



The Fairford Flyer

Newsletter No 15

July 2012

DIAMOND JUBILEE WEEKEND

The Heritage Room in the Community Centre was alive with people on June 3rd and 4th. They were absorbed by the exhibitions produced by Eddie Cuss and by Alison Hobson and other members of the History Society. There were lots of photographs and documents illustrating Fairford's contribution to previous national celebrations and other aspects of local life. It always fascinates



people to look at scenes from the past in the town they know well, to see what has changed and what is unchanged.

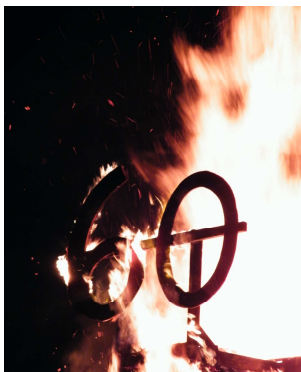
The nearer we move to the present the greater the chance of recognising and identifying the characters who were captured by the camera. This time an additional feature was some film taken by Liz Hope of the 1977 Silver Jubilee Celebrations and of the 1981 Bed Race (an annual New Year's entertainment that has died out). This short piece of film ran



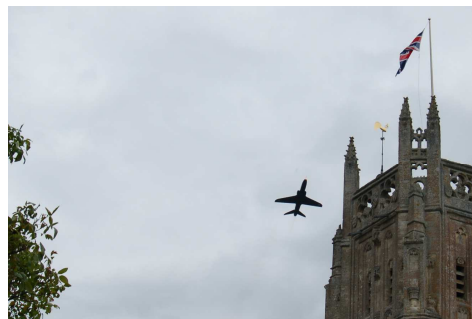
on a continuous loop and proved a source of real fascination for visitors. Liz freely admitted it was not the greatest of filming and shots moved past quickly so you had to watch over and over again to check that what flashed past you was what you thought. Around the room you heard, "Isn't that what's his name who used to live down.....?"

Documents and photographs keep emerging from all sorts of people and sources. Please do keep them coming in. We can always scan them and hand them back. They all contribute to knowing more of the people and the life of our town.

Geoff Hawkes



JUBILEE FLYPAST



Fairford was privileged to have its own Diamond Jubilee Flypast by a BAE Hawk T1 piloted by a Fairford resident Phil Bird. He was also one of the pilots in the 24 Hawk E11R formation flypast over Windsor for the Queen and at the recent Fairford Air Tattoo. Phil also gave a very spirited individual Hawk display at the airshow.

Jubilee Publication: to mark the Diamond Jubilee, FHS has published a booklet about all the Royal Celebrations that have taken place in Fairford from the 19th century onwards. Each event is illustrated by pictures from Edwin Cuss's collection and the FHS Archive and gives descriptive accounts from the Wilts and Glos Standard and Parish News of the day. **Price £2.** Jubilee quiz answers will be available at the first FHS meeting on September 20th.

A WALK AROUND COLN St ALDWYNS

On a wet, gloomy June evening some 17 members of FHS went on a guided walk round Coln led by Ana Bianchi Evans who wrote the recent book about the village, 'The Way We Were'. Sometimes crouched under umbrellas we heard the story of the Hicks Beach family and their role in the life of the area. They emerged as benevolent patrons of village life. The tour was most enjoyable and illuminating. We learnt a lot that we didn't previously know about our near neighbours up the Coln valley. P.S. It was good that we could provide a similar service to Lechlade History Society when Edwin Cuss and Syd Flatman led a guided tour around Fairford on a somewhat drier June evening. The tour was much appreciated.

TITANIC

Hugh Brewster from Toronto, who has recently published a new book about first class passengers on the Titanic, 'Gilded Lives, Fatal Voyage', came to Fairford especially to talk to members about Fairford's connection with the Titanic, the Countess of Rothes, who has a memorial in the Church. He had been lecturing at the Broadway Festival. It was a highly entertaining and informative talk and we are grateful to Hugh for taking time from his busy schedule to visit Fairford and talking to FHS. He finished most poignantly with an image of a pair of shoes lying on the mud at the bottom of the Atlantic Ocean indicating the position that a body must have lain until consumed by ocean organisms – reminding us what a terrible disaster it was.

HOMECOMING

What's this? A geriatric report of yet another evacuee returning to Fairford? Yes, I'm afraid so. But you shouldn't be too surprised. Fairford was inundated with them, coming in two waves, the first at the outbreak of war, the second after Dunkirk, in anticipation of the Blitz. This particular evacuee came in 1940, at the age of eight and was dragged away, kicking and screaming, in 1945.

He vowed to return "home" and it took him only 66 years to do so. Fortunately a daughter had the sense to marry a young man from Cheltenham so the torch was rekindled and kept aflame.

Fairford, he says, is the most wonderful serene place to return to and he hopes its long-term residents still value their treasure. Of course, Fairford wasn't a sleepy backwater during the war - as any contemporary can tell you (although he hopes none of his contemporaries remembers him because he was not a pleasant child). There were the army camps, the military hospital, the WVS Settlement, the row of tanks receiving deep-water modifications and the planes and gliders landing and taking off for D-Day and Arnhem plus the break-ins into Palmer Hall to hide, then see the film shows put on to the military, and trouble with the law when he dared to fly his kite etc, etc.

You will need to ask others, though, how Fairford livened up even more when the Yank soldiers arrived!

So he loves his Fairford, its past and its present. Just don't get him started on his reminiscences or he will corner you for hours on end.

Ah, I remember....." Not now, Ivor, not now!"

Ivor Tully age 81¾

Joyce Davis nee Ross was also evacuated to Fairford with her younger brother and sister and has written a book about her memories.

Saturday's Child. There are some copies for sale in the Archive Room, price £10. She would be very pleased for people who knew their family to get in touch with her. Please contact Alison for details.

LIFE WRITING

Explore how to write memoir, autobiography, biography and family history.

Eight sessions will include critiques of published works, writing exercises, advice on how to develop your skills as a writer. The aim of the course is to open up different ways to write about life (yours and others'). Fairford Community Centre, Fridays 10–12, beginning 21 September 2012. £12 per session.

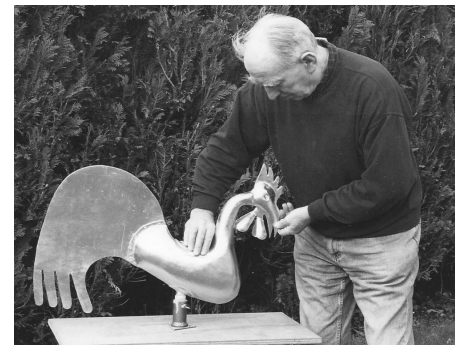
For more information and booking in advance, please contact Christine Kidney at christine@elbowbooks.com.

THE TALE OF THE CHURCH COCK'S TAIL

While the scaffolding was up for work on the tower in 2000, Derrick Youngs, was able to have a close look at the weathercock which he thought was in a parlous condition. It was, so Derrick took on the job of repairing it and here are some of the interesting facts he found. First of all the body is in two halves, rather like a chocolate Easter egg is made, the two halves overlap slightly and are soft soldered. The body extends up into the neck of the head and the tail is riveted to the body. Now how did the poor old cock get a hole in its tail so high up on the church? (Does anyone else remember the tale that Marine Doug Scarrott made a pot shot at it during the celebrations at the end of the war?)

The cock weighs about 13 lbs and is made from copper. Derrick double-gilded it with twenty-three-and-a-half carat double thickness English gold leaf – much superior to its continental rivals for this job. The gold is in transfer leaf form and so fine that Derrick could not measure it on his micrometer – it is less than one-tenth of one-thousandth of an inch. Gold leaf is expensive but gives a superior fine finish, highly reflective and durable, lasting four times as long as paint.

Derrick found this inscription in the portion of the tail: Joseph Packer, Maker, Cirencester 1843, then added his own detail for history: Repaired by Derrick Youngs, Fairford 2000. If you look up at the weathercocks on the two churches (Fairford and Cirencester) they are a matching pair, Derrick adds: They must have hatched from the same clutch of church cock eggs!



Derrick Youngs repairing St Mary's weathercock in 2000 and it proudly keeping an eye on our town in 2010.

Thank you to June Lewis–Jones for this article.

From the Archives

Joseph Packer

Following on from the article on the previous page, the censuses for 1841, 1851 and 1861 all record Joseph Packer as a brazier living in Dyer Street in Cirencester with his wife Hannah and their children. After Hannah's death Joseph retired from his trade and moved to Haxey in the Isle of Axholme in Lincolnshire to live with his daughter Elizabeth and her husband, Silas Tufley, who was the station master in the village. Joseph died in Haxey in 1875 but at least some of his work lives on in Gloucestershire.

Shot himself in the foot

While researching for a forthcoming FHS Monograph or Occasional Paper on the Cornwall family of Fairford, I came across a newspaper report of a fatal shooting accident that took place on the Hatherop Castle estate in 1862, then the home of The Honourable Ashley Ponsonby, the Member of Parliament for Cirencester. Hugh Bailey, the estate's gamekeeper, was carrying his shotgun on his shoulder when the barrels fell from the stock, hit the ground and fired straight into his foot at close range. Father and son Doctors Charles and James Cornwall were called from Fairford but despite their prompt attention, Mr Bailey died five days later from "disease of the heart, hastened by the effects of the accident" at the age of 57.

Hugh Bailey was originally from Canford near Wimborne in Dorset and he had been the gamekeeper at Hatherop Castle since at least 1850 as their youngest son Thomas was born there in that year. Hugh's wife Rachel received a pension after the tragic accident and lived the rest of her days in Hatherop until her death in 1879. A few months after Hugh Bailey's sad demise Hatherop Castle was sold to the Maharajah Duleep Singh, the last monarch of the Sikh Empire who five years later sold it to Sir Thomas Bazley, son of a successful cotton magnate.

The Missing Wife

While searching for information on the Morgan family of Fairford for a another future FHS publication, I came across this announcement in the London Edition of the Daily Gazetteer for the 15th April 1738. It does not refer to any of 'our' Morgans but it is such a curious and amusing piece that I thought FHS members might like to see it. Incidentally, this kind of newspaper advertisement was by no means uncommon in the 18th Century.

"Whereas Elizabeth Morgan, the wife of Edmund Morgan of the town of Bedford, Esq, hath, ever since the 23rd of March 1737, withdrawn herself from her said husband's house, and went away with a lusty tall man, about six foot three inches high, lately a Trooper, and took away with her several things of value, unknown to her said husband: This is therefore to give notice to all persons whatsoever, not to entertain or harbour the said Elizabeth Morgan, for that her said husband will not pay any debts she shall contract; and if any person or persons will inform the said Edmund Morgan where his said wife can be found, so that she may be secured, shall receive as a reward the sum of two guineas, to be paid by me Edmund Morgan. And whoever shall harbour or entertain the said Elizabeth Morgan, will be prosecuted for so doing.

Note. She is a short, thick-set, full-chested, fresh colour'd woman, speaks very thick, and went away in a black velvet cap, a long scarlet cloth cloak, and a crimson damask gown."

Omnibus tragedy

Continuing on a sombre theme, this next tale is drawn from newspapers cuttings found in an album compiled by Mr Frank Busby, landlord of The Bull, and now in the care of our President, June Lewis Jones. On 11th of June 1901 The Bull's horse-drawn omnibus, which travelled daily between Fairford and Cirencester, was waiting in the yard of Cirencester railway station when the horses appear to have been startled and galloped off. The driver, Mr William Selwood, desperately tried to hang on and rein the horses in but he was thrown from the vehicle between Lloyds' Bank and Beecham's shop in Castle Street and fell under the wheels. William was taken to the Cottage Hospital where he was placed under the care of Mr Edward C Cripps, surgeon.

For the next four weeks William appeared to responding well to treatment despite having both the tibia and fibula of his left leg broken, his leg deeply gashed beneath the knee (which required 14 stitches) and three fractured ribs. He was expected to make a full recovery. However, on the evening of Sunday 7th July William's condition suddenly worsened and he died.

The inquest held in the Police Court in Cirencester heard from one witness that William was moving luggage when the horses bolted and that he tried to stop them but only got up to the pole between the two horses and fell off before he could reach the reins. William himself said that he slipped off the pole when getting back on the omnibus ready for the journey back to Fairford but later he told the hospital's matron that he thought the horses had been startled by a train whistle. Frank Busby himself gave evidence and gave his opinion that William had fallen onto one of the horses when trying to get into the driving seat and this is what startled them. Luckily the boy who accompanied William on the omnibus had gone into the railway parcel office when the accident happened and a passenger who was already on the bus was uninjured. The inquest jury brought in a verdict of accidental death resulting from an embolism of the pulmonary artery, probably caused by a fractured rib. The newspaper reported that the members of the jury and the witnesses donated their fees for attending to William's widow Elizabeth.

William and Elizabeth, with their children Frank and Ellen and step-son George Hicks, lived in one of the cottages in Mill Lane that have since been demolished. William had been a coachman in Fairford for much of his life but had only driven for The Bull for about seven years prior to the accident. In 1891 the Selwood family were living in Milton End and in 1881 they were in The Croft. William was born in 1850 in Eaton Hastings near Faringdon where his father was a farm labourer. Elizabeth Selwood continued to live in Fairford until her death in 1927, the same year as Frank Busby; both are buried in Fairford churchyard.

Meetings 2012-13

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

September 20th

This is the End of the Line: the Fairford Branch Railway then and now by Colin Moulden

October 18th

Aviation Heritage in the Cotswolds by Air Commodore Graham Pitchfork

November 15th

In fairforde aforesaide: place names in Fairford by Alison Hobson and Sue Middleton

February 14th (half term) - a morning meeting at 10am

Churches and Chapels: a presentation by Edwin Cuss followed by a visit to each of the sites

March 21st 2013

Come and Meet Mr Therm: the story of gas in the post war years by John Lang

April 18th to be arranged

May 16th

Old paths of Gloucestershire by Alan Pilbeam

June 20th

AGM followed by John Higgs on a postcard theme

Other dates for your diary

August 30th 2012. A talk on **Herbal Medicines** by David Callaghan from the National Trust at Chedworth Roman Villa will take place at **Fairford Library at 5.30pm**. Free but booking advisable. Contact Fairford Library for further details on 01285 712599

5 September 2012 :

Dr Nick Barratt from 'Who do you think you are?' will be talking to Fairford W I at **7.30pm in the Palmer Hall** on 'Family History and the Media'. Visitors welcome. Tickets £3 to non WI members.

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

www.fairfordhistory.org.uk

Email: enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk