

# The Fairford Flyer

Fairford History Society

Newsletter No 3

July 2006

## FAIRFORD HISTORY



**SOCIETY**



## Roman cemetery found near Fairford

Early in May, Oxford Archaeology announced the exciting discovery of a Roman cemetery near Fairford, a "very significant" find which attracted regional and national press coverage. In preparation for the excavation of yet another gravel quarry, the first graves complete with skeletons started to turn up. By mid-June about 85 skeletons had been discovered together with evidence of Roman and Saxon buildings. Dr Alex Smith, Oxford Archaeology's project manager said: "Large Roman cemeteries like this are usually only found around towns or substantial settlements, but no such site has been found here yet. We believe that a small Roman farm lies immediately to the west, and it may be that the cemetery acted as a communal burial ground for the local rural population. We hope that further work will reveal more of how people lived and died in this region, around 1600 years ago."



The graves appear to have been segregated into two distinct groups buried on different alignments. It has been reported that at least one skeleton was found with the skull placed between the feet. This was not an uncommon funerary practice in Roman times but could also indicate that the unfortunate individual was executed. The dig is set to continue throughout into July although it will be some time before the finds can be analysed and an interim report compiled.

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On June 23<sup>rd</sup> a small group of FHS members were able to visit the dig which was explained by Ken Welsh of Oxford Archaeology. The site shows evidence of Bronze Age, Roman and Anglo-Saxon activity. Ditch boundaries, post holes and Anglo Saxon grub huts were clearly visible in the ground. FHS members were also able to inspect some of the finds including a silver needle, a weaving tool and some knives found with the burials plus a large amount of Anglo-Saxon pottery.

For further details see the report at [www.fairfordhistory.org.uk](http://www.fairfordhistory.org.uk)



### Meeting dates 2006/7

7.45 pm at the Community Centre  
21<sup>st</sup> September - Victorian Fairford  
16<sup>th</sup> November - Fairford Hospital  
15<sup>th</sup> February - Edwin Cuss  
17<sup>th</sup> May AGM -Fairford Railway

### Membership Sept 06-Aug 2006 £2.50

Membership renewal is due at the next meeting September 21<sup>st</sup> or can be renewed by contacting Ian Westlale (712329), by downloading a form from the FHS website and given to any committee member or handed in at FTC Office, 3 London Street .

[www.fairfordhistory.org.uk](http://www.fairfordhistory.org.uk)

**Chairman's report.** Our summer edition of the Flyer marks the end of our second full year. Besides the play, we are preparing a booklet for early 2007 with the working title of 'Then and Now' to chart some changes in Fairford since the early days of photography. We are also in the early stages of planning a video film of the notable parts of historic Fairford. We hope to establish from this project a team who will make a contemporary record of future town events. May I also remind you to renew your membership at our September talk. The Society needs all our numbers to maintain its prestige in the County and beyond. **KC**

### **Fairford Community Play - Report**

The planning for the play "School Report - a history of education - is well under way. The research has been handed to our writer, Steven Deproost, who has a great deal of experience in writing community plays and his very successful play "Time Flies" has just been produced at The Space in Lansdown, Stroud. Barry Kilgariff is our Director and will be working with Steven and the Producer to stage the play in St Mary's Church Fairford in October 2007. A group of volunteers to manage the lighting, sound, sets, costumes make-up, front-of-house, publicity will be gathered together. If you are interested in helping with any aspect of the play production please contact Alison Hobson. Barry will be casting the play in 2007 so be prepared all you budding actors to audition for parts!

We anticipate that the schools and the Fairford Amateur Dramatic Society (FADS) will also be heavily involved in the play. Steve Martin will be working with Steven Deproost and the GCSE Drama Students to write and perform a section of the play and Tony Frewer will be in charge of the music.

The LHI grant has enabled us to buy a good quality digital camera and a video camera with a tripod. This means that we are able to record the progress of the production and to produce a DVD of the final performance. **JR**

### **Publications**

Two **Occasional Papers** have been published, one about **Charles Haultain**, a Royal Navy Commander whose grave is in St Mary's Churchyard who much to our chagrin was not at Trafalgar but did take part in many naval campaigns at the time and was instrumental in modernising the Navy List. **Occasional Paper No 2** is about the **Honeybone** family of clock makers from Fairford. Both publications are priced 50p. These publications, and **Fairford's War Memorial and Roll of Honour** by Chris Hobson price £5.00 are available from the Secretary or e-mail [fhs@cotswoldwireless.co.uk](mailto:fhs@cotswoldwireless.co.uk)

### **Fairford Oral History Group**

A total of 28 recordings have now been made. Several of the recordings are now available on CD's and these can be borrowed or purchased. Versions on tape can also be provided when required and seven tapes have already been given to interviewees. A talk, Fairford Memories, was given at Fairford and District U3A's April meeting. Extracts from the recordings were played including life in Fairford since the First World War, shops and facilities over the years, Fairford schools for all ages, reminiscences of Fairford during the Second World War, memories of Fairford railway station and the history of the airfield. This was well received and generated new interest. If you are interested in having your memories of Fairford recorded please contact Geoff Bishop 713747, the group leader or e-mail [fhs@cotswoldwireless.co.uk](mailto:fhs@cotswoldwireless.co.uk) **GB**

Safe and expeditious Travelling to  
Gloucester,  
By Way of ABINGDON,  
CIRENCESTER, &c.  
IN ONE DAY.

Angel Inn, St Clement's, Strand  
**A NEW and Elegant POST COACH**  
set out from the above Inn, on  
Monday, 21<sup>st</sup> of August inst. at Five  
o'Clock in the Morning, to Gloucester,  
and from the Bell Inn, Gloucester, to  
London; and will continue to go from  
each place every Monday, Wednesday,  
and Friday, at the above hour, through  
Abingdon, Faringdon, Lechlade,  
Fairford, and Cirencester, and arrive in  
Gloucester and London, the same  
Evenings, Fare, One Pound Four  
Shillings.

The Passengers who travel in this  
Coach, are not deceived by being  
removed from a light coach to a  
Machine with six insides, which is a  
custom on this road that has been a  
long time so justly complained of; but  
to prevent the inconvenience that  
attends the shifting of passengers and  
luggage, the same Coach goes through  
the whole journey.

The Gloucester, Carmarthen and  
Swansea Mail Coaches, from the above  
Inn as usual

Performed by J WATSON, and Co.  
These Coaches call at Gloucester  
Coffee-House, Piccadilly

**From The Times: Tuesday  
August 22<sup>nd</sup>, 1786**

### **Roger Phillips 1948 - 2006**

With Roger's death, the Society has lost not only one of its founder members but also a man dedicated to the history of Fairford and the surrounding area. I have known Roger for a long time and was proud to call him my friend. Although a quiet man, he had a dry sense of humour but became more animated when talking on the subject of Archaeology. He had a large collection of artefacts from the 'digs' he had taken part in and his knowledge of the Celtic, Roman and Saxon periods and how they affected this area was unsurpassed. We shall miss Roger and send our deepest condolences to Lynn and his sons Nathan and Justin. **BR** Roger was responsible for the FHS logo and we shall always have that reminder of him. **AH**