

# Fairford Flyer

## Extra No 23

January 2021 (2)

**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)

**Gloucestershire's Industrial Heritage with Dr Ray Wilson Monday 25 January 2021 at 7.15 pm for 7.30 pm**  
Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology (GSIA) is keen to promote the County's industrial heritage and is offering a talk by Zoom to members of GLHA member groups. Please note this is a repeat of the talk given on 23 November, last year which was heavily oversubscribed. There is no charge for the talk, but it will be necessary to register in order to obtain a unique link to access the talk, as there will be a limit on numbers set by the Zoom licence. Further information about joining the meeting and getting started with Zoom meetings in general is available at: <https://gsia.org.uk/zoom> [NB Neither a microphone or video camera is needed if you just want to watch the talk and not take part in any discussion.]

New Mills, Kingswood, Wotton-under-Edge is not readily associated with industry, but in fact it has a very rich and varied industrial heritage. The aim of this fully illustrated talk is to look at some of the extensive remains of various industries from all over the County. In addition to the woollen cloth and other major manufacturing industries some of the more unusual industries like the manufacture of pins and walking sticks and even cars will be considered. Transport systems, such as the railways and canals, which were so vital to the development of industry will also be featured. Some of the scenes in Ray Wilson's talk will be familiar, but others, we hope, will be completely new to you.

### **Readers' Letters**

#### **From Chris Peachey - Poulton Priory and Ready Token and Drove Roads**

Poulton Priory was haunted—all sorts of funny things happened when we lived at the Lodge; Ready Token my cousin says is also haunted!

I would be quite happy to drive cattle and sheep thro' Fairford via the Oxpens even today, even with current traffic, as long as I had energetic staff and a good dog or two.

#### **From Barbara Cottam - Welsh Way**

The article in this month's Newsletter about Fairford and its part in the Welsh Way was very interesting and informative. I can't add to that but I know a little about the end of the journey. We used to live in Yateley, Hampshire, two miles from Blackwater on the Surrey border and some thirty miles from London where the merchants from London gathered to barter and buy the sheep that had travelled such a long way. Part of Yateley common was called Brandy Bottom and this was assumed to be a corruption of branding which had taken place there as part of the buying and selling. I know of no written records to back this up but I have always believed that strong local traditions can't be too wrong.

### **Memories of my grandfather by Edwin Cuss**

My maternal grandfather, Ashford George Farmer was born in 1872 so that when I was born in 1940, he was already 68 years old. When I was about 10 he was 78 and grandmother was 76, so I only knew them as very old people. They were both real Victorians in their outlook and way of life. Very often I was with him in his stonemasons' yard in Milton Street and he taught me the art of cutting the letters on tombstones and some of my examples I still have today. He mostly trusted me to do the cats and dogs tombstones at about 1/- per letter carved.

We lived in 'Five Elms' and they lived at No 1 Eastbourne Terrace, London Street next door so there was a lot of contact for me and I popped round fairly regularly. During those times as we chatted he used various phrases spoken in a broad Gloucestershire accent that I found very interesting and here are a few of those that I remember:-

1. He often gave me a few pence to go up to Powells, High St shop to get him a copy of the 'Hedger and Ditcher' i.e. the Wilts and Glos Standard.
2. If he couldn't remember where someone lived he would say they lived 'Over the back of Bill's mother'.
3. When he was eating, especially sharp tasting items, he would say they were 'as sour as varges'. I understand that varges is a corruption of the old French phrase 'vers jus'.
4. Some days my mother cooked dinner for them and I used to take the plates round and he would joke he only had a 'rasher of wind and a snowball' for his breakfast.
5. He always listened to his radio and if he didn't like the music or singing he would say it was like 'Cats march out of the ash-hole'. Now the ash hole was really the coal shed which had the coal one end and the ashes from the fires at the other end. Each day when the ashes from the fires were cleared out they were put through a sieve in the shed and the unburned pieces of coal or wood went back in the bucket to be put on the next fire.
6. My favourite saying of his was quite rude for a small boy but was quite frequently used. It was for someone he probably didn't like and when you asked him where they lived he would say they lived up sh\*\*\*\*\*s ditch. I will not offer any explanation but it was some bodily function.

Here's hoping that this will encourage other people who have similar experiences and sayings to send them in to be put in future newsletter.

Editor's Note:

Bill's mother for us was when there was a big black cloud in the distance and we say 'it was raining over Bill's mother', and I had forgotten all about sieving the ashes, it brought it back to me.

### **The Three Magpies**



I expect you have all noticed that the Three Magpies on Cirencester Road was up for sale and has now been sold (STC).

The Three Magpies was built beside the Cirencester Road in 1830, there is a date on the building (but there may have been some sort of a building there before then, as it is a suitable stopping place between Fairford and Poulton).

It is a listed building and described as colour-washed limestone rubble with brick dressings, stone slate roof, 3 storeys, 3 bays, and a central entrance with later pitched roof porch. Round window above and date stone. 12-pane sashes, 6-pane single hung to second floor. Gable stacks. Building extended to right by 2 bay farm store with loft over. The Webb Paton 2020 sales catalogue describes it as "Formerly a 1830s public house, this five bedroom Grade II Listed Farmhouse offers a unique opportunity for a renovation project. Magpies Farm includes a range of redundant farm buildings, two potential Class Q barn conversions (subject to planning) and agricultural grassland, in total extending to approximately 24.34 acres"



Its situation is unique – it is on the most northern point of Wiltshire and it is said that one end of the bar was in Wiltshire and one end in Gloucestershire.

**From censuses and directories we have some of the landlords:** William Clifford (1851), John Scotford (1855, 1859), Samuel Sparrow (1861, 1871, 1881), David Sparrow (1889, 1891), Richard Radband (1895, 1898) died 5 Nov 1898, Alfred Mutlow (1901, 1903), Ernest Sparrow (1907, 1911), Ernest Booth (1914, 1920), Walter Day (1927, 1931, 1939). The brewery sent a Mr and Mrs Maddock to close the pub down in 1952. Phil Hope, who used to work on the farm, remembers having a last drink there with Arthur Goodman.

Liz Hope's mother always thought it curious that a Miss Sparrow, married a Mr Thrush and lived at the Three Magpies. And now a Mr Swan lives there. Quite a collection of birds!

The VWH Hunt also used it as a meeting place at the start of their hunts. On 6 Jan 1937 Gloucester Cycle Club lunched there on a cycle trip of the area.



Three Magpies 2012



The room where the bar was, 2020

There is no clear explanation of either the derivation of the word 'Magpie' or an explanation of the several versions of the verse 'three for a girl' or 'three for a wedding' etc. Shakespeare refers to 'by maggot pie and choughs and rooks' in Macbeth III iv. Maggot being Margaret (birds tended to be given familiar names like Robin Redbreast, Jenny Wren) and pie either after the derivation of the Latin 'pica' or the fact that it was pied (two colours). Perhaps the explanation of the pub name was as simple as there were a family of magpies that lived on that piece of land.

Thanks to Edwin Cuss, Syd Flatman, Liz and Phil Hope and Mike Johnson for Three Magpies information

## From the Newspapers

### **Cheltenham Chronicle Saturday 12 June 1909**

Mr Mason, licensee of the Five Mile House, Duntisbourne, and was for several years in charge of the Bull Hotel Tap, Fairford, visited Fairford on Tuesday and purchased several porkers. They were being conveyed to Duntisbourne in a trap, but on reaching the Three Magpies Inn about two miles from Fairford, one of the pigs jumped out of the trap and ran into an adjoining field. The driver of the trap and others gave chase, but the pig was so lively that it eluded its pursuers and was eventually lost sight of altogether. The police were informed of the loss, and the next day the porker was recaptured and taken to Fairford. Probably by the time these lines are in print the pig has been restored to Mr Mason, but its security was made doubly secure, for it was placed in a box, out of which it could not possibly escape.

### **Cheltenham Chronicle Saturday 12 May 1934**

When the question of the county boundaries was under consideration a year or so ago it seems strange that a short stretch of the main road between the Maiseyhampton cross-roads and Fairford, which belonged to Wiltshire, was not included in the Gloucestershire boundary, as well as the public house, The Three Magpies Inn, which adjoins the main road. To mark the county boundaries of this piece of road two sets of posts have been erected at the side of the road on which are painted in bold letters on one side the word 'Gloucestershire', and on the other side 'Wiltshire'.

### **Gloucester Citizen Wednesday 6 January 1937**

Gloster Cyclists' 70 miles run: FIRST CLUB OUTING OF THE YEAR

Nearly 20 members of Gloucester City Cycling Club assembled in King's Square for the first run of the New Year. Headed by the new club captain [Mr E Folly], the party left the city for Cirencester, the London Road being taken. Crickley Hill was negotiated and there the route lay via Seven Springs and on to the main Cheltenham Cirencester Road. Owing to lack of time, Cirencester was by-passed, and the Fairford Road was taken. Lunch was taken at the Three Magpies Inn, near the charming village of Meyseyhampton.

After a light meal the main road was followed for two miles into Fairford for a view of the Church, famous for the complete set of original stained-glass windows, and through Whelford to the delightful village of Kempsford, situate of the River Thames and the Thames and Severn Canal, and not far from the junction of these two waterways at a point near Lechlade, about five miles distant....

### **Cheltenham Chronicle Saturday 10 June 1950**

Fairford RAF aerodrome is to be taken over by the United States Army Air Force as one of its English air bases. It will be the only one for this purpose in Gloucestershire.

Work on adaptation is to begin at the end of the month and will include the extension of the east-west runway to just over three miles long nearly as far as the parish of Meyseyhampton - a proposal which Cirencester RDC decided at its March meeting to strenuously oppose.

It will involve the severance of the road connecting the village of Kempsford and Dunfield with the main Cirencester-Fairford road. Construction of the runway and perimeter track will involve an addition to the airfield and the closing of the two roads, together with the building of a new road to take the place of one of those to be closed.

The roads to be closed are leading from the 'Three Magpies' on the main Cirencester-Fairford Road to Kempsford village, and the Marston Meysey, Fairford road the portion to be closed being in Wiltshire.

The proposed new road runs to east to west, and terminates near South Leaze Farm on the Marston Meysey - Meysey Hampton road and will be of no benefit to either Kempsford or Dunfield.....