



The Fairford Flyer

Newsletter No 19

July 2014

FAIRFORD HISTORY SOCIETY 2004-2014



FHS celebrated its tenth anniversary in style and it was rewarding to see that over 60 members attended, almost half the membership, (although this may have been the promise of food and drink!). There were displays of some of the items collected and donated over the past ten years, including part of the Fairford Silver Band Archive donated after its closure, Dr Cornwall's case

book notes from the Lunatic Asylum, and Fairford Peace Group items.

A 'Show and Tell' session followed with about 12 members talking for around three minutes each on a treasured possession:- a cup and saucer from the Royal Yacht, a first camera with separate light meter, a 4ft-long 1918 photograph of RNVR personnel, a Honeybone clock, a print compositor's tray, a piece from a Wellington bomber, fossils found near Fairford, George Loughton's wood working tool, a selection of old bottles found in the garden, a large picture of a sailing schooner based in Falmouth sailed by the owner's grandfather, a piece of shrapnel that fell in the owner's cot during an air raid in WW2 – 'there by but for the grace of God go I' and some 19th Century deeds found in Keble House and a leather letter pouch with "Revd Keble" inscribed on the brass catch.

Members then enjoyed a selection of Gloucestershire food and drink and it was a pleasure that June Lewis-Jones, our very supportive FHS President had been able to attend. She cut the birthday cake, which was totally appropriate as it was her birthday!



Fairford History Group

Are you interested in Fairford's history?

A wine and cheese evening will take place on

Friday 18th June, 2004 at 7.30pm
at Fairford Community Centre

For the purpose of forming a Fairford local history group to record and collect memorabilia and memories for future public use.

Archives, videos and various presentations
Whatever your interest, please come!

Membership 50p
Enquiries to Keith 01285 711054 or Alison 01285 712344

Fairford History Society

Election of Officers, adoption of a Constitution and plans for the future, followed by:-

Colin Watkins on
"How Education came to Fairford"

will take place on
Thursday, September 9th, 2004
at Fairford Community Centre at 7.45 pm



FHS aims:-
to provide a forum for those interested in history generally and in the local history of Fairford and the surrounding district
to promote the conservation of the historical heritage of the area and to compile and make available to all, a Fairford archive
to promote research, discussion, field studies, talks, publications, exhibitions and other activities relating to local history

Membership 50p
Enquiries to Keith 01285 711054 or Alison 01285 712344

The first two posters

THE HISTORY of the HISTORY SOCIETY 2004 – 2014

by Geoff Hawkes

This year's AGM was a bit different. Instead of reviewing the past year's events and activities the Chairman took a longer view over the last decade. Sometimes we assume everyone knows what happened in Fairford ten years ago, and for that matter what happened twenty, thirty or forty years ago, forgetting that the town has a steady turnover of population. There are always newcomers just as there are people moving away or passing on.

So the tenth anniversary of Fairford History Society was a good opportunity to recap on crucial events that saw the birth of our society. In 2004 we were in the midst of a battle to save the community centre for the people of Fairford. The county council had lost interest in trying to save the increasingly dilapidated building and were prepared to see it disposed of, probably as flats. We were extraordinarily fortunate to have a group of local people able to pilot their way through the complexities of funding for such an enterprise. The Heritage Lottery Fund was the key to unlocking the situation.

Amongst our allies was Professor Tim Copeland who was adviser on heritage issues. He made various suggestions out of which came in January 2004 a Heritage Drop-in Day. Some 400 people attended that day to look at displays and talk to others who were interested in matters historical. This was followed up a while later by a wine and cheese evening which was a focus for moving on plans to set up a history society. Keith Cottam began to assemble a potential committee and he was insistent on producing a clear constitution which has stood the test of time.

So on 9 September 9 2004 the first meeting of Fairford History Society took place. Its first job was to elect a committee and approve the constitution. That was all voted through *nem con*. Following the formalities Colin Watkins, former head of the Primary School, gave a talk about the school. We were up and running! The rest is history. .

News

In collaboration with Gloucestershire Library Service there will be a World War 1 display with associated literature at Fairford Library for about a month from 13 October 13 2014

FHS has already researched the names on the War Memorial and produced a monograph 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.

Some of you who attended the FHS AGM may have seen Mervyn Cully's letter bag belonging to Revd Keble, which he donated to the Society. Having inspected the brass plaque closely and asking an expert, the considered opinion is that it could be either Revd J Keble or Revd T Keble. The were two Revd J Keble's, the father (1745-1835) less likely as the bag is thought to be mid-Victorian and John Keble (1793-1866) Tractarian and author of 'The Christian Year' and also two Revd T Kebles, Thomas Keble, (1793-1873), vicar of Bisley, brother of **the** John Keble, or his son Thomas Keble (1826-1903), vicar of East Ilsley and Bisley to whom **the** John Keble left Keble House. Whoever it belonged to, the letter bag it will take pride of place in our collection. Mervyn also has lent us some documents relating to the Keble family.

From a letter dated 15 April [1847] black-bordered written by Ann Cornwall, wife of Doctor Charles Cornwall, who leased Keble House.

I am very sorry we have so long neglected remitting it [the rent] to you, but in consequence of our heavy affliction in our family we have been unable to attend regularly to business.

In Fairford Churchyard there is the Cornwall family grave stone which records the deaths of four of the Cornwall children in August 1846, this letter obviously relates to the death of those children, aged 16-21 from cholera.

Victoria County History News

As you may know FHS has pledged £100 per annum for 5 years to help the continuation of the Victoria County History for Gloucestershire series. Volume VII which contains the Fairford entry was published in 1981 and needs refreshing. It is the only volume not online at www.victoriacountyhistory.ac.uk but hopefully it can be updated in the near future. Funding has been acquired by the Victoria County History Trust for research into the Cheltenham and Cirencester volumes. Experts have been employed to lead the way but a lot of work is being carried out by volunteers. Sue Middleton and I have been working on Cirencester wills. These give information about people, property and beliefs of the time. An overseer is a person who helped the Executor carry out the will. These are some of their interesting duties.

Who'd be an Executor or Overseer? - extracts from Cirencester wills

From the will of Samuel Coxwell, 1625 (PROB 11/148/328)

And my special charge is to all my children is upon my blessing that they be obedient to their Mother and not wilful to make any rash match without the connsaile and consent of their Mother and uncle Robert Strange

From the will of Elizabeth Toll 1534 (PROB 11/25/212)

To twenty poor maidens of honest conversation £6 13s 4d That is to say to wit to each of them towards their marriage 6s 8d

From the will of Samuel Pratt, yeoman 1630 (PROB 11/158/147)

My will is that my Executors shall yearly every year against Christmas provide and cause to be made and give four new Gowns for 4 poor old persons of Cirencester viz the first Christmas for 4 men and the next for 4 women and in like manner for 5 years from my decease at the discretion of my Executors

From the will of Humfrey Webbe 1614 (PROB 11/128/548)

To my overseers whom I desire that if any controversy should happen between my Executrix and my children concerning any gift or legacy bequeathed that they mediate without suit of law for which I give them for their pains 6s 8d apiece

From the will of John Phillipps, shoemaker 1612 (PROB 11/121/400)

To my overseers 4s to be divided between them. And if any difference should happen between my children I desire them to end it

Another part of this project is the cataloguing of the Mullings Solicitors collection in the Gloucestershire Archives. Some of it had been listed but not catalogued in depth. Again a project leader has been employed but the work is being done by volunteers. We are starting off with 'Sales Particulars' and I have listed all the ones for Fairford. The following are details of the sale East End House (D1388 SL/8/43) in 1897 at the Bull Hotel, Fairford, *on Tuesday, the 13th day of July, 1897, At four for five o'clock in the Afternoon.* This was after the death of Alexander Iles who lived at East End House.

EAST END HOUSE, FAIRFORD, A MOST DESIRABLE AND PLEASANTLY SITUATED FAMILY RESIDENCE

Standing in its own grounds, built of stone, of the best construction, and most conveniently arranged, and containing Entrance Hall, Drawing Room 17 ft by 15½ ft., Dining Room same dimensions, Breakfast Room 12 ft. square, Eight good Bedrooms, 2 Dressing Rooms and Attics, Kitchen, Scullery, Dairy, Pantries and Larders, with a lean-to Bake House, and Offices

The Outbuildings consist of Three Loose Boxes, Coach house, Saddle Room and lofts over, Barn, Cowsheds, Piggeries, and other convenient Buildings. An excellent walled-in Kitchen Garden, well stocked with the choicest fruit trees, Greenhouse, Lawn and Pleasure Grounds, Orchard, and 2 Inclosures of Rich Pasture Land, all adjoining, the whole containing 12a. 2r. 27p., and is approached by a carriage drive well studded with Timber and Shrubs, and has been for many years in the occupation of the late proprietor.

Another item of interest was D1388 SL/5/82:

'Sale particulars to be sold on 9 September 1873 several inclosures of accommodation land, suitable for building purposes fronting the London Turnpike Road in Fairford'

the land included Betterton's Close, Betterton's Paddock, Betterton's Garden, Quarry Short Piece, Near Short Piece and Middle and Far Short Piece.

The map indicates that this is the Fairford Gate and Stoneleigh (Pip's Field) developments that have just been built on. I do not think a vast number of houses was envisaged in 1873.

Fairford Flyer edited by Alison Hobson. With contributions from Geoff Hawkes. Photographs by Hobson Cameras.

Esther Swinford

At the presentation by the Swindon Society at the FHS meeting in May, the murder of Esther Swinford was mentioned. As a follow up Diane Everett one of the presenters has sent some further information which she has kindly said we can use.

Esther was born on 20 December 1883 at Fairford and was baptised on March 14 1884 in St Mary's Church. Her parents were Alice Stevens (nee Gardener) and Edwin Swinford, a farm labourer and they lived at this time at Dynevor Terrace. She was one of five children Lizzie, Charles, Esther (Hettie), Kate & Rose. Alice died when Rose was only 9 months old in 1889.

Hettie came to work in Swindon and lived with her Aunt Gertrude Edwards (nee Brindle, who was baptised at St Mary's Church, Fairford on April 26, 1886) at 13 Rodbourne Road. Her uncles, Sam and Richard Brindle lived nearby with their wives. It is thought the Brindle family had moved to the town to work in the Railway Works. Their sister Gertrude and husband Frederick Edwards were married at Rodbourne Cheney Church in 1890. Gertrude was a half sister to Alice, Hettie's mother, hence the name Gardener, Alice's father was John Gardener, an accountant and they lived at Eastleach and had a servant on an early census return. It is not known what happened to John Gardener but Elizabeth Gardener is next found in Battersea, London with Sam Brindle (no marriage found) where she gave birth to Sam and Gertrude then returned to Fairford before Gertrude was a year old. Richard was born soon afterwards, the youngest child. Gertrude and Frederick Edwards had nine children, seven boys and two girls. Her eldest daughter was called Alice, after her half sister and the youngest one, born in 1905, Esther after the tragic Hettie and Elizabeth after her own mother.

Hettie had worked in Rodbourne Rd Workingmen's Club for some time, then went to work at the Ship Hotel for Mr & Mrs Matthews. Hettie became engaged to Richard Palmer and the wedding was to be on 6th September 1902 at Rodbourne Cheney Church and the banns had been called. It seems her Uncles did not approve of her choice and there were grave doubts about his ability to provide for her. Auntie Gertrude was very protective of her (half) sister's daughter and very superstitious. She found Hettie parading in front of Palmer in her wedding dress, a most unlucky omen. After an argument about buying furniture three days before the wedding, it was cancelled and Richard Palmer left the town saying he was going to Canada. In fact he went to Reading and it seems corresponded with Hettie through friends in the town, unknown to her Uncles and Aunts.

A year later it was rumoured that Richard Palmer was back in Swindon, and had been heard to threaten to 'do for' her Uncles and it was known he carried a gun. The family were given Police protection but Hettie herself was confident that she could look after herself.

On the fateful day 18th September 1903 Richard Palmer had been playing pool and drinking at the Mechanics Institute and had spoken of Hettie and said that if he couldn't have her, nobody would. He left saying he would find her and talk to her. He was not thought to be drunk. He entered the Ship Hotel and went to the front lounge and



ordered a Bass and a cigar from Hettie. When she returned with it, he shot her through the heart, she died almost immediately. She was 19 years old. Richard made no attempt to escape and was arrested and named by the inquest jury which was unusual procedure.

The trial took place at Wiltshire Assizes on 27 October, and Richard Palmer was hung on 17 November 1903 at Devizes jail, the last hanging to take place there, it closed at the end of 1903.

Hettie was buried in Radnor St Cemetery, funeral expenses were paid by Mr W E Matthews of the Ship Hotel. A tombstone inscribed "In midst of life, we are in death" was erected and paid for by public subscription and cost £16. 18.0.

The picture above was published in the several special editions of the Swindon Advertiser. This was thought to be the first ever photograph reproduced in a newspaper. Richard Palmer was carrying her photo when arrested and on the front was written "The curse of my life' and on the back 'To Dick with love from Hettie'.

Adapted from information provided by Diane Everett of the Swindon Society. Picture supplied by the Swindon Society.

Meetings 2014-5

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.

2014

September 18 Industrial Archaeology of the Cotswolds by Ray Wilson
 October 16 The Black Death by Dr Tim Porter
 November 20 Fairford House Deeds by Martin Lee-Browne

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

Membership Renewal

It's that time again! Membership subscription is due in September. It remains at £5. **Members with standing orders need not do anything, you will be contacted if there is a problem. Your membership card will be enclosed with this Flyer.**

For those who pay annually a membership renewal form is enclosed with this Flyer, you can pay at any meeting or drop it in to the Community Centre, clearly addressed to FHS.

Another method of payment for those of you with online banking is bank transfer. The treasurer requests you name it something like <YOUR NAME> – FHS Subs 2014. The FHS Lloyd's Bank account number is 30-92-06 A/C 02170130. Thank You.

A Missing Swinford

If this should meet the eye of Emily Swinford who left her home in Fairford twelve years ago - last heard of in Cardiff eleven years back—will she write to her sorrowing mother, or will any kind friends knowing whether she is alive or dead write to Jane Tovey, care of Editor Reynolds Newspaper. American and Australian papers please copy.

From Reynolds Newspaper Sunday July 16, 1893

www.fairfordhistory.org.uk

email: enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk