

Stonehouse History Group Journal



Issue 7

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Front cover photograph - St Cyr's Church 2007 ©Jim Dickson

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Editorial Team

Vicki Walker

Jim Dickson

Shirley Dicker

Janet Hudson

Darrell Webb

Why not become a member of our group?

We aim to promote interest in the local history of Stonehouse.

We research and store information about all aspects of the town's history
and have a large collection of photographs old and new.

We make this available to the public via our website and through our regular meetings.

We provide a programme of talks and events on a wide range of historical topics.

We hold meetings on the second Wednesday of each month,
at 7:30pm.

Meeting fee £1 members; £2 non-members.

Annual membership £5 due in May.



Stonehouse History Group Journal
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Welcome to Issue 7

This year our main research topic has been “*Gardens for food, fun and flowers*” - the theme chosen by Gloucestershire Local History Association for their 2017 Local History Day. We created nine large posters for a display on the Day and were commended for our work. These posters have been on display in Stonehouse Library, the Town Hall and at the Summer Jolly. Six of the articles in this issue are based on this topic.

The chronology of St Cyr’s Church also stems from a display created for the church. Janet Hudson has developed the original timeline display into a brief history of our local church. Janet has also written a history of Dr Bond, who tried out an experimental enterprise at her family home, now known as The Old Dairy or Apsley House in High Street. We also remember Janet’s mother, Betty Sargeant, one of our original members and a well-known person in the community, who sadly died this year.

We have been lucky to be able to record the memories of a number of senior citizens of Stonehouse who have exceptional recall of life in the 20th century. Some of these stories overlap, particularly concerning life during the war and working at Hoffmann’s. We have also been given a large number of photographs and documents from all decades which we have added to our collection. We do save all our oral history recordings and still have some in the process of writing up for our next issue!

During 2017 we have created two more information boards, one at Park Schools in Elm Road and one by Wycliffe College Chapel in Bath Road. We are grateful to the Town Council and Wycliffe College for their support. We are hoping for funding to create more boards to be erected in 2018.

An interesting project has been organised by Darrell Webb to provide a memorial plaque in the English Tower in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The Tower was built 100 years ago using bricks from the Stonehouse Brick & Tile Co. Ltd and our plaque is now on display in the Tower. (see page 45)

As always, we would be glad to hear from you if you have information to add to the topics covered in this Journal. Contact details below.



*The editorial team
September 2017*

Our Aims

- To promote interest in the local history of Stonehouse in all its aspects and through all periods of history.
- To hold talks and meetings devoted to this aim and to visit places of historic interest.
- To encourage members to work on research projects on local history.
- To cooperate with other societies and bodies having similar interests.
- To try to ensure that any material related to the history of Stonehouse is collected and preserved and made available for future use.

Do you have any interesting historical photographs of Stonehouse (from 1860 to 2017)?

We would like to scan them and add them to our collection. Please contact us if you can help.

May we record your memories?

If you have memories of life in Stonehouse many years ago we would like to talk with you. At the moment we are researching Stonehouse between the Wars 1919-1939, railways, the canal and industries. If you think you could help with information on any of these topics please phone Vicki Walker on (01453) 826 334 or contact us via our website

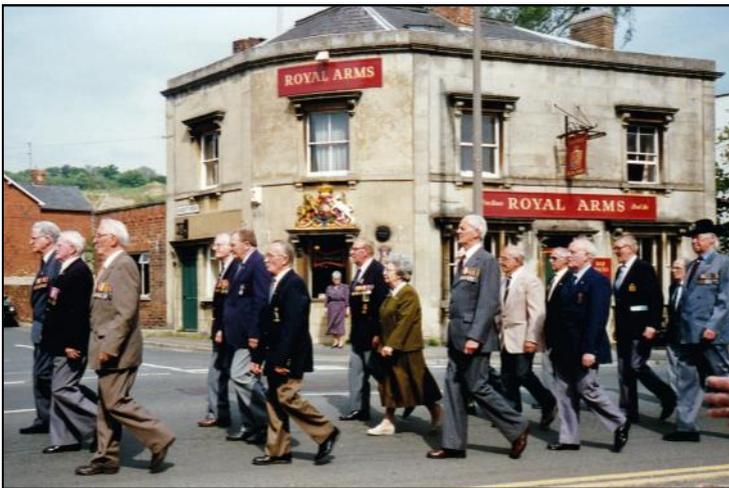
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Rebecca Elizabeth (Betty) Sargeant, 1921-2017

by Janet Hudson

My mother was one of the founder members of the Stonehouse History Group in 2008, and attended meetings for as long as she was able.

In April 1941, her parents were killed when an enemy bomb destroyed their house in London, a tragedy which influenced her whole life. Betty joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service and trained to be a Morse code interceptor at the Beaumanor listening post, attached to Bletchley Park. She was commended in 1944 for intercepting an important message, possibly helping in the preparations for D-Day. She married Ernest Sargeant in 1945, and they raised three children, while both working as teachers and college lecturers in Surrey. On retirement, they joined me and my family in Stonehouse in 1989. They both joined in the life of the town, especially through the Royal British Legion, both the Branch and the Women's Section. Betty took a special interest in welfare work.



Royal British Legion at the Victory in Europe 50 years parade, 1995: Betty a Forces Veteran through the ATS

She loved music all her life, and worked part-time in the music department of Wycliffe College Junior School. In 1991, she became secretary of a long-running local campaign which tried to keep Standish Hospital for health service use. She was also at various times both secretary and president of the Women's Institute. She was secretary of the Stonehouse Town Appraisal in 1996, and edited the town newsletter Stonechat.

After her husband died in 1998, Betty followed him in the Royal British Legion as branch secretary and poppy appeal organiser, and would not let small hindrances, such as a broken arm or a hip replacement, interrupt her welfare or secretarial work.

She helped to set up the Lunch Club through the Royal Voluntary Service, and also served the Royal British Legion at County level. By 2009 she belonged to thirteen committees, but had begun to struggle with words. Nevertheless, she gave several memorable talks about her wartime experiences to local schools and societies, and wrote about them for the Stonehouse History Group Journal in 2012.



Members of Stonehouse Women's Institute, 1996: Betty on the far left

She was diagnosed with Alzheimer's Disease, and moved into Moreton Hill Care Centre in 2013. She continued to lead a fulfilling life there, especially with her music, while she also tried to give support to others. Betty always wanted to help people to overcome trouble through a combination of laughter and practical action, and her smile will be remembered by all who knew her.

Betty at a History Group meeting in 2013

Horticulture in Stonehouse

by Vicki Walker

Stonehouse has a long history of interest in horticulture and its promotion through societies and shows.

Horticultural Society

2017 is the 150th anniversary of the founding of Stonehouse Horticultural Society in 1867 by the Reverend William Farren White who was vicar at St Cyr's Church from 1861 to 1898. He was a well-known naturalist, a member of the Entomological Society of London and the author of "Ants and their ways", a book first published in 1883. This classic book is still in print today.

Newspaper reports show that the Horticultural Society held annual shows from 1867 until 1911. These began on a small scale concentrating on exhibitions and competitions for flowers, fruit and vegetables. They attracted visitors from a wide area. A full page advert in the Stroud Journal of August 1867 includes the information - "*For the convenience of the Inhabitants of Nailsworth, Woodchester, and Cainscross, A SPECIAL TRAIN will run on the STONEHOUSE AND NAILSWORTH RAILWAY on the day of the Show, leaving Nailsworth at Two o'clock*". There was also a band and refreshments on offer.

Later shows became more ambitious. By 1890 the Gloucester Journal reports that "*The Stonehouse Horticultural Society has so progressed since its establishment in 1867 that its shows are now looked forward to with considerable interest over a wide district*". There were 879 exhibits and 235 competitors. Prizes were awarded for honey, cheese and butter, as well as poultry, birds, rabbits and industrial work (needlework, knitting, carving, modelling etc). As the show grew, competitions included photography and sports events. In 1895 competitors came from Gloucester, Stroud and Hereford to take part in sports events including racing, cycling and a Menagerie Race for members of the Sports Committee (dogs barred). First prize of 10 shillings was won by F. Mayo's goat! Attractions included Stonehouse Town Band and Fireworks displays. Judges came from far and wide for the many categories in the Horticulture section. They were often professional gardeners at local large houses such as Owlpen Manor and Standish House. The Shows were mainly held in the vicarage grounds while Rev Farren White was the organiser, although Upper Berryfield (1867), Haywardsend House (1868) and The Grove (1872) were also used.

After 1900 the organisation of the Annual Show was taken over by the headmaster of the local school, John Westacott, assisted by a committee taking responsibility for each competition class. In 1901 it was held in the Laburnum Field by permission of Dr Watters, who was President of the Society. Dr Prout was secretary of the amusements committee and the Show featured a torchlight procession, a bicycle gymkhana, a cycling polo match and a tug-of-war competition. The Best Mouse in Show was won by E Brockwell from London. There was also a tortoise race and a needle-threading race.

In 1903, 1905 and 1910 the Show was held at Haywardsend House, the home of Edward Jenner Davies, who also took a turn as President, and featured events including a cricket match, a military tournament, swings and roundabouts and a switch-back railway.

In other years the Show was held at the Laburnum Field, then owned by Dr McLannahan, also President of the Society.

In 1908 the Society had dropped competitions for animals and birds, and was concentrating on the plants.



The crowd at the 1906 Show held at Laburnum Field.

Local nurseries brought exhibitions for the main tent. Messrs Vowles & Sons of Lower Mills demonstrated brush-making and there was a beautiful baby competition. The Echo reported that there was a record attendance and the Show “*proved one of the most successful on record reflecting the greatest possible credit on the officials and the exhibitors*”. Successful shows continued in 1909, 1910 and 1911.

In 1911, Mr Westacott retired from school and it can only be assumed that he also retired as secretary of the Flower Show committee. 1911 proved to be the last year for the Show and probably for the Horticultural Society as we have not found any record of it beyond that date. Stonehouse Horticultural Society had a large committee including many influential businessmen and local dignitaries but it seems it suffered from the problem that many groups have today – no-one wanted to be in charge!

Following on from the demise of the Flower Shows, fêtes were held by a variety of organisations such as the Unionist Rally and Fête at Haywardsend House in 1913, the Red Cross Fête in 1917 and fund-raising events at Stonehouse Court and Laburnum Field, but these involved mainly sports and entertainments. In 1922 Standish House became a TB Hospital and from 1923 organised an annual fête to entertain the patients and raise money for the hospital.

The Stonehouse Friendly Circle was established in 1948 to support older people and one of their first events was to hold a Flower and Vegetable Show at Haywardsend House. This was also held in 1949 but discontinued in 1950 because of the “large amount of work involved”. We can find no record of Horticultural Shows being held after that until the Town Council decided to revive the tradition in 2008.

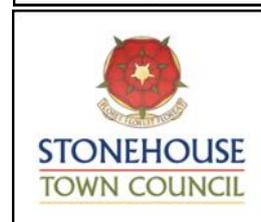
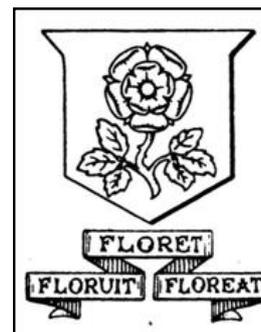
The Stonehouse Rose

In 1348 the Stonehouse Manor was given to John Maltravers “**by tenure de Marchacia by a rose per annum**” - the rose was a symbolic payment in exchange for supporting King Edward III. The rose symbol became associated with Stonehouse and it was chosen by the Horticultural Society as its logo. It featured on the Flower Show programmes, from at least 1902.



In 1978, when Fred Rowbotham was looking for an emblem to represent Stonehouse on a new Mayoral Chain of Office he was designing, he is said to have seen an old Flower Show programme and chose to base his design on it.

The rose with its motto
Floret Floruit Floreat
It flourishes, it has flourished, it will flourish
 has been adopted as Stonehouse town logo.



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The Stonehouse Rose

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Stonehouse Horticultural Society, 1910.

STONEHOUSE FLOWER SHOW

"one of the most attractive events of the season in the Stroud district"

The Citizen, July 1910



Our President
Edward Jenner Davies, Esq. J.P.



Founded in 1867 by
Rev William Farren White

Stonehouse Horticultural Society.

SCHEDULE of PRIZES

FOR THE

Flower Show

AND

Industrial Exhibition

TO BE HELD IN THE GROUNDS OF

HAYWARDSEND HOUSE,

Kindly lent by E. JENNER DAVIES, Esq., J.P.,

ON THURSDAY, JULY 28, 1910.



PRIZES FOR COTTAGERS

Gardens (for Stonehouse only)

Gardens, with finest crops, most neatly arranged, and best cultivated.

Garden, with most tasteful arrangement of flowers

Garden—window

Special Prizes for Climbing Plants on cottage walls and porches

Allotments—best cultivated



PRIZES FOR COTTAGERS

Residing in Stonehouse & adjoining Parishes.

413 prizes for exhibits including:

FLOWERS

Roses, Sweet Peas, Stocks, Begonias, Carnations, Dahlias, Pansies, Ferns, Grasses, Wild Flowers, Bouquets, Table decorations,



FRUIT

Apples, Pears, Gooseberries, Raspberries, Currants, Plums, Honey



VEGETABLES

Potatoes, Peas, Beans, Parsnips, Cabbages, Cauliflowers, Carrots, Onions, Leeks, Turnips, Beet, Marrows, Celery, Radishes, Cucumbers, Tomatoes, Lettuces, Rhubarb, Herbs



FIRST PRIZE COLLECTION GROWN AT OSBORNE BY
H.M. THE KING FROM TOOGOOD'S SEEDS.

Toogood & Sons will not only be offering many Special Prizes but also free advice on any question relating to agriculture or horticulture, including identification of plants, injurious insects and plant diseases.

PRIZES FOR INDUSTRIAL WORK

Dressmaking—shirts, dresses, buttonholes, pinafores, nightdresses.

Knitting—socks, vests, stockings

Needlework—fancy or plain, crochet.

Drawing, carving.

Bread, Cakes and Pies,

Special Prize offered by the Stonehouse Brick and Tile Co. Ltd for the best Bust or panel made from Stonehouse clay.



'FARREN WHITE' PRIZE, SILVER MEDAL,
For the highest proportion of Firsts in at least six competitions.

Admission from 2 o'clock, 1/-; 4 o'clock, 6d.; 8 o'clock, 3d. Children, twelve years of age and under, half-price

The Great Western Railway Company's Motor cars run till 10 p.m.

It is earnestly hoped by the Committee that the inhabitants of Stonehouse will decorate their houses on the day of the Show.

J. WESTACOTT, Hon. Gen. Sec.

Mr. W. R. HOPKINS, Hon. Sec. of the Sports Committee.
 Mr. E. LANGFORD, Hon. Sec. of the Poultry Show.
 Mrs. WM. FARREN WHITE, Hon. Sec. of the Industrial Exhibition.
 *Dr. F. G. HEARD, Hon. Sec. of the Photographic Exhibition.
 Rev. WM. FARREN WHITE, Hon. Gen. Sec.
 *Members of the Amateur Athletic Sports Committee.

The Annual Cottagers' Flower Show, Industrial Exhibition, and Poultry Show, will be held in the Vicarage Grounds on Thursday, August 9th, 1894.

341 Prizes are offered for competition, 110 of which are for open competition, not being restricted to Cottagers, viz., Poultry, Pigeons, Cage Birds, Rabbits, and Guinea Pigs.

An attractive programme of Instrumental Music will be carried out by Messrs. King & Liddiatt's Brass Band.

There will be an Exhibition of Photographs taken by the members of the Stonehouse Camera Club. Photographs will be sold for the benefit of the Horticultural Society.

A Cricket Match from 2 to 4 has been arranged between the Stonehouse Village Club and the Gloucester Post Office Club.

Amateur Athletic Sports (under A.A.A. and N.C.U. Rules), Pony and Donkey Races, will be held in a Field adjoining the Vicarage Lawn (no extra charge for admission) from 4.15 p.m. to 7.15 p.m. All entries close on Aug. 1st. £10 more in prizes than last year. Application for Entry Forms, &c., to be made to Mr. W. R. Hopkins, Stonehouse, Hon. Sec. to the Sports Committee. First Race starts 4.15.

Extract from the Minutes of the Horticultural Society 1894



Horticultural Show logo 2010

The Horticultural Show in the 21st Century

by **Mattie Ross**

It all started, as so often happens, with a chance remark of “*why don't we*” at a Town Council meeting in 2007. Both Gary Powell and I had helped out in the horticultural tent at Stroud Show, which started us thinking!

Along with Carole Crisp, Clare Sheridan, Sue Latchford, Chris Brine, Lesley Williams and Liz Lawrence, we formed a small working group. With help and advice from many, and some trepidation, we booked the Community Centre for Saturday 26th July 2008. We were fortunate in having the advice of a senior and knowledgeable judge, Mr Jim Jelliman, who steered us through the intricacies of show standard and gave much valuable assistance. That year was a very steep learning curve, and we quickly realised that schedules could not in any way be ambiguous, and sizes had to be metric or imperial and never both.

The working group joined forces with the Stonehouse Partnership, which has organised the Show since then, with support and encouragement from the Town Council. The happy sunflower logo was commissioned from local artist Rob West. The Community Centre has been generous in support of this community venture, as have other businesses in the town.

The show is now entirely self-sufficient, we do the catering and Judges' Lunches “*in house*”, serve refreshments to raise funds and have made many donations to charity over the years. It has gone from strength to strength under the leadership of Simon Lewis, the standard of exhibits are high, the venue is fully accessible and we certainly enjoy it and take great pride in staging the show each year. We are delighted to be celebrating the first decade.



Stonehouse Gardening Club

by Austen Perkins

The first recorded meeting of Stonehouse Gardening Club took place in the Community Centre on 6th November 1974 with a talk and slide presentation on "Annuals" by Miss Bunce.

In December 1974 the committee officers were: Chairman – Mrs Evans, Secretary – Mrs Mealing, Treasurer – Mrs Gabb. There were 14 members present and it was decided to join the Gloucestershire Federation of Gardening Societies, which was then based at Hartpury. In 1977 Fred Cross became Chairman and remained in post for 32 years until his death in 2009. Mrs Hayward was Treasurer for 17 years followed by Beryl Cross, who was Treasurer for 20 years and still remains a member in 2017. Mrs Mealing was secretary for 26 years followed by Jackie Pockett. In recent years other members have shared the roles including Austen Perkins, Daphne Gardner, Cheryl Hall, Cherry Foster and Clive Boardman.



Fred and Beryl Cross who were Chairman and Treasurer of the Club for many years.

In 1976 a competition was started for members for best entry in a nominated subject which changed each month. The person with the best entries over the year was awarded a cup. This ceased at the beginning of the 2000s.

In 1982 the Club adopted a footpath and maintained it for many years to help in a County competition.

The Club meets once a month and aims to provide informative talks on gardening matters with other topics of interest such as local issues or wildlife matters. Nearly every year there has been a full-day coach outing to a nationally important garden and also an evening or half-day trip to a more local venue.

Membership rose to a maximum limit of 60 with a waiting list during the 1980s and 1990s. At the turn of the century numbers dropped but with the aid of adverts in the Stroud News and Journal and the advent of the Summer Jolly, things are now looking up for the Club. Recently members have been involved in helping with Stonehouse in Bloom and are starting to prepare a "bee friendly" plot on Upper Queen's Road by the railway station. A range of plants have been put in, including winter flowering ones to help bees survive during the winter.



Stonehouse Gardening Club members preparing their new bee friendly plot in January 2017.

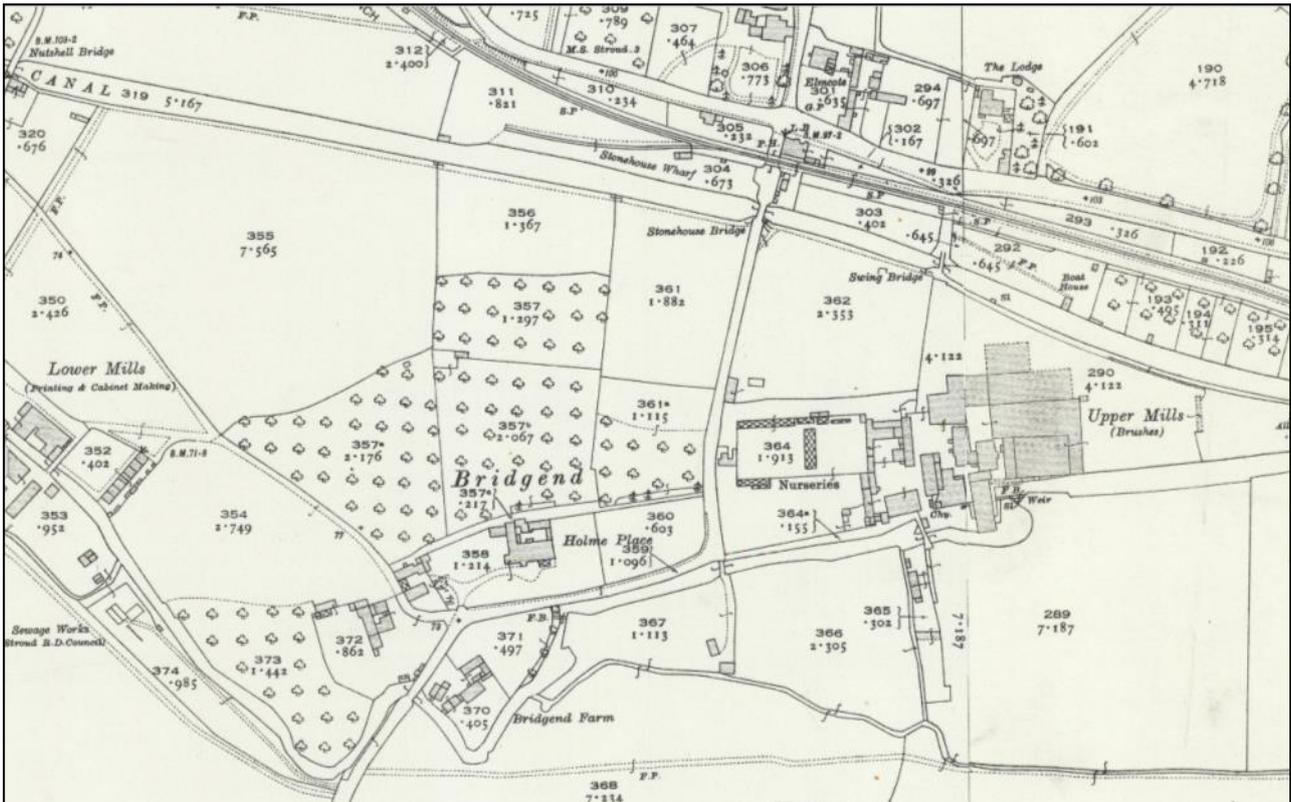
*Left to right:
John Pleasance,
Sue Pleasance,
Georgina Boardman,
Margaret Foxcroft,
Terry Fulton,
Maureen Fulton,
Austen Perkins*

Bridgend Nursery

by Shirley Dicker and Caroline Dicker

Bridgend Nursery was on the east side of Downton Road opposite Holme Place (sometimes called Bridgend House). Holme Place was probably built in 1683 and occupied by clothier families. By the nineteenth century the Davies family owned Upper and Lower Mills, Holme Place and the surrounding lands, including the nursery, as well as the 17th century house on the corner of the lane to Lower Mills (confusingly also called Bridgend House), which still stands today.

The Davies family sold the whole estate in 1904, the nursery being sold as a separate business. In 1911 the nursery was being run by William Driver, who lived in the house, now known as The Old Nursery, on the Downton Road side of the nursery.



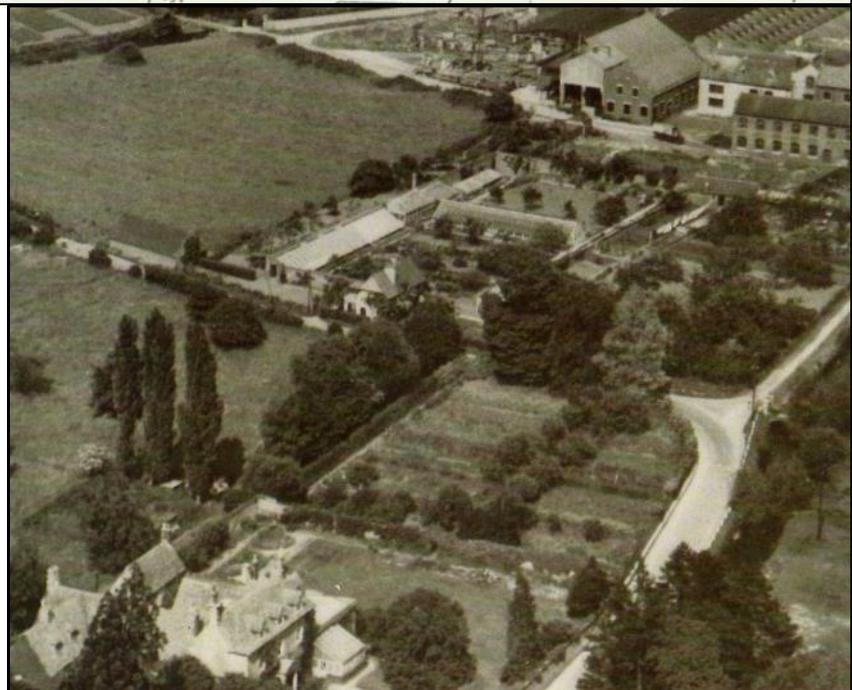
OS map c. 1920 showing the nursery.

Aerial photo 1920s.

Holme Place is at the bottom left corner.

Bridgend Nursery house and greenhouses can be seen in the centre of the photo.

Upper Mills at the top.



We interviewed Sid King about the time when his parents-in-law Cecil and Amy White ran the Bridgend Nursery. His wife Kathlyn White was born in 1933 at the Nursery. Mr King gave us her story which she had written a few years before her death in 2010.

After WW1 George Hubbard bought Bridgend Nursery for his two bachelor sons Bertram and Harry to provide them with employment. The brothers asked their sister Amy to be their housekeeper and florist. She had some training in floristry from a Mr Hind of Chalford. Amy's husband Cecil White also joined the workforce, installing the heating to the greenhouses and helping with the vegetable growing in the nursery. Bertram also ran a greengrocer's shop in Bath Road.

Harry Hubbard died in 1921 and his father George some six years later. Bertram continued in charge of the Nursery until his death in 1937. The ownership of the business came into question but eventually Cecil was declared an equal partner. After paying off Bertram's share to his remaining brothers and sisters, Cecil and Amy took over the business, which they ran together until 1951.

In the early days the nursery business had two shops in Stonehouse where they sold their home-produced soft fruit, vegetables and other goods. One was in Bath Road and the other in the shop on High Street now known as Hurn's Hardware. They had taken over the building from the Post Office which had moved in 1933 to its new premises on the corner of High Street and Queen's Road. Later another shop was built on the end of their house at the Nursery which catered for the residents of the new Bridgend Estate.



Cecil White



Amy White with son Henry

A feature of their business was the florists where cut flowers and wedding and funeral arrangements were sold. This side of the business was managed by Amy White. Benefitting from her floristry training she made magnificent wedding bouquets often featuring arum lilies with ferns trailing to the floor. She made them by standing in front of a mirror and placing each large bloom correctly in the reflection. Wreaths were enormous affairs, being very elaborate and costing about 4/11d or 5/11d. Fresh Christmas wreaths were always taken to the church on Christmas Day and Cecil and Amy would stay up all night making them. The wreaths were delivered by the errand boy on a bicycle. If the roads were icy the wreaths would be tied onto a ladder, fixed to the bicycle, and the whole thing pushed along on foot.

The house and grounds covered 4½ acres, and there were seven greenhouses. In the early days they specialised in chrysanthemums and a few exotics such as freesias and orchids. When wartime restrictions prohibited the use of fuel (coke) to heat the greenhouses for flower production their focus switched to tomatoes and cucumbers. Kathlyn liked helping with the gardening especially in the greenhouses, "pricking out" the rows of seedlings in the trays, or outdoors "puddling in" behind her father as he planted rows of leeks. For a time the Whites rented part of the old kitchen garden of Holme Place and Kathlyn and her mum would often go into the garden to pick the herbs.

Kathlyn had many happy memories of summers in a beautiful garden with neat box hedges around the beds. "There were long rows of raspberries and strawberries, which we all had to help pick. Apple, pear, and plum trees all heavy with fruit – Tom Putt apples were one of the varieties grown, with as many windfalls as I could eat and Victoria Plums as big as pears" she recalled.

Bridgend Nursery house was originally a three-up, three-down gardener's cottage with no "mod-cons". Kathlyn recalls that it was designed as a copy of an Irish crofter's cottage where cattle belonging to the crofter were brought into the middle of the house to generate warmth. This space became their living room.

"The three rooms downstairs had no inside toilet or bathroom, only a tiny scullery with a stone sink. It was so small that the doorway was just behind you when you were at the sink. The toilet was a two-hole wooden seat in an outer shed. Lighting was by two gas mantles over the mantelpiece and cooking was in ovens in a black leaded grate with an open fire. Bath night was a galvanised bath in front of the fire with water heated in saucepans and poured into the bath. (It wasn't until 1940 that one bedroom was partitioned off to form a small bathroom.)"

When Holme Place was demolished, a new estate of three-bedroom semi-detached houses was built in Bridgend which, in 1937, were sold for £495 each. At the same time the Whites modernised their house and opened a third shop.



Kathlyn with her brother Henry outside the house c.1934



Bridgend Nursery house after modernisation

"The old scullery plus the back yard became a large kitchen with a proper sink and gas-stove. Behind that was a storeroom for the shop plus a flush toilet. We got our first telephone around this time. It was attached to the wall, had a jutting out mouthpiece and the receiver was held to your ear. It had a handle to crank to call up the exchange. Our number was Stonehouse 232. Electricity was installed downstairs but upstairs we still used candles to light our way to bed."

The family always entered an exhibit at Stonehouse and Frocester shows, with Amy White often judging the fruit or vegetable classes. Lewis and Pagett, other Stonehouse

nurserymen, always had one end of the flower marquee at Stroud show for a display of cacti. Kathlyn had a shelf of her own cacti in one of her dad's greenhouses. Mr Pagett often came to see her dad before the show to borrow some of the cacti to enhance his display. He always returned them with a few more of his own, which were added to Kathlyn's collection. This lasted until she was married with her own home.

During Kathlyn's childhood, milk was delivered by Jack Knee, the milkman from Leonard Stanley, by horse and cart. The milk was measured from large pails into your own milk jug in graduated measures from 1 gill to 2 pints. She remembered the "stop-me-and-buy-one" ice cream man on a tricycle. It was not actually ice cream that he sold but frozen ice-sticks, triangular and 1d each. Also there were elvers, still alive, sold by the pint from a galvanised bath on a wooden trailer behind a bicycle. The lack of motorised vehicles "meant that the roads were our playgrounds for marbles, whipping-tops, hopscotch and skipping ropes."

Kathlyn's first vehicle was an Austin 7 van - green with running boards and "trafficators" (direction indicators) which sprang out at right angles and lit up. Her mother drove and delivered produce to the two shops, taking anything spare to Gloucester Market and buying other supplies. Their next car was a Morris Oxford saloon, which Kathlyn learnt to drive in 1950.



The Old Nursery house in Downton Road in 2017

Second World War

Because they ran a family business they had never had a holiday until 1939 when they went to Weston super Mare. Until then Kathlyn had never seen the sea and sand. The day they were due to come home, war was declared, so they filled the van with sand to make sand bags to protect the windows. All the local men on Bridgend Estate dug trenches. These were never used, but made a great playground for the children.

The Whites took in an evacuee, but the boy was a “*hardened Eastender*” and Kathlyn’s mother could not control him. He was re-billeted to her Aunt at Chalford who took in the difficult evacuees that no-one else would look after. Kathleen remembered two evacuees arriving and being stood on a blanket to catch the fleas while their clothes were taken off and burnt. She recalled having to teach them how to eat with knives and forks and persuading them to have a bath - at which they screamed blue murder!

The greengrocery shops became grocery shops with the onset of food rationing, when the Ministry of Food required basic rations to be sold at all local shops to reduce the amount of travelling. Kathlyn’s job was to weigh up the sugar from large sacks into 2 lb blue paper sugar bags.

“I was allowed to cut out the coupons or points from the ration books, or to cancel the appropriate page with a blue china graph pencil. Another job for small fingers was to count the points cut out from the ration books into hundreds, and tie them with cotton before they were then taken each quarter to the Ministry of Food at Rowcroft in Stroud.”

“I remember the excitement when the first consignment of bananas after the war was due to arrive. Word spread like wildfire around the estate that there were ‘bananas at Whites’. A queue had formed before the delivery arrived.” She had never seen a banana before, only coloured pictures. Imagine the disappointment when the crate was opened to reveal tiny green things smaller than one’s little fingers and quite inedible. *“The imported fruit arrived in wooden crates and orange boxes were highly prized for furniture. My first bookcase was an upturned orange box which lasted for years!”*



Amy White with baby Kathlyn and Bonzo the dog c.1934



Playing in the trench

Her father had been in the Navy in World War One and became a fire watcher in 1939. He would go off with a tin hat at dusk for a night’s fire-watching and looking for approaching aircraft.

“I was in bed with tonsillitis at the time of V.E. Day and from my deep bedroom windowsill sat to watch the street party held in Haven Avenue, Bridgend, for all the local children. The food consisted of jam and paste sandwiches, raspberry buns, jelly or junket.”

Kathlyn’s mother Amy was very over-worked, caring for her family and the business. She had four children, two of whom died as babies. Sid told us that the two babies who died were buried in their grandparents’ grave. Amy was responsible for running two shops and doing all the driving, deliveries and collections as well as looking after the staff. She was also expected to do all the paperwork. She handled money matters related to the banks or for the Ministry of Food officials, and liaised with the headmasters or doctors. The only help she had was one full day from a washer woman, Mrs Scrivens, from Paganhill. A wood fire had to be lit under the boiler early on washday in an outhouse in the back yard and Mrs Scrivens spent all day amid the clouds of steam until she left to go home around 4pm. The iron was one that you heated on the grate.

Kathlyn remembers life in Stonehouse in the 1930s and 1940s

"We wore practical clothes which lasted till they wore out. My early dresses were made by a little woman in Stonehouse. Mother wore a wrap-around pinafore all day and I remember her in nothing else until they retired through ill health in 1950. Father never went into a clothes shop in his whole life. He died in 1983 aged 89. A new suit or overcoat would mean a one-off appointment at Bramwell Parker's in Stonehouse for a made to measure garment and you were ushered straight into a fitting room. Shirts, underwear etc were chosen entirely by mother. Shoe purchases saw mother collect three or four possibilities to bring home. They were tried on and the rejected sizes plus payment were returned to the shop. All our clothes and materials came from Stonehouse: Bradley's for shoes; Mullin's for clothes and material; Parker's for tailoring and Godwin's for haberdashery."

In those days meat came from Jack Price, the butcher, who was also the unofficial bookie. Groceries came from the Co-op and milk and bread were delivered. The family never went to Gloucester or Cheltenham for shopping and Stroud was a rare outing, usually for the "pictures" at the Ritz or the Gaumont. There was no NHS. Childish ailments were treated by three doctors in Stonehouse - Dr Murray-Browne for the gentry, old Dr Prout, who was succeeded by Dr Kinsella, (who was Kathlyn's doctor), and Dr McFarland.

Cecil and Amy White sold the Nursery to C.R. Croome in 1950. Sid and Kathlyn were never actively involved in managing the Nursery and they moved away from Gloucestershire at the start of their married life. But running their own business was a dream which they fulfilled on their return to Gloucestershire in 1964, when they bought the Forge Bakery in Dursley, which they ran until they retired.

Sid still lives in Dursley and has preserved the memories that his wife wrote down as well as the family photographs showing life at Bridgend Nursery. Thanks to him for sharing those memories and photos with us.



Sid King in 2016

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SHG Oral History interviews - Sid King November 2016

White family photographs courtesy of Sid King

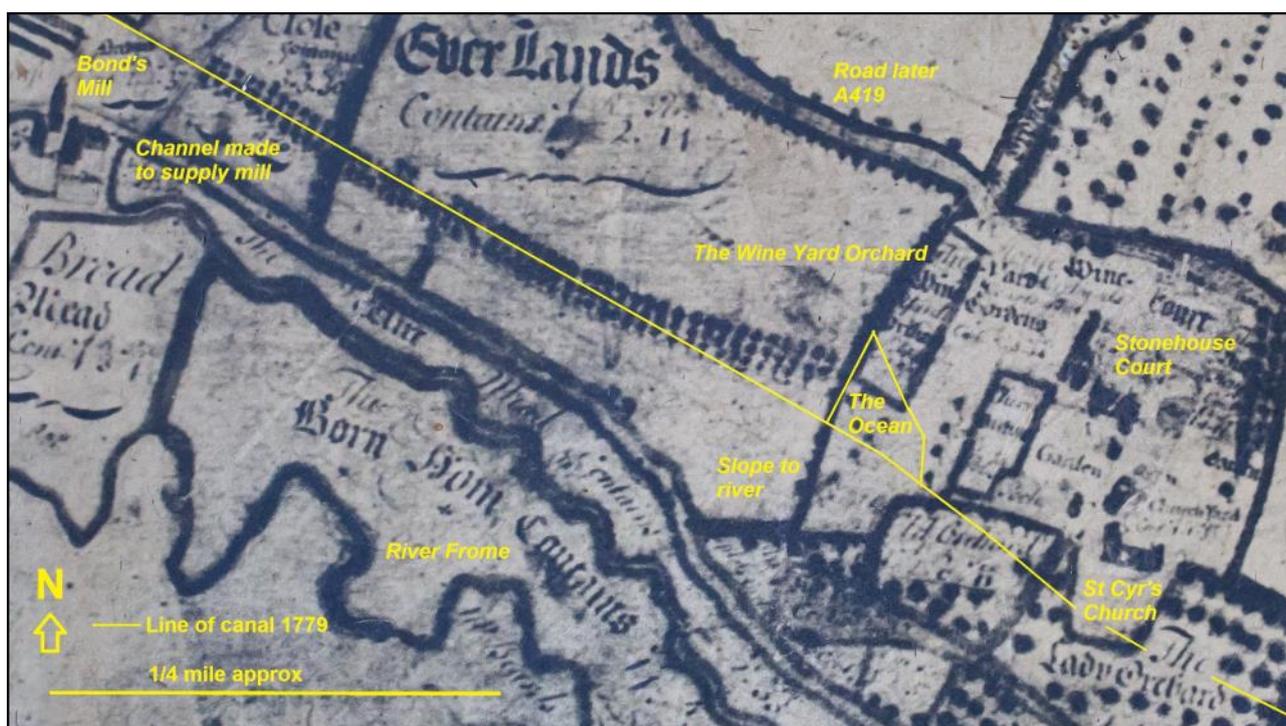
Other photographs from SHG Collection

Stonehouse vineyards past and present

by Janet Hudson

Vines are known to have been cultivated in England from Roman times. Domesday Book, reporting in 1086, lists at least 40 vineyards in England, but the only one it records in Gloucestershire is at Stonehouse. Its area is given as two 'arpenz', thought to be about one and a half acres, or about 0.6 hectare (Domesday).

The Domesday vineyard is likely to have lain west of the manor house, Stonehouse Court, where there was an enclosure called the Wine Yard Orchard. In medieval times land called Winyards may have extended west along the south-facing riverside slope towards Bond's Mill, as well as including the area called Wine Yard Gardens east of the Wine Yard Orchard. However, despite the name, no references to vine cultivation have been found in surviving Stonehouse records from medieval times onwards (Wine Yard Orchard).



Stonehouse Court area, from manor map c.1730, with annotations:
courtesy of Stonehouse Court Hotel, 2015

A stream has always run down the west side of Wine Yard Orchard, originally joining the River Frome. This map of c.1730 appears to show it meeting a channel serving Bond's Mill. This line is still suggested by field boundaries in 1775, but when the Stroudwater Canal opened in 1779, the stream was obstructed. This allowed some of the sloping land to flood to the level of the canal, perhaps deliberately. The result was a passing or turning bay, known as The Ocean, which is shown on a plan of the completed canal made in 1781 (Ocean).

The monk and historian William of Malmesbury wrote, in about 1125, that the wines from the vale of Gloucester were of a comparable sweetness to those from France. Wine production is thought to have declined in England from the 13th century onwards, perhaps due to a changing climate, or to good wine supplies from France. The gentleman traveller Fynes Moryson wrote in the early 17th century that *"in Glostershire, they made Wine of old, which no doubt many parts would yeeld at this day, but that the inhabitants forbear to plant Vines, aswell because they are served plentifully, and at a good rate with French wines, as for that the hilles most fit to beare Grapes, yeeld more commoditie by feeding of Sheepe and Cattell"* (Vineyards).



In 2013 vines returned to Stonehouse as part of the Woodchester Valley Vineyard group, which produces white, rosé and sparkling wines. The vines enjoy the same southerly aspect in the Frome Valley as the Domesday vineyard did, but this time on the slopes of Doverow Hill, and over an area of about 25 acres, or 10 hectares.

Woodchester Valley Vineyard looking south from Doverow Hill, summer 2016.

Vines take several years to reach maturity, but the Stonehouse vineyard is now producing good yields. The company won three medals, including a gold, at the UK Wine Awards in 2017.

Part of the vineyard on Doverow Hill in autumn sun.
© Gerry Chance 2016



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Domesday: outline history at <http://www.englishwineproducers.co.uk/>; The Domesday Book online <http://www.domesdaybook.co.uk/> , search for 'vines'; approximate arpent value <https://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/arpent> between 5/6 and one acre.

Ocean: map of Stonehouse manor for Levi Ball, c1730, surviving only as a photograph, GA PC/365, and at Stonehouse Court Hotel; plan of proposed canal 1775, GA D1278/P/3; plan of completed canal 1781, GA D1180/10/2.

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Dr Francis Bond and a Stonehouse “*Pioneer Enterprise*”

by Janet Hudson

Dr Francis Bond is an important figure in the history of public health in Gloucestershire, and he also left a significant legacy in Stonehouse.

Medical Officer of Health

Francis Thomas Bond was born in Plymouth, Devon, in 1834, the son of a naval officer. He trained in Birmingham, London, Paris and Edinburgh, and was registered as a medical practitioner in 1860. He was a physician and a professor of both medicine and chemistry at Queen’s Hospital, Birmingham, and was married in 1865. In 1873 he was appointed as the first Medical Officer of Health for the new Local Government Board of the Gloucestershire Combined Sanitary District, a position which he held for 38 years, until his death in 1911 “*in his 78th year*”. He lived with his growing family at various addresses in Gloucester, spending his last days at Beaufort Buildings in Spa Road.



Image from a copper printing block,
advertising *The Temperer* milk and beer cooler:
Dr Bond's Patent.
Hudson family property.

Dr Bond was a prolific writer of letters and pamphlets throughout his life. His many publications on all aspects of health ranged from *On the pathology of rheumatism* (1858), to *A plea for the more general practice of skipping as an unsurpassed form of home gymnastics* (1906). Throughout his time as Medical Officer of Health he did a great deal of bacteriological and practical research and patented at least eighteen inventions designed to promote public health. Their subjects included office filing, hygienic bed quilt stuffing, improved skipping ropes, gas stoves, ice storage, disinfection, sterilisation, ventilation, filtration, the heating and cooling of liquids, infusions and extracts of vegetables, butter and cheese making, and milk quality (MOH).

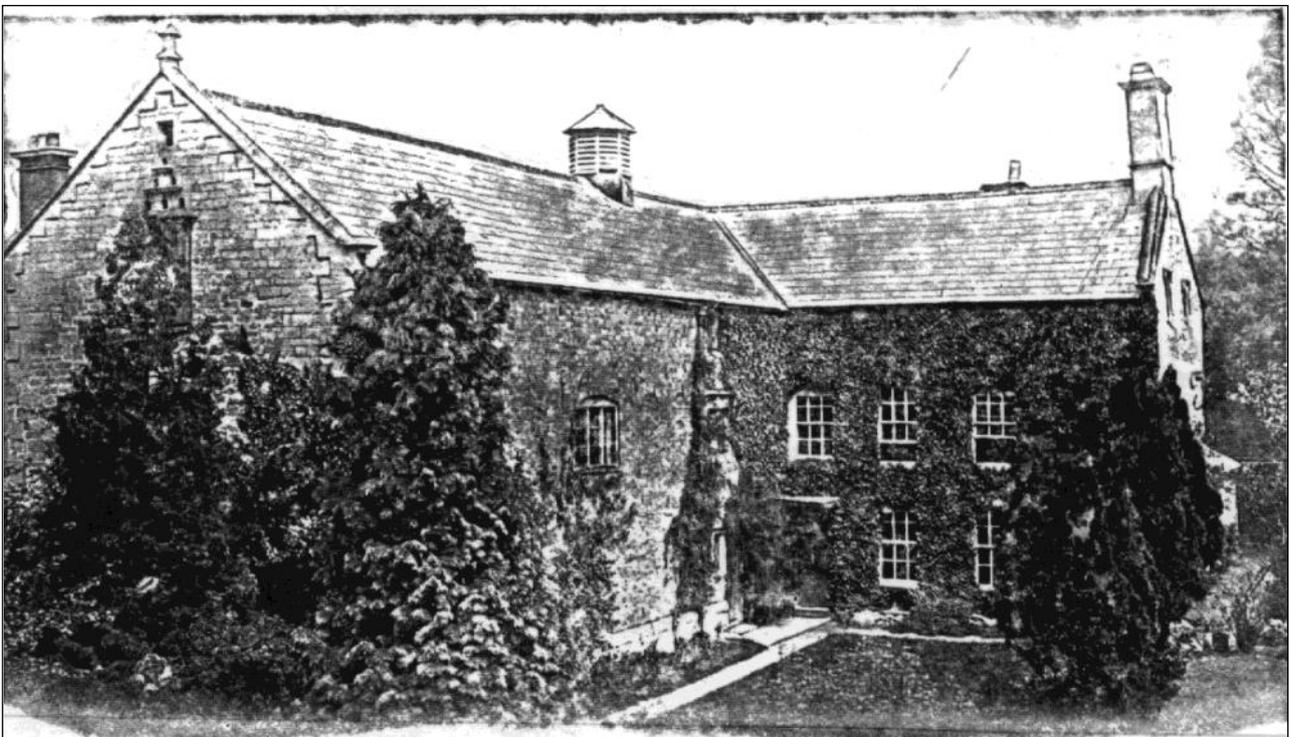
Vaccination

Described in his obituary as “*a keen controversialist*”, Dr Bond took a great interest in vaccination against smallpox. In 1853 parliament had made this compulsory throughout the UK for infants up to 3 months old, extended to fourteen years old in 1867, with severe fines for parents who refused. However there was opposition from those concerned about contamination of the vaccine, the effectiveness of the immunity conferred, and the philosophy of vaccination. After much debate, those refusing to have their children vaccinated were permitted in 1898 to register for exemption after examination by magistrates, and were the first to be termed “*conscientious objectors*”. In 1907 exemption was allowed on a simple declaration, and smallpox vaccination effectively ceased to be compulsory. It was against this background that Dr Bond contended with a smallpox epidemic in Gloucester in 1896, when a temporary isolation hospital was erected on the Stroud Road. Besides writing many letters and newspaper articles in support of vaccination, he became the secretary of the Jenner Society, set up in 1896 and headed by the Lord Lieutenant of Gloucestershire and a host of gentry and medical professionals. Its first object was “*to counteract the mischievous efforts so persistently made to discredit the name and work of Edward Jenner M.D. of Berkeley*”. This society does not appear to have continued beyond 1907, but its namesake was re-established in 2010 (Vaccination).

Dairy industry

Perhaps having accepted that vaccination could not be imposed, and by now in his seventies, Dr Bond turned his attention to another lifelong interest, the scientific basis of agriculture, and in particular the dairy industry. In 1884 he had helped to found the Dairy Conference Association in Gloucester, and in 1889 he was appointed the secretary of the Gloucester Dairy School. He had become interested in vegetarianism, or at least the reduction of meat in the diet, and in 1906 published the pamphlets *The Dairy v the Slaughter House*, *The Claims of Cheese as a Substitute for Meat*, and *In Praise of Rum and Milk*.

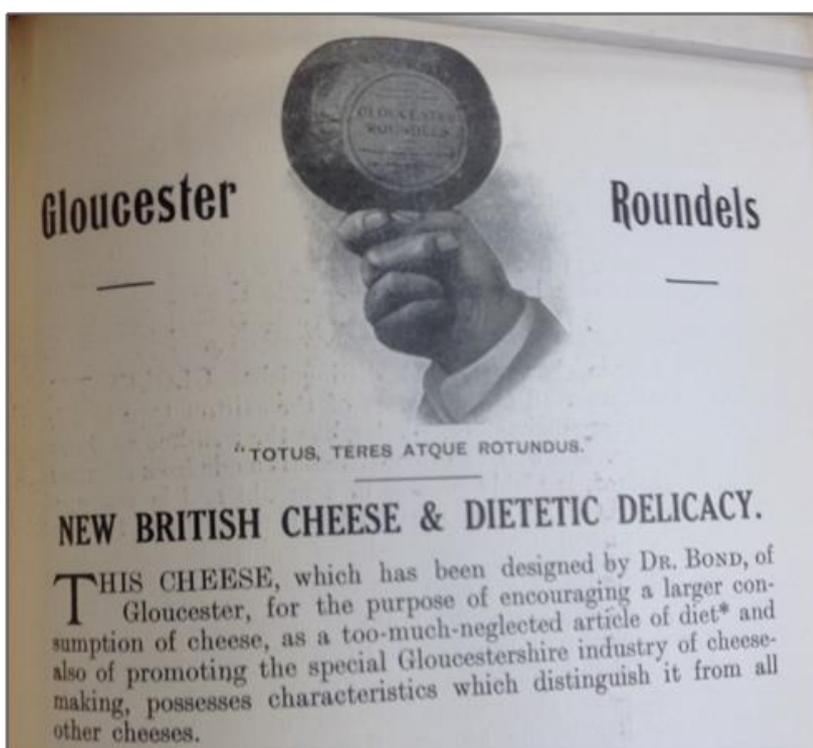
In August 1908, Dr Bond sent out letters and information to potential backers about “*an effort which I have been engaged during the last three years in making, in the intervals of leisure which my official duties have allowed me, one of the objects of which is the revival of the old established but now fast disappearing association of the county of Gloucester with the industry of cheese making*”. Two years earlier, by what he called a “*happy accident*”, he had taken a seven-year lease of former malthouse premises in Stonehouse High Street, “*known as Apsley House*”, from the then owner Henry Holmes, a retired mechanical engineer. He wrote that “*the products of the Dairy...have been overshadowed by those of the Slaughter House, to an extent which is not creditable either to our civilisation, our intelligence or our humanity*”. It may be no coincidence that in 1906, W.A. Sibly, an enthusiastic vegetarian, had joined the staff of Wycliffe College, Stonehouse, where his father was headmaster. Dr Bond described the premises as being in “*the picturesque and very accessible village of Stonehouse, on the high road between Gloucester and Stroud, within a few minutes’ walk of stations on the Great Western and Midland lines of railway and in the centre of the great milk producing district of the Severn Valley*”. The land formerly farmed with the property had, by this date, been reduced to a small field between it and the railway, offering stabling and some pigsties. The house would accommodate the staff, and the converted malthouse had a ground floor dairy, with cheese making facilities on the upper floors.



*Apsley House, or The Old Dairy, Stonehouse High Street, 1908.
Image from a copper printing block,
illustrating Dr Bond’s publicity for the Severn Valley Dairy Products Company.
Hudson family property.*

The project would be known as “*the Severn Valley Dairy Products Company*”. The intention was not to supply liquid milk, as he believed that urban areas would in future be supplied by using powdered milk. Rather he planned to promote small and varied cheeses to appeal especially to “*the old, the young, the poor and the feeble*”, on grounds of both nutrition and economy. He believed that most such customers did not want large cheeses such as whole Double Gloucesters, so he had developed a new small cheese called the “*Gloucester Roundel*” - ball shaped and of a soft unpressed Stilton type, average weight two pounds (almost 1 kg). He also offered a new form of soft cheese called Casona, for vegetarians who found cheese indigestible, and the same cheese, reduced to Casona Cream, to be used like butter, and good for young children and invalids. His concern to make his cheeses acceptable to vegetarians suggests that he was using vegetable rennet. The Spanish word “*casona*” means a large rural house, often linked to dairy farming, and is today the name of a Mexican-style soft cheese producer in the USA. Dr Bond may have given his new cheese this name in order to promote it as competition against foreign cheese imports, one of his stated aims. He also hoped that cheese production would encourage small-scale agriculture, and intended to offer education in such matters as poultry care, pig keeping, gardening, fruit growing and bee keeping, and how to make them pay. (Project).

In 1910 Dr Bond produced a report on his “*Pioneer Enterprise*” so far. The public taste was turning to small cheeses due to “*life in flats, the necessities of the unattached wage earner, the improvement of taste and the increase of dyspepsia*”. Sales of all the cheeses were doing well, and he hoped to add production of a dietary drink made from the whey, rather than using it for pig feed. Having funded the experiment himself, he was now looking for “*Courage, Capital and Capacity*” to expand it. However, the census return for 1911 apparently shows no staff resident in the dairy premises, and Dr Bond himself died in December that year. Large-scale investment does not seem to have been forthcoming, and Dr Bond’s “*Pioneer Enterprise*” did not long outlive him. In 1913 Norman Westlake Hudson took over the dairy as a liquid milk supplier, and in 1915 the Hudson family bought the premises from Mrs Anne Pegler of Leckhampton, daughter of Henry Holmes. The Severn Valley Dairy produced its own cheese up to the 1930s, and milk and cream until 1975. Before 1939 the rear field housed Dolly, the dairy horse. Later chickens were kept, and a few bullocks were fattened there by a local farmer (Dairy).



Advertisement for 'Gloucester Roundels' by Cater, Stoffell and Fortt Ltd, grocers of Bath and Bristol, c.1910.



Milk bottle from The Severn Valley Dairy, made to take a cardboard top, mid 20C. Hudson family property.

Dr Francis Bond was a person of great energy, enterprise and invention, which he devoted to improving public health throughout Gloucestershire. Although his dairy project in Stonehouse took a different form after his death, The Severn Valley Dairy would not have been so readily established in 1913 without his work in converting the building and developing local milk supply contacts. He also recognised the commercial advantages of Stonehouse High Street, which are as important today as they were a century ago.



Items found during work on The Old Dairy, Stonehouse c.2000: Dr Bond's Patent Film Filter, Dr Bond's Regenerating Firebricks, [Dr B]ond's [R]egulatin[g ?Filt]er. Hudson family property

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St Cyr's Church

by Janet Hudson and Vicki Walker

The church and vicarage

In Saxon times Stonehouse was probably part of the ecclesiastical territory of Frocester Minster, which would have sent out visiting priests. William de Ow, or Eu, thought to be a relative of William the Conqueror, held Stonehouse at the time of the Domesday Book in 1086. The manor boundaries may have been defined before 1066, and the parish ones almost matched them. The old parish included Ebley, Cainscross and Westrip. William de Ow/Eu forfeited his lands to the Crown after his rebellion in 1095, but before then he may have given the advowson, or patronage,



Painting of Stonehouse Church from the south west, date and artist unknown.

of Stonehouse to Elstow Abbey in Bedfordshire, founded in 1078 by his "cousin" Judith. Elstow Abbey held the advowson, the right to appoint the vicar subject to the Bishop of Worcester's approval, until the 16th century. However, Stonehouse Church itself may have been founded by the de Clare lords of Chepstow, who were the next lords of the manor. Chepstow Priory later owned a share in the church.

There is evidence of Norman architecture which was incorporated in later buildings, indicating that the present church may have been founded as early as 1100. The dedication to the child martyr St Cyr is unusual in England, but was popular in early medieval France. Most of the Norman remains were lost during the rebuild of 1854 but there may be an original Norman arch over the inner door in the entrance porch. There is still a mason's mark in the tower which is said to date from before 1300.

The church was probably rebuilt in the 14th century, the date of the lower part of the west tower. During the 15th century the top of the tower was added, with the square stair turret, and other additions were made to the building. There is still a 15th century window in the nave. In the 16th century the Reformation of the Roman Catholic Church began in Europe. In England, royal politics led to a complete break. Henry VIII made himself head of the English church in 1534, and proceeded to the Dissolution of the Monasteries, including Elstow Abbey and Chepstow Priory.

In around 1540 the patronage of St Cyr's was taken over by the Crown. It remains a "Crown Living" today. Technically the vicar should still be appointed by the Crown but that duty has been suspended. In 1541 Stonehouse became part of the new diocese of Gloucester, taken out of the dioceses of Hereford and Worcester. In 1553-1558, Queen Mary Tudor attempted to restore England to the Roman Catholic church, but after the accession of Elizabeth I in 1558 the protestant Church of England was established.



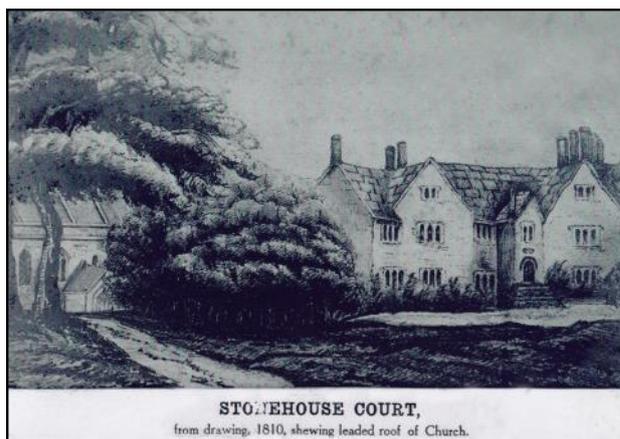
A drawing of the vicarage, Stonehouse in 1854. This building, built in 1684, was demolished and a new one built in 1858. This in turn was sold in 1954 and eventually became flats.

In 1584 a survey showed that the "glebe" land belonging to the vicarage came to about 30 acres, spread in parcels in various fields. The largest area lay around the present Elm Road and Quietways, where a vicarage existed by 1533. It was rebuilt on the same site in 1684. The vicarage was linked to the church by the ancient footpath known as "Church Way", which still runs down beside the Berryfield.

In 1601, Daniel Fowler rebuilt the manor house, Stonehouse Court. The church was closely connected to the manor house, as shown on this drawing dated 1810. The last part of Church Way ran through the Court grounds straight to the north door of the church. This was later diverted to create Church Lane, and boundary walls were built.

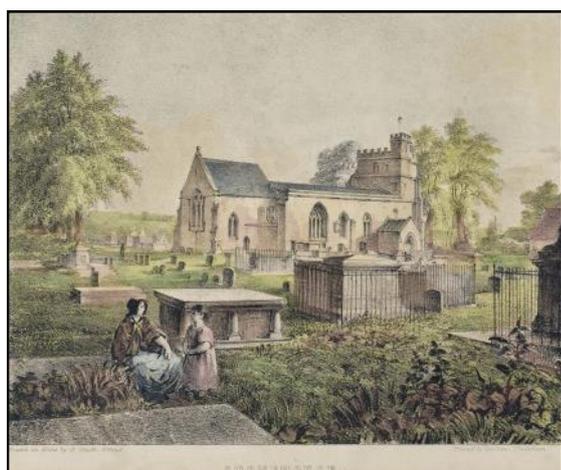
Stonehouse is not known to have suffered disturbance to the church buildings during the civil wars and political upheavals of the 17th century. However, between 1690 and 1720 many repairs were done to the church building including a new roof. The nave was extended to the south in 1746.

There had always been one bell, but by 1703 four bells dated 1636 had mysteriously arrived. It is said that they came from Eastington, where the owner of the manor house objected to the noise being too close. Another was added to make a set of six, one being recast in 1768.



The Stroudwater canal was built between 1775 and 1779. This engraving from 1781 shows two barges, one rowed and one man-hauled, passing the church.

The original churchyard lay on the south side of the church, although more land was added on the north side. In 1775 plans were afoot to build the Stroudwater Canal, and the canal company wanted to buy a piece of the old south churchyard. After complex negotiations the sale was agreed, and the canal was opened in 1779. The canal company bought other land from Mrs Ball at Stonehouse Court, but it seems that although the vicar, John Pettat, wanted some of this land in compensation, he eventually settled for money.



A lithograph of the church from the north in about 1835, before its rebuilding.

In 1852-54 the church was rebuilt. The main body of the old church was demolished and a new building constructed in the same style. The original tower was kept and possibly the chancel, and some of the older features were incorporated in the new building, such as some medieval windows, and part of the font. A new font copied from the old Norman design was made by local stone mason William Taylor. The new church was opened in January 1855. Some ancient items were preserved such as the Breeches Bible and the parish chest, but many were sold, or disappeared.

In 1884 the church was restored, and side chapels and a new vestry added, with further work since.



St Cyr's Church from the south c.1912, much as it is today.

The clergy

A vicar was appointed to the parish by the Bishop of Worcester between 1218 and 1225. A list of vicars and their dates can be seen on the church wall next to the main door.

The first recorded vicar was Sir Geoffrey in 1225, given a courtesy title as a clergyman. Apart from names, little is known about the clergy before the 16th century. Richard Brown, vicar from 1515 to 1554, also held church positions elsewhere and was not always in Stonehouse. He weathered most of the Reformation process, until he resigned from Stonehouse in 1554 after he was found to have married. How the resulting gap was covered is not clear, but Edward Fowler was the vicar from 1556 to 1561, during the change from catholic Queen Mary to protestant Elizabeth I. His father previously had the "farm", or lease, of the glebe land under Richard Brown. In 1558, Stonehouse manor was bought by two local clothiers, Edward's brother William Fowler, and William Sandford, both of whom also leased the glebe. Several of Edward Fowler's successors only stayed for a short time. However, Thurston Shaw, vicar from 1574 to 1610, settled in, and most vicars after him lived in the parish.



George Whitefield, locum for Samson Harris, 1737

The list states that in 1644 the vicar John Norris, a local man, was replaced by "dissenters" but was reinstated in 1661 after the restoration of Charles II. These "dissenters" were two moderate Presbyterians. Thomas Wallace married into the Fowler family, and was buried in Stonehouse on 2nd January 1654. His successor Thomas Thache was appointed by Oliver Cromwell, but showed some sympathy for the restoration of the monarchy, and in 1661 was made rector of Sapperton when John Norris was reinstated. Between 1670 and 1722 William Robson, Robert Ratcliff and John Hilton presided over the parish at a time of great prosperity in the local cloth industry, which encouraged social stability.

In 1727 Samson Harris became vicar. He was a popular man who increased the size of the congregation so that the extension built in 1746 was needed. In 1737 George Whitefield took charge for two months while Harris was away. He was a friend of John and Charles Wesley, and one of the founders of Methodism. He attracted large crowds to hear him preach. Depression in the cloth industry was encouraging protest and religious nonconformity at this time, but Whitefield made little progress in Stonehouse, mainly due to the popularity of Harris. However, he was chaplain to the Countess of Huntingdon, who took up his ideas. Ebley Chapel, founded in 1797, later joined the Countess of Huntingdon's Connexion.



Funeral hatchment of John Pettat, 1811



Henry Cripps rebuilt the church and vicarage.

In 1763 Samson Harris died and John Pettat took over as rector and vicar. He resigned as vicar in 1798, when his son Thomas Pettat took over, but remained as rector until his death in 1811. Henry Cripps (1826-1861) oversaw the rebuilding of the church by 1855, and rebuilt the vicarage in 1858, but left the running of the parish to curates, including Washington Hallen (1834-1837) and William Lewis Mills (1838-1857). Later vicars included William Farren White (1861-1899) a well-known local naturalist who founded the Horticultural Society, Rupert Waugh (1911-1920) who spent some time as a chaplain to the Forces in the Great War, Leonard Dawson (1920-1937), Geoffrey Highmore (1937-1949) who saw the parish through the difficult days of the Second World War, Frank Springford (1950-1954), Hilary Way (1955-1968), Lionel Ford (1968-1982), and James Harris (1982-2002), all memorable in different ways. In 2017 the Priest in Charge is Charles Minchin (2003 to present).

The church in local government and education

The medieval church had always contributed to public order through its moral and legal authority over family affairs and probate, reinforced by the church courts, and by public penance for such offences as adultery and drunkenness. Churchwardens had the care of parish finances and property, and kept a watch on parish affairs on behalf of the parishioners. However, concern about poverty and vagrancy led the Tudor monarchs to use the church in local government, alongside the existing manor and royal courts. Henry VIII ordered the keeping of registers of christenings, marriages and burials in 1538, to be kept in the parish chest. In Stonehouse the first surviving register is a transcript made in 1598, with the first entry on 16th June 1558 (St Cyr's Day). In 1555 Queen Mary required parishes to maintain the highways.

In the reign of Elizabeth I the Poor Law was developed. In 1572 it became compulsory for parishes to raise poor rates and relieve the poor. The churchwardens, surveyors of the highways and overseers of the poor would meet under the vicar's chairmanship, usually in the church vestry. By the 18th century these Vestry meetings were as important to civil life as the manorial authorities.



The Stonehouse parish chest, once used to store the parish records. It had three locks under a law of 1552, the vicar and churchwardens each holding a key.



The National School bell, datestone 1832

Clergy and churchwardens were both concerned in the movement towards the education of the general population which developed in the later 17th century. In 1703 the vicar and others petitioned Queen Anne for a grammar school to be set up in the parish. This was unsuccessful, but Stonehouse did have a charity school by 1720, teaching twelve poor children, probably in the church or the vicarage. The church continued to encourage literacy and education. In 1763 the vicar Samson Harris left his library of books to the parish, although they have not survived.

In 1775 two charity schools were founded, in Stonehouse and Ebley. There are wall plaques over the church door with the names of the benefactors, erected in 1808 by vicar John Pettat. The Stonehouse school was at the Swan Inn (now Orchard House). In 1832 this school moved to new buildings next to Church Way, off Elm Road, and was affiliated to the National Society, which aimed to provide elementary education to the children of the poor, according to the principles of the Church of England. This National School was taken over by Gloucestershire County Council in 1905, and developed into Park Infants and Junior Schools. Ebley also became a National School.

In 1837 a chapelry was set up in Ebley and Cainscross, served by the new church of St Matthew, which gave the Ebley school a home in 1877. In 1894, civil parish councils were established, and Cainscross became a separate ecclesiastical parish. St Cyr's church relinquished its local government powers and reverted to its spiritual and moral role.

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Frank Woodyard, 1918 – 2012

by Jim Dickson

This is a companion to the article entitled *Hoffmann's "Shadow Factory"* which was published in Issue 1 of this Journal.

Introduction

Frank was born on 5th February 1918 in Chelmsford, Essex, the fourth of six children of Harry Woodyard and his wife Ella. From around 1912, Harry owned a cycle store in Writtle, a beautiful village just to the west of Chelmsford. He was an agent for Raleigh bicycles and, according to his advert, would repair bicycles "*and anything on wheels*" (including cars as they became more popular). He also sold gramophones, paraffin and petrol - and ice creams around the village from his tricycle named "*Stop Me and Buy One*".

Frank married Rose Mary Collins in 1939 and they had 3 children: Margaret, Douglas and Peter. Rose died in 1976, aged 56. Some years after Rose died, Frank married Beatrice, a widow (she and her husband had been friends of Frank and Rose for many years). Frank and Beatrice lived together in Orchard Court for some 19 years.



Frank and Beatrice in 2010

Hoffmann's factory in Chelmsford

Frank worked at this factory from 1934 until he moved to Stonehouse in late 1940. He remembered that, before the Second World War, German Junkers Ju 52 passenger aircraft flew regularly over the Chelmsford factory. They were a long way from where they ought to have been (Croydon, which was the airport for London at that time, is south of the city; Chelmsford is some 30 miles NE of London). Presumably these aircraft were collecting intelligence. The Marconi Company had a factory nearby making military communications equipment and transmitter aerials for Britain's first air defence radar network which would also, presumably, have attracted the attention of German intelligence officers. Frank commented that nothing ever seemed to be done to stop these flights. (It is known that the Luftwaffe (German air force) gathered extensive intelligence before the outbreak of war. Indeed, the German Air Ministry published comprehensive information on our air forces, anti-aircraft defences, war economic targets, flying conditions, etc in June 1939. **Ref.:** Overy, page 70 and Rennison, page 23)

Early in the war, the Hoffmann Company asked for volunteers to move to their new "*shadow factory*" which was being built in Stonehouse. Frank was clear that people were given the option; there was no compulsion to move. He volunteered since he thought that Stonehouse would be a safer location than Chelmsford. (During the war there were three bombing raids on the Chelmsford factory, the worst in December 1944 when a V2 rocket killed 39 people and injured 138, 47 seriously).

Frank recalled that, early in the war, productivity was poor at the Chelmsford factory because people were spending a lot of time in the air-raid shelters (sirens were going off all the time – presumably because of its proximity to London). Some people would walk home – even 15 minutes away; some stayed at home and did not return to work that day. Night shift workers would go straight to the shelters when they arrived at work, then go home in the morning.

Hoffmann's "*shadow factory*" in Stonehouse

Between 1939 and 1941 this new factory was built to back up (and supplement) the parent factory in Chelmsford. It produced large numbers of bearings for aircraft, and steel cores for bullets. The latter were made in enormous quantities and sent to munitions factories to be made into bullets [both 0.303 inch (7.7 mm) calibre, the standard size for British Army rifles and, at the start of the war, for aircraft) and 20 mm (0.787 inch) cannon for anti-aircraft guns and aircraft later in the war]. According to Frank, the manufacture of bullet cores was done by young women.



0.303 inch calibre bullets kept by Frank.

When Stonehouse had been chosen as the location for the new factory, the Government did not anticipate that France would be defeated, and occupied, by German armed forces in summer 1940 – bringing their bomber airfields much closer to SW England. A key reason for the choice of location was its proximity to the GWR and Midland railway stations, giving good connections with London and the parent factory in Chelmsford, and with the industrial centres of the Midlands. It was located conveniently between the two main Rolls Royce aero-engine factories in Bristol and Derby. The bearings they made in the new factory were mainly for Rolls Royce (including for Merlin engines), for

Napier (plain, non-rolling bearings) and for de Havilland (for the Goblin which powered the Vampire). Each Lancaster bomber was fitted with some 950 Hoffmann bearings.

Hoffmann made the steel for the bearings at a works in Sheffield. The balls were made from steel rod, cut into lengths in a turret machine, ground into balls, then hardened. The balls and rollers were made in Chelmsford then supplied for assembly, with races made at the Stonehouse factory, into ball and roller bearings. Frank remembered surface grinding batches of 2500 per hour of some sizes of races after they had been hardened.

Frank worked at the Stonehouse factory from December 1940 until his retirement in 1983 at the age of 65. The buildings were not complete when he arrived. Since he believed they were being built in secret, Frank had imagined that they would be located in forest or hidden in some other way. He was therefore shocked when he saw that the factory was being built in the middle of an open field! He would have been even more shocked had he known that the German air

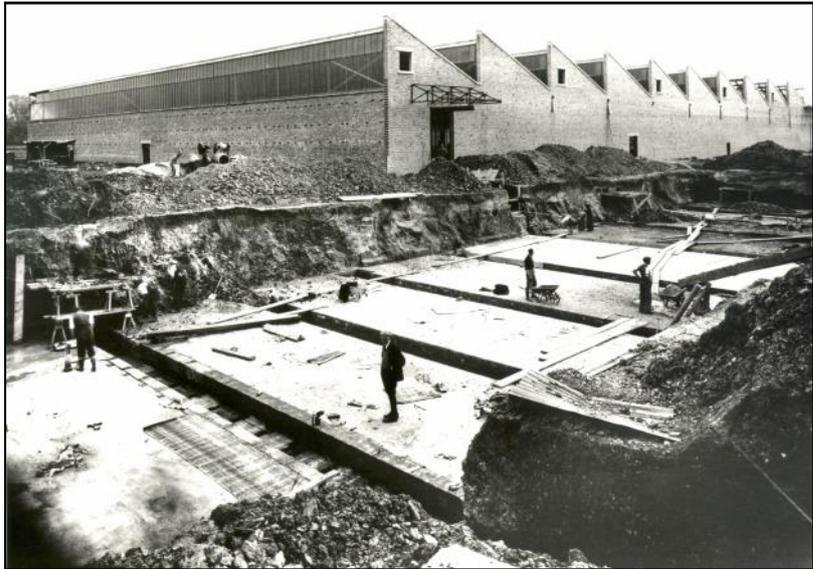


Inside the Stonehouse factory a month before Frank arrived.

force had photographed the factory (and the other shadow factory being operated by Sperry Gyroscope at Bond's Mill) three months earlier (on 12th September). And a month before that (20th August), a bomb damaged Blunder Lock on the canal and another made a large hole in the ground near Millend (both within a mile of the two factories).

When asked if there was anything he particularly remembered of his initial time at the Stonehouse factory, Frank said that, at that time, there were no indoor toilets - only buckets outside. Being a cold winter he remembered the considerable discomfort associated with using them. The company moved people from Chelmsford as different sections of the new factory became ready for use; also to help in setting up the equipment. As the factory was being completed, the "heavy gang" would re-arrange the equipment every now and again. The main electrical cables entered the factory underground from Oldends Lane. These were substantial armoured cables (around 3 inch diameter) and they were carried in a tunnel, with other services, under the floor (which would have given the cables valuable protection had the factory been bombed). They entered via the basement of the front office block ("Queen Mary's Gate") and were extended as the factory grew (as far as the power house by the NE corner of the factory - the power house also contained standby electricity generators). Frank remembered helping to pull these heavy cables inside the tunnel and hang them on brackets fixed to the wall (the tunnel was big enough to allow men to stand upright - but only just). The men doing such work negotiated special rates for installing the cables on Saturday and Sunday mornings.

Intriguingly, the Luftwaffe noted (from aerial photos taken in September 1940) what they believed to be pipe or cabling under construction, running east from the factory towards the Bristol to Gloucester railway line then north alongside the line. However, John Wadley, who worked at the factory from 1953 to 1966, confirmed that the construction features identified by the Luftwaffe analysts were the rails for the factory's railway siding. Steel and coal were brought to the factory by rail and metal swarf was taken away via the siding.



The Stonehouse factory in May 1940 showing the “north lights”. The entrance to the services tunnel can just be made out behind the worker to the right of the photo.

The new factory included blast walls and steel shutters for the “north lights” (north-facing windows) in the roof so that the building could be blacked-out after dark. Frank found this a marked improvement compared with the Chelmsford factory where, since the windows had been painted over, the workers had to work in artificial light throughout the war.

There were air-raid shelters for the workers behind Avenue Terrace, half underground, with turf on top. As at the Chelmsford factory, too much of the workers' time was being spent in the shelters when air-raid sirens sounded but no enemy bombers arrived. The factory's warning system was changed; when air-raid sirens sounded, observers went up to a lookout on the roof. If they saw enemy aircraft approaching, they would set off alarms throughout the factory. Then, and only then, were workers allowed to take shelter. Frank said that, after the introduction of that system, he did not remember ever going to the shelters. He commented that this system would only have allowed time for workers to dive under the nearest table! Later in the war, brick outbuildings were built onto the side of the factory (“*Somewhere to run!*” was Frank's comment). (In September 1940, “*when the government considered the idea that workers should carry on working even after the air-raid alarm had sounded, the risk was justified by the argument that all those engaged in vital war work ‘are frontline troops.’*” (Ref.: Overy, page 128)).



Beatrice in the miniature bearings section.

Frank's second wife, Beatrice, worked in the unit known as “*the spaceship*”, that is near the railway bridge on Bristol Road (the flat-roofed building close to the east end of Avenue Terrace). She assembled miniature bearings (see at right below) in a clean room accessed via two sets of air-locked doors. Beatrice said that the smallest bearings she had assembled were for hospital equipment and gyro-compasses (for aerial navigation of aircraft). They were made in both metric and British sizes – the smallest metric ones had an internal diameter of 1 mm; the British ones 0.055 inch. Apparently, only women had the delicacy required to assemble the tiny components.





Hoffmann staff with Mary, the then Queen Mother, during a courtesy visit in April 1941.

In the above photo, the lady to the right of the Queen Mother (looking at the photo) is Miss M.C. Murrell, the Canteen Superintendent. The man to the left of the Queen Mother is the Works Manager, Mr Norman Parrett. When Frank was asked where he was in the photo, he responded that he was not in it since "it was a good opportunity to have a fag!"

At the end of the war, some of the workers who had transferred from Chelmsford to work in the Stonehouse factory returned to Essex. But the majority remained here.

Homes in Stonehouse

According to Jack Anderson (**Ref.:** *The First Ninety Years*, page 20): "There was a time when nearly 4000 people were employed on war work on the two (shadow factory) sites. The coming of the factories was bound to change Stonehouse, so the Maisonettes were built to accommodate them and Bridgend Hostel came into being. During the war the place had graduated from a village into a small town and, whatever happened next, for parishioners and councillors things would never be quite the same again."



*Frank, Jimmy Tween & Jack Prail
in Home Guard uniform*

Workers were transferred from Chelmsford to Stonehouse in small batches as construction progressed and different sections of the factory became ready for use. Frank came to Stroud by train with three other workers and they were met at Stroud Station by Jack Prail, chief inspector at the Stonehouse factory. He took them to a café, then to Stonehouse by bus (Frank commented that there were plenty of buses at that time). Prail took Frank and one of his colleagues to lodgings at Pendennis, a house on St Cyril's Road. The owner, Mrs Keating, was their landlady. Frank ate in the factory canteen where food coupons were not required.

Frank remained at Pendennis for more than two years. Then he and his wife, Rose, rented Hilby, fully furnished, with another couple, Jimmy and Louie Tween. Frank and Rose had a young daughter, Margaret (born June 1939), at that stage, and the Tweens had a little girl also. Hilby is an Edwardian house on Pearcroft Road which belonged to one of the teachers at Wycliffe College (he and his family were away with the school, and its pupils, at Lampeter in Wales for the duration of the war). He had left all of his books and a pool table up in the attic.

Frank and Rose's next home was a maisonette (number 13C Woodcock Lane). It was built by the Ministry of Supply and people waited their turn for allocation of one of them. Some went to workers from the Sperry Gyroscope factory and from MoD at Quedgeley. Frank had an allotment where Maidenhill School is now located. In 1953 Frank and Rose moved to a new house at 30 Midland Road and later, in around 1970, to Bridgend.

Work during the Second World War

Working hours were 7:30am to 7pm with an hour for dinner and half an hour for teatime. Night shift was 8pm to 7am. They worked to 12:30pm every Saturday morning and every other Sunday.

There were works policemen on the gate and others patrolling the grounds.

Those in the Home Guard were on a rota for factory security e.g. against parachutists. When on duty, about ten of them slept on straw palliasses and folding beds in the basement of the front office block. On weekends when doing Home Guard duty, they would go home, change clothes and return to work on Monday morning!

The Hoffmann Company offered awards to employees for suggestions which would improve their products and methods of manufacture. In 1969 Frank received an award from the scheme. He was given the choice of £600 or a Triumph Herald motor car.



Frank in 1969, with his wife Rose, having been awarded his cheque for a valuable suggestion.

Alan Brown, a senior manager at the factory, is standing at right rear.

Hoffmann's Home Guard platoon



Hand grenade training in a quarry near Dursley.

The platoon was part of Company H of the 8th Battalion, The Gloucestershire Regiment. It comprised some 30 men under the command of Lieutenant Fred Davey. The platoon was attached to the larger unit at Sperry Gyroscope's shadow factory at Bond's Mill which was under the command of five officers, the senior one being a major. Frank was a private, number 7/640. He remembered an embarrassing occasion: "One night we were on weekend duty. Somebody had gone to the New Inn pub at Newtown (Ben Duxbury's) – so the rest of us went to the Spa Inn. The major came over from Bond's Mill and none of the members of Hoffmann's Home Guard were at the factory! The lieutenant was in trouble!"

They had two regular soldiers in their Home Guard platoon. They trained at the local brickworks (rifle practice), and went on training exercises to Woodchester (and to Portishead later – shooting at targets towed by aircraft above the Severn). Hand grenade practice took place in a quarry near Dursley. Frank had a vivid memory of one of his colleagues throwing a grenade which did not explode. The man was ordered to go and fetch it (since it was too dangerous to leave a primed grenade in a location where nobody would expect to find one). Thereafter, Frank and his colleagues took their Home Guard training much more seriously.

At the beginning of the war, shotguns, poachers' guns and a Tommy gun [Thompson (American) submachine gun] were donated to their platoon. Then they were given Lee Enfield army rifles – which they liked. However, these were taken from them after the evacuation of the British Army from Dunkirk in May/June 1940 - because of the shortage of weapons for the Army, since so many had been left behind in France. They were given P14 American and Canadian Ross rifles (which they disliked because they were so heavy and could not fire standard British 0.303 inch calibre bullets (for details of the associated problems, refer to the article on *Tom Round-Smith – a remarkable life*, in Issue 6 of this Journal). Later on they had four 20 mm (0.787 inch diameter) anti-aircraft cannons (Hispano-Suiza) and were trained in their use.

When talking with Frank about his past life and experiences, he never appeared to “*dress things up*”. And he never appeared to invent; if he didn't know something, or why it happened, he would say so. So he was always striving to be as accurate as possible. He was incredibly modest and “*down to earth*”.

Frank's first wife, Rose, died in 1976, aged 56. After his death on 15th October 2012, aged 94, his second wife, Beatrice, arranged for his body to be buried in the same grave as Rose in St Cyr's Churchyard. Beatrice lived in a rest home in Frampton until her death in June 2017.

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The photo of Stonehouse Home Guard at hand grenade training in a quarry near Dursley was taken by Tom Round-Smith before he joined the Royal Navy in August 1942.

Irene Adey

by Shirley Dicker, Vicki Walker and Janet Hudson

I was born Irene Drake on 18 March 1917, at my grandma's house in Shortwood, Nailsworth, the eldest of five children. Mother did not go to hospital - she used to say, "*I am glad I had all my babies at home because I did get to stop in bed for two weeks*".

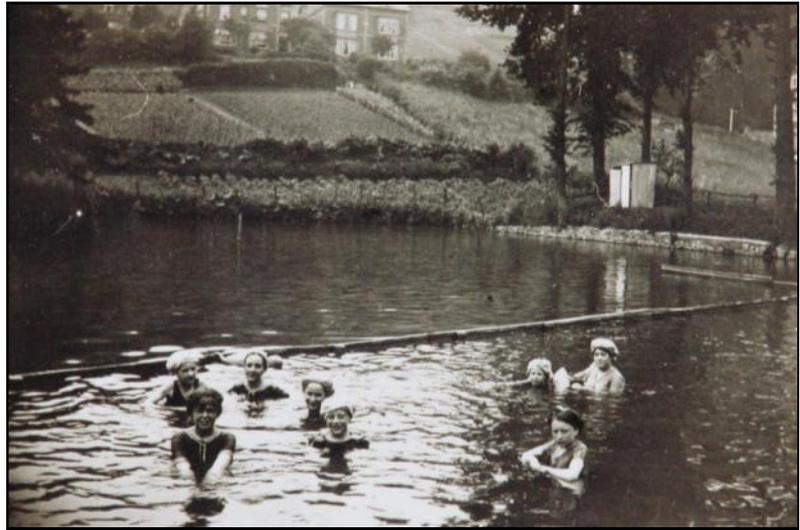
At a very young age I was taken back to the original family house in Old Bristol Road, Nailsworth, which was built by my grandfather, and is used now by Ruskin Mill College. Next born was my eldest brother Reginald Douglas Drake, who lived in Amberley, and died aged 95 on Easter Monday 2016. Then came my sister Dorothy, later Mrs Critchley, who lived in Bristol and died on her 90th birthday. I remember when she was born, a lady called Mrs Pegler came in to look after us. My next sister, Mrs Cynthia Dickens, was 90 in March 2016 and lives in Cirencester. The youngest is my brother Wilfred Hollis Drake, who is 88 and lives in Essex. My Dad was Wilfred Reginald Drake, called Reg, and both the boys were named after him, but were known by their middle names to avoid confusion. Hollis was an uncle's name.



The Drake family - left to right: Dorothy, Cynthia, Douglas, Hollis and Irene

My brother Doug and I used to play doctors and nurses, and I was very fond of cutting up the toys, until Mother managed to confiscate the scissors. We had a lovely toy elephant and I cut him open because he had bad tummy trouble! We went to Nailsworth Church of England School and I stayed there till I left school at fourteen. I did not pass my eleven plus exam because I did not like school, but I always went, in all winds and weathers. We got some bad weather in Nailsworth, we would skate to school in the snow and ice, and skate back, or fall over and roll around. One of my father's sisters was a school teacher there and she taught us. I used to take Doug and my sisters to school.

Dad taught my brother Doug and me to swim, and we spent most of our free time in the Nailsworth swimming pool up Brewery Lane, known as Johnson's Pond. In the summer holidays we took a picnic and stayed all day. It is half filled in now.



Nailsworth swimming pool c.1930s.

When I was thirteen I had scarlet fever, and I was taken to Cashes Green Hospital in a horse drawn ambulance. My brothers and sisters watched from the window.

It was still war time when I was born. Dad went to volunteer to go to war but did not pass his medical. He worked for Newman Hender's, so he stayed there and worked on the munitions, then after the war he stayed and worked there for many years as an engineer. When he retired he was foreman pattern maker.

When I left school at fourteen Dad got me a job at Newman Hender's in the executive canteen. I waited on Mr Percy Newman and Mr Noel Newman. I worked there as a waitress till I was seventeen.

When I left school at fourteen Dad got me a job at Newman Hender's in the executive canteen. I waited on Mr Percy Newman and Mr Noel Newman. I worked there as a waitress till I was seventeen.

Then in 1934 I saw a notice in the Stroud News, as it was called then, not the Stroud News and Journal, for someone to train as a nurse at the workhouse. I said to Mother and Dad, "*That is something I would like to do*". "*Get your paper and pen out*", says my father, "*write a letter, and we'll read it*". They passed what I had written asking for an interview. I was sent for, Mother came with me, and I got a job at the Stroud workhouse in Bisley Road. It is called Stone Manor now, and is all flats.

I lived in at the workhouse to train as a nurse, and I enjoyed the work very much. The workhouse was divided into three floors. The ground floor consisted of the laundry, kitchen, and dining room area. The next floor was for able bodied men and women, but they were separated, men in one room and women in another.

A lot of men and some women travelled the roads on foot from town to town looking for work, Stonehouse to Stroud and so on. They would sleep rough in the better weather, but when bad weather came along they still travelled, but they made sure they were in an area where there was a workhouse so they could stay there if they needed to in the winter. They had to work in the workhouse. The able bodied men would do the gardening, get the coal in, make the fires, sweep the chimneys and do jobs like that. The able bodied women would do laundry work, cook, clean, and help the nurses with the patients. Some of the people who came in were very bad with strokes or so crippled up with arthritis that they could hardly move.



They were brought in to the workhouse because there was no one to look after them at home. I was in the infirmary part, where there were male wards, three large female wards, and a labour and maternity ward, where there were mainly single girls. A girl would get pregnant, you would miss that daughter from a house and ask about her, and her family would say "*she has gone into service*" but she had been put into the workhouse.

She would have her baby, and the workhouse staff would take the baby away to be adopted or kept somewhere. It was just like the film 'Philomena'. They brought disgrace to the family, and there was a true saying then, "*you bring trouble here my girl, to the workhouse you go*".

A few years ago Chas Townley wrote a book about the workhouse, which said that there were children there. Some children did come in with their parents, but then they were kept separate at Roxburgh House in Nelson Street, not in the workhouse. Married couples were separated too, the men stayed on the male side and the women on the female side. When I was a child at Sunday school we were always asked near Christmas, "*before you have any new toys, if you have any old ones you do not play with, bring them here for the children at Roxburgh House*".

I was at the workhouse as a junior nurse under Master and Matron Crane till I was nearly 21. Matron Crane was the trainer, she was a very nice person, a very caring lady, and every question you asked she would answer. I think I am the only person alive who worked there then. Shortly after I arrived another girl started as a junior nurse, and we shared a room which was divided by a curtain. We were allowed out on our evening off between 6pm and 9.30pm, and I would cut across the Bisleigh Road and down the High Street into the Shambles, through by the church and down the steps into Bank Gardens. There was a bench at the bottom of the steps, and a young man would be sitting at one end of it. I would sit at the other end reading a book, and I would have an inkling that someone was looking at me, I would look up, and he would look then turn away, but we never spoke. This went on for a year and then I missed him, until the story of my stockings.

A lot of the gents who were in the workhouse were wounded from the First World War, some had legs very badly ulcerated to the bone, but they were always busy sitting up in their beds making rugs or doing sewing, mending and embroidery. The women too would be doing embroidery, sewing, mending or knitting. Matron would put them in for competitions like Stroud Show and they would often win a little prize. I had a ladder one day in my stocking, and a male patient, Mr Street, said, "*Nurse, you got a ladder up your leg. If you take your stocking off I will repair that for you*". Mr Street could do invisible mending to your stocking, going through every thread so that you could not see the ladder. I said to him, "*When I have taken it off and washed it I will let you have it. I can't let you have it until I am off duty, Matron would disapprove*".

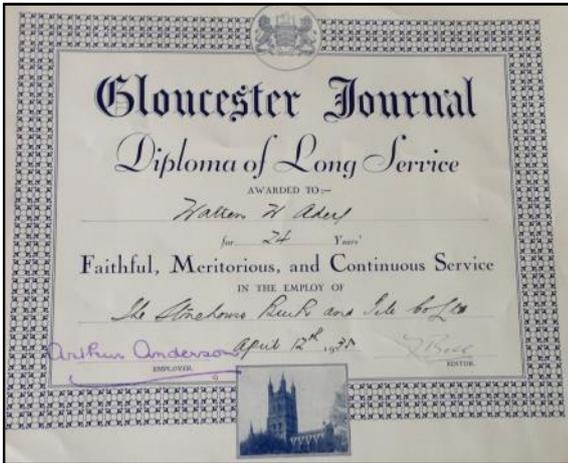
In those days you could go to Woolworths and buy one stocking for 3d or a pair for 6d. They had to be black, they were thicker than normal stockings but not woolly. I went to buy another pair, and then I gave my stocking to Mr Street, so I had an extra pair of stockings! Anyway, as I went to open the door at Woolworths the young man from Bank Gardens was on the other side, so I let him open the door towards me. I said, "*Hello, I have not seen you for a long time, where have you been?*" He said, "*This is my first day out*". "*Your first day out?*" "*Yes I've been in hospital with a burst appendix*". "*If I had known I would have come in and visited you*". "*Would you really?*" "*Yes*". "*I don't feel I can stand here and talk now - you are a nurse aren't you?*" "*Yes*". "*Are you at Stroud hospital?*" "*No, I am at the workhouse*". "*When are you off duty again?*" "*I think I'm off tomorrow afternoon 2 - 4pm*". "*Right, I'll come and meet you and we will go for a walk*".

That's how I met my husband, in 1937, his name was Leslie Adey. I was nearly twenty and he was my first boyfriend. We courted for five years and were married for sixty years all but two months. He passed away fifteen years ago.



Leslie Adey with his father Walter and mother Lily c.1914.

The Stroud workhouse was in the throes of closing in 1937 because it was too dilapidated to repair, though the building is still there. After it closed in 1939 they put the soldiers there, then after the war it was empty until it was apartments. The old people were transferred to other workhouses, a lot went to Cheltenham. I left and got work at Standish Hospital in 1937, in the laundry, and while we were going out Leslie's mother let me lodge here in Storrington Place. We had to live in at Standish from Sunday night till Saturday lunch time, we worked till 6pm and had to be back at in the house by 9.30 every night. Saturday and Sunday I lived here. We would spend most of our free time going for walks around the area, over Doverow Woods, to Westridge and Randwick up through Fuzzy Wood, to Cashes Green, and over to Frocester.



Leslie's father was Walter Adey, a Stonehouse man, and his mother was known as Lily, although her real name was Fanny. Leslie was born in 1911 in Cainscross. Walter embarked to serve in the First World War when Leslie was three years old. He survived and afterwards worked at the Stonehouse Brick and Tile Company for twenty-four years until the 1930s. He was given a retirement certificate by the Gloucester Journal, signed by the manager Arthur Anderson.

Leslie began work when his parents apprenticed him as a printer at the Stroud Journal. In those days the majority of apprentices lost their jobs when they finished as they could claim a higher salary, and the firms could not afford to pay them. Stroud Journal

did not take him on, so he went to work at Arthur's Press at Cope-Chat, then he left this area and went to live with an uncle in Birmingham, and to London to try and get a job in printing. Eventually his father got him a job labouring at the Stonehouse Brick and Tile Company, but it was in the process of being sold.

Leslie then went to dig the foundations for Hoffmann's factory - they were about to put in the machinery when he had to go for his army medical. He was called up within two weeks, on 17th July 1940. He went to Caerleon, Newport, Port Talbot and Porthcawl in Wales, then he moved around in Lincolnshire and back into Wales. He was in the Gloucestershire Regiment, and trained for three months on the doodle bug defences on Romney Marsh. His group went to Burma and not one of them came back, but because he was older he stayed here on anti-aircraft defences. We were married in 1941 at St Cyr's Church, Stonehouse, while I was still at Standish laundry.

I never stayed long in any job, it brings a variety to life, and you learn a lot of things. I moved to Ebley laundry, where I should not be ashamed even though I got the sack. I was working on the hydros, or spin dryers, where you took the washing out of the spin dryer and put it into the drying machine. I had just emptied my truck and Mr Evans wanted a truck and took mine. I told him to go and get his own and he swore at me. He went and told Mr Horsfall that I had been cheeky to him. Mr Horsfall came down and I told him I had never been spoken to like that in all my life and I was certainly not taking it from Mr Evans. So Mr Horsfall told me to leave and come back tomorrow for my cards. I said, "I will go but I want my cards now", which I got and I left. All that for 9d an hour and heavy work, though I was not afraid of hard work. I next went to Stanley Mill to learn weaving with Marling and Evans. I worked two looms, one doing quick plain weaving, and one with three for four shuttles making different patterns. I liked the mill work, which was mostly making white worsted material for monks' robes. Stanley Mill made a lot of serge cloth.

In 1941, I was sent by the government to Hoffmann's who were making ball bearings. We worked from 7.30am to 7pm Monday to Friday and to 12.30 on Saturday, with some Sundays. At first we went into the air raid shelter every time there was an alarm, but it happened so often that they stopped it unless a plane was spotted. After the war the shelter was used as the executive dining room.

They came round for volunteers to train at Chelmsford and then go back to Stonehouse to teach the people here. Mr Carter the foreman said, "No good asking you". "Ask me what?" "To go to Chelmsford". "Oh yes please! My husband is near Chelmsford, at Felstead at the headquarters!" He said, "I will think about it". Then he came back and said, "Are you ready to go next Monday?" It was Wednesday then, but I was ready.

Four of us went, all women, we were there for three months all expenses paid. We got blown out of bed at 7am on a Sunday morning by German planes trying to bomb Marconi which was near the lodgings. All the windows and the doors were blown off. We went to work on Monday and they came over to have another go but missed. When we got back to Stonehouse we taught the others.

I was at Hoffmann's until 1943 when I had my son Colin. I learned more when he was at school than I did at my school, it was more interesting. He qualified as a doctor at Bristol University and at Southmead and Frenchay Hospitals, then he went out as a missionary with his wife for six years in Segbwema, Sierra Leone. Both my grandsons were born out there. When they came back his family stayed here for six months while he looked for work, then he became a GP at Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex. He had been retired for four years when he passed away two years ago. My eldest grandson works in Sierra Leone in customs and excise, and my other grandson is a GP in Wrexham, North Wales. They both have a son and daughter each, my great-grandchildren.

Leslie was discharged from the army on 22nd December 1945. He went to Hoffmann's at first, then to Stonehouse Brick and Tile Company, until it closed in 1968. The business had been sold by Mr Jenner Davies to Gloucester builders Nicholls, Byard and Hall. In 1963 the Hurdiss brothers from up north had it, but they burned dirty coal which spoiled all the food in the allotments. The allotments were where Burdett House is now, on land belonging to Mrs Hayward. I remember Mr Clutterbuck and Mr West at the brickworks, and Cyril Hyde. Hurdiss had problems with the bricks, some older men said it was because they dug where there was lime, not good clay. When the business closed it was going to be a waste tip, but it was used for the Rosedale houses instead.

After a few years I went back to work in Mr Beard's shop. I was there with Peggy Shiers for three or four years, then I went back to Hoffmann's and worked in the director's canteen till I retired at sixty in 1977. Tom Shiers was the first-aid man there. Hoffmann's had skittles, football and a social club, and many staff came over from Chelmsford.



Irene with her son Colin, grandson Alistair and great-grandson Felix.

I knew Frank Woodyard, who was foreman over the larger ball bearings, and Mr Sealy and Mr Ray Brown. Cyril Chandler used to put pictures in the window of his shop in Stonehouse, which he changed every week. One was of the Stonehouse football club in the 1920s when Walter Adey played.

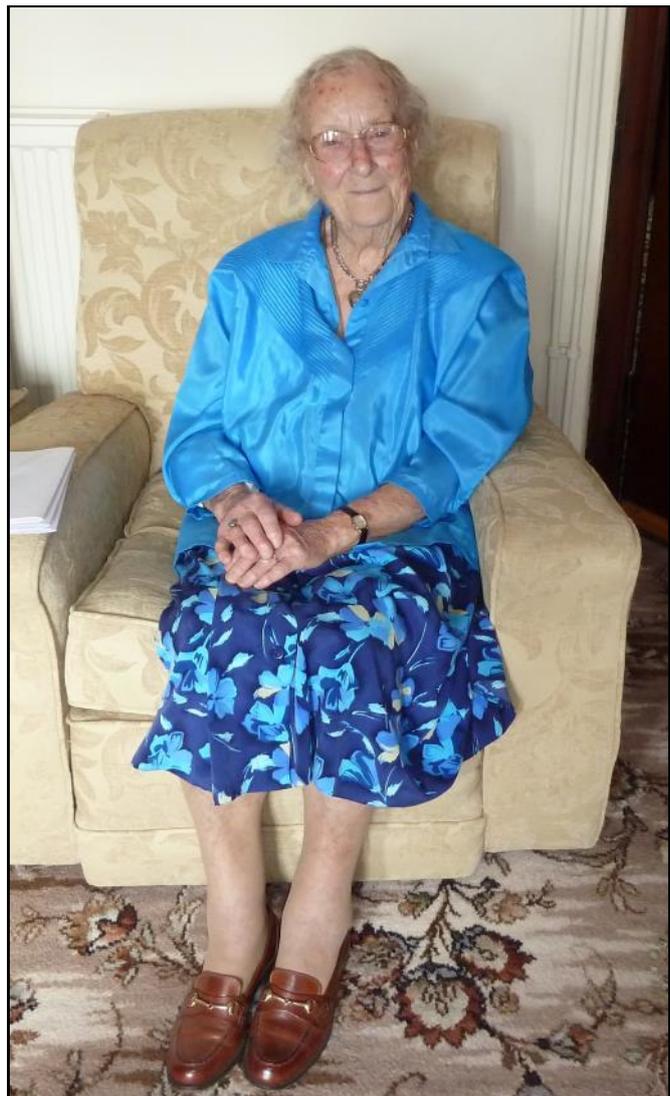
We rented two allotments from Mrs Hayward and went to Haywardsend to pay the rent. When she sold the land next to Storrington the bottom piece went for the telephone exchange and the top to the council for Burdett House. People now do not know that there were railway sidings outside here, with a signal box, a siding for the goods yard and a turning place for the trains, and a siding the other side for the brickworks.

Mr Sibly, headmaster of Wycliffe College, wanted to buy the Royal Arms but the brewery would not sell it to him. He did own the four cottages next door in Bath Road. He demolished the cottages and built Springfield House, which was vegetarian. I worked in the kitchen at Springfield for a while before Wycliffe was evacuated to Lampeter in the war, and their buildings were used by the Air Ministry. Later Wycliffe did buy the pub and demolished it, together with Springfield, and built houses there again.

There used to be a lot of shops around Stonehouse which have now gone. It was only a village but had better shops than in Stroud. The Post Office is moving into the Co-op, which is a shame when the Post Office was purpose built. Lloyds Bank used to be where the Coventry Building Society is now, and would only be manned some days from Stroud, you would see the staff waiting for the bus at 4pm with bags of money chained to their wrists. There was Bradley's for shoes, opposite Mullins for household and ladies linens, Bramwell Parker's gentlemen's outfitters, Pile's saddler's shop, Wilcox the chemist across the alleyway from it, and Jack Price the butcher where the cycle shop is. Miss Horsham and her brother had a china shop, and there were two jewellers, Neno's was one. The Co-op had a separate draper's shop, and a grocer's shop with over-the-counter service, and a separate butcher's shop run by Ernie Owen. When he retired he opened a drapers' in Regent Street, which was later Polly Owen's, but she was no relation to him. There was the Corner Café, and Miss Lord's café where the Chinese takeaway is. Ronnie Lewis had his music shop in Elm Road. The two Hurn's shops were opened by the grandfather from Nailsworth, where he had a cycle shop. I worked with Derek Hurn's mother who was a telephonist at Newman Hender's.

I used to meet up with my mother and my brothers and sisters when the men went to the Marling School Old Boys' dinner, and then we would go to Nailsworth and visit our old haunts. I had my ninetieth birthday party at Egypt Mill, which was a corn mill when we were children. I kept my garden till I was 92, but now I need someone to do it as I fell in the garden pulling up a weed and cut my head. The paramedics took three hours to get to me. I said I would tell them it would have been quicker if they had come in a horse drawn ambulance!

Mrs Adey celebrated her 100th birthday in March 2017 with all her family and friends.



Mrs Adey in 2016

Memories of Stonehouse by Arthur French 1920 - 2016

edited by Darrell Webb

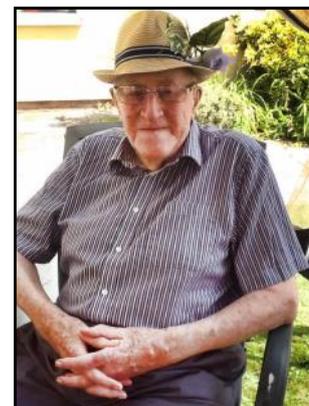
In 2010, Stonehouse History Group received an email from Arthur French telling us that he saw our website and wanted to get in touch and tell his story about his connection with Stonehouse.

"I was born in Regent Street and lived there between 1920-39 and 1943-47. I now live in Ipplepen, Devon. I've been writing some memories at my grandson's request. You might like some of them?"

My home in Regent Street

I was born in 1920 and brought up in a house called "The Cottage", now behind Regent Street Garage. It was semi-detached, and in the other half lived Mr Hale, a farmer who kept chickens in the orchard behind (and killed them there when they were ready to eat). His brother had a big farm at Stanley Downton, and brought us milk daily, in churns. When elvers were in season, men would come up Regent Street (from the Severn) with elvers in zinc baths, shouting "Elvers alive!"

In front of the house was a long garden. The way in was from Regent Street (not as it is now, from the lane.) There was a box hedge on each side of the path, and a man used to come from time to time, and ask us if he could collect snails from the hedge, to eat! We grew most of our own vegetables, and there were two apple trees, one eaters and one cookers. There were sheds in the garden: a tool-shed near the lane; a summerhouse just in front of the house; and a shed under the apple trees for my father's art materials (he was an art and craft teacher at Wycliffe College).



Arthur in 2010



The Cottage, 1925. Photo shows Arthur with his mother, Hilda. His sister Marian is in the pram.

My father had two extensions built: one at the north end, of cement blocks, making one big room and one small one; and the other at the back, with a new bedroom upstairs, and a big store-room below. The house is now, I think, three apartments?

There was another house which adjoined our property on one side and at the back. In that house Mrs Stephens had a sweet shop. I remember when Mars Bars and Milky Ways were introduced, at 2d and 1d each. (Mars Bars cost over 50p in 2010, and look a little smaller.) Her son had a garage business next to their house, on the corner of the lane.

Wycliffe College used the Berryfield for sports, and they installed an old railway carriage at the back of the orchard, as a changing room. Just inside the orchard gate they put up a big shed as a bookbinding facility, and my father taught there - out of regular class hours, I think.

I was away at university from 1939 to 1943. My father was with Wycliffe in Lampeter, but I returned in 1943. I was married then, and we brought our eldest son with us as a baby. Mr Hale was no longer there. Our neighbours were Mr and Mrs Street who had a child, Derek, about the same age as our Christopher. They played together. We had a second son, but in March 1947 he died from a fall. The doctor, who lived at the bottom of Regent Street on the right, was very upset that he hadn't spotted a fracture in his skull, and there had to be an inquest. He is buried in St. Cyr's Churchyard, and so is my mother Hilda, who died in 1929.

I bought the house from my father in 1945, but I had to sell it again in 1947, because I had to move away to get a job. I've been back to see it a couple of times in recent years.

Going to school

I never went to a "playgroup". I didn't go to school until I was 6 (in 1926). My mother taught me to read and write before I went to school.

The photo to the right would have been taken in our back garden in about 1923. To the south-west of The Cottage, beyond Mr Hale's orchard, there was a field used as allotments. In spite of having a big garden, my father rented one. In the distance you can see the roof of The Cottage and the roof of Mr Hale's chicken shed, both viewed from the back.

I didn't go to the village school. I went to a private school. It was a long way from home, at the other end of the village (Hill View House, north of the Great Western Railway bridge). It belonged to a Miss French, but she wasn't related to us. She had Miss Saint to help her, and some younger ladies.

My mother knitted some of my clothes. Some of the children thought this was a bit babyish. I remember that one boy, aged about 5, turned up in a suit, with a jacket and shorts made of the kind of cloth that grown-up men used. The other children thought that was very good!

I sometimes got teased on the way to and from school. My hair was a bit ginger, and I got called "carrots" and other names. Once, someone pushed me into a ditch.

In school, we had to learn a lot of things "by heart". We repeated the multiplication tables, from 2 to 12. In Geography we had to learn the county towns, like "*Berkshire: Reading, on the Kennett*". I remember learning the names of Yorkshire rivers - "*Swale, Ure, Nidd, Wharfe, Aire, Calder, Don*". In History we learned kings and dates. "*Henry VII: 1485-1509*". In Physical Education we did exercises, like putting our arms "*forwards, upwards, sideways, and downwards*".

After a couple of years, Miss French's school moved much nearer to us. We lived in Regent Street, and the school moved to a house in the same road, on the other side, only a hundred yards or so to the south (now Regency Retirement Home). That was much easier!

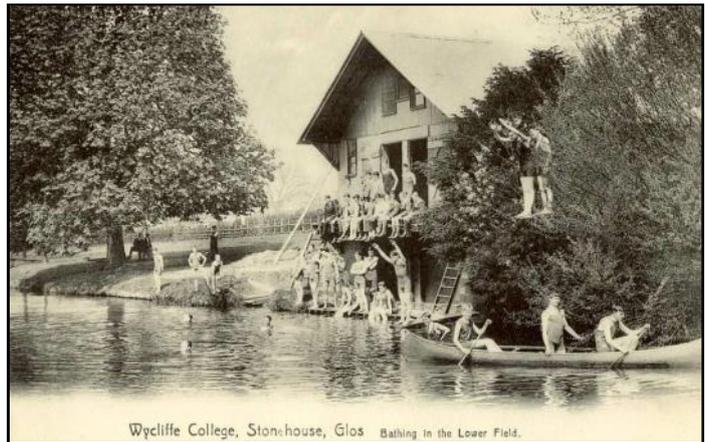
Eventually, after my mother died, when I was nearly 11, I went as a day boy to the Junior School of Wycliffe College, where my father taught art and craft. It was at Ryeford Hall, on the road towards Stroud, to the east of Stonehouse. I was a bit surprised to find that I often came top of the class!



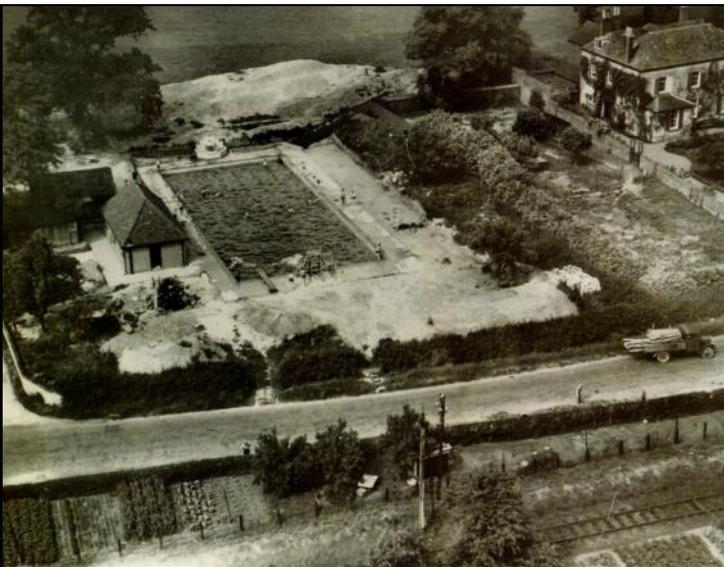
*The footbridge over Ebley Road near Wycliffe Junior School, c.1935.
The crest was designed by Arthur's father, Edward French.*

Two swimming pools

I learned to swim in the Stroudwater Canal. If you went out of the main Wycliffe entrance, turned right and then left, over the railway level crossing and there on the left was a field by the canal. At the far end of the field was a two-storey boathouse, and beside it was a sort of octagonal cement-lined swimming pool. You could swim in the pool, or in the canal itself. There was a channel linking the two. There was a small square raft in the canal, and I remember teaching myself to swim on my back by hanging on to the raft.



Eventually, the boating became centred at Framilode, on the Berkeley Canal. For the swimming, we built a “proper” swimming pool in the main Wycliffe estate.



I say “we” because the pool was dug by boys. It was in the south-west of the school grounds, not far from the bottom of Regent Street. When we had dug the hole, professional grown-ups came and lined it with cement. A substantial building with a chlorination plant was added on the west side.

In my memory, that swimming pool is always linked with the school's departure for Lampeter.

Photo shows the Wycliffe pool in the 1930s with The Lodge top right (now demolished) and the Nailsworth branch line at the bottom. (Now the cycle path.)

Off to Lampeter

By 1939 I had spent three years in the sixth form, taken Higher School Certificate, and won enough scholarships to finance a course at Queen's College, Oxford. For vacation employment I was looking after the school's swimming pool in the absence, on holiday, of a Mr Jenner. I had to operate the chlorination plant, and then I could sit in a summer-house which stood, surrounded by rockeries, near the shallow end of the pool. I had to make sure that only authorised people used the pool in the holidays, but when all was quiet I could study a maths textbook which my new College had prescribed.

War was looming near. Suddenly, the headmaster said: “*Drop everything! The Air Ministry has requisitioned Wycliffe's buildings, and we are moving to St. David's College at Lampeter, in Wales! We must pack up.*”

I spent several days putting the school library into boxes, and then the exercise books, pencils, and other equipment from the school stock-room, ready for transport to Lampeter. But my father had to move our home as well, and I wasn't due in Oxford until early October. So I packed up my own things, and I think that must have been the occasion when I went to Lampeter on my bicycle, leaving my family to travel with my luggage.

I visited my parents in vacations, and when I got married in 1942, I took my new wife with me to Lampeter by train, going via Gloucester because there was gunfire over Bristol. In those days there was a railway from Carmarthen to Lampeter!

My next visit to Lampeter was in 2008. And I went back to Stonehouse from there: two giant steps back in time.

My father, Edward John French (1888 –1958)

Wycliffe staff football team 1923/24

*Back l to r: T.S. Dixon, E.J. Bevan,
A.G. Caudle, G.F. Timpson
Middle l to r: P. Thuyn, T.M. Sibly,
W.A. Sibly, E.J. French, R.E. Pryce
Front: G.L. Reade, N.E. Webb*



Edward French (known as ‘Ted’) taught art and craft at Wycliffe, from just before my birth in 1920 until the return of Wycliffe from Lampeter in 1945. He had previously taught at Taunton School (where his brother was on the staff), and at Dean Close in Cheltenham. He qualified in London as an A.R.C.A. (Associate of the Royal College of Art), after a course at Birmingham, where he met his future wife Hilda Clough, daughter of one of the editorial staff of the Birmingham Post.

I remember him teaching upstairs in a wooden building, which no longer exists, on the eastern boundary of the school grounds (which then did not include the Haywardsend estate). Downstairs was, I think, a woodwork room, and the building continued southwards with a bicycle shed below and a big room above, where we shot at targets with 0.22 inch calibre rifles.

The boys gave him nicknames. He was “*Froggy*” French for a time, so I was known as “*Tadpole*”. Then, in craft lessons, he often referred to the benches - “*Leave your work on the bench.*” French rhymes with Bench, and he got called “*Mr Bench*” and then “*Benny Bench*”. I got called “*Little Benny*”, and then just “*Benny*”. This nickname accompanied me to university!

After that I remember him teaching in an upstairs room which is now used for political science classes. The skylights there, in the northern slope of the roof, provided the “north light” which is so beloved by art specialists.

There was also a wooden hut, near our house, beside the path to the Berryfield, which was full of excellent bookbinding equipment, and my father held classes there too.

Ted had a wide range of skills in art and crafts, some of which influenced me and my late sister Marian. He was also very knowledgeable about gardening and about nature. I learned so much from him. My mother Hilda died in 1929 and Ted married again. His second wife encouraged him to do more of his own creative work. He was a very competent landscape and still-life painter. He was responsible for the original drawing of the Wycliffe crest which adorns the bridge over the road at Ryeford. (see photo page 39)

In 1945, when Wycliffe came back to Stonehouse, Ted resigned, and became head of a school in Didsbury, Manchester, before retiring to Titchfield, near his birthplace in Gosport, Hants.

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During the time Arthur lived in Ipplepen, Devon, he helped students and archaeologists at the information point by providing a local history of Ipplepen. He was also a founder member of the Ipplepen Local History Group and was instrumental in initiating the Ipplepen Archive project for keeping records of the history of the area.

Arthur died in 2016 age 96.



Tom Shiers remembers

by Shirley Dicker and Caroline Dicker

Tom was born in New Tredegar, South Wales, on 12th May 1926. He left school aged 14 and immediately started work in the coal mines. During the Second World War, he wanted to volunteer for military service when he reached the age of 17½. However, because of the importance of coal mining to the war effort, that entailed a formal application and process for discharge from his employment. The procedure included having an interview with a doctor in order to obtain a medical release note. Tom felt that he had been lucky with the doctor who conducted the medical. The procedure involved him stripping off and the doctor "*went over me with a fine tooth comb*". Despite classing him as A1, the doctor at first refused to release him from the mines, questioning why he wanted to volunteer for active service with a high risk of being killed. Tom explained his dislike of mining. The doctor finally conceded and granted the request. He remembered the doctor saying, as he signed the release note, that he didn't believe young lads should be down the pits.

Tom vividly recalls taking the release note to the pit on the following Friday. As usual, the foreman told him to "*Get your lamp and go down the pit*". Showing him the release note and refusing further work, Tom remembers that his boss "*hit the roof*". But there was nothing his boss could do to prevent Tom's departure and so he left coal mining. This was in total contrast to his brother's experience: he was unable to get the necessary documentation for release and continued to work underground for 30 years.



Tom in 1945

Tom's time in the services lasted from the end of 1943 until February 1947. He spent two months at Brecon completing Army training then moved on to Special Operations - testing rockets all over the World. While on leave, he met Peggy, a Fretherne girl, who was staying in New Tredegar during a visit to a cousin. As was customary at that time, Peggy sought permission from her aunt to go to a dance with Tom and this was granted on condition that he walked her home. A spark had been lit and, on their second meeting, Tom realised she was the girl for him. He proposed and, with her mother's blessing, they became engaged.

Tom then moved to Staines, Middlesex to work for Wimpey Construction. This contract lasted until January 1948 when he was offered a posting to Kenya with the company. Although tempted, Tom declined the offer because of his forthcoming marriage. Unemployed, he sent Peggy a telegram asking her to meet him at Gloucester Railway Station and so began his years in Gloucestershire.

He arrived on a Saturday and, on the following Monday, went to Stroud Labour Exchange to look for a job. Because of his coal mining experience he was offered a job down the mines at United Collieries in the Forest of Dean. Tom refused that, going instead to Hoffmann's in Oldends Lane to see if they could offer him a job. He started work there in January 1948 and remained for almost 44 years. Luckily, a room was available to rent at Bridgend Hostel and, with the necessary forms filled in, Tom began a six week stay. This provided sufficient time for his future mother-in-law to get a room ready for him at their house. Tom added wryly that he always remembers her words to Peggy: "*That's his bedroom and don't forget it!*"

Tom enjoyed his brief stay at the hostel, his room being on Crescent Road with the Paper and Bag Factory behind it. He has fond memories: "*The room was fine and the food was good. There were a lot of different people who had come here to work: Cornish, Welsh, English, and German girls who were working at Hoffmann's. There was lots going on down there and I would have been happy to stay longer. One bloke, whose home was in Bristol, worked at Hoffmann's and stayed in the hostel during the week.*"



Tom and Peggy's wedding in 1948

Tom and Peggy were married on 31st July, 1948 and lived with his wife's family in Moreton Valence until May 1950 when they were allocated a maisonette in Stonehouse. He remembers being given the keys and the papers and was told he could have an hour off work in the following week to move into their new home. The maisonette, sited at the top of Woodcock Lane, was a downstairs property with two bedrooms which was ideal since, by that time, they had two children. During the war, these maisonettes had been built for factory workers by the Ministry of Supply. Houses were assigned to each factory and Tom and Peggy were offered the last one allocated to Hoffmann's. For this two-bedroomed maisonette, they paid a total of 11s 4d (59p) per week for rent and rates. A couple of years after that the properties were taken over by the District Council.

In due course the family moved to a three bedroom property in Doverow Avenue which the Council had taken over from the Ministry of Supply. The rent was 11s 6d per week. In the 1970s, thanks to Tom's work manager, Ted Russell, they were allocated a home at 65 Park Road. Tom remembered that gardens on the estate had to be kept tidy "*and they would check they were kept tidy!*" During this time Peggy was employed at the RAF maintenance unit at Quedgeley. Later, when the children grew up, she worked in Beard's hardware shop.

Once their family had left home, the Park Road house was too big for Tom and Peggy and the Council offered them a bungalow. A quick decision was needed and, although initially Tom did not want to move, he was glad that Peggy over-rode him since it turned out to be an ideal property as they grew older.

Tom worked at Hoffmann's factory on Oldends Lane for more than 43 years - 21½ years on the shop floor and 22 years on staff. He received Red Cross training at the factory and went on to dedicate many years to this work. He helped the sister in charge in the surgery at Hoffmann's and took charge when she was out and at weekends. Then, when she retired, he took over completely. He spent 14 years as chairman of the local branch of the APEX Union and received three commendations for his work.

With well deserved pride Tom shared his memories of his retirement day, recalling that it was the biggest surprise of his life – and he assured us he has had a few! A stage had been erected in the middle of the shop floor for Tom, Peter Graham (the Works Manager) and Fred Bartlett (the Personnel Manager). Work at the factory was stopped for half an hour. A large bouquet was delivered to Peggy who had declined an offer to attend. Tom was presented with an envelope containing two flight tickets from Bristol and a hotel reservation, full board, at St Helier in Jersey. Following the presentation, work continued for the final hour before everyone finished and went for a pint at Hoffmann's Social Club. Peggy was eager to find out about the day's events, but Tom recalled that he wanted his tea first. "*I got the envelope out and told her to read its contents. I thought she was going to fall off the chair!*"



Golden Wedding day

Peggy used to complain that she was a widow to the Red Cross and football. Tom was a Red Cross member for 39 years, attending meetings in the Subscription Rooms, Stonehouse, as well as at Cashes Green. He was in regular demand to help out as first aid man at Stonehouse Football Club. He helped with the match against the "All Stars" in 1962 and recalled that Jess Conrad was playing as goal keeper. He caught the ball awkwardly and it gave him a nose bleed. As a result, he would not go back on the pitch! Tom said jokingly, "*He did not want to spoil his looks!*" Responding to regular phone calls for assistance was a feature of Tom's life at this time as were training and rehearsing procedures for emergencies. He recalled one particular occasion in the 1960s. On answering a call at the door he was told to get his coat as there had been a gas explosion. The Sunday morning emergency turned out to be a training exercise at the Star College at Ullenwood with the injured students being played by Wycliffe pupils. He recalled: "*We did not know if it was real or mock training at first. It was a mess. If the doctor had put a D on their forehead it meant they had died and you did not touch them.*"

Tom's other pleasure was football, a passion he shared with his four sons. Indeed, on one occasion, all four of his sons played for the Stonehouse FC team. He still enjoys and watches the game nowadays but had to give up helping at matches because he could not run fast enough! He became a life member of Stonehouse Football Club (the Magpies), helping out along with other volunteers throughout the 1970s. Tom has many memories of successes and matches won - the times in the Western League, then Wiltshire Premier League (before the County League), getting promotion to Division 1 and achieving 3 cup wins in one year. Travelling to away matches was often a tedious business in the days before the motorways opened.

Tom shared his memories of his and Peggy's Golden Wedding. His grandson Peter, unbeknown to the couple, organised a message from the Queen for their celebrations. The postman knocked on their door and delivered it personally. Fortunately there were no problems with delivery as there were instructions that, had it not arrived in the post on the specific day, Buckingham Palace had to be contacted! The day's special events continued with a surprise party at the Little Thatch to which all his work colleagues had been invited.



Tom (at left) as First Aid man with Stonehouse FC



Tom and Peggy enjoyed 64 years of married life together. Sadly, Peggy suffered from dementia at the end of her life and from painful arthritis in her knees. Although Tom had excellent help during the day he had to manage on his own at night. He considered himself most fortunate in having the assistance of his two eldest daughters who live in Stonehouse. Peggy died in 2012.

Our talk with Tom made us wonder what memories we will have if we reach the age of ninety. No doubt there will be further changes to Stonehouse and we will remember back to the good old days when cars were driven by people and Twitter and Facebook were the means of staying in touch and sharing thoughts and events. Happy days!

Tom in 2016

The English Tower, Buenos Aires, Argentina

by Darrell Webb

In May 2016, Stonehouse History Group received an interesting email from Christina Douglas now living in San Francisco USA. She was born in Buenos Aires, Argentina and lived there for many years. Christina was researching her English great-grandfather who owned a brick factory in Buenos Aires, and came across our web site mentioning that Stonehouse Brick and Tile Co. Ltd. supplied the 55,000 bricks for the English Tower in Buenos Aires in 1912/13. She said that, for a moment, she wondered if her ancestor had supplied the bricks for the tower, but Brick & Tile Co. manager A.W. Anderson's papers state that the bricks came from Stonehouse.

Christina remembered the Torre de los Ingleses (as it was called until it changed after the Falklands War). She did not know that it had been vandalised and bombed at the time of the Falklands War as she was no longer living in Argentina by then. She told us that the government was doing a refurbishment of the tower to commemorate its centenary in 2016 and opening it to the public again.



On hearing this information from Christina, Stonehouse History Group thought it would be a good opportunity to supply a brass plaque to commemorate the tower's centenary and send it to Buenos Aires (BA) to fix at the base of the tower - from the people of Stonehouse to the people of Buenos Aires.



Darrell Webb suggested that we should request donations for the plaque from our members and due to their generosity, the money was soon raised. We then contacted Christina and asked her for a contact in BA to put forward our idea. She put us in contact with John Hunter who was the Chairman of the English residents in BA, and he thought it a great idea too. We got the plaque made, complete with inscription and SHG logo. It took three months from posting for that plaque to get to them, but it eventually got there.

Photo shows Darrell Webb with the plaque

History of the Tower

On September 18, 1909, there was an offer by the British residents of Buenos Aires to erect a monumental column to commemorate the centenary of the Argentinian May Revolution of 1810. It was designed by English architect Sir Ambrose Macdonald Poynter. The clock tower was finished in 1916 by Hopkins & Gardom, with materials shipped from England, such as the white Portland stone and the bricks from Stonehouse. The technical personnel responsible for the construction also came from England. The inauguration of the building took place on May 24, 1916, and was attended by the President of Argentina, Victorino de la Plaza.

As reported in the Gloucester Journal on 10th August 1912, thirteen railway wagons left Stonehouse Brick and Tile Co. Ltd. works siding, loaded with 55,000 two-inch red sand-faced facing bricks. They were taken to Newport docks where they were loaded onto the steam ship the SS Woodford, bound for Buenos Aires.

The tower reaches a height of 75.5 m (247 ft 8½ in) and has eight floors. There are clocks at the 35 m (114 ft 10 in) level, and the bells were designed in imitation of the ones at Westminster Abbey.

In July 2017 the plaque was finally mounted on the inside wall of the Tower, near their information desk.



Stonehouse History Group Annual Report 2016 - 7

In May 2017 we celebrate the ninth anniversary of the formation of our group. Our membership is now 59 (down from 64) with 120 names on our contacts list. This year we have had 11 events, with an average attendance of 45, plus a visit to the Jenner Museum at Berkeley, the GLHA Summer Afternoon in Chipping Campden and a tour of Stroud Brewery. One of our founder members, John Peters, has resigned from the committee and we thank him for all the work he has done to support the Group since 2008.

We have been working on two local history Information Boards to be erected in May outside Park Schools and Wycliffe Chapel. We are grateful for the support of the Town Council and Wycliffe College in funding these. Unfortunately we were not successful in obtaining a grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund for the next phase of boards. We still intend to create more boards in the future but this will be on hold until we can obtain funding.

The Stonehouse History Group website, www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk, continues to be maintained and developed by Darrell Webb. Our Facebook page has enabled us to identify people and places in our collection of historic photographs. We have also been able to advertise our events and to answer enquiries about the history of Stonehouse. Darrell also designed an SHG logo which is now in use on all our publications.

Darrell also organised the creation of a plaque recording the centenary of the English Clock Tower in Buenos Aires, which was built with bricks from Stonehouse Brick and Tile Co Ltd. Members donated money to pay for this and it has been received by officials in Buenos Aires. We still await news of when it will be in place on the tower.

We have continued to interview local residents about their memories of Stonehouse. Shirley Dicker, Jim Dickson, and Vicki Walker have interviewed Irene Adey, Sid King, Sylvia Bliss and Stanley and Gladys Hook. We also accompanied two visitors from Australia to see where their ancestors lived around the town. Several people have sent us written memories which we intend to include in future Journals.

This year we have acquired two large collections of old photographs. Pamela Redding donated her father Donald Smith's collection of photos from the 1970s to 1990s. Dursley History Society has acquired the negatives of photos taken during the 1960s to 1990s from the Dursley Gazette. We have been given those of Stonehouse to scan and save. Thanks to Shirley Dicker for her work in scanning hundreds of photographs. Some of our members are involved in Rick Jordan's project to record Stonehouse in photographs throughout 2017.

We have continued with local walks and talks. We have taken one group of people (SP3) on the High Street walk and another (Gloucestershire Society for Industrial Archaeology) on a Second World War walk. Jim Dickson talked to Friends of the Gloucester Waterways Museum and Stroud Local History Society on "Some history of the canal at Stonehouse". Vicki Walker and Shirley Dicker visited Scarlet House and Stonehouse Pensioners Club with our collection of old photographs. We led a history walk around the High Street with Wycliffe Cubs.

We have increased our range of displays. We have exhibited many of these in Stonehouse Library. Maidenhill School borrowed our display on the First World War, including Stonehouse Soldiers at the Somme, along with the research we have done on the effects of the War in Stonehouse, to help with their Y9 History project. We created a display on Gardens for Food, Fun and Flowers for the GLHA Local History Day in March. We have also been heavily involved in the display created for the new Cotswold Canals Trust Activity Centre in Bond's Mill Gatehouse, helping them with both information and posters. We produced information sheets for sculptures in Stonehouse Arts Week in June and hope to be involved with this project in 2017.

We were involved in the publication of a book – *The Stroud Valleys in the Great War* by The Five Valleys Great War Researchers Group published by the History Press. The chapter on Stonehouse was contributed by SHG using material from Journal Issue 4. The launch of the book in January 2017 was very successful and copies are selling well. We do not receive an income from this; however we are entitled to purchase copies at half the recommended retail price.

Our journals and calendars continue to sell well. We still have printed copies of all Journal issues available and earlier issues can be viewed on the website.

Our bank balance has been reduced this year due to a contribution towards the Information Boards. We will be unable to contribute any more financially to these until our funds have recovered appreciably.

Committee, May 2016 - April 2017

Chair - Jim Dickson

Vice-Chair - Shirley Dicker

Secretary - Vicki Walker

Treasurer - Andrew Walker

Committee - Valerie Blick, David Bowker-Praed, John Peters, Darrell Webb (website), Colin Wood.

Journal and Information Board working group - Janet Hudson

SHG Events 2016 - 17 (attendance in brackets)

May 11th (40)

AGM followed by members' Show and Tell

Philip Wells - "Liddiatt Leftovers - The Congregational Church Organ", **Shirley Dicker** - "Timbabil", **Alex Walmsley** - "Methodist baptism register", **Peter Morton** - "Cannonball", **Andrew Cooke** - "Brass dog collar", **Cresby Brown** - "Stroud Voices".

June 8th (48)

Virginia Adsett and Gillian Morse - The Swinging Sixties. A great exhibition of objects from the 1960s with stories to match.

July 13th (55)

Bob Lusty - The Local Music Scene in the 1960s and 70s. Bob's memories of his youth encouraged many of the audience to recall their own happy days in Stonehouse.

July 16th (6)

GLHA Summer Afternoon at Chipping Campden.

July 24th (30)

Visit to Jenner Museum in Berkeley.

August 28th (12)

Walk along the canal to Eastington followed by tea at Stonehouse Court

September 15th (42)

John Putley - Blood, guts and a little off the top: An entertaining look at medicine and surgery from medieval through to Tudor times. John came dressed as a medieval barber surgeon complete with medical instruments and medicines from those times.

October 12th (39)

Peter Strong - Sudbrook and the Severn Tunnel. The story of the building of the Severn Tunnel and the village which housed the workers.

November 9th (30)

Barry Harrison - Thomas Hughes: the man who took Stroud's temperatures. Thomas Hughes was an apothecary and surgeon who moved to Stroud in 1771, and who kept detailed weather records up to the year of his death in 1813.

December 14th (56)

Roy Edwards - Memories of School Days: Stonehouse School 1953 -1956. Roy told us about his education at Stonehouse Secondary School before it moved to the new building in King's Road. Many members also brought items from their school days.

December 16th (20)

Visit to Stroud Brewery

January 11th (42)

Vicki Walker and Jim Dickson - Stonehouse in the Second World War. The Invasion Committee, Shadow Factories, Wycliffe College and evacuees were some of the topics covered.

Feb 8th (47)

Howard Beard - Victorian Stroud and surrounding area in old photographs. Another opportunity to see some of Howard's extensive collection and hear the stories behind them.

March 8th (51)

Philip Wilkinson - Great British Brands. The author of many books on English history, Philip presented a brief history of advertising signs and slogans for some famous products.

April 12th (44)

Rob Carruthers - Restoring the Vale of Berkeley Railway. The history of the line and the plans for its restoration.



2016 — 2017

