

# The Fairford Flyer

Fairford History Society  
Newsletter No 6  
January 2008

## FAIRFORD HISTORY



## SOCIETY

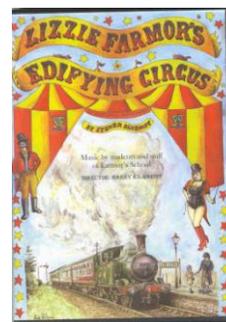


## Lizzie Farmor's Edifying Circus



Superteachers, (Maureen Partington and Nicky Clare) with Farmor's School children and 'Sir' (Hugh Dudley) and 'Miss' Jean Kilgarrif in the background. Photo John Lang

I expect that many of you who read this will have either seen or taken part in our Community Play, so generously funded by the Local Heritage Initiative. It was a huge effort by everyone who took part and the numbers were very large. Over two hundred people were directly involved on stage and behind the scenes and 800 people saw the show on four nights. There isn't space to name all the people who took part but Fairford History Society do wish to give special thanks to all three schools, FADS, the Town Council, the Post Office, St Mary's PCC and Blenheim Antiques. This was a true community effort and one which we will all remember for many years to come. It is a requirement of the grant that any profit made should be put towards a 'heritage' project. The FHS Committee have agreed that the money should be put towards equipping the Heritage Room and Archive Room in the Fairford Community Centre. JR  
**If you want to recapture the show why not buy the DVD which is on sale in Blenheim Antiques price £8.50.**



**'God Sent a Plague of Frogs to Fairford'** - Dr Andrew Warmington's fascinating talk in November told a tale of media manipulation, religious differences and social tensions in Fairford in 1660. A plague of frogs may well have visited Fairford but this was a common occurrence due to local conditions and the incident was used as propaganda by both Anglicans and nonconformists.

### **2008 FHS events are:- FAIRFORD LIBRARY at 7.30 pm (change of venue)**

February 21<sup>st</sup> 2008

Edwin Cuss - Crawling to Concorde - transport

May 15<sup>th</sup> 2008

AGM - Fairford in Canada by June Lewis-Jones

### **and back in Fairford Community Centre**

September 18<sup>th</sup> 2008 and November 20<sup>th</sup>

## Fairford Community Centre

Work on the Community Centre is progressing well. The builders hope to finish at the end of April; May will be a month of equipping and moving in and it is hoped the Centre will be open for business at the beginning of June. There will be various opening events to which the Community will be invited.

The refurbished building will have Council and Parish offices and an Information room and Conference chamber as well as rooms for community and youth activities, and will be fully accessible to the disabled. The former church tea room will provide Visitor/Heritage Centre facilities. There will be a small exhibition with items on display, a timeline round the room, and an audio visual presentation. At the top of the building FHS hopes to have an Archive Room where all the historical material collected so far can be stored. The Archive Room will be used for research purposes and will be open to visitors by request. MB

## Publications

All FHS publications are available by contacting the secretary 01285 711768. They are also on sale at St Mary's Church, Fairford

NEW is FHS Monograph 3 -

### **The Raymond Barkers of Fairford Park**

The long and complex story of the Barker and Raymond Barker family of Fairford Park is told in this new monograph in some detail. The story starts at the end of the English Civil War when Andrew Barker arrived in Fairford and built his grand new house at Fairford Park. The Barkers and their relations the Farmors and the Micos were intimately involved in the creation of Fairford Free School which later bore the name of Elizabeth Farmor, one of the benefactors. In addition to being lords of the manor, major landowners and JPs of Fairford

the family was also very active in county and national affairs and many of them became prominent in business and commerce as well as the church, both Anglican and Presbyterian. The family was not without trial and tribulation including the tragic death of John Raymond Barker's first wife Martha who died when her hairpiece caught fire after dinner one night in 1796! The surviving wills of the family have proved to be a useful source of information. For example John's second wife Margaret held very strong views on her burial: "It is my very particular desire that wherever I may die that my remains may be removed to Fairford Church in Gloucestershire for Interment there by the side of my late dear husband John Raymond Barker Esq of Fairford Park deceased and that such removal may take place by a hearse in the old fashioned mode and not by railway or steam boat which I consider unkind, indecent and showing great want of respect and feeling to the departed ..."

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June Lewis-Jones has published a new book 'Fairford Images' which contains 250 evocative images to create a visual outline of the town's history over the last 100 years. £12.99 ISBN 978-0-7524-44758

### **Enid Johnson**

All will be touched by the news that FHS should benefit from some of the money donated to Enid's memory. We have received £700 which we will spend on a suitable project in remembrance of Enid's kind generosity.

### **Membership Sept 07-Aug 2008**

Members can join or renew at any meeting or by contacting Ian Westlake (712329) or by downloading a form from the FHS website and giving it to any committee member or handing it in at the FTC Office, 3 London Street . £3.00 p.a.

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

**Sadly we have lost a valuable member of the Committee, Lesley Pincombe has moved from Fairford to a new job but we hope she will still be able to attend meetings. Our thanks go to her for her invaluable support. The result is that there are now two vacant places on the Committee; please contact any committee member if you are interested. Someone with an artistic bent is also needed to help with setting up the displays in the new Heritage Room in the Community Centre.** Officers: Keith Cottam (Chair) 711054, Brian Routledge (Vice Chair), Alison Hobson (Secretary) 711768, Geoff Hawkes (Treasurer) 712053, Ian Westlake (Membership) 712329, Margaret Bishop (FCC rep), John Read (IT), Maurice Jones (FTC rep)

## From the Archives

Newspaper advertisements can sometimes be a useful source of local history information as well as providing unintended amusement! A search of The Times newspaper has revealed some interesting advertisements relating to Fairford.

### Situations Wanted

#### 16 May 1844

MEDICAL - A gentleman, MRCSL and LAC, wishes to obtain a situation as visiting and dispensing assistant, emoulement not being so much an object as the desire to see practice and obtain leisure for reading. Address to E. P. H., post-office, Fairford, Gloucestershire.

#### 7 February 1846

WANTED, in a highly respectable school, in the country, a YOUNG LADY, about 18 years of age, to assist chiefly in the ciphering and writing departments. A knowledge of music and drawing would be desirable. The salary is small but the home comfortable. Address, with particulars, to Miss Iles, Fairford, Gloucestershire.

*(This advertisement was for Miss Jane Iles's private school on Park Corner, in the building that was recently occupied by the chemists.)*

#### 16 March 1854

FAIRFORD RETREAT, Fairford, Gloucestershire. The above establishment has been successfully conducted upwards of 30 years. It has now a few vacancies for invalids of both sexes. Terms very moderate. Particulars to be obtained by application to Messrs Iles, the proprietors.

*(This advert appeared in The Times on no less than 26 occasions between March 1854 and May 1857. Alexander Iles died in 1856 leaving his son Daniel to run The Retreat.)*

#### 18 December 1871

A thorough COOK WANTED, where the lady is her own housekeeper, for a large house in the country. Must understand ices and confectionery, and not be under 40. Liberal wages will be given to a trustworthy and competent person. The best references required. Address G. F. O. post-office, Fairford.

*(One wonders just how many 40-plus ladies with a good understanding of ices and confectionery were available in 1871!)*

#### 2 November 1887

MAN-SERVANT. Age 30, height 5ft 9in. Good character. V. T. K., London Street, Fairford, Gloucestershire

*(The heights of servants were often given in advertisements. This may have been to fit the uniform provided. Does anyone know?)*

#### 30 November 1909

WANTED, on Dec 15<sup>th</sup>, good single-handed COOK. Quiet country place. Write, stating age, wages, etc, to Mrs Thornton, Pope's Court, Fairford, Glos.

*(Presumably single-handed cooks were cheaper to employ than those with the good fortune to have two hands!)*

#### 28 August 1946

WINGS, FAIRFORD, SCHOOL FOR GIRLS  
WANTED in September, young teachers keen to organize their subjects from a cultural point of view and to take responsibility in a unique venture. (1) Science. (2) Mathematics. (3) History, to College Entrance. Mathematics and History to link with Science and Logical Reasoning. Research excursions on horseback. Alive people with the right sense of values who are imbued with loyalty, graciousness, a love of the country and tradition are looked for: good salaries and a good life are offered. Apply Headmistress.

*(The Wings School opened in The Retreat, the location of today's Coln House School, in 1944 but closed in 1949.)*

## Wills

Did you know that copies of wills are available for a small fee from the National Archives and Gloucestershire Archives? FHS has now collected and transcribed 26 Fairford wills so far. The wills are very useful in helping to prove family relationships as property and money is usually left to husbands, wives and children. They can reveal other associations as the wills tend to be witnessed and executed by family, friends or neighbours. They can also reveal fascinating detail and give us a glimpse of the way people lived their lives and what they thought. Transcribing the often poor handwriting and making sense of the sometimes archaic language provides an unusual challenge to the researcher!

Some examples of the wills collected so far are:

Frampton Huntington, the Vicar of Fairford, left in his will of 1738 his Turkey bed quilt and his table linen to the wife of Charles Morgan. He also left £10 for "sixpenny loaves of good wheaten household bread" for the poor of Fairford but stipulated that only families who frequently attended St Mary's Church should receive his charity.

One of the earliest Fairford wills, dated 3 May 1617, was left by Thomas Watkins. He was innkeeper and was unable to sign his will so he made a mark but he seems to have been a man of some wealth and generosity: "I give and bequeath unto my daughter in lawe Maythia Watkins fforty shillings of lawfull English money for to buy her a ring and to wearre ytt for my sake".

Sometimes the money wasn't paid out immediately as Charles Clinch wrote in 1765 "I give to my son Charles five pounds to be paid to him at the end of two years next after my decease".

The wills sometime reveal the physical and mental state of the subject. Valentine Strong, the builder of Fairford Park, wrote in October 1661 that he was "sicke in body but of sound and perfect memory thanks be given to God". He died in September of the following year

leaving his son to finish the building of Andrew Barker's great mansion house.

Andrew Barker's own will was written in 1681, almost 20 years before his death. Among various bequests he left the sum of £2,000 to his grand daughter Elizabeth Farmor who would eventually bequeath some of this money to help found Fairford Free School.

Andrew's daughter Mary, another benefactor of the Free School, wrote a year before her death in 1710 "I bequeath my soul to God Almighty from whom I received it and my body to the earth to be buried with my ancestors in the vault where they lye being in the parish Church of ffairford aforesaid in a plaine coffin and at midnight as privately as may be without Escutcheons or any persons to hold up the Pall to be conveyed thither in a hearse with one Mourning coach only attending"

The National Archives has available 162 wills of people from Fairford dating from 1584 to 1858. Gloucestershire Archives has a further 392 wills from a similar date range. In addition the Gloucestershire Archives also holds 61 inventories that list the household items of some of Fairford's citizens of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century. These documents could form the basis of a very useful research archive that could be housed in the new Archive Room of the Community Centre.