

Fairford Flyer

Extra No 10

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FAIRFORD HISTORY



SOCIETY

We hope you are enjoying these online newsletters. If anyone has anything they would like to contribute or any local history questions please email enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk.

Fairford Trees

After Extra No 8 there was some interest in trees so here is an article about various special or specially-planted trees in Fairford. There may well be more and we shall be pleased to hear about them. Photo credits: Chris Roberts, Chris and Nick Hobson.



In 2010 Fairford won 'The tree with the most interesting history' category in the Cotswold Tree Warden competition. This was for a black mulberry tree at East End. It is thought to be over 400 years old as it is one of many planted by order of King James I. He had a liking

for silk and thought he would boost the silk industry by importing mulberry trees and having them planted throughout the country. Unfortunately he imported black mulberry trees and it is the white mulberry that silkworms prefer so the plan failed. This tree also survived being reversed into by a lorry during the wartime blackout.

It is thought that some of the trees on the Fairford Park Estate may date from the mid-18th and late 18th century landscaping by William Eames. Eames preferred a more heavily wooded landscape than did Capability Brown so it is more than likely that some of the original trees remain.

The yew tree planted in the churchyard by the Reverend Frampton Huntingdon in 1718 was sadly blown down in the storm of March 16th 1986. Frampton Huntingdon was vicar from 1711-1738. This tree was planted in the fifth year of King George I and recorded in the Parish Registers. Its destruction was recorded in the Parish News of May 1986.

Not quite as old as the mulberry but certainly the most handsome tree in Fairford is the Cedar of Lebanon tree at Keble House. The house is listed as 18th century so it may have been planted by John Keble's father or grandfather in the late 18th century.



Another historical tree is one on the Fairford Park Estate. It has some graffiti carved on it Polish and the dates 1942 and 1945 can be made out in this 2009 photograph. The person who carved this came to the Polish plaque ceremony in 2009 when we went to find it. Pupils from Farmor's School visit it during the Year 7 'World on your doorstep' when they learn about the Polish camp.

In 1953 to mark the Queen's Coronation Liz Hope planted a tree at Waiten Hill Farm. Let's hope it survives the building work.



The newspaper cutting below shows Farmor's School head master, Christopher Arnold planting a tree to mark the 250th anniversary of the school. With him are the school's oldest boy and girl (Liam Buckley and Janice Coates) and the youngest boy and girl (Lawrence Rozier and Eleanor Leigh).



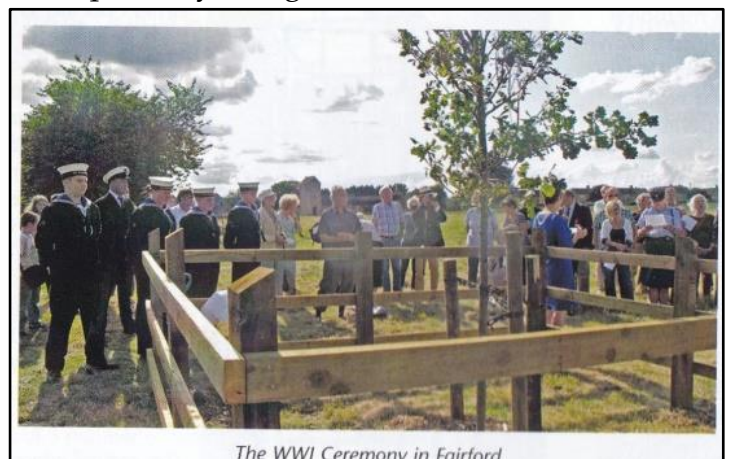
The planting of the Millennium Yew was organised by Tree Wardens Jane Pugh and Phil Trickett. It was part of the successful Guinness World Record attempt organised by the Tree Council to plant the most trees during the 24-26th November 2000. A total of 107,781 trees were planted at 515 sites throughout the UK. The yew was planted in the grounds of Fairford Library. It was moved to a different site within the grounds in 2004.



In 2002 an oak was planted at RAF Fairford to mark the 75th Anniversary of the Royal British Legion in honour of those who flew from Fairford on D-Day 1944.

In 2012 the Ernest Cook Trust planted 25,000 new trees across its country estates nationally, creating '**Diamond Woods**' to celebrate Her Majesty the Queen's 2012 Diamond Jubilee. At the Trust's Fairford Estate eight acres of new woodland have been created at two sites; Year 10 students from Farmors School helped launch the tree planting. In 2014 ECT also planted a tree to mark the retirement of Andrew Bosanquet, Chairman of the Trustees, he had been a Trustee since 2001.

In 2014 Fairford Town Council marked the centenary of the start of World War 1 by planting an English Oak in Gasson's Field. This was before the new pathway along Mill Lane was built.



The WWI Ceremony in Fairford

Fairford Preservation Trust (now Fairford Community Voice) was started in the 1960s and planted many trees over the years as part of its policy. Below is a picture of a 1990 tree planting session along Cirencester Road, and another session around the edge of Walnut Tree Field in 2014. Each tree has a plaque showing its sponsor. Some of them are still surviving! FCV have recently been involved in planting hedgerows.



A Recollection of Edna and Johnny Godding at the White Hart from their nephew Chris Rice

Chris's wife Maureen has passed on this reminiscence on his behalf via Janet Ainsworth and Nick Humphries. Sadly, Chris Rice passed away on June 12th, 2020.

'The memories that he has of Fairford are from his teenage years in the 50's. His uncle and aunt were running the White Hart pub. Their names were Edna (known as Eddy) and John (known as Johnny) Godding.

Eddy was one of Chris's aunts, his mother's sister. The family were brought up in Bristol and after the war Eddy and Johnny lived with Chris's family for a while. He is not sure when they moved to Fairford. They had one son, Martin who was younger than Chris and died some years ago.

Johnny was a hard worker and as well as running the pub, he also had a van and went to buy fresh fish early in the morning and then drove round the nearby villages to sell it.

At some time in the 50's Chris's cousin Jackie moved from the family farm in Devon and came to live and work at the White Hart. Later Jackie married Michael Barnes who ran an electrical business in Fairford and who is remembered as a very entertaining and good humoured man. They had three children. Michael died last year but Jackie is still living in their house in Horcott Road.

Chris remembers going to visit his Aunt and Uncle at the White Hart and he even cycled there from Bristol when he was a teenager.'



Samuel Vines

You may have noticed a large chest tomb on the north side of the path going up to the Church. This marks the burial place of Samuel Vines and is remarkable because his wife Mary Ann was buried 6 May 1837 aged 37 and he was buried 19 May 1892, aged 96. The name is connected to Vines Villa in the Green and Vines Row on Welsh Way (did you know that this road was always known as Blackford Road by the older Fairford Residents? Blackford Barn was a little up the road and it was a known liaison place for the young!)

Samuel Vines came from Brinkworth, Wilts. In the 1820s he was in partnership with his cousin Jacob, a maltster and horse dealer, but the partnership was dissolved in 1829. Jacob went on to be a shop keeper and tea dealer whereas Samuel went on to be an ironmonger and a proprietor of houses and is listed as 'gentry' in the trade directories.

He certainly had built or bought the houses now called Vines Row and obtained income from the rents. His account books are kept at Gloucestershire Archives. This is a letter about one of his properties for a new tenant on 9 January 1888:

... There is a large yard. The privies were in that yard but at one time after a glut of rain the water over flowed and ran down the path into the well and we were forced to empty the well & move the privies to the bottom of the garden. Therefore they must not keep a pig there. Wishing you a Happy New Year. Yours faithfully Sam Vines

In 1826 he had an illegitimate daughter Sarah to Anne Reeve, and at Sarah's marriage to Joseph Palser of Quenington Mills, paper manufacturer, Samuel is listed as the father. Samuel married Mary Ann Mills in Reading in 1831 but she died just six years later and Samuel never remarried.

He is listed as living in Milton End, probably in the same house (Vines Villa) in The Green, right through the censuses (1841-1891) with a housekeeper and a servant. He had a box-like observatory built on the house 'a safe place should Napoleon ever reach Fairford'.

This is just a snapshot of the long life of Samuel Vines, as there is a huge amount of information available. A longer article is going to appear on the FHS website or as an Occasional Paper in due course.

Dr Eastwood - The Retreat

Recently we had an email from a lady researching the Eastwood family. We knew of Dr Eastwood as he was a doctor at the Retreat in the 1860s. She has some notebooks by the doctor which she plans to donate (perhaps copies) to FHS. We shall have to wait until she can visit Fairford, but she sent a taster from a notebook. It looks as if they are going to be really interesting.

1862

Dissenters: I found a considerable number of Dissenters at Fairford, chiefly Baptists and Wesleyans but as they were not demonstrative there was no antagonism between them and the church people from whom they were very distinctly separated socially.

Amusements: I have said that there were few amusements at Fairford, but at the Retreat there were occasional dances, a selection of the patients being invited and several friends and relatives of the family being amongst the visitors. I started a series of 'Penny Readings' for want of a better name, we had readings, songs and music. They proved a source of interest to other than the patients."

Colston House

With regard to the recent furore in Bristol and elsewhere against Edward Colston (1636-1721) who made a fortune from the slave trade it is worth remembering that Colston House in the Market Place has no direct connection with the Bristol slave trade. It was the property of Alexander Ready, a solicitor who changed his surname in 1755 after he married Sophia Edwards, a descendant and heiress of Edward Colston. Its name could be changed to 'Alexander Ready House' but you can't change history.



From the Newspapers

John Bush 'of Fairford'

The following notice was published in the Oxford University and City Herald newspaper on 4 December 1830:

"On Thursday Nov. 25, was married, at Itchen Abbas, Hants, by the Rev. R. Wright, jun. John Bush, Esq. of Fairford, Gloucestershire, surgeon, to Margaret, eldest daughter of the Rev. R. H. Wright, rector of Itchen Abbas."

This is intriguing because there is no other record in the FHS archives of a surgeon called John Bush living or working in Fairford. The local surgeon in Fairford in 1830 was Doctor Charles Cornwall and although he is known to have taken on apprentices (such as the renowned John Hitchman), John Bush is not mentioned in any of the records we hold. Quite often "of Fairford" in old newspapers could refer to any of the villages near Fairford as well as well as to Fairford itself.

A search on Ancestry, Find My Past and the British Newspaper Archive provided some clues and a possible explanation. In the 1841 census John Bush is recorded as a surgeon living with his wife Margaret in Witney. The 1841 census does not give a place or a precise year of birth but subsequent censuses do provide this information and show that John Bush was actually born in Witney. He was baptised in Witney's church of St Mary on 7 November 1806, one of the 10 children of John and Ann Bush. The 1851 census showed that John was the proprietor of the Retreat Asylum in Clapham, Surrey. This is confirmed by the Middlesex University's website on privately-managed asylums which reveals that John Bush took over the management of the Clapham Asylum in 1844 and that he had previously worked in the private asylum in Witney owned by his mother-in-law Rebecca Batt.

John Bush's involvement in the world of private asylums suggests that he may have worked at the Retreat Asylum founded by Alexander Iles in Fairford in 1822, hence the statement "of Fairford" in the marriage announcement. If this is so then he does not seem to have adopted the practices of humane treatment of patients for which Fairford's asylum became well known. Apparently after John Bush took over the Clapham Asylum it was increasingly criticised in the annual Lunacy Commission reports, particularly for its excessive use of physical restraint.

John Bush died on 5 October 1871 and was buried in St Mary's churchyard at Witney. The asylum at Clapham was closed three years later. Research will continue to try to confirm if John Bush was one of the surgeons who worked at the Fairford Retreat with Dr Cornwall, just like Doctor Eastwood in the article above.



An 1835 etching of the Retreat