

Fairford Flyer No 58 December 2023



FAIRFORD HISTORY



SOCIETY

FHS Meetings 2023/24

All meetings are at 7.30 pm in the Farmor Room, Fairford Community Centre on the third Thursday of the month, (except for January and February 2024)

Membership fees were due in September and remain at £5. Visitors are always welcome at £3. Thank you to everyone who helped with the chairs last month.

2024 Programme

There is no meeting in December.

January 18 - 2-4pm - afternoon meeting. This year as an experiment we are trying an afternoon meeting with tea and cake, displays, publications for sale and visits to the Archive Room. We will need some idea of numbers so please email enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk if you would like to attend.

February 15 - 10am, Edwin Cuss morning meeting - Along the road through Fairford

March 21 - 7.30pm, David Aldred on Hailes Abbey and the Mystery of the Holy Blood

April 18 - 7.30pm, Chris Hobson on the Retreat Asylum: the patients' story

May 16 - to be arranged

June 20 - AGM Social 20th anniversary of the FHS

November Meeting



At the November meeting Dr Samantha Harper of Oxford University gave an entertaining and very informative talk on "how to read a church". She invited audience participation which FHS members responded to enthusiastically. Samantha was inspired after a visit to Bridlington Priory which has three different architectural styles, plainly visible from the outside. She took us through the various stages of worship throughout the ages starting with Celtic simplicity then the more impressive minsters in towns e.g. Beverley and Wimborne Minster. From the 7th century manorial churches were built where the lord was entitled to keep one third of the tithe, e.g. Kempley, Inglesham, and St Mary's Deerhurst.

After 1066 came the more elaborate Norman influence; Dore Abbey, the Kilpeck Romanesque church, and the Knights Templar church at Garway were especially recommended for visits. These three churches were built between 30 and 40 years of each other. The Gothic style of architecture resulted in larger and more elaborate windows (often with stained glass) which could be supported by slimmer columns of masonry. From the 14th century the concept of purgatory caused great concern about the length of time to be spent in that unpleasant limbo state prior to going to heaven. In an effort to reduce the time spent in purgatory pilgrimages could be made, indulgences could be bought and generous gifts to the poor and the church were thought to be beneficial. John Tame's concern about purgatory may have been a driving cause for him to rebuild Fairford church in the Perpendicular style at the end of the 15th century; in his will he asked for a very large number of masses to be said for his soul. Dr Harper is writing a book on how to read a medieval church and the reasons why they were built and her talk to FHS helped formulate her ideas.

Eric Jones sent in information about this fascinating new book: *Thomas Baskerville: Journeys in Industrious England* edited by Anthea Jones. Hobnob Press October 2023

Thomas Baskerville (1630-1700) was a cheerful and energetic man, who enjoyed good wine (witness his list of London taverns), good company, a game of bowls, and well-dressed fish for his dinner. His character emerges from his wide-ranging writings preserved in three manuscripts, and now made available in *Thomas Baskerville: Journeys in Industrious England*. All the varied contents of the manuscripts are included, with the exception of a very small number of items irrelevant to family or English topographical history. There are introductions to each of the major sections in the book.

Baskerville's substantial accounts of ten journeys through England are an important focus of the book. There are other journeys mentioned more briefly amongst his writings, one of which is in verse. He was driven by an irrepressible curiosity to see for himself so he travelled to measure and describe bridges over the Thames. Hearing of the great fire in Northampton a few years after he had been to the town, he went there again to see how the town looked. Although he lived in an old house, Bayworth manor in Sunningwell now in Oxfordshire but then in Berkshire, he favoured the new buildings arising in Northampton and in London after the Great Fire, and thought York would benefit from a fire. He observed the destruction of Colchester in the Civil Wars and compared Cambridge colleges with those in Oxford; he knew Oxford well, and wrote a history of all the colleges and halls and their buildings.

Markets and the goods for sale particularly interested him. Oxford, he suggested, would have benefited from a market place. There is a detailed discussion of the market in Norwich, and his curiosity sent him to Farnham on market day because he understood that the bishop of Bath and Wells enjoyed a handsome income from the tolls. He went to Stourbridge fair, and wrote a description of the goods transported by water to and from the fair at St John's Bridge near Lechlade. He compiled a long list of local and foreign specialties, presumably all available in England.

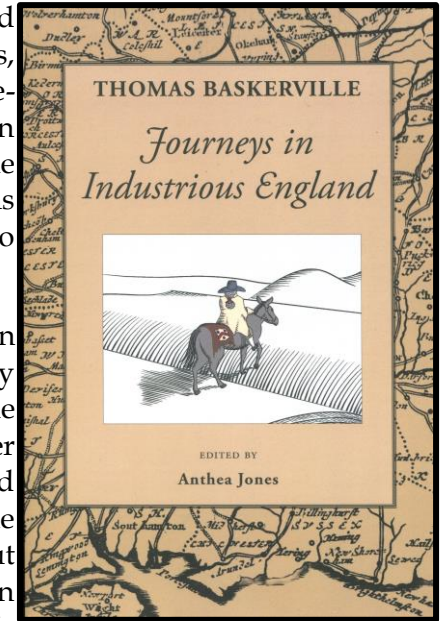
Baskerville's travelling was largely on horseback though occasionally he went by boat; he had had experience of sailing to Newfoundland, Barbados, and twice through the Bay of Biscay. He appreciated riding over springy downland grass and found some still substantial commons, saw Charles II and his brother James racing on Burford Downs, and he commented on the wild flowers. He was glad to emerge from narrow Suffolk lanes onto a better road. He looked for viewpoints from hills, and appreciated the good air on their summits. London air he castigated more than once.

Writing a detailed genealogy of his family and their various relationships, though without specifying dates, Baskerville illustrates the demographic experience of the Seventeenth century. A few women lived long and productive lives, but the loss of children and of spouses was a frequent experience. Baskerville himself had a number of step-relatives while all his brothers and sisters pre-deceased him. He married very late in life, and his son, although outliving him, did not have a long life like his father.

A full index enables references to subjects of interest to be drawn together. There is material here for historians interested in Seventeenth-century politics, economic affairs, demographic history, and local and agricultural history.

Ferfert (Fairford) is mentioned

"The next town in the Road forward where are good Innes to Lodge, is called Ferfert 3 miles from Leachlad (Lechlade). A little without the Town on the right hand is a great square new built house where Esquire Barker Lord of the Manor now lives, who have Royalty of the River running by the town in which are very good Trouts. For the effigies of the Saints in ancient painted glass you may see more in the Church windows of Ferfert than in riding of many miles else where."



Thomas Baskerville was also poet

*So next upstream is Ferfert town,
A place for Inns of good renown,
Barker they say is Lord of this place
Whose hard by, adds a grace.
And now remember ere you pass,
Go into Church see that glass
There you'll find in Glaziers paint
The figure of Ancient Saints,
And wonder 'tis be it spoken.
Roundheads leaft it so unbroken.*

Baskerville's visit to Fairford was about 1665 only 14 years after the end of the English Civil war and five years after the Restoration of King Charles II.

CHRISTMAS CLIPPINGS

Cheltenham Chronicle 1 January 1910

Christmas in Fairford 1910

Gifts of coal have been distributed to the poor of Fairford by Mr A J Palmer and Mrs E A Abbey (Morgan Hall).

Monday was a red letter day for the children of Fairford Infants School for they were invited to tea and a bran pie by Mrs Palmer of Fairford Park. After the children had partaken of the good things which had been kindly provided for them, there was waiting for them Father Christmas, in the person of Mr H W Kemble, who presented them with gifts from the bran pie. Mr and Mrs A J Palmer were present throughout the proceedings, and were accorded three hearty cheers.

On Wednesday afternoon a concert was given in the Infants Schoolroom, Fairford in aid of the Fairford Orchestral Society, The room was well filled, and the concert consisted of trios, piano solos, and songs, which were well rendered. The principals taking part were Miss May Elliot (pianist), Miss Gladys Lewis (violin), Mr J Snowden (cello) and Mr Miles Bishop (vocalist).

On Christmas Eve Mr A J Palmer of Fairford Park, very kindly entertained the members of the Fairford Town Prize Band to a very enjoyable supper, which was thoroughly enjoyed by everyone.

The adult members of the Fairford Parish Church Choir were entertained on Wednesday evening at the Vicarage to a supper and social by the vicar (Rev F R Carbonell) and Mrs Carbonell.

Christmas time at Fairford was rather quiet. On Christmas Eve members of the Fairford Town Prize Band, under Mr Churchman, rendered a selection of carols, etc., till two o'clock in the morning. The services at the Parish Church were of a bright and hearty nature. There were three celebrations of Holy Communion – at seven o'clock, eight and after morning service – which were conducted by the vicar (Rev F R Carbonell), and were attended by a large number. The church was decorated with some lovely chrysanthemums donated by Mr A J Palmer. During the evening the choir rendered carols. Mrs Carbonell was the organist for the day. The collections were on behalf of the sick and poor.

On Christmas Day Fairford Athletic entertained Stratton Rovers. A good game resulted in a draw of two goals each. On the run of the game Fairford should have proved the winners.

Fairford Athletic on Boxing Day had quite a runaway victory credited to them, and they were in rare scoring form against Kempsford who had a fairly representative team doing duty. The victory was nine goals to nil.

The matron of Fairford Cottage Hospital acknowledges with thanks the following gifts: Lord de Mauley, six rabbits; Mrs Archer and Mrs F P Bulley, Christmas puddings; Mrs Gardner Bazley, turkey; Hon M H Hicks Beach, four pheasants; Mrs J Jones and Mrs A J Palmer, desserts; Mrs Bloxsome, mince pies; Mrs Arkell, mincemeat; Mrs Hyett, fruit; Mr A Perry, joint of beef; Mr F Plank, Christmas cake.

... and at The Retreat Asylum in 1858

During the present festive season the patients of the above establishment have been much gratified by exhibitions, and drolleries with the magic lantern and other social amusements, etc., the chief of which took place on Tuesday evening, and at which nearly all the patients were present, followed by a supper. Dancing was carried on with order and propriety. The room was decorated with evergreens, banners etc. Over the fireplace we observed the word 'harmony' the letters formed by coloured rosettes; and the whole having a very pleasing effect. We were also much gratified by the discourse and order which prevailed reflecting credit on the Medical Officer, who we hear is very zealous in getting up and promoting any recreation that would gratify and benefit the inmates.

Wilts and Glos Standard 2 January 1858

From a letter to the Editor Wilts and Glos Standard 9 January 1858 about the Retreat Christmas Ball

Among the very pleasing reminiscences of this our first ball, two have just come to memory. Upon my asking a patient, an inmate of longstanding, what he thought of it, he clasped both my hands, and with tears in his eyes said "God bless you Sir, it has been many a long day since I have seen the like". A female patient, who is almost lost to everything that is human, stood up and went through every dance with accuracy and attention, roused for the first time from her distressing condition. I would further add that recreations are not to be looked at as mere transient gratifications, for by such means is the irksomeness of confinement relieved, the cure of the malady promoted, besides having a wholesome and cheering influence, relieving the sorrows of a broken heart, raising the hopes of the wavering, and rousing the faculties, which would otherwise sink into a complete state of fatuity.

I am your obedient servant

W Day



Happy Christmas and Best Wishes for 2024