are four Saxon Letters. My Lord said, he was told this.

Extract from *Hearne's Collections.* The entry for 15 March 1727 (in Vol. cxvi)

# EYNESHAM ca.1863: FOR WHOM THE BELLS DIDN'T TOLL

by Brian Atkins

The first page of the *Eynsham Church News* of August 1965' is reproduced opposite. The censorious verses, written more than 100 years ago, have a certain malicious charm, and invited some detective work. Which member of the distinguished Druce family was its target? What circumstances inspired it? Might it be possible to date it? Can the author be identified?

The first two questions can be answered with certainty.

The 'victim' was Joseph Druce (1816-90) who served as churchwarden in 1857-58, 1862-63 and in 1869<sup>2</sup>, and was the tenant of Twelve Acre Farm by 1851, and was certainly living there by 1858 and at the time of the 1861 census.

His years as churchwarden were all during the incumbency of the notorious Revd. W.S. Bricknell, vicar from 1845 to 1888; and, among the voluminous records relating to Bricknell which have been preserved in the diocesan records, we find a story of the neglect of the fabric of the church in the 1860s, and, as in the poem, specific reference to the state of the bells.

I think we can identify the date of the poem with some precision. On 2nd November 1863 Bricknell wrote an almost savage letter to Druce, accusing him of dereliction of duty in at least seven respects, including:

*"You are also aware that the state of the Bell Loft & its machinery is such that I have found it my duty to prohibit the ringing of the Bells, until the existing danger of accident and great extra expense to the Parish shall have been removed."*<sup>3</sup>

I conclude that the barbed verses were written shortly before or after Christmas 1863 (they certainly didn't pre-date the poem which they parody!); and that their target was Joseph Druce, churchwarden and farmer living at Twelve Acre Farm.

But who was the author? The fabric of the church was in a poor state at this time, and must have been allowed to deteriorate over a long period. Those immediately responsible for the building would have been the vicar and the two churchwardens. But Druce had been a warden for only two brief spells (1857-8 and 1862-3). But by 1863, Bricknell had been the incumbent for 18 years. I shall argue speculatively that Bricknell was the author of this poem which assigns all the blame to Druce for a state of affairs for which Bricknell himself would have been more culpable.

August, 1965.

My dear Friends,

The following composition was handed to me a few days ago, and I include it here so that Eynsham readers of the present may have a sight into the troubles and complaints of our forefathers of about a hundred years ago. We are not sure of its age but it is certainly prior to 1879. Perhaps it will make light reading for the holiday month.

Blessings on you all and happy holidays.

Yours sincerely,

J. W. G. WESTWOOD.

SONG OF AN EYNHAM CHURCHWARDEN

Those Eynsham Bells! Those Eynsham Bells!  
What a pitiful tale their silence tells!

'T was at Twelve Acre Farm the last night of the year  
With turkey and chine and right good Christmas cheer  
I kept such a feast as Churchwardens should keep  
Till Havannah's sweet fumes gently lulled me to sleep.

I dreamed. Far away in the visions of night  
O'er fallow and greensward I wended my flight;  
Then me thought I stood shivering at midnight's chill hour  
On a beam of the bell-loft in Eynsham's church Tower.  
All was gloomy and chill as the chamber of death,  
My hair stood on end, I could scarce draw my breath;  
When a low rumbling sound the dread solitude broke,  
The big clapper moved and the Tenor Bell spoke:  
"So you've come, Mister Warden, at last to inspect  
This perilous scene of official neglect.  
Take care how you tread, Sir, on that rotten floor,  
If you drop thro' the boards you'll be Warden no more.  
Now cast your eyes round, don't you blush at the sight?  
How on earth could you say to the Bishop 'All right'  
When our wheels are all broken, our clappers all loose.  
And 'tis you we've to thank for it, Churchwarden Druce.  
Look again at the ruins before you and say  
Is it thus that our labours of love you repay?  
Three times we have known you a bridegroom so spruce  
And gladdened your honeymoons, Churchwarden Druce.  
But now you care nothing whatever for us.  
Is it grateful in you to dishonour us thus?  
Thro' our shutters the little birds come to and fro  
To bring us up news of what passes below.  
They've told us ere now of some scandalous matters,  
Green walls! dirty pews! and a surplice in tatters!  
And this very morning they chirped in our ears  
'He has not paid a farthing of Church-rate for years'.  
Fie for shame! Fie for shame! Mr. Churchwarden Druce.  
For such conduct as this there can be no excuse.  
To your profit it seems a dull Christmas we've spent.  
Go home, Mr. Warden, get ready for Lent.  
But before you are shriven, your purse-strings unloose,  
And remember the bells, Mr. Churchwarden Druce".  
Ding dong went the clapper. I woke with a scream,  
Put my hand to my pocket and lo!—'twas a dream!

That extreme hostility existed between Bricknell and Druce over a long period of time is clear from the diocesan and other records. However, it is a well-established fact that Bricknell made a thousand enemies, from the lowliest parishioner to Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Oxford; and so far as is known Joseph was an uncontroversial character, except in his dealings with Bricknell. Sooner or later the full story of W.S. Bricknell and the details of his mischief during a long incumbency will I hope be published. In the meantime it will suffice to quote, from the recently published volume of the *V.C.H. Oxon* some extracts relevant to this particular story. The italics are mine.

'In the 19th century parochial life was frequently turbulent, especially during the incumbency of W.S. Bricknell (vicar, 1845-88), *whose quarrels with his parishioners became notorious in the county.*' p.108.

'The vestry's effectiveness as the governing body of the parish in the 19th century was reduced by its division into two factions, *one supporting the vicar, W.S. Bricknell, the other led by a farmer, Joseph Druce, who was frequently the parish churchwarden.*' p.146.

'Quarrels began over *church restoration* in 1857 and ranged over many other issues, notably charity administration. Crowded Easter vestries, when churchwardens were appointed, became trials of strength between the factions, and formal polls and canvassing became commonplace. In 1865, after fisticuffs in the Bartholomew Room involving Bricknell and a parishioner, a magistrate referred to Eynsham's 'endless squabbles'. *The deaths of Bricknell in 1888 and Druce in 1890 ended an era*, and in 1895 an Eynsham vestry was noted for its "extreme cordiality". p.146.

'The incumbency of W.S. Bricknell created deep divisions among the parishioners. Bricknell, an Oxford city lecturer from 1840, was strongly Evangelical, but probably caused most trouble because of his litigious spirit and *fondness for publicizing quarrels*. In 1856-7 during a dispute over church restoration an opposition group formed under Joseph Druce, churchwarden and leading farmer, who then *harried Bricknell for over twenty years....* At his [Bricknell's] death in 1888 he was described as "almost the last survivor of those unhappy theological controversies that embittered the lives of so many good men". p.149.

Bricknell did command some minority support which in the village included James Gibbons, farmer and brewer, and the Shillingfords, woolstaplers; and grander but more remote figures such as W.E. Taunton of Freeland and the owners of Eynsham Halls. Any one of these supporters might have been capable of composing the verses. But it



was precisely in Bricknell's style to blacken his enemies in letters to the bishop, to the newspapers, and to others. He was articulate, literate, and intelligent, and used the written word cunningly to obfuscate problems, condemn others, and exculpate himself. It would not be out of character if at least on this occasion he did not dip his well-worn quill into his vitriolic ink to pen some anonymous defamatory doggerel!

One couplet of the verse is somewhat misleading:

`Three times we have known you a bridegroom so spruce  
And gladdened your honeymoons, Churchwarden Druce.'

This is 'spoken' by the 'Tenor Bell', and implies that Joseph married three times in St Leonard's.

He did in fact marry three times (Rachel Large, Elizabeth Stevens and Ann Cox) but none of his nuptials took place in Eynsham. However, the bells may have 'gladdened his honeymoons' if these were spent at home.

### *Footnotes and references*

1. *Eynsham Church News*, August 1965. Rev J.W.G. Westwood was then the vicar.
2. Three members of the Druce family have served as churchwardens of St Leonard's church. Apart from Joseph, his father, Samuel Druce (1787-1860), was a warden for 40 years, from 1815 to 1856, during the incumbencies of Thomas Nash, Thomas Symonds, and William Simcox Bricknell. He was also a farmer (Home Farm, now called Abbey Farm), and major landowner in the area.

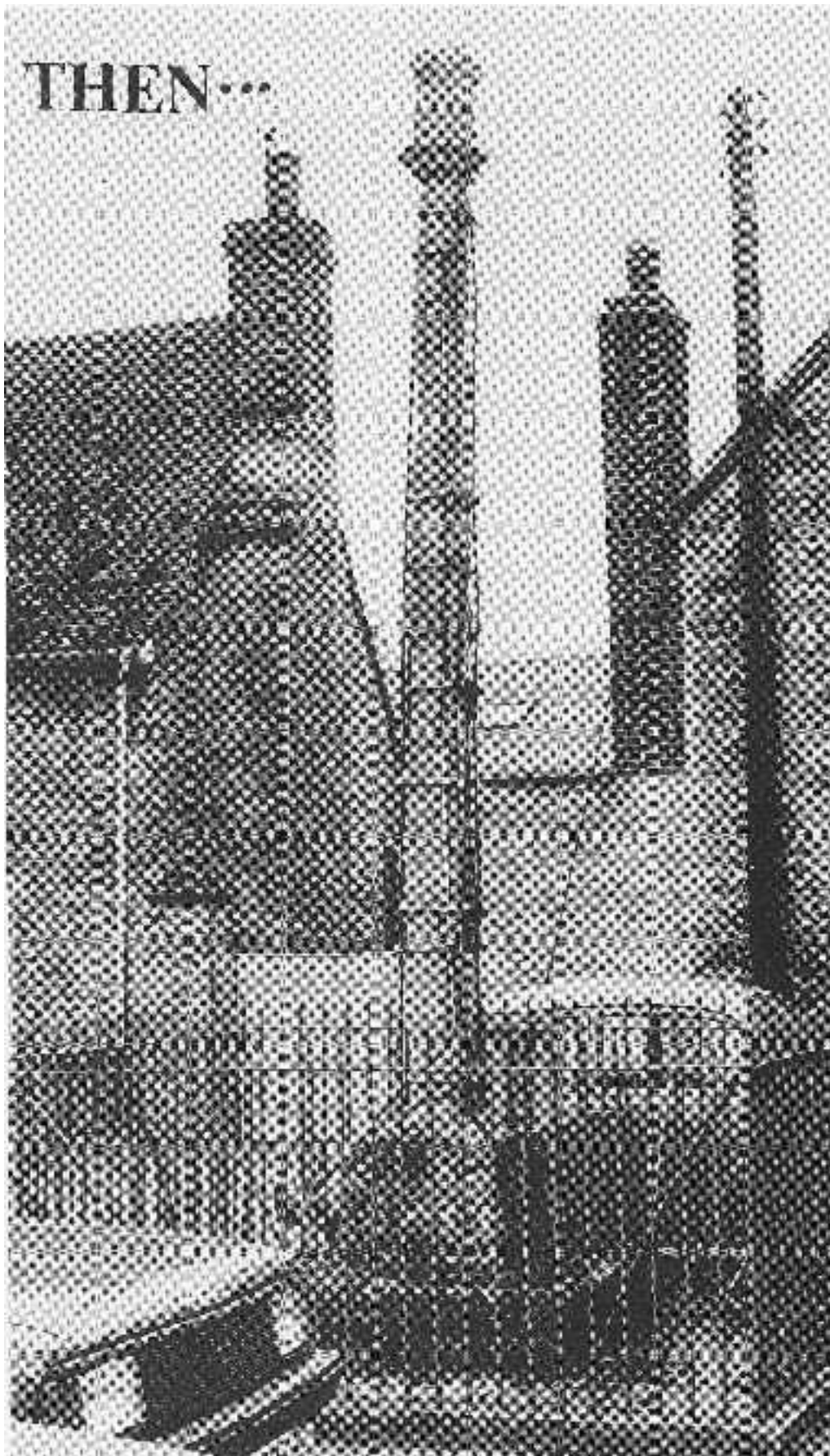
Joseph's grandfather, also Joseph Druce (1745-1821), was a churchwarden from 1794 to 1814 during the incumbency of Thomas Nash. Neither Samuel or Joseph, Senior, ever lived at Twelve Acre Farm, so can be firmly eliminated from this enquiry!

3. Bodl: MS Top. Oxon. d.214 (11)
4. 'Twas the night before Christmas when all through the house  
Not a creature was stirring - not even a mouse; .....
- A visit from St Nicholas*. 1823 poem by Clement Clarke Moore (1779-1863)
5. *V.C.H. Oxon.* xii, passim.

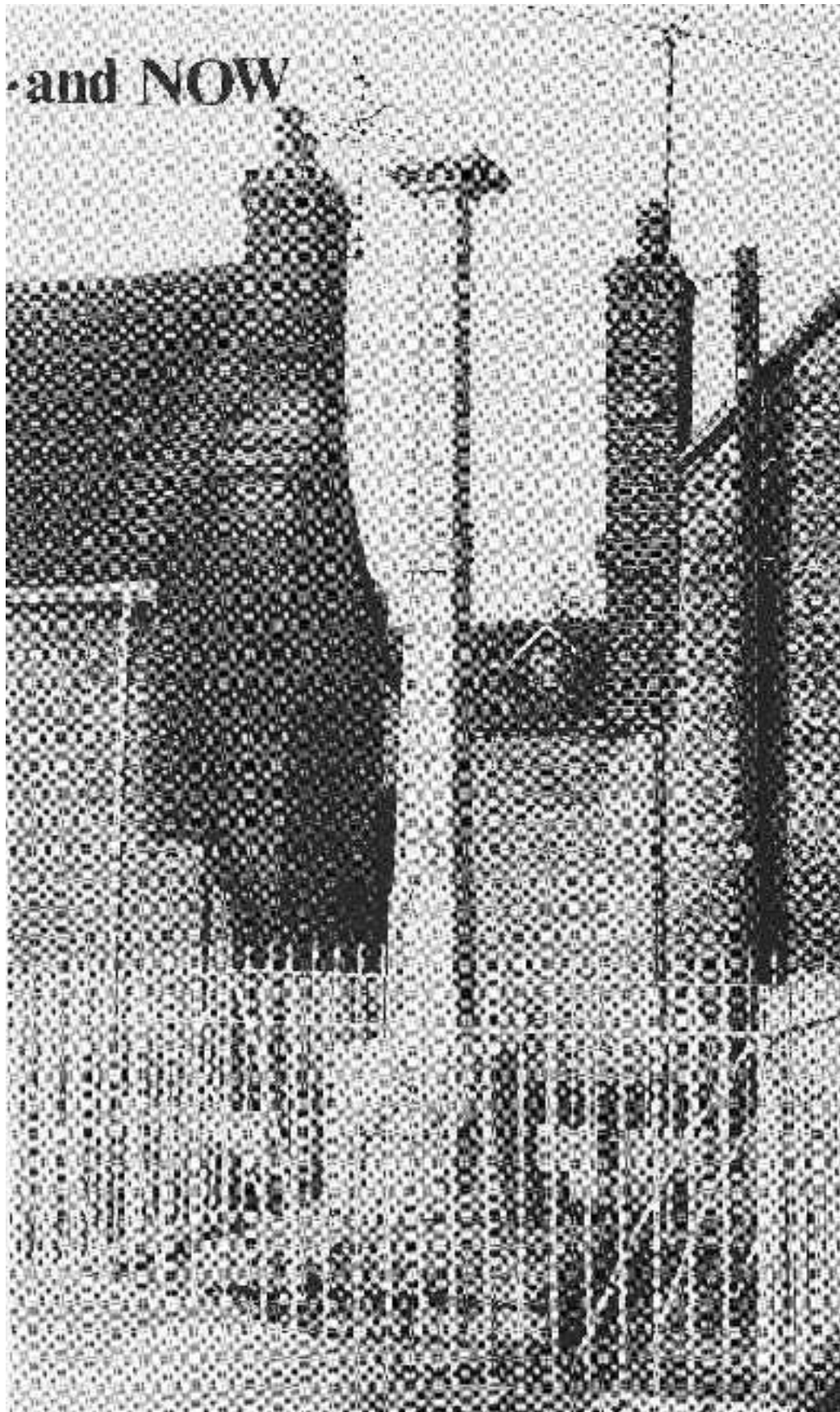
### *Acknowledgements*

I thank several members of the E.H.G. for their assistance:

Lilian Wright for providing details of the churchwardens of the 19th century, and for other information and help; Josie Smith for additional details concerning the Druce family; and Eileen Carlton and Mary Franklin, whose careful transcriptions of the Oxford diocesan records relating to Bricknell, proved to be very useful.



The old Market Cross, decaying beyond hope of repair.  
Both photographs by Sue Chapman.



The new Market Cross, February 1991, carved by Mr Bill Brown. The now shapeless mass at the top of the old cross is thought to have been added in post-medieval times, and has therefore been omitted in the new version.

# THOMAS SYMONDS AND THE CHARITY SCHOOL

by Donald S. Richards

Thomas Symonds, who was curate and then vicar of Eynsham for fifty years until 1845, the year of his death, was a good and devoted minister to his flock, as his memorial tablet on the north wall of the chancel in the parish church testifies. Education was a particular interest of his, witness his zeal in establishing the Sunday school, his efforts to start a National School<sup>1</sup>, his careful accounting over many years for the Charity (or Free) School, founded by John Bartholomew, and the draft application in his hand (circa 1820) for a grant from the Treasury to enlarge the existing School Room *'and augment the number of the poor Chil[dre] n in want of educa[tio]n, commensurate with the increasing population of the Parish & the general Desire for Instruction.'*<sup>2</sup> His care for the efficient working of the Free School is seen in his letters that survive from 1809, addressed to the then Bishop of Oxford. The school *'statutes'* he helped to draw up throw light on the attitudes and conditions of that age. The documents are presented with no change in their style or spelling.

[Ms. Oxf. Dioc. Papers, c. 659, fols. 29-30]

My Lord,

I have taken the Liberty of requesting your Lordship's Advice respecting the Regulation of a Free School in this Place. The Circumstances are these.

In the Year 1713 [a mistake for 1701] a Gentleman left £350 in the Hands of his Executors, to be afterwards vested in Trustees, then nominated, for the Purchase of Land, which he supposed would produce annually about £15. £10 of which he directed should be given to the SchoolMaster - & £5 for the apprenticing one of the Scholars annually - The Building of a School was not in his Contemplation: but this Deficiency was afterwards supplied by a Subscription.

From the Commencement of the Charity the Trustees have never failed to give the Master his full stipend - & the incidental Expences for the Repair of the School etc have always been deducted from the £5 allowed for the Boys, so that instead of placing out one every year there has seldom been more than one in two years.

The whole of the Rent has however been faithfully & invariably applied to the Uses of the Charity.

Your Lordship will observe that  $\frac{2}{3}^{\text{ds}}$  the Rent was designed & has been applied to the Payment of the Master & the remaining  $3^{\text{d}}$  Part to the Boys. Since the first Purchase of the Land its Value has in Course considerably increased & now lets for £46 - But till the Year 1797 the Stipend of the Master continued at £10. This I thought iniust and prevailed upon the other

Trustees to give him £12 - afterwards £15 and now £20. I am still inclined to imagine that we ought to give him  $\frac{2}{3}^{\text{ds}}$  & the Boys  $\frac{1}{3}^{\text{d}}$  after defraying the incidental Expences Because the Increase in the Value of the Land is almost sure to keep Pace with the Price of Provisions.

There are 3 Trustees & it unfortunately happens that one who is resident at Worcester & a Native of this Place has taken it into his Head to interfere a good Deal & by Way of making himself popular has been giving the Boys in Contradiction to the Masters Wishes the Liberty of being absent whenever they may be wanted for the Purposes of Hay Making Harvest or any field Work & is desirous of applying a greater Proportion of the Income to the apprenticing of the Boys than the Donor ever intended.

Now it so happens that we have no rules for the Regulation of our Conduct - for that of the Master or the Scholars & we go on intirely ad libitum. The Clergyman of the Place has generally had the principal Management & I do believe hitherto it has been conducted exceedingly well excepting with Regard to the Distribution of the Income for I do not think that the Master has had that Proportion to which he is entitled.

The Land now lets for £46 & in 5 or 6 years when the present Lease is expired it will certainly be much farther advanced. Now I wish to submit to your Lordship's Consideration whether it would not be adviseable to lay by the Overplus every Year for the Purpose of making an accumulating Fund for the Purchase of a House for the Master. He is at present satisfied with his Stipend & we should by this Means in the Course of 10 or 12 Years be enabled to make the purchase. This would be doing a permanent Benefit to the Charity & the Application of it would be for the Advantage of the Master if your Lordship is of Opinion that we should be justified in so doing.

And I think it would be still farther necessary to draw up a Body of rules for the Regulation of our Conduct as well as that of the Master & Scholars. And if your Lordship is of the same Opinion I will sketch them out & submit them for your Lordship's Approbation who I believe are ex Officio the superintendent of such Charities as have no Visitors appointed.

[There follow two paragraphs on a different topic which we may ignore].

I remain my Lord Your Lordships most obedient Servant,

Thomas Symonds

Ensham June 30.<sup>th</sup> 1809

Symonds' estimation of the rate of apprenticing was a little pessimistic. In the period 1702 -1833 exactly one hundred boys were '*put out*', which gives an average annually of 0.76. He was also strictly incorrect to claim that there were '*no Rules for the Regulation of our Conduct*'. John Bartholomew's original will had clearly not been detailed enough for that purpose, but an earlier vicar, John Goole, had in the 1738 Visitation Returns written of the Free School, '*The Statutes I made myselfe, and they are well observed on the Masters, and on the Boys part, as well as I can prevail upon them to observe them.*'<sup>8</sup>

Symonds' suggestion was obviously well received. A subsequent letter of his, dated July 6th, asked for an appointment with the Bishop to discuss the Free School and he promised to '*bring ... the necessary Documents.*'<sup>4</sup>

A meeting took place, at which the Bishop clearly raised some points that needed clarification. Therefore Symonds's next letter<sup>5</sup> referred to four questions on which he had approached a lawyer, '*A Friend of mine upon the Western Circuit.*' Who, for example, was entitled under John Bartholomew's will to inherit '*the Office of Feoffee*' (or trustee of the charity), and did the Churchwardens and Overseers of the Poor have any role? This letter also makes plain that the troublesome trustee from Worcester (the '*obnoxious Feoffee*' as Symonds called him) and the person who was probably the immediate stimulus for Symonds to try to regularise the workings of the school, was Mr. Knapp, the heir of the George Knapp mentioned in John Bartholomew's will. Symonds enclosed his lawyer friend's reply, but sadly it seems not to have survived.

However, the document that resulted from these discussion does survive, but probably still only in draft form, because there are above the line additions. This document is not dated but is clearly connected with the above correspondence. The paper is watermarked ME1806 and the additions are in Symond's handwriting.

[Ms. Oxf. Dioc. Papers, c. 450, fols. 51-53]

#### STATUTES and ORDERS FOR THE

Management of the Free School in the Parish of Ensham founded and endowed by John Bartholomew and other private subscriptions, and now under the Controul of certain Feofees appointed according to the last Will and Testament of the said John Bartholomew.

The Master of the said school shall be nominated and appointed by the Feofees. He shall be a Member of the Church of England and duly qualified to instruct the Scholars in reading writing and Arithmetic. He shall be a Man of unblamable life and Conversation.

If any Person so elected shall afterwards be found to be insufficient or negligent or upon just accusation shall be detected in any scandalous Crime; or shall discountenance Religion as by Law established; or shall take upon himself any other charge or employment to the hindrance of performing the Duty of the said Place, The Feofees shall upon their own knowledge or certain Information thereof Remove him from his Situation, and cease all further Payments to Him and appoint another Person qualified *as* above and under the Provisions and Limitations before expressed.

The said Schoolmaster shall be constantly resident and attendant upon the Duties of the said School and if he, being in Health, shall be absent above 9 days at any one time (except by permission of two or more of the Trustees one of whom shall be the resident Minister) and shall neglect the instruction and teaching of the said Scholars so that there shall be reasonable Ground for Complaint the Feofees shall then admonish Him of his Absence or Negligence and if the said

Master so admonished shall not immediately amend that then the Feofees shall give Him three Months Notice and from that Time shall cease all further Payment to him.

The School shall be free for twelve poor Boys who shall belong to the Parish of Ensham (ten of which shall be upon the Foundation; One of the two Remaining shall be elected every Vacancy and in the place of him so elected upon the Foundation another shall be recommended by the Trustees) which said Boys shall be instructed in reading Writing and Arithmetic.<sup>6</sup> And if it shall happen that the Children shall not amount to ten the Number assigned by the Donor then the Trustees may admit into the Freedom of the School the children of such Parents who may inhabit within the Parish of Ensham so that the Number of ten may be kept up for ever according to the true Meaning of the Will.

No Children that have upon them any infectious disease, shall, during the same Time be admitted; or if, after admission any shall fall into any such Malady, they shall be removed until they be perfectly Cured.

[fol. 52] Each Boy upon the Foundation shall wear on his left Sleeve the Letter B of different coloured Cloth or of Brass.

One Boy shall be annually put out apprentice if there should be any sufficiently advanced in their Education, and if the funds will admit of it.

The Schoolmaster shall at his own expense provide Books, Pens, Ink and Paper for the Ten Boys who shall have been admitted upon the Foundation as aforesaid.

No Boy shall be deemed a Free Boy unless it be by appointment of the Trustees at their annual Meeting; or unless he produce to the Master in the Hand Writing of two or more of the Trustees a Recommendation from them, which said Recommendation shall be entered in a Book kept for that purpose by the Master specifying the Date of Admission.

The Scholars shall have notice of the time of their repairing to School by the Ringing of a Bell, by some one of the said Poor Scholars to be by the Master appointed from Time to Time for that Purpose: who shall also take Care to sweep the School.

The Hours of coming to and departing from School shall be from the 21<sup>st</sup> of March to the 21<sup>st</sup> of September from 7 oClock in the Morning until 12 and from 2 oClock in the Afternoon until 5. And from the 21<sup>st</sup> of September until the 21<sup>st</sup> of March they shall repair to School at 8 oClock in the Morning and continue till 4 oClock in the Afternoon, two Hours being allowed for Dinner Time.

The first Duty to be performed every Morning shall be a Short and Solemn Form of Prayer to God for a Blessing immediately shall follow the distinct Reading of a Chapter in the Holy Scriptures by one of the Scholars as the Master shall direct and appoint Likewise before their dismissal in the Evening they shall close the Day with Prayer and Thanksgiving. And the Master is enjoined to see and take care that those religious Duties be solemnly performed and attended to.

No Scholar shall be absent without the Permission of the Master and if anyone shall have so absented himself 3 several Times after admonition of the Scholar and due Notice given to his

Parents, (unless in some extraordinary Case, of which the Trustees shall determine, he shall be deprived of his Freedom and be incapable of Readmission unless the Trustees shall otherwise order).

All disobedient and stubborn Boys shall after two or three Admonitions if they so continue, be expelled the School.

No Scholar shall at any Time cut or deface the Forms or Desks, Break the Windows or do any other Injury whatsoever to the School House, nor shall in any Manner abuse the Books belonging to the Master or Scholars under the Pain of exemplary Punishment.

[fol. 53] In order that the ten<sup>9</sup> Free Scholars may not be neglected the Master shall not at any time increase the Number of his other Scholars beyond such a Number as may appear to the Trustees impracticable for one Man to Educate.

All these Statutes and Orders made for the Free Scholars privileged by the Founder shall be duly observed by all the other Scholars and no Scholar that is not comprehended within the Freedom of the School shall be admitted but such as do submit to one and all the Same Government.

The Master is allowed to make what Terms he pleases for the teaching of others.

The Trustees shall meet on the Tuesday in Easter Week and settle all accounts belonging to the School; shall examine the Master's Diligence and the Scholars due Proficiency. and shall hear and determine all Matters of Difference that shall arise between the Master and Scholars and their determination shall be binding to all the Parties concerned.

These Statutes and orders fairly written in a Book kept for that Purpose shall be openly and distinctly read once every Quarter of a year by the Master to all the Scholars so that none may plead ignorance thereof.

The Vacations shall be a month at Christmas and a Month at Midsummer.

On Application of the Parents of either [*sic*, meaning 'any'] of the Boys within the Freedom of the School to the Resident Minister <or his licensed Curate> and on their producing <to the Master> a written Certificate under his hand, such Boy shall be allowed to be absent during the time specified in such Certificate.

The Scholars shall assemble at the School House every Sunday Morning and Evening immediately before divine Service and preceded by the Master shall proceed to Church.

<The Schoolmaster shall punctually attend divine Service.>



The text within angled brackets is the additional matter in the hand of Thomas Symonds himself. I wonder what little story lies behind the last extra clause? At the bottom left-hand corner of the last sheet there is a statement of the expenses to be borne by the schoolmaster:

24 writing Books	_____	12.0
Pens per Ann	_____	2.0
Ink	_____	1.0
One Testamt	_____	1.6
Spelling Books	_____	1.6
Slate and Pencil	_____	1.0
Summing Books	_____	<u>3.0</u>

£1.2.0 pr. Ann. for each Boy.

As there were ten boys to be provided for by the schoolmaster, one may well imagine that he - at this time it was Joseph Foster - welcomed the extra paying pupils he could take. In 1808 they numbered between forty and fifty.<sup>8</sup>

#### *Footnotes and references*

1. See *V.C.H. Oxon.* xii, p.155.
2. Bodl: Ms. Top. Oxon., c. 200, fol. 75.
3. Oxon. Arch: Ms. Oxf. Dioc. Papers, d. 552, fol. 227a.
4. Oxon. Arch: Ms. Oxf. Dioc. Papers, c. 659, fol. 36.
5. Oxon. Arch: Ms. Oxf. Dioc. Papers, c. 659, fol. 75.
6. The ten boys educated '*upon the Foundation*' are those envisaged by John Bartholomew's will. The other '*two free scholars*' are those provided for by the will of William Plasterer of West End, Stanton Harcourt, dated 24 April 1711 (Ms. Oxf. Wills 145/2/3).
7. A mistake for 12?
8. Oxon. Arch: Ms. Oxf. Dioc. Papers, d. 707, fol. 64.

# MELODRAMA (1927) AND DRAMA (1960s) AT EYNSHAM STATION

By Don Chapman

You may recall the *film, Oh, Mr Porter*, featuring Will Hay, the celebrated comedian of the inter-war years, in charge of a forgotten country railway station.

That 1937 classic came to mind when I visited Eynsham Railway Station for the first time in the course of my professional duties as an *Oxford Mail* journalist in 1968.

The modest establishment, which stood where the Oxford Instruments Group headquarters are now at the bottom of Station Road, was only a shadow of its former self. A goods train still trundled through on its way from Oxford to Witney twice a week, but it was six years since the last passenger train had called on 16 June 1962, and four years since a goods train had stopped with a parcel of freight.

Officially, the station had ceased to exist, though it would be another two years before the Oxford-Fairford branch line finally became a thing of the past. Grass grew through the cracks in the platform. The goods shed had become a scene dock for the Oxford Playhouse Company. And there, believe it or not, hard at work helping the company carpenter, Larry Nolan, were two of the branch-line's most loyal servants: former Witney stationmaster John Barnby and retired Eynsham signalman Fred Tovey (Fig.1).

Fred served 45 of his 48 years on the railway at Eynsham. When he first came to take charge of the goods yard in 1920 as a lad of 19, the station boasted a staff of six and handled eight passenger trains and two goods trains every day, not to mention seaside, blanket, and other specials.

No more than 30 passengers passed through the booking hall on an average day, but goods traffic was booming. Six or eight vehicles of stinking bones with three or four inches of maggots in the bottom were delivered to the glue factory, turned into glue, size and candle fat, then sent on their way again.

There were loads of beet for the experimental sugar factory where Oxford Magnet Technology is now. There were loads of asphalt made in the station yard for Oxfordshire roads. And there were loads of coal, timber, groceries and all the other necessities of life for the population round about.

Seven years after Fred arrived in Eynsham, the most notorious episode in the station's history occurred on 5 December 1927, and it was obviously a film of a very



Fig. 1 *Main picture.*

Fred Tovey, and John Barnby (in the glasses), former Witney stationmaster, hand down a stage-set door to Oxford Playhouse Company's resident carpenter, Larry Nolan, at Eynsham station in 1968. Fred Tovey was a railwayman at Eynsham in 1927, the year of the hold-up.

Fig. 2. *Top left.*

The Eynsham station safe which Browne and Kennedy tried to crack in December 1927, photographed in 1968 when it was in use by the Oxford Playhouse Company. Both photographs by courtesy of Oxford & County Newspapers.

different nature that sprang to the *Oxford Times* reporter's mind when he came out to Eynsham to record the event.

'A sensational hold-up and robbery,' he began, 'suggestive of the thrilling scenes sometimes depicted in the cinema, took place at Eynsham Railway Station during the early hours of Monday.

'Two men, heavily masked and each armed with a revolver, were surprised by a railway porter while they were endeavouring to steal the safe from the Stationmaster's office, and they immediately threatened him with their revolvers, bound him and tied him to a chair...'

Little did he or the police investigating the crime realise it, but the two men were criminals on the run, whose subsequent trial would shock the nation every bit as much as any fictional epic of the silent cinema.

The porter was Frederick Charles Castle (see Fig.3) and he gave the reporter a remarkably lucid and detailed description of his experience.

"I was coming home on my motor-cycle after seeing a friend, arriving at the station just after midnight. As I entered the station yard I shut off the engine and turned out the light with a view to putting the machine away.

"As I neared the platform I saw two men near a shed and thinking something was wrong I shouted 'What are you doing?' The men who were of medium height and build, one wearing a soft felt hat pulled well down over his eyes and the other a motoring helmet, immediately swung round and as they approached me I noticed that they had handkerchiefs masking their faces.

"Covering me with revolvers they ordered me to put my hands up. They told me to put my motor-cycle on the stand and then marched me along the platform to the station-master's office, the door of which they had forced open. It was pitch dark but the two men used small electric torches.

"Tying my hands behind my back they sat me in a chair and bound me to it. With the view presumably of showing me that they were in earnest they opened the revolvers and showed me that they were fully loaded and told me to keep quiet. By the light of the torches I was able to see that they had forced the lock of the cupboard in which the safe was kept (Fig.2).

"The safe was bolted to the floor but the men had tried to get it free by sawing the boards round it after making a hole in the floor with a brace and bit. They asked me for the keys, but I had not got them and told them they were with Mr May, the station-master (see Fig.3).

"The men then went through my pockets, but could find nothing but my wallet which they returned remarking: 'We don't rob poor men, but the railway company can afford to lose something.' I was then asked where the station-master lived and when I told them one of the men left the office and I was left for a long time with his accomplice.



Fig. 3. The staff of Eynsham railway station in the 1920s. Left to right: (standing) Ernest Walker, carman; Fred Tovey, in charge of the goods yard; Albert Mumford, signalman; Frank Betteridge, signalman; (seated) A.J. May, Stationmaster; and Fred Castle, office porter.

Photograph courtesy of Oxford & County Newspapers.

"I was treated with every consideration and was even asked to have a drink from a flask. When the other man came back they released me from the chair, but did not untie my hands. After this they walked me along the platform onto the railway lines. About 300 yards along they trussed me up like a fowl and put me in a small signal box at the side of the line, which we call a ground frame. Here they left me.

"After repeated attempts I managed to get free. I at once dashed over to the station-master's house, woke him up by throwing gravel at his window and after I had explained to him what had happened I fetched the police constable.

"When we made a search we discovered that the men had stolen the station-master's typewriter, a case of tobacco (weighing 120 lb.) and several other parcels of merchandise. It was an alarming experience and one which I should not like every day."

But it would have been even more alarming for Fred Castle had he known that the two men, who had driven along the railway track in their car for more than a mile to get to the station without attracting attention, were no lesser criminals than Frederick Guy Browne and William Henry Kennedy, both later to be hanged for the murder of an Essex policeman.

On the night of 26 September, some ten weeks before the Eynsham station hold-up, PC Gutteridge of Stapleford Abbots had stopped Browne and Kennedy driving a stolen Morris between Romford and Ongar. When challenged, Browne shot the constable twice through the cheek with a Webley revolver, then twice more - once through each eye - saying "What are you looking at me like that for?". It was suggested that Browne, like other superstitious criminals, may have thought that his image would be imprinted in the dead constable's eyes.

Why had the murderers chosen to rob Eynsham station all those weeks later, and to approach it by such an awkward route, bumping their car along the sleepers from the west in the dark, and disengaging the vehicle from the track with the aid of a wagon tarpaulin found at the station? Knowledge of the local geography and the whereabouts of the safe were implied, and, indeed, it turned out that Browne had once lived in the village!

In the words of the *Oxford Times* reporter after the trial, Browne had at one time lived in Oxford and subsequently went to Eynsham where he lived at a house on the main road at the Cassington Turn. He carried on the business of a cycle agent in the name of Brown (without the final 'e').

According to 'a well-known Eynsham tradesman, "He was an extraordinarily good mechanic and could do any mortal thing. He used to keep very much to himself and always seemed to be out at nights ..."

'To all appearances he was a business-like man and evidently had a sense of humour' for on one of the notice boards displayed over his shop 'was printed in gilt lettering the verse:

Here lives a man who'd neer refuse  
To mend all kinds of inner tubes.  
All kinds of cycles he'll repair,  
And only charge you what is fair.  
I'll mend a puncture in your tyre,  
I'll let you out a bike on hire.  
The rate is good, the work is just,  
The profits are small so cannot trust\*.

"He had a good clientele in the neighbourhood and his work gave every satisfaction. He had a good stock of bicycles and it is alleged that he used to steal them, take them to pieces, repaint them and then sell them at a cheap price. This practice eventually led to his coming under the notice of the police and he left Eynsham under police escort in 1910.'

During World War I Browne served as a sapper on the Western Front, and Stanley Jenkins suggests that his experiences there may have turned a petty criminal into the ruthless killer of 1927.

Porter Fred Castle may well have owed his survival on that frightening December night of 1927 to his age. He was then only 22 and would not have known Browne. An older Eynsham man might have been able to recognise Browne's face, even behind his mask; and perhaps this explains why Browne did not himself wake stationmaster May to demand the key to the safe.

The capture, arrest, trial and execution of Browne and Kennedy are only indirectly part of Eynsham's history.

The pair were 'shopped' by a convict pal who claimed the £2000 *News of the World* reward and then left the country. Browne was arrested by officers from Scotland Yard, acting on information from the Sheffield police, as he returned to a garage he owned near Clapham Junction, and Kennedy was picked up in Liverpool.

\* i.e. 'I cannot give credit'.

The trial, held at the Old Bailey during April 1928, was reported in great detail by the national and local press. The gruesome nature of the policeman's death, and the relative novelty of the forensic evidence presented by Sir Wyndham Child, a firearms expert, exerted a popular fascination.

The case against Browne and Kennedy was overwhelming. Child proved that the lethal bullets had been fired from the Webley revolver found in Browne's possession at the time of his arrest; and that items recovered from his garage belonged to a Dr Lovell, whose stolen car was used on the night of the murder. The link with the Eynsham station hold-up was established by the discovery of the stationmaster's typewriter.

Both men were found guilty, and at 9 a.m. on May 31 1928, Browne was executed at Pentonville and Kennedy at Wandsworth.

A day or two after I recounted the story of Browne and Kennedy's robbery in the Anthony Wood Column, which I wrote for the *Oxford Mail* from 1964 to 1985, I received a call from another old railwayman, Reg Taylor of Blew bury, pointing out that Eynsham was not the only station the pair broke into on their sorry progress to the gallows. It was one of several, all following the same pattern.

At Tilehurst, where he was a porter at the time, they missed the petty cash bag, which he had tossed into the waste-paper basket to save himself a long walk to the signal box. But they walked off with the chocolate for reloading the station slot machine and his best dark brown courting suit!

As recently as 1968, the Eynsham Station safe that Browne and Kennedy tried to crack was in use by Larry Nolan, the Playhouse Company's resident carpenter (Figs. 1 & 2).

### *Sources*

Most of this story is taken from my 'Anthony Wood' columns of September 10 & 11 and October 3 of 1968, published in the *Oxford Mail*.

Some additional details are from Jenkins, S.C. *The Fairford Branch (The Witney & East Gloucestershire Railway)*, Oakwood Press, 1985.



# THE MARTIN MEMORIAL IN ST LEONARD'S EYNSHAM; A LINK WITH JANE AUSTEN



By Lilian Wright

For some time I had suspected a connection between the Martin (Martyn)<sup>1</sup> family of Eynsham and the novelist Jane Austen. During the autumn of 1990 we studied her novels in a WEA English Literature course, and this prompted me to investigate the link (suggested by the place name Chawton, which was much later to become Jane Austen's home).

In St Leonard's Church, on the wall above the pulpit, is a marble memorial tablet dedicated to members of the Martin family. The inscription reads :

To the dear memory  
of  
MICHAEL MARTIN GENT: who died 14 Oct 1681  
(Heir at law to Sr RICHARD KNIGHT) who  
devised his estate to RICHARD the son of MICHAEL  
and his heirs for ever by the name of KNIGHT  
And of  
FRANCES MARTIN his wife, daughter of Sr  
CHRISTOPH: LEWKNER of Sussex who died  
the 30th Jan. 1676  
And of  
RICHARD KNIGHT Esq. son of MICHAEL and  
FRANCES who died of the Smallpox at  
Oxford ye 28th May 1687 and lies buried  
by his father and mother near this place.  
CHRISTOPHER KNIGHT Esq. died Oct 22 1702  
and lies buried at Chawton in South'ton the  
ancient seat of the KNIGHTS  
Elizabeth Knight their onely and  
surviving Daughter and Sister  
dutifully erected this  
Monument



Burke's *Dictionary of the Landed Gentry of 1847*<sup>2</sup> enabled me to compile the genealogical table (Fig.1), which shows the Martins of Eynsham to the left and Jane Austen at bottom right. There was no direct blood relationship, and the connection on such a chart can be made only by virtue of some marriages. In strictly genealogical terms it is probably not particularly worthy of note. But there is an interwoven thread, involving the surname Knight, and an inheritance passing down and across the generations via the Martins of Eynsham to one of Jane Austen's brothers. This inheritance was substantial; it included landed estates at Chawton, and caused no fewer than six of the principal characters in this account to change their surnames to Knight - a common condition of major inheritances in those times, the names and arms' clause in a will.

To follow the story, frequent reference to Fig.1 is recommended! Unless otherwise indicated quotations are from either the memorial tablet or Burke's *Dictionary 2*'

In the early 17th century this fortune was in the hands of Stephen Knight Esq. of Chawton (near Alton in Hampshire), ancient seat of the Knights (see top left, Fig.1). Stephen's daughter Dorothy married Richard Martin of Eynsham, but on Stephen's death in 1628 the Chawton seat and fortune passed to his son, Richard Knight, and in due course (1642) to his grandson, Sir Richard Knight, who died childless in 1679.

The male Knight line had ended.

According to the St Leonard's memorial the fortune now passed to Sir Richard Knight's cousin, Michael Martin of Eynsham (his 'heir at law'), who did not change his surname, and outlived Sir Richard Knight by only two years. According to Burke's *Dictionary*<sup>2</sup>, however, the Knight inheritance passed not to Michael but to his son, Richard. Perhaps the estates were transferred to Michael in trust for Richard? Note that Richard's mother was descended from the May family of Kent (Fig.1, central portion); this connection was to become an important link in the chain.

Richard enjoyed his inheritance for only eight years, dying prematurely '*of the Smallpox*' and childless in 1687, when it passed '*sideways*' to his brother Christopher Martin, now to be Christopher Knight (of Eynsham), and in turn, when Christopher died childless in 1702, to their sister Elizabeth Martin of Eynsham who likewise changed her name to Knight and, despite two marriages, also died childless (1737).

The fortune and family seat had been linked with Eynsham for 58 years, but the Eynsham Martin's had died out<sup>3</sup>. Where was it to go next?

After some short-lived complications, involving a branch of the Martin family (the Hintons)<sup>4</sup>, it now passed to Elizabeth's second cousin on her mother's side, Thomas Broadnax. He had already '*relinquished his patronymic & assumed the surname of*

*MAY'* in order to inherit estates at Godmersham in Kent where he rebuilt the mansion. Now he assumed the Knight surname, and became Thomas Knight of Godmersham and Chawton.

His wife Jane (née Monk) was a descendant of John Austen of Grovehurst in Kent (see top right of Fig.1), and on the death of Thomas Broadnax/May/Knight in 1781, the Godmersham and Chawton estates and fortune devolved to their son Thomas Knight.

Yet again the direct line of descent was to be broken, for the younger Thomas died without issue in 1794. His nearest blood relations, it seems, were his 3rd cousins, the Austens, who included Edward Austen and Jane Austen (see bottom right of Fig.2). Thomas had adopted Edward Austen to whom the inheritance (finally, for the purposes of this account) now passed.

This is the concluding link. Edward Austen, now Edward Knight of Godmersham and Chawton, was able to help his mother and sisters, including Jane, by providing them with a home at Chawton, once a posting house and alehouse, on the Chawton Manor estates (Fig.2). Jane settled here in July 1809 and it was to be her home for the rest of her short life. These were 'years of serenity and success, of growing confidence in her powers'<sup>5</sup> during which she revised or wrote all her major novels.



Fig. 2 Jane Austen's home at Chawton, Hampshire.

Burke's *Dictionary*, which provided most of the details of this story, concludes the section on the Austen family with the following understated comment on one of the very greatest writers in the English language:

*Jane born 14 Dec 1775 & died unmarried 18 July 1817.*

*This lady acquired a high reputation as a novelist, and has left behind her some of the best modern productions in that walk of literature. We need only name Sense & Sensibility, Pride & Prejudice, and Emma. Miss Austen's style was her own - domestic, interesting and original?*

#### *Footnotes and references*

1. There are other 17th century Martin memorials in St Leonard's, none directly relevant to the main story. The name 'Martyn' occurs in sundry Eynsham records since at least 1503/4, and a rent collector of 1422, John Martyn, may have been an Eynsham man (*Cart. Eynsham*, vol.2, p.x).
2. Burke's *Dictionary of the Landed Gentry* Vol.I A-L, 1847.
3. In the *V.C.H. Oxon.* xii, p.111, the Martins are described as 'a *leading Eynsham family*' who owned the Shrubbery in High St. and its associated estate throughout most, if not all of the 17th century. In 1650 this property, much larger than it is today, was held by Thomas King D.D. (see Atkins, F.B. *John Whiting's Survey of Eynsham, 1650, E.R.*, No.6, 40-50, 1989); but King, a sequestered clergyman, was then the notional owner only by virtue of his marriage to Dorothy Martin (née Knight) after the death of her first husband Richard Martin.
4. Elizabeth '*devised her estates in tail male to, first Thomas May of Godmersham; second to William Lloyd of Newbury; & third John Hinton (descended from the Martins) to whom she likewise bequeathed the next presentation to her Rectory of Chawton with remainder over to her own right heirs, Edward Hinton of Sheering being at the time of her decease, her heir at law.*' Burke's *Dictionary*. op.cit.
5. Chapman, R.W. *Jane Austen; Selected Letters*. Oxford University Press, 1955, p.106.

## **R.A.F. EYNESHAM**

**by Peter W.Davis**

During the early stages of World War II there were some nine major high explosive underground storage sites in Britain which, to reduce the likelihood of air attack, were all situated west of a line from Southampton to Edinburgh. These were called Ammunition Depots and could hold stocks of up to 25,000 tons of explosives.

These stocks would then be routed by road or rail to smaller units known as Air Ammunition Parks, which would have holdings of about 1000 tons, for onward supply to bomber airfields within an approximate radius of 25 miles.

Royal Air Force Eynsham was one such unit, tactically located near good road and rail facilities. Whilst Oxfordshire did not have any dedicated bomber bases, being too far west, the 25 mile radius included at various times bomber Operational Training Units (OTUs) at Abingdon, Barford St John, Benson, Bicester, Edgehill, Enstone, Grove, Harwell, Mount Farm, Stanton Harcourt and Upper Heyford. Aircraft from Abingdon, Edgehill, Harwell, Stanton Harcourt and Upper Heyford took part in the first 'Thousand Bomber' raid which attacked Cologne on 30/31 May 1942. OTUs were to take part in many of the large raids in the following months, supplementing the squadron aircraft.

The Air Ammunition Park at Eynsham was designated No 96 Maintenance Unit and was opened in mid-1941, being situated half a mile south-west of the village adjacent to the Stanton Harcourt Road. Some buildings have survived and are today in use for farm purposes.

In late 1941, to overcome the very wasteful use of manpower, the system was streamlined to cut out all unnecessary handling of the explosives. The Ammunition Depots now became Reserve Ammunition Depots, and Air Ammunition Parks such as Eynsham's became Forward Ammunition Depots (FADs). Factories now delivered about 95% directly to the FADs, but in some circumstances directly to the airfields. By late 1944 it was estimated that 25% was being delivered direct to the airfields. An improvement in efficiency of 60%, compared with the earlier system, was recorded.

As an FAD, Eynsham's capacity was increased to 6000 tons. The Unit's diary, preserved in the Public Record Office, reveals some interesting facts which, had they been known to local inhabitants at the time, might have given some cause for concern!

Samples of the diary entries speak for themselves:

- 17 June 1941 No 96 Maintenance Unit opened
- 18 June 1941 First personnel arrived
- 23 June 1941 Telephone No. Eynsham 273 allocated
- 24 June 1941 First intake of explosives
- 30 June 1941 Defence personnel arrived
  - June 1941 181 tons of explosive received in 32 rail trucks
  - July 1941 1429 tons of explosive received in 187 rail trucks
  - Aug. 1941 694½ tons of explosive received in 124 rail trucks
  - Sept. 1941 580 tons of explosive received in 96 rail trucks
  - Oct. 1941 145 tons of explosive received in 24 rail trucks, plus 2 tons by road
  - Nov. 1941 5 tons of explosive received by road
- 28 Nov. 1941 First consignment of 'Y' from Benson ['Y' was the code letter for chemical weapons]
- 20 Dec. 1941 Fl.Lt. Ralph Reader & the 'Gang Show' visited
- 8 Feb. 1942 2840 201b. bombs issued to Royal Australian Air Force
- 14 Feb. 1942 Panic when a training aircraft crashed near the unit
- 21 Sept 1942 Hut erected for bomb-filling plant
- 3 April 1943 In 18 hours 442 tons of bombs were manhandled onto railway trucks
- 23 Sept. 1943 Airfield construction workers arrived to begin work on a satellite storage unit at Eynsham Hall Park
- 14 April 1945 Unit and satellite reported as filled to capacity
  - June 1945 Eynsham Hall taken over [previously used by USAF as a rest home for officers]
  - April 1946 Unit transferred to RAF Kidlington [as parent station]
  - Nov. 1951 No 96 Maintenance Unit disbanded

In addition to the scare on 14/2/1942, recorded above, a Whitley bomber trainer (BD 234), and a Magister trainer (V 1067) also crashed near Eynsham, on 16/1/1943, and on 7/2/1944 respectively. Had Eynsham Hall Park been in use in 1940 there would have been an even greater scare; on 8 September of that year an Oxford trainer actually crashed in the park.

### *Sources*

*Airfield Review*, Vol.10 No.2 October 1988 (The journal of the Airfield Research Group).

No 96 Maintenance Unit's Diary, held in the Public Record Office.  
Personal Records.

THE VICTORIA HISTORY OF THE COUNTIES OF ENGLAND

*announces the publication of*

# OXFORDSHIRE

VOLUME TWELVE:

WOOTTON HUNDRED (SOUTH)  
including Woodstock and Blenheim

Published for the

University of London Institute of Historical Research

by

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

NOTE: THE IMAGE SHOWN HERE WAS SADLY UNUSABLE.

Images have been re-sized throughout to reduce the overall size of this .pdf file.  
Back numbers of the Eynsham Record are available in print for £1 plus p&p.

Contact the Editor Brian Atkins, 8 Thornbury Road tel 01865 881677  
email [brian@fbatkins.free-online.co.uk](mailto:brian@fbatkins.free-online.co.uk)

or Fred Bennett, 68 Witney Road tel 01865 880659

THE MARKET PLACE, EYNHAM, IN 1826



A HISTORY OF THE COUNTY OF  
**OXFORD**

*EDITED BY ALAN CROSSLEY*

VOLUME TWELVE:  
WOOTTON HUNDRED (SOUTH)

This volume contains the histories of fifteen ancient parishes and several extraparochial places north and west of Oxford. The small boroughs of Eynsham and Woodstock are richly documented, allowing particularly full accounts of their topography and economic development. The area was dominated by a large medieval royal estate centred on Woodstock Park, and by its successor, the Blenheim estate; original sources for both are here re-examined, and major amendments made to earlier accounts of Blenheim Palace, its park, and gardens. Most villages in the area were nucleated, but some lying within the royal forest of Wychwood had dispersed settlement patterns and were affected by intercommoning and other forest customs. Open-field farming prevailed but there was also some extensive early inclosure. Complex meadow customs survived, notably at Yarnton. At Cogges and Eynsham in the early 13th century there were comparable borough extensions, both called Newland, and Cogges provides an example of the layout of an important early-medieval manorial centre. Later-medieval distress in the area is reflected in the number of deserted and shrunk village sites, some identified here for the first time. Prominent local industries were gloving, centred on Woodstock and carried on in many villages, and the manufacture in the 18th century of steel jewellery at Woodstock. Kidlington, Stanton Harcourt, and North and South Leigh have notable churches. Among the larger houses are Stanton Harcourt manor house, associated with Alexander Pope, and Eynsham Hall, probably first built by a London theatre owner interested in coal-mining on Eynsham heath.

The fifteen parishes included are Begbroke, Bladon, Cassington, Cogges, Combe, Eynsham, Hanborough, Kidlington, North Leigh, South Leigh, Shipton-on-Cherwell, Stanton Harcourt, Wilcote, Wolvercote, and Yarnton. Woodstock, a chapelry of Bladon, and Blenheim Park, an extraparochial place, are treated separately in the volume.

*528 pages including index, with 20 pages of plates, 27 text illustrations, cloth, 310 mm. £60.*

ISBN 0 19 722774 0

# THE NEW V.C.H. OXON

## Some facts and figures, and a first impression

by Brian Atkins

The Victoria History of the County of Oxford, Volume 12, published in the autumn of 1990 lives up to the very high standards long associated with this nation-wide project.

This is not the book to take to bed for an easy read before 'lights out'. It weighs about 5 lbs, and the text is very terse and factual, dense with names of places and people -and numbers (dates, land areas, sums of money, census figures, and superscript references to thousands of footnotes). It costs £60.

But do use it! As befits its importance, the history of the parish of Eynsham gets handsome coverage. Alan Crossley, the editor of the Oxon. series, has personally researched this section, and devotes to Eynsham some 60 pages, 5 Plates and 2 maps, with no fewer than 1512 footnotes (chiefly references). The *Eynsham Record* is cited some 23 times!

While its chief use to the local historian lies in the wealth of factual information brought together in one book, it is, of course, not the last word. It would be foolish to think that the history of the parish (up to 1990) is now fully revealed and analysed. On the contrary, it serves to inspire the amateur researcher by providing a host of primary sources of which he was probably unaware, and which invite further and more detailed investigation.

Both Joan Weedon and I have spotted errors, inevitable in such a book, and no doubt there will be others. It would be useful if we compile a list of these, and I invite readers to send me details of any errors of fact which they happen to notice. I suspect that it will be a short list.

If you don't buy your own copy, you will certainly want to consult the volume from time to time in the library. If the publishers could be persuaded to produce off-prints of the Eynsham section for say £6.50 (the same price per page as the full volume) they would sell a lot of copies hereabouts.

# EYNESHAM HISTORY GROUP

Founded 1959

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

New members are welcome.

The current subscription is £3.50 per annum (excluding the Record).

Please apply to the Secretary for further details.

President The Rt. Revd. Eric Gordon, 45, Queen St., Eynsham

Chairman: Mr D.S. Richards, 6, Abbey St., Eynsham

Vice-Chairman: Mrs J. Weedon, 2, Clover Place, Eynsham

Secretary: Mrs L. Wright, Charfield, Cassington Rd., Eynsham

Programme Secretary: Mrs J. Smith, 8, Tilgarsley Rd., Eynsham

Social Secretaries: { Mrs P.M. Atkins, 8, Thornbury Rd., Eynsham  
{ Mrs J. Weedon, 2, Clover Place, Eynsham

Treasurer: Mr S.G. Green, 55, Witney Rd., Eynsham

Editor: Dr F.B. Atkins, 8, Thornbury Rd., Eynsham

Librarians } { Mrs P. Pimm, Witney Rd., Eynsham  
Archivists } Mrs S. White, 10, Millmore Crescent, Eynsham

Committee members: Mrs J. Buttrick, 46, Evans Rd., Eynsham  
Mr E. V. Hibbert, 2a, Queen St., Eynsham  
Mrs E. Mason, 26, John Lopes Rd., Eynsham