

Fairford Flyer

Extra No 28

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FAIRFORD HISTORY

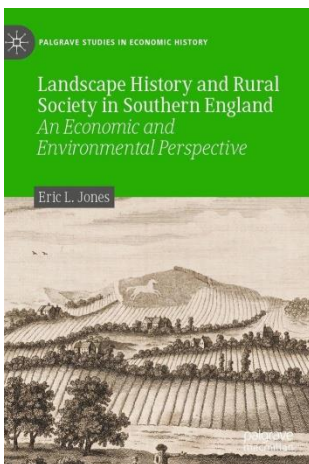


SOCIETY

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. Now Lockdown is easing the Extras will now be issued monthly.

The Glorious Glosters

Michael Vann gave a very interesting U3A talk on the Glorious Glosters, depicting their regimental history from 1706 to 1994. William Giles of the 8th Battalion, Gloucestershire Regiment who served in both World Wars and died of natural causes in 1940 is buried in St Mary's Churchyard. We also learnt that Diana Lee-Browne carved the Glosters Regimental badge on their monument at the National Arboretum near Lichfield.



Eric Jones has published a new book 'Landscape History and Rural Society in Southern England: An Economic and Environmental Perspective' (Palgrave Studies in Economic History). It contains several references to Fairford, including a chapter on Fairford Park. <https://www.palgrave.com/gb/book/9783030686154>

This book applies an economic and environmental perspective to the history of landscape and the rural economy, highlighting their inter-connections through specific case studies. After explaining how the author made his discoveries and when they started, it analyses relations between documentary and landscape evidence. It is based on exceptional first-hand observation of a dozen sites and close consideration of topics in the ecological and economic history of southern England. They range from reclaiming chalk down-land, occupying low-lying heaths and reconstructing parkland, to wool-stapling and the manufacture of gunstocks for the African slave trade. Additional themes include the tension between ecology and institutions in decisions about the location of economic activity; the decay of communal farming ahead of enclosure; and other interesting puzzles in rural economic history.

Arlington Bibury to Arlington Virginia USA by Syd Flatman

Ever since I was a small boy I have had a fascination with Bibury Court, for reasons which I will return to later.

When I was six years old, my mother took me out of Fairford Primary School and enrolled me at the Convent of St. Clotilde in Lechlade. My mother, being Irish, and herself educated by nuns back in Strokestown, County Roscommon, thought it was a good idea that her little Sydney should be educated the same as she. I was there barely three years, as the school only took boys until the age of nine. There were very few of us boys amongst a great sea of grey uniformed girls. Getting to "Saint Clots" as we knew it, I travelled by taxi every day, being picked up and dropped off at what is now the Vets in Milton Street. Back then it was the office of Thomlinson's taxis. In the mornings my mother would walk me down from West End Gardens and we would wait on the opposite side of the road in the doorway of Herbert's the Bakery, now home to David and Anna Jane Pitts.

Sounds a little extravagant travelling to school by taxi, but we shared the cost with another lad from Poulton who was the same age as myself. His name was Orme Clarke and from a very different social class than I. His mother was a Lady Clarke formerly of Bibury Court, hence my fascination with the great house. Orme and I

became best buddies. I remember him as having a slight stutter. Losing touch with him when we left Lechlade I was sure that being the son of a Lady he would go on to achieve great things in life. I will return to Orme later.



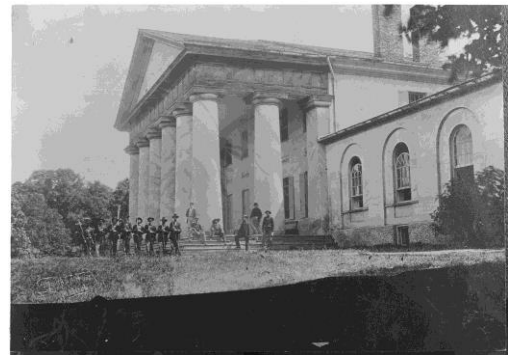
The Clarke family were the last to occupy Bibury Court as a private residence before it was turned over to a Hotel. Some of the family income came from Foster Clarke's Custard. In 1905 Elfreda Roosevelt of the USA married into the Clarke family of Bibury. Her cousin, Franklin D Roosevelt was elected to President of the United States in 1933.

President Roosevelt, in 1938, chose Joseph Kennedy to be his Ambassador to Great Britain. Joe, along with his wife Rose and their nine children, moved to London. During this time, due to the Roosevelt connection, the Kennedy's, Jack (JFK), Edward, Bobby etc. would be seen staying in Bibury.

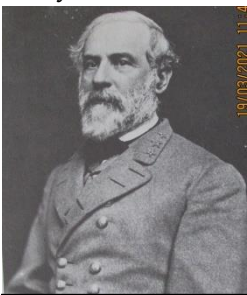
The village of Bibury is divided into two halves. On the East side of the River Coln is Bibury proper but cross over to the West Bank and you are in Arlington, which if you care to explore the side roads and alleyways is equally as big as Bibury.

So to Arlington Virginia, USA

Around three hundred years ago, Edmund Custis of Cirencester married Miss Smithers of Arlington Bibury. Their eldest son, John Custis, married Miss Joan Powell and together with their family emigrated to Virginia. They bought a plantation of 1,000 acres on the South Bank of the Potomac River overlooking what was to become Washington D.C. The Custis's named their estate Arlington in recognition of Arlington Bibury from where they originated.



One of the Custis's great grandchildren called Martha, a widow by the age of 25, married George Washington in 1759. George Washington adopted the four Custis children, indicating that by now even though George Washington was not yet the first President of the United States, the Custis family were moving in the higher echelons of American Society. In 1831 George Washington's step granddaughter Mary inherited the Arlington Estate. Mary went on to marry a young army officer by the name of Robert E Lee.



Robert E Lee

The Lee's lived happily at Arlington for over thirty years, but with the outbreak of the Civil War, Robert E Lee, now General Robert E Lee, in 1861 became the Leader of the Confederate Army of the slave-owning South.

As the Civil War progressed, the Union Army of the North crossed the Potomac River and took over Arlington House as their headquarters. The army imposed a property tax on Mary of 92 Dollars, which she was unable to pay, so Arlington was confiscated. 200 acres were set aside for a cemetery. By the end of the conflict 16,000 soldiers were interred in the grounds around the house. Today, over 200,000 veterans lay buried there. It is now named Arlington National Cemetery. So how fitting that in life, as a young man, John Fitzgerald Kennedy should grace the lanes of Arlington Bibury and in death, as the 35th President of the United States and the Leader of the Free World, should have his remains interred in Arlington National Cemetery. The wheel had turned full circle.

Working for an American-owned company, having its headquarters in Philadelphia and also having an Auntie in Hampton Virginia, I had the opportunity on three occasions to pay my respects at JFK's graveside. On my last visit his widow Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis had only a few day's beforehand been laid to rest beside him.

And so, what of my old school chum, Orme Clarke? During the first Covid lockdown, to relieve my boredom, I took to visiting all the local cemeteries and reading every legible headstone I could and to reflect on the names of the people and families I once knew.

Visiting Poulton Cemetery I was taken aback to discover there, alongside the west wall of the Church, a simple headstone that read "Orme Clarke 1947 to 2009". No mention of a family and being buried next to his beloved mother who had died the previous year to him.

Easter 1888

At Easter 1888 the Reverend Arthur Smart Loxley was unable to conduct the services as he was unwell, he sent out a card or picture as follows -



The caption reads: - Easter Greetings 1888

The vicar sends to his people affectionate Easter greetings

It has pleased the all-wise God to visit him in love and Fatherly chastening, and thus he is able to join only in spirit and soul in the glorious worship of Easter Day. May the rich blessing of God Almighty, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, rest upon this parish, upon you here your homes, your families. May He build us all up (both as individuals and a Church) in the power of His Resurrection. May He guide our footsteps ever during our earthly pilgrimage, until His own best time He bringeth us into His rest. A S Loxley

He died a few days later.

From the Gloucester Chronicle April 7 1888

DEATH OF THE REV A S LOXLEY

We announce with deep regret the death of the Rev Arthur Smart Loxley, vicar of Fairford, which took place on Monday last. Mr Loxley graduated at Exeter College, Oxford, BA 1868, MA in 1871. He was ordained deacon in 1870 and priest in the following year by the Bishop of Rochester; he was curate of Northchurch, Herts 1870-71, and of Lamport with Faxton 1874. In April, 1875, he was appointed a minor canon of Gloucester Cathedral, in succession to the Rev George James and late in December 1878 the Dean and Chapter presented him to the vicarage of Fairford, which had become vacant by the death of Rev Lord Dynevor after an incumbency of half a century. Mr Loxley by his geniality and courtesy, won the regard and affection of all who knew him. He was a diligent pastor, a cultivated musician, and an impressive and eloquent preacher, and a sermon which he preached at Highnam Church a few months ago on behalf of the Gloucester Children's Hospital will not be forgotten by those who heard, or who read the report in our columns. While he held the minor canonry he preached a strikingly eloquent sermon in support of the Festivals of the Three Choirs, and he held office as one of the stewards, The Choral Festivals which he organised and carried out at Fairford were a proof of his unwearied efforts to improve Church music and the appeal which he recently issued in conjunction with a committee for the needed restoration of Fairford Church and the preservation of its world-famous windows showed his keen love of ecclesiastical art and his appreciation of the invaluable art-treasures committed to his care. Mr Loxley was not in vigorous health when he left Gloucester, but the bracing air of the Cotswolds greatly strengthened him, and his friends hoped that his life would have been much prolonged. He has, however, passed away at the comparatively early age of 42 years, the cause of his death having been, we believe, the pulmonary affection from which he had long been a sufferer. Mr Loxley had published an ordination sermon preached in Gloucester Cathedral and books entitled 'Thoughts on Church Music' and 'The righteousness of God'.

Fairford History – Month by Month

From the Newspapers & other Records

100 Years ago this month

In April 1921 the Gloucestershire Housing Commissioner set the weekly rent for newly-built Council cottages intended for agricultural workers in the Cirencester Rural District. For Fairford the rent was set at 11 shillings per week which is about £17 in today's money. Other rents were given as 12 shillings and 6 pence for South Cerney and Stratton; 10 shillings for Ampney Crucis, North Cerney and Kempsford; and just 7 shillings and 6 pence for Kemble. Although this might seem a modest sum for a weekly rent, the Cirencester Rural Housing Committee replied to the Commissioner stating that so far no agricultural workers had applied for any of the cottages and were unlikely to do so in the future unless the rents were substantially reduced.

200 Years ago this month

Advertisements placed in 19th Century local newspapers can often provide very useful information about the property of residents. The Oxford Journal of the 7th of April 1821 included the following advertisement:

'VALUABLE FLOCK OF SHEEP, of the Cotswold and Leicestershire Breed, Horses, and Implements in Husbandry, TO BE SOLD BY AUCTION, By Mr. Wane, on Friday next the 13th of April.'

The advertisement went on to list the property being sold by Isaac Wane of Milton End, Fairford who was leaving his farm. The animals for auction included: 131 very prime ewes with lambs; 9 barren ewes; 2 well-bred rams; 104 ewe and wether tegs, 6 useful cart mares and geldings; 1 mare in foal; and 2 colts. The 'implements of husbandry' included: 2 wagons; 1 'exceeding good tilted wagon with iron arms'; horse harness; 3 narrow-wheel dung carts; ploughs; an oak corn roller; a chaff cutting machine; drags; harrows; and other sundry items.

The sale was conducted by Isaac's brother Jonathan, a very successful auctioneer who lived in Croft House in Fairford. Isaac moved to Pinkneys Green in Berkshire and died in Wycombe, Buckinghamshire in 1854.

300 Years ago this month

On the 29th of April 1721 Joseph Lewis was baptised in St Mary's church by the Reverend Frampton Huntington. Joseph was the fourth of six children of Henry and Mary Lewis. Henry was a tallow chandler and soap boiler. He was also a church warden and a bell in St Mary's is inscribed with his name. Henry died in 1748; his will was witnessed by Jacob Kuffeler, master of the Free School. It seems that Henry may not have been a particularly successful tallow chandler and soap boiler as he only left one Guinea to each of his surviving children. Joseph died in 1780 and is buried near the entrance path to the church.

400 Years ago this month

There was only one marriage recorded in the Fairford parish register in April 1621 when Christopher Betterton married Ann Hodge on the 24th of the month. The couple had seven children, at least two of whom died young. Like Joseph Lewis, Christopher was also a church warden at St Mary's; he was buried in the churchyard on the 8th of October 1660.