

# Fairford Flyer Extra No 21

December 2020

FAIRFORD HISTORY



SOCIETY

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](mailto:enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk)



## A Fairford Christmas Miscellany

Adin Williams was a Victorian schoolmaster in Kempford. He was very interested in the legends of Gloucestershire and wrote epic poems about some of the tales. These were published in 'Lays and Legends of Gloucestershire', Savory Press, Cirencester, 1878. Most of the poems are very long – they include 'Fairford Windows' and 'Lady Maud'. Below is a short extract from 'De Spenser's Feast'. De Spenser was a favourite of Edward II, and held the manor of Fairford in 1322.

The heaped-up logs and torches burning bright  
Made glad De Spenser's hall that winter night,  
Where men at arms and vassals all day long  
Had passed the wassail bowl with mirth and song.  
At Cirencester Edward held his court,  
And kept the season meet with Christmas sport;



His nobles gathered in from town and town  
 But some went there to meet a kingly frown  
 Not so De Spenser, at that gathering  
 He 'bove the rest was favoured by the King  
 And hated by his peers for haughty pride,  
 And evil counsel running side by side  
 Made England's barons feel the despot's will  
 More hardly since it wrought to do them ill  
 De Spenser purposed, at his Fairford hall,  
 On New Year's Eve his tenants round to call  
 That he and they might make a merry feast  
 And hail the New Year rising in the east

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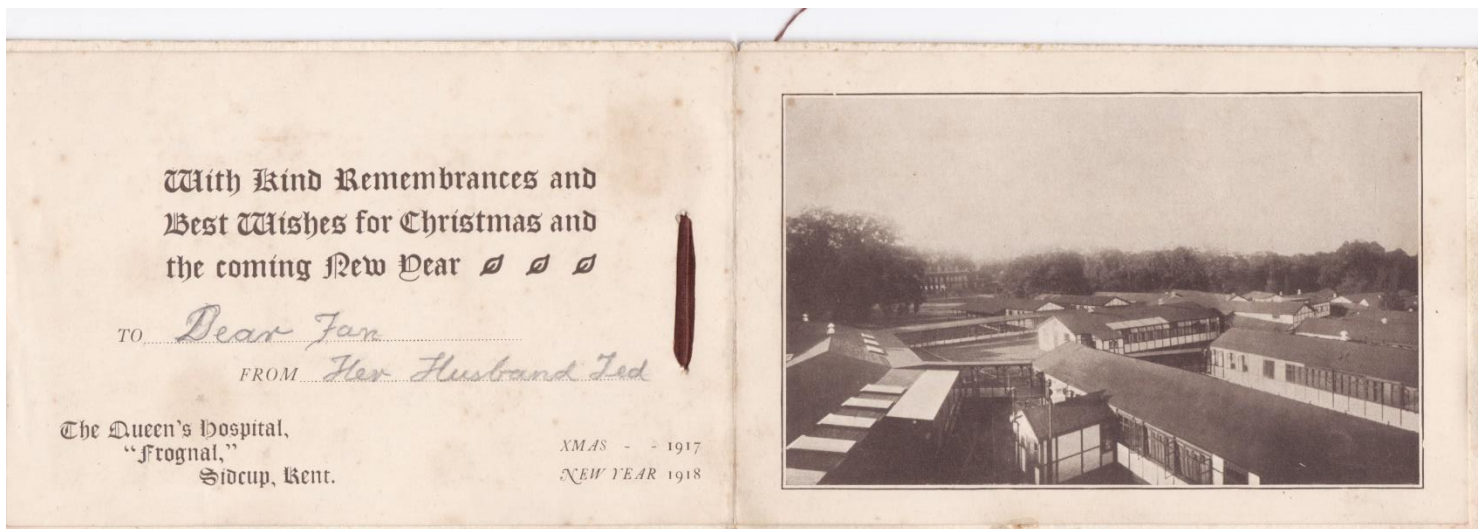


From Sarah Thomas's diary - Wednesday 25 Christmas Day 1861

"The long looked for come at last. A lovely day. Parr brought some holly etc. in, and Charles brought down electric machine, but poor man he was frightened to come near it or us either when we had received a shock. He ran up garden to get away and was glad 'twas church time. Before we were ready Mr Cornwall came very unexpectedly as he called and to my great annoyance asked if we are expecting John coming. I said we were going out to tea and thereupon came John round the lawn just

before Mr Cornwall. He said he saw someone go round but it wasn't Mr Kingsley, naughty man I believe he came on purpose to see if John came. He asked the other day if I had been to Arlington lately, had I seen Mrs William Coles. I begged Kate to go and meet him and he went in front parlour. Was in nice mood all day, quite himself and we were all very comfortable though I felt a little restraint and had very severe headache all day. At half past 4 we all went to tea at Frises, leaving Emma's mother to bear her company. She was driven over by her son in morning. I spoke to her on religious matters as she told me her troubles. Said she and her sister, ages 8 and 10 were turned out of doors by mother in law and had to get their livings. She helped support her sister, then went to service, then to a shop and a gent fell in love with and married her sister; He was always most generous and kind to them and has never been since to see her for 40 years. He is now dead. I gave Mrs Parsons "The Life of Richard Weaver", praying it may be blessed to her and her family."

Mr Cornwall - the local doctor: Kate - Sarah's sister: John Davis - Sarah's suitor: Mr Frise - minister of the Baptist Church, Fairford: Charles Kingsley - Sarah's half-brother: Electric machine -?



A Christmas card from Edward Morse to his wife Fanny. He had been wounded at Ypres in November 1917 and was recovering at this hospital at Sidcup, Kent

**Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard, 28 December 1907**

THE BAND played in the Market place on Christmas Eve and on Boxing Day paraded in the town playing nice selections at different places.

CHRISTMAS TREE - Mrs Bloxsome, with her customary generosity, again invited all the little ones of Fairford to tea and Christmas tree in the Infant Schoolroom on Boxing Day, the children once again being delighted with dolls and toys so kindly given to them.





**Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard, 16 December 1911**

### **FAIRFORD CHRISTMAS PRIZE MARKET - A Record Entry**

On Tuesday in delightful weather the Christmas Prize Market was held in Fairford. There was a good attendance, and the supplies were of a good quality and met with ready and good sales. On the competitive side of the market entries which numbered over eighty, were practically double those of the previous year, and constituted a record for the market. This is a fact which points clearly to the fast growing importance of the market dealers of all classes. In the cattle classes, the entry was undoubtedly the best that had ever been seen at Fairford since the market was established. The beasts entered showed that they had been fed with good judgement and were just what the butchers wanted, In the championship class Mr N H Geach of South Farm, was placed first with a fine pair of steers, which were remarkably well-finished. Mr Alex Iles of Fairford, was a good reserve with a well-matched pair of good quality. Mr E G Clifford of Quenington was placed first in the class for a pair of fat steers, with a couple of animals of good size and full of butcher's meat. Mr J R Freeth, of Dudgrove was a good second with a pair of well-matched steers which would have been better for a little more time ...[etc.]

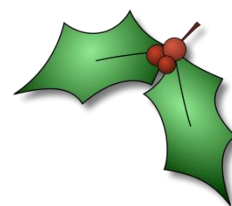
The sheep classes were well filled, and the quality was excellent, being the finest lot of sheep ever penned at Fairford market.....Altogether the quality of the sheep classes was so excellent that it would have been a difficult matter to find a better lot of tegs in the district. There was a large show of pigs, the successful pen of both classes, fat pigs and porkers, being of excellent quality.

The trade for mutton showed a considerable improvement there being an advance of 4s or 5s a head on previous markets, and we may quote 7d to 8d per lb for primest Downs. Best steer beef made 12s, and maiden heifers 13s per score.

[There followed a list of officials and Awards and Prices]

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Following the Christmas Market there was always an Annual Dinner



**Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard, 10 December 1910**

### **FAIRFORD CHRISTMAS MARKET - ANNUAL DINNER**

#### **ENJOYABLE GATHERING**

On Thursday evening, the annual dinner in connection with Fairford Christmas Fat Stock Show was held at the Bull Hotel, Fairford, when a good company, though hardly so numerous as former years, was present. The chair was taken by Mr A J Palmer, and he was supported by Colonel the Hon A B Bathurst, MP, Rev F R Carbonell, Messrs James Joicey, John Faulkner, Alex Iles, H W Kemble, H A Northen, W Wearing, R R Smart, A J Hitchman Iles, C Braybrooke, A K Iles, J T Brockman, C Allen, A Bryant, A F Hobbs, W R Gantlett, E G Clifford, N Geach, R H Green, R Rickards, E R Clifford, J H Jakeman, J B Chesterman, F Constable etc. An excellent dinner was well served by Mr and Mrs F R Busby. A saddle of mutton inlaid with red meat with Colonel Bathurst's name and majority, prepared

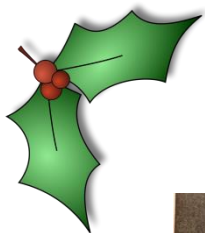
by Messrs Woodward Bros, Fairford was discussed in more ways than one. The massive cup which Mr W R Gantlett had won outright at Cirencester Market adorned the head table.

After the loyal toasts, proposed by the Chairman "SUCCESS TO FAIRFORD MARKET" was proposed by Mr Wearing, who said in spite of competition with bigger markets, the prices at Fairford had been higher than at surrounding places. (Hear, hear)

[There follows a list of toasts, speeches, many more 'Hear, Hears!' and applause and finally...]

The toast of the visitors was proposed by Mr H E Cole and was responded to by Mr Wearing. Colonel Bathurst proposed the health of the Chairman, which was drunk with musical honours. Mr Palmer in replying, thanked Mr and Mrs Busby for their hospitality, and regretted the absence of Mr Cole.

During the evening some excellent songs were sung by Messrs J B Chesterman, Jenkins, Manning and Mr J T Brockman told some of his amusing stories. The singing of the National Anthem brought a most enjoyable evening to a close.



### A few Christmas photos



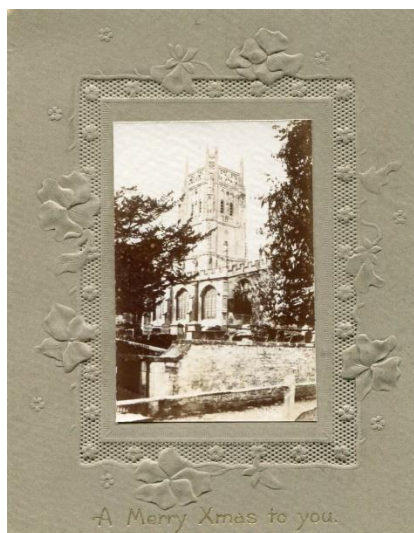
Sunday School Christmas Party 1954



Father Christmas visits a patient at Fairford Hospital



Stirring the pudding at Farmor's School



A late 19<sup>th</sup> century Xmas card of Fairford Church



And finally a recipe for you to try...

### **Dumb Cakes**

These cakes got their curious name from the custom of being made in absolute silence by the unmarried ladies of the Cotswolds, who were anxious to find some sign of whom their intended was to be. On Christmas Eve, the Cotswold lasses would make their cakes without speaking to anyone at all during their making, as this would break the magic spell they were stirring into them. They would then scratch their initials on the top and leave them to bake in the ashes of the fire as they went to bed. The front door would be left open and at midnight a suitor would enter and prick his initials on top of the cake beside the girl's. On Christmas Day, if the maiden ate the dumb cakes with the initials on – again in silence – it was a sign that she accepted the rather quaint proposal. Unfortunately there is no record of what the cake contained, and it is very difficult to imagine how the initials remained legible if they were only scratched in. However, this cake is a nice plain one, in contrast to the rich fruit of the Christmas cake, and contains almonds because they are mentioned in Genesis – so appropriately, connected with the Scriptures to warrant a place on the Christmas table.

This seems even more unlikely than tossing a peeling over one's shoulder and seeing what the initial was. I never got a C!!!!

6 ozs butter, 4 ozs caster sugar, 2 eggs beaten, 2 ozs ground almonds. 4 ozs icing sugar, 2 tbsps milk, few drops of almond essence, toasted flaked almonds

Gas Mark 3 170° C 45-50 minutes

Grease and line the base of a loaf tin. Beat 4 ozs of the butter and the caster sugar together until light. Add a couple of drops of essence, and then beat in eggs gradually. Fold in the flour and ground almonds, then milk. Bake until golden. For the icing beat the rest of the butter and the icing sugar together with a drop of essence until smooth. Pipe a swirling line down the cake and spike with flaked almonds.

From a Calendar of Cotswold Cookery by June Lewis-Jones, 2010, p135

### **Fairford Christmas Market 2015 – a reminder of what we have missed this year**

