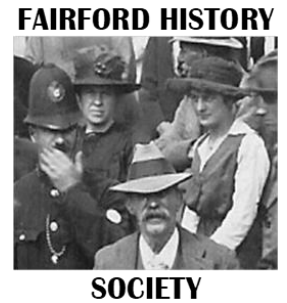


Fairford Flyer

Extra No 14

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We hope you are enjoying these online newsletters. If anyone has anything they would like to contribute or have any local history questions please email enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk. We are taking a few weeks break, the next edition will be at the end of August when it will have a definite Tudor theme as it was at the end of August 1520 when Henry VIII visited Fairford.

Agnes Porter (c.1752-1814)

Agnes was a governess and diarist whose journals and letters have been published in a book 'A Governess in the age of Jane Austen' edited by Joanna Martin (Hambledon Press 1998). Her connection to Fairford is that she was the sister of Fanny Richards, wife of Thomas Richards¹, curate at Fairford and master at Farmor's School 1814-19. Fanny herself may have been the governess to the Hicks Beach family of Williamstrip. Agnes spent a good deal of time at Fairford from 1805-1812, but by 1811 she found the town 'dull' and she spent her last years at Bruton, Somerset where she had friends in the area.

Extracts from Agnes's visit to Fairford in 1805

15 April Left my good London friends and set out for my still dearer friends at Fairford. Left London at six o'clock - travelled all night

16 April Reached Fairford about six in the morning. My Fanny's arms open to receive me; a most kind welcome from Mr Richards and his niece Miss Morice: breakfast ready set - a delicious meal; then my sister insisted on my going to bed; did so and slept till two o'clock, then dressed for dinner. A most happy party - my brother and sister in good health, thank God. Their nephew goes on well at Mr Crowdy's of Swindon, lawyer, and their niece is a lovely amiable girl of fifteen. Miss Brooke is much the same, poor girl, and their new child, Miss Edwards is a sweet girl. She was daughter to the late rector of Fairford², who left his affairs in great disorder. Mr Richards and Mr Keeble [sic] another worthy clergyman, undertook to settle them and assist the widow and children. ...They are both very fond of her, and my sister gives her the name of 'dear sparkle'.

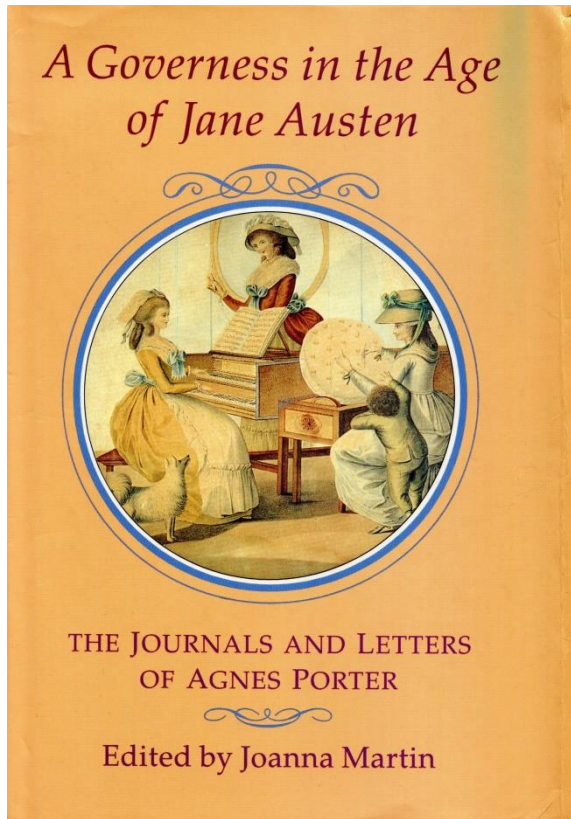
18 April We drank tea at Revd Mr Keble's. A charming family of five children. The eldest son³ is, at thirteen, a prodigy of learning - can repeat fifty or sixty verses in any part of Homer, and when he translates can repeat either the scene or the words of the original and exactness. Mr Richards told me the circumstance of it.

19 April Walked about Fairford. A very pretty little town, but the church is most curious. It was built on purpose to put in very fine painted glass windows, a prize from the Spaniards in Henry VIIIth's reign⁴.

21 April We rise at six; breakfast at eight; dine at three; and sup at half past eight; prayers at half past nine and to bed at ten. This is the life of the people of Fairford. It is needless to say diligent, good and happy.

¹ Thomas Richards was curate at Fairford from 1804 to 1819 to vicars John Smith, and John Michell both of whom were absentee vicars, living elsewhere and leaving all the work to Thomas. Neither of them carried out any baptisms, marriages or funerals during their time as vicars here.

2. James Edwards was also vicar of Ashleworth, he married Sophia and had 10 children. He died suddenly in 1804, perhaps why he left his affairs in such disorder.
3. Fairford's most famous son, **the** John Keble (1792-1866)
4. Incorrect information, a theory of the time.



There is no picture of Agnes Porter, but we perhaps can imagine her, rather like Jane Austen but older. It is not known why she left Fairford, she said it was now not convenient for her sister and brother-in-law to have her with them, but a friend of hers theorizes that she found Thomas Richards too strict as she liked playing cards and socialising!

In the book there are pictures of Thomas and Fanny Richards and a picture of Agnes's trunk with 'A P' studded on the lid. Due to copyright considerations we are not able to reproduce these so here is a picture of the book cover. The book is available to view in the Archive Room when we reopen.

Fairford Telephone Numbers 1908-1925

100 years after Agnes Porter the telephone was introduced in Fairford. There were no Fairford telephone numbers prior to 1908 and only seven numbers in the Cirencester Exchange in 1906.

Fairford 1 was the number for the Post Office and for the public call box at the Post Office that was inside the Capital and Counties Bank in the High St. The Bank was taken over by Lloyds Bank in 1918

Fairford 2 was E N Edmonds, miller & dealer at Whelford Mills

Fairford 3 was Mr Cobbett Arkell, coal merchant. By 1912 this number was being used for Dr Bloxsome's surgery at Croft House

Fairford 4 was J T Hobbs, Manor House, Meysey Hampton and then by 1925 East Glos Engineering

Fairford 5 was the coal merchant H Cole at Milton Farm and by 1925 Nicholas Geach had taken over Milton Farm

Fairford 6 was C K Milbourne in 1908 only. He was son of Sarah Thomas (the famous Fairford diarist) and lived at Milton House. After this the number changed to Constables coach builder and in 1920 and 1925 was used by Oliver Holt-Needham at Burdocks

Fairford 7 A J Hitchman Iles, Solicitor at the White House, London St

Fairford 8 Arthur Perry, Purveyor of fine meats by 1925 A Perry and Sons (now Londis)

Fairford 9 Dr A C King-Turner at the Retreat (the Coln House School site)

Other numbers that didn't change **Fairford 13** the Police Station, **Fairford 14** the Railway Station, **Fairford 17** the Bull Hotel and **Fairford 21** for A J Palmer at Park House, surprisingly they did not get a telephone until 1911.

In the 1925 telephone directory the highest numbers is Fairford 28

FROM THE NEWSPAPERS (or the dangers of working on the land)

Stay out of the Sun

The following brief article appeared in the Witney Express and Oxfordshire and Midland Counties Herald of 11th July 1878:

FAIRFORD.

DEATH FROM A SUNSTROKE. — An old man named Joynes, a carter in the employ of Mr. Miller, died from the effects of a sunstroke on Thursday. Deceased was, with a boy, in charge of a wagon and team of horses, when he was suddenly seized, and told the boy to go on with the horses. The boy seeing something was the matter, called for assistance, and the poor old man was at once taken home, but never rallied, and died in a state of unconsciousness the same evening.

Thomas Joynes was buried in the churchyard at Fairford on the 29th of June aged 70.

Heatstroke doesn't just happen in tropical countries, now that summer is here let's be careful out there and drink enough fluids!

Beware of the Bull

From the Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle of 7th July 1879:

"FAIRFORD. A lad named Charles Betterton, in the employ of Mr. W. Arkell of Hatherop, met with his death in the following manner. It appears the lad had the looking after of a bull, and on Wednesday afternoon between 4 and 5 o'clock deceased went to feed it as usual and was supposed to be clearing out the bull's manger to put his food in, when the bull attacked him, and gored him very badly about his body. Deceased managed to get from the bull before any assistance came, but was unable to tell anything about it, and was conveyed home. The doctor was sent for, and was soon in attendance; but between 3 and 4 o'clock on Thursday morning he expired from the injuries received."

Charles Betterton was the son of labourer Thomas Betterton and his wife Mary Ann who lived at Netherton. Charles was just 16 years old when he died, he was buried at Hatherop on the 15th of July.

Mind that tree!

This report is from the North Wilts Herald of 3 May 1889:

"SHOCKING FATAL ACCIDENT: On Saturday morning a sad fatal accident occurred to a man named William Keylock, who was employed in felling a tree just outside Fairford on the road to the railway

station. Deceased, with his gang of men, had prepared the tree for throwing. The men had gone to the crab windlass, which was fixed in the field, and from which a rope was attached to the upper part of the tree and were in act of winding, deceased being at the base of the tree, driving wedges into the saw cut to assist the action of the windlass. As the tree began to fall all was apparently right, but in an instant from some cause it severed. Deceased saw his danger and ran, but, strangely and unfortunately, ran exactly in the direction in which the tree was falling. It came down with a fearful crash, striking the poor fellow to the ground, and killing him instantly. Someone ran immediately for Mr. Bloxsome, who was on the spot as soon as possible, but of course his services were of no avail."

The report continues to give an account of the inquest before which the body was viewed at the Railway Inn by George Henry Loughton, a carpenter and builder and foreman of the jury. One of the witnesses said that when the tree began to fall one of its branches caught a branch of an adjacent tree twisting the falling tree to one side. The witness went on to say "Deceased did not run as he saw the tree coming towards him; he seemed confused, and in running for his life he ran into the jaws of death – the tree overtook him as he was running – he did not hesitate or stop".

William Keylock (alias Garlick) was a 40 year-old widower of Bibury and was buried in the churchyard there on the 1st of May.

Don't drink and drive (or walk next to a horse)

And lastly, from the Gloucestershire Chronicle of 16th October 1897

"CIRENCESTER INQUEST. Mr Coroner Ball has opened an inquest at the Police-court on the body of John Swinford, aged 50, labourer, of Fairford, who died on the previous Thursday in the Cottage Hospital. The deceased came to Cirencester Mop on Monday from Gloucester, where he had been working for five months, and on Tuesday he met Job Mills, carter to Mr Cole, junior, of Fairford, and decided to proceed to Fairford with Mills and his team. Before starting, Mills and other wagoners met at the Wagon and Horses Inn, Cirencester, and drinking resulted in a disturbance, Mills wanting to fight. Another carter named Sykes, of Coln St Aldwyn, took Mills away, he being worse for liquor, and sent his son, a boy of 14, to take charge of the team. Swinford, however, who was also the worse for drink, refused to let the boy interfere, and walked by the side of Mill's horses as they followed Sykes's team. When about a mile out, in descending Northcote hill, the load pressed on the thiller*, and the shaft struck Swinford, who was knocked down, the wagon passing over him, breaking his thigh badly. He was taken to the Cottage Hospital in a state of collapse, and attended by Dr Mackinson, but he died on Thursday. After the accident, Mills rode home on the top of his load. The Coroner adjourned the inquest for the attendance of Sykes, remarking he would not prejudice the effect of evidence against Mills. At the adjourned inquest, the jury recorded a verdict of "Accidental death," the Coroner strongly cautioning Mills as to his future conduct, remarking that he had narrowly escaped committal for manslaughter in respect of neglect of duty."

* A thill/thiller is the shaft of wood between which the horse is placed when pulling a cart (Barclay's Dictionary, 1812)

John Swinford was the son of Richard and Jane Swinford of Milton End and he died on the 8th of October and was buried in Cirencester Cemetery on the 11th.