

Fairford Flyer

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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 have any local history questions please email enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk

FHS Update

The Fairford Festival Committee has sadly decided to cancel the Festival this year, so the Tudors will have to wait for another year. I think this decision is the correct one and we shall all feel more comfortable 'mingling' safely in 2022.

Provisionally the FHS Committee have decided to start their meetings in September. Currently the Government's planned date for when meetings are allowed is after our usual final meeting in June and by starting in September with the AGM and a talk this gives us a little leeway and means that all our projected meetings for 2020-21 can be pushed one year to 2021-22. The programme of talks will be published in due course.

The Glorious Glosters - invitation to a Zoom talk

From Michael Vann:-

Dear Fairford History Society Members

I should like to invite the members to join Fairford U3A for a Zoom meeting on Tuesday 6th April 2021 for a talk on Gloucestershire's own regiment the Glorious Glosters.

Our U3A AGM (which will be brief) at 2:30 pm will be followed by a talk and questions and will be for about an hour commencing at about 2:45 pm

We hope you can accept this invitation and join us. If you do a Zoom link will be supplied before 6th April.

There is specific Fairford content! I refer to the Giles family of Vines Row Fairford (where I live) who lost family members in both World Wars.

Please email: chairman@fairfordu3a.org.uk

Update on Bibury/Ablington Airfield

From Chris Peachey:- A barn at Donkeywell was re-roofed c1955 with timber and asbestos sheets salvaged from Ablington aerodrome buildings sadly the barn is no more; it was cruciform in plan and made of pitch pine stanchions and purlins; erection I think about 1880-1900. The original roof was either slate or tile and too heavy for it. I used to know the name of the first building, (something like the radio shed). In the stone wall just south of it are what I assumed were 4 bee boles (niches in wall used to house bee skeps). Opposite was the Cinema in the copse planted by Gregory Phillips c.1965. The big Hangar was used by R Hinton and Sons to store grain in the 1960s, 2,000 tons in 2cwt Gopsil Brown sacks stacked flat like bricks up to the roof. The right turn track is part of the Salt Way- hence the Salt Way Barn which stood north of it and was demolished and sold for the stone c 1970. Like the Southrop aerodrome the coconut matting was held in place by 18 inch metal spikes which were forever getting picked up by farm machines for years after.

From Malcolm Cutler:- On the Bibury airfield I am a regular visitor up there with the cars on their 'open' weekends but I can add that, when we get back to post lock down freedom (!), they are often open in the week, so if the gates are open I am sure there would be no problem viewing the memorial, which is just behind the gate.

The search for an Inn by Trevor Betterton

Christopher Betterton, of Fairford, who died in 1660, was, according to his will (below), an Inn holder.

“In the name of god Amen; September the twenty Fourth One thousand Six hundred and Sixty I Christopher Betterton of Fayrford in the Countie of glouc^{ter} Inholder being att the present writing hereof Sicke and weake in bodie butt in good remembrance Doe here make and ordayne this my Last will & Testament in manner and writing as Followeth, First I bequeath my Soule into the hands of god my creator and unto Jesus Christ my redeemer by whose merritts I freely hope to be saved And my body to the earth from whence it was taken And As for what wordly estate the Lord hath lent mee I doe give and bequeath as Followeth

- *Inpremis I doe give to my Sonn Alexander Betterton my hithermost peece of ground called the peece the ground that lieth neerest the Town and this house after his mother during the Lease and after her death the ground*
- *Item I do give unto my Sonn Charles my house called Haynes house with Two Acres in the Field And other remaynder of my peeces And that to have after the Death of his mother*
- *Item I do give unto my daughter Alice a hundred pounds And that to bee paid her within three years after my decease*
- *Item I give to my Sonn Robert one shilling*
- *Item I give my Daughter Ann Thomas Brownes wife one shilling*
- *Item I give to my grandchildren each of them two shillings six pence a peece*
- *Item I give to my Servant Edith Harbert Tenn shillings*
- *Item I do make and Appoint Ann my wife Sole executrix to this my Last will and Testament and Leaving wholly unto her the remainder of my estate what is not by me Above menconed bequeathed And I doe Appoint my welbeloved Friends my brother in law John Stokes and my Sonn in law Thomas Browne For to bee overseers for the true performance of this my will And Testament desiring them for the tender mercie of god to see it Justly and peaceably performed And I give them for their paynes herein two shillings a peece; And to this my Last will the day and year Above written I sett my hand and Seale*

The marke of I the Testator

Wittness John Stokes William Chaunler Probate 26 July 1661”

Which Inn? As you can see the will gave me no clues.

It seems that son Robert and daughter Ann, being given “one shilling”, had previously received their ‘share’ and one phrase seemed particularly interesting – “to see it Justly and peaceably performed”. The family had lived through the Commonwealth; had there been some friction amongst them?

Christopher had married Ann Hedges in 1624 and they had had seven children. Two, aged 2 years & 4 years, were buried in January 1638 within two days of each other, the others are mentioned above.

Christopher’s widow died in 1675 and she had left a will. Maybe this would give me a clue. The words in () are assumed, as small parts of the original are missing.

“(In the) Name of God Amen The Twentieth Day of November One Thousand Six Hundr(ed and seventy) five, I Ann Betterton of Fayford in the Diocese of Gloucester widdow beinge Sicke & weake in (body but) perfect memory thanks be to Almighty god, Doe herin make & declare this my last will and (testament) in wrightinge as Followeth, first I bequeath my Soule to Almighty god my Creator and to (Jesus) Christ my sole Redeemer, by whose merritts I freely hope to be saved, And I Bequeath my body (to) the Earth from whence it was taken & to be decently Buryed in the parish Church of Fayrford, by my Executor herin named, As for what wordly goods the Lord hath blessed me withall, I doe give & bequeath as Followeth

- *I doe give unto the use of the parish Church Tenn shillings & Tenn shillings to the poore of the parish, to be payd by my Executor within one year next after my decease*
- *I doe give unto my Sonn Alexander Betterton one shilling, Ittm I doe give unto my sonn Robert Betterton one shilling, Ittm I doe give unto my daughter Ann Browne one shilling, Ittm I do give unto my daughter Alice Iles one shilling Ittm I doe give unto my daughter Alice Iles the Bedd & furniture that my Bones use to lodg upon, or*

else my Sonn Alexander shall have the sayd bed & furniture, payinge unto his sister Alice Iles Three pounds in satisfacon & leiew of the same

- *Ittm I do give unto my Grandchild Alice Browne Five pounds to be payd unto her within Three months next after my decease by my Executor & I doe give unto the sayd Alice Browne the Bedd I usually Lodg upon & the bedding belonging to it Imediatley after my decease*
- *Ittm I doe give unto my Sonn Alexander Betterton all the rest of my goods belonging unto me & in the Inn & about the house I now live in moveable & immoveable, not herin given & bequeathed*
- *Ittm I do give unto all my Grandchildren each of them Two shillings & six pence a peece to be payd by my Executor*
- *Ittm I doe give unto Edith Harbert my Servant Tenn shillings to be payd by my Executor*
- *Ittm I doe give unto my Grandchild Ann Iles Forty shillings to be payd her within three months next after my decease by my Executor*
- *Ittm I do give unto my Grandchild Christopher Betterton, son of Alexander Betterton, my whommost peece Called the great peece, now divided into Two parts Layinge & beinge in Milton End, now in the possession & occupacon of the said Alexander Betterton, To have hold & enjoie the said peece From & Imediately after the death of his Father Alexander Betterton, for & during the Remayinge Tearme of the Lease, Concerninge the sayd peece & other things that is itt to come & unexpired Butt my will and Intent is That my Sonn Alexander shall have receive & take all the profits of the sayd peece, for & during the Tearme of Three Score years if in case he shall happen soe longe to live*
- *Ittm I doe give unto my Sonn Alexander Betterton the house I now live in Commonly called & known by the name of the Bull Inn, in Fayrford, now in his possession together with all the stables outhouses gardens orchards & all other Appurtenances therunto belonging granted by Lease from Sir Robert Tracey Knight, bearinge date one thousand six hundred Thirty & Seaven, to have, hold & enjoy the said Inn and all other Appurtenances before menconed unto him the sayd Alexander Betterton for & during the Tearme of Ninety & Nine yeares in case he the sayd Alexander shall happen to live soe longe*
- *Ittm I doe nominate & appoint my Sonn Charles Betterton to be my whole & sole Executor of this my Last will & Testament giving & bequeathing unto him all the rest residue & ramaynder of all my goods Cattles & Chattles & not herin by me given & bequeathed willing & Charginge him to fullfill this my Last will, to pay & discharge those Legacies by me herin given & bequeathed & to discharge my funeral expences, And I doe nominate my Lovinge Friends Daniell Hawkins & Thomas Arden and doe desire them to see that this my will may be performed & to be overseers in trust willing them to endeavour to keep peace and Continew Love among my Children & doe give them for theyr love & paynes Twelve pence a peece to be payd by my Executor, revoking all former will by me formerly made doe declare this to be my last will and Testament, wheunto I sett my hand & seale the day & yeare above written*

The mark of the A Testatrix Ann Betterton

Witnesses Edith Harbert William Weston Thomas Arden

Probate 28 December 1675"

The Bull it was and there had obviously been friction in the family during the Commonwealth. Maybe Charles, third son and fourth child, held similar views to his mother, as he was the Executor to her will. Robert (my 6th great grandfather) had married Priscilla Browne in about 1655 and moved to Quenington. And the grandchildren? At the last count there were 20 in 1675.

And what of the Bull? When Alexander died in 1693 it appears to have passed to his eldest son Christopher, born c1667 to Alexander's second wife. Christopher married Susannah Wallington 15 Oct 1695. They had one son, Alexander baptised 13 Feb 1695/6. Christopher died intestate in 1696 (buried 6 May 1696 at Fairford). Susannah married Richard Busom in Cirencester on 16 June 1696. Whether Richard Busom became the landlord of the Bull I do not know, but it seems the Betterton connection with the Bull had ceased.

Thanks to Trevor Betterton, a descendant of the Bettertons of Fairford for this article. He has been a long standing FHS member and occasional visitor to meetings although he lives in Doncaster. He is regarded as the expert on the Betterton family history and has also helped FHS out with occasional projects.

Fairford makes the national news in 1660



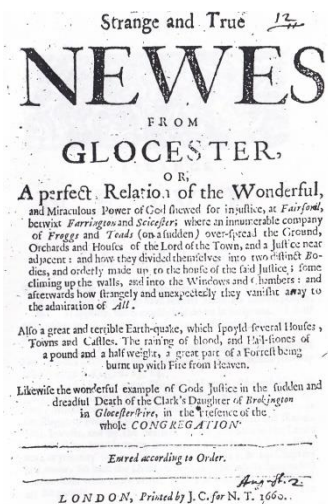
Some of you may remember that on November 15th 2007 at an FHS meeting Dr Andrew Warmington gave a fascinating insight into the religious turmoil that followed the English Civil War when Fairford hit the national headlines! He told the story of the pamphlets that were published in 1660 telling of a plague of frogs that visited the houses of Fairford's Justice of the Peace and Lord of the Manor as a 'punishment' following their refusal to act when Nonconformists were harassed by the locals.

Kings Pamphlet August 2nd 1600 *"Strange newes from Gloucester, a perfect relation of the wonderful and miraculous power of God showed for injustice at Fairford, between Farrington and Scicister, where an innumerable company of frogs and toads (on a sudden) overspread the ground, orchards, and Houses of the Lord of the town, and a justice near adjacent, and how they divided themselves into distinct bodies, and orderly, made up to the house of the said justice, some climbing up the walls and into the windows and chambers; and afterwards how strangely and unexpectedly they vanished away."*

According to the 'Strange and True News', within a month of Charles II's return, a dissenting congregation was violently interrupted in its worship by 'a company of Rude People'. Some went to complain to a JP [William Oldisworth] who lived nearby. He not only refused to help 'but rather spake hardly unto them by way of threatening. He being encouraged thereto by the Lord of the Town [Andrew Barker]'. Two days later they went to see the JP again, warning him of God's punishment if he did not help, but he gave them the same answer. The JP's punishment was swift indeed. Next day a man walking near the JP's house on the outskirts of the village came across a vast multitude of frogs and toads marching on it 'it two companies, even as divided into two groups and proceeded to swarm all over the houses and gardens of the lord and JP. The JP's maidservant, vainly trying to clear them away, reminded him of the warning he had been given, he therefore resolved to go and do justice, if only he could get out. No sooner had he decided this than the frogs and toads parted to from an alley for him to walk through. Once he had reproved the 'rude multitude' and assured the congregation of his protection.

'The Frogs and Toads departed so suddenly and wonderfully as no man can tell how, when nor whether they are gone, doing no harm at all to any place, Thing or person whatever.'

Not only that but it was also reported in 'The Lords's Loud call to England' 1660 after the Nonconformists had been abused again. Two weeks after the incident of the frogs *'there appeared in the Lord of the Manor's orchard a great swarm of flies, about the size of Caddis flies, with long wings. And the same day also, an honest Christian man saw the Lord of the Manor's garden covered with these flies in heaps like swarms of bees'*.



Andrew Barker was the Lord of the Manor. He moved to Fairford in 1650 having been a Bristol merchant. He acquired the estate from Sir John Tracy of Toddington who having been a Royalist had been forced to sell Fairford Manor to pay his fines to Parliament. The Barkers lived in Warwick (or Beauchamp) Court before Fairford Park House was built in 1661/2. William Oldisworth, Justice of the Peace, leased Hydecourt Manor in Fairford and was said to have been responsible for saving the Church windows from destruction by the Puritans.

Dr Warmington wrote a paper 'Frogs, Toads and the Restoration in a Gloucestershire Village' that appeared in the Midland History Magazine in 1989 and which won the Midland History Prize Essay. There has even been a book entitled 'The Battle of the Frogs and Fairford's Flies: miracles and the Pulp Press during the English Revolution' by Jerome Friedman. New York: St Martin's Press, 1993.

