

Fairford Flyer

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FAIRFORD HISTORY



SOCIETY

FHS Meetings 2023

All meetings are at 7.30 pm in the Farmor Room, Fairford Community Centre on the third Thursday of the month, (except for February)

May 18 - Bill King - 'The Home Front in World War Two'

June 15 - AGM and Items from the FHS Archive - Committee members' choice

We are at present planning the programme for next season's meetings so we would appreciate it if anyone has any ideas or requests please let us know.

Tomb Trail 2

Owing to the success of the tomb trails in St Mary's churchyard last year, our Chairman Chris has devised a route for a brand new selection of interesting former Fairford residents buried in the section north of the Church, the first Trail being **20th May at 2 pm**. Price £3. If you are interested please let us know at enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk

Henry VIII's Royal Progression through Gloucestershire - April meeting



Henry VIII

Anne Boleyn

Thomas Cromwell

Alan Pilbeam gave members an excellent talk on Henry VIII's Royal Progression through Gloucestershire which took place from July to October in 1535. It was a longer progression than usual as an outbreak of plague prevented the Royal party from returning to London as originally planned. Henry VIII was then age 44, still a fine figure of a man at 6 ft 2 in and popular among the people. He was very fond of hunting hence his choice of venues, all of which had or were close to enclosed deer parks. With a retinue of some 500 people the Royal party stayed at Sudeley Castle, Tewkesbury, Berkeley Castle, Little Sodbury Manor, Acton Court, Thornbury Castle and Gloucester.

Henry was accompanied by Anne Boleyn. She was then in her early thirties, admired in Court for her elegance, piety and education. However, she had not forgiven by many people for replacing Katherine of Aragon, Henry's first wife. Anne Boleyn was very critical of the state of the Church in England. She was quite a humanitarian and gave money to the poorest person in each place that they stayed. But by 1535 Anne had not produced the male heir that Henry so desperately wanted and in 1536 Henry had her executed on the probably fabricated charges of adultery and treason.

Henry's chief minister Thomas Cromwell who also accompanied the King on the Progression came from a humble background and had worked very hard to better himself. Cromwell was a very able lawyer and

administrator. It was his Commission to assess the wealth of the monasteries and the result was the dissolution of the monasteries with the money going to the crown. The Royal Progression through Gloucestershire was an ideal opportunity for Cromwell to assess the wealth of the monasteries and church lands in the county. Henry needed money from the Church to fund his extravagant lifestyle and military operations abroad.

Alan showed pictures of each of the places where the Royal party stayed, all these can be visited with the exception of the privately owned Little Sodbury Manor. Thornbury Castle is now a very up-market hotel. Sudeley Castle became the burial place of Catherine Parr, Henry's sixth and last wife, and is well worth a visit.

Fairford's Royal connections

Although Henry VIII did not visit Fairford during his Progression through Gloucestershire in 1535, he was no stranger to Fairford as he did spend a week in the town some 15 years earlier. In fact Fairford's connection to Royalty dates back much further than the Tudor period.

In 1066 the manor of Fairford, along with many other manors in the south west of England, belonged to a wealthy Anglo-Saxon thegn named Brihtric. He was sent on a Commission to the Court of Flanders where Count Baldwin's daughter Matilda fell in love with him but Brihtric rejected her offer of marriage. Spurned and humiliated, Matilda later married Duke William of Normandy and after the Norman Conquest she persuaded her husband, now William I of England, to dispossess Brihtric of his lands whereby Fairford became a Royal manor until it was sold off in 1087.

Nearly 400 years later Fairford became a Royal manor again because by then it had passed by inheritance to Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, the 'Kingmaker' but when he was killed at the Battle of Barnet in 1471 the manor was granted by Edward IV to his brother George, Duke of Clarence. However, Clarence was executed for treason in 1478 and the manor returned to the Crown. In 1479 King Edward IV leased the manor of Fairford to John Twyniho of Cirencester and his business partner and son-in-law John Tame, a wealthy wool merchant.

John Tame held several administrative appointments for the Crown in Gloucestershire. In the summer of 1502 Fairford was visited by King Henry VII and his Queen Elizabeth of York when returning from a Royal Progress to South Wales. It is possible that this occasion, which would undoubtedly have included a visit to Fairford's church newly rebuilt by the Tames, facilitated the idea of having windows made for the church by the Royal glazier Bernard Flower.

John Tame's son Edmund also made Royal connections. In 1510 he was appointed a Commissioner of the Peace for Gloucestershire by Henry VIII and in 1516 he was knighted and became a Knight of the Body. In the same year Sir Edmund's son, also named Edmund, became an Esquire of the Body which meant that father and son must have spent some time in the splendid but volatile Court of King Henry.

In late August 1520 Henry VIII visited Fairford and spent a week with Sir Edmund Tame in his mansion. As the church windows are thought to have been completed by 1520 this visit could well have been arranged for the King to view the newly-installed windows which may have been inspired during his father's visit in 1502. It was during the 1520 visit that Henry VIII knighted Sir Edmund's son.

Sir Edmund Tame the elder died in 1534 and his son in 1544. Sir Edmund the younger's wife was Katherine Denys, who came from a prominent Gloucestershire family. In 1547 Katherine married Walter Buckler, a diplomat who was also private secretary to Catherine Parr, Henry VIII's sixth and last wife. In the same year Walter was knighted by King Edward VI just two days after the young King's coronation. One month before this Fairford ceased to be a Royal manor as it was sold for £224 14 shillings (about £62,000 in today's money) to Walter and Katherine thereby severing the Royal connection with Fairford, in a legal sense at least.

Fairford Street names – Royal connections

Coronation Street was formerly known as Milton End. The street was renamed to commemorate the coronation of Edward VII at the suggestion of Councillor Eric Cole who lived at Milton Farm. The change was approved by the Parish Council in 1902.

Queensfield and Prince Charles Road

From the Fairford Parish Council minutes of January 6th 1953: 'After a long discussion it was unanimously agreed that the new housing site should be called Queens Field with Crabtree Villas to be renamed Hatherop Road, the Airey Houses 1 to 10 be renamed Prince Charles Road and the Swedish Houses be called the Plies'.

Newspaper Cuttings

The local newspapers of 1837/1838 are singularly uninformative about the Coronation of Queen Victoria although the Wilts and Glos Standard and Oxford Journal were being published at that time. The excerpts below have been put together from various issues of the Wilts and Glos Standard and Parish News.

1902 - The Coronation of King Edward VII

The postponed Coronation took place on August 9th, and in view of the fact that in most of our country villages the festivities prepared for June 26th had, in accordance with the wish of His Majesty, been carried out on that day, it was rather difficult to know how best to celebrate the actual day of the Coronation. The houses in Fairford were gaily decorated with bunting and devices of all kinds, the Market Place and High Street being ablaze with colour. It was whispered though of course it must not be repeated anywhere west of Waiten Hill, that Fairford completely cut out Cirencester in this respect.

At eleven o'clock there was a Service in the Parish Church, the form of Prayer being that which was issued for use on June 26th. At 2 pm the children met in the Market Place, and the Coronation medals were distributed. The National Anthem was again sung, the Cirencester band, whose services had been secured for the afternoon, leading the voices.

The children then followed the Band up to the Cricket Ground, where an amusing local match (Married men versus Single) was going on. A selection of suitable music was played during the afternoon, and when the match was concluded, the Cricket Club kindly gave permission for dancing on one side of their ground. This was carried on till about nine o'clock, when Mr A Iles gave an effective display of fireworks. The rest of the evening was spent in walking round the town and admiring the illuminations, which were a brilliant success, and testified to the ingenuity as well as the loyalty of the householders who erected them. Far into the night loyal and patriotic songs were heard in the streets, and it seemed certain that Fairford people had carried out the resolution which one heard frequently proclaimed: - "We'll all be merry on the Coronation Day."

1911 - The Coronation of King George V and Queen Mary

The observance of Empire Day, May 24th, was this year postponed in accordance with the suggestion issued of the Local Education Authority till June 22nd Coronation Day. The children of all our Schools therefore assembled in the Infants' School Playground on the morning of that day and, after a few words from the Vicar as to the meaning and purpose of Empire Day, the Union Jack was hoisted by one of the Fairford Boy Scouts and the boys then marched to the Market Place so as to be ready to join in the procession to Church for the special Service.

At about 10.20 am that procession started, the Fairford Prize band led, the Scouts coming next, and then the Vicar and Choir in their robes, followed by the Churchwardens and sides men. A large number of the Parishioners joined the procession and behind them, bringing up the rear, were the school children.

The Service commenced punctually at 10.30, the Choir singing the Old Hundredth Psalm as they entered the Church, and then, after a slight pause for the general congregation to seat themselves, the 122nd Psalm. The special form of prayer with Thanksgiving to Almighty God, commended by the Archbishops of Canterbury

and York for general use on the Day of Coronation was used. Copies were distributed throughout the Church. The Anthem was Mr Lee Williams' "The King shall rejoice" and it was very well rendered by the Choir. The Service was over by 11.15.



At 12.30 the local farmers gave a dinner to all men, women and boys working on the land and a party of some 140 sat down to a substantial meal at Mr Alexander Iles' Dutch barn, kindly lent for the purpose. At 2 pm the children's sports started in the Park, and a succession of races occupied the afternoon until tea-time. Tables had been laid for tea in the open, but at the last moment a smart shower made it necessary to adjourn to Mr Iles' barn again. At tea each child received a Coronation Mug as a memento of the day. After the children had finished, the old people, of sixty-five years and upwards sat down to tea.

From 6 pm onwards there were more sports and at ten some hundreds of Parishioners went up to Horcutt Hill to see the bonfire lighted. Some seventeen fires could be seen from the top of the hill. There was a brave display of bunting and other decorations in the town, and when it became dark many of the houses were lighted up with Chinese lanterns and fairy lights.

1937 - The Coronation of King George VI and Queen Elizabeth

The town of Fairford was very prettily decorated on Coronation Day and it was rare to find any house which did not display some form of festive decoration. The event will be a memorable one for Fairford, all residents being her catered for in one way or another.

The roasting of ox in Morgan Hall Park was the outstanding feature of the day and as usual Fairford went into this business wholeheartedly. When this particular form of celebration was mooted Mr Arthur Woodward offered an ox for roasting and for the purpose selected an animal fatted by Mr Tom Rymer; home products every time being Fairford's motto. Mr Woodward's slaughter man killed the ox and prepared it for the spit. This feature attracted visitors from a wide area and there was a constant stream of onlookers throughout the morning and afternoon. Shortly after noon the first slice were cut by Mr Woodward, the donor of the ox, following an introductory address by Mr J Cripps who thanked Mr Woodward for his gift.

Mr Woodward in reply said that that the giving of an ox for Fairford's Coronation festivities had afforded him the utmost pleasure. To make a speech filled him with fear and trembling, but he was consoled at the thought that the feast would remain a happy memory long after his poor words were forgotten. Fairford had roasted an ox and he was sure it was not too much to say that it would remain for ever a vivid and enjoyable memory.

In the morning there was a parade of ex-servicemen, scouts and others including a good contingent of ex-servicemen from Kempsford. They paraded under Captain W B Forrester and marched to the Parish Church where a Service was held. Following the Service facilities were provided for listening to the Coronation Service broadcast from Westminster Abbey.

OLD AGE PENSIONERS ENTERTAINED - At 12.30 pm 70 old age pensioners and widows were entertained to lunch at the Palmer Hall. The exterior of the hall had been very prettily decorated and the tables in the hall were tastefully laid out, the decorative scheme being in red, white and blue and presented quite a festive appearance. The diners were given a beautiful spread and a pleasant item of a varied menu was the inclusion of the first slices of the roast ox. The Fairford Silver Prize Band played selections outside the hall while dinner was in progress and after the dinner several local ladies and gentlemen entertained the guests to a delightful programme of popular airs old songs and sketches.



Commencing at 2 pm there was a good programme of children's sports in Morgan Hall Park, many of the items were keenly contested. The children received a souvenir of the occasion in the form of a Coronation plate. Meanwhile in Morgan Hall Park there was a free buffet with tea, sandwiches and cake for residents, those who preferred something stronger than tea were not overlooked. A six-a-side football tournament in the evening provided some well-contested rounds and was watched with interest.

At 9 pm a torchlight procession was formed and headed by the Fairford Silver Band which had done yeoman service during the day by playing for the Church parade and selections in the Park and had proceeded up Milton Street to the Gassons. The procession looked very effective in the fading light and was followed by a large concourse. On arriving at the rendezvous a bonfire was kindled and a very pretty firework display was given.

The closing event of the day was a dance and social in the Palmer Hall. This was well patronised and a good programme of dance music was rendered by the Supertonicks Band, dancing being indulged in upon the excellent dance floor until the early hours of the following morning.

1953 - Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II

The day of the Coronation began with prayer offered from nearly every altar in the land, for the Queen and all her subjects. Holy Communion at our own altar was at 7.15 am and 8 am. In the Church there was a short, half hour service at 10 am to which all were cordially invited to echo the Nation's prayer. People were drawn to a special act of worship on the day of Coronation rather on the Sunday before. Rev P A Rose preached a short and telling sermon and a special prayer was offered with that of the entire nation for our Queen and our country. Then all went back and were held spellbound by the broadcast ceremony of the Coronation in the Abbey watching the consecration of a Queen with over a thousand years of royalty behind her and the love and loyalty of many million hearts beside her, enthroned beneath the mighty power of the hand of God. On the Parish Church St George's flag with the diocesan arms was made anew from a larger one by ladies for the Coronation; also 100 yards of streamers decorated the outside of the Church from tower to roof pinnacles.

After the break for television viewers to 1.30 pm the secular celebrations began with a parade of Polish children in the Market Place - 120 altogether. After playing some popular selections, Fairford Silver Band,

resplendent in their new uniforms, under Bandmaster A J Cook, headed the procession to the cricket field where a programme of sports for both English and Polish children had been arranged by Mr F C Smith of Farmors School and Mr A Szydzik of the Polish School. The sports continued till nearly tea-time when about 300 youngsters received souvenir mugs at the gaily decorated Palmer Hall.

At about the same time 80 residents were received at the Bull Hotel assembly room by Mrs Richmond and Mr E Watson. Mr Tom Swinford and Mr M Bartlett, both 85 years old, were the seniors in this happy party who greatly enjoyed a substantial meat tea after grace by Father McSweeney. The brightly-decorated room was kindly lent for the occasion by Mrs Mussenden, the proprietor. While the meals were in progress Miss K Winser and the Misses Thornton were touring the flag-bedecked streets judging the artistic merits of hundreds of decorated premises and houses. The ultimate awards were 1st Mrs C Godding of the Lodge, Fairford Park; 2nd Mr H Caldicott; 3rd Mrs F Godding.



Milton Street
Coronation
decorations

River Coln race - About three o'clock on the afternoon of Coronation Day the remarkable sight of 11 men and two ladies (including the vicar Canon Edward Keble, Dr M Veale, Miss M Norman, and Miss Inge) plunging fully clothed into the ice-cold waters of the River Coln provided highly diverting entertainment at Fairford for the crowds lining the banks. Starting from the Mill Bridge they raced or otherwise along the bed of the river for about 400 yards to the Town Bridge and under the arches. The first to breast the tape was Mr W Clark, 2nd Desmond Godding 3rd Derek Jones with Miss Norman also a good finisher. Prizes of £5, £3 and £2 were kindly given for this event by Mr T Rymer.

