

## THE MONUMENTS OF St MARY'S CHURCH, FAIRFORD - 20

### JOHN RAYMOND RAYMOND BARKER (1801-1888)



John Raymond was the head of the Raymond Barker family for much of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. The family lived in Fairford Park and provided Fairford with its lords of the manor as well as its magistrates and were major benefactors to the town for almost 300 years.

The family connection with Fairford started in 1650 when Andrew Barker, the son of a wealthy merchant and mayor of Bristol, took up residence in John Tame's 15<sup>th</sup> Century mansion near the church. In 1661 Andrew Barker contracted the stonemason Valentine Strong to build him a new house which came to be known as Fairford Park. Andrew and his wife Elizabeth Robinson had four children: Samuel, Elizabeth, Mary and Jane. Mary and Jane's daughter Elizabeth Farmor became benefactors of Fairford's free school which was opened in 1738 and was later renamed Farmor's School in Elizabeth's honour. The present Farmor's School is built on the site of Fairford Park House which was demolished in 1955.

Andrew Barker died in 1700 and was succeeded by his son Samuel who married Jane Hibbert of Hampstead who had two daughters, Elizabeth and Esther. Samuel was a sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1691 and a Member of Parliament for Cricklade from 1702 to 1708. Samuel died in 1708 and left his estate in trust to his two young daughters but Elizabeth died in 1727 leaving her sister Esther as the sole successor to the considerable Barker fortune. In 1730 Esther married James Lambe of Hackney who owned various properties in London and the Home Counties. James continued to acquire land after his marriage by buying up property in Fairford and Tetbury.

James Lambe died in 1761 but Esther, childless and going blind, was determined that the Barker family name would continue. James Lambe's sister Britannia was the wife of John Raymond of St Giles, Middlesex, the son of a brewer and Member of Parliament for Weymouth. Esther chose Britannia's son John to succeed her at Fairford but only on the condition stipulated in her will that stated: "I give and devise all those my Manors of ffairford .... to and to the use of my Nephew John Raymond his heirs and assigns for ever upon condition that he take and use the name of Barker and my family Arms".

Esther died in April 1789 and in the following month John changed his surname by Royal Licence to Raymond Barker. John had, in fact, been running the Fairford estate for some years before Esther's death dividing his time between Fairford Park and his town house in Bedford Square in London.

John's first wife was Martha Booth who gave birth to an astonishing 14 children, most of whom were baptised in the Carter Lane Presbyterian chapel in St Paul's, London. Martha died tragically in 1796 when her hair (or wig) caught fire while she was in her bedroom at Fairford Park. Three years later John married Margaret Boddington at Hackney; she was 22 years his junior. Margaret added two more children to what must have been a very busy household. John Raymond Barker died on 16 January 1827 and was succeeded by his eldest surviving son Daniel. Unfortunately Daniel's tenure as Fairford's lord of the manor was cut very short as he was thrown from his horse and died on 25 August the same year.

Daniel was succeeded by his son John Raymond, the subject of the memorial plaque in St Mary's. Born on 30 March 1801 at the Raymond Barker house at Banks Fee in Longborough near Stow-on-the-Wold, John Raymond was the eldest surviving child of Daniel and his wife Sophia Ann Ives. John Raymond had married Harriott Ives Bosanquet on 6 May 1823 and she bore him two daughters, Augusta and Leonora, before her early death in September 1830. After 11 years as a widower, John Raymond then married the Lady Katherine Reynolds-Moreton, the youngest daughter of Thomas, 1<sup>st</sup> Earl of Ducie, on 14 December 1841 at Sarsden, Oxfordshire. Two years later Katherine's only child, Percy Fitzhardinge, was born.

John Raymond was a keen farmer although he did not farm all the 3,395 acres of the Fairford estate as some land was leased out to local farmers. He had a wide range of other interests including brief spells in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Regiment of Foot and the local Yeomanry Cavalry. As magistrate for Fairford, John Raymond was known for his strict impartiality and fairness. Despite this reputation he was threatened by a mob during the 'Swing Riots', a period of agrarian unrest of 1830, but later spoke up for most of the Fairford men during their trial at Gloucester thereby reducing their punishment.

John Raymond was involved in county politics being appointed Deputy Lieutenant for Gloucestershire in 1837 and sheriff of the county in 1853. He was a co-founder of the Fairford Highway District in 1863 with the aim of improving road maintenance which was greatly needed. He was also a frequent visitor to the Fairford Free School and to the Retreat Asylum opened by Alexander Iles in 1821.

He was well aware of the often difficult and uncomfortable coach journey to London and from 1845 began to put forward proposals for a railway line from Fairford. In 1864 the East Gloucestershire Railway Company was formed to extend the branch line from Witney to Fairford and John Raymond became a director and later chairman. Fairford station was opened on 15 January 1873 but the line never really made a profit and the last train ran from Fairford in June 1962.



At the age of 87 and after 61 years as Fairford's lord of the manor, John Raymond Raymond Barker died on 21 May 1888. He was buried in the churchyard to the west of the church where he was joined by his wife Lady Katherine, who died in 1892, and in an adjacent grave by his daughter Leonora who died in 1906.

His memorial plaque was made by Thomas Milnes and was probably placed near the Raymond Barker vault which is mentioned in several earlier wills but which was no longer in use by 1888.