

GOOD HISTORY

**Journal
of the
Eynsham Junior
History Group**



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The Journal of the Eynsham Junior History Group

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Some line drawings and photographs have been taken from work done regarding the blitz in Bristol by the Malago Society whose inspiration is Anton Bantock, M.B.E. Picture in Westminster Abbey adapted from one taken by Frank Blackwell in "The Door"

Front Cover: Abbey Street under snow 1982

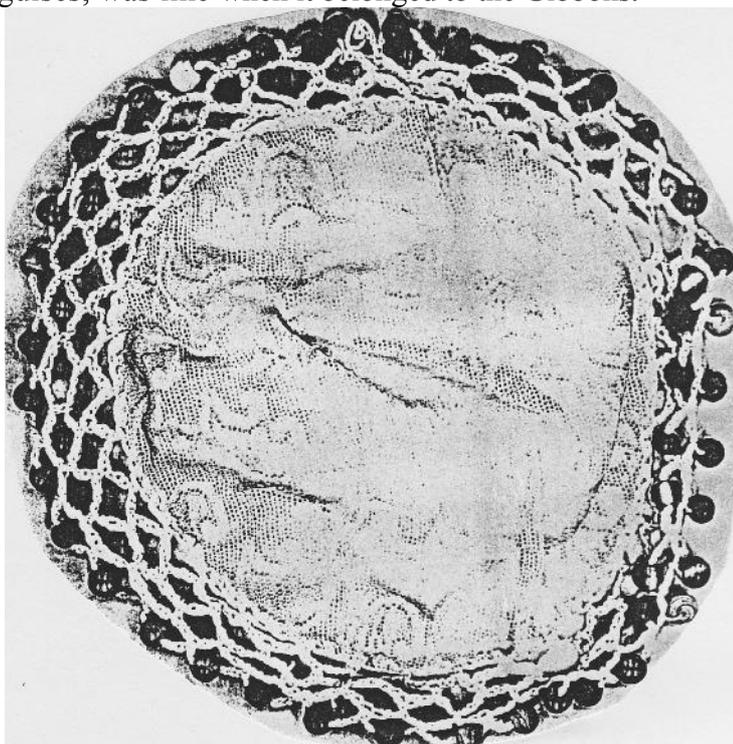
Members of the Group who have taken part in the research and discussion which has been used for this edition –Lawrence Hills, Alan Hughes, Vivian Hughes, Luke Maskell, Matthew Marks, David Richardson, Olivia Stratford, and Natalie Taylor

EDITORIAL

During this term we have looked at a number of things including the houses of Eynsham, those we live in and those that we have found of particular interest. In the East Wing they have been learning about the Anglo-Saxons and in the West Wing they have been learning about the period of history, which includes the Second World War. It also happened that we were asked to take part in the Service of Remembrance so that we have been able to link up thoughts about life and death at that time.

We have also had to say farewell to a staunch supporter of our group. Known to most at school now as 'Becky's Aunt Polly', Mrs Clifton had come many times to talk to the group and share her memories of life in Eynsham as it was. When we wrote about the public houses of Eynsham it was 'Polly' who could tell us what the building that became 'The Board' hotel and later a restaurant under various guises, was like when it belonged to the Gibbons.

We particularly remember the calling card cases, which she had been given and the beaded milk jug covers, like the one shown here which she gave us for our archives. Her grandchildren had been pupils at the school and I think it can now be told that at one time, her husband Aubrey, promised a number of children they would get good things on Christmas Day when he appeared at the school Christmas Fayre dressed in red robes. As our special tribute to 'Polly' we print the address given by her brother, Reg Treadwell at her funeral service on September 3rd 2003.



Pamela Richards, Editor

MRS MARY CHRISTINE SILMAN CLIFTON, 'POLLY', DIED AUGUST 25TH, 2003

Polly was born in 1916 at Brize Norton. The family moved to Eynsham (via Farmoor) in 1922 to a cottage in Mill Street that is now a hairdressing salon. Then in 1939 they were allocated a house in Hanborough Road. Polly worked for a family called Gibbons who had a shop (which became the Board Hotel) in Lombard Street.

When the 1939-45 war came Polly worked at the Osberton Radiators, cycling along the by-pass in all weathers. There she met her husband-to-be Aubrey. They married in 1949 and had two children, Dudley and Jeremy. Aubrey sadly died in 1991.

Polly had a very active life; President of the Women's Section of the British Legion, Member of the Day Centre, The Stanton Harcourt Old Folks' Club, The

Drop-In and the Thursday Market. Polly had given talks to the pupils of Eynsham Primary School about old Eynsham and had her photograph on the front of "The Changing Faces of Eynsham No 3" – a book by Martin Harris.

Polly loved Jumble Sales, Car Boot Sales and Village Fetes. She had an eye for a bargain and her room was a miniature Aladdin's cave of which she was very proud.

Polly had so many friends in the village and she will be sadly missed. It is only a pity that she didn't write a book of her experiences, because with her death goes a whole generation of memories forever.

Reg Treadwell

WE WILL REMEMBER

This year members of the History Group took part in the Remembrance Service on November 9th, this being the nearest Sunday to November 11th, the day on which the First World War stopped.

The Group drew attention to some of the names read out on the Roll of Honour, which covers the two world wars.

"Some years ago we did some research about what happened to Eynsham during the First World War and came across references to soldiers who lost their lives.

At the beginning of 1915, Sergeant Percy Rowland of the 8th Battalion of the East Surrey Regiment, the youngest son of Albert Rowland of Home Harm married Emmie, the third daughter of J.G. Pimm of the Square. Emmie Pimm was a teacher at the Eynsham Infant School and it is reported in the school log that as Mrs Rowland she was given leave of absence on 23rd April 1915 because her husband was going to the front. Seventeen months later, in September 1916 he was reported missing. Emmie Rowland would have received a standard Casualties Form E from the War Office. It was a very cold document. She continued to teach.

Private John James, the son of Mr G.F. James, of the 1st Battalion Oxford & Bucks Light Infantry had gone with the Indian Expeditionary Force to the Persian Gulf at the outbreak of the war as a volunteer. In February 1916 he was reported to have died of wounds. He was 23 years old.

In May of 1916 Frederick Green, a basket maker, was killed at the Front. He left a wife and 10 children. By the second anniversary of the war, August 1916, 12 Eynsham men had died. By the end of the war the number was 50.

When we looked at Eynsham in the Second World War (1939-1945) we also found reports in the *Oxford Times* of several missing or wounded or killed in action but there were far fewer than in the 1914-1918 war. The total of Eynsham men being 18.

On the 28th June 1940 it was reported that Mr & Mrs E. May of Queen Street, had received news that their son Herbert who for some time had been reported missing was confirmed as having been killed in action.

On the 31st October 1941 the funeral of Airman Harry Burden was reported. He was 19 years old and the eldest son of Mr & Mrs John Burden of Newland Street. He had been killed while on active service.

On the 7th April 1942 it was reported that Mr & Mrs State of Pelican Place had been notified by the War Office that their only son Gunner Ivor State was

reported missing in Singapore. It was later reported that he had been found in a Japanese prisoner of war camp. These were terrible places where many died of disease.

In July 1944 Mr & Mrs N. Green of Mill Street were notified that their son Lieutenant H.C. Green was wounded and missing. In August they learned that he had had been killed in action.

Later in 1945 it was welcome news for some families to find that a number of men who had been taken prisoner were able to return home. Among these were Private George Osman, Private Edwin Allsworth and Private G. Holland.

WHAT MADE 1939-1945 DIFFERENT FROM THE WAY OF LIFE WE KNOW TODAY?

The Second World War by Matthew Marks

The Second World War began on September 3rd 1939. The war began because Adolf Hitler, the leader of Germany, attacked Poland. Britain and France declared war on Germany. In May 1940 Winston Churchill replaced Chamberlain as Prime Minister. On September 7th 1940 the blitz began. The allies were Britain, France, Russia and America. Winston Churchill was the leader of Britain, Joseph Stalin was the leader of Russia and Franklin Roosevelt was the leader of America. Germany, Italy and Japan fought against the allies. Benito Mussolini was the leader of Italy. The allies eventually defeated Germany. Hitler committed suicide and Germany surrendered. The war ended on May 8th 1945, which was known as V.E. day (Victory in Europe)



THIS IS VE-DAY

***Premier Is To Broadcast At 3 p.m.:
Two Days Holiday***

* THE KING SAYS :
Crushing Victory

The Blitz by Luke Maskell

The blitz is a name given to the bombing raids. The Germans started bombing in September 1940 and the blitz continued until 11th May 1941. After Hitler took control of France his way was clear to attack Britain and his bombing raids did just that. He targeted a lot of cities and ports, as he knew that bomb damage would make it very

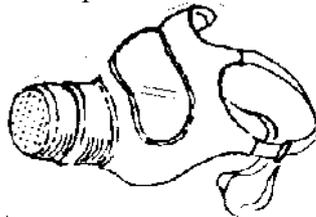
difficult for the British to still fight, especially if big weapons factories were destroyed. People were usually warned by an air raid siren that an attack was about to take place so that they could take shelter before the bombs were dropped. Most bombing raids took place at night. Incendiary bombs were dropped first before the explosive type bombs. These were to guide the planes, as if there were fires on the ground it was far easier for the Germans to pick out their targets. By 1941 43,000 citizens had been killed in the blitz. The bombing eased off by June 1941 because the German pilots were needed to fight elsewhere.

[Churchill visiting, among others in Leighton Road, Bristol, the editor's grandfather's house]



Some Air Raid Precautions by David Richardson

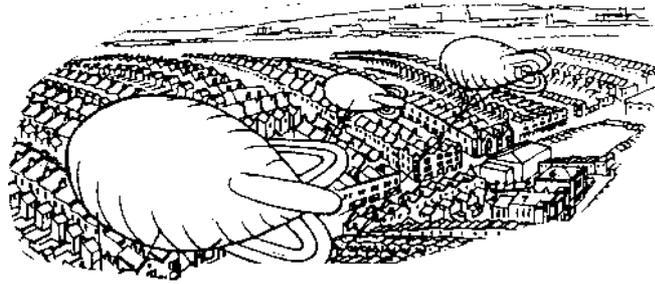
1. They put blackout curtains at windows so that planes could not see the house lights
2. The car lights were masked so the planes could not see moving cars.
3. Everyone had a gasmask because of the bomb dust and the possibility of gas attack.



4. Air-raid wardens in tin hats looked for survivors when a house was bombed.
5. Sirens were used to tell people that planes were coming to bomb. A different sounding siren went at the end of a raid – it was called the 'all-clear'.
6. People built Anderson Shelters in gardens to protect them from the bombs.



7. The wardens sucked water out of a bucket with a stirrup pump to squirt on a fire.
8. Anti-aircraft guns were used sky when found by the searchlights
9. Barrage balloons, which were attached to the ground, floated in the sky to get in the way of the raiding planes



Food Rationing and the Black Market by Lawrence Hills



Rationing began in 1940 and ended in 1954. It was organised by the Government. Coupons out of ration books were exchanged for food. Things that were rationed were coffee, sugar, butter, bacon, cheese, sweets, and meat. There were also Clothing coupons and soap and petrol was rationed.

Rationing led to the Black Market. Say a farmer had 400 chickens he could lie to the Government and say that they laid 300 eggs when they had actually laid 350 so that he could keep 50 for himself to sell privately to anyone who could

afford them. People who had money could buy things, which should have been on ration. To help people have more food the Government decided on a Dig for Victory campaign. People were encouraged to buy seeds and grow potatoes and other vegetables in their gardens even where they usually had flowers. Allotments were made in parks in the cities. Everyone was meant to grow as much food as they could.



More about Rationing by Natalie Taylor

Rationing began in January 1940, four months after the war began. Food was in short supply during the war because Britain could not produce enough of certain essential foods to feed all the people. Ships brought food across from America but this was very dangerous as the Germans attacked the ships as they crossed the Atlantic. To make sure that everyone got a fair share of food the Government introduced rationing. Everyone was given a ration book and the coupons in the book let you buy the foods that were scarce.

Evacuation by Alan Hughes

When the Second World War started in 1939 Britain and other European countries had evacuation plans to take civilians out of the centres where bombing might be expected.

The British Government moved one and a half million people in one week. At the same time, two million people moved on their own accord. It was the largest mass movement of people ever seen in Britain.

The main evacuation scheme was set up by the London County Council, but children from all over the country that lived in towns were moved to quiet rural places. Some children were evacuated abroad. Many children were evacuated from the East End of London, some of them coming to Eynsham. [See *E.R.* No 7]. Cities where there were ports or known industrial areas were also evacuated. These were all considered to be likely targets for the enemy bombers. Some families were split up, others managed to stay together and some never returned to the cities as they preferred to live in the country.

[For more information on Eynsham in wartime see 'What Did You Do in the Great War, Eynsham?' in Eynsham Record No 12 and 'The Emergency, Eynsham 1939-45' in Eynsham Record No 7]

A COMPARISON OF TWO EYNSHAM HOUSES by Lawrence Hills

I live in Dovehouse Close. My house is made of brick. The roof is plain. It has roof tiles. The windows have wooden frames and clear glass. I have a small front garden. My house was built roughly 20 years ago. My house is built at an angle to the road.

My chosen house is in Mill Street. It looks French. It is a bigger house than mine and looks a different colour. It is made of stone and there is no front garden. The house looks beautifully built with some lovely pillars. It was built about 1870. In Oxford there is a building called the Randolph Hotel, the architects of this building also designed the house in Eynsham, which is called the Holt. You can see some of the similarities of the two buildings. The Buchanan family owners of the house for many years, among other things, painted some of the people of Eynsham.



The Holt, Mill St. Eynsham

FOUND BEHIND THE PLASTER

While doing some renovation in a house in Abbey Street this fireplace was found behind the plaster in a bedroom.



There were often fireplaces in bedrooms before central heating.

THE ANGLO-SAXONS

**An Anglo-Saxon Newspaper
(imagined) by Olivia Stratford**

Inside an Anglo-Saxon House by Vivian Hughes

Inside Anglo-Saxon houses it was very dark because they did not have electricity. They used oil lamps instead. They got the oil from animals. They did not have glass for the outside of the lamps. They used animal horns. They shaved the horn so that it was transparent. It had to be transparent otherwise the light would not shine through. They also had fires in the middle of the house. It made it very smoky because there was no chimney, only a hole in the roof. The fireplace was built of stone.

THE NEW BISHOP OF BUCKINGHAM and his connection with Eynsham

Alan Wilson was formerly Curate at St. Leonard's during the time when Peter Ridley was Vicar, leaving to become Vicar of St. John's, Caversham in 1982.

Alan Wilson and his wife Lucy

Here we have accounts from some who were closely involved with the ceremony of consecration:

On the 8th of October this year I went to Lambeth Palace because my Dad was going to become a Bishop. I slept at Lambeth Palace and had dinner with the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Archbishop's son Philip took us to the dungeons. In the morning we had cooked breakfast and then we went to Westminster Abbey for the big service. We saw a lot of our friends. Then we went to Lambeth Palace again for lunch. My Dad used to be curate at St. Leonard's and my Mum went to Eynsham Primary School and Bartholomew School.

Nicholas Wilson (8)



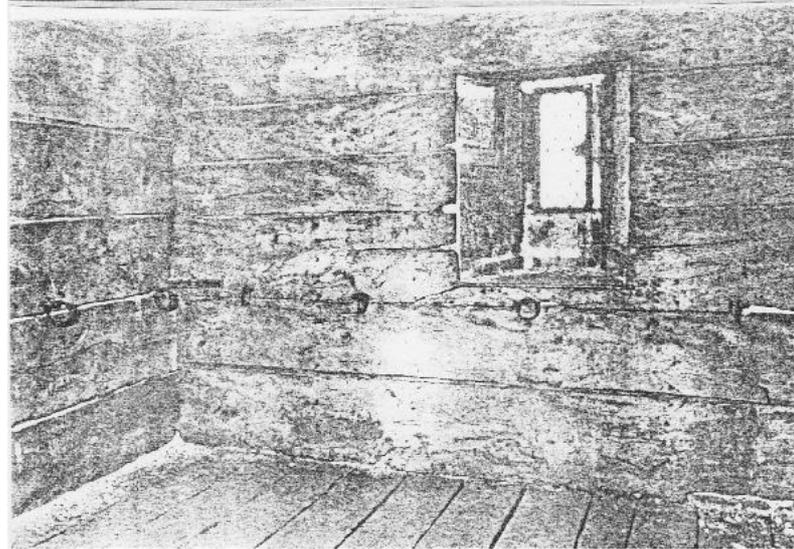
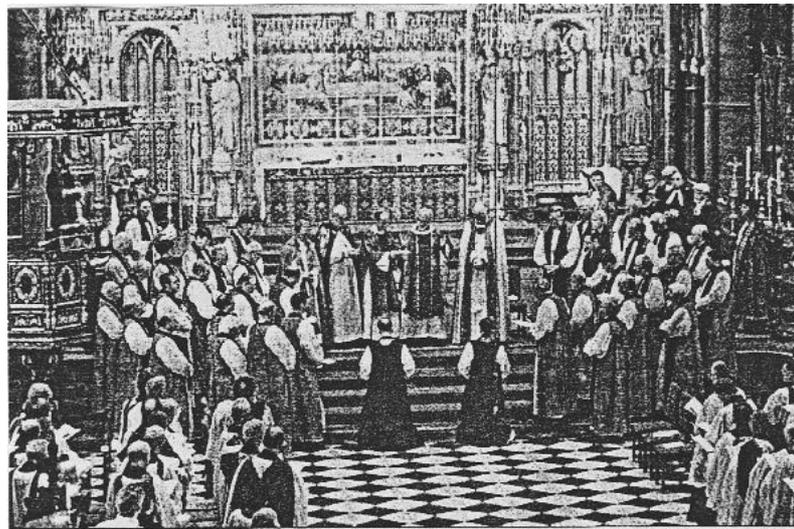
On the 8th October I also went to Lambeth Palace. It was a very nice place and I was lucky because I got to sleep there. I had dinner with the Archbishop of Canterbury and his son Philip showed me round the dungeons. I signed the Visitors' Book that the Queen had signed. Next day we went to Westminster Abbey to watch my Daddy get made Bishop. Afterwards we had lunch with my Mum and Dad's friends.

Stewart Wilson (8)

I slept in Lambeth Palace in a big bed with curtains. I didn't think the dungeons were scary. The service was interesting. Daddy became a Bishop. Other bishops put their hands on his head to make him holy.

Anna Wilson (5, dictated)

Inside the dungeons where Anna wasn't frightened



ACTIVITIES OF THE JUNIOR HISTORY GROUP.

Last year we explored the lives some of the children named in the 1851 census might have led. We presented a play about this to Eynsham Day Centre and spent some time with the audience. Here are some photographs to prove it!



Playing Snakes and Ladders with two Ernies, Messrs Baldwin and Hacker. Mr Hacker told us what it was really like to be a coalminer. Sadly Mr Hacker died earlier this year.



Mary Moore helping Mrs Day and Mrs Rainbow to make mince pies. Both the ladies had children who attended Eynsham Primary School and Mrs Rainbow used to come to help with sewing.

Some Views of Abbey Street taken in 1965



An apology from the Editor.

In our last issue a typing error turned Thomas Sutherland's great-grandfather into Mr Parsley rather than Mr Parslow. Many apologies.