



SOCIETY

# The Fairford Flyer

Newsletter No 11

July 2010

## Church windows restoration completed after 23 years



A wonderful weekend of celebration took place June 11<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> to mark the completion of this momentous project.

In 1985 inspection of the glazing revealed several areas of concern; the loss of paint pigment, especially on the north wall windows, and the accumulation of whitish deposits on the south wall windows were the greatest cause of concern. Tenders went out for the work and the Barley Studio of York won the contract. This was the first major restoration since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Little is known about restoration after the 1703 storm when Windows 14, 15, 16 were severely damaged. There had been minor repairs but in 1869 Chance Brothers of Smethwick were commissioned to repair Saints Matthias and Thaddeus in Window 12; the result was so successful they were asked to repair the Great West Window. Although the result was aesthetically pleasing there was a huge outcry as Chance Brothers had not used the medieval glass but made copies with a result that a lot of the original glass was lost.

In 1889 Canon Carbonell, who was responsible for the later 19th century restoration, made strenuous efforts to find the original medieval glass. The reglazing was carried out by Lavers, Barraud and Westlake. By 1890 the work was complete and Westlake wrote 'all seems pretty solid and sound and will do for another century'.

The Friends of Fairford Church, which had been set up in 1982, set about raising the money – a colossal task. In May 1988 Window 17 was removed to the Barley Studio and in November it was returned, cost £12,400. In May 2010 Windows 19 and 20 the final two were returned. The final cost was pretty near the original estimate. At the evening event in June hosted by Denys Hodson, Chairman of FOFC, Keith Barley said that the windows would be good for another 300 years at least.



As well as mounting the History of the Church Exhibition for the FOFC, June 2010 was a very busy month for FHS. On Saturday June 5<sup>th</sup>, as part of Fairford Festival, Edwin Cuss mounted his postcard and photographic exhibition and the Society also had a display. This year for the first time the exhibition was held in the Heritage Room at the Community Centre instead of the Marquee in the Walnut Tree Field and this was a much more

comfortable venue for us; level floors and no draughts! The Art Society had their annual exhibition in the Centre and supplied refreshments so there was a steady stream of visitors.

The following Wednesday, June 9<sup>th</sup> we had been invited to mount a display at the RAF Heritage Day in the B-2 hangar at the airfield to commemorate the history of RAF Fairford as part of the winding down events at the air base. This turned out to be a really splendid event with displays by the Fairford Aviation Society, Concorde Association, Military Historic Vehicle Trust, RAF Charitable Trust and other organizations. There were also several aircraft present:- 2 x F-15C Eagles, a Typhoon, a Tornado, a Harrier, a Griffon helicopter, a Hurricane and a KC-135R Stratotanker (which visitors were able to look inside) and 'arena' displays. About 40 FHS members attended the event and it was a very special day tinged with a little sadness but the feedback was that everyone had a really enjoyable day.



At the AGM on June 17<sup>th</sup> the existing Committee was re-elected. Doug Newton gave an interesting talk. He was part of the Concorde Flight Testing team at RAF Fairford and is now the mainstay of the Concorde Association. Members enjoyed information from 'behind the scenes' and nostalgic photographs of a triumph of British engineering. The short film at the end of the talk was especially enjoyable as a reminiscence of one of the world's most aesthetic aircraft.

## MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTIONS

Members are reminded that subscriptions are due in September and can be paid at any meeting or by filling in the enclosed slip and returning it to the membership secretary or to the FHS at the Community Centre. Members are encouraged to set up standing orders which will be debited on September 1<sup>st</sup> each year; this considerably reduces administration costs. A membership card for those members with standing orders is enclosed with this newsletter.

## ARCHIVE ROOM

Since the last Fairford Flyer several members have loaned for copying or have donated some interesting items:- a commemorative plate of the visit of the Duke of Connaught to Fairford in 1909; 1930s Farmor's School prizes with book plates and the school crest embossed on the cover; memorabilia of David Niven who was Colonel Palmer's godson and used to stay at Fairford Park; and Fairford Primary School staff photos from the 70s. Graham Young has collected cuttings and photographs of the flooding in the area over the years and this will make an excellent record for the future and with the oral history interviews of flood victims made by Geoff Bishop and a collection of photos on CD, this will make an excellent record for the future. This is exactly the sort of material we want, it may not be particularly old now but it will be a record of Fairford's history for the future. FHS keeps a record of everything donated and from whom it came so it could be returned if required. If the donator does not want the item to go into the public domain we can do that too.

On the Easter and Spring Bank Holiday Mondays FHS has been holding 'Open afternoons' in the Heritage Room; this is not only for Church visitors but also an opportunity for anyone else to come and ask questions or get help with their family history etc. The next 'open afternoon' will be on 30<sup>th</sup> August, Bank Holiday Monday from 2pm.

We receive many local history and family history enquiries by email: enquiry@fairfordhistory.org.uk or by phone 01285 711768. The Archive Room is also open to visitors each Monday afternoon from 2-4pm.

Fairford Flyer edited by Alison Hobson. From the Archives by Chris Hobson. Photographs by Hobson Cameras.

Any comments or letters would be appreciated.

## NEW FHS PUBLICATIONS

### FHS Occasional Paper 6 – Searching for Thomas. Price £1

Thomas Morton was a curate of Fairford for Francis William Rice (5<sup>th</sup> Baron Dynevor) for almost three decades from 1851 to 1879. This paper traces the life of Thomas using a number of information research tools as an illustration of the wide variety of family and local history resources that are now available to the researcher. Born in St Helens, Lancashire, Thomas was also a curate in Plymouth, London and Hull before retiring from Fairford to live out the remainder of his days in Edwards College in South Cerney. The portrait of Thomas Morton is by Samuel Vines, an ironmonger of Fairford who was also a talented artist.

### FHS Occasional Paper 7 – Alexander Ready/Colston. Price £1

Alexander Ready was a solicitor and attorney who lived in Fairford in the early 18th Century. After the death of his first two wives, Alexander married Sophia Edwards, heiress to the fortune of wealthy Bristol merchant and philanthropist Edward Colston. In 1755 Alexander Ready changed his name to Alexander Colston and lived in Filkins Hall. He owned property in Fairford including Colston House and was buried in Fairford church.

## NEW ACQUISITIONS

Whilst carrying out research for the History of the Church Exhibition we were able to purchase:- **Fairford Church and its celebrated windows by Henry Taunt**. 3rd ed. Published by Joseph Powell. c.1910 and **Handbook to Fairford Church and its stained windows by J.P.** 3rd ed. 1883, but we haven't been able to locate a copy of **A Handbook to Fairford Church and its windows by Francis Carbonell** published in 1893. If anyone has a copy we would really like to see it and take a copy or photograph it.

Other items acquired are:- **A Calendar of Cotswold Cookery by June Lewis-Jones. Sigma Leisure, 2010**. Same recipes as the previous edition and beautifully produced. **The Poles in India 1942-1948**: based on archive documents and personal reminiscences. Association of Poles in India. [2009]. This is a translation from Polish and donated by Alicja Christofides. It contains information about how some of the Fairford Polish Camp residents came to this country.

FHS is a member of BGAS (Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society). We regularly get their **transactions. Volume 127** contains an account of the excavation at Horcott Pitt, 2002-2003.

**'A grand city – life, movement and work: Bristol in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries'**. Essays edited by M J Crossley. BGAS, 2010. Interesting articles about Bristol. Also a BGAS publication.

## From the Archives

### Fetid Fairford

Although today we all take the provision of efficient sewers for granted (until they become blocked!), this was not always the case. The Second Report of the Royal Sanitary Commission, published in 1874, presented the results of a nation-wide survey of the state of Britain's sewers, drains, water supply and medical facilities. The report make uneasy reading!

Under the heading *Sewerage* the report for Fairford reads:

*"There is no proper public sewerage or drainage in the town. Sewers are ventilated by open gratings and in part by rain pipes. Sewers and house drains are not trapped. Some drains go into the river, many into a watercourse, which empties into the river between Fairford and Lechlade. The houses are not generally supplied with water-closets or privies capable of being flushed with water. Cesspools and ashpits are not deodorized. Houses do not generally drain into the sewers. A great many are without the means of communication."*

Under the heading of *Water Supply* it is stated that:

*"Water supply is chiefly obtained from wells, some of which are polluted, and in very few it is pure, in part from the river Colne, into which very little drainage runs. There is no general plan for utilizing the rainfall."*

Perhaps surprisingly the section on *Treatment of Disease* records that: *"There have been a few cases of typhus or scarlet fever, but no special outbreak of disease, since 1853."* Perhaps people had stronger constitutions in the 1870s!

The Commissioners obtained their information by sending out a questionnaire to each parish and the respondents for Fairford are listed as Lord Dynevor, the vicar; Robert Hayward, a plumber; Henry Dancy, the owner of a drapers in the Market Place; and Samuel Vines, a retired iron-monger. They sent in their reply on 16 February 1870 but it took another four years for the report to be published – nothing changes, does it?

Another Government survey, *Water Undertakings*, published in 1914 showed little real progress with the majority of the Fairford's water coming from a spring near the Mill; the river Coln; and numerous wells.

From the Fairford Parish Council Minutes, July 8th, 1903

*"Reference was made by Mr Cole that on certain days there was a quantity of soapsuds escaping from the drains of the cottages belonging to the Church Lands into the Green ditch & the Clerk was directed to write to Mr A H Iles drawing his attention to the fact."*

### Fairford's first telephonist?

Way back in Fairford Flyer number 7 (July 2008) there was a brief article on the introduction of the telephone to Fairford in about 1908 by which time 17 households had the 'phone installed. While adding the 1911 census entries to the Fairford Register project (23,000 names and still growing!) I came across the person who was probably Fairford's very first telephonist. Edith Mabel Jackson, aged 25 in 1911, lived at 29 London Street with her father Edward, a GWR porter at Fairford station, her mother Emma and her sister Elsie, a teacher. In the 1901 census Edith had been listed as a draper's assistant but in 1911 her occupation was given as a telephone operator for the National Telephone Company (NTC).

The NTC was founded in 1881 to extend telephone services into the counties outside London where the first telephones had appeared just three years earlier. The NTC played an important role in the rapid development of communications across Britain but it ceased to trade on 31 December 1911 when all commercial telephone services were taken over by the General Post Office.

### The Fairford Booke

In June, as part of the display to commemorate the completion of the restoration of the church windows, the FHS was very fortunate in being able to borrow from Gloucestershire Archives an amazing historical document titled simply the 'Fairford Booke'. This large vellum-bound book contains 26 pages of manuscript written in an ornate but readable and very elegant hand. The book consists of copies of several 17<sup>th</sup> Century legal documents including enfeoffments and wills relating to church and charity land transactions concerning Fairford. The earliest document is dated 1601 and the book contains many references to Fairford people from 400 years ago including the Barkers, the Oldisworths, the Bettertons, and the Gearings. Several pieces of land are also mentioned including Beane Lands, Swann Fields and Butler's Court in Lechlade. The 'Fairford Booke' now belongs to the trustees of the Fairford Church Lands Charity who have deposited it with Gloucestershire Archives for safe keeping and gave FHS permission to borrow the book.

The main text of the book is preceded by a letter from Mr William Crouch of Glasgow explaining that the book was in the possession of his uncle, another William Crouch, who lived at Fairford. The letter was written on 5 May 1884 to Fairford's vicar, the Reverend Arthur Smart Loxley. William Crouch senior was listed as a 'conveyancer' and an agent for various

insurance companies in several directories of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, he was also secretary to the Church Lands Charity and was paid 5 guineas annually for a number of years around 1842. There was a meeting in Croft Hall in 1854 called by Mr J H Wane at which dissatisfaction at the application of the charity's funds was expressed and in 1857 Chancery proceedings were brought against the feoffees. In 1857 William Crouch was paid £15 to cover expenses of journeys to London to appear before the Charity Commissioners and a further £10 guineas in 1859. William Crouch died on 10 February 1884 and is buried, along with his parents, under a grave slab near the path at the west end of the St Mary's church.

The following is an extract from the book listing church property (original spelling has been retained):

*The Almes-house above menc[i]oned is scituate on the North-side of Calcot-Street in ffairford above said having a Back-side and Garden-ground thereunto adjoining and belonging now in the severall possessions of Elizabeth Yates widdow Nicholas Barnes labourer Anne Tayler or Shepheard Elianor and Barbara Winterborn Spinsters*

*Next above the said Garden Northwards and two Cottages Back-sides and Gardens now in the possessions of William Brodway and Robert Brodway carpenters*

*Also a Close of pasture-ground lyeing northward of and abutting on the last recyted premises betweene the pasture-ground lyeing westward belonging to Allexander Joyes yeoman and a Close of **Pasture** ground lyeing Eastward belonging to Robert Taylor or Shepheard labourer containing about one Roode now in the possession of Richard Gale clerke of the aforesaid parish Church*

*Also a Tenement in Calcot Street aforesaid being Eastward of and next to the Dwelling house of the said Robert Taylor or Shepheard with an Out-house Backside Garden and about halfe an acree of Arrable land thereto adjoining and common of pasture for one beast in the fields of the East-End of ffairford aforesaid now in the possession of Thomas Acreman Labourer or his Assignes*

*Also a Cottage lyeing Eastward of and next to the said Tenement with a Back-side and a little Garden thereto adjoining now in the possession of John Tayler labourer*

*Also a tenement now three severall habitations lyeing betweene the said Cottage and the now Dwelling-house of Richard Crips weaver with a Back-side and three Gardens thereunto adjoining now in the Severall possessions of Elizabeth Nicolson widow Edmund Harbert and Edmond Walklet Labourer*

## Meetings 2010-11

### September 16th 2010

**Swing Riots.** Our next meeting will be a presentation by Jill Chambers, author of *The Gloucestershire Machine Breakers*. Increasing hardship for agricultural labourers across the south of England during the winter of 1830 led to rioting and industrial sabotage. Fairford was no exception with a riot involving up to 100 men and the destruction of several threshing machines resulting in troops patrolling the streets and the subsequent imprisonment and transportation to Australia of a number of Fairford residents.

### November 18th 2010

**Gimson and the Barnsleys:** the Arts and Crafts Movement in Gloucestershire: a talk by Dave Walton  
Fairford has a special interest in Ernest Gimson as he designed Fairford's War Memorial shortly before his death. He actually designed it to go in the Market Place and he probably would have redesigned the base had he lived longer.

### February 17<sup>th</sup> 2011

**Where have all the shops gone?** a daytime talk followed by a short walk to locate the site and put names to businesses that once existed in Fairford. Do you remember the location of the 'Barrel and Basket'? What was the shop in the old council offices in London Street?

### March 17<sup>th</sup> 2011

**The Thames and Severn Canal:** a talk by Bruce Hall, Chairman of the Cotswolds Canals Trust and will include recent developments at the eastern end of the Canal.

### May 19<sup>th</sup> 2011

Fairford Park: Nicholas Ford, the Agent and Director (Chief Executive) of the Ernest Cook Trust since 2002 will talk about the Ernest Cook Trust including reference to the former Fairford Park buildings.

### June 16<sup>th</sup> 2011 AGM (followed by a talk to be arranged)

All meetings take place in the Fairford Community Centre, Farmor Room at 7.30pm unless otherwise stated.

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