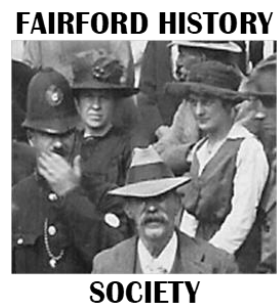# Fairford Flyer Extra No 2

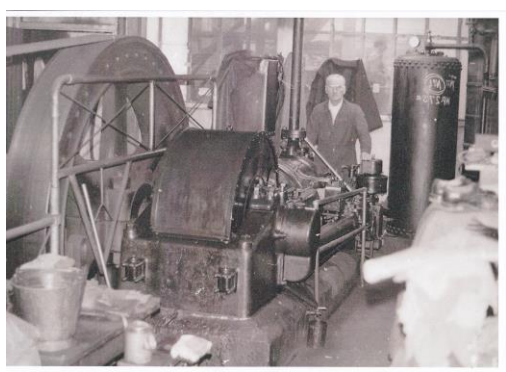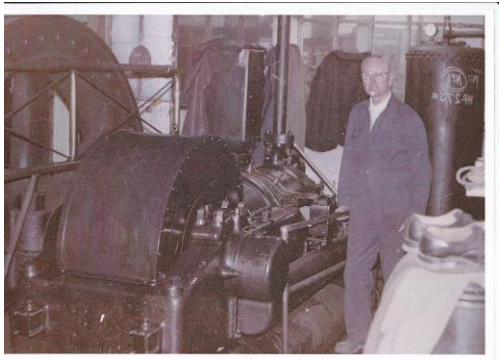April 2020

FAIRFORD HISTORY

SOCIETY

This is the second interim online FHS newsletter, which we hope will be of interest during this difficult time. If anyone has anything they would like to contribute or any local history questions please email enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk. What about those Fairford memories?

For your information: FHS is still hoping to have their commemoration of Henry VIII's visit to Fairford on September 5th in the evening in St Mary's Church and Fairford Festival has been rescheduled to the weekend of September 11-13.

Godwin Pumps

As a postscript to the article on Godwin Pumps, Syd has sent two further pictures of the Fielding Engine with Alan Miles, the engine master on his retirement in the late 1970s. The photos were taken by Norman May. This Engine is now at the Gloucester Waterways Museum in its own Engine house in the corner of the car park.

****

If you like maps visit https://coaley.net/maps/historic/bryant_1824.php. This is a fascinating detailed map of Gloucestershire. Eric Jones noticed an interesting feature near Miserden and this is what he has researched about it.

Steam Manufacturing in the Cotswolds by Eric Jones

Bryant's map of Gloucestershire in 1824 marks a steam engine along a stream at Miserden. This was very early and unusual away from the cloth-making Stroud Valley. The names 'Engine House' or 'Engine Bottom' recur at Miserden throughout the nineteenth century although without details or remains. A steam engine was certainly used at Cranham about 1820 to fashion gun stocks of beech for the Birmingham market. Miserden and Cranham belonged to the Sandys family and gun stocks were made at both in the 1770s. The Cotswold edge from Birdlip to Wotton-under-Edge offered the most

beech within reach of Birmingham and accessible to it along the Severn valley. Moreover gun stocks were also manufactured in places south of Stroud although this little industrial concentration has been concealed because parish histories fragment the tale. It had probably emerged as an alternative to weaving, which could not compete with the superior watermills (and later steam) in the Stroud valley. Miserden did have a little water power and in the 1830s was actually using it to make beech staves for the packing cases in which goods were exported from Birmingham and Sheffield.

****

The First Parish Council meeting

The First Parish Council meeting was held at the Girls schoolroom at Farmor's Endowed Schools, Fairford at 8pm on Sunday Evening the 4th Dec 1894. There was a good attendance of parochial electors all others being excluded for want of space. Parochial electors at that time were all men, and in 1894 there were 289 electors. It was proposed that the vicar, Rev F R Carbonell should take the Chair.

There were 11 candidates for election for the nine seats. The poll was conducted by a show of hands. There was a debate about this and Mr Corsie Grant pointed out a show of hands was not an accurate mode of voting and any dissatisfied candidate should demand a poll. This was agreed.
The results alphabetically listed were:-

Mr Arkell 147; Mr Bloxsome 150; Mr Cole 99; Mr Cook 108, Mr Cowley 142, Mr Garlick 131, Mr Hignell 146; Mr Iles Junr 155; Mr Milbourne 111; Mr Ponting 66; Mr Powell 68

There were no objections to the results and the first nine were duly elected. There are some familiar names there. Mr William Cobbett Arkell was elected Chairman and remained Chairman until he became ill in 1915. He died in January 1916, age 75.

****

Calcott Street to Park Street - why did it change?

The first mention of Park Street seems to be in the 1891 census. At that time the Raymond Barkers had left Fairford Park for Tetbury and Colonel Porter was in residence. Alexander Iles was at Park Farm. It was mentioned in the Parish Council Minutes as Park Street in 1897. However, looking at the Electoral Registers where the information is recorded as given by residents, the name Calcott Street is given until 1910 when Park St first appears. There must have been there was a very slow take up to the change!

****

A FAIRFORD TRAGEDY

On Friday 11 August 1848 two boys were working in the fields of Thomas Slatter of Fairford. William Bradfield was keeping birds away from Mr. Slatter's wheat field while Joseph Webb and another boy named Kimber were in an adjacent field tending sheep. William Bradfield had been loaned a gun and powder to keep the birds off the wheat. Bradfield wanted Kimber to accompany him but Webb would not allow him to go and an argument then ensued. Bradfield loaded his gun with powder and fired at Webb but this failed to change Webb's resolve to keep Kimber with him. Bradfield was then seen to reload his gun and put some small stones in the barrel. He then fired again and this time hit Webb in the head grievously wounding him. Joseph Webb started to run home but met Dr. James Cornwall on his way who immediately tended to Webb's wound but one of the stones was

embedded in the boy's brain and he died ten weeks later on 13 October. The real tragedy of this sad event is that Joseph Webb was just eight years old and William Bradfield, his killer, was only 12 years old.

William Bradfield was arrested and John Raymond Raymond Barker, JP committed him to Gloucester Gaol on 18 August 1848. The trial took place at the Gloucester Lent Assizes on April 1849 and, undefended by legal counsel, Bradfield was found guilty of manslaughter. The jury recommended him for mercy on account of his youth but he had stolen property in gaol while awaiting trial so the judge, who was initially inclined to transport Bradfield for life, decided to sentence him to one year's hard labour in prison.

Joseph Webb was the son of the miller John Webb and his wife Mary of Mill Lane in Fairford. Joseph was buried in St Mary's churchyard on 20 October 1848, his grave is now unmarked. William Bradfield has not been traced in Fairford but was probably the son of James and Hannah Bradfield of Kempsford who had a son named William baptised at Kempsford on 14 August 1836. The only record of William after his release from prison is in the 1851 census where he is one of the inmates of the Cirencester Union Workhouse.

****

FROM THE NEWSPAPERS

Poor pig!

A brief item in Jackson's Oxford Journal of 11 August 1849 reported an amazing porcine event:

"Extraordinary Fecundity. A sow which has been the admiration of most dealers in the locality, now in the possession of Mr. Hewer, White Hart, Fairford, brought forth on Friday 3rd inst, the immense number of 21 living pigs."

Dangerous Dog

The Oxford Chronicle and Reading Gazette in its issue of 2 September 1837 reported a case of a rabid dog wreaking havoc in Fairford:

"FAIRFORD, AUGUST 31. A strange dog, with every symptom of madness, appeared in the town yesterday morning. A hue and cry was soon raised, and he was shot as soon as possible, but not until after he had bitten several dogs belonging to the inhabitants. These were immediately destroyed or safely secured. The dog was recognised as having been seen in the neighbourhood for several days past, and it is possible to say what mischief may have been done, but we hope every precaution will be taken. The parish authorities in the town and adjacent villages have ordered all dogs to be tied up for a month, which we hope will be strictly attended to."

Morris On

The Public Advertiser, a London newspaper, contained the following item in its issue of 14 July 1788:

"Cheltenham – Troops of morrice dancers were last week assembling in and near Cheltenham, with ribbands of various colours, and little bells at their feet, to meet the King upon the road. They were practising farabands, with tambours and castanets. Frequently young men of good property join the

merry morrice dance, which was introduced into this country in the reign of Henry VIII. The Fairford dancers are distinguished for their dexterity."

This event was in preparation for the lengthy visit of King George III and Queen Charlotte to Cheltenham where the King took the waters in an attempt to improve his poor health. The earliest written record of Morris dancers in England is dated 1448 so it was in the reign of that unfortunate monarch King Henry VI that this form of dance was first seen in the British Isles. Many towns and villagers had their own Morris troops and a few still exist today. The music of the Morris made a revival in the 20th Century thanks largely to the folk-song collector Cecil Sharp and groups like the Albion Band and Fairport Convention.

An early slide show

Although the Fairford History Society has only been in existence for 16 years, an article in the Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard of 31 March 1846 shows that the residents of Fairford have always had an interest in history:

"On Thursday last, the 26th inst., a lecture on English History was delivered at the Temperance Rooms, Fairford by Mr. J. Beecham of Cirencester. The lecture was illustrated by a number of dissolving views, executed on the same principle as those which drew such crowds to the Polytechnic Institution and Adelaide Gallery. It was stated by the lecturer that the paintings, as well as the mechanical apparatus, were the work of members of the Cirencester Mechanic's Institution, and that they had been exhibited with great success in that town. The construction and dimensions of the Temperance Rooms are very unfavourable for an exhibition of the sort, but the effect upon the whole was extremely beautiful, and the audience, which was most respectable, gave repeated proofs of the satisfaction they felt."

John Beecham (1813-1882) was an artist of Castle Street, Cirencester and is well known for his imagined scene of John Blake, the last abbot of Cirencester Abbey, surrendering the abbey during the Dissolution in December 1539. More information on John Beecham can be found in Fairford Flyer 24 on the FHS website. His 'dissolving views' were a type of magic lantern projection whereby one image was gradually replaced by the next image, a technique still used today in film and television and can also be achieved in some computer programmes.

An example of a magic lantern capable of displaying dissolving views (via Wikimedia Commons)