

The Fairford Flyer

Fairford History Society
Newsletter No 7
July 2008

FAIRFORD HISTORY



SOCIETY



The Fairford Community Centre makes history

On Saturday 14 June 2008 Mr Henry Elwes, the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire officially declared the Fairford Community Centre open. This was the culmination of eight years of hard work by the Town Council and the Parochial Church Council and was funded by many donations from the people of Fairford, the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Ernest Cook Trust, the Rural Renaissance, the Mercers Company and many other charitable bodies.

Not only do the Town Council, St Mary's, the Volunteer Bureau and Gloucestershire Youth Services have sparkling new offices but Fairford now has a number of meeting rooms furnished to modern standards which can be hired on very reasonable terms.

The Lottery Fund stipulated in its requirements for a grant that a proper home should be found for Fairford's heritage which should be accessible to as many people as possible. As a result the Fairford History Society now has an Archive Room and a Heritage Room in the new Centre. The Archive Room houses artefacts, books and photographs that have been collected during the four-year life of the Society and also is a home for the much larger collection which is recorded digitally on computers together with the CD's of our Oral History collection.

The Heritage Room is designed to act as a visitor centre for the very large number of tourists who come each year to view the stained glass in St Mary's Church and the historic centre of Fairford. Around the walls of the room is a timeline that records key dates and events in the history of Fairford and relates these to national events. There is also a display case housing a changing exhibition of historical objects but pride of place is given to a lectern designed and made by Ian Westlake which has a loose leaf collection of information sheets relating to some of the more interesting events in Fairford's history. 21st Century technology is also in evidence with a 42" plasma screen television and DVD player to show audio-visual presentations about the St Mary's windows and other topics.



The History Society looks forward to using all these exciting new facilities in its quest to make the heritage of Fairford available to as wide a range of people as possible. **John Read**

2008-9 FHS meetings in the Farmor Room, Fairford Community Centre
September 18th Fairford in Canada by June Lewis-Jones
October 16th Son et Lumière Reminiscence evening
November 20th The Retreat (Fairford Lunatic Asylum and the Iles family)
February 19th tba **May 21 or June 18** AGM Edwin Cuss

Son et Lumière

Do you realise it's the 30 years this year since this memorable event in St Mary's Church in 1978? June Lewis is very keen to have a reminiscence evening in October. We are asking if we can borrow any photos or memorabilia of the occasion so they can be copied and displayed in the Heritage Room. We have the script and programme. We are also asking for people to record their reminiscences of the event for a CD compilation. Please contact Geoff Bishop for oral recordings and Alison 711768 or June Lewis-Jones for any items.

AGM 2008

About 50 people attended the meeting postponed from May to June so it could take place in the Centre. Sadly we said goodbye to Keith Cottam as Chairman. His expertise and leadership has taken us from small beginnings to a flourishing Society. Geoff Hawkes was elected as Chairman with new Committee members, Gill Compton, taking over as Treasurer, Chris Hobson and Julie Parker.

Oral History

Geoff Bishop gave an excellent, informative and interesting talk on oral history and Fairford at War. When the recordings are put together it certainly shows what a valuable asset to local history oral recordings can be, it really makes the past come alive, so please come forward to have your memories of Fairford recorded. The interviews can now take place in the Archive Room or in your own home if you prefer. Contact Geoff 713747

Questionnaires

Questionnaires had been sent out to all members and 24 have been returned. Most people still want to have 4 meetings a year but many were interested in events and outings. The majority wanted local subjects but almost the same number wanted wider Gloucestershire history.

Archive Room.

Would anyone who offered to help in the Archive Room please contact me as foolishly I left no space for people to give their names

and out of 11 only 4 did! The intention is that there should be a presence in the Archive Room on Monday afternoons from 1.00pm and at other times by arrangement, starting regularly from September. At the moment it is a matter of organising the material transferred there.

Heritage Room

We commissioned Ian Westlake to make us a lectern to go in the Heritage Room with the money bequeathed to us by the late Enid Johnson. Ian crafted a beautiful piece of furniture which is a great asset to the room. A file with information relating to the timeline is in place at the moment but it could be used for any topic. A plaque in remembrance of Enid has been added to the lectern. A copy of the Victoria County History volume that includes the Fairford area has also been bought, a book the Society had long been wanting. **A. Hobson**

Publications

All FHS publications are available by contacting the secretary 01285 711768. They are also on sale at St Mary's Church, Fairford and at the Community Centre. We hope to acquire a portable display rack for the Heritage Room when it is open and the Archive Room.

FHS Monograph 3 - The Raymond Barkers of Fairford Park. This has been one of our best selling monographs and through the website we have had contact with a member of the Raymond Barker family who has provided us with some additional information.

For all those interested in Fairford wartime years a new book about the two RAF Stirling transport squadrons that were based at Fairford in 1944 has just been published. *Stirlings in Action with the Airborne Forces* by **Dennis Williams (Pen & Sword Books, ISBN 9781844156481, £25)** gives detailed information about the Squadron's activities at Fairford and has many photographs of the aircraft and personnel based at Fairford.

The Committee 2008-2009.

Officers: Geoff Hawkes (Chair) 712053, Brian Routledge (Vice Chair), Alison Hobson (Secretary) 711768, Gill Compton (Treasurer), Ian Westlake (Membership) 712329, Margaret Bishop (FCC rep), John Read (IT), Maurice Jones (FTC rep), Chris Hobson, Julie Parker.