



The Fairford Flyer

Newsletter No 18

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'The Tames of Fairford' by Chris Hobson

John Leland is a useful source of knowledge about 16th century England, though not always an accurate one. He travelled widely in his role as 'king's antiquary' and his powers to investigate the records of cathedrals, abbeys, priories proved very useful not least to Henry VIII when the monasteries were dissolved. It was Leland who gave us a key phrase about the Tames when he wrote

“Syr Edmund Tame of Fairford up by
Creckelade cam oute of the house of
Tame of Stowel”.

The story that the Tame family originated in Stowell near Northleach has been accepted by succeeding authors until now.

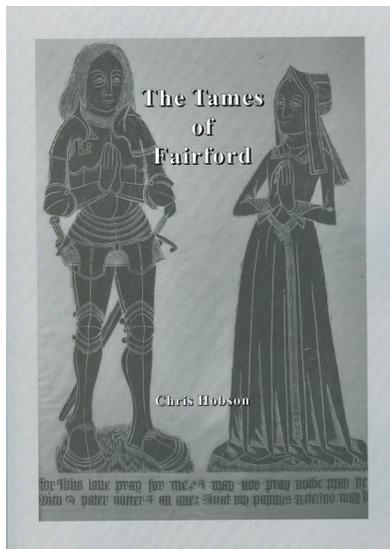
Now in his meticulous study of the family Chris Hobson has been able to show how a misunderstanding came about. In his book he has been able to put some flesh on the bones of an important Cotswold family and clarify their history. Not least he gives us a picture of how they acquired power and influence at the Tudor court through their success in the wool trade

This is quite the most important book with which the society has been associated, one which every member would no doubt wish to have on their bookshelves.

Members of Fairford History Society can buy copies at £10.00 each. (Non-members £12.00). To obtain a copy you can contact Chris and Alison Hobson **either** by email: enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk or telephone: **01285 711768** or by post: **Chris Hobson, 6 Faulkners Close, Fairford GL7 4DE (p & p £1.40)**

Copies will also be on sale at future meetings.

Geoff Hawkes



Chairman's Report

The autumn programme proved to be very stimulating and informative. First Chris Hobson gave us a double header in the shape of a lecture on Fairford Park which was described in the subtitle as “a lost treasure”. The supporting slides were vivid and in a way sad as you watched the destruction when this once fine house was demolished. The second part of the evening was an illustrated talk on the Tames of Fairford which was the basis for Chris's book which was completed later in the autumn. Carolyn Heighway's lecture on Anglo-Saxon Gloucestershire was full of interest drawing as it did on her book of the same title. It reminded us of the importance of Fairford and the county as a whole in this not very well known historical period. Our last topic before Christmas was 'The Gloucestershire Regiment in World War I' in which the speaker, Graham Gordon, cleverly used individuals to illustrate great events and mass movements of armies. It was easier to understand the motivation of many volunteers who traded dreary and routine jobs on the land or in factories for the thrill and excitement of war.

Even before we have reached the centenary of the outbreak of hostilities the topic of The Great War has already become an object of vigorously contested historical interpretation. The headlines have been made by the Secretary of State for Education who suggested amongst other things that Blackadder has played a part in wilful misinterpretation of the war. We are likely to be in for legions of historians, amateur and professional, battling to get their own version of truth heard. I sincerely hope whatever commemoration we settle on for the nation, it is dignified, not vain-glorious, increases our knowledge and understanding of events that now seem too dreadful to contemplate, and reflects the fact that so often those who did most in time of war chose to say least about it. .

Our next meeting will be the morning meeting about Fairford Farms, followed in March by a talk about an aspect of World War II that has only lately come generally to light, and then in May the development of Swindon.

For our AGM and to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Fairford History Society we will give members a chance to give voice to a topic of their own choice followed by refreshments in the form of Gloucestershire drinks and nibbles. Look out for more information about these forthcoming events.

Geoff Hawkes

ARCHIVES

This Autumn the Archives have received two donations: one from Mark Bridges from his mother Peggy Bridges which includes some interesting Carnival memorabilia and items from Bridges shop (where the Co-op is now). The other is from Mary Vizor which consists of pictures of Fairford and other memorabilia.

Inventories

About 10 members volunteered to transcribe the Fairford inventories and the project was completed in record time. The results are at <http://www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk/explore/items/fairford-probate-inventories-1648-1790> and they can be downloaded. Thanks to all who helped with this project. Here is my favourite example — to be read with a Gloucestershire accent to complement the antiquated spelling!

GA 1755/39A

November ye 25 1755 William Early

The Inventory of ye Goods and cattell and credits and dets of all belonging to William Early saddler Deceased November ye 5 of fairford in ye County of Gloster

A Little Hous and Garden in milken inde [Milton End]	£20	
2 Bedds and all belonging them	£2	
A chest of Drorrs	7s 6d	
A chest	5s	
An ould fashend clock	10s 6d	
Puter valled at [Pewter]	15s	
Kittells and potts	£1 5s	
Sass pan and drinken copper and candlesticks	7s 6d	
2 ould tabells	5s	
A screen	3s	
6 ould chears	2s	
Fier shovel tongs and bellis	1s 4d	
2 Barrills and 3 tubs	8s	
2 ould cows	£2 5s 6d	
Hay	£1 5s 0d	
2 Pidges [Pigs, not Pidgeons]	15s	
Ode Lumber Goods triffelings Things of small vallen valed at	10s	
Total	£31 5s 4d	

Gloucestershire Archives

FHS members with Gloucestershire family connections might be interested to know that a team from Ancestry have been working at the Archives for the last few months digitally recording all the Parish Registers and Wills. These will be available on Ancestry.co.uk very soon.

On February 3rd the Archives are running a drop-in session from 2:00-4:00 at Fairford Library to show people some of the sources they can use to research both servicemen and the effects of the war on their community. They are hoping that they can bring some original documents. There will also be access to the library's PCs so you can access the toolkits that have been put together as well as other relevant sites like the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Later in the year there will be the two whole day sessions at the Archives to show how the research results can be used to create digital stories as well as how to preserve and share the information. These sessions will be free but spaces on them are limited so we will be taking bookings.

FHS will have a display at the above event. With the commemoration of the start of WW1 this year FHS had already researched the names on the War Memorial and produced a book in 2007 but are looking to supplement that material to produce a new edition. We are also looking for information about anyone from the town who served but returned safely and for information about how World War 1 affected Fairford.

Burdocks – the name lingers on!

Whilst researching at the Archives a few months ago I came across the name Thomas Burdock. He appears in an Indenture of 1751 which refers to a previous Indenture of 1657 when the land at Lower Waiting hill was granted to Thomas and Elizabeth Burdock for 99 years at a yearly rent of £8 8s payable to the Betterton family. Thomas seems to have retained the land until his death and it was probably taken over by his son James. Thomas and Elizabeth had seven children baptised in Fairford between 1645 and 1667. Elizabeth died in 1669 and Thomas in 1708. So it is quite fitting that the name of Burdocks was changed back from Churchberry Manor and Claremont House. I imagine that Thomas Burdock never dreamt that his name would be commemorated in Fairford for so long.

Fairford Flyer edited by Alison Hobson. With contributions from Geoff Hawkes. From the Archives by Chris Hobson. Photographs by Hobson Cameras

From the Archives

Still Learning from Wills

Over the past few years we (Alison and I) have been collecting the wills of Fairford residents from both The National Archives and Gloucestershire Archives. Wills can be a valuable source of information about Fairford's past and can be particularly useful with regard to family and business connections, property and places. There are 162 wills of Fairford people in the National Archives collection (from 1500 to 1857) and 392 (from 1544 to 1858) in Gloucestershire Archives. So far we have transcribed and indexed about 100 wills, so we have a little way to go!

In addition to basic factual information about people and their legacies, some of these wills contain interesting and sometimes quite touching passages that add colour to the bald historic facts. For example, in the will of Walter Hurst, a blacksmith, in 1702 is the following:

"Item, I give unto my daughters Elizabeth Hurst and Katherine Hurst my little house that is now in the possession of William Search and all that strip of ground on the right hand side of the path in the garden against the said house extending as far forth as the Great Catherine pear tree during my son Richard Hurst's life but if they are minded to dispose of the said house they shall sell it to my son Richard Hurst at twelve pounds."

The Catherine pear is an ancient variety that rarely appears in any horticultural books nowadays as it has long since been superseded by the multiplicity of cultivated varieties. According to John Claudius Loudon's 'Arboretum et Fruticetum Britannicum' published in 1838, the 'Katherine Pear' was "a small red early fruit, still occasionally sent to market" and was considered by John Gerard in his 'Herbal' of 1597 to be the highest quality pear available at that time. William Cobbett in his 'The English Gardener' published in 1829 goes on to say "the Catherine Pear, which is a little long pear with a beautiful red cheek; it does not rot at the heart as some pears do, and is nearly as great a bearer as the Green Chisel itself, and that is a great bearer, indeed." Sadly neither Londis nor the Co-op seem to stock either the Catherine Pear or the Green Chisel!



"For streaks of red were mingled there,
Such as are on a Catherine pear"
--Sir John Suckling (1609-1642), "
I Prithee Send Me Back

The Catherine pear top left has a noticeable rosy blush in this picture originally in colour.

From 'Hortus Camdenensis' 1812

Apart from the "little house" (which at £12 in 1702 is still only equivalent to about £950 today), Walter Hurst also left his daughter Elizabeth £150 but it was left in trust with Walter's brother-in-law Lawrence Comely and Elizabeth would not receive the capital sum if she married within one year after Walter's death with someone not approved of by Lawrence. In fact this proviso proved to have been unnecessary as Walter was buried in Fairford churchyard on 16 May 1702 and Lawrence on 9 August the same year. Walter's daughter Elizabeth died in 1753, still unmarried. Lawrence's will is in Gloucestershire Archives, waiting for us to transcribe.

Unfortunately, it is rare for specific houses or other buildings to be mentioned in Fairford wills but in the 1853 will of Alexander Iles (founder of the Retreat asylum) there is the following passage:

"I give devise and bequeath unto my son Daniel all those my two messuages or dwelling houses together with the cottage and orchard adjoining the Female Asylum the cottage and premises lately purchased of Robert Cowley and the yards and gardens thereto belonging situate at Fairford aforesaid being the whole of the premises now used and called the Male and Female Asylums and also all those two pieces of land or ground called Home ground and Church Acre Ground situate at Fairford aforesaid."

This kind of information, in combination with data from a wider variety of sources, may eventually enable us to piece together a detailed picture of who lived where in bygone Fairford and may assist those who are interested in the history of their house or property.

Ending, as we began, on another horticultural theme, an article in the Illustrated London News of 26 September 1857 is worth reading (it is available for viewing in the Archive Room in the Community Centre). This journalistic 'gem' starts out by saying that

“Fairford is a little old town lying on the slope of the Cotswold Hills, about nine miles from Cirencester. In this primitive nook, the air has never yet been rent by the railway whistle; consequently, in most respects, except gardening, the people are half a century behindhand.

One of the few events which, in the course of the year, appear to be capable of exciting animation in its quiet streets (for there are two), and of withdrawing the inhabitants from their regular duties, is the exhibition of flowers, fruit, and vegetables, attracted by the prizes offered by the Fairford Horticultural Society.”

The article continues in a similar tone, a mixture of condescension and inaccuracy (there were more than two streets in 1857), before going on to say that the FHS (no, not our FHS but the Fairford Horticultural Society) had been founded in 1855 to promote horticulture amongst the “cottagers of the town and neighbourhood”. The point of the article, apart from the unwarranted slur upon the good folk of Fairford, was to report that the third annual horticultural exhibition had taken place on 3 September in three tents erected in Fairford Park, the home of the Raymond Barker family. However, the correspondent quickly moves on from the horticultural exhibition expressing a complete lack of interest in who won what and instead devotes a few paragraphs to the church windows. This is where the writer really comes unstuck as he simply repeats then current but later discredited mythology that the windows were acquired by John Tame having captured a ship at sea which was bound for Rome and that the artist who painted the windows was none other than the famous German artist Albrecht Durer. The London journalist might have been safer to stick to reporting the Fairford Horticultural Society exhibition!

Meetings 2014

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

20th February 2014 **at 10 am** - Fairford Farms by Edwin Cuss and Chris Peachey

20th March – Dad's underground army: the Auxiliary Units (British Resistance Organisation) by Bill King

There will be a follow-up evening walk to visit the Auxiliary Unit training site at Coleshill led by Bill King (date to be arranged)

17th April – no meeting

15th May – Swindown to Swindon: a town on a hill by members of the Swindon Society

19th June – AGM followed by an event to mark FHS's 10th anniversary



Fairford Carnival float 1908 outside Lower Croft cottages.
From the FHS Archive, donated by Mary Vizor