

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

Season's Greetings to all FHS Members and Best Wishes for 2022

New Acting Chairman

At a recent Committee Meeting, the lack of FHS Chairman was discussed and it was proposed and agreed that Chris Hobson would be Acting Chairman until the next AGM. Thank you, Chris [no arm twisting was carried out during the meeting].

The next meeting is on January 20 at 7.30 pm at the Community Centre and Chris will be talking on 'Cotswold Wool Merchants, their legacy in stone, brass and glass' which will include our own John and Edmund Tame.

November meeting

At the November meeting we welcomed Barbara and William Cooper to speak to our members on the Commonwealth War Graves Commission, its organisation and history. Both Speakers were former members of the RAF and Barbara is still a Reservist. They are volunteers for the CWGC and as well as giving talks they also inspect the condition of CWGC headstones in the Cirencester area.

During the First World War Sir Fabian Ware, who had been commanding a mobile Red Cross ambulance unit treating the wounded, saw the need for recording the sites of fallen soldiers. His unit was transferred to the British Army in 1915 and in 1917 the Imperial (later the Commonwealth) War Graves Commission was founded with Sir Fabian Ware serving as vice-chairman, liaising with British and Commonwealth military and political leaders. Sir Fabian Ware died in 1948 as is buried at Amberley near Minchinhampton where he lived from the 1940s. He is honoured with a CWGC headstone himself which he richly deserved.

By the end of the First World War there were burials scattered all over the campaign fronts. Some were brought together to form larger cemeteries, for example at Etaples. Each headstone consisted of the name, service number, unit and emblem, date of death and an inscription that could be chosen by the families. The numbers of those in each cemetery is mind-blowing especially of those who remain unidentified. If a body could not be identified then the words 'Known unto God' was inscribed. Although nowadays identification of bodies can potentially be found by using DNA and other evidence, a decision was made that no unidentified bodies already in cemeteries should be excavated for identification. On average about 20 bodies, mainly from the First World War, are discovered during excavations each year. Some identifications are made and the bodies are buried with full military honours.

The names of the missing are inscribed on memorials such as the Menin Gate at Ypres where the last post is still sound during a ceremony at 8 pm every day.

Cemeteries with over 40 burials have a Cross of Sacrifice, a cross which has a brass sword built into it. The larger cemeteries have a Stone of Remembrance with the inscription 'Their name liveth for evermore' chosen by Rudyard Kipling.

One thing that we had not realised was that the dates for CWGC recording war deaths are 4 August 1914 to 31 August 1921 and 3 September 1939 to 31 December 1947. All other headstones outside these dates are the responsibility of the Ministry of Defence so the stone of Sergeant A C Pugh who was killed in a motor cycle accident in 1980 and is buried in the New Burial Ground is an MOD headstone but looks very similar to a CWGC stone. The names of those who did not die during either of the two World Wars are not recorded



by the CWGC. The Commission's web site at www.cwgc.org can be used to find information about the war dead and the cemeteries and churchyards in which they lay or the memorials upon which their names are recorded.



From Sarah Thomas's diary - December 1860

Monday 24th

While busy making mince pies, Mr Davis walked into the kitchen and was as usual. Kate [Sarah's sister] in fun tried to make him think I hadn't come home and he looked dismal over it, but soon changed when he brought his wet boots into the kitchen and saw me there.

Christmas Day

It is very cold and frosty. The rime frost is as thick as snow and presented a most exquisite appearance. Emily and I went into the garden to see the trees. The elms in the orchard were lovely beyond description. The dark branches looked most rich with their foliage of snow-like feathers. Charles and dear John walked to Meysey Hampton in the afternoon and in the evening we had music and different games. It had been a merrier Christmas than we have had for years.

Friday 28th

The snow still beautiful, but sharp frosts made it very cold. The kitchen all frozen up this morning. John urged me to consider his proposal. He says he loves me more and more. He said he loves every eighth of an inch of me three times over.... John came into my bedroom before he left. I was so vexed that Emily came and found him there. She said she wanted to say goodbye but couldn't find us. She spoiled it completely for us as I felt quite inclined to give way, but on reflection think it might be providential.

[Sarah did not marry John Davis, the minister but instead married Captain Thomas Milbourne, a sea captain]

From The Little Book of the Cotswolds by Gillian Broomhall, 2011

December 11th 1936

King Edward VIII broadcast the news of his abdication to the nation. Local dignitaries and several hundred townsfolk gathered to signify their allegiance to King George VI at a special ceremony in Cirencester market place - an occasion marred by the 'worst possible weather conditions as a gale blowing throughout the morning reached its height and roared round the parish church tower', accompanied by torrential rain.

Christmas Eve 1539

The ancient abbey at Hailes was dissolved, its famous pilgrim-pulling relic, a phial of Christ's blood, turning out to be nothing more than coloured gum or honey. What little remains (apart from those bits 'absorbed' into several other buildings around the Cotswolds) stands defiantly opposite the little church at Hailes.

Christmas Day, Sunday 1836

Heavy snow lasting all week commenced at noon just as Cotswold folk were coming out of church, while the Duke of Wellington travelling in a carriage with outriders between Marlborough and Badminton found the roads impassable. Royally inconvenienced, the Iron Duke had to put up for the night at a local inn.

New Year's Eve 1961

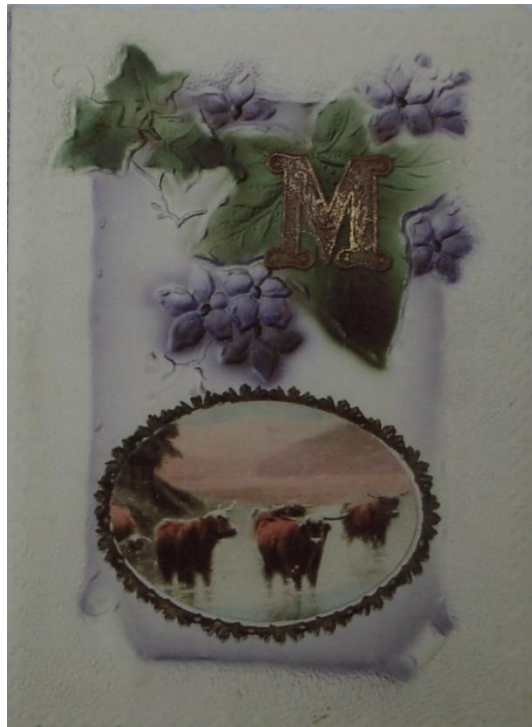
Woodchester's trusty bell ringers turned out in 17 degrees of frost to ring in the New Year.

From A Cotswold Miscellany by June Lewis, 2006

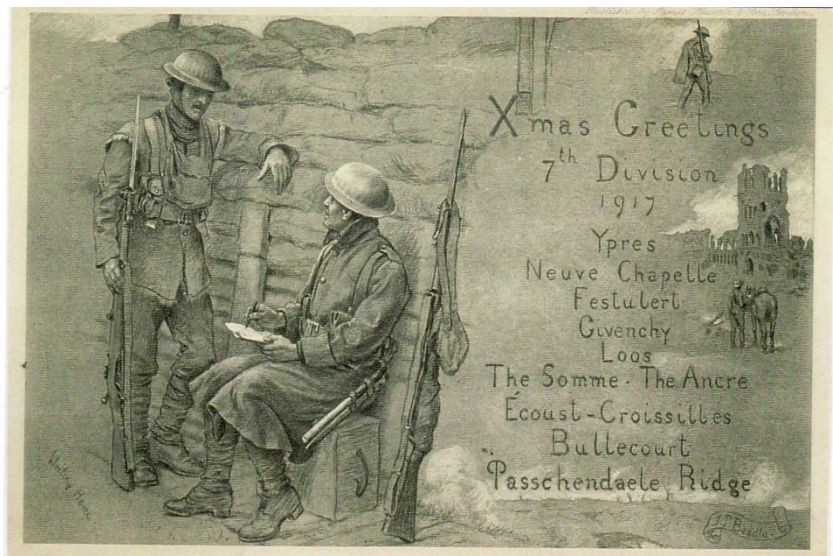
1879

Recalled as the wet summer, spoken of terms of awesome respect and terror as 'The Great War' as a benchmark of 'bad weather' and 'Seventy Nine' passed into weather lore when skating began in the Cotswolds the week before Christmas and winter continued into May as this timely poem shows:

The Merry Month of May, 1879
Put on your warmest things
Draw closer round the fire
And though it's still at 23
Let's pile the Silkstone higher
Let us be merry - and thought we are
From going out debarred
For tis the genial month of May
And look! It's snowing hard



A Farmor's School Christmas card
A St Mary's Church Christmas card
An Edwardian Christmas card
1917 Christmas postcard



Fairford History – Month by Month

From the Newspapers & other Records

100 Years ago this month

The North Wilts Herald of 2 December 1921 reported on the annual meeting of Fairford Bowls Club held in the Reading Room the previous week. Mr. Alfred Lees, owner of the East Gloucestershire Engineering Company, presided at the meeting and Mr. Milner Ralph Mudie of Moor Farm was elected president for the coming season. The report stated “the Chairman expressed the warmest thanks of the members to Mr. Mudie for his generous support with regard to the new bowling greens now being made at Moor Farm on land which Mr. F. Dancy has kindly allowed the club to take over for that purpose, the cricket ground having been found unsuitable”. Other prominent members of the Club Committee at this time were Mr. Albert Derry (secretary and treasurer), Mr. Edgar Buxton Chew (vice-chairman) and Dr. A C King-Turner.

The Gloucestershire Echo of 14 December 1921 reported the very successful annual Christmas Fat Stock Show at Fairford which took place on the 13th in connection with the monthly market. The Management Committee, especially its secretary the solicitor Arthur John Hitchman Iles, was congratulated on achieving a record number of entries compared with previous years. The entries included 35 fat cattle, 25 pens of fat sheep (each pen with five animals), and 15 pens of pigs. Prizes were donated by Lieutenant Colonel Albert J Palmer of Fairford Park, Messrs. R. Townsend and Company of Stroud and Messrs. J. Thorley and Company of London. The main prizes were won by Mr. E G Clifford of Quenington, Mr. J B Chesterman of Kempsford, Messrs. Gantlett and Son, Messrs. Perry and Sons and the Latton Co-operative Society. Another report of the event stated that “it was decided that in view of the congestion which resulted on former occasions no motor-cars will in future be allowed to stand in the Market Place on market days.” Even 100 years ago traffic congestion in the Market Place was a problem!

200 Years ago this month

The Oxford Journal of 1 December 1821 reported the sale by auction of a “neat and substantial-built dwelling House with sashed front, in excellent repair; comprising two parlours, kitchen, four exceeding comfortable bed rooms on the first floor, and four in the attic, brew-house, two cellars, dairy house, and exceeding fertile garden; together with an orchard, extensive work shops, barn, stable cowsheds, pigsties, and large yards”. The house belonged to Mr. Robert Wood who was retiring from his business and the auction was held by Wanes of Fairford on 13 December in the Bull Inn. Robert Wood is described in the advertisement as a builder but in his will he is a wheelwright and in the British Universal Directory of 1791 he is listed as a carpenter. Another newspaper has him as an architect. His wife Jane had died in August 1817 and Robert died in August 1824 aged 68; they and four of their children are buried in St Mary’s churchyard. One of Robert and Jane’s daughters was Elizabeth who married Peter Cox, another builder and architect of Fairford. One of the two local commissioners who saw Robert’s will through probate was the famous Reverend John Keble.

300 Years ago this month

December 1721 was fairly busy for Fairford’s vicar Frampton Huntington. On the 1st of the month Andrew Stanley (also written as Standly) was buried; on the 19th Joseph, the son of William and Sarah Winston (also written as Winstone), was baptised; on the 22nd Joseph, the son of Ann Midwinter of Well-Hope was buried; and on the 30th Harry Green and Elizabeth Harbett were married; the couple died within three months of each other in 1767.

400 Years ago this month

On 3 December 1621 John Collins the son of John and Katheren was baptised in St Mary’s church by the Reverend Christopher Nicholson. Sadly, little John was buried on Christmas Day.

