



# Fairford Flyer Extra No 5 May 2020

FAIRFORD HISTORY



SOCIETY



## VE Day 1945 in Fairford

I have not been able to find any written recollections of VE Day in Fairford, even among June Lewis's extensive collection, so this is what it may have been like....

The Market Place and High Street are full of people, civilians and military personnel, the Union flags and possibly US flags are flying. The ale is freely flowing. Fairford Silver Band has set up in the

Market Place and playing a selection of patriotic music, perhaps there are fireworks...dancing, everyone is hugging and kissing each other. What a relief the war is over...

One of the young soldiers is Wally J Glavor from the 186<sup>th</sup> USAF General Hospital stationed in Fairford Park, he has come out with his buddies to see what was going on. He has probably had a bit to drink. There is a flag flying above a shop, within arm's reach, what does he do?... He can't resist the temptation to liberate the flag and take it back to the States with him.

Fifty three years later the flag was returned to the town via Ralph Wilkins, a colleague of Wally, who sadly died last year. In 2006 the then Assistant Town Clerk, Penny Ibbotson and I were in the Council

Office in London Street when we were visited by Cynthia Bellar and Sheila Shryver, relatives of Wally Glavor. I remember being very impressed and relieved that Penny was able to find the flag straight away. The visitors were very pleased to see the flag.

In 2016 Wally's granddaughter Sarah Schantz visited Fairford and the Town Council put on a reception for her. She was shown the flag, given photographs of Fairford at that time and was also given a tour of the town by Syd Flatman and Edwin Cuss. So that one 'impulse' in 1945 has not been forgotten and we made some new friends and we still have the flag.



### FHS Members Memories of VE Day

From the Parish News May 2005

Four-year-old **Ian Westlake** helped to put the bunting on the boats in Falmouth Harbour, but they told him it was for his birthday!

**Margaret Bishop** grew up on a farm and on VE Day she remembers the farm hands asking her father if they could go down to the pub. Her father said "Yes, but be back by evening milking." The lads were certainly back in time. They were seen wobbling up the lane on their bicycles, roaring drunk, incapable of doing any work. So little Margaret and her sister had to set to and help their father do the milking.

**Rosemary Westlake** remembers going to a street party and being fancy-dressed by her mother as a nurse, and she was embarrassed when her mother took part in a ladies' walking race!

**Graham Young** was at boarding school and the boys were given a half day off. He had half-a-crown to spend and this bought a three course lunch, a visit to the cinema and a fizzy drink.

**Gretchen Langford** was at Domestic Science College near Malvern. The girls were given the afternoon off and they decided to walk up into the Malvern Hills to British Camp. She says, "We wondered if the war would be over when we got back down. And it was!"

**Miriam Scott** thinks of the May bugs which invaded the dormitory at her school. The windows were wide open the lights on, much later than ever before, because of all the excitement outside.

From Fairford & Lechlade Voices, compiled by June Lewis-Jones, 2002

Terry Keene used to live in Catch Lodge.....now somewhere under the runway.



"Work on the base started in 1942 and my father worked at the Department of the Environment. There was a large Irish workforce, my mother used to make tea for them and a couple of workers lodged with us for a while. The main contingent used to live in Nissen huts down the hill where Faulkner's Close is now. Work was going on all around us, the woods next to us were felled as they were right in the way in the path of the intended runway – we were next to be moved out of the way. A network of steel cables was fastened round the cottage, rather like tying a parcel up with string, and as we set off on the lorry with our belongings to Vines Row and the great hawser pulled and reduced Catch Lodge to rubble – the home of a generation of gamekeepers, built on an ancient public right of way, was no more."

### Some of the original WW2 artefacts and information in the FHS Archive

List of Fairford wartime officers

Fairford estimated present population: 1324 plus 144 for Horcott

Rural District Councillors:- **Mr H Busby, Captain H Chandler**

Chairman of Invasion Committee:- **Lady O Hirtzel**, East End House

HQ of Invasion Committee: East End House

Alternative HQ:- WVS Settlement

ARP local organisers:- **Rev F A Gibbs**, The Vicarage

Address of Wardens Post:- White Hart Hotel

Situation of First Aid Post:- Fairford Cottage Hospital

In Charge of First Aid post:- **Mrs W Jones**, Morgan Hall

First Aid Parties (mobile):- 2 parties at White Hart Hotel

First Aid Party leader:- **Mr A C Goodman**

Local Billeting Officer :- **Lady O Hirtzel**, East End House

WVS Representative:- **Lady O Hirtzel**, East End House

Voluntary Food Organiser:- **Rev Gillman**, The Manse, Fairford

Distribution point for Emergency Rations:- **Mrs Palmer**,

Burdocks; **Dr King Turner**, The Retreat; **Mr N H Geach**, Milton

Farm; Messrs **Gilletts**, Market Place; **Mr R W Bridges**, Market

Place; **Rev F A Gibbs**, Vicarage; **Mrs Iles**, Park Farm

Buffer depots:- Fairford House, Waiten Hill, Marcom, Ltd Moor Lane

THE CROFT

Mr & Mrs F. Price  
 Mrs. Derry  
 Miss Pinnegar & Miss Nash. Housewife.  
 Mrs. Carter.  
 Dr Bloxsome  
 Mr & Mrs Evans. Stirrup pump.  
 Mr Barratt Card -  
 Mr & Mrs Allen  
 Mr & Mrs Swinford.  
 Mr & Mrs Davis. Housewife.  
 Mr Daws  
 Miss Arkell. Housewife.  
 The Hospital.

Mr Evans. Warden.

### ARP warden list of occupants of the Croft



Rev Francis A W Gibbs, Vicar of Fairford, 1936-46. Rev Gibbs was severely wounded in 1916 at the Battle of the Somme but returned to the Front in 1917. He was later awarded the Military Cross and Bar for conspicuous gallantry. He also served in North Russia in 1919. He moved to Fairford in 1936. He was in charge of Fairford's Air Raid Precaution team in the Second World War but was once fined for leaving a light on in the Vicarage!



The model submarine HMS Pride of Fairford stood on the counter of one of the Pubs to collect funds for 'Warships Week' during 1942. There was also a larger version which floated on the River Coln – for a while! The owners of this model have donated it to FHS

Fairford also contribute to the Spitfire fund, unfortunately not enough to have a Spitfire named after the town as £5,000 was required. This might have bought one of the wheels.

MRS L.G. POWELL & J.E. HARRIS ESQ FAIRFORD SPITFIRE FUND					
Statement of account with LLOYDS BANK LIMITED,					
CIRENCESTER.					
DATE	PARTICULARS	PAYMENTS	RECEIPTS	BALANCE	(RED Figures denote DR. Balance)
1941					
1 MAR	FORWARD			266.18.9	T
17	MOSS		1. 0.0	267.18.9	T
21	CASH		1. 5.6	269. 43	T
24	CASH		1.6	269. 5.9	T
31	MINISTER OF AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION	269. 5.9			U T



TELEPHONE FRANKLIN 2211

Extn.....

MINISTRY OF AIRCRAFT  
PRODUCTION,  
MILLBANK,  
S.W.1.

28th March 1941

Dear Sir,

Lord Beaverbrook has received with great pleasure the contribution you have sent him from the people of Fairford and district towards the purchase of a Spitfire.

He will be glad if you will convey his warm thanks to all who subscribed to this gift.

They have given proof of their devotion to the cause for which we are fighting and of their desire to have a share in freeing our skies from the menace of the Luftwaffe.

He will be glad, too, if you will convey an expression of his gratitude to Mrs. Powell.

Yours faithfully,

*B. J. Dunbar.*

Personal Secretary.

J.E. Harris, Esq.,  
Lloyds Bank Ltd.,  
Fairford, Glos.

### Evacuees

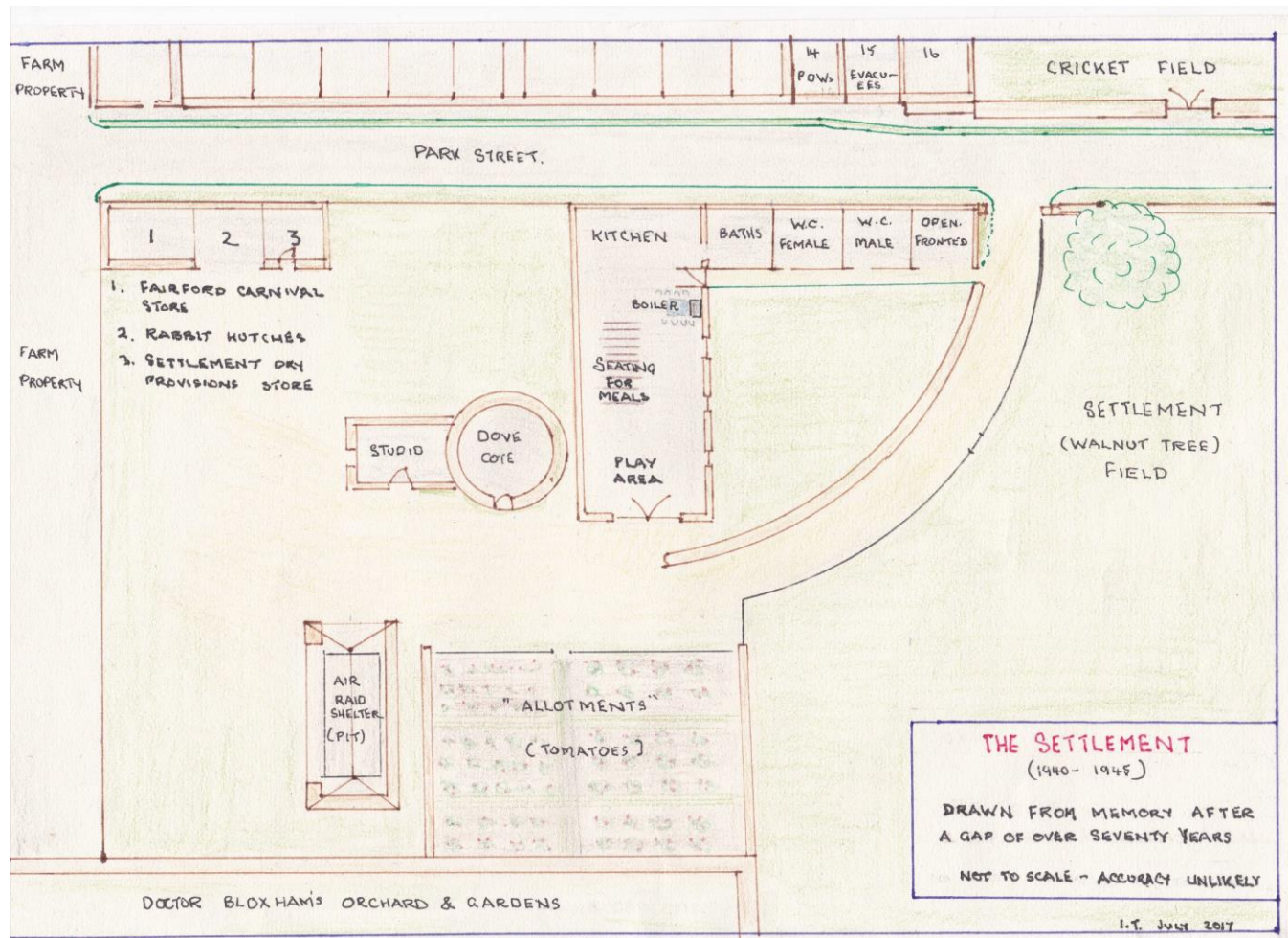
The FHS has several evacuee recollections of Fairford, however none of them mention VE Day. Perhaps going home eclipsed this event in their memory.

Ivor Tully, our evacuee who has returned to live in Fairford, who I am sure, would have given a reliable account missed the event:

*"I was rushed by ambulance to Oxford's Radcliffe Infirmary and the one thing I remember from the pre-op period was my horror when a doctor used a finger in the old and trusted way to confirm the diagnosis. Sadly I don't have any record of the dates when these things happened but when I was again able to join the living I found that in my absence the war with Germany had ended."*

From *Tiddly Music* by Ivor Tully

Ivor drew a plan of the WVS Settlement in Walnut Tree Field as he remembered it.



From the Farmor's School logbook (Mr Hedges, headmaster)

May 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> 1945

Public holidays owing to Peace celebrations - the defeat of Germany

