

## **Stonehouse History Group**

### **Annual Report 2014 - 15**

In May 2015 we celebrate the seventh anniversary of the creation of our group. Our membership is now 51 with 111 names on our contacts list. This year we have had 11 events, with an average attendance of 44 (slightly up on last year), plus two summer walks and a tour of Standish Park Farm.

The highlight of the year was the acquisition of the Ceremonial Key to the Post Office, originally presented to Sir Stephen Tallents at the official opening in November 1933. We were delighted to welcome to our December meeting Dr Freddie Pemberton-Pigott (Sir Stephen's grandson) and Mark Heywood, who presented the key to Valerie Blick for SHG.

We have increased our range of displays which we have shown at the town events and in Stonehouse Library. We created a display on Stonehouse in World War I for the GLHA Local History Day in October, which was voted 2nd best for the 2nd year running. We took our Timeline, plus posters on the canal area, to the recent exhibition organised by the Stroudwater Canal Archive Charity and received many positive comments.

Our journals and calendars continue to sell well. We still have copies of all Journal issues available, including Issue 1 which we have had reprinted.

We have continued to interview local residents about their memories of Stonehouse.

Shirley Dicker, Jim Dickson, and Vicki Walker have interviewed the following:

Beryl Ridley (garage that replaced the Regal Cinema), Tom Round-Smith (memories of Stonehouse), June Sturm (memories of Stonehouse), Ann Gearon (Paper & Bag Mills), Bruce Baker (Baker family and Spa Inn). Jim Dickson talked to friends of June Sturm about her life. Bob Lusty has interviewed a number of people about their time living in Bridgend Hostel (see article on page 27). We are grateful to those people who have contacted us with their memories and photographs.

The Stonehouse History Group website, [www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk](http://www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk), is maintained and developed by Darrell Webb. It has been successful in prompting residents (past and present) to get in touch, and to communicate their memories to us and sometimes to provide photographs. We have been successful in answering many questions about the history of Stonehouse. We are particularly grateful to Janet Hudson for her valuable help in dealing with these questions.

We have continued with local walks and talks this year. We have taken two groups on the Canal and Church walk and have given two talks on different aspects of Stonehouse history. Vicki Walker visited Hopelands School in Regent Street to talk about the Development of Stonehouse and we are hoping to work with Wycliffe College on their World War I project.

We have a healthy bank balance, benefiting from members' generous contributions to monthly fund-raising raffles. This money goes towards paying for the speakers and the hire of the premises. It also enables us to produce professionally printed displays. We are working towards creating outdoor information boards to be placed around Stonehouse and have been awarded a generous grant from the Midcounties Co-Operative to help with this.

### **Committee, May 2014 - April 2015**

Chair - John Peters

Vice-Chair - Shirley Dicker

Secretary - Vicki Walker

Treasurer - Andrew Walker

Committee - Valerie Blick, David Bowker-Praed, Jim Dickson, Darrell Webb, Colin Wood.

## Events 2014/15 (attendance in brackets)

### May 14<sup>th</sup> (47)

AGM followed by **Janet Hudson, Vicki Walker and Shirley Dicker**

The History of the Crown and Anchor Hotel. Presenting some of the stories and photographs from our oral history interviews.

### June 11<sup>th</sup> (30)

**Geoff North** - Exploring Cheltenham's decorative ironwork.

Geoff talked about examples of ironwork to be seen in Cheltenham in preparation for the guided walk he led in July.

### July 6<sup>th</sup> 2.00 (8)

**Walk** with **Peter Strong** around Sudbrook and the Severn Tunnel.

We had lovely sunshine for our walk along the river and a very interesting talk on the building of the Severn Tunnel and how it affected the local area.

### July 9<sup>th</sup> (37)

**Linda Howell** - Living History.

Linda told us about her work with Guernsey Museum bringing history to life by dressing as historical characters and telling their stories.

### July 27<sup>th</sup> 2.30 (10)

**Walk** with **Geoff North** looking at Cheltenham's decorative ironwork

### Weds Aug 13<sup>th</sup> (25)

**Standish Park Farm evening tour** with Jonathan Crump. Everyone really enjoyed the experience of travelling up the hill on a hay cart and sampling delicious cheeses!

### September 10<sup>th</sup> (34)

**Roger Turner** - From Manor House to Your House.

Roger outlined the historical development of houses showing Gloucestershire examples of different architectural styles.

### October 8<sup>th</sup> (52)

**David Viner** - A look at some developments in Canal Technology.

A fascinating explanation of how the canal network was constructed.

### November 12<sup>th</sup> (37)

**Keith Creighton** - WWI Trench Art.

Thanks to Keith for bringing along his amazing collection of WWI trench art and telling us about it. Lots of people brought along their own artefacts to show everyone.

### December 10<sup>th</sup> (49)

**Eric and Val Winder** - The Nicolle Story and the Occupation of Guernsey.

Eric and Val brought the story of Guernsey to life by talking about their own relatives' experiences during WWII and explaining what life was like during the German occupation.

## 2015

### January 14<sup>th</sup> (49)

**Tony Conder** - Gloucestershire railways from the Forest to the Cotswolds.

A wonderful collection of railway photographs reminding us of all the lost stations along our local lines.

### February 11<sup>th</sup> (52)

**Peter Hill** - Stanley Spencer in Leonard Stanley and Stonehouse.

Peter gave an excellent talk about the artist and particularly the paintings that he did while living in Leonard Stanley during the 1940s.

### March 11<sup>th</sup> (50)

**Paul Barnett** - Fore and Aft - A pictorial journey through the Purton Ships Graveyard.

Probably the most enthusiastic speaker we have had, Paul showed us his extensive collection of photographs of the river boats stranded on the banks of the Severn.

### April 8<sup>th</sup> (46)

**Friends of Gloucester Waterways Museum** - Life on narrowboats.

Jill Ruiz and friends brought their collection of canal craftwork and talked about how families lived on the boats.