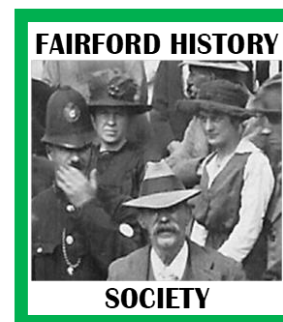


# FAIRFORD FLYER

NO. 69 DECEMBER 2024



FHS membership runs from September to August and remains at £5. Visitors are always welcome at £3. You can pay at the meeting or by bank transfer, Lloyds Bank, sort code 30-92-06 A/C Fairford History Society No. 02170130). You can also leave the subscription at the Community Centre in the FHS post slot by the FTC office door.

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## FHS Meetings 2024-25

All meetings are at 7.30 pm in the Farmor Room, Fairford Community Centre on the third Thursday of the month, (except for January and February 2025)

## 2024/2025 Programme

2024 - There is no meeting in December. **Season's Greetings to you all.**

2025

16 January History of Christmas and wassailing by Robin Burton (afternoon meeting at 2.30pm)

21 February Along the River Coln, Fairford - Edwin Cuss (afternoon meeting at 2.30pm)

20 March John Putley on a topic to be decided.

24 April (4<sup>th</sup> Thursday) Maps and LiDAR imagery for historic studies in and around the Fairford and Cirencester areas by Peter Vujakovic of *GlosGeog* (Gloucestershire Branch of the Geographical Association)

15 May Fairford's part in the Second World War by Chris Hobson

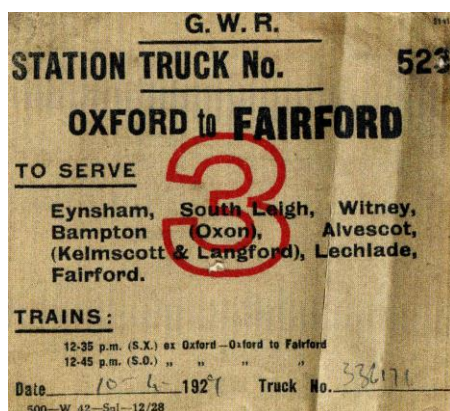
22 May 2.30 Cirencester Civic Society is offering FHS a guided walk in Cirencester - more details later

19 June AGM and Show and Tell

In July Syd Flatman is giving Cirencester Civic Society a guided walk round the town, FHS to provide teas

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## Lost railways of Gloucestershire - November meeting



Over 40 members braved a very cold November evening to listen to Colin Moulden taking us on a tour of the lost railways of Gloucestershire. We started out from Cirencester, where there were two stations, Town and Watermoor. It was fascinating to see the routes the lines took through the town, hardly anything of which remains to see and which us newcomers never even knew existed. We then went south to Tetbury where the goods shed and station yard have been converted to a flourishing arts centre and some remains of the old station can be seen.

Back to Cirencester and northwards via Chedworth, Bourton-on-the Water and Andoversford to Cheltenham. The Cheltenham Spa Express once held the record for the fastest train on the route to London, there

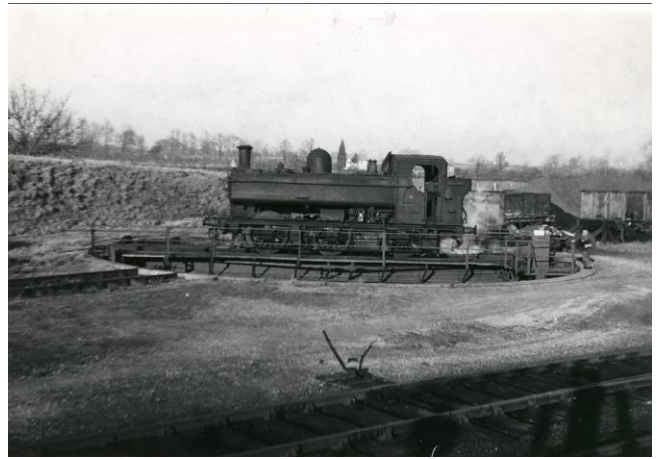
were no gradients on the route.

Back to Cirencester again and then over to the Slad Valley and Stroud where a goods shed built by Isambard Kingdom Brunel is now the only survivor of its type, Stroud of course still has a station. We also visited Nailsworth and Dursley where the railway served Listers Engineering works. Listers made the engines and

Godwins of Quenington made the pumps. On to Gloucester and the Forest of Dean where coal was transported from and once there was a bridge across the Severn to Sharpness Docks. In 1960 two barges collided in fog and hit the bridge, five lives were lost and two spans collapsed, thus severing the link across the Severn. There is a memorial along the Sharpness Canal.

Back eastwards, Kemble is lucky enough to still have a line to London and on to Swindon which opened in 1845 with its vast GWR railway works. Swindon Town station closed in 1961. From Swindon we could take a train to Highworth and Hannington, there is still a Station Road in Highworth, then on to Faringdon where the Old Station Nursery is in the converted station buildings but the yard is now Tesco car park.

From Faringdon up to Oxford, where we came back down the Fairford Branch Line visiting Cassington Halt, South Leigh, Witney, Bampton, Oxon (not to be confused with Bampton, Devon as some passengers did!), Brize Norton, Carterton, Alvescot and Lechlade. These stations came into their own in World War Two as there where so many military establishments in the area including of course RAF Fairford and the US Military Hospital in Fairford Park. We closed with pictures of the old Fairford station, and its opening in 1873 and closure in 1962. This report was just a flavour of the routes and stations of Colin's talk, which was illustrated with some lovely pictures of Gloucestershire railways and stations - a bygone age, sadly lost.



Witney Signal Box

Loco 9654 being turned at Fairford

Fairford Goods Shed

Last day at Fairford station 1962

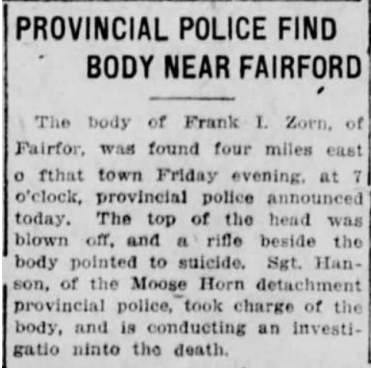


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## Fairford or Fairford?

The Fairford Parish Office often gets enquiries about burials in Fairford which they refer to FHS, which we are always pleased to answer as best we can. Sometimes it is disappointing for the enquirer if there is no record of the burial or there is no grave marker but often we can send a photo of the gravestone. There are burials lists and plans of the churchyard at the Steward's station in St Mary's Church.



We recently had an enquiry not through the Parish Office but directly from the USA about a Polish worker, a Roman Catholic who had had an accident while working on a farm near Fairford and died. This will be easy to find I thought and consulted St Thomas's burial list. No record. I consulted the Chairman, and he did a bit of research and found this man was working in a homestead near Fairford, Manitoba!! The enquirer was rather embarrassed to find they had the wrong continent.

About the same time Syd Flatman was stewarding in the Church and there were two visitors from Fairford, Manitoba. He was able to take them to the Heritage Room and show him the display cabinet where Chief Woodhouse's headdress and other First Nation memorabilia are displayed.

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## Some Christmas pictures



1960s Making Xmas pudding at Farmor's      Xmas cakes in the new domestic science room, 1966 at Farmor's

2012 Xmas tree being erected, hope they got it vertical

Fairford decorated 2010



## CHRISTMAS CLIPPINGS

**FAIRFORD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE.**  
**O**N Tuesday the 28th of December Instant, 1784,  
will be performed, at the BULL INN,  
**The MASQUE of ACIS and GALATEA.**  
Instrumental Performers from Cheltenham and Cirencester;  
the Choruses by the **Fairford** Choir.  
*To begin at One o'Clock, after which will be a BALL.*  
Tickets 2s. 6d. each, including the Whole.

Oxford Journal 18 December 1784

The beautiful church of Fairford has lately had an organ of a very fine tone, by Flight and Robson, erected in it. The instrument was the munificent gift of two ladies, the Misses Raymond Barker. It was opened on Christmas Day last.

**Morning Advertiser 28 December 1829**

... more munificent gifts!

Mr Barker of Fairford Park, had four bucks killed and made into a rich soup, which was liberally dealt out to all applicants on the day preceding Christmas.

**Gloucestershire Chronicle 9 January 1841**

and more meat...

Fairford: Meat Show - The show of Christmas meat at Fairford was very good this year. Messrs Cole and Brown were the only butchers that made a show, which consisted of three extra-fed half bred sheep, and eleven superior Sussex shearling downs, bred and fed by G. Edmonds, Esq., of Eastleach; also some very prime or heifer beef. This was considered to have been the best show of meat that has exhibited here for a number of years.

**Cirencester Times and Cotswold Advertiser 29 December 1862**



*Season's Greetings from FHS and Best Wishes for 2025*