

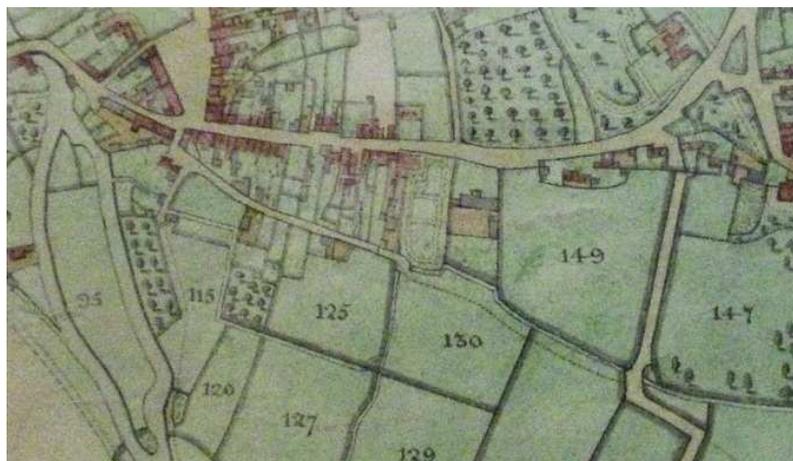


The Fairford Flyer

Newsletter No 16

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THE SWALWELL MAP, 1849



In the *From the Archives* section of this edition of the Fairford Flyer there is an article about John Bravender Swalwell who, in 1849, created a map of Fairford which was donated to the town by his last surviving descendant over 130 years later. This map includes numbered plots that can be matched to information in the 1834 Terrier document which records land ownership in Fairford at that time.

For example, Plot number 115 in the view above, called The Challice in the Terrier was owned by the Raymond Barker family but in 1834 it was leased to George Honeybone, a watch and clockmaker who had a shop on London Street (today occupied by the Allium). This plot now equates to properties on both sides of Gas Lane. Plot 125 was a meadow owned by Mary Humphries but the map shows a building that is almost certainly the Old Tannery. The adjacent Plot 130 was also a meadow but this was church land, owned by the then vicar, the Reverend Francis William Rice (later Lord Dynevor) but in 1834 it was being used by Richard Rose, probably for grazing. Plot 149 was then and still is called the Plies and in 1834 was a grass field owned by the Raymond Barkers but leased to Richard Rose. This map and the ever-growing collection of historical data is helping to build up a detailed picture of 19th Century Fairford.

THE PLACE NAMES OF FAIRFORD

Many who arrived puzzled over the title of our November meeting - 'In ffairforde aforesaid' – left clearer and wiser, having been absorbed by a thoroughly enjoyable talk given by Alison Hobson and supported by Sue Middleton. The lecture was supplemented by an occasional paper on street names. The talk showed how place names varied over time and then settled on one particular spelling. We were given the example of Waiten Hill which settled on this version in 1828 having previously been recorded as Wayting Hill and Weighing Hill (1591), Wayghting Hill (1603), Waiting Hill (1633 and 1696), Wayting Hill (1633), Waiting Hill 1633 and Waitinghill 1751. There might have been many other variants but if they were not published or did not survive then we won't know. The surviving versions derive mainly from maps, from legal documents, land transactions and taxation records.

The 'Fairford Aforesaid' title came from a typical document. It begins (in modernised spelling): "This indenture made ...in 1751 between Alexander Ready of Fairford Gentleman of the first part James Cove of Fairford aforesaid who Married Mary daughter of Walter Morgan late of Fairford aforesaid of the 2nd part and Jonathan Wane formerly of Fairford aforesaid...."

The meeting gave us the encouragement to look at the detail of maps and the names printed on them. Field names are often very informative. We were also given a lot to think about. For example the origin of The Garretts has not been absolutely established while The Plies is even more mystifying – many people have assumed it derives from the wooden Swedish houses which are post-Second World War but the name is found in a 16th century document. Fields and streets can change their names and there are some quite recent examples where we lack documentary evidence. For instance when were London Road and London Street formally divided? And by whom? So get out there walking and looking and see what you can discover.

P.S. This meeting had its own small historical significance – the regular third Thursday date November 15th had to be changed to the following week because the Community Centre was being used for the first elections for Police and Crime Commissioner.

Geoff Hawkes

ARCHIVE ROOM

FHS has recently acquired the artefacts from the excavation at the Community Centre that took place in 2007. The collection includes a large number of tiles, pottery and excitingly some tiny fragments of the leads and glass from the pre-1497 Church. A display will follow in due course.

Recent books include **Discover Gloucestershire Ancestors**. Vol 1 by Elizabeth Jack; a very useful handbook and guide on how to get the most from a visit to Gloucestershire Archives. Vol 2 follows later.

Did you know that Fairford was once a hotbed of trade unionism? The book **Agricultural Trade Unionism in Gloucestershire, 1872-1950** by Nigel Scotland, published in 1991 was found at the Cirencester Book Fair, last year. The East Gloucestershire Agricultural Labourer's union was formed near Fairford in 1872 to 'lessen the number of ordinary working hours'. One Thomas Ponting who may have been a descendant [son] of Christopher Ponting who was transported after the Swing Riots was heavily involved in the late 19th century.

There is a picture of a rally held in Fairford in 1913, and Florence Hancock, who was later on the General Council of the TUC and became a Dame, attended a rally in Fairford in August 1921 and gave a 'vigorous address, urging the agricultural workers to maintain their solid organisation unless they wanted to see their wages sink below 42s a week'.

To accompany the talk in November a booklet on **Fairford Street Names** has been produced. This gives as far as possible the history of the origin of street names in Fairford. It is available from St Mary's Church and also will be available to purchase at the next FHS meetings. Fairford Street Names. Price £1

Fairford and District U3A has set up an **Industrial Heritage Group** under the leadership of Pete Martin. As well as visits and talks, the local topic being researched at the moment is the Fairford Gasworks. George Simmonds White, a Fairford solicitor was Secretary of the gas works from its start in 1853 and for many years. Articles relating to the Gasworks have been deposited at Gloucestershire Archives. The original building agreement, the specification and a plan are at the Archives. It is hoped that the combined research will result in a publication. If anyone has any information or pictures please contact Pete Martin, Colin Moulden or FHS.

In March John Lang is giving the FHS a talk on the history of British Gas — come and meet Mr Therm!

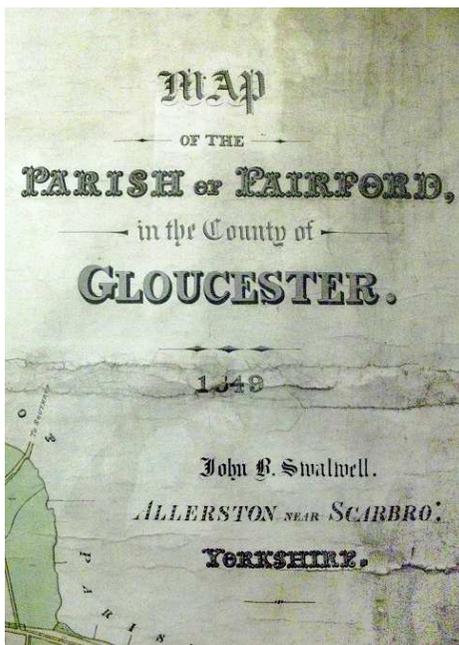
From the Archives

Who was Mr Swalwell?

Regulars and casual visitors to Fairford's Community Centre will no doubt have noticed the large framed map which hangs on the wall next to the entrance of the Farmor Room. Encouraged by November's FHS talk "In ffaireforde aforesaide" in which we saw several old maps of the Fairford district, I thought it might be interesting to investigate the background to this map and its creator.



In August 1983, Fairford Parish Council (as it then was) was contacted by former Army Chaplain Captain Geoffrey Hubert Swalwell of Highgate in London. He wrote that he had in his possession a large and very detailed hand-drawn map of Fairford which had been made by his great grandfather in 1849. Captain Swalwell was well advanced in years and was anxious to find a good home for the map before he died, and what better home than Fairford itself. He was unable to give any information about the map other than that it had been passed down through the family and had narrowly avoided being thrown out when his parents died.



The information on the map "John B Swalwell, Allerston near Scarbro' Yorkshire 1849" was the starting point for research into the man responsible for the map. John Bravender Swalwell was born at Allerston near Pickering in North Yorkshire on 14 October 1829, one of seven children of John and Hannah Swalwell. In the census returns between 1841 and 1871 John senior is variously recorded as being an agricultural labourer and a farmer of about 18 acres, always in Allerston. John senior retired from farming later in the 1870s and died at Scalby near Scarborough in 1882.

Unfortunately John junior cannot be found in the 1841 census but he may have been training as a school teacher around this date as by 1851 he was serving as an assistant teacher at the prestigious Oundle Grammar School in Northamptonshire. Six years later he married Miss Annie Sawdon at Malton North Yorkshire but in the marriage record John is recorded as being a school teacher at Wiveliscombe in Somerset which is where the couple's first child was born in 1858. This is the only mention I have found so far of him having any connection with the South West of England. In the 1861 census John and his family were in Scarborough, North Yorkshire where he is recorded as "Schoolmaster Classics & Maps" in a private boarding school, although one reference claims that he was at some time the headmaster of Scarborough Grammar School. This census record indicates John Swalwell's interest in cartography which must have started much earlier as he was only 19 or 20 when he produced the Fairford map in 1849. A newspaper report of 1867 records the dissolution of a partnership between John Swalwell and F D Fowler, both school masters of Scarborough. It is possible that the pair were running a private school in the town.

However John was not destined to remain a schoolmaster for ever as in October 1865 he enrolled as a pensioner, paying for his own tuition, at St Catharine's College in Cambridge University at the age of 36 - a remarkable achievement at that time for the son of an agricultural labourer. He graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree in 1869 and was ordained a priest in the same year, being appointed as curate of Ebberston, just a mile from his birth place. In 1871 he was appointed curate of Thorganby near York where he stayed until 1876 when he moved to the curacy of Yeldingham, just a few miles from Allerston. In 1879 he made his final move when he was appointed vicar of Sinnington, four miles west of Pickering. He remained in residence at Sinnington for the next 20 years until his death on 23 April 1900. At some stage during his tenure as the vicar of Sinnington he was apparently also the headmaster of Pickering Grammar School.

Three of John's sons were also educated at St Catharine's College and also became clergymen. His eldest son, also called John, emigrated to Saskatchewan, Canada where he was the rector of Swift Current and Estevan. John Swalwell's youngest son Marmaduke became the rector of Normanby near Sinnington and was the father of Geoffrey Hubert Swalwell who gifted the map to Fairford.

The map was received by David Perry, the then Mayor of Fairford, on 11 October 1983 and spent many years on display in the old council office in London Street before being moved to the Community Centre in 2008. John Swalwell may well have copied from a map made by Stephen Tock in 1834 which accompanied a terrier recording land ownership in Fairford. Although Tock's map is much larger than Swalwell's, they are very similar in style and colouring but Swalwell may have done some surveying himself as there are several minor differences between the two maps. Tock's huge map is preserved in Gloucestershire Archives.

Sadly, Geoffrey Swalwell, the last surviving grandson of John Bravender Swalwell, died in 1989 but the citizens of Fairford should be grateful to him for his thoughtfulness and generosity in gifting what is a unique artefact that not only adds to the knowledge of our town's history but also provides interest and pleasure to visitors of the Community Centre.

A Tall Story

The following brief news item was printed in the Morning Chronicle and London Advertiser of the 19th of June 1775:

"Report says, there is now living at, or near, Fairford in Gloucestershire, a boy only eight years of age, who is six feet six inches high, but so helpless, that if he tumble down, he is not able to rise again. This strange and improbable story is now much talked of, and has many believers."

Falconry at Fairford

Tantalising glimpses of Fairford's past occasionally come to light in the most unexpected places. A book titled '*Kings and their hawks: falconry in Medieval England*' by Robin S Oggins published in 2004 has the following passage which relates to falconry expeditions from the court of King Edward I.

"Contingents might go out for very short periods of time or for the entire falconry season. A group, for example, consisting of Sir Gerard de Busellard, nine squires, and three falconers was sent to Fairford in Gloucestershire between February 27 and March 1, 1278, to fly at cranes. The court arrived in Gloucestershire on March 3, so this group may have been sent in advance to try out the falconry."

The common crane is known to have been a breeding bird in medieval England although the grey heron was also referred to as a crane in certain parts of rural England. I am not sure which is the more exciting: the thought that medieval falconers were hunting in the area or the possibility that Edward I might have stayed at Fairford!

The curse of the mummy's tomb?

One famous person who is definitely known to have stayed at Fairford is the Egyptologist Howard Carter who, after many years of digging in Egypt, discovered the tomb of Tutankhamun in 1922. In the book '*Howard Carter: the path to Tutankhamun*' by T G H James published in 2001, there is mention of Howard Carter taking a break from his studies and touring with his friend, the novelist Percy White. They started their tour in July 1930 when Carter and White travelled to the Cotswolds and stayed at Fairford Park as the guests of Lieutenant Colonel and Mrs A J Palmer. It is not known how long they stayed or what they did while they were here but I imagine that a visit to see Fairford's famous church windows was on their itinerary.

Meetings 2013

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

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. See below

March 21st 2013

Come and meet Mr Therm: gas in the post war years by John Lang

April 18th

Chedworth Roman Villa—a talk by Nick Humphris

May 16th

Old paths of Gloucestershire by Alan Pilbeam

June 20th

AGM followed by John Higgs on a postcard theme

MORNING MEETING Thursday February 14th 2013 at 10am

Do you know of any churches or chapels in Fairford that have disappeared? Have you visited the three remaining places of worship in the town? For the last two years we have held our February meeting in the morning beginning with slides and a talk and following up for those who wish, with a walk to look at the some of the sites mentioned. This year our topic is 'Churches and chapels of Fairford'. We will omit St Mary's on this occasion because it is a huge subject in itself and many of you know it well (We may, however, return to it for an in-depth study next year).

The outline programme, some of which remains to be confirmed, will be like this:

10.00 Slides and talk by Edwin Cuss, 11.00 Coffee

Either: 11.20 Set off for walk with Edwin via two lost chapels to St Thomas's

Or: 11.30 Walk or drive to St Thomas's to look at the church and its history

12.00 Visit the United Church ("The Chapel") in Milton Street

12.15 For those still up for one last stage of the *tour de Fairford* we hope to visit a site of particular interest.

Even if the weather is very inclement we can still visit the United Church and St Thomas's but the walk may have to be cancelled.

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