

FAIRFORD WALKS – POINTS OF INTEREST

1 Church of St Mary the Virgin Rebuilt in the 15C by John Tame, a medieval wool merchant, on the site of the original Church. The church contains the only complete set of medieval stained glass in the country.



2 Fairford Mill A watermill was mentioned in the Domesday Book but the present building dates from the 17C. Once a fulling mill, it last ground corn in 1922.



3 Railings on Mill Bridge Wrought by William Chew in the mid to late 19C – the foundry was in Waterloo Lane. These railings are a fine example of local trade skills. If you look at the base of the railings on the bridge, the name Chew can be seen.



4 The Oxpens Refurbished by the Ernest Cook Trust into a picnic site this area was where wooden stalls were used for tethering oxen and other livestock, the hitching rings can be seen.



5 Gassons Field Water Tower The tower dates from the early 20th century. It was fed by gravity from the reservoir above Dynevor Terrace and used to fill mobile water tanks that transported water to the cattle.

6 Milton End Corner Green A precious patch of green forming a junction from the ancient Welsh Way driving route to the busy main thoroughfare – a convenient grazing plot for the animals while the drovers refreshed themselves at a nearby hostelry.

7 Green Stile, Milton Street A lovely old stone as a stile leading on to Upper and Lower Green – from where the flat meadowland gives a good illustration of the site of the original ford from which Fairford got its name in Saxon times as Fagranforda i.e. fair or clear water to cross the river.

8 Waterloo Cottage It was here William Chew had his iron foundry from the mid to late 19C, this was where he wrought the railings for the Mill Bridge and other sites in the town. Note the gates were made by Chew.

9 Dilly's Bridge Only erected in 1990, it was originally a wooden bridge named after a favourite dog. It made a welcome short cut for Horcott residents to the town. Horcott only became part of Fairford in 1987, it was formerly in Kempsford.



10 White Hart Court Formerly a row of cottages, possibly built to house the masons and builders of the church, around 1475. It had opened as an inn by 1750 and retained this function until 1990. It has now reverted to cottages again.



11 Retort House marked by a plaque was the site of Fairford Gas and Coke Company, 1852 -1972 [Heritage Plaque]



12 Keble House (next to Keble Alley) Formerly called Court Close, this is the birthplace of the priest and poet John Keble (1792-1866) author of *'The Christian Year'* and a founder of the Oxford Movement. He was the curate at Southrop and Eastleach. Edward Keble, great-great nephew of John Keble, was the Vicar of Fairford from 1946 to 1974 and also lived at Keble House. [Heritage Plaque]

13 Croft Lane Archway A beautiful feature of the town linking the commercial High St to the ancient crofts – former cattle grazing area, reflecting the importance of the coaching era in the market town



14 The Bull Hotel dates from the 16C, may have been a medieval wool guild hall. It became an important coaching inn on the route from London to Gloucester and well known as a centre for fly fishing along the River Coln.

15 Fairford Community Centre This building was originally Farmor's School from 1738-1961. It was named after Elizabeth Farmor, the first benefactress. After 1961 a new school was opened in Fairford Park. The old school subsequently became a library, youth centre, parish rooms and community centre, serving the community for over 280 years. Note the plaques on the front and side of the building.



16 Old Police Station and Magistrates Court Built in 1860, it housed the Police Station and Magistrates Court until the 1990s.



17 St Thomas of Canterbury Roman Catholic Church built in 1845 at a cost of £700 after the closure of the chapel at Hatherop Castle. The Old School House housed a school from about the late 1860s to 1888, It was then let as a house and sold off as a private house in 1974.

18 Cascades The Cascades (constructed by 1757) feed the Broadwater on the River Coln which was built as a feature in Fairford Park in the 1780s.



19 Fairford Polish Hostel During WW2 Fairford Park House was requisitioned by the Army and on the land north of the house was part of the US Army's 32nd Hospital, 15th Hospital Centre for injured soldiers. Post war from 1947-1959 the buildings were used to house displaced people mainly from Poland, known as the Polish Resettlement Camp or Polish Hostel. In the wall at the Leaffield Road gate is a plaque erected in 2009 to mark the site of the Polish Hostel, commemorating the 50 years since its closure.

20 Park Street The original hospital established in 1867 was in the end house of the row of cottages on the north side of Park Street, next to the cricket ground. It was used until the new hospital was built in the Croft.

21 Dovecote Thought to be Medieval, possibly C16, the dovecote has 1196 pigeon holes, not only in its wall, but also in the central column. It has an octagonal small glazed lantern and was part of the former Fairford Park Estate

22 Cutler's Ford Situated East of Snake Lane, the Ford originally enabled people to cross between Horcott and Fairford. It is now used by Horcott Farm tractors to cross the river and is also a popular bathing and picnic spot. Please respect the farm and their activities.

23 Ridge and Furrow The fields North of the River Coln still show evidence of ridge and furrow cultivation which is an archaeological pattern of ridges and troughs created by a system of ploughing used in Europe during the Middle Ages.

24 Broadboard Bridge The bridge connects the path across the River Coln and is a tranquil spot to observe the local wildlife. The remains of control sluices can still be seen, East of the bridge, which were used to control the flow of the River Coln.

25 Fairford Railway East of Fairford, at the top of Cinder Lane, walking along Fieldway, an ancient trackway, you come a bend in the path, where it obviously used to go straight on. This was the site of

Fairford Railway Station, 1873-1962. There was sidings and a turntable as Fairford was the end of the line. It is now an industrial estate.

26 East End Buildings The houses along East End date back to the 16th Century and include a row of cottages originally called 'Thehovels'.

27 Fairford Park The original house was built in 1661-62 for the Barker Family, it was designed by Valentine Strong, stonemason (his grave is in the churchyard), it was demolished 1955 and Farmor's School built on the site. It is now owned by and the headquarters of, the Ernest Cook Trust (ECT).



28 St Swithin's Church, Quenington Built around 1100 and has two of the finest carved doorways in the country

29 Old Priory Gateway Marking the home of the Knights Hospitallers in medieval times, when the manor of Quenington was owned by the Knights Templar

30 Stanford Hall – private house

31 Lechlade Cemetery – look out for Commonwealth War Graves headstone and grave of WW2 soldier

32 Halfpenny Bridge – marks the start of the navigational Thames. Called after the cost of the toll levied on pedestrians (done away with in 1839)

33 Inglesham Round House – former canal and lock-keepers house at the junction of the Thames and Seven Canal with the River Thames

34 Round House Bird Hide Cabin – good bird watching especially in winter especially red crested pochard, widgeon, teal, grebe etc.

35 Whelford Pool Nature Reserve – owned by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust and designated Site of Specific Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Natural Features:

In these areas please observe the Countryside Code and minimise disturbance to wildlife, especially in and around the River Coln and Lakes, by ensuring dogs are kept under control and no swimming/boating (apart from around Cutler's Ford)

V Vole Conservancy Areas

The river Coln is an important Water Vole conservancy area

W/B Wildfowl

The Lakes and River have abundant wildfowl, migratory birds and care should be taken in the spring/summer breeding season

C/F River Coln/Fishing

The River Colne is classified as a Cotswold Limestone River and is renowned for its natural Brown Trout and Grayling

D Deer and Wildlife Rehabilitation Area

This area is used for the release of rescued deer, hedgehogs and other wildlife. Please ensure that all dogs are kept under control when walking along the Fieldway path

Sources

Heritage plaques suggestions by June Lewis, Margaret Bishop and Alison Hobson, 2009

Fairford Town Council minutes

History of Fairford by June Lewis, 1981

St Thomas of Canterbury Roman Catholic Church history

Fairford History Society Archive