

Fairford Flyer

Extra No 40

April 2022

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

The next meeting is on April 21 at 7.30pm when Professor Eric Jones will talk on the Grand Drain: Fairford's contribution to agricultural history. The drain, some of which still exists, runs from Totterdown Lane southwards to join the River Coln.

The Woodchester talk has been moved to June at the request of the speaker so the 19 May meeting will be 'Show and Tell', a re-run of the old Primary School favourite. You are invited to bring along and talk about any object that is important to you and that might be of interest to History Society members. We have successfully tried out this idea in previous meetings; 5 minutes is the maximum length allowed and a bell will signal your time is up. So please get thinking and let Alison or Chris know if you would like to contribute.

FHS Members have been invited to

The Forensic Pathology of the Female Saxon Skull discovered in the River Coln at Fairford in 2013

A talk on Wednesday, 13 April 2022 7:30 pm at Royal Agricultural University - Sir Emrys Jones Lecture Theatre by Linda Ainscough M.Sc., Ch.FA.

Many of you will remember that back in July 2013 two Farmor's School pupils, Christian Thompson and Robbie Cribble, discovered a human skull in the river Coln. At the time it was thought that the remains were that of a woman, aged between 18 and 24, from Sub-Saharan Africa. This has subsequently been questioned. If you have ever wondered about the skills and technology used by forensic anthropologists then this is the evening for you.

Linda Ainscough is the Senior Reporting Scientist, Anthropology Section Science Lead at Cellmark Forensic Services, which was where the skull was analysed back in 2013.

Victoria Hardwidge, who wrote her MSc dissertation on 'The Fairford Lady: A Case Study and Investigation' into her origins, will be attending to answer questions, as will staff from the Corinium Museum in Cirencester, where her skeleton now rests.

This link might help to refresh memories:

<https://www.wiltsglosstandard.co.uk/news/10688142.fairford-schoolboys-who-found-skull-are-fascinated-to-hear-it-dates-back-1000-years/>

The talk will be reported on in the next Fairford Flyer.

Location Location Location by Marian Winckles - the March meeting

The development of Lechlade is a result of its geographic location. Early Neolithic, Bronze Age, Iron Age peoples, Romans and Saxons all found the gravel terraces of the Upper Thames ideal places to settle. Important archaeological remains have been found including the celebrated Anglo-Saxon skeleton known as 'Mrs Getty' on display at the Corinium Museum, Cirencester. Lechlade derives its name from the River Leach and 'lade' a marshy field. The Trout Inn's car park field was known as the 'lade' field.

St John's Bridge was built over the River Thames around 1200 alongside the original ford when a Nunnery later becoming an Augustinian Priory. The Priory was responsible for maintaining the bridge and received

tolls for the crossing over and under the bridge. However, the monks failed to carry out the maintenance work and the failing priory was dissolved in 1472.

As the bridge was an important crossing over the River Thames Lechlade became a trading centre for wool and other commodities on the way to London from the 14th and 15th Centuries. In the 18th century the turnpike road system developed making Lechlade an important staging post for east-west and north-south routes.

In the late-18th century the Thames and Severn Canal was built providing a link from the River Severn to the Thames. Park End Wharf (at the Riverside pub) received coal from the Park End Colliery in the Forest of Dean via the canal; there were also wharves where the Marina now is and behind the Red Lion pub as well.

Then the railways came causing the canal and stagecoach traffic to cease and marked the end of prosperity for Lechlade. However, the River Thames gradually became important for the Lechlade leisure industry. A very successful water carnival was held 1903-1936 and post-WW2, as private car owning became the norm, visitors to Lechlade increased. The annual Music Festival makes Lechlade a good place to visit (as well as Fairford).



Halfpenny Bridge c1795

Addition to the Storm

An FHS member wrote in to remind us of the 'whirlwind' that displaced some of the pinnacles of St Mary's Church in December 1971.

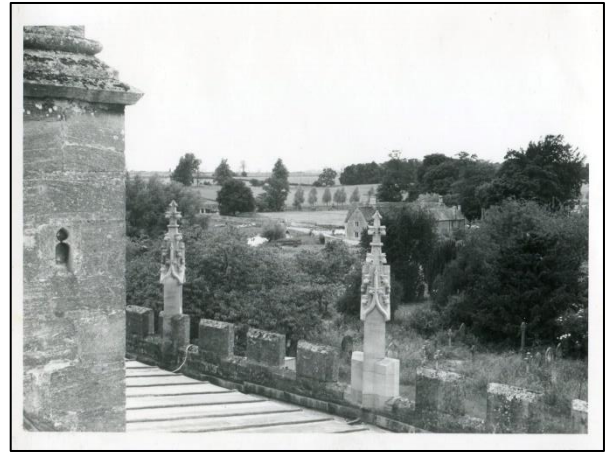
'After seeing your latest Fairford Flyer about severe storms in Fairford it reminded me of a freak weather incident back in 1972 when St Mary's church was damaged during the Sunday morning service, when loud crashing noises were heard and the congregation went outside to find that a sudden whirlwind had blown down all the embellishments and pinnacles on the south side of the nave roof.' She supplied the left side picture



Birmingham Daily Post - Monday 20 December 1971

'At Fairford pinnacles were torn from the parish church, seven trees were ripped up in a local park and a shop window smashed.'

Some of you may remember that Peter Juggins, stonemason repaired or replaced the pinnacles.



Guided Tomb Trail

Have you ever wondered about the lives of some of the people buried in St Mary's old churchyard? There are some fascinating and strange stories behind some of these people. Find out about Ebenezer's inflatable globe and wind-driven carriage, the tragic story of Doctor Cornwall's children, and the man behind the Royal Navy List. In conjunction with Fairford History Society St Mary's are offering guided 'Tomb Trails' throughout this Spring and Summer. The £3 contribution will go in part towards St Mary's and the FHS. Groups from 5 to about 12 please. Contact the Parish Office 01285 712611 or fairfordpcc@gmail.com or enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk

From the Archives - recent additions

At the end of March Fairford Town Council received an email from Melvin Brown of Charlton Kings. He had found in his house loft a very fine Fairford banner painted on 7 mm ply board about 4 ft by 3 ft and asked if FTC would like it. Of course they thought of FHS and Melvin brought it to Fairford and deposited it with FTC. It shows the Fairford Chamber of Commerce banner post-1979 as the reverse has an estate agent's notice board sale of 1979. How did it get to Charlton Kings?

Fairford Chamber of Commerce was flourishing in the 1980s and was instrumental in the re-opening of the Fairford Street market in 1986.



The Royal Wedding 1863

Another very interesting addition to the FHS Archives was kindly donated by our Society's President Edwin

MARRIAGE
OF THE
PRINCE OF WALES
FAIRFORD.

The Committee appointed for celebrating the MARRIAGE of the PRINCE beg to announce to the Inhabitants of Fairford, that they are making arrangements for having

A PUBLIC DINNER

in the Market Place, on Tuesday, the 10th of March.

They therefore respectfully request the Members of the Benefit Societies residing in the Town, and the Parishioners of all classes, to meet together in the Market Place, at half past One o'clock, in order to Promenade the Town with the Fairford Band.

At Two o'clock a substantial Dinner will be provided, under cover, in the Market Place; and the Inhabitants generally, of both sexes, with Children above six years of age, are invited to attend, preparations being made to accommodate 800 persons. It is expected that every person will bring a plate, knife and fork, and a mug or glass.

The Committee desire that the Shops be Closed at noon, and that all work and business be suspended during the remainder of the day throughout the Parish. They trust that the Loyalty of the Inhabitants will be shewn by the wearing of Wedding Favours or White Ribbon; by the exhibition of suitable Flags and Devices; and by an Illumination during the evening.

LONG LIVE THE QUEEN!
God Bless the Prince of Wales!

Fairford, March 4th, 1863.

W. BEALE, PRINTER, STATIONER, &c., FAIRFORD

Cuss. This is an original poster advertising a public dinner to be held in Fairford market place to celebrate the marriage of Prince Albert Edward, the eldest son of Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, to Princess Alexandra of Denmark. The wedding took place in St George's Chapel in Windsor Castle on 10 March 1863. The poster is dated 4 March so perhaps the public dinner was organised at fairly short notice. The dinner was open to everybody although it is stated that preparations were only made for up to 800 persons (Fairford's population at that time would have been about 1,650). Even those who did not attend the dinner were given the afternoon off work as all shops and businesses were expected to be shut at noon. The poster advises that "It is expected that every person will bring a plate, knife and fork, and a mug or glass." The poster was printed by William Beale of London Street who was Fairford's postmaster and stamp officer but diversified his business as a printer and stationer.

A notice in the Wilts and Gloucestershire Standard of 25 April reported on the finances of the event. The financial report was presented by the treasurer, draper William Wakefield and signed by the

chairman of the organising committee Dr. Joseph William Eastwood, a physician working at The Retreat private asylum on Milton Street. A total of £65 2 shillings and 6 pence was collected which was roughly equivalent to about £3,800 in today's money.

Unsurprisingly, the majority of the expenditure went on food, a total of £45 15 shillings and 2 pence with £29 11 pence and 4 pence paying just for meat and suet. Money was also paid out for the building of triumphal arches and for flags and illuminations (£6 12 shillings and 9 pence); for the erection of tents, hire of "ware and calico and labour, etc" (£8); and for the bell ringers and the band (£3 14 shillings and 6 pence). The £3 left in hand was donated to the Fairford Horticultural Society which had probably provided floral decorations for the event.

FAIRFORD.		MARRIAGE OF THE PRINCE OF WALES.	
Cash Account presented to the Committee by MR. W. WAKEFIELD, Treasurer.			
	£.	s.	d.
To Cash collected by Messrs. Wakefield and Ferris	28	3	0
To Cash collected by Dr. Eastwood, Rev. W. Fris, and Mr. Kingsley	18	16	0
To Cash collected by Messrs. Brown & Caldwell	18	3	0
£65 2 6			
By Cash paid for erecting Triumphal Arches; for Flags and Illuminations	6	12	9
By Cash paid for Erection of Tent, Hire of Ware and Calico, Labour, &c.	8	0	0
By Cash paid for Meat and Suet	29	11	4
Groceries, &c.	6	17	11
Potatoes	1	9	0
Bread	3	8	11
Beer	2	8	0
43 15 2			
By Cash paid for Ringers, Band, and Sundries	3	14	6
By Balance in Hand to be given to the Fairford Horticultural Society	3	0	0
£62 10 0			
£3 14 6			
Examined and found correct,			
Fairford, April 22nd, 1863. J. W. EASTWOOD, M.D., Chairman.			

If anybody else has anything they would like to donate to the FHS Archives please contact us.