

The Fayerhodes of Ludgate hill.

Introductory Notes.

This story extends over a period of 200 years from 1210 covering five generations of Fairhoods. The period goes back for more than 700 years and it is rare that sufficient data can be collected from records of these early days from which a story can be built of a family of normal status, and without undue prejudice I feel that the characters of this composition were of sufficient significance to record builders for their conduct to have been recorded in this way.

This story is based on true extracts from records with fictitious linking matter necessary to build such a composition. I am indebted to all who have helped me in any way to make this work possible.

A.E.Fairhead

Norwich,

October 1972.

In this update I have copied Albert's book, as at this time there is no additional information to include. At this time it is possible that more records have become available to researchers so the possibility of additions can be considered when time permits. (I. D. No's. in Blue)

Additions **R.A.Fairhead**

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It was early in the thirteenth century, about the year 1210 that Ralph Fairhod (3097) was born, a time when so little was written, resulting in almost complete absence of information regarding ancestry.

The art of writing was almost unknown except to the privileged few, and at that time calculations were made by means of a "tally", a notched stick.

There does not appear to be any writing in existence from which could ascertain the parents of Ralph, and it is quite possible that his forbears did not carry the name of Fairhod or anything similar.

Prior to this date surnames were not a permanent feature for the masses of the population, and were then just coming into use.

Ralph Fairhod was doubtless one of the first of normal individuals to have been recorded. Had history claimed him, the recording could have been of more cardinal value. The name doubtlessly comes from a beautiful haired individual, expressing a fair hood of hair in the same way as fair hair and fair head and it is possible that Ralph's appearance gave support to the name.

At this time there were Fairhairs and Fairheads as well as Fairhoods and the question could be asked why the three appellants meaning the same. The answer is possibly that each family preferred to remain apart from the other for varying reasons.

An extract from the "Eastern Daily Press" of the 5th of October 1972 concerning the origin of surnames by F. Williams states:

"Hoods were part of the wear of university men and various officials and members of orders in those old days, so we have the surname Hood and a nickname for one who wore one different from those of his fellows, as Whitehead, Breenhead and Fairhead which though in some instances they have origins, in others the second syllable was originally Hood".

By this extract Mr. Williams suggests that a possible explanation of Fairhod was an original fair hooded university man, which varies from my version of that of a fair hood of hair, but we both agree that the name Fairhead is the outcome of Fairhood.

By the middle of this century Ralph had become a citizen of some standing. This was a time when London, although a very important city only had a population of some 35,000, which was followed by Bristol with 8,000 and Norwich with 6,000 - the three largest cities in the Kingdom.

Cattle often strayed in the streets and poultry and other domestic animals shared the home, and dung from the animals created a cleaning problem in the streets. The horse was always a source of danger, the accident rate being unbelievably high.

Freemen of that day had a privileged status as the law protected this class, but the unfortunate serfs or bondmen were only protected by the law as laid down for them, it being in many ways much more harsh from that for the freemen.

The law of the bondman was the law of the slave to his Lord. Freemen could buy their way out of trouble, but the bondmen had little hope of doing this.

Ralph was the possessor of a house and shops on Ludgate Hill, together with tenements near the wharf and some country property south of the river, in Kent. His main activities comprised of trading in merchandise, and from time to time he would make visits to his property in Kent. These visits were usually made on horseback, Ralph being accompanied by his groom, with a break of one night's stay in a halfway Inn where always-good accommodation was to be had.

Ralph would be provided with excellent services in the Inn, while the groom made himself comfortable in the loft above the stables. This state of affairs would be unthinkable today, but both parties accepted it as right and proper in those days. The master considered it was his heritage that he should govern and control, and took the view that this was a necessary service to mankind and he questioned as to what the unfortunate peasants would do if it not for him to look after their welfare. On the other hand the servant looked up to his master as a saviour, having provided him with his needs and questioned as to how he could exist otherwise. Doubtless a groom was better off many of the unfortunate peasants.

It was about the year 1245 when Ralph married Matilda (3098), and in 1250 a son, John (3099), was born and this meant more coach journeys for a time and less use of the saddle, but as the years advanced and adulthood arrived John was able to accompany his father on horseback when making trips to his country property.

John, the Inquisitor.

Ralph died about the year 1266 and his son John inherited his entire estate. About this time there was trouble in France, attacks and reprisals between Cinque Ports was followed by a war between the Gascons and the French.

In 1295 the King commanded that three ships should sail in his service; the vessels named were the "Newcastle", the ship of Richard de Chiggewell, and the ships of Alexander Pyk and Thormas de Bolonia. The funds for this expedition were raised by a tax of twopence in the pound on chattels and merchandise. The Gascons had forfeited certain assets to the French in this fighting and were unable to meet debts to merchants in London, with the result that the Mayor, Aldermen and citizens of London undertook at the King's command to give certain securities to these creditors. This placed John Fairhod (3099) in a happy position as he, together with John Plot and Simon Gut, had supplied goods to the value of £80.19.3d. It should be remembered that Gascony in France was at that time under the English Crown, and a substantial measure trade was carried on with merchants in London.

It seems that at this time, John stepped into the political arena and became a member of the Common council, which consisted of representatives of the various districts of London. They would meet under the direction of the Mayor and Alderman to consider matters of state. On the 6th of May 1300, such a meeting was called to consider the expenses of Commonalty which was attended by Elyas Russel the Mayor, William de Leyre, William de Bettoyne, John de Kanterbury, Nicholas Pepkoe, Micholas de Farindore, John Fairhod and many others, possibly almost all of the Council and it was agreed that an account for 20,000 marks should be presented to the treasury of the Exchequer. It appears that in those days the Mayor and Alderman and members of the Commonalty dealt with matters of state and were not divorced from the government as is the case today. The mark represented 13-4d but there was no coin as such, nor were there any shilling or silver coins, other than the silver penny with its value of 240 to the pound.

It may be noted that reference is made to the Mayor and not the Lord Mayor, as would be today.

In addition to John's work on the Common Council, he became an Inquisitor, a position that meant he had to attend a Board of Inquisitors or Judges to hear and give judgement to cases where wrong had been done. Invariably the Mayor headed these sittings. The first case recorded was on the 15th August 1300 in respect to forestallers of wood and coal and it was decided that those guilty should lose the freedom of the City and be treated as foreigners.

John was now becoming very much involved in matters of state. On the 11th June 1303 he became concerned in a lease of tenements, wharves etc. This property, situated in the Parish of St. Andrew, Castle Baynard, was leased to William Weldore for the sum of 5 Marks plus 2.6d and a further 12 pence yearly, this last amount to be paid to the Prior and Convent of Dounmowe with a condition that a lamp should burn perpetually in St. Andrew's Church for the good of the soul of the former owner, Robert de Mineter. John Fairhod with others witnessed the signing of this lease. This illustrates the religious outlook at that time. I understand that the church no longer exists; so much for the perpetual burning lamp.

Apart from duties of state, John attended to business matters with no less zeal and on the 10th May 1311 he brought one of his employees, a certain John de Browewode to appear before the Mayor, Richer de Refham and others, to apply for admission to the Freedom of the City. John testified that the said John de Browewode had served him faithfully as an apprentice for 10 years with the result that his application was granted. It appears that without this Freedom he would have been unable to practise at his trade within the City.

On the 15th of December 1314 and again on the 13th of April 1316 at Westminster, a direction was given for the protection of John Fayrehode while purveying wood and other goods in the Kings service for John de Sandale, the Chancellor. The direction states that "Nothing is to be taken against his will, of his corn, carts, carriages or any other goods for the use of the King or of any other persons."

It is difficult to understand today why this direction should have been necessary. One can only assume that violence was evident.

John (3099) had three wives, the first Johanna (3100), then Juliana (3101), and finally Bona (3102) who outlived him. About the year 1290 Adam Fairhod (3103) was born but which parents were responsible I am unable to state. (For the purposes of this narrative it has been assumed to be Bona)

John followed his fathers habits of visits to his property in Kent from time to time. When his father acquired this property, a liberal work force of Bondmen were included in the acquisition. These have now increased by their offspring coming along and apart from the wealth they have earned for their owner, their value by the additions had increased. A Serf or Bondman was worth at that time equal to the value of 25 acres of land. There had been a few problems regarding this workforce, which had been amicably settled.

One of John's men wanted to marry a girl from an adjoining estate, and the Lord of that Manor wanted a pledge that half the offspring would return to his Manor. It was finally settled by a cash payment. Such was the way of Serfdom at that time.

John died in the year 1320 at an age of 70 years or thereabouts. According to his will he left his dwelling house in the Parish of Saint Andrews, Castle Baynard, to his wife Bona for life, and other assets to pious uses in the said Parish Church for the good of his soul and that of the souls of his former wives Johanna and Juliana, Bona his present wife, Ralph his father and Matilda his mother. Shops in the said Parish were to be sold to pay debts and the remainder to be devoted to pious uses. No mention was made regarding Adam or any other children, but possibly there had been an earlier settlement.

An interesting question has now arisen - John having lived the span of three score and ten years, having had three wives, the probability of a reasonably large family is a possible deduction.

The copy of the Will which I (Albert) have could be incomplete as it is an English translation from Latin and transcribing this very old Latin is often very difficult and omissions are possible. At this period there were a number of Fairheds and these could be the same family as Fairhods as it is reasonable to suggest that the "o" could have been replaced with the "e" at a time when writing was so restricted.

There were also a number of Fairhers of that period where the "r" could have replaced the "d" and it is possible that these followed the Fairheds.

The Fairheds and Fairhers mentioned are mostly with some business connection in the same locality in London as the Fairhods.

Adam, maintains the peace.

Adam did not follow in John's steps with regard to public service, but nevertheless he was a very respected citizen. The first account of him that was recorded was when he was chosen with others to safeguard the ward of Castle Baynard. It happened that on the 24th of June 1338 during the twelfth year's reign of Edward III, he the King was about to go overseas, and requested the Mayor and Aldermen to bring about a scheme for safeguarding the City during his absence and it was arranged for the election of six, eight or twelve of the best men for each ward to patrol the City and to see that the King's peace was not broken. Adam was one of those so chosen. At this period, many centuries before the Police Force came about, peace, it would appear, was not taken as usual and efforts were so necessary to retain it.

Adam at this time was recently married and the records favour me in as much as stating that his wife was Amy (3104). In the year 1322 John Fairhod (3105) was born, and then a daughter, Alice (3107), and possibly others that were not recorded followed this line of Fairhods and this birth.

It may be noted that the name has been spelt 'Fairhod' in my notes - in actual fact it was recorded as Fairhod, Fairhode, Fayrhod and Fayrehode and possible other variations. Little had been written concerning the life of Adam Fairhod, who died about the year 1379. His wife, Amy, survived him. Alice, the daughter of Adam and Amy married a William Baldewyn, a tanner of London. The name of Baldwin was world-renowned at that time.

The estate of Adam was now broken up between John and Mary and at Westminster on the 18th July 1389 a tenement left to Alice by her late father was granted to the Prior of the Friars Preachers Convent at Saint Andrew. Barnard castle.

John, in the King's Service.

It may be noted that Saint Andrews, Baynard castle, has been mentioned before as this district appears to be where the Fairhoods had an interest.

Warehouses adjoining the docks with tenements owned by the family was an area where their activities were concentrated. The business was now increasing in the County of Kent where the family had owned property for a great number of years and now they were becoming very involved in the port of Sandwich where trading was done with that part of France under the English Crown.

The family had acquired property in Callus and travelled between this port and Sandwich and also up the Thames to Baynard castle, near their old home at Ludgate Hill. The journey by horse transport lessened as both young John and his father often covered the distance by sea.

It was about the year 1345 that John (3105) married Mary (3106), but the marriage ended abruptly after three years in 1348 by her death, the same year as the birth of their son John (3110), now the third Fairhode to carry that name.

In the year 1379 John's father, Adam, died leaving his widowed mother, Amy, to survive him many years, she being mentioned at Westminster on the 18th of July 1389 when her daughter Alice, now Mrs. Baldewyn, granted the freehold for life of tenements to the convent of the Friars Preachers of London, mentioned earlier.

There is little written about the John of 1322 and his service to the Crown, but evidence shows that some measure of this was carried on in the same manner as his Grandfather John, as on the 18th of November 1399 John was summoned to Westminster for an announcement to be made to the effect of granting him six pence per day for life by the Exchequer for as the citation reads:

"In recompense of his great costs and expenses in the King's service. "

John was now becoming much involved in the business in Kent, and trade was flowing through the port of Sandwich where warehouses had been acquired and as the years went by the attraction of this lovely county of Kent was favoured to the city interests.

His son, John (3110), had long reached manhood and when his father died in 1404 he, the son, was about 50 years old. Matrimony did not enter his life very early as he was approaching middle age when he married Constance Stille (3106), a widow, the late wife of John Stille of Sandwich. As middle age had passed for Constance there was no family.

John, the Pirate.

It happened that when John (3110) married Constance (3106) she had possession of certain goods, which were left at her home (that of John Stille, her late husband) belonging to a certain John Broun and Lawrence Jonan Fogase who were arrested for debt to the master of a vessel, the St. James of Portugal. The result of this was an application made to Thomas Erpyingham, (Constable of Dover Castle) on the 6th of February 1404 to recover the goods for the satisfaction of the owners, but apparently John failed to comply with the request and on the 23rd of February 1404, an application was made to the court at Westminster for the recovery of the goods, namely:

A chest with a mantle, and hood of black and green, two pairs of white hose, two pairs of black, divers other property, and harness therein.

A great barrel, locked

A bed

One pair of pates and divers other harness

A coat furred with lambs wool

A pair of boots

A pair of tables

Two shirts put in chests

In spite of the Court application, it does not appear that John ever handed over these goods as in those days the Courts had not much sentiment with foreigners and the name of Fairhode had the greatest influence. It appears that after John married Constance he was forever getting into trouble, but as the family over the generations had fulfilled the many good qualities needed of a man, a "black sheep" was always a possibility.

John became involved in a number of court actions, but up to the present time he had successfully evaded any serious outcome. He was still a very respected citizen having been appointed custom duty collector at Sandwich, a position of trust.

He, however, was involved in some rather dubious ventures and from one in particular that is recorded I can tell the following story. Early in May 1404 it was discovered that a ship or " barge" known as the Saint Martyn of Elkeyco, Spain, would sail through the Channel with a variety of Merchandise which would be easy pickings" for those for those with that desire. The Masters of seven vessels together with Merchants, namely: Richard Wybard, John Syble, William Beneyt, Richard Wyndesore, Thomas Langle, John Gyles, John Sampson, John Wheteneye, John Fairhod, John Wiggemor and Thomas Boydon of Sandwich and Rye decided upon a plan to intercept this ship with its cargo and bring it into a local port to dispose of the spoils.

The plan was put into operation on the 12th of May 1404, the seven vessels surrounded their prey at a point between Alderney and Normandy and some of their numbers attempted to board the Saint Martyn. There was a deal of fighting to overcome bitter opposition to the boarding, but while parties were attempting to reach the decks from both starboard and portside another party succeeded in boarding the vessel at its stern and at this moment fighting was turned to these unexpected arrivals with the result that both starboard and portside assailants were soon aboard, to be followed by very fierce hand to hand fighting. After two of the defending party were killed and the Master and Mate locked away below, the remainder surrendered and the boat was taken to the port of Rye where the cargo was divided between the offending merchants. This kind of piracy doubtlessly flourished in those early days, particularly if it concerned a country unfriendly or in a state of war, when the juridical authorities would take little notice and action by the offenders often had poor results.

On the 1st of July 1404, a petition was made to the Authorities at Dover by a certain Fortunus Vanus of Spain for the restitution of the Sent Martyn and payment of 1,000 Marks with expenses, the value of the goods and for the Master and Mate to be freed. This was apparently a formal petition only as the case was again heard at Westminster on the 13th of July 1404.

The stolen goods alleged to be held by John Wheteneye, John Fairhood, John Wyggemor and Thomas Boyland were:

2000 lbs. of iron valued at 40/- per thousand
15 sacks of osemond valued at 4/- each
9 barrels of osemond valued at 8/- each
370 lbs of rosyn valued at 3/- per hundred
6000 bars of iron at 2/6 per thousand

by Stephen Shirman of Rye:

22 qrs. & 4 bushels of salt
1056 lbs. of iron
8 sacks of osemond
5 barrels of osemond
100 lbs. of rosyn
200 lbs. of rosyn

by Richard Wybard of Hastings, Richard Gervays and William Longe of Rye:

22 qrs. of salt
1000 lbs. of iron
8 sacks of osemond
4 barrels of osemond
200 lbs. of rosyn

by William Longe, Robert Longe, Robert Tailours and John Boterford:

28 qrs. of salt
1200 lbs. of iron
8 sacks of osemond
6 barrels of osemond
256 lbs. of rosyn

by William Longe, John Langport and John Wykham of Rye:

24 qrs. of salt
1056 lbs. of iron
8 sacks of osemond
5 barrels of osemond
200 lbs. of rosyn

by Thomas Langle and Robert Tailour of Rye:

19 qrs. & 4 bushels of salt
956 lbs. of iron
6 sacks of osemond
4 barrels of osemond
184 lbs. of rosyn

Many searches do not reveal how and if the case was settled but it appears that John Fairhood was still free to engage in any similar activities that happen to present themselves. It seems that John carried on much as usual, perhaps getting richer from ill-gotten gains for about a further seven years when alas he ventured too far and did not abide with the Court's decision for the payment of £19-16-7 1/2d for a similar offence for which on the 12th of November 1411 he was thrown into prison.

What a different position to that of his forbears who upheld the law and were honoured for service to the crown.

By the Order of the Court at Westminster, John Langacre and John Wareyn were deputed to take recognisance's and to appraise his tenements, goods and chattels and the Constable of Dover Castle was to "take away and imprison his body" in the town prison at Sandwich. After this condemnation one might think that John was beaten, never to rise again, but like a true Fairhead he came again to the surface and carried on trading as strong as ever.

It happened that two of John's farms were let to Robert Carleton and Robert Smyth for which the rent was seized together with the realisation of certain goods and chattels, the amount due was satisfied.

On the 11th of May 1412 the Court at Westminster directed the Constable of Dover castle to "set free John Fairhood, giving him livery again of his tenements, goods and chattels which had been seized by the King's hand". It is possible that the name of Fairhod of the past had a good influence in this case.

Nothing further was heard concerning John and one can assume that he kept within the Law for the next ten years or so. He died at his country house at Worth, a few miles south of Sandwich early May 1420, which ended perhaps the fullest life man could hope for. He was buried at Saint Clements, Sandwich and according to a few tips gathered from the records he was given a hero's funeral. He left a donation to the Parson, Sir William Grove, for celebration of Mass, and a further donation to the Sisters of Sandwich.

From a Will written in almost illegible Latin, his beneficiaries were John Style, John Neweke, William Payne, and Constance his wife. He also left a house at Worth to his servant, Joan Clarke. All the property in Ludgate Hill and in Kent, together with property in Calais, France, was left to Constance, his wife.

It appears that there was no inheritance for the Fairhods, as John had no family. In this issue I have mentioned five generations of Fairhods from the years 1210 to 1420. These are as follows:-

Ralph ⁽³⁰⁹⁷⁾ & Matilda ⁽³⁰⁹⁸⁾	1210 - 1266
John ⁽³⁰⁹⁹⁾ & Johanna ⁽³¹⁰⁰⁾ Juliana ⁽³¹⁰¹⁾ Bona ⁽³¹⁰²⁾	1250 - 1320
Adam ⁽³¹⁰³⁾ & Amy ⁽³¹⁰⁴⁾	1290 - 1379
John ⁽³¹⁰⁵⁾ & Mary ⁽³¹⁰⁹⁾	1322 - 1404
John ⁽³¹¹⁰⁾ & Constance ⁽³¹⁰⁶⁾	1348 - 1420

Present day Fairheads will ask, Why this story if there are no descendants to follow this line to the present day Fairheads? The answer is that there are possibly a number of Fairhods that come from the branches of this tree. I have given account of those that were recorded but it is possible that there are others where no record is made. I have recently found at the City of London Record Office that a John Fairhod was born in October 1588, the son of John Fairhod. This John could come from a line started by other children of John 1250 or Adam 1290, or from any other of the possibilities, but this is another story, which I trust will be detailed in a further composition of the Fairhead family. (These and other early unconnected Fairhead's are listed at the beginning of the "London Butchers" section).

Post Script.

I (Albert) visited the old borough town of Sandwich and found it very rewarding. It is rich with relics of the past and it was not difficult to enter into a dreamland of the time when John walked the narrow streets and through the Key Gate, now known as the Fisher Gate to take up his duties at the Custom House still remaining.

The harbour from where the merchandise was brought ashore is now little more than a pleasure quayside, which at this time in history was one of the greatest ports in the country, from where the many armies were transported to the continent during the earlier wars. Today the sea is replaced largely by rush marshes, the silting up of the port over the years bringing this about and reducing its value almost negligible.

The narrow streets with their fourteenth century buildings, the upper parts overhanging, are almost alive with the past, having changed little since John's time and when the hustle of traffic has died in the late hours of the day and silence envelops the place it is not difficult with imagination to enter into the past.

The Key Gate was erected in 1384 and as indicated, John would pass beneath this to approach the Custom House at the top of what is known as Quay Lane. His lawlessness is reminded when one walks a few further hundred yards to a spot in St. Peter's Street where the town gaol still stands. The building is now used for some modern trading venture, but the original doorway remains with the words above "The Town Gaol". This is where John paid in penitence for some of the unlawful acts.

A journey higher up this street which is named after St. Peter's Church, is a second church named St. Clements where John's last resting place is recorded to be. I was absorbed with interest in this great building that stood here long before John was born. Monumental stones in the turfy yard, the inscriptions long decayed, do not hold any interest as it was the interior of the church where a possible search might be rewarding among the slabs of stone well worn by the feet of many over the centuries. I felt that I could be walking upon the remains of the man who holds this interest today.

However, the key had been inserted into the lock by a custodian and my inspection was unfortunately curtailed I reflected what a strange creature this John, a churchman and a customs official with the other side of his make up, a pirate and a goal inmate.
