

## Faringdon facts and myths

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King Alfred is reputed to have died in the Salutation Inn (now Salutation mansions)

322 families were still living under canvas 40 years after the end of the Civil War in 1690

A headless ghost, reputed to be a sea captain, whose head was blown off by his wife for being unfaithful, walks the wall at All Saints in the stroke of midnight at mid-summer

A giant toad lived in the basement of the Pump House for many years, but did not survive the renovation.

Hanging Judge Jefferies tried cases in the Court Room in the Crown, which resulted in the hanging of several people, some of whose descendants still live in the town.

The old Town Hall has never actually been a town hall, but it has been variously a market office, a jail, a police station, a library, a fire station, a charity shop and now a war memorial/bus shelter, meeting room

There's a listed gazebo In the grounds of Sudbury House Hotel

Extract from Faringdon Folly October 2008

There was a cattle market in Faringdon until the late 1950s early 1960s

There used to be an isolation hospital on the Highworth road. There were 3 huts - 1 for men, 1 for women and 1 for children.

Anyone with an infectious disease was sent there, even impetigo

There was once a carriage works on the hill at the top of Marlborough St, run by Mr Arthur, who the hill is named after. There was a manually operated carriage lift to take the vehicles to the top of the building.

There was a bomb scare at Tollington School in 1974(now the Community College). Builders discovered a cache of molotoff cocktails. When one was smashed the phosphorous caught fire. Bomb disposal people came from Hounslow.

Apparently the owner of the cottage that was once there, a member of the Home guard, had buried them for safety.

The Folly pub won Pub of the Year in 1986, in a competition through the campaign for real ale.

The Old Berks Hunt used to meet in the Market Square on Boxing day

There used to be Festival of Britain dances in the Corn Exchange. A highlight of the evening was releasing a net of balloons from the ceiling.

The actor Richard Todd crowned Ann Goodenough Carnival Queen in 1960

Part of the Silver Jubilee in 1977 was a pram race. The pair, one in a pram, drank half a pint of beer at every pub in the town.

The owners of Sudbury House used to host a fete in the grounds

Royal Marines had a camp at Butts Close. Their cinema/theatre became the town theatre for many years

Faringdon had a Choral society in 1930s

Hobwell cottages (between Southampton St and Park Road) were first Railway cottages and then for workers of the saw mill. They had no electricity, water or sanitation and were condemned in the 1950s

The Eagle coach business was situated off Park Road (currently the Eagles housing). It is said that their petrol tanks leaked into the cellar of the Swan Pub.

The site was developed into housing around the 1970s

Faringdon Secondary modern school was situated at the end of Southampton St. When Tollington, the comprehensive school (now the Community College) was built, the school became the Junior School (until about 1978). Once the grammar school premises in Gloucester Street became vacant, the Junior school was moved there and the Southampton St school demolished for housing.

There used to be a weighbridge in Gravel Walk, in front of the White Hart pub (now flats)

Many cottages on the right of Southampton Street were demolished in 1968. The dip in the land was filled in, the stream ducted and Hart Avenue was built. Following this the Lees social housing were built, and the car park behind the supermarket.

Faringdon had Gas street lighting until the late 1950s

The old police station in Coach Lane was built in the 1880s. It had a courtroom, a JPs retiring room, and inspectors office (and a flat above), and cells

The corner in the Market place by Barclays bank used to be called Pockocks corner

*Notes taken at a Nostalgia talk by Jim Brown October 2008*