



The Fairford Flyer

Newsletter No 23

July 2016



The Bull Hotel Visitors' Book, 1910-1959

A recently donated item to the FHS Archive is the Bull Hotel Visitors' Book, 1910-1959. It includes signatures, comments, poems and sketches from all over this country and the world with many tributes to the good quality of the food and the good fishing. Disappointingly, the years 1939-45 are not included in the book so the much hoped for signatures of JRR Tolkien and friends are not there. This article covers the years 1910-20; during this time Frank Busby was landlord of the Bull with his wife Kate. There are parties from Cheltenham Ladies College and other schools. The Bull was often a honeymoon destination. World visitors between 1910-20 were from Winnipeg, Manitoba; Philadelphia, USA; Pietermaritzburg, Natal, S Africa; Tokio [sic], Japan; Auckland, NZ and Argentina.

A sample of comments are:-

August 3 1910: **Most enjoyable visit, simply ripping.** The Scott family from Sway, Hants. This family came regularly for many years.

August 13 1910: **Tempus Fugit. We must flit. Alas!** C H Pulford, University of London

August 30 1910: **My dear Sir. What a week!! Tales of fish and perpendicular.** Walter Everard

20 May 1912: **'Twas here I met my only love; 'Twas but a fish, alas!!** Josiah Snookes

April 1911: **Everything 'Top hole'.** J W Webster, Wallington, Surrey

Signatures from 1910-20 include:

Viscount and Viscountess Barrington

1911: Mr Hastings Clay's Otter Hunt, Chepstow

1911: Henry W Crees - London Festival of Empire 1911. Hon Sec Hospital Committee

July 1913: Stafford Cripps and his wife Isobel

September 1914: Rev Lord Manners Hervey, Suffolk

July 29 1917: Sir Hamo Thorneycroft (1850-1925, a famous sculptor) & Lady Thorneycroft

May 18 1918: Two simple velocipedestrianisticalarians

Erik, Prince of Denmark 1914 and 1919

Related to World War 1 1914-18

Military visitors include: officers from the 18th Hussars in 1914, Gordon Highlanders, 18th Lancers, KOYLI, Royal Scots Greys and from the Royal Navy, RFC and RAF including RAF Rendcomb.

Capt T S Tyler, the Queens Own Oxfordshire Hussars on leave from France 26/11/1917.

July 16 1915. **Enlist today and do your duty.** N.W.N

June 9 1916. **Come and be a Woman War worker & learn to plough & wear an armlet like we do. We came here for lunch while delivering demonstration notices round the country.**

National Land League, Royal Oxfordshire Branch.



Sketches by Edward Bignell, 1913

Verses were also popular

*To England I came My experience was good
Some English to learn In England you see
With Prince Erik and Martin They drink beer as much here
I was at the Park Farm As they do in Germany
July 1913*



*Three elderly men from Oxford City
Have found Fairford very pretty
John Tame's church is very splendid
We learned before our visit was ended
Having lunch, and being well lined within
We say farewell good old Bull Inn. H S & N*

Fishing also seemed to inspire versification:-

*Enjoy thy stream o' gentle fish,
And when an angler for his dish
Through gluttony's vile sin
Attempt the wretch to pull thee out
God give thee strength o' gentle trout
To pull the rascal in
D Rayner West Bucks R I*

*Fishing for health - and getting it
If your health be weak and low
Due to worries, war's alarms
To the Bull at Fairford go
It will cure you with its charms
P Lambert Benson. Bucks*

There are probably many more famous signatures hidden in these pages - it is a matter of deciphering and recognising them. Maurice Chevalier leapt from the pages but it turned out to be Muriel Chevalier. How disappointing! This is an absolutely fascinating and an absorbing record of visitors to the Bull, recording the social history and language of the time. There is scope for more articles which may follow in later Flyers. 3

Chairman's Report

It seems ages since we were starting out on our 2015/2016 programme with an entertaining talk by Bill King on that curiosity of the Second World War, the Upper Thames Patrol. There followed a usual wide variety of subjects: great national topics like Magna Carta and the very local interest ' those adventurous Cowleys'. Edwin Cuss took us along the Coln, Cherry Hubbard acted out the nature of Tudor medicine, St Mary's bell-ringers introduced us to the art of bell-ringing, while Howard Beard gave us a sensitive account of life in Slad and Stroud. We will again have for you in 2016/7 a stimulating variety of topics and we hope there will be something for everyone. The February morning meeting has always been popular and a number of members asked if we could add to that. We are planning to add a January morning. It is not so simple because this building is very well used but we would like to respond to members' requests.

A lot goes on in this History Society that never reaches the ears or eyes of most members. I thought I would give you one example that illustrates this. A few months ago Alison was contacted by Nicky Turner, a History teacher at Farmor's School. The school had some potential display space along one of the main corridors and would like to think how it might be used. Alison and I went to the school to talk ideas over with Nicky and the Headmaster, Matt Evans. One thread of discussion was linked to the school's effort to boost the house system. This in turn is linked with the new smarter uniform. A few years ago the head at the time abandoned the old house names – Farmor, Tame, Keble, Barker – and replaced them with rivers. They have now returned to the original list of local characters. The aim is for FHS to provide some information about each of them and some material conveying their importance. This should bring to life four people who contributed significantly to life in this town and beyond. Display space is precious in schools and much fought over so this is a real opportunity for us as a history society. We already support the school notably in something called **WORLD ON YOUR DOORSTEP** where the new Year 7s look at various aspects of the life of the community. Volunteers are also wanted to help talk to the Year 7s. This year it is on **September 15th from about 9 to 1pm**. Please contact Alison if you would like to be involved.

Work on the June Lewis Archive is still being undertaken with much interesting information to record plus occasional work for the VCH Cirencester project and Gloucestershire Archives. FHS also gets several local history and family history queries during the year.

Geoff Hawkes

From the FHS and Newspaper Archives

For this issue the source is mainly the Wilts and Glos Standard, taken from Frank Busby's scrap book from about 1897, when he arrived at the Bull, to about 1910-11. Frank cut out anything in which the Bull Hotel was mentioned as he catered for all occasions not only in the Bull but farm sales as well. He also cut out items from newspapers where his family was mentioned. He came from Milborne Port in Somerset where his family had owned a draper's shop and in the 1891 census he is recorded as working there.

In the Wilts and Glos Standard there are several articles in the 1890s by Johnny the Bard, Johnny the Rambler etc., obviously a regular contributor in the paper. In 1903 there was the following obituary.

The Late Mr F. Lockwood

On Wednesday (Feb. 18) there passed peacefully away, in his 59th year, Mr Frederick Lockwood, whose name in association with everything pertaining to angling has become familiar as household word to all the neighbourhood. His frequent and instructive communications on the 'gentle art' were not only produced in our own columns, but he was a regular correspondent of the Fishing Gazette, Field and other London sporting papers. With the detailed characteristics of the local rivers and streams he had by close observation and experience made himself well acquainted, and he was an angler of no mean repute. He also contributed frequently to local hunting notes and sometimes invoked the poetic muse, though not always, it must be confessed, with complete success. He was a keen and delightful observer of Nature, and had made a considerable study of the local flora and fauna, being never so happy as when he had discovered the haunt of some rare specimen. Among his friends and in congenial company he was of a genial and social disposition, and he will be very much missed at the gatherings of many of the riverside hostels where fisherman love to congregate. Amongst the pen names which he adopted the best known perhaps are Johnny Morgan, Johnny the Bard, Lock o' the Woods, Rambler, Pan and F.L.

Wilts and Glos Standard 21 February 1903

I had noticed that Mr Lockwood was listed as being present at many of the functions held at The Bull and thought it would be interesting to research him as obviously he was a local resident. It turned out to be quite a surprise.

Frederick Lockwood was born in 1845 in Oxford and was the son of a tailor. The shop was at 50 Broad Street in Oxford until 1884 and the family lived at the flat above. In 1871 he is working as a tailor in the shop. His father had died in 1854 and the shop was run by his mother. On 13 August 1877 her son Frederick Lockwood, who had been the foreman of the family business, was admitted to the Warneford Lunatic Asylum at the age of 32. In 1881 and 1891 census he is recorded as being at Fairford Lunatic Asylum. There are some electoral register entries which imply that from 1887-1891 he was living in a furnished room in the Manor House, Upper Slaughter with landlord Richard Tovey Iles who had Fairford connections, but by the time of the 1901 census he was back at The Retreat as a boarder. His mother had died in 1879 and his sister ran the business in Broad Street until 1884. Blackwell's book shop then expanded into the property. By 1899 both his sisters had died and his brothers had moved away. He died in early 1903 and was buried in St Mary's Church, Fairford by Rev Carbonell. There is no marked grave.

The following is a charming piece written by him.

THE MARKET BUS (the horse-drawn bus to Cirencester)

There are few of these conveyances now left on the road. One of the few remaining ones is the one which every market-day rattles up through our Market-place from the Bull Hotel at Fairford almost to the tick of the clock. We have ridden in or on this well horsed 'bus in all weather, in hail, rain or snow, and summer sunshine as well as in the winter evening, when many stars are twinkling on a clear frosty night. Pleasant is it to get on the top of the 'bus on a hot summer's day and get a breath of the cool refreshing breeze and the sweet perfumes of the honeysuckle, clover or hawthorn. Bracing is it, too, on a bright, crisp, frosty winter's day to have a ride on the market 'bus but a good thick overcoat and rug and some warm gloves are then a necessity, for at times the wind blows keen and cold off the hills, as the horses' feet keep up a rat-a-tap upon the hard well-made road. Tis a musical sound to me as Jack, the bronzed and jocund driver in his smart blue uniform and topper tools his pair of useful animals along at a steady trot. He's an amusing curio is Jack, and how many times he has told me that the old ivy-clad church on the roadside is where they bury the deaf and dumb I should really be afraid to say. Still it is a good many times during the decade I have travelled with him backwards and forwards to Ciceter market.

The characters we meet on the market 'bus do not vary much. They are generally the farmers living in the neighbourhood or an occasional business man, lawyer or divine.

It is rarely that we see ladies on the market 'bus, but if they do travel by it, they generally prefer the outside and their favourite seat is the box seat by the side of Jack who wiles away the journey by some civil, courteous and sometimes witty descriptions of the country around. The inside of the 'bus is generally sacred to the old regular passengers, the aforesaid farmers some of whom have not failed to take their seat perhaps for nearly half a century. On a few rare occasions a lady has been known to venture inside the 'bus, but although perhaps known to the gentlemen present, there seems often to come over the company the polite but freezing coldness, for if the truth must be told, but which we believe is an open secret, those inside travellers like to enjoy a quiet pipe or cigar, or even an innocent game of whist to beguile the tediousness of the journey as well as to have a chat about the crops, the horses, sheep or cattle, or it may be about the fate of the government. Very pronounced are the political views of the majority of these big farmers and a stranger is a wise man who does not meddle with them.

This journey from Fairford is by no means unpleasant, and in some parts is most picturesque. After leaving the town and ascending the Waiten-hill, away to the left we get a view of the dark thickly wooded Berkshire and Wiltshire hills, the tower of Highworth church on a clear day standing out in bold relief against the sky. To the right at some points the distant ranges of the Cotswolds burst in to view. We pass the old Three Magpies; a favourite meet of the VWH was within our remembrance kept by one 'Sparrow.' We pass the secluded villages of Maisey Hampton, Poulton, Easington and Ampney, past the Old Red Lion and Ampney Park and at a trot across the Midland and South Western Railway, and soon in the distance the massive square tower of Cirencester parish church comes in view. On our left the graceful spire of Watermoor church rises loftily into the clear blue sky and we go down the hill still at a steady trot and we then find ourselves entering the town of Ciceter. It is with a feeling of pride that we rattle up through the crowded Market-place, the object evidently of attention to the majority of passers by. Jack has to duck his head as we go up under the archway. We jump off the 'bus, give ourselves a shake down and are soon lost in the crowd outside, where pretty well every necessity of life can be obtained at moderate prices.

JOHNNY'S JOTTINGS

September 1896 Wilts and Glos Standard

An example of the poetic muse!....

FAIRFORD CARNIVAL 1902. Sept 4. Invitation and Programme

Come out, 'tis now September-
Fairford Carnival has begun,
And oh little boys and girls
There will be heaps of fun.
Come then all in gay attire
And give everyone cause to admire,
Then 'twill be no great surprise
If perchance you win a prize.
Come as Kings and Queens in crimson and gold,
Come as Dukes and Earls and Barons bold,
Come as Court Ladies in gorgeous dresses,
Come as Fairies with golden tresses,
Come as Indian Princes with mantles of gold,
Come as Robin Hood with merry men bold.
Let everything be bright and gay,
On this great Coronation Cycle Day.
Comic footballers there will be,
With soldier and sailor from beyond the sea,
Who have fought for us o'er and o'er
Against the bold but vanquished Boer:
Oxford men will carol sweet glees
'Neath the shade of the grand old trees,
Whilst dancing and "kiss in the ring"
Will fairly make the welkin sing.
Then save up your bronze, silver and gold
And give liberally as of old.
And now I end my humble lay
About the Fairford Carnival Day
By praying "God bless our King and Queen,"
As we ponder o'er the brilliant scene.

Johnny the Bard

Other articles from the Wilts and Glos Standard not always dated in Frank's album

How Far to Zisseter?

The horrid state of the roads when the frost broke up and rain came reminded me I had not given, in a short selection from old Ackerman recently, one of William Little's best stories. This is it in the dialect: - "How far d'e cal't to Zirencester, my friend? " zays a Cockeny genelmn one day to owld Pople, as a wor breakin' stwones on th'road> "Don't know zich a please." says he scrattin's yead. "Never yead on't before!"

What! says the genelman, never heard o' Zirencester?" Noa, " says he. "I ain't." Why, its the next town." "Haw, haw! says Pople, 'you means Ziszester. Why didn't e'e say so? It's about vower miles off."

Another time somebody asked him how far it was to Ziszeter. "Ho, dree miles this weather." It was nation dirty and slippy. Why so?" said the man to 'n. "Ho, it's about two miles in vine weather; but when it's hocksey, like this; we allows a mile for slipping back." [c1901]

April 16 1902

Visit of Mr Balfour. On Tuesday afternoon, the Right Hon A J Balfour paid a flying visit to Cirencester. The right hon. gentleman, accompanied by Lady Elcho, arrived in his motor car from Fairford, where he had inspected the church windows, taking luncheon at the Bull Hotel.

Arthur Balfour was prime minister from July 1902 - December 1905, He had a 40 year friendship with Mary Charteris (nee Wyndham) Lady Elcho.

Fairford Parish Council - November 1899

With reference to the question of a public bathing place, a letter was read from Mr Busby regretting that he could not grant a length of the river, as it would interfere with the privacy of the fishery. It was resolved, however that the matter should be proceeded with, and that the agents of the Fairford estate should be approached with a view to renting a site, the ground occupied by the dog kennels in Mill Lane being suggested as a favourable position.

The dog kennels were on the opposite side of Mill Lane from the Oxpens.

The Floods

Dear Sir, I was so surprised not to see anything in your paper about the heavy floods at Fairford, for it was never so before. Many were flooded out, or rather properly speaking, flooded in, for some had to live upstairs, it being such a heavy flood. I consider it is like the Fairford Carnival, another record. I am afraid we have lost a few trout, but let us hope not, for the sake of others.

Yours respectfully

Thomas Wichell, January 15 1925

The following poem accompanied the letter.

*The river Coln has overflown
With water on the moor,
Fairfordians say they never saw
Such a heavy tide before.
We paddled through the water deep
Upon the road being stored,
Thinks I, Fairford is rightly named,
It's really now a fair ford.
The Bull Tap, too, was also blocked,
No one could go therein,
And likewise the White Hart yard,
'Twas flowing much within.
The fish I know but little of,
Whether it's loss or gain,
But now the floods have disappeared
We'll let the rest remain.*

The following is an extract of a letter also relating to floods written by John Dance in December, 1841

...I don't know how it is with you, but we have had something like a record flood here. The cellar across the road is full up to the top steps, and poor Foreshew [The George] has a store, some beer and other things in these but can't get it out. At the worst the water was knee deep from the Baptist Chapel down to the Bridge...

John Dance was a grocer, druggist and agent for the Gloucestershire Banking Company in the Market Place. Unfortunately with Henry Wane he became bankrupt in 1857. This leads on to an interesting item on the history of banking in Fairford which in fact does not mention the debacle of the bankruptcy of John Dance and Henry Wane as agents for the Gloucestershire Banking Company which rumbled on into the 1860s.

LLOYDS BANK FAIRFORD CELEBRATES 100 YEARS OF BANKING

Wilts and Glos Standard 8 November 1968

Mr Henry Dancey was already known in Fairford as a linen draper when in 1868 the Gloucestershire Banking Company decided to open an agency in the town and appointed him as their agent. Mr Dancey owned premises in the Market Place. In 1886 the Gloucestershire Banking Company was taken over by the Capital and Counties Bank. There are no records of the company moving at that time and Mr Dancey may well have continued to act as their agent until 1895 when they transferred their business from the Market Place to an office at Montague House, High Street. They rented a room at an annual rate of £12. They remained there until 1898 when they purchased the present bank premises.

Some year's earlier opposition had arrived in the town in the shape of the County of Gloucester Bank. They conducted business from a room in the Bull Hotel. However they did not flourish long in the town and in 1897 they amalgamated with Lloyds Bank. Lloyds continued to use the room at The Bull at a rental of £15 p.a. The Clerk in Charge arrived each day by bicycle from the main branch in Cirencester carrying cash enough for the day's business. The Bull was then owned by Mr F Busby whose family later ran a garage business in the town (where Groves Place is now).

The Capital and Counties Bank merged with Lloyds in 1918 and Lloyds gave up their room at The Bull, moving into the offices of Capital and Counties. This building had been partially demolished and rebuilt in 1901 and part of it was taken over by the Post Office. The whole premises were occupied by Lloyd's Bank in 1964. The Fairford office continued to operate as a Clerk-in-charge branch under Cirencester until 1962 when it achieved full branch status.

Fairford Flyer edited by Alison Hobson. With contributions from Geoff Hawkes and Alison Hobson and the FHS Archive and June Lewis Archive.

Meetings 2016-17

All meetings take place in the Farmor Room of the Fairford Community Centre at 7.30pm this year except for the January and February meetings which are at 10 am

2016

- September 15 **Long lost local railways** by Colin Moulden
October 20 **Hidden portraits in the stained glass windows of St Mary's Church** by Margaret Bishop
November 17 **Magic lantern show** by Patrick Furley

2017

- January 19 at 10am in the Keble Room upstairs **Show and Tell**
February 16 (half term) **at 10 am People** by Edwin Cuss
March 16 (short talks and/or a film evening to be confirmed)
April 20 **Landscapes of the Coln Valley** by Alan Pilbeam
May 18 **Siege of Cirencester 1643** by John Paddock
June 15 AGM and talk to be arranged

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 (we now have a letter slot on the right hand side of the main door as you go in).

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 2016. The FHS Lloyd's Bank account number is 30-92-06 A/C 02170130. Thank You.

Next meeting

Thursday September 15 2016
7.30pm at Fairford Community Centre

Enquiries Alison 01285 711768

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