

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

Meetings restart on September 16th with a short AGM. FHS is in need of new active Committee members and lacks a Chairman. Roles for Committee members could include FHS Publicity and arranging 2022-23 meetings. Please contact Alison or any other Committee member (Margaret Bishop, Gill Compton, Edwin Cuss, Syd Flatman, Chris Hobson, Ian Westlake, Richard Harrison – FTC Representative, and our newest Committee member recruited during lockdown Joanna Petty). The September 16 talk will be Syd Flatman on the Remaining Treasures of Fairford Park – something to look forward to. The programme for 2021-22 season will be in the September Newsletter.

Moody Morollo Fairford



Wills Hill was baptised in St Mary's, Fairford on 24 June 1718 and his brother Arthur was also baptised at Fairford a year later, however we do not yet know the family's Fairford connection. Wills was the son of Trevor and Mary Hill who at least must have been staying locally, perhaps at Fairford Park or Morgan Hall. Wills must have had a close connection with Fairford because on 28 August 1772 he was created Viscount Fairford and Earl of Hillsborough in the British peerage. In February 1773 Viscount Fairford gave £20 to the poor of our town. A final promotion occurred on 26 August 1789 when he was styled Marquess of Downshire, though this he was obliged to accept as an Irish title. Fortunately Wills Hill, Viscount Fairford was unlike his father Trevor.

Trevor Hill (1693–1742) was an MP, Privy Councillor and Governor of County Down but he was termed by Horace Walpole as '*one of the most profligate and worthless men of the age*' and at a time when scandalous behaviour was common, Trevor had few equals. In 1717 he had been created Viscount Hillsborough and became a member of the Irish Privy Council but it was clear that a political career did not really interest him. In fact he was most often to be found at race courses including Guildford, Aylesbury and most especially Newmarket, racing and betting heavily on his horses. Many of these events also featured Trevor's close friend Philip, Duke of Wharton, widely regarded as the greatest rake in Britain. Philip Wharton, 1st Duke of Wharton (1698–1731) was one of the few people to have been raised to Dukedom whilst still a minor and not closely related to the monarch. When his father died in 1715 Philip, then 16 years old, succeeded him as 2nd Marquess of Wharton and 2nd Marquess of Catherlough in the peerage of Ireland. Just a month after he inherited his titles he eloped with Martha Holmes, the daughter of Major-General Richard Holmes.

The close relationship of Trevor Hill and Philip Wharton was demonstrated as early as 1718 when a report in the *Original Weekly Journal* of 6th December recorded that '*A young Negro boy being lately presented to the Duke of Wharton, his Grace was pleased to have him baptised by the name of Moody Morollo Fairford*' (the last name probably after Wills Hill who had been born at Fairford that year). Trevor Hill and his wife Mary were the godparents.

This is all we know. Hopefully Moody Morollo Fairford had a better life than he might have done otherwise, but who knows because in 1725 Philip Wharton lost everything and went abroad never to return. Trevor also suffered a personal tragedy in June of the same year when his youngest son, Arthur, died following inoculation for smallpox. Trevor went back to Ireland and stayed there till 1729 when he returned to London a reformed man.

Fairford Farmers' Club

"The first meeting of Fairford Farmers' Club was held at the Bull Inn, at Fairford on Friday last, and was attended by most of the influential agriculturalists of the neighbourhood. The Chair was most ably filled by John Raymond Barker, Esq. to whose zeal for the interests of agriculture the Society is indebted for its formation..."

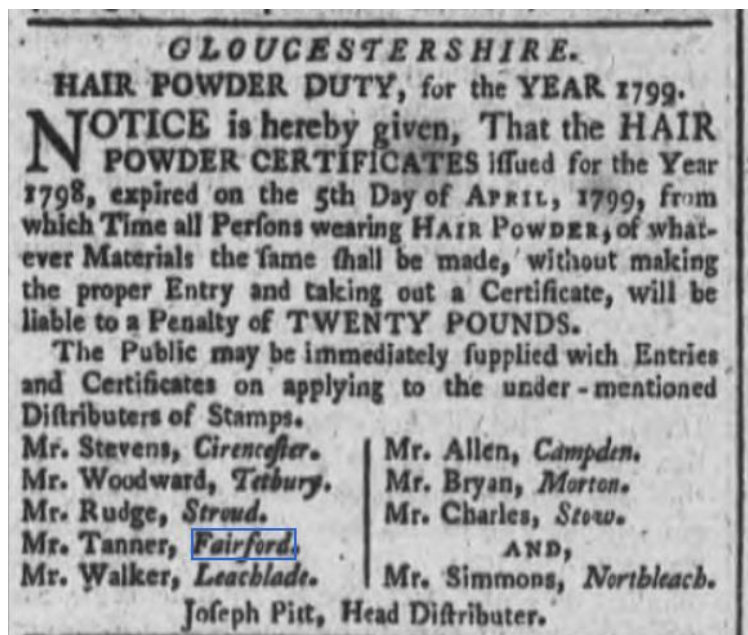
Jackson's Oxford Journal Saturday, December 28, 1839

The Fairford Farmers' Club was one of the first to be set up in the area. By May 1840 they had over 100 members - topics that were discussed included stall feeding, turf burning, manure for turnips, the Corn Laws, the cultivation of wheat as regards the mode and time of planting, quantity of seed and the manure most fit, crop rotation, the best manure for strong land etc, etc, etc. In 1842 it had become the Fairford and Cirencester Farmers' Club. One of the most important lectures in November of that year was on the gradual deterioration of our climate and probable means of amelioration given by Professor Robinson of the Yorkshire West Riding Medical Institution which showed that climate change is not just a recent concern.

On 12 November 1842 Robert Jeffreys-Brown gave a talk to the Club on the advantage of a specific education for agricultural pursuits. The idea was progressed at the Cirencester Wool Fair dinner on 20 July 1843 when Mr Bowly, then Chairman of Cirencester and Fairford Farmers' Club and Mr Brown were attending for the purpose of further advocating the advantage of an Agricultural College. After discussion Mr Brown concluded that 'The advantages likely to accrue from the formation of a college, and an example farm are so great that we must confess our surprise that the agriculturists of their district are not more alive to their interest' (Cheltenham Chronicle 29 June 1843). From this initiative the Royal Agricultural College was born. A committee was organised with Henry Bathurst, 4th Earl Bathurst as president. Funds were raised by public subscription and the first 25 students were admitted in September 1845.

Hair Powder Duty

William Pitt the Younger was responsible for a whole series of taxes at the end of the 18th century, including the first income tax, either directly or indirectly to help fund the expensive war with Napoleonic France. The introduction of a tax on hair powder was one such measure. Individuals who used hair powder were required to purchase a certificate from their local Justice of the Peace for which they were charged one guinea. The list



of those that had paid was lodged at the local Quarter Session court and a copy of the list affixed to the door of the parish church by the parish constable. It was common practice also, to fine those who did not pay this tax.

Wig powder was made from finely ground starch to which was added lavender, jasmine and roses and was scented with orange flower and was occasionally coloured violet, blue, pink or yellow, but was most often off-white.

It was Joseph Pitt, Head Distributer that amused me!

Wilts and Glos Standard, 1 September 1855

Fairford - Caution to Applestealers - An inhabitant of the town having a fine apple tree in his garden, and missing a quantity of fruit, resorted to the expedient of perforating a few of his apples and inserting a substance not particularly palatable. Whether the trick was discovered by the spoiling of the 'dumpling dust' or this disorganisation of the olfactory nerves, is not known; but certain it is that it has caused a great commotion among the gossips in this neighbourhood, and Mrs Partington says, "this world 'as cum to a fine pass - to think folks can't steal a few apples without having their flowers spoiled. Twasn't so when her was young."

Liverpool Mercury Saturday, 26 November 1859

A new candidate for Parliamentary Honours: For several days past a very singular old gentleman has been canvassing the voters of Gloucestershire, soliciting votes jointly for himself and Sir Robert Carden. He stated that he had promises for 800 plumpers, while many more had promised to split between him and 'his friend Sir Robert'. On Friday he appeared before the city magistrates, and created a great sensation. He was armed with a pair of scissors and an open clasp knife, which he flourished in the faces of those about him. He declared that two men 'on the other side' had attempted to garrotte him because he would not give up his claim to the representation. Superintendent Griffin communicated with the gentleman's friends, and the results was that, by adopting a clever ruse, the would-be MP was installed in a 'seat' not in the House of Commons, but in a vehicle, which conveyed him to Fairford Lunatic Asylum.



This was possibly Henry George Fowler admitted to Fairford Lunatic Asylum on 15 November 1859. He died in the asylum on 19 July 1870 and is buried in the churchyard

Two lucky escapes!

Oxford Journal, 21 June 1851

Accident: On Wednesday last Miss Rice, daughter of the Vicar of Fairford, was driving into Burford in a pony carriage, and when near the top of the street the pony took fright, and dashed down the hill at a terrific pace; on attempting to take the turn into Witney Street, Miss Rice and the servant were thrown out, and the horse went through the shop window of Mr Westrop, draper, knocking the window frame etc., completely out, and doing considerable damage to the stock. The animal with the shafts attached, went some distance into the shop, till its career was stopped by a heavy desk. We are happy to add that Miss Rice was but slightly hurt; the servant received but little or no injury; but the pony was badly cut and injured.

"Miss Rice" was Ellen, the eldest daughter of the Reverend Francis William Rice, later Lord Dynevor. On 20 September 1855 she married the Reverend James Gerald Joyce at Fairford. In 1872 James Joyce's huge book 'The Fairford Windows' was published, the first serious study of St Mary's magnificent windows. Ellen was awarded a CBE in 1920 for her work as an organizer of women's emigration. She died in 1924 at the age of 92.

Devizes and Wiltshire Gazette, 20 February 1845

An accident, which might have been attended with serious consequence, occurred at the village of Poulton on Wednesday last. Mr Henry Wigginton of Fairford accompanied by Miss Reynolds of Cirencester arrived at the Falcon Inn in a gig, and after partaking some refreshment were proceeding on their journey, but had scarcely proceeded forty yards, when owing to the slippery state of the road, the horse fell forward, precipitating them with great violence to the ground. Very fortunately, neither party received the slightest injury, and what is more strange, although placed in such a critical situation, did not appear the least alarmed – the lady in particular showed the most heroic firmness. The shafts of the gig were completely broken off, and the vehicle otherwise damaged. Another gig having been produced, the lady and gentleman went on their way, rejoicing at their fortunate escape.

Fairford History – Month by Month From the Newspapers & other Records

100 Years ago this month

From: The Gloucestershire Echo, 17 August 1921

Is this the first invention of a folding stand for a bicycle? Does anybody still have one?

Hugh Busby was the proprietor of the garage near the town bridge and Frank Townsend was his business partner and inventor.



200 Years ago this month

There were seven baptisms in St Mary's church during August 1821. One of these was Anne Miriam Hooper, the daughter of baker William Hooper and his wife Sophia. Anne Miriam was baptised on 9 August and there is a note in the Fairford parish register which states "admitted – being previously privately baptized at Coln St Aldwains [sic] by the Rev. Th. Keble". In fact the original baptism of Anne Miriam is recorded in the parish register of Coln St Aldwyn on 3 September 1820 when the ceremony was performed by the Reverend John Keble vicar of the parish and father of Thomas Keble and his more famous brother John. It was common in the 19th Century for babies that were sickly when born were quickly baptised privately in the family home in case they did not survive. Many were later baptised in the church, sometimes many years later.

300 Years ago this month

There was only one burial in Fairford's churchyard in August 1721 when Mary Savory was buried on the 28th of the month. Her husband James was one of the church wardens at the time of her death. There was a large number of the Savory (sometimes Savery) family living in Fairford during the 18th Century but this branch of the family probably died out because James was buried on 15 June 1723 just five days after James and Mary's only son Richard was buried. Richard was six years old when he died.

400 Years ago this month

August 1621 was a very quiet month for the Reverend Christopher Nicholson, vicar of Fairford. There were no baptisms or marriages just two burial services. Margery Stokes, a widow, was buried in the churchyard on the 1st of the month and Margery Best, wife of John Best, was buried on the 30th of the month. John Best survived his wife by 19 years and was buried at Fairford on 18 October 1640.