

The Fairford Flyer

Fairford History Society
Newsletter No 8
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FAIRFORD HISTORY



SOCIETY

Fairford Silver Band



Sadly, Fairford Silver Band has had to disband after 105 years – the band is a part of Fairford's heritage and some of you may remember the centenary celebrations in 2003.

The Band started in 1903. Mr Churchman became the first Bandmaster at the request of Colonel Palmer who generously supplied the instruments. The Band prospered and started to enter local contests with some success. It was restarted in 1920 after the War with Mr Lionel Adams and Mr S Alderman as successive bandmasters. Mr Horace Baldwin, the builder, was largely responsible for the inauguration of

the band contests which were so successful at the Carnivals held in Fairford Park. **The picture above was taken outside the Infants School after a successful 1934-35 season. Second on left back row is A Cuss, his father on bass right hand front row. Behind the table left Mr Tozer (Secretary), Mr Young (Chairman) Mr A J Cook (conductor), Mr A Cook senior third right of middle row between Mr Reg Tranter and Dick May trombone. Mr Alfred Shakespeare left in the middle row.** In 1935 Mr A J Cook was appointed bandmaster and served until 1953. The 60s and 70s were probably the most successful era of the Band as it took part in contests all over the country as well as at carnivals and fetes. In 1997 the band were equipped with smart new uniforms with the help of a legacy. However, with a change of education policy and the players leaving the town it has not been possible to keep it going. **The photo right shows the band on an Armistice parade in the mid 1960s, crossing the town bridge. The three little boys in their duffel coats are posed as if in a Victorian photograph.**

The Silver Band has passed its memorabilia to Fairford History Society for preservation in the Archive Room. There are many photographs and press cuttings of the band over the years. These now have a permanent home and will be available for viewing. The Archive Room is open from 2-4 pm on Monday afternoons and at other times by arrangement with the FHS Secretary.

2008-9 FHS meetings in the Farmor Room, Fairford Community Centre

February 19th The Corinium Museum Collections from Claydon Pike and Thornhill Farm by Emma Stuart, Outreach Officer

June 18 AGM Edwin Cuss

September 17th and November 19th



Resources for Family Historians

Julie Parker, a member of the FHS Committee is running a 6 week WEA course on this topic at the Westwood Centre, Northleach on Mondays afternoons from 2-3.30 pm, from January 19th. If you are interested please call Julie on 01285 720583.

Fairford and the Ashmolean Museum

If you want to see artefacts from Fairford's Anglo-Saxon cemetery you will have to wait a while. W M Wylie who wrote the book 'Fairford Graves' in 1852 gave his collection to the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. The museum has been partially shut for a while and it is now completely closed till November 2009. A huge refurbishment programme has been taking place and the new galleries promise to be splendid. As soon as it re-opens do go and see what they have done with the Fairford collection.

Reflooring St Mary's

At the time of writing there are large holes at the front of the nave and along the south wall of St Mary's. These will be filled and flagstones laid over a wide area. Target completion date is Palm Sunday. The holes make it possible to examine some of the structure such as how the columns are underpinned and the foundations for the tower. A photographic record is being kept. One or two items of interest have turned up, one being a fragment of a memorial stone. The name Samuel can be read and another name is probably Mary. Unfortunately the date is not on this piece. It is also of interest to see the complicated interventions of more recent times for heat, power and water.

1911 Census

This census is now online at www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/1911census or www.1911census.co.uk

FHS Monograph 4 - The Oldisworths of Fairford. William Oldisworth was Fairford's Justice of the Peace in the late 17th Century and was a central figure in the bizarre tale of the plague of frogs, toads and flies that visited the town in 1660 following the discrimination faced by a group of religious non-conformists. This monograph tells the story of William, his father Robert whose brother-in-law was murdered in the Tower of London, his clergymen brothers, one of whom died of the plague, and his descendants, the last of whom was still living in Fairford at the end of the 18th Century. This monograph adds some fascinating details to Fairford's history and provides the background to the four excellently preserved memorial plaques to the Oldisworth family that can still be seen in St Mary's Church in Fairford.

All FHS publications are by contacting the secretary on 01285 711768. They are also on sale at St Mary's Church, Fairford and at the Community Centre, Archive Room.

Cotswolds at War

June Lewis-Jones has been asked for a 2nd edition of 'The Cotswolds at War'. She would like to include additional information. If anyone has any photographs or memories they would like included, not necessarily from Fairford but the whole Cotswolds area, please contact June Tel 01285 712312

Parish Registers. The task of transcribing parish registers from 1617 is now almost complete and will be available to search in the Archive Room very soon. This will make local family searches much more accessible and less time consuming. The project has been conducted in co-operation with Gloucestershire Archives which made the microfiche/film available to us and GA will also have a copy of the files.

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.

Graveyard List.

A revised graveyard list for St Mary's Church has now been completed and a printed copy is now in the Church, as well as a searchable CD in the Parish Office and Archive Room. Just over 2,000 graves in the churchyard are recorded and all plots with the exception of the most recent extension at the western end of the graveyard are covered. This register would not have been possible without the efforts of those who have helped to transcribe headstones in the past. In particular the Fairford Women's Institute made an extensive record of the visible headstones in the 1980s. Information was also found in Bigland's survey of 1791 which listed major tombs and headstones in the churchyard at that date. In addition burial notes relating to the Garden Section have been immensely useful, especially as this plot has suffered from some confusion in the grave numbering in the past as several rows have been started and then restarted at a much later date. Unfortunately many of the older burials in the original plots around the Church cannot now be positively identified. In addition to using the records of previous surveys this register is also the result of many hours spent recording, photographing and listing all the visible grave markers in the churchyard. The Fairford parish registers which list burials from 1617 to the mid-20th Century have also been of great use and have enabled the identification of several of the older gravestones. Over 3,000 photographs have been taken of the memorials.

The Inklings by Humphrey Carpenter p 203-4. Harper Collins. Pbk. 2006

"The railway line from Oxford to Fairford is closed now, but in 1945 it was still operating. At nine thirty-five each weekday morning a tank engine would haul two or three coaches northwards from Oxford station, along the edge of Port Meadow, and then sharp west at Wolvercote and over the fields to Witney. In the summer months the train would often be quite full, carrying (besides its usual complement of local people) families setting off for a holiday by the Upper Thames or in the Cotswolds, or maybe a group of men from the University armed with knapsacks and sticks

and about to begin a walking tour. But in winter only a few people used the train.

One Wednesday morning in December 1945 Jack Lewis (C S Lewis) was on board, looking out of the carriage window at the fields and streams and villages as they passed. The countryside through which the branch line meandered was not, as he observed, dramatically beautiful: just a fine English winter beauty of haystacks and stubble, ploughed land, bare trees and rooks. From Witney the train carried him on until it passed not far from William Morris's old home at Kelmscott, and came at last to the end of the line and the station that served the small quite town of Fairford. Warnie Lewis was on the platform to meet him, with Tolkien. They had already spend a day and a night staying at the Bull Hotel in Fairford. It was the long-planned Inklings' celebration of victory ('To take a whole inn in the countryside for at least a week, and spend it entirely in beer and talk'). But none of them could spare even as much as a week, let alone more; and they were only a small party. Dyson could not come, Owen Barfield was ill, Havard was only able to get to Fairford for lunch one day, Jack Lewis himself had not been able to arrive until after the others; and Charles Williams was dead.

The Fairford party made the best of it. They walked. They argued. They found a pub called the Pig and Whistle. They admired the flat countryside. 'I don't remember ever seeing more exquisite winter colouring, both of sky and landscape, of the subdued types,' Warnie Lewis wrote in his diary. 'Down on the river was a perfect mill house where we amused ourselves by dreaming of it as a home for the Inklings.' Then, on Friday afternoon, they took the train back to Oxford."

Note: The Inklings were CS Lewis, JRR Tolkin, Charles Williams and their friends who met regularly to talk and discuss one another's writings over beer, usually in the "Bird and Baby" (the Eagle and Child in St Giles, Oxford). Warnie Lewis was CS Lewis' brother. They stayed at The Bull to celebrate the end of World War II.

FHS note: (The Pig and Whistle was a Quenington pub on the road to Ready Token.) Article sent by Philippa Gupta.

From the Archives

Snippets from the Parish Registers

A recent visit to the Gloucestershire Records Office to consult the Fairford parish registers revealed some interesting pieces of information outside the usual baptisms, marriages and burials.

On the last page of the 18th Century register is the following information:

December ye 6th 1718 The Yew Tree was planted in Fairford Church-yard by Frampton Huntington A.M. Vicar

NB: The Wall from ye Parsonage Stable to ye Street was built at ye cost of ye Revnd Mr James Oldisworth Impropiator, but it was pointed & cop'd at ye charge of ye Revnd Mr Frampton Huntington Vicar purely for ye good & benefit of ye trees planted against it.

It would be interesting to know which wall this referred to as it would then point to the location of the parsonage stable and the parsonage itself. This was written before the Free School (Community Centre) was built so the wall dividing that plot and the churchyard is a candidate.

Another passage on the same page of the parish register reads:

Thomas Carter Widower & William Reeve junior gave a black Cloth Pall to ye Parish of Fairford in ye Year 1722 & Willm Green made ye 1st use of it.

William Green was the husband of Sarah and he was buried in the churchyard on 31 October 1722.

Property for Sale

A source of useful and interesting information is advertisements for house sales or rentals from the past. Estate agents often produce detailed descriptions of houses and some estate agent brochures have been donated to the Records Office at Gloucester and the National Monument Record Office in Swindon.

Advertisements in old newspapers can also be found and the following is from The Times of 17 August 1878:

Fairford, Gloucestershire - To be let, furnished, MORGAN HALL, for the term of five or seven years. The house, which is within half a mile of the Fairford Station, on the East Gloucestershire Railway, consists of a good entrance hall, dining, drawing room, and library, five best bed rooms, two dressing rooms, five servants' rooms, housekeeper's room, pantry, servants' hall, cellar, kitchen, scullery, larder; large coach-house, seven-stall stable, walled garden and pleasure grounds. For terms and orders to view apply to Mr G.S. White, Fairford.

George Symmons White was an accountant and district auditor for Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, and held many other important positions in Fairford until his death in 1881. These included agent for Alfred Life and Accidental Insurance companies, secretary to the Gas Company, clerk to the Magistrates' Court, clerk to the Highway Board, auditor to the Retreat Asylum, and commissioner of taxes. He was also involved in the administration of the Raymond Barker estate and was buried next to the Raymond Barker plot in the churchyard where his grave is marked by a pink granite obelisk.