

## FAIRFORD HISTORY SOCIETY OCCASIONAL PAPER - 4

### RICHARD GREEN, SCHOOLMASTER (1713-1767)

Fixed to the north wall of what is now Fairford Community Centre but was once Fairford's school is a pair of plaques that commemorate two headmasters who, although they lived about 200 years apart, both ably served the cause of education in Fairford. One of the plaques commemorates Herbert Hedges who was headmaster of Farmor's School from 1921 to 1947 and who many people still living in Fairford today will remember. The other plaque is to Richard Green, who is known primarily through Herbert Hedges's own history of Fairford Free School and from the wills that Richard Green and his wife Sarah left behind.

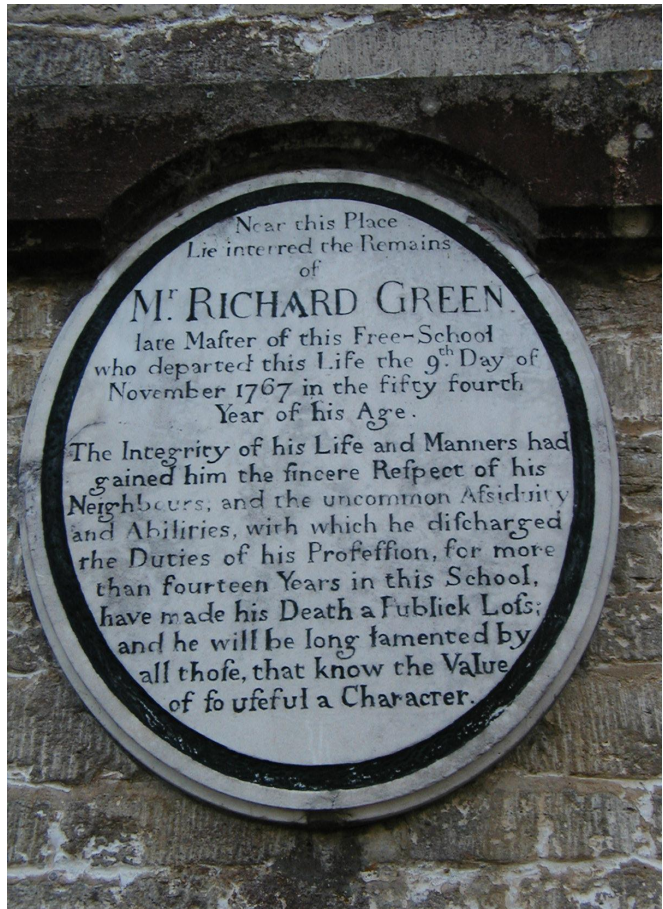
The story of the establishment of the Free School in Fairford is well known and involves legacies left by Andrew Barker's granddaughter Elizabeth Farmor, her aunt Mary Barker, and great aunt Lady Jane Mico, which resulted in the building of the school next to the church in 1738. The Barker family (and their descendants the Lambes and Raymond Barkers) were intimately connected with the school for the next 150 years and, amongst other things, selected the headmaster for the school and authorised his salary.

Fairford Free School opened to its full capacity of 60 boys (it would be another 77 years before girls were allowed into the school!) in November 1738 and its first headmaster was Jacob Kuffeler who was assisted by an usher, John Bayley. It seems likely that Kuffeler was still headmaster at Fairford in 1751 as he is recorded as being "...of Fairford" when he married Elizabeth Rodbourn at Chedworth on 28 April that year. However, in 1752, 14 years after the school first opened, Richard Green of Highworth was appointed the new headmaster.

Hedges relates how James Lambe, the Lord of the Manor at that time and the husband of Esther Barker who was the last surviving grandchild of Andrew Barker, had Richard Green sign a binding agreement. This agreement stated that Richard was bound to James Lambe to the sum of £500 to do his duty as teacher and estate manager for the school, to collect rents and keep the buildings in good repair. He also had to agree to teach two boys, nominated by James Lambe and his successors, to read and speak Latin. Lastly Richard could appoint an assistant or usher to help with the teaching but whose salary must not exceed £10 per year, a paltry sum even then as it is worth only about £850 in today's money. It is presumed that this was not the usher's only source of income!

Richard Green signed the agreement with James Lambe on 11 October 1752 but the following clause was added in an amendment dated 9 December:

*"The Charge in the Bond within for the keeping of the School and premises in good and sufficient repair is not intended to oblige the within said Richard Green to rebuild the said School House in case it should be blown down by tempestuous weather or burnt down by accidental fire."*



Perhaps Richard Green had sought legal advice and insisted that this sentence was included to limit his liability in case of “tempestuous weather” or “accidental fire”? While this may seem slightly strange, it should be remembered that this was written within living memory of the Great Storm of 1703 that badly damaged St Mary’s church and was responsible for widespread death and destruction throughout southern England. This, and the ever-present threat of fire at a time when many buildings were still largely constructed of wood and thatch, and fire-fighting capabilities were often very limited, makes the insertion of the extra clause easier to appreciate.

Richard Green may have lived in the front part of the school building and must have fulfilled his duties at the school satisfactorily as he remained headmaster until his death on 9 November 1767 at the age of 54. James Lambe had himself died in 1761 but his wife Esther maintained a close interest in the school throughout her long life at Fairford Park, as did her successors the Raymond Barkers.

Richard Green wrote his will on 3 November, less than a week before he died. In his will he refers to himself as “I Richard Green of fairford in the County of Gloucester Gentleman”. Disappointingly, he makes no mention of the School or his occupation as headmaster. It seems that Richard and his wife Sarah had no children of their own as neither mentions any in their wills. However, Richard appears to have had a favourite nephew, William Green, the son of his brother Joseph. William not only received £80, whereas most other relatives and friends only received £30 or less, but he was also left Richard’s “... books (except those of my wife) papers and mathematical instruments”. Richard mentions that upon his marriage to wife Sarah he had given a bond for £300 to her brother Charles Farr, a plumber from Highworth, to be used to support Sarah in case of Richard’s early death. His will cancelled this bond as “I am now possessed of nine hundred pounds old South Sea annuities now standing in my name in the books of the South Sea Company...”. Instead he allowed Sarah £300 from this annuity for her own use but directed that the remaining £600 annuities go to his nephew William after Sarah’s death.

In Richard’s will he also left small sums of money to Mary the wife of Daniel Spackman and their two children, Charles and Susannah, but with the warning that the legacy is “...for her own sole and separate use and not be intermeddled with by her husband and her M’script alone shall be a sufficient discharge for the same”. Mary Spackman (née Farr) was the sister of Sarah Green.

After Richard’s death Sarah lived on in Fairford for another 20 years before she too died on 22 November 1787 at the age of 75. Sarah’s will shows that instead of leaving the entire £600 South Sea annuities to William Green as her husband had intended she divided it among her own blood relations, especially her sisters Mary Spackman (on behalf of Mary’s daughter Susannah Savory) and Elizabeth Farr, and to her nephew Henry Burden of Faringdon. However, Richard’s favourite nephew did not go entirely empty-handed as Sarah left William £50 plus a further £50 for his daughter Mary Ann.

The plaque to Richard Green, with its touching commemoration of a highly respected citizen of Fairford, indicates that his grave lies close by. In fact Sarah’s tomb is just feet away from the plaque where her grave is marked by a slab that also commemorates her sister, Mary Spackman (1719-1793). Between that grave and the fence that separates the churchyard from the passage alongside the old Farmor’s School building there is a headstone with a badly worn inscription which may well be the last resting place of Richard Green, schoolmaster and gentleman.

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#### References:

H W Hedges. *The History of Farmor’s School, Fairford 1838-1938*. Gloucester: John Bellows, 1938  
The Will of Richard Green, PROB 11/934. The National Archives  
The Will of Sarah Green, PROB 11/1161. The National Archives