



The Fairford Flyer

Newsletter No 14

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Memorial Seat to AEB



Who was AEB, to whom three memorial seats in Fairford were dedicated 100 years ago? The seat at the top of the High Street by the Park Gates is showing its age and is shortly to be moved and replaced as part of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations and FTC asked FHS this question.

AEB was Agnes Eliza Bloxsome, wife of

Dr Charles Bloxsome – to whom there is a finely carved wooden plaque acknowledging his services at Fairford Hospital. Dr Charles Bloxsome came to Fairford in 1883 as a young man of 26 years of age with new ideas as a junior partner in the practice of Dr James Cornwall, whose surgery was at Keble House. The Bloxsome family at the time lived at Montague House (Number 5 High Street), and it was here that Dr Charles furthered his studies in bacteriology and the technique of cutting sections of tissue, making vaccines and counting blood cells in the small laboratory he set up in his smoking room.

Dr Charles married Agnes Eliza Iles, (Lizzie) the youngest of seven children of Dr Albert Iles who practised in Fairford and Cirencester and was killed at the age of 41 when his Phaeton turned over in 1863. His widow (a wealthy heiress of an Abingdon landowner) lived at Croft House and died in 1893. With the help of her mother's considerable legacy, and financial help from her Aunt Nell Iles (who lived with them) Lizzie persuaded Dr Charles to buy Croft House and they made it their home, from which he ran the medical practice single-handed for some 30 years after the death of Dr Cornwall. He was the first man in Fairford to have a car, a steam-driven Locomobile in 1903.



The role that Lizzie played in helping to run the surgery was of paramount value: she acted as pharmacist and, according to the memoirs of her son (Dr Harold Bloxsome) she “interviewed *many patients who had the symptoms more suitable for her sympathetic ear. Many patients would rather have a little advice and medicine from her than from the doctor, and my mother's special patients inclined to hang about until my father set off on his round, so that they could have her undivided attention. She was a most gentle and affectionate character who had a great love for the Croft and her garden. She was a great gardener herself and was intensely interested in photography, developing and printing the photographs herself. She did the booking and sent out the bills, taking great pleasure in receipting them, often with a glass of port to the payer. She died in 1911 at the age of 49. There are three seats in Fairford for passers-by to rest on. They were subscribed for by the poorer people of Fairford, in memory of AEB.*”

Thank you to June Lewis-Jones for this article.

FAIRFORD MARKET



On a lovely day at the end of September we celebrated 25 years of the reopening of Fairford Market with a stall in the market with displays. On the left, FHS Chair Geoff Hawkes, our Mayor, Rob Winney, Maurice Jones and FHS Sec Alison Hobson. In the middle a 1986 picture with Mayor Dorothy Paton and Maurice and on the right, a re-enactment of 1986.

MEMBERSHIP and SUBSCRIPTIONS

It is 4 months into the membership year. Members who haven't renewed their membership will receive a reminder with their Newsletter. Please renew as soon as possible.

February and March Meetings

PUBS AND HOTELS IN FAIRFORD - Thursday February 16th at 10am

Many of you will remember the fascinating meeting we held this time last year when we looked at shops past and present in Fairford. We began in the Community Centre where Edwin Cuss showed us pictures of businesses, some still extant, others vanished or much transformed, then we had the chance to go for a short walk and look for traces of the past. This year we are going to do something similar with public houses and hotels. Edwin will again have a selection of illustrations to help us bring our hostelries to life. Many of you may have at least an idea of where the Carriers Arms stood and likewise The George but what about The Swan? Do come along and learn about what has been lost and what survives.

The format will be like last year. We meet in the Farmer Room at 10am and for about an hour we will have an illustrated introduction to the subject. We welcome any contributions from members so do rack your memory. After the talk we will have a pause for coffee/tea then if you wish you can go on a short guided walk to look at some of the sites or go off under your own steam. The walks do depend on the weather. Last year we were lucky not just in having a dry day but the main road was temporarily shut to through traffic which made standing back to look at shop fronts a good deal safer than usual. Alas we can't guarantee the same this time.

MARCH MEETING

Thursday March 15th at 7.30pm in the Community Centre

Popular local lecturer Steven Blake will be talking on **The Cotswold Way: 100 miles of history**. We know many of you have walked parts or even the whole length of the Cotswold Way which runs north to south through the county along the Cotswold scarp, ending at Bath. Within a few miles of the path lie many accessible sites of historic interest. Steve will help us pinpoint many of these places. With Spring just around the corner by this date it should be a good time to get inspiration for walks and visits.

Dr Steve Blake worked for 30 years as Museums and Collections manager for Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum. He lectures on a wide range of topics but he has a particular passion for medieval history and architecture. He is important to us for his role in local history and he is currently chairman of the GRCC Gloucestershire Local History Committee. GRCC has withdrawn its support and Steven has taken on the task of forming a new body to fulfil the same role. GH

NEW PUBLICATIONS

- To accompany the February meeting an occasional paper gathering together information about present and former hostelries in Fairford has been collated. This will be available at the meeting.
- In commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic an occasional paper will be produced entitled '*Fairford's connections with the Titanic*'. This is based on Graham Young's articles in the Parish Magazine in 1993 and FHS would like to thank him for his help with this publication.
- *The Doctors Cornwall*—the Cornwall family of Fairford is to be published in the next few months.
- *Over the years*: celebrations in Fairford to be published in association with the Diamond Jubilee celebrations in collaboration with Edwin Cuss.

KEITH COTTAM

In July we lost our founder Chairman Keith Cottam. His erudition, wisdom, common sense and droll sense of humour will be sorely missed. It was my first role as secretary of a Society and he gave me excellent guidelines to work on. Keith saw us through the difficult period of the start up of the Society, steered us safely through the Lottery Fund application and administration of the grant, he was heavily involved in the production of *Fairford Now and Then*. It was a sound basis for Geoff Hawkes to follow. Our sincere condolences to Barbara and the family. AH

A collection was made in his memory and the following items have been bought to be called 'The Keith Cottam Memorial Collection'.

Victoria County History. Vol 2—the general volume on the County.

Brian Trubshaw test pilot, Sutton 1998

Branch lines of Gloucestershire by Colin Maggs, Amberley 2011

Prehistoric Gloucestershire by T. Darvill 2nd Ed, Amberley 2011

Patent 12242, 1902. A Device for Preventing Foxes from Entering Fowl Houses, Runs and the like by Alexander Iles—an original patent dated 1903.

Two pictures, details from Windows 6 & 7 of the Church dated 1855 by Harris Fleming St John.

From the Archives

Rabbit, rabbit!

This first piece has nothing to do with Fairford history but it is so bizarre that I could not resist including it in the Fairford Flyer. This is reprinted verbatim from the weekly periodical *John Bull* of 10th September 1855 and takes the report from the *Manchester Examiner*:

PRACTICAL JOKING IN THE ARMY

At the Preston Town Hall on Tuesday last three military officers named A.G. Onslow, J. Conroy, and Hopton S. Stewart, were fined 40s. and costs, and severely reprimanded by the Bench, for smashing street lamps by throwing rabbits against them. The defendants pleaded guilty to the charge.

There is no mention of the use of rabbits as a weapon in the 1855 edition of the Army Field Manual!

Harris Fleming St John



H. F. St John whose signature is on the pen and ink drawings of Windows 6 and 7 (a man in purgatory and the head of the third Mary) was curate of Kempford, 1859-1868. His family came from Dinmore in Herefordshire, he married Gertrude Ward at Frenchay, Bristol in 1878.

He moved back to his family home at Dinmore Manor after his marriage to be chaplain of the Chapel of St John of Jerusalem. This was in a bad state of repair and by 1886 he had restored the chapel and filled it with painted windows designed by himself. It is quite possible that he had

been inspired by the church windows of Kempford and Fairford. Dinmore Manor is not open to the public.

The Garrow's Law mystery

Avid followers of the BBC television series *Garrow's Law* will no doubt have cheered on our legal hero as he fought for justice and human rights at the Old Bailey in the 1780s. Viewers may also have booed and hissed at the dastardly Arthur Hill, the cruel husband of Sarah and father of baby William, over whom a vitriolic custody battle forms the backdrop to the series. William Garrow and Sarah eventually fall in love and Arthur Hill becomes Garrow's arch enemy.

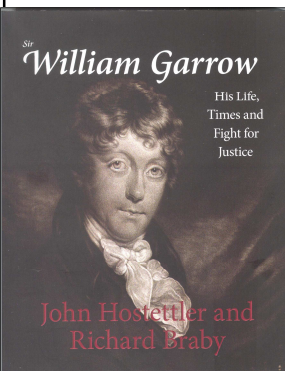
Viewers may, or may not, be aware that the series is based on real historic characters and, in some instances, actual events. William Garrow is credited as being the pioneer of the adversarial approach to trial by jury which made for a much fairer system than when defendants had practically no rights to a legal defence at all. He was indeed a passionate barrister whose speeches to the jury achieved high renown and who helped to move the English judicial system towards a model that has been emulated in many countries throughout the world. Arthur Hill was also a real character and was from a prominent and very wealthy Anglo-Irish family, being the son of Wills Hill and grandson of Trevor Hill, 1st Viscount Hillsborough.

So, here is the mystery: the Fairford parish register shows that "Wills ye son of ye Right Honourable Trevor Lord Hillsborough and Mary his Lady" was baptised in St Mary's church on 24 June 1718. At first I thought that this might simply have been because Lady Hillsborough was passing through or visiting Fairford when she gave birth to Wills who was baptised immediately as he may have been sickly and perhaps not expected to live. However this explanation can be discounted for two reasons. Firstly, Wills was born on 30 May, nearly a month before his baptism, and secondly because on 7 June 1719 Arthur, another son of Lord and Lady Hillsborough, was also baptised at Fairford, indicating more than a coincidental connection with the town.

So far I have been unable to find a reason why two of Viscount Hillsborough's children should have been baptised in a Cotswold town. The family does not appear to have owned property or land in Fairford but the town was obviously of some significance to the family as Wills, who became the 2nd Viscount Hillsborough in 1742, was created 1st Viscount Fairford on 22 August 1772. He used his Fairford title until 1789 when he was created 1st Marquess of Downshire.

There does not appear to be any familial connection with Fairford through either the paternal or maternal lines and I can find no indication that the Hill family were acquainted with the Barkers or the Morgans or any other of the prominent families in Fairford, although this cannot be discounted. The closest Irish connection that I can come up with is through Fairford's vicar, Reverend Frampton Huntington who baptised the Hill children and was the vicar of St Mary's from 1711 to 1738. He had an uncle, Robert Huntington, who had been the Provost of Trinity College, Dublin and the Bishop of Raphoe in Dublin before his death in 1701. Was there a connection between the Hills of County Down and Bishop Huntington which led to Wills and his brother being baptised in Fairford? A tenuous and speculative link, I must admit, but the best I have come up with so far. If anybody has any other ideas or information to solve this mystery then I would be really pleased to hear.

As for the Arthur Hill of *Garrow's Law*, the viewer might be cheered to learn that the 2nd Viscount Fairford was not the total bounder that he was portrayed in the television programme. In fact it seems that he financially supported Sarah, to whom he may not have been actually married, even after she took up with William Garrow. Arthur was also a very generous benefactor to his son William with whom the Hill family remained on good terms for the rest of his life. Also William Garrow and Sarah were living together and had two children of their own even before Garrow started practising at the Old Bailey. Garrow later became a prominent judge and regularly sat at the Assize court at Gloucester as well as serving as the Solicitor-General and Attorney-General prosecuting 'revolutionaries' on behalf of the Government.



Further information can be found on Garrow in the 2009 book 'Sir William Garrow' by John Hostettler and Richard Braby as well as the website of The Garrow Society (<http://www.garrowsociety.org/>). A record of many of Garrow's trials can be found in the fascinating website "The Proceedings of the Old Bailey" (<http://www.oldbaileyonline.org/>).

Meetings 2012

All meetings take place in the Farmor Room of the Fairford Community Centre at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated.

February 16th

Pubs and Hotels of Fairford at 10am a presentation by Edwin Cuss followed by a walk round the town.

March 15th

The Cotswold Way: 100 miles of history by Steven Blake

May 17th

AGM and A Grave Matter: Cotswold churchyards and tombs by Chris Hobson

New Dates for your diary

June 4/5th: Diamond Jubilee celebrations in Fairford, Edwin Cuss and FHS will be having their usual exhibitions in the FCC Heritage Room.

June 14th at 7.30pm. Titanic. We have been lucky enough to have the opportunity of inviting Hugh Brewster author of *Gilded Lives, Fatal Voyage: the Titanic's First-Class Passengers and Their World* to talk to us about his new book published this year. Hugh is speaking at the Broadway Festival and will visit us in Fairford. He will present an illustrated slide talk from his new book. Specially featured will be the story of Noelle, the Countess of Rothes, who was hailed as the "plucky little Countess" in the aftermath of the *Titanic* disaster and became a national heroine in Scotland. After the death of the Earl of Rothes in 1927, she married Colonel Claude Macfie and lived with him in Fairford until her death in 1956. Today, she is commemorated by a plaque in the parish church. Books will be available for sale and signing.

This will be a ticketed event open to everyone.

Price £5 (Members £3)

June 21st an evening walk round Coln St Aldwyns led by Ana Bianchi Evans.

Fairford Flyer edited by Alison Hobson. With contributions from Geoff Hawkes and June Lewis-Jones. From the Archives by Chris Hobson. Photographs by Hobson Cameras and Dorothy Paton.

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