

Fairford Flyer No. 84 April 2026



Sadly, we have lost another loyal member; Martin Lee-Browne, and a past member Barbara Cobbett. Martin having lived in Fairford since 1959 was always ready to help answer local history queries and had a wealth of information about the local area. He was a great music lover and wrote a book 'Delius and his music' and also 'I Wessex: A West Country Territorial Army Battalion 1967-1995'. He will be much missed. Memorial service 3pm 30 May
Barbara and her husband Don lived in Fairford for 50 years were past members of the Society, Don was on the Committee for a while and designed some of our earlier posters. They also contributed items to the Fairford Archive for copying, especially FADS material. They are also missed.

Membership

Membership fees were due in September and remain at £5. You can pay at a meeting or by bank transfer, Lloyds Bank, sort code 30-92-06 A/C Fairford History Society No 02170130. Important - we are sorry but this year we cannot accept cheques as the bank now charges for each cheque paid in. You can also leave the subscription at the Community Centre in the FHS post slot by the FTC office door. Thank you to all who have paid already, we have 155 paid up subscriptions as of 1 April.

FHS Meetings 2025-26

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 which are at 2.30pm)

2026 Programme

2026

16 April 'A Brief History of Tetbury' by Jane Haines

21 May 'Misericords' by Miles Dodd

18 June AGM and 'Gloucestershire Follies' by Jonathan Holt

Next year's programme is being arranged at the moment, if anyone has any suggestions or would like to volunteer to give a talk themselves please let the secretary know at enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk

Other events

May 16 Fairford Town Council Annual town meeting at the Palmer Hall, 1-3 Local organisations including FHS will have the opportunity to promote themselves checkxx

June 5-7 Fairford Festival

August 15-17 Fairford Steam Rally

FHS has had a request from the Fairford Primary School for someone to go in and talk to year 3 Olive Class about Fairford's local history. Would any of our members like to do this? We can always supply information. The Committee would also like to thank everyone for their generous contributions to the book sale and refreshments at the January and February meetings. We have raised about £320 so far towards our new display boards.

March Meeting - History of Packwood House by Alison Bird

We were extremely grateful to Alison Bird for stepping in at the last minute after Bill King was not able to give his talk.

Packwood House is a National Trust timber-framed Tudor manor house in Packwood on the Solihull border near Lapworth, Warwickshire. Owned by the National Trust since 1941, the house is a Grade I listed building. It has a wealth of tapestries and fine furniture and is set in beautiful gardens.



The first known owners of Packwood House were John and Emotta Featherston in 1468; they were yeoman farmers. During the 16th and 17th centuries the Fetherston family bought considerable land in the area until in 1599 the 'great mancienc howse' was bequeathed by William to his son John Fetherston. A 1634 inventory shows it was an estate of 446 acres. The Fetherstons became landed gentry by education and marriage. The Civil War was a time of great danger for them, but they and the house survived and in the late 17th century great improvements were made to the house. After 1720 succession passed through the female line to the Leigh and Dilke family of Maxstoke Castle. John Fetherston (previously Dilke) lived intermittently at Packwood with his wife and family in the 1830's until there appears to have been a family break up and the house was largely occupied by tenants from the 1840's onwards. John Fetherston became bankrupt leading to the sale of house and estate in 1869. George Oakes Arton, a wealthy Birmingham ironmonger, purchased the house and lived there till his death in 1901.

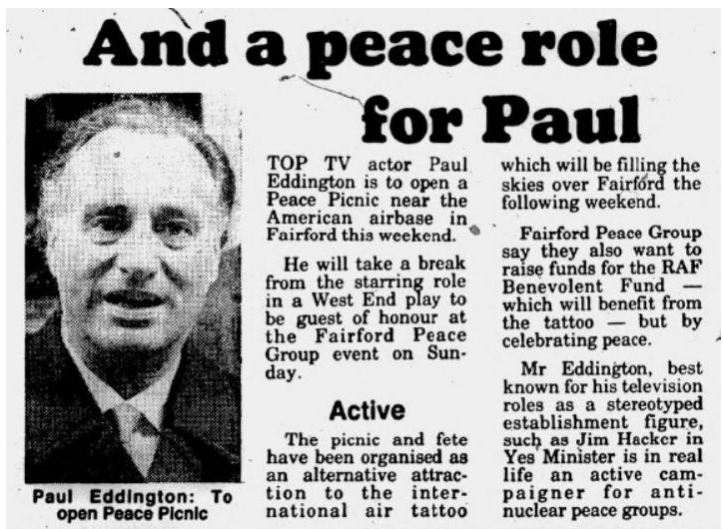
In 1904 the house came up for auction again and was bought by Alfred Ash who had made his money from galvanising products. Alfred and his son Graham Baron were interested in Tudor houses and wished to restore it and for the next 40 years that became Baron Ash's life work. He furnished the house with beautiful objects, restored original features, made internal changes and created a 'great hall' where he lavishly entertained. The culmination was a visit from Queen Mary in 1927 after which the room that she used, and her cup and saucer were labelled in memory of the visit.

Graham Baron Ash was the last owner of Packwood House which was sold to the National Trust in 1941 and opened to the public in 1947. Graham moved to Wingfield Castle in Suffolk and died there aged 90 having created his life's work 'a home to dream in and a garden to dream of'.

Fairford Peace Group

One of the books from the collection of Geoff Hawkes was 'The Complete Yes Minister' and was signed by Paul Eddington who played the MP Jim Hacker in the TV series. It also had the inscription 'Fairford Peace Picnic 1985' which was rather intriguing. According to a newspaper article in the Western Daily Mail of 4 July 1985 Paul was to open the picnic described as an alternative attraction to the Air Tattoo which was to be the following weekend. Paul was an active campaigner for anti-nuclear power.

From an advert flyer - The Peace Picnic July 7th
'We would like to stress that this event is designed to draw in as many local people as possible to show them that the 'Peace Group' are not freaks but



And a peace role for Paul

TOP TV actor Paul Eddington is to open a Peace Picnic near the American airbase in Fairford this weekend.

He will take a break from the starring role in a West End play to be guest of honour at the Fairford Peace Group event on Sunday.

Active

The picnic and fete have been organised as an alternative attraction to the international air tattoo

which will be filling the skies over Fairford the following weekend.

Fairford Peace Group say they also want to raise funds for the RAF Benevolent Fund — which will benefit from the tattoo — but by celebrating peace.

Mr Eddington, best known for his television roles as a stereotyped establishment figure, such as Jim Hacker in Yes Minister is in real life an active campaigner for anti-nuclear peace groups.

Paul Eddington: To open Peace Picnic

Western Daily Press 4 July 1985

ordinary folk from all sections of the community. We hope that this event will have a happy, friendly atmosphere when we can show people that with us peace is already a reality.'

A BBQ and other food, craft and plant stalls, etc, with games and children's races were planned.'

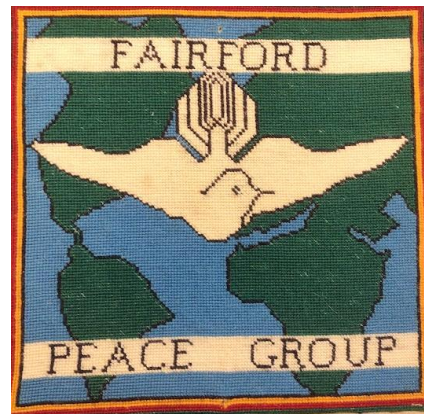
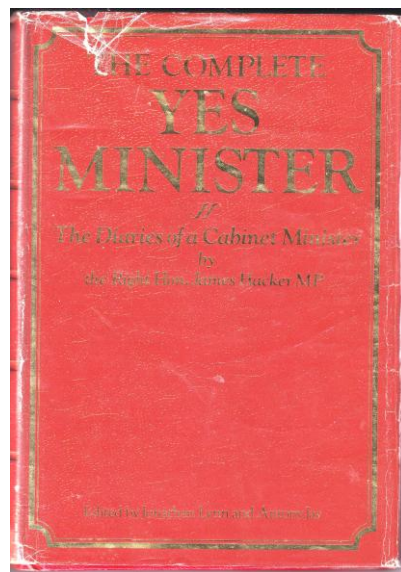
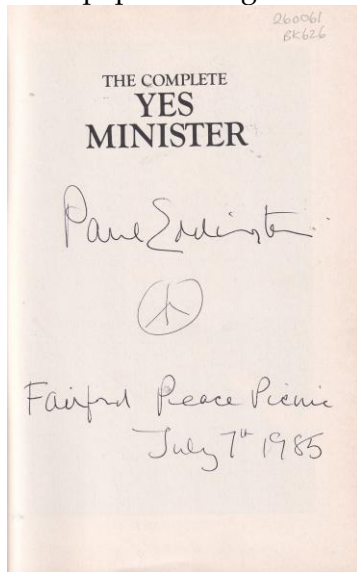
We should like to know if anyone has memories of attending this event in 1985 or anything about the Fairford Peace Group. There was also a similar event at Hatherop Castle in 1986.

Fairford Peace Group was formed in 1984 because of 'the concern about the massive build-up of nuclear weapons by East and West, and the tenuous peace that this situation presented for future generations... From FPG publicity 'We felt we must take further action and as such we have decided to launch the 'Fairford Peace Group' with the overall aim of working towards the removal of the threat of nuclear war.'

The Group were very active for a few years and had regular meetings and some high-profile speakers. They peacefully had a presence at RIAT and regularly demonstrated at various events along with other peace groups. They were affiliated to CND, both local and national branches. They wrote hundreds of letters, including one to President Reagan and one to Mrs Thatcher, the Prime Minister, expressing their concern about the nuclear threat. This lasted until 1988 when the file of minutes and correspondence ends. There is a newspaper article in early 1988 which said after a meeting at the Bull the Cotswold Peace Federation was formed after which there is only one more reference in September 1988 when questions were asked about the build-up of the number of B-52s at Fairford Air Base. The leading spokesperson of the Fairford Peace Group was Susan Vereker from Thornhill Waters.

The FHS Archive has one file of minutes and correspondence, and a tapestry worked emblem as illustrated.

Newspaper cuttings of the time were also consulted.



NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS

Wilts and Glos Standard 15 February 1890

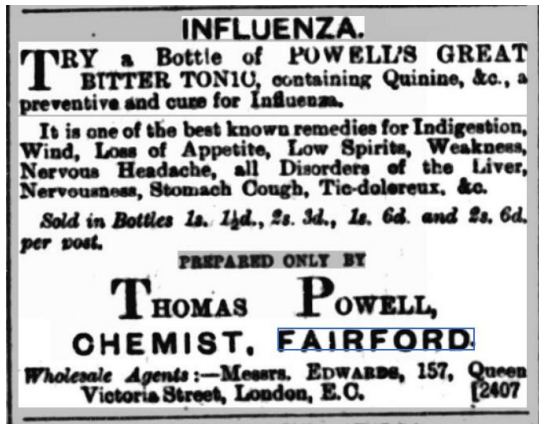
A STUPID HOAX: Some clever individual at Fairford sent us last week an advertisement professing to come from a 'professional rat catcher' giving the address of the person whose name he forged. We have handed over the letter to the parties aggrieved, and it is probable that the idiotic sender may find his little 'joke' a costly one.

Wilts and Glos Standard 22 February 1890

PLEASANT EVENINGS FOR THE PEOPLE: On Thursday evening in last week, another of these popular entertainments was given in the Congregational Church schoolroom, when the programme consisted of the Service of Song, entitled 'Poor Mike'. The Rev J S Grant, F.S.Sc. (Lond), acted as conductor, and gave the

connective readings. Miss A Crampton and Mr C baker discharged their parts as accompanists in good style. In responding to the vote of thanks to those who had given their services, Mr Grant mentioned that several members of the choir were absent through illness, and he had no doubt that the same reason accounted for absence on the part of the audience.

Perhaps the choir and audience has not tried...



Wilts and Glos Standard
 28 February 1890

Wilts and Glos Standard 12 April 1890

EASTER: On Easter Day the usual festal (archaic word for festive) services were held at the parish church, which was beautifully decorated. There were large congregations. Appropriately sermons were preached in the morning by the Curate Rev R H Wilmot, and in the evening by the Vicar. A new pulpit cloth, exquisitely wrought in gold braid and coloured silk needlework on white corded silk, with bookmarkers for the lectern, and offertory bags to match, were used for the first time, the gift of members of the Vicar's family. The collections during the day will be devoted to the fund for restoration of the organ. The bells rang out merrily during the day, and the St George's ensign again floated out from its point of vantage on the tower.

BAND OF MERCY ENTERTAINMENT: It may be remembered that owing to the very favourable reception of the adapted representation of "Dick Whittington and his Cat" by the Band of Mercy boys at Christmas, the Rev R H Wilmot, who had so efficiently arranged the whole thing and so ably tutored the lads, kindly promised a repetition of the performance at Easter. It was accordingly reproduced on the evenings of Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday, and there being yet a demand for tickets another night is promised for Saturday next. As before, the lads played their several parts capitally, and secured themselves an excellent reception. On Tuesday evening, Mrs Porter, the Misses Porter, and a large party from Fairford Park were present, and expressed themselves highly pleased with the entertainment. Suitable pianoforte and "cello" accompaniments were provided by the Vicar and Mrs and Miss Carbonell. The scenery, the costumes, and other accessories, as before stated were designed by and in in great measure the work of Mr Wilmot, and were much admired as being so very appropriate to the various characters.

EASTER VESTRY: The annual vestry for the appointment of churchwardens and for passing the churchwardens' accounts was held on Easter Tuesday, when besides the Vicar and Churchwardens and Mr A Hitchman Iles, vestry clerk, only two ratepayers were present. The Church Lands' Charity accounts were submitted for inspection, and also a list of persons who have received parochial relief during the year. The Churchwardens' accounts, embodying a gross amount of under £10, were agreed to, and the Vicar then had pleasure in again nominating Lieutenant Colonel Archer as Vicar's warden, at the same time expressing his indebtedness to the Churchwardens for their valuable assistance during the past year, saying that the post was more than usually arduous owing to the restoration work that was going on. Mr Alexander Iles was re-appointed as parish Churchwarden, and the meeting terminated.

CRICKET - An opening game was played on Easter Monday, when a number of young players came forward and joined the club. The following officers have been appointed: Rev F R Carbonell, captain; Mr J Woodward sub captain : Mr Francis Chard, treasurer; Mr Ernest Baldwin , secretary.