

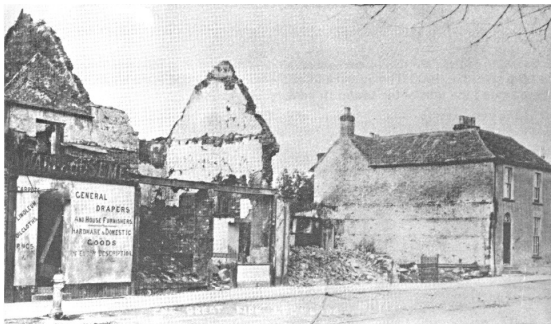


The Fairford Flyer

Newsletter No 20

January 2015

FAIRFORD FIRE ENGINE TO THE RESCUE –100 yrs ago



On the night of Saturday 10 January 1915 a fire broke out in the row of shops along Burford Road, Lechlade. The shops belonged to Messrs Cullerne and Co., grocers and butchers, and the Misses Edmonds and Co., drapers etc. and the auctioneers' office was the property of Innocent

and Sons. The fire was first discovered by two men at 1.30 on Sunday morning, and they quickly gave the alarm. The police sergeant in Faringdon sped on his bicycle to Buscot to awake PC Boffey, the pair then continued to Lechlade where they found local residents not only tackling the fire as best they could but also salvaging sides of bacon and other items of value! Much of the furniture was rescued from the office of Messrs Innocent, but valuable reference books could not be rescued from the flames.

The fire brigade captain, Edward Wheeler, had been roused by Mr Roy Cullerne, but when Capt Wheeler went to the fire station – the small building to the left of Ryton House – he revealed a situation that added to one of Lechlade's darkest moments. The Merryweather fire engine had been dismantled for overhaul and many parts had been sent away some weeks before; nothing more could be done than ring the bell on the roof. PC Stafford arranged for the Fairford fire engine to be called and a hose was attached to the only hydrant available, outside Morley House. Lengths of the hose were attached to the street hydrant, and although there was a fair supply of water the fire had such a firm hold that all that could be done was to direct the water on to some adjoining cottages and save the fire from spreading. Fairford Fire Brigade did useful work, but the effort to obtain the Cirencester motor fire engine failed as the telephone wires were out of order in consequence of the stormy weather.

Fairford's engine remained on site until daybreak and buildings smouldered for a couple of days. It was thought that the fire started in the back of the grocer's shop by an oil storage tank. A decision had been made to install hydrants in Lechlade several years before the war but to-date only one had been installed; the absence of a telephone in the police station and fire station also received unfavourable comments in the local press. The cause of the fire is unknown, but it is understood that the premises involved were covered by insurance.

JUNE MEETS JULIA

No, this isn't a title of a forthcoming novel, but thanks to the dedicated work and efforts of Alison, the backbone of our outstanding Fairford History Society, this is a short tale of a long trail to learn more about Sarah Thomas, the Baptists Minister's daughter whose diaries of 1860-65 I transcribed, edited and published over twenty years ago.

Despite several appeals through major newspapers and a dramatized version of the book produced as a Radio Four play in 1998, there was just no response from any member of the family. That is, until a couple of months ago when Julia Holt contacted Alison, having seen our Society mentioned on Ancestry, which Julia was using to follow the Milbourne family line.

It was a rather surreal meeting: Julia holding her great grandmother's diaries which I bought from the Bodleian Library about 30 years ago and me coming face to face with the granddaughter of Sarah and Thomas's eldest son, Kingsley. Sarah Thomas married Captain Thomas Milbourne in 1862 and lived in her family home in Milton Street, opposite what is now the United Church where the family tombs of Thomas can still be seen.

I am longing to learn more about the Milbourne family, whose former family home was Armathwaite Castle in Cumbria, and I cannot wait for Springtime to come when I shall show Julia the brook on The Green, where her grandfather paddled as a toddler, the places Sarah and Thomas once walked, and their final resting place. 'It will be like the final chapter of their story', said Julia with – was it a tear?

Thanks FHS – I shall keep you in the picture as it develops. JLJ



Julia holding her great grandmother's diary of 1860

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT - January 2015

Now mid-way through the society's year, we are already looking for topics and speakers for the coming History Society year. We aim to provide a variety of subjects over the year. For instance we try to have something of specifically local interest which may be balanced by something of wider interest, something that means a lot to the locality and something of national or even international significance. Our three talks this autumn exemplified this mix. We had the very local in Martin Lee-Browne's talk on Fairford legal deeds, the world-transforming experience of the Black Death given a freshness of approach by Tim Porter and complementing these two Ray Wilson's talk on industrial archaeology with a county-wide focus.

Of course there are constant dates and anniversaries that challenge us to consider how or why they might be cause of celebration. This year we have been almost overwhelmed by the sheer volume of remembrance of the outbreak of hostilities in 1914. A subject as vast as the First World War offers so many angles. It can be seen from the experience of individuals from the most remote corners of these islands or it can be viewed in the grand sweep of international politics. The aspect that fascinates me most is the way the past can intrude on the present even over a long period of history. Many of the current difficulties in the Middle East were crystallised in the treaties that followed the Great War. We have an English scholar, Gertrude Bell, the only woman involved in the postwar diplomacy, to thank for drawing the unnatural borders of Iraq that all these years later still throw up massive, seemingly endless problems.

The year 2015 contains several anniversaries. We have already acted to celebrate one in particular, Magna Carta 1215. Tim Porter has been working on his lecture plans for the topic and we are pleased to have booked him for our October meeting. GCH

Lechlade Fire, January 1915 acknowledgments

Picture: Lechlade History Society

Text: Cheltenham Chronicle Jan 20 1915

Lechlade and the Great War, 1914-18 by Paul and Tessa Cobb. 1998

FURZEY HILL FARM RECORDS

Recently Jane Eliot (nee Rickards) via June Lewis very kindly donated to FHS a photograph album and three farm record books from Furzey Hill Farm.

The photograph album contains family photographs and apparently holiday photographs from the Victorian era. There are five photographs of Fairford views, one of the Church c1868, the Broadwater c1880, the Church from the Mill bridge c1892, Park Farm c1892 and two of the foxhounds outside the Bull Hotel, c1892. (Thanks to Edwin Cuss for dating the photographs).

The first farm record book dates from about 1870. It contains lists of field names, the jobs done there, labourers names and their pay. Field names include Furs Ground, Model Ground, Lower Honey, Ruff Ground and New Enclosure.

The second book dates from 1921-25. From October 1921 J Sprules carries out the jobs of hedge crop, brooking, appleing, mangold, harrow, corner dig, beating and was paid £3 12s per week. There were up to 15 men working on the farm. Two interesting notes from 1925: 'casualty pig to Perry', and 'heifer to A. Perry (1/- per lb)'. The Perrys were a butchers in Fairford.

In the third book from 1943-1950 there are half as many men working on the farm and much more tractor driving, but the wages had risen to £8-9 per week.

These books make an interesting in-depth study in socio-economic history as they give a snapshot of farming history of 80 years.

FHS News

Sue Middleton and I have continued working on the VCH Cirencester project, recording sales catalogues and probate inventories. Unfortunately the excellent GA team leader left and there has been a hiatus while the new person has been chosen and settled into post, but we hope the work will resume shortly.

You may remember last year that a team of people transcribed the Fairford inventories. FHS has been asked to continue with this and I thought Kempsford inventories might be interesting and useful as the Horcott part of Fairford was in Kempsford previously. Please contact me if you are interested in helping with this project..

Gloucestershire Archives were successful in the Heritage Lottery Fund bid to create new strong rooms and rebuild the entrance area to the Archives. Gloucestershire Family History Society will then be housed in the same building and there will be a new meeting room centre. This is the first planning stage. Building will probably start in 2016. FHS raised a small amount of money towards the project during Fairford Festival. As you can imagine much more money is needed than the grant available.

The Farmor's School logbooks are at Farmor's school and this year I managed to photograph them all. This was mainly due to the fact that I wanted to know what went on during the war years. It would be really useful if they were transcribed. The handwriting is fairly good. If anyone would like to help with this, it would be most useful.

The Parish news for 1914 and 1916 are at Gloucestershire Archives and in 2014 I wrote a series of articles in the Parish News about Fairford 1914. Despite there being no Parish news existing for 1915 I intend to continue with the articles. For those of you who don't see the Parish News much the same information is available at our blog Fairford remembers WW1 at www.fairfordhistory.org.uk/news/ww1/

During 2014 Syd Flatman has been writing articles about Fairford in the 1960s in the Parish News. These will shortly be published in a new occasional paper. For those of us growing up in the 60's they are very evocative, as much the same activities by teenagers were going on all over the country!

Please let Alison Hobson know if you interested in transcribing enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk or my personal email or 01285 711768

Fairford Flyer edited by Alison Hobson. With contributions from Geoff Hawkes and June Lewis-Jones. Photographs by JLJ, FHS Archive

FAIRFORD IN FICTION

I was reading the first novel listed below when I came across the reference to Fairford, which gave me the idea for this article. Usually I don't enjoy sequels by any other than the original author, but this was a well-crafted detective story with the style and atmosphere of Dorothy Sayers, with the added bonus of a local Oxford setting.

The late Scholar by Jill Paton Walsh. 2014

Based on the characters created by Dorothy L Sayers, this is a Lord Peter Wimsey and his wife, Harriet Vane, murder mystery set in Oxford in the 1950s.

Chapter 7

...[Peter said] "Let's have a break, let's go and see the Judgement window at Fairford, - an easy ride. What do you say?" "Yes please," she [Harriet] said.

A judgement window puts everything in a different proportion, they found even, or perhaps especially, intuitions about murder. But as it turned out they met an old friend of Peter's coming out of the morning service in the Church and were asked to go home with him to meet his wife. One way and another they didn't get back to Oxford till rather late.

Death of Kings by Bernard Cornwell. 2011 Warrior Chronicles: 6

Alfred, the great king, is said to be dying. Rivals for his succession are poised to tear the kingdom apart. The country Alfred has worked thirty years to build is about to disintegrate.

Uhtred, the King's warrior, Viking born but Saxon bred, wants more than anything else to go and fight to reclaim his stolen Northumbrian inheritance. But he knows that if he deserts the King's cause, Alfred's dream – and indeed the very future of the English nation – will very likely vanish.

I [Uhtred] celebrated Yule with a feast at Fagranforda. We made a great wheel of timber, more than ten paces wide, and we wrapped it in straw and mounted it horizontally on an oak pillar and greased the spindle with fleece oil so that the wheel could revolve. Then after dark we set fire to it....

"Why did you set fire to it?" she [Stiorra, Uhtred's daughter] asked.

"It's a sign to the gods," I said, "it tells them we remember them, and begs them to bring a new life to the year."...

There was a cheer when the wheel collapsed and the men and women competed to jump over the flames....

(From information from a Fairford resident)

The Looking Glass War by John Le Carre 1965 and 2001 p189

A Cold War thriller from the master of spy fiction. It is a gripping novel of double-crosses, audacious bluffs and the ever-present threat of nuclear war, featuring George Smiley.

Day after day Leiser and Johnson sat at the small table in the bedroom tapping out their messages. Sometimes Johnson would drive away in the van leaving Leiser alone, and they would work back and forth till early morning. Or Leiser and Avery would go – Leiser was not allowed to go out alone – and from a borrowed house in Fairford they would pass their signals, encoding, sending and receiving 'en clair' trivialities disguised as amateur transmissions....

From information from RE Whitfield of Carlisle via Piers Hobson.

The Invaders of Fairford by E E Cowper c. 1929

The story set in Fairford in the late 17th century during the Interregnum is pure fiction. However, detailed research must have been carried out into the historical background and characters that would have lived in Fairford at that time.

E.E. Cowper (Edith Eliza Cadogan) was the daughter of the rector of Wicken, Northamptonshire. Edith and her husband Frank purchased land on the Isle of Wight in 1883 where they built a house, Lisle Court. Her husband was also an author. She later divorced him in the 1890s, citing violent behaviour and infidelity. Writing was Edith's main source of income for her and her nine children. She mainly wrote adventure and school stories for girls. She died on the 18th November 1933.

Her inspiration for the novel 'The Invaders of Fairford' was likely to have been that her son Frank Cadogan Cowper, an artist, spent six months at Edwin Austin Abbey's studio at Morgan Hall, and there are letters to show that Edith visited him in Fairford. He lodged with Mr Wade, the Registrar, in London Street. He must have liked the area as he retired here to live and died in Cirencester in 1958. Frank Cadogan Cowper's most famous work is 'The Ugly Duckling' which hangs in Cheltenham Art Gallery. The painting was inspired by a 16 year-old sales assistant in Boots the Chemist in Cirencester (For an interesting interview with the sitter, Valerie Tarantolo see <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OtSc2fDyFzA>). He also painted a picture which includes the west window of Fairford Church which is captioned 'How the Devil, disguised as a troubadour, having been entertained by charitable nuns, sang to them a song of love.' and dated 1907.

Thanks to Glenda Evans and June Lewis Jones for information about E.E.Cowper and Frank Cadogan Cowper.

Jefferies' Land: a history of Swindon and its environs by Richard Jefferies, (1848-1887) edited with notes by Grace Toplis. 1896. This is available on Google books. <https://archive.org/details/jefferieslandah00jeffgoog>

This of course is not fiction, it is, as the title suggests a local history of Swindon and its surrounding villages. Fairford merits a lengthy mention in the chapter entitled 'The Oxford Road'. However, Jefferies continues the myth of John Tame, 'a merchant and seafaring man who chanced to take a prize ship destined for Rome' and Albrecht Durer designing the windows. It gives the full Bishop Corbett poem of around 1635.

One quote *'Hell and damnation are represented at the west end with such horrible minuteness of detail that we understand this window is usually kept covered...'*

The windows must have made a huge impression on Richard Jefferies as in August 1860 he writes a letter from Coate, Swindon regarding his Aunt Sarah who had been brought to the 'Fairford Lunatic Asylum'.

As for Aunt Sarah a letter arrived at Swindon on Sunday informing them that she was quieter – in consequence of some medicine – but otherwise no better. Of course not. Nobody expected it. It's their interest to keep her there as long as possible.... The 'there' means Fairford. Everybody has heard of that place – an awful wicked place. Even the Church windows are painted with staring figures of imps & other occupants of the bottomless pit.

They say it is a very pretty place as far as vicars, trees, rivers, crayfish, eels and small potatoes are concerned. I know nothing more.

Thanks to the Richard Jefferies Society for copies of the letter. They are also reproduced in 'Letters to Aunt Ellen' published by the Richard Jefferies Society, 2011

Please let Alison Hobson know if you come across any more examples of 'Fairford in Fiction'. enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk or my personal email or 01285 711768

From the Newspaper Archives

Leicester Chronicle 11 November 1815

SPECIOUS SWINDLER – There is now a person of this description actively employed upon his circuit against whose practices we consider it necessary to caution the public. At Hereford, under the assumed name of Walters, he hired a horse and gig to go to Malvern, but drove off to Fairford in Gloucestershire: where, under the pretence of their being his own property, he left them, after contriving to procure from Mr. Miles of the Bull Inn, an advance of money, until his pretended return from Oxford, for which place he set off in a post chaise, in order to place at College the youth who accompanied him. The first time he was afterwards heard of, however, was by letter bearing the post mark Stratford upon Avon, which he had the audacity to send to the parties he had duped at Hereford, mentioning where their property was left; in consequence of which the gig and horse have been restored to them, on their merely defraying the expense of the keep of the horse. On the 10th last he played off the same trick in Birmingham by the appellation of Mr G Wilkinson; and on that occasion he left the horse and gig at Ludlow, under similar circumstances. It is strongly suspected he has been practising his nefarious deceptions in this way, in various ways for some time, as he has been traced to Marlborough, where in the month of July last, he succeeded in defrauding a person by the same means. The youth who accompanies him has been his hopeful pupil throughout these scenes of deception and fraud.

The said W. Walters appears about 50 years of age, about five foot five or six inches high, thin and pale in the face, a little freckled, genteelly dressed in black clothes, his hair powdered very white, and a glass hanging to the button of his coat and has much the appearance of a Clergyman; it is supposed he is now in the neighbourhood of Lichfield or Coventry. The boy had on a brown coloured jacket and pantaloons.

18 November 1815 Morning Post

EXTRAORDINARY SHOT – As the Hon Mr A. was out with a party in the neighbourhood of Andover, he observed three hawks dart at the same instant at a beautiful cock pheasant he had selected for a shot – he fired at the group with a single barrelled gun, when strange to say, the whole four lay dead on the spot.

Cambridge Independent Press 1915

Although invalidated out of the Navy and over the age limit, William Fitzgerald of Hatherop, near Fairford, offered his service, and on Thursday in pouring rain, he rode 6 miles on his bicycle to attest. Certified 'medically unfit' he was returning home home when his machine skidded and he was thrown under an approaching motor. He was taken unconscious to Fairford Hospital, where he died on Saturday.

A slightly different version in the Cheltenham Chronicle 25 December 1915 from the Coroner's inquest at Fairford.

Wm Patrick Fitzgerald (49) of Hatherop left home at 12.30pm on Dec. 9th and proceeded to Cirencester with the intention of trying to enlist as he had previously been in the Army.... As he was returning home he called on Wm Ernest Smith, a shepherd of Donkeywell, Quenington and told him he had had to walk a mile and a half as his chain had come off. Smith having put the chain right, the deceased who was perfectly sober rode off on his way home. About 4.45 pm Mr Geo. Day of Quenington Court in his car headlights saw the deceased about 50 yards away as he was rounding the bend in Quenington Hill. The bicycle was wobbling and the deceased ran into the car, which was going at a slow pace... He was taken unconscious to Fairford Hospital ... where he died at 11.35 pm. The deceased had no lights and it was foggy and rainy that night, the verdict was accidental death.

Cheltenham Chronicle 13 February 1915

The hope that Fairford may have soldiers billeted in the town has been revived again. A dozen soldiers visited Fairford last weekend and canvassed for billets. It was stated that billets were wanted for 1,200 soldiers. The canvassers found there would be ample accommodation not only for the number stated, but also for a hundred more. It is to be sincerely hoped that the wishes of Fairford folk will now be realised, and that they will not have to suffer disappointment, as was the case with Cricklade. It is stated that a great effort will be made to get the Cheshires now stationed at Draycott Camp to be billeted at Fairford, and other battalions billeted at Lechlade, Cricklade, and Cirencester. If this is to be brought about the 5th Wilts and South Wales Borderers now billeted at Cirencester and Stratton would have no necessity to go to Aldershot for brigade drill, as this could be carried out in the Cirencester and Fairford districts.

It had been rumoured that the soldiers at Cirencester would march to Fairford on Tuesday. How the rumour got about I do not know, but it had the effect of bringing scores of disappointed villagers to wait about for hours along the main road on which the soldiers were expected to march. Although disappointed on Tuesday, the villagers later had an opportunity of seeing both of the Cirencester battalions march to Lechlade and back, a distance of 26 miles.

RAMBLER

Cheltenham Chronicle 4 September 1915

Most astonishing were the results of similar street and house collections in and for Fairford Cottage Hospital. The collections far exceeded expectations. The total amounted to £151 9s 4½d, and as the expenses were only £1 6s 1½d there was a balance of £150 3s 3d. This handsome sum has been handed over to the treasurer of the hospital, who has sent a letter of thanks to the Carnival Committee for generous and timely help. For some twenty years in succession the Fairford Cottage Hospital has received most liberal donations from Fairford Carnival Committee, but this year's contribution is double that of any other year. The Carnival Committee felt it would be nice not to forget the good work done by the Fairford Nursing Association, and they decided to give the Nursing Association £6 16s 3d out of the Reserve Fund.

RAMBLER

£151 9s 4½d is the equivalent of about £10,590 in 2013 money.

Cheltenham Chronicle 27 November 1915

Cotswold Gleanings

Recruiting is still going on steadily in the Cirencester area, and farmers and business men are doing all they can to release their employees for the Army and Navy. It is quite a common thing now on the Cotswolds to see farms being worked entirely with elderly men, women, and boys. One patriotic farmer at Fairford who is also a dairyman in a large way, gave his consent for his son, who is nearly 18 years of age, to enlist, provided he could secure someone to overhaul and clean his milking machine and petrol engine once or twice a week. The offer has been accepted by a practical woman, who has demonstrated her mechanical knowledge and skill with such good results that the farmer's son has decided to join Her Majesty's Forces forthwith if he can pass the medical tests.

Meetings 2015

All meetings take place in the Farmor Room of the Fairford Community Centre at 7.30pm except for the February meeting which is at 10 am.

2015

February 19	Fairford in Close-Up by Edwin Cuss at 10 am
March 19	Men behind the medals (WW2) by Graham Pitchfork
April 16	Letters from St Helena by Fiona Mead
May 21	Poets of Gloucestershire by Dave Walton
June 18	AGM & Those were the Days – the Swinging 60s

FAIRFORD in CLOSE-UP

For the last four years FHS has held the February meeting in the morning, which has proved very successful. This year our topic is "Fairford in close-up". There will be a presentation by Edwin Cuss of about 60 local views each of which will be looked at in detail. There will be a coffee break mid way, but no walk this year – finishing before 12 noon.

Enquiries Alison 01285 711768 or enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk

Thursday February 19th 2015
MORNING MEETING at 10am
 at Fairford Community Centre



Fairford Carnival 1913

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