The Town of Faringdon

The market town of Faringdon occupies a sheltered declivity at the western end of the plateau which divides the Thames Valley from the Vale of White Horse. An eminence east of the town, with its clump of fir trees, forms a notable landmark across the Vale and is known as The Folly, or Cromwell's Battery.

The town stands at the intersection of the main road from Oxford to Swindon and Bath with those from Wantage to Barford and to Cirencester and Gloucester. In spite of its long history, Faringdon retains only a few ancient buildings beyond its handsome old church. Yet this is a very pleasant town, built mainly in limestone, but with some mellowed brickwork and tile. The residual atmosphere of its streets is not dispelled by the thriving nature of its business life and industry resultant from it being the market centre for the Vale of White Horse.

In the Market Place stands the old Town Hall, or Market Hall, supported on stone pillars over an open piazza and having a stone-tiled roof. It was presented to the town by Lord Berners on condition that it should be restored. This work was duly carried out and an oak panel near the staircase commemorates the men of this parish who gave their lives in the 1914-18 and 1939-45 wars. There are no records in existence to establish the origin of this public building; but most probably the present 17th century structure replaced a medieval market hall. In the upper chamber the courts were formerly held and a lock-up and stocks were provided below for use when required.

Faringdon has some gracious late Georgian houses. Its stone-built residences date mainly from the 18th and 19th centuries although two of its hotels retain interesting period features and some shop premises are of 17th century dating.
WATER ENGINEERS
HEATING & SANITARY INSTALLATIONS
AGRICULTURAL AND DOMESTIC PLUMBING
ALL WORK UNDER PERSONAL SUPERVISION

BUILDING CONTRACTORS
INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR DECORATIONS AND RENOVATIONS
PUBLIC WORKS CONTRACTORS

S · G · BOWLER & SON
S. G. BOWLER  G. H. DAVIS, A.M.INST.B.E.
BROMSGROVE · FARINGDON · BERKS
PHONE FARINGDON 2140
Faringdon House and Folly.
Faringdon House was built about 1730 and stands on the edge of the Golden Ridge looking northwards to a private lake, the Upper Thames and far-desired Cotswolds, southward up terraced grass to the church beside whose north wall wall the headless ghost of Hampden Pye (Hamilton Tighe of the Ingoldsby Legends). The house is as charming an eighteenth century stone house as may be seen in England, square, three-storied, with stone attic hidden by a parapet and a curved screen wall on its entrance front. There is a double staircase and much Bath-style plasterwork within. The agriculturalist and Post Laureate, Pye (immortalised in Sing a Song of Sixpence) built the house and is said to have planted the six trees on the hill known as Faringdon Folly on the Oxford side of the town. The tower in the midst of these was erected in 1936 at the expense of the fourteenth Lord Berners from designs by the eighth Duke of Wellington. It is the last purely Decorative building to give landscape pleasure to be built in England. From the observation room at the top of the tower is a wonderful view in all directions, for the Golden Ridge, though not high itself, rises out of flat country in a basin of distant hills.

— Extract from "Murray's Berkshire Architectural Guide" by John Balfour and John Piper.

Sudbury House.
Sudbury House, originally built in the 17th century, was then known as Gossips. About a hundred years later it became the home of Samuel Sudbury and was for some time thereafter known as Sadbury. The present residence of stone retains parts of the original house but is mainly of Regency dating and displays some attractive period features.

Wadley House.
Wadley House, about 1½ miles east of the town, was the seat of the notable Unton family. When Queen Elizabeth stayed here Sir Edward Unton presented her with a "juell of gold garnished with dyamondes and rubbes."

This stone-built residence retains a fine 17th century oak staircase and some handsomely-panelled rooms.

Littleworth.
This small village, situated 2 miles north-east of Faringdon near the road to Oxford and below Barcole Hill, has a modern church and a Nonconformist chapel.

There are numerous 18th century monuments and memorials to members of the Pye family, but although these are ornate they lack beauty and interest in spite of the splendour of their marble. A bust of Admiral (Nosey) Pye should be noticed. He was an uncle of Henry Pye, the Poet Laureate. The poet's great grandfather, Sir Robert Pye, the Parliamentarian, is buried beneath the floor of this chapel with his wife, Anne, who was the eldest daughter of John Hampden. They had a married life of sixty years and died within a few days of each other in 1701.

Other Memorials.
In the chancel are some good medieval brasses of Margaret Faryndon, her husband in armour but now headless, and their daughter, Katherine Pynchpole. Another brass here depicts a priest, John Sadler (1505), and the last is to a 15th century merchant of Calais and his wife.
The Parish Church

Faringdon Church, dedicated to All Saints, is a splendid cruciform building which dates almost entirely from the 13th century, being of late Transitional and Early English architecture. The massive central tower carries a peal of eight tuneful bells. It has lancet windows on the south and west and was formerly surmounted by a spire; but this was smashed by cannon-fire in the Civil War.

The oldest part of the church is its north doorway, of plain Norman work. The porch has now been converted into a baptistry and contains an octagonal, 14th century font. In the round-headed south doorway should be noticed the original 13th century ornamental ironwork to the wooden door.

The light and spacious nave has a clerestory of round-headed windows. The massive supporting arches are also rounded although the arcades of the tower are pointed and rise from graceful, clustered columns.

Places of Interest Around

On the Cirencester road from Faringdon stands the stone-built model village of Buscot which is very pleasantly set beside the Thames in the extreme north-west corner of Berkshire. St. John's lock is the last lock upstream on the river. The 13th century church with a Perpendicular tower contains a pulpit which displays painted panels from a Flemish triptych. In Buscot House, a Classic-style 18th century mansion, are the celebrated Briar Rose paintings by Burne-Jones. This house and gardens are now National Trust property and may be viewed on Wednesday and Thursday afternoons.

Some 2 miles north of Faringdon stands Radcot Bridge. It dates from the 13th century and was the scene of the defeat and dramatic escape in 1387 of Robert Vere, Duke of Ireland.
Westwards from Faringdon along the Swindon road and set on the
hillside above the River Cole, which defines the Berkshire and Wiltshire
boundary, is the village of Colehill with a well-restored 13th century
church which has a splendid Perpendicular tower and near which
may be seen the shaft and base of a medieval cross. Colehill House, built
in 1659, is a handsome mansion said to have been designed by Inigo
Jones, and it stands in a well-timbered park. About 2 miles from the
village is the tree-crowned Badbury Hill where a prehistoric encamp-
ment may be seen.

About a mile south-west of Faringdon are the villages of Great and
Little Coxwell. The latter has a Norman south doorway to its church
set within a fine 15th century porch. There are numerous pits in this
area which may be disused iron-ore workings. An interesting local
geological formation is known as sponge gravel. Great Coxwell was a
possession of Beaumieu Abbey. Close to a picturesque Elizabethan
farmhouse stands the monastic tithe barn, a massively-timbered structure
dating from the 14th century. The church was built 700
years ago. Its oaken north door is original and displays good 13th
century tracery.

Uffington, 4 miles south of Faringdon, is one of the most attractive
villages in the Vale. Its splendid cruciform church was built 800 years
ago and has been little altered. The reading room close by is of chalk
construction and dated 1617.

But in the turf of the downs, which rise to 846 feet beyond the village,
is the famous White Horse. Although popularly described as a com-
memorative symbol of the Battle of Ashdown, this work has now been
authoritatively dated as about 300 B.C. and is, therefore, by far the oldest
of the various horses cut out of the chalk downs of southern England.

Uffington Castle, a massively-defended prehistoric earthwork on the
summit of the hill, commands wide views. Below it runs a Roman road,
the Portway. About 1½ miles south-west and just off the more ancient
Ridgeway, lies Wayland Smith's Cave, set within a circle of beech trees.
This is a ruined cromlech, or prehistoric burial chamber.

Kingston Lisle, nestled under the downs about a mile from Uffington,
is a pretty village of thatched cottages with an interesting little church
which contains 14th century wall paintings and good 17th century
woodwork. The manor house is an imposing early 18th century man-
sion in a very beautiful park with a series of fishponds converted into
lakes. Near this village stands the Blowing Stone, a perforated sarsen.
A wailing sound is produced by blowing through one of the holes.
Like other local antiquities, this is linked in legend with King Alfred,
who is said to have summoned his army by using this glacial relic as a
trumpet. Both the Blowing Stone and the White Horse are referred to
in Tom Brown's Schooldays.

L. Elgar Pike.

Whilst every care has been taken in compiling this guide, and the state-
ments contained herein are believed to be correct, the publishers and
the promoters of this publication will not hold themselves responsible for any
inaccuracies.
BELL HOTEL

TEL. 2134

Hotel Accommodation

LUNCHEONS
TEAS
DINNERS
Open to Non-Residents
LOUNGE BAR

MARKET SQUARE, FARINGDON

TELEVISION
Service Station

Local Agents for
'HIS MASTER'S VOICE'
MARCONI
BUSH, G.E.C.
EKCO, CESSOR
Etc.

Demonstrations arranged
Excellent Results in
FARINGDON & DISTRICT

Jewellery, Antique Silver
Watch and Clock Repairs
Boots, Clothing and
Furniture

E. LEVERTON & SONS
CORNMARKET ------- FARINGDON
PHONE 2161
The Portwell Press
[W. J. Ward]
General Letterpress Printers

STATION ROAD, FARINGDON
BERKSHIRE
Phone: Faringdon 2151

Enterprise Garages
The Faringdon Engineering Co. Ltd.

Car and Motor Cycle
Specialists: New & Used

Agents for
AUSTIN AND RILEY CARS

Matchless, A.J.S., Norton
B.S.A., Royal Enfield, James
and Ariel Motor Cycles

Showrooms:
GLoucester St.
Tel. Faringdon 2237

Filling Station and Repairs:
LECHLADE ROAD
Tel. Faringdon 3169

FARINGDON :: BERKS
COMLEY'S
NEW & SECONDHAND
FURNITURE
GENERAL REPAIRS
FRENCH POLISHING
UPHOLSTERING
Agents for
Slumberland Bedding
Also
LADIES' AND CHILDREN'S WEAR

LONDON ST.
FARINGDON
TELEPHONE: 3176

T. H. HICKS
High Class Confectioners
and Grocers

The Model Bakery

SPECIALISTS IN
DOUGHNUTS
LARDIES
BIRTHDAY
CHRISTENING
WEDDING
CAKES
ALL VARIETIES
FANCY CAKES
AGENTS FOR
APLIN & BARRETT'S
ICE CREAM
VANT-ICE

FRESH
FROZEN FRUIT
AND
VEGETABLES

GLOUCESTER STREET
FARINGDON - BERKS
Telephone 2176

QUANTITIES
OF ICE CREAM
FOR DANCES
PARTIES, ETC.
SUPPLIED IN
PORTABLE
CONSERVATOR
Agent for NORVIC
KILTIE - CLARKS AND K SHOES

Frank Thair
LONDON STREET
FARINGDON
BERKS

Phone
FARINGDON 2259
PERSONAL SUPERVISION

Gordon J. Hardyman
Radio and
Electrical Engineer
All kinds of Radio and Electrical Apparatus
Supplied and Repaired

7 College Lane
(OFF GLOUCESTER STREET)
Faringdon · Berks
Telephone 2230
Telephone: 2142 - 2155

Telegrams: "Nap Faringdon"

Bankers: Barclays

Established 1900

Bridge & Co.
(Prop. FRED BOWERMAN)

Turf Accountant

Corn Exchange - Faringdon - Berks

J. E. SHARLAND

Wholesale and Retail
Fruit & Potato Merchant

LONDON STREET, FARINGDON, BERKS.

Phone: FARINGDON 2152
Classified Index of Advertisers

Builder and Contractor.
  F. E. Lister, Church Street
  Map

Builders and Heating Contractors.
  S. G. Bowler & Son, Bromsgrove
  18 & 19

Cafe.
  Jane's Pantry, Market Square
  15

Coal and Coke Merchants.
  W. Indge & Sons, Gloucester Street
  11

Confectioners and General Stores.
  West Stores, 4, Cowell Street
  25

Confectioners and Grocers.
  T. H. Hicks, The Model Bakery, Gloucester Street
  31

Dairymen.
  White Horse Dairy, Southampton Street
  Map

Electrical, Radio and Television Engineers.
  Bartwell & Drew, Cowell Street
  33
  Gordon J. Hardman, 7, College Lane
  33
  E. Leverton & Sons, Cornmarket
  27

Footwear Specialist.
  Frank Tisir, London Street
  32

Fruit and Potato Merchant.
  J. E. Sharland, London Street
  35

Furnishers and Ladies' and Children's Wear Specialists.
  Comely's, London Street
  30

Garage and Motor-Cycle Agents.
  The Faringdon Engineering Co., Ltd., Enterprise Garages
  Gloucester Street and Lechlade Road
  29

General Engineers.
  Eagle Motors (Faringdon), Ltd., Station Road
  2

Grocers and Domestic Stores.
  C. H. Blissett, London Street
  4

Hairdressers.
  Elizabeth, Gloucester Street
  10

Hotels.
  Bell Hotel, Market Square
  26
  The Crown Hotel
  1

Nurserymen.
  R. Tucker & Sons, The Nurseries
  18

Printers.
  The Portwell Press, Station Road
  28

Turf Accountants.
  Bridge & Co., Corn Exchange
  34
Faringdon
Berks

The Official Guide

PRICE 9d.