

# Stonehouse History Group

## Journal



**Issue 5**

**May 2015**

**ISSN 2050-0858**

Published by Stonehouse History Group

[www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk](http://www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk)

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May 2015

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Printed by Zeta Printing

Front cover photograph - Ocean Bridge from the tower of St Cyr's Church on July 6<sup>th</sup> 2013 .

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#### 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,

usually in the Town Hall at 7:30pm.

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

Annual membership £5 due in May.

# **Stonehouse History Group Journal**

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## Stonehouse History Group

### 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?**

We are interested in, for example, photos of shops or pubs, local industries, schools, streets or houses, roads, bridges, railways, fêtes, fairs or other activities. We would like to scan them for our collection. We can scan them in your home or take them away for a few days. We promise to return them safely. If you would like to give us your old photos we will store them safely for the future. Please note that we are particularly interested in photographs from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

### **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 immigration and emigration, pubs, schools, Stonehouse during both World Wars, 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 [www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk](http://www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk)

### **Our Website**

[\*\*www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk\*\*](http://www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk)

Stonehouse History Group's website is packed with over 100 pages of local history containing photographs, maps, memories, videos and information about the town from its early days.

If you have any information about local history that you would like us to add to the web pages, or have any questions about local history, please email the Website Manager, Darrell Webb, at

[\*\*info@stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk\*\*](mailto:info@stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk)

If you don't have access to email, please leave a note for us at the Town Hall marked "Stonehouse History Group" (and leaving a contact phone number or address) or telephone one of our committee (see inside cover).



## Welcome to Issue 5

We are pleased to present thirteen articles on a wide variety of topics. It has been especially encouraging to receive contributions from new writers and researchers, about family memories, observations or personal research.

A number of readers have contacted us with additional information to add to our archives. Three of our articles (*Ernest Weaver, evacuee; Captain Eric Dixon, Royal Flying Corps; A not-so-lost cricket bat willow plantation near Stonehouse*) add new information to that in articles published in previous issues. We are always pleased to receive further information on any of our articles.

The article about Bridgend Hostel was written after receiving an enquiry via our website about a Polish resident there. This prompted Bob Lusty to check if there was anyone living in the Stonehouse area who remembered the hostel. He received an amazing response from ex-residents. We have been loaned more photographs than it is possible to use in this Journal so we intend to include more on our website in the near future. If you have any memories or photographs of the hostel, please get in touch.

In 2015, the bicentenary of the Battle of Waterloo and the defeat of Napoleon is being marked. Darrell Webb has researched the lives of two men connected to Stonehouse, David Wingfield and Alexander Ball, who played a part in the wars and politics of the time.

You may wish to suggest a topic for a future Journal. A letter from his grandson was the inspiration for research into Edward Jenner Davies and has prompted us into finding out more about influential men and women of the town. Some of these people will be the subject of a presentation to the group on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2015.

This year we have lost one of our most respected members. June Sturm was a mine of information about the town and church and we talked to her often about her memories. She will be sadly missed at our meetings and by her many friends.

*The editorial team  
May 2015*



*In December 2014 we were given the ceremonial key which was presented to Sir Stephen Tallents at the official opening of the Post Office building in 1933. The key is now displayed in the Town Hall alongside our Information Board on the history of the building.  
Photo shows Mark Heywood, Freddie Pemberton-Pigott, Valerie Blick and Paul Dicker.*

## A fond farewell to June

by Jim Dickson and Vicki Walker

June Sturm, who lived in Stonehouse all her life, died on February 9. She was one of our first History Group members and gave one of the first talks in 2008, about the history of St Cyr's Church. June was always keen on the history of St Cyr's, of Stonehouse and of its people. We recorded three separate interviews with her about her life and her memories of Stonehouse. We have compiled this article from those memories, the address at her funeral (which she wrote herself), and help from some of her friends, particularly Jim Bidmead.

In April 1923 John Loydell and Hilda Birt were married in St Cyr's Church by Rev. Clarence Simpson, the Rector of Eastington with Frocester. Years passed and they had no children. Encouraged by the Vicar, Rev. Leonard Dawson, they took the brave step of adopting; they visited London and returned with a small cockney bundle which had been abandoned by its parents. The bundle was duly baptised here as "Miriam June" by the curate, Rodney Wilson.

The family lived at 'Hilcot' in Upper Queen's Road, facing down the road under the railway bridge. Her father was in the Royal Navy and her mother was a dressmaker. June was born in April 1931. One of the earliest photos of her can be found on page 46 of J.H.A. Anderson's book: *Stonehouse: a pot-pourri of the past in pictures*.



L to R: Margaret Neale, Barbara Hunt, June Loydell,  
Jean Gardner, Pamela Gwinnell.

June attended Audrey Butt's dancing class in Stonehouse Subscription Rooms and her group was to lead the Silver Jubilee Fancy Dress Parade in 1935. June remembers that most of the little girls were dressed as Bo Peep, but she was dressed as a fairy! They were driven up to Gordon Terrace, where the photo was taken, in Mr Gardiner's big car and paraded back down the street.

At the age of five, June was taken to Stroud High School to be enrolled in the Kindergarten. Miss Brew, the headmistress, interviewed her and her mother and insisted that, at school, she should be known by her first name, Miriam, even though she was known as June at home.

During the 1930s June remembered accompanying her mother to the shops. Every Tuesday afternoon her mother would go to the Co-op where she was served by men dressed in white overalls and aprons. Her mother would be given a chair from which she would give her order which she had written in a little book. The person serving her would check items and make notes in preparation for delivery of her order the following day. The order would be parcelled up with a roll of paper kept under the counter. Mr Mullins owned the store which is now Pizza Planet. The shop was an old-fashioned drapery which sold school uniforms, knitting wool, cotton goods and materials. It was a treasure trove for kids and, indeed, for her mother who was a dressmaker. June also accompanied her father regularly to Gardiner's Garage to have their accumulator (which provided power for the family's radio) re-charged at a cost of 6d (= 2½ pence). Gardiner's was on the site of the present Co-op Supermarket. On the way home they would call at Miss O'Neill's sweet shop on Queen's Road to buy 1d worth of dolly mixtures for June. These were carried home in her father's pocket since she wasn't allowed to eat on the street. Her mother didn't know about the sweets which her father slipped to her quietly.

June recalled that, during the Second World War, evacuees came to the High School and trenches were dug in the fields. Her family took in war workers: a nurse and a man who worked at the Air Ministry (based at Wycliffe College). June travelled to school on the railcar, getting off at Downfield Halt. She remembered going to Bond's Mill in 1941 to wave to the Queen Mother on her visit to the Sperry Gyroscope "shadow factory".

In 1941, June was due to take the Scholarship Exam. That very morning, her father collapsed with what turned out to be a massive stroke and was never able to work again. She was sent off to school as if nothing had happened. A year later she was told, "*go to the examination room and take your pencil case with you.*" The Headmistress, Miss Dancer, had decided that, as she was young enough, she should sit again, hoping she would get a scholarship which would guarantee a free place with grants for travel and uniform. June passed the exam and stayed at the High School until she was 18.



*St Cyr's Church Choir in 1947*

Back row: G Parker, P Baker, R Walker, E Wheeler, F Rowbotham (Choirmaster), C Davis, B Parker, E Lewis, G Seaborne, R Neale, Joan Smart, E Darby

Middle row: C Parker, M Elmer, E Walker, Deaconess Walker, Rev G Highmore, F Gwynnill (Organist), M Gwynnill, A Seaborne, A Darby, M Wheeler, Janet Smart

Front row: M Moore, B Hunt, P Gwynnill, M Loydell, I Rogers, P Smith, J Brotherton, Y May, B Bailey, B Powis

St Cyr's Church played a big part in the life of the family. June wrote:

*"I was brought to Church week by week and told that Sergeant Major Gardner, the Verger, would deal with me if I was naughty. Sadly I was never allowed to go to Sunday School as it was held in the day school and I might catch something; I thought of mumps or measles but many years later I found that nits were the dreaded item."*

The Church was a great support through difficult times.

*"When my father was very ill, my much-loved Godfather, George Parker, one of the churchwardens, was as a rock to me. In 1944, Fred Rowbotham, the choirmaster, asked my mother if she would allow me to join the choir. Permission was eventually granted and I proceeded to cause chaos until 2002 when I was no longer able to sing. Whilst our group of eight girls was being trained we could visit Gloucester to hear Elijah. I sat within a stone's throw of the tenor*

*soloist and came home hooked for life, later being in Tewkesbury and Stroud Choral Societies and truly loving my times there.”*

As a member of the choir for nearly 60 years and a churchwarden from 1986 to 1992, June amply repaid that support with service given. She was always keen on the choral side at St Cyr's and played the organ, mainly to help out when the regular organist was not available. She was also a good pianist but, sadly, had to stop playing due to arthritis in her hands. Until about six years ago, she attended and sang regularly at the Three Choirs Festival (held annually, rotating between the cathedrals of Hereford, Gloucester and Worcester) and sang in Gloucester Cathedral. She did readings and prayers regularly at St Cyr's until shortly before she died (latterly from her chair).

When June left school in 1949 she went to train as a teacher. Money was tight and she was grateful for financial help from the Stonehouse Schools Trustees. June took over as Clerk to the Trustees in 1993 and did all the running of it, including the finance, until 2007. She continued as a Trustee until 2009. She attended Salisbury Diocesan Training College. She first taught at Bredon Secondary Modern School, teaching a variety of subjects including Religion and Music to 11 and 12 year olds. With her mother ailing, June returned home and got a job at Brimscombe Secondary Modern. “*Ancient and Modern they used to call it! It was very hard for the first year but after that it was fine. It was in the old Thames and Severn Canal Headquarters. It was a lovely building – why they pulled that down I don't know; the history belonging to that building was wonderful. It was started in the 1880s by mill owners finding boys causing trouble so they found them something to do by setting up a school.*”

When the school closed and Eastcombe Manor School was built, June moved there.

After her parents died, she lived with her aunt until she married Peter Sturm in 1961. They took over Grove Farm at the top of Brown's Lane in 1967 and June left teaching to become a farmer's wife, which she enjoyed. “*It's a lovely life with nobody bothering you. We had milkers and their calves and we had beef at the finish. Peter bought half a dozen sheep at Gloucester Market one day. Brought them home and put them in a safe field with an electric fence all the way round. Next morning he had to get the Police to help catch them as they escaped. He took them back to market and we never bothered with sheep again. We had an orchard. Now they have planted grapevines all across the side of the hill.*”

Jim Bidmead got to know Peter Sturm in the 1950s since his mum did housekeeping for Mrs Sturm. When Peter started farming at Grove Farm, Jim helped regularly and continued to do so until 1983 when Peter was no longer able to continue working the farm.



Peter and June

Jim first got to know June when she and Peter moved into the farmhouse. Jim thought that June took very well to her new role which was clearly a radical change from being a school teacher. She loved the organisational and secretarial side, was a reliable back-up and go-for for Peter, and helped to keep the farm ticking over. Former Mayor Mattie Ross recalled that, before all the houses had been built at Cotswold Green, Grove Farm land extended to near her home. Even though the fields were fenced off, the cows got out occasionally and one of Mattie's first memories of June is of her running up the road chasing cows!

June offered B&B for people on the Cotswold Way (which passes close by the farm). Mattie Ross recalls that her hospitality was quite famous: “good hearty breakfasts, delicious evening meals, good home cooking” – and jugs of cider for those working on the farm.

Felicity Norris was a cloth designer at Marling & Evans at Stanley Mill. She lodged with June and Peter for 4 years and only moved away when Stanley Mill changed their products. Jim remembered that Felicity was like part of the family at Grove Farm. June and Felicity became close friends and kept in touch all their lives.

When they were at the farm, June loved to watch the Tennis Championships at Wimbledon on TV for two weeks each summer, at Peter's mum's home. The men would be haymaking and June would tell them that they wouldn't see her for the rest of the day but that she had prepared food for them – "so help yourselves!" She also liked to watch rugby internationals.

Although they had no children of their own, June and Peter loved having friends and their children come to visit them on the farm – and some of the children would stay on without their parents. One of June's close friends, Laurie Rock from Derby, was a friend since their schooldays. Laurie's children loved being there, as did other young people. And June always laid on good food. Also, like Jim, other young people came to work on the farm (Colin Wood, Paul Lawrence, etc).

Grove Farm was hard work, being up on the slopes of Doverow Hill there was always a lot of uphill trudging to do. In the early 1980s, the UK had a sustained cold winter which involved extra hard work since the cattle needed regular supplies of water. Peter suffered serious health problems and several of his friends recall that that winter stopped him "in his tracks". Since Peter couldn't cope, he and June gave up the farm and moved to 48 Regent Street. Having to give up the farm was a big shock for Peter. However, June was still able to maintain other interests such as Meals on Wheels, Women's Institute, etc.

Mattie Ross believes that June was one of the first volunteers with Meals on Wheels in Stonehouse, being involved from 1969. The cooking was done by the volunteers, put in special dishes with fitted lids, served up in people's homes – then the dishes returned to be washed. So being a Meals on Wheels volunteer was a whole-day affair, 3 days per week - quite a commitment. Eventually, Social Services took it over and employed cooks. Then, from the early 1990s, the food was prepared at Maidenhill School. June carried on for many years and became Deputy to the Organiser then, later, Mattie's Deputy. June continued to do Meals on Wheels until after the Millennium when she began to deteriorate physically. Although she stopped delivering, she carried on as Mattie's Deputy until 2009. She loved keeping the records and Mattie found her to be always methodical and rigorous.

In August 1996 or 1997, there was a WRVS garden party at Oxford with the Queen participating. Mattie was unable to attend so arranged for June to represent her – since she had been doing Meals on Wheels much longer than Mattie. Being the thorough person that June was, she provided Mattie with a typed report on the day's event. The report, which Mattie has kept, was a lovely piece of writing, typical of June, who had thoroughly enjoyed the day.

June found things difficult after Peter became unwell. Jim used to take Peter back and forth to hospital for various things because, although June could drive, she struggled to get Peter in and out of the car. In the end, Peter had to go into the Regency Retirement Home, since she needed some respite. She never wanted him to go there and was shocked when he died.



Well-prepared as ever, June wrote her own eulogy to be read at her memorial service. She was very grateful to all her friends and family who supported her. She was especially grateful to her adoptive parents:

*"Above all my eternal thanks to Mother and Father, how did they do it? A leap of faith! I can understand Father, he was a man of the world, he'd done 25 years in Her Majesty's service and could cope with all situations. BUT Mother - who had never left home, only worked from home, had very poor health and had everything exact, tidy precise, neat and above all 'ladylike.' I truly cannot think how she did this deed of rescue for me. She told me when I was grown up, 'You see I always felt that I had to take greater care of you than one of my own, for I was doing it for someone else. Join the Saints, Mum and Dad!"*

June at the church's  
Diamond Jubilee  
celebrations in 2012

# Standish House before it became a hospital

by Shirley Dicker

## Introduction

In 1784, James Lenox Napier Dutton inherited the family fortune and became Lord Sherborne, 1<sup>st</sup> Baron of Sherborne. He had three daughters and a son named John, born in 1779. In August 1803, John married the Hon. Mary Bilson-Legge, daughter of Henry Stawell Bilson-Legge, 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron of Stawell. When James died in 1820, John became the 2<sup>nd</sup> Baron of Sherborne, which included the Sherborne Estate (centred around North Gloucestershire, Hampshire and Somerset). When Mary's father died in the same year, the Stawell Estate also passed to John. This gave John (Lord Sherborne) sufficient money to update the Sherborne Estate and he spent the next 42 years transforming it.

When work started on updating the Sherborne Estate (near the village of Sherborne in Gloucestershire), the house was found to have extensive dry rot. It was therefore decided to demolish the house and have it rebuilt to better suit the family's needs. So, while their new home was being built, the family required somewhere to live (by this time, Lord Sherborne and his wife had three sons: James, John and Ralph).



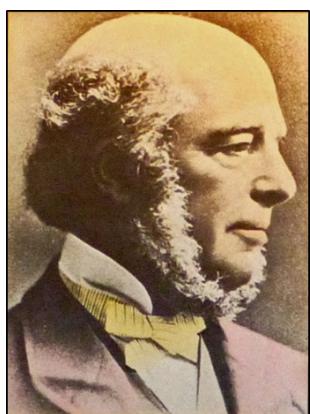
*The block at the left (with 3 windows in the upper floor) was the original house prior to its considerable enlargement by Richard Potter in 1865-67.*

In 1818, a small farmhouse had been built at Standish, which was part of the Sherborne Estate. Lord Sherborne decided to have the farmhouse demolished and replaced by a new house, to be named Standish House. It was designed as a 'square stucco box of two storeys with simple interiors and a pedimented Doric porch in the recessed centre of the three bay entrance front'. This new house was only to be a temporary residence while Sherborne House was being rebuilt. Construction of Standish House was completed in 1830. Lord Sherborne and his family used Standish House regularly as a hunting lodge until the 1850s.

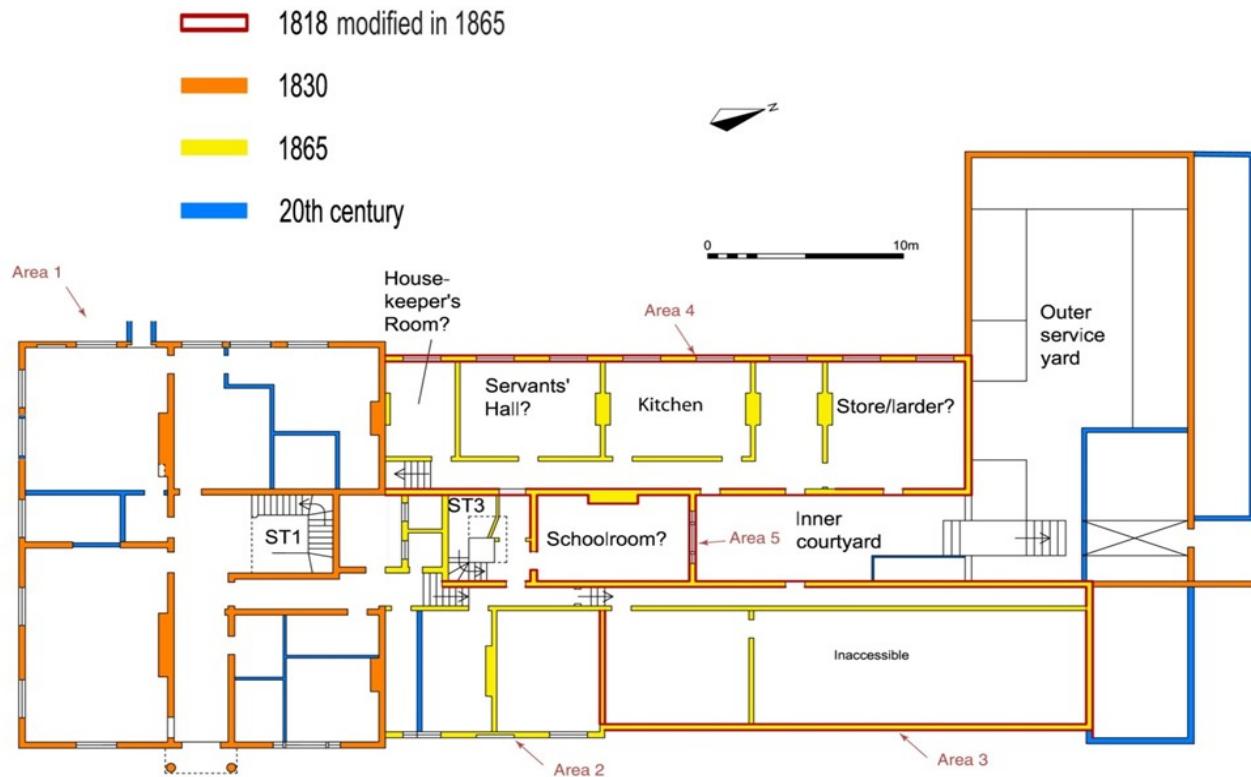
## Potter family

In 1849, Richard Potter became a partner in Price and Company, timber merchants, of Gloucester. During the Crimean War (1853 to 1856), the Company made a fortune selling wooden huts to the British and French Governments for use by their armies and for hospital units (Isambard Kingdom Brunel designed hospital units which were made by Price & Co). This enabled the Potters to lease Standish House from Lord Sherborne between 1853 and 1884 (the family also rented a large furnished house in London every year for "the Season"). Potter was a highly successful businessman and held directorships of important companies including Chairman of the Board of the Great Western Railway and Director of the Hudson Bay Company in Canada.

Richard and his wife Lawrencina had nine daughters, the last three of them born at Standish House. Their long-awaited son was also born there but, two and a half years later, he died. Standish was the place where the girls spent the major part of their childhood and the one they loved most and recalled most frequently in later years. Richard Potter found the House to be too small for all their staff (around a dozen in the 1861 and 1871 Censuses), children



and their governesses, so he had a large new wing built onto the side of the House at his own expense. This extension contained bedrooms, an extensive library, school room, servants' quarters, etc. The plan view of the ground floor (below) shows some of the extensive changes by Potter, and subsequent changes in the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the house had become a hospital.



The building work took from 1865 to 1867 to complete and more than doubled the size of the House. Potter also added a large fruit and vegetable garden and landscaped the gardens, including a good selection of trees.

Beatrice, eighth daughter of Richard and Lawrencina, wrote in *My Apprenticeship*: “The leased house ..... was in all its domestic arrangements typical of the mid-Victorian capitalist. The building, a plain and formless structure, more like an institution than a home, ..... was sharply divided into front and back premises. The front region, with a south-western aspect, overlooked flower gardens and the beautiful vale of the Severn: the stairs and landings were heavily carpeted; the bedrooms and sitting-rooms were plainly but substantially furnished in mahogany and leather, the ‘best’ drawing-room and my mother’s boudoir more ornately blossoming into reminiscences of the 1851 Exhibition. In this front portion of the house resided my father and mother and any honoured guests; the library and study were frequented by my elder sisters, and in the large and sunny dining-room all the family assembled for the mid-day meal. The back premises, with a predominantly northern aspect, overlooked laurel shrubberies, the servants’ yard, the stables and extensive kitchen gardens. Bare stone steps led to long corridors of bedrooms, one apartment exactly like the other in shape and necessary furniture; stone-flagged passages connected the housekeeper’s room of the upper servants with the larger servants’ hall for the underlings, and a stone-paved yard separated the kitchen, scullery and larder from the laundries. In this back region of the house were the day and night nurseries, the large bare schoolroom over-looking the servants’ yard and stables, the governesses’ bedrooms, the one bathroom of the establishment, and, be it added, my father’s billiard- and smoking-room.”

Beatrice married Sidney Webb in July 1892. They were to form a formidable partnership as social reformers. The playwright, George Bernard (GB) Shaw who became a Nobel Laureate in Literature, judged Sidney to be the ablest man in England. GB persuaded Sidney to join the Fabian Society when it was formed in 1884 and Sidney and Beatrice became important members. Through their lobbying and fund-raising efforts the London School of Economics and



*This view during the 20<sup>th</sup> century when the House had become a Hospital shows that the fine grounds were retained.*

Political Science started in 1898. The Webbs also founded the New Statesman in 1913. William Beveridge was one of Beatrice's great protégés. He and Beatrice are said to have argued and debated for decades! The Beveridge Report published in 1942 led to the introduction of the Welfare State and the establishment of the National Health Service in 1948 (with free medical treatment for all). Following their deaths, the ashes of Beatrice and Sidney were buried together in Westminster Abbey in 1948, the only married couple to be so honoured.

## King family

The Kings came from Wiltshire, from a manor called Samways at Alvediston near Broadchalke. One of the sons, John, had a wish to go to sea and he was able to pursue his dream since he had elder brothers at home. In 1690, aged 15, he set off for Bristol and started what was to become the family shipping business. At the outset of his career, John turned his attention to the trade in Virginia, in the Eastern USA, particularly about the Rappahannock River. In time he built up a large merchant trade in which he employed his own ships. He became Sheriff of Bristol in 1719 then Mayor in 1732. He died in 1734.

Thomas King (one of John's grandsons) developed the business and started to trade along the West coast of Africa. That business became well established at Gran Bassam and Abidjan Lahou on the Ivory Coast and at Duala in Liberia.

When Thomas died in 1841, his business as a West African merchant and shipowner was carried on by his two sons, Richard Jenkins Poole King and William Poole King. They traded under the name R. & W. King Ltd of Radcliffe Wharf, Bristol, and had a fleet of 20 sailing ships averaging 200 tons each. The company traded or bartered with West African native chiefs – using coloured cloth, beads and even firearms to acquire ivory, rubber, palm oil, gold dust and wood. Their main trade was in palm oil and kernels. Both Richard and William maintained close association with civic and business life in Bristol. Richard was President of the Chamber of Commerce 1839-42, Mayor in 1844-45, and first Chairman of the Docks Committee 1848-59. William was High Sheriff in 1871-72 and, up to his death in 1887, 'father' of Bristol Town Council.

Richard met Annie Liddon through her father, Captain Mathew Liddon, who was in the Royal Navy and was second in command, and captained a ship, the *Griper*, which accompanied Edward Parry in his 1819-20 expedition to find the North West Passage. Annie married Richard in 1852 (when she was 20 and he was a 52-year old widower) and they lived at Kensington House, Brislington, Bristol (Annie's brother was Henry Parry Liddon, a renowned Church of England orator who, in 1870, was appointed Canon of St Paul's Cathedral). Such was the respect in which Richard was held that, on his death in September 1874, at the age of 75, flags flew at half-mast in Bristol.

Annie and her family remained at Kensington House for 10 years after Richard's death. However, she sold up and moved to Standish House in 1884 since she felt that Bristol was beginning to encroach on Brislington. Annie rented Standish House on a 21-year lease for £150 per annum. There was stabling for some 30 horses at their new home so the family was able to indulge in its great love of country pursuits. They all belonged to the Berkeley Hunt.

Richard and Annie had five children: Sarah, Mary, Alice, Louisa and Thomas. Sarah married before the family moved to Standish; Mary loved gardening and spent a lot of time in the gardens and was involved with the Red Cross; Alice loved fishing and riding; Louisa was not always in good health but did travel to Egypt; and Thomas, who enjoyed travelling, racing, hunting and spending money, took over the family business when Richard died (but his mother Annie, who was a shrewd businesswoman, kept a tight rein on the finances).

There were great glass houses where the family grew grapes. There was a mushroom house with beds heated by hot water pipes, and watercress beds around the spring which fed the pond. There was also an underground ice store below the dam where ice collected off the pond during the winter could be kept until the summer.

The family lived at Standish until 1897 when the business began to suffer because of the Boer War in South Africa. Annie decided to economise by moving to a smaller home. They rented Newark Park (near Wotton-under-Edge) and took all their staff with them. Despite Annie's economies, a wing was added to the house to accommodate their staff.

In 1913, Mary was Vice-President of the Gloucester branch of the Red Cross under the Duchess of Beaufort. They both realised that, if war broke out in Europe, there would be a shortage of nurses and of hospital facilities. So they set up Red Cross units, began training staff, and Mary asked Lord Sherborne if Standish House could be used as a Red Cross hospital. Lord Sherborne agreed and offered it rent-free. He also agreed to have it decorated and the interior overhauled, including fitting electric lights, additional baths and toilet facilities. Mary was Commandant of the hospital until it closed in early 1919. [See the article "*Effects of the First World War on the Stonehouse community*" in Issue 4 of this Journal for some details of the House's use as a hospital between 1915 and 1919.]

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*W.E. Parry's Expeditions*, <http://www.rmq.co.uk/explore/sea-and-ships/in-depth/north-west-passage/exploration-adventure-and-tragedy/william-edward-parrys-expeditions-1819-25>

## Haywardsend House

by Janet Hudson

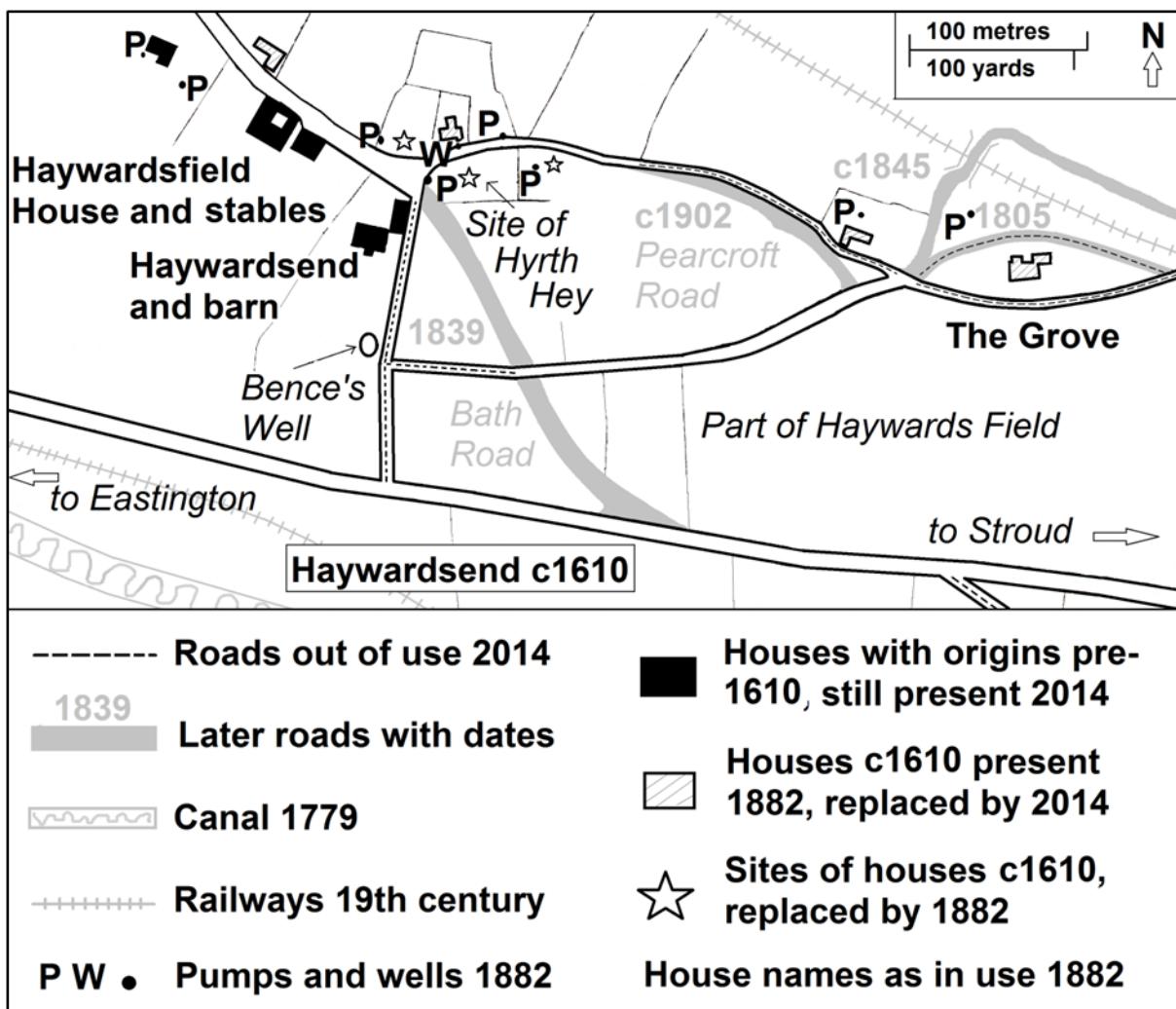


*Haywardsend from Bath Road 2014, looking south. The building on the left is the former barn or coach house, listed as the Mews. The end section on the right is part of the 1789 alterations, and the linking building is later.*

The house now called simply 'Haywardsend', in Bath Road, Stonehouse, has a long history. It is one of a group of houses in a hamlet known in the sixteenth century by variations of the name 'Hyettsende', but by about 1730 as 'Haywardsend'. The hamlet once marked the western end of a hedged enclosure, which by the medieval period was arable land. It was called variations of 'Hyetts', and later 'Haywards', Field, stretched as far eastwards as Ebley, and may be Anglo-Saxon or earlier in origin. The older name derives from words for 'hedge gates', but was perhaps changed by common usage. A hayward was a manorial officer responsible for maintaining important hedges and preventing livestock from straying into arable areas. There were also local farmers named Hayward in the hamlet in the later seventeenth century.

The Bence family had been tenants of Stonehouse manor since at least the fifteenth century, at one time running a cloth processing mill. In 1558 William Bence was the tenant of two manorial holdings, granted to his family in 1532, but which had probably existed since at least the twelfth century. One of these was a house on the site of Haywardsend, with the piece of land adjoining to the south, and about fifteen acres spread about in various fields. The other, called Hyrth Hey, was a house across a lane on the site of what is now Pearcroft Lodge in Pearcroft Road, with a small enclosure and about eighteen acres of land, also spread about. The name Hyrth Hey has not been precisely defined, but probably had to do with hedges and boundaries. [Names]

William Bence worked both holdings, possibly subletting the Hyrth Hey house, and died in 1592. His heir in the tenancies was Richard Bence, probably his son, but in his will he left to another son, Edward, 'all my instruments belonginge to the weaving of broadclothes', and to other children, livestock including oxen, crops, and a pair of new wain wheels. He had evidently combined farming with work in the cloth industry, like most of his contemporaries. Richard Bence, however, seems to have been less industrious. He was repeatedly 'presented', or accused, in the manor court, probably then held in Stonehouse Court, for neglect of his agricultural obligations and failure to maintain his property. In 1604 he was to 'well and sufficiently repayre and thatch his howse', and in 1605 was presented 'for letting downe his howsing and selling the Tyle'. It appears that Haywardsend at this time may have been a neglected thatched house, and Hyrth Hey a stone roofed building which had been demolished, the land being sublet. In 1610 William Warner, a clothier living in what would become Haywardsfield House next door, was ordered with Bence to clear the ditches between their properties, but in 1612 to do it on his own. When Bence died, in 1624, the property was taken back 'into the lord's hands'. [Bence]



*Map of the Haywardsend area in about 1610 [Map]*

Daniel Fowler, lord of the manor, leased both Bence's holdings to his son Stephen in 1624, but Stephen seems to have let them to his brother, Nathaniel Fowler, whose first wife was Anne, daughter of William Warner. In 1630 the manor court ordered Nathaniel Fowler to 'scoure his ditch at the upper side of Bence's House next the highway that men may have passayge over the lake, and also that he dig and scour his ditch at the lower end of Bence's orchard next hiettsfield'. The 'lake' was the natural water which gathered at the road junction, reflected in the number of pumps and wells there in 1882, perhaps the reason why the hamlet was there originally. Nathaniel Fowler himself lived elsewhere, however, leaving the house to Walter Morse, a dyer, who had married Mary Bence, probably Richard's daughter. Morse and his wife were excommunicated in 1607-1610, and in 1626 he was said to be 'a common night walker living inordinately without a calling'.

The land was let out to other tenants, such as Edward Harmer of the Grove, who in 1641 had put a ditch and hedge 'att a place called the hearth-haye joining to a common waye leading all the inhabitants for their lands lying above the said place in a common field called Hyettsfield unto their lands there with all their Teemes and Carriages, att which place was not antiently any ditch digged or mound set so farre forth, to the great annoyance of the said waye and danger of the inhabitants passing thereby'.

In 1647-1649 Stephen Fowler formally passed the manor lease of both properties to his brother Nathaniel and his heirs, but it was probably only after the death of Mary Morse in 1651, having outlived her husband and son, that Nathaniel Fowler was able to rebuild the house in the form now seen from the Bath Road. [Fowler]

The rebuilt house was let for a time to Samuel Colwell, a broadweaver, and his son Daniel Colwell, a shearman and later a clothier. However, from 1665 to 1717 it was occupied by members of the Fowler family, first by Nathaniel's brother William and his son Daniel, both clothiers, and then by Stephen Fowler, son of Nathaniel. The property was still called 'Bence's' in 1709, but when Sarah Fowler, widow of Stephen, died in 1728, she was said to be 'of Haywards End'. An inventory listing the rooms where she had personal goods mentions a parlour, butteries, a parlour chamber with a bed and truckle bed, a hall chamber with a bed, a buttery chamber with two beds, garrets with one bed, a brewhouse and two furnaces. There must also have been a kitchen. Sarah had shared the house in her last years with Samuel Apperley, a yeoman farmer who worked the land. The next owner, under Stephen Fowler's will, was his nephew, another Nathaniel Fowler, who continued to let it to tenants, mainly clothworkers or small farmers, some of whom may have been William Dangerfield, Daniel Cobb, Thomas Clutterbuck and Giles Dimmock. Nathaniel Fowler, a gentleman and clothier who lived at Holme Place, Bridgend, died childless in 1781. In his will he named many cousins, one of whom, Thomas Skipp, became the new owner and occupier of his Stonehouse property. [Farm]

Thomas Skipp had prospered as a buckle plater in Birmingham, and now set about updating his house to gentlemanly standards. A new south front was completed in 1789 (as seen in the photograph on page 17) with higher floor levels than in the older parts. The house was becoming associated with the name 'Haywardsend', although the name 'Bence's' was not quite forgotten. While making his garden alterations in 1788, Thomas Skipp was taken to task by the manor court about 'Bence's Wells, being a well upwards of 270 years, an old accustomed well used by the inhabitants of Stonehouse. This well is situated in Bence's Lane near the dwelling house of Thomas Skipp gent, and the aforesaid T. Skipp has had it stopped up'. This spring or well was shown on maps into the twentieth century, although Bence's Lane was replaced by a new length of the Bath Road in 1839. Thomas Skipp held almost the same lands as Bence had done in 1558, with additions which had expanded them to about 106 acres, and on his death in 1837 the estate passed to his grandson, Richard Skipp, a solicitor. Richard Skipp unfortunately drowned in an accident at Sharpness in 1840, and in 1841 the house was apparently empty except for a caretaker lodger, Samuel Collier. The entry in the 1841 census follows that for Haywardsfield House, and is the first of several listed under 'Haywardsend'. [Skipp]

Meanwhile Dr Joachim Cooper Hayward had brought his growing family to Stonehouse. Originally from Wiltshire, he served as a surgeon to the North Gloucestershire Militia, based in Bristol from 1805 to 1808. After farming in Somerset, and then in Uley, Gloucestershire, for a time, he settled in Stonehouse in 1830, renting the Grove, and buying the nearby cottage and about 40 acres of land. The Grove had apparently been known as 'Stonehouse Cottage' in 1824, but in the 1841 census is called 'Haywardsfield Cottage'. Joachim is not known to have been related to any of the Gloucestershire Hayward families, but appears to have been anxious to have his name attached to his house, which may be why he was interested in the Haywardsend area. In 1845 he bought the Skipp estate, bringing his total lands to about 146 acres in the area surrounding Haywardsend and Doverow Hill. In the 1851 census the house has no specific name, but censuses did not always record house names. The family photograph on page 17 was taken in about 1859 'outside the coach house, Haywards End', and was probably sent to Johnson Frederick Hayward, another of Joachim's sons, who was in Australia from 1847 to 1864. The former coach house, facing the courtyard, with space for the double doors still in its long side wall, can be seen in the Bath Road photograph on page 14. [Hayward]

Joachim Cooper Hayward died in July 1864, leaving his property to his eldest son Martinus Peter Hayward, who in 1861 was living in Somerset, and in 1871 in Cheltenham, where he died in 1904. The 1871 census lists Haywardsend after Haywards Field Mansion, but confusingly calls it Haywards Field House. The residents present in 1871 were Mary and Charles Hayward, two of Joachim's other children. In 1881 they and another sister, Magdalena, were listed at Haywards End House, which was regarded as the home of Mary and her three younger sisters, all unmarried, until Mary's death in March 1886. The house then passed to Edward Jenner Davies and his wife, and then widow, Helen Elizabeth, née Hayward, daughter of Martinus, who died in 1943.



*The Hayward family c1859. Standing top left is Martinus Peter Hayward, next but one along is his father Joachim Cooper Hayward. The baby is Helen Elizabeth Hayward, daughter of Martinus, and later Mrs Edward Jenner Davies.*

*Photograph from the State Library of South Australia.*

The contribution made by Edward Jenner Davies to Stonehouse life is described in the next article in this journal. Johnson Frederick Hayward, who returned to England in 1864, had a son, Hubert Martinus Hayward, an engineer in the Royal Navy, who in 1916 married his cousin Cecil Margaret Joan Jenner Davies, daughter of Edward and Helen. Their son, Martinus Peter Jenner Hayward, was baptised in Stonehouse in January 1918. Peter Hayward, as he was known, was the last member of the family to live at Haywardsend. He died in December 1986, and on his tombstone in Stonehouse churchyard is described as 'a good and faithful Scout all his life', having served the county Scout movement as Badge Secretary and in other capacities for many years. [Davies]



*Haywardsend House in 2010*

Following Peter Hayward's death, Haywardsend and some adjoining land were acquired by Wycliffe College.

The school was first established in 1882 in Haywardsfield Hall which was renamed School House. A new building named Haywardsfield House was added to the school campus in 1884.

Haywardsend and its Mews were both listed as buildings of special interest in 1987, and together continue to flourish as one of the school's boarding houses. [Wycliffe]

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GA = Gloucester Archives, GDR = Gloucester Diocesan Records, TNA = The National Archives

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Fowler: deeds, GA D445/T24, D5869/6, D12468/2; Stonehouse manor court books, GA D445/M3, M4; Stonehouse parish records, GA P316; detection causes 1610, GA GDR/111; photograph SHG collection 2014.

Hayward: family records and census returns see Davies; Stonehouse on Bryant's map of Gloucestershire 1824, reproduced in Anderson, J.H.A., *A History of Stonehouse*, Gloucester, 1977, pp. 8-9; lease 1830, GA D5869/5; Stonehouse tithe map and award 1839, GA GDR; deed 1845, GA D5869/12; photograph State Library of South Australia, full caption at <http://images.slsa.sa.gov.au/mpcimg/36250/B36199.htm>, accessed August 2014.

Map: Stonehouse c1610 map in SHG Journal Issue 2 Dec 2012 p8; OS map 25 inch to the mile 1885, surveyed 1882, and 1902, online at <https://www.old-maps.co.uk/> accessed August 2014; road diversion plans, GA Q/SRh/1805/A/2, Q/SRh/1839/D; Great Western Railway opened 1845, GA D9125/2/6147; house building Pearcroft Road 1902, Anderson, J.H.A., *Stonehouse: A pot-pourri of the past in pictures*, Stonehouse, c1985, p10.

Names: will William Dangerfield 'house at hayettsende', GA GDR wills 1554/146; vicar's tithe accounts 1709-1722, Stephen Fowler has Bence's, his widow of Hyetts End, GA P316/IN3/1 p7; will Sarah Fowler widow of Haywards End, GA GDR wills 1728/13; Heighway, C., *Anglo-Saxon Gloucestershire*, Gloucester, 1987, p. 66; Oosthuizen, S., *Tradition and Transformation in Anglo-Saxon England*, London, 2013, pp. 68-70; Smith A.H. ed., *Place Names of Gloucestershire Part 2*, Cambridge, 1964, p. 203; Stonehouse manor court rolls 1487, 1491, 1495-7, GA D445/M1, M2; Stonehouse manor survey 1558, GA D4289/MI1.

Skipp: Skipp and Gee, buckle platers, in Birmingham trade directories c1780, information from a family descendant; Stonehouse manor court papers 1788, GA D445/M11; listing descriptions of house and barn 1987 at <http://list.english-heritage.org.uk>, accessed August 2014; survey of Stonehouse by John Elliott 1804, GA P263/MI9; Stonehouse tithe award and map, 1839, GA GDR; death of Richard Skipp from 'an old Gloucestershire diary', Hawker collection case 19 item 12, GA D9174/4/12; 1841 census see Davies.

Wycliffe: Loosley, S.G.H., *Wycliffe College, The First Hundred Years, 1882-1982*, Stonehouse, 1982, pp. 1-10; listings see Skipp; Haywardsend House: photograph 2010 ©Wycliffe College.

## Edward Jenner Davies

by Vicki Walker

If you walk past the main door to St Cyr's Church you may notice, in a prominent but rather dark and gloomy spot, a large memorial stone placed on its own. This commemorates a citizen of Stonehouse upon whom I should like to shine a light – Edward Jenner Davies.

Edward was born on April 10<sup>th</sup> 1851 into a prosperous clothing family. His grandfather Robert Davies owned and managed both Upper and Lower Mills at Bridgend and his father William lived in Bridgend House and was also a clothier. Edward was their fourth child of eight and was named after his great, great, great uncle, Dr Edward Jenner who developed the smallpox vaccination.

As a young boy, Edward was sent to boarding school. In the 1861 census he was living at Lord Weymouth's Grammar School in Warminster. This school was founded in 1707 to teach the children of estate workers at Longleat and still exists today. It provided a classical education including Latin and Greek. From 1865 -1870 he attended Clifton College in Bristol.

On July 25<sup>th</sup> 1870 Edward was admitted to Pembroke College, Cambridge. He achieved a BA in 1874 and an MA in 1877. While at university he excelled in Athletics being awarded a "Blue" for achievement at the highest level in 1872, 1873 and 1874. He was amateur champion in Long Jump beating the record in all three years with a final jump of 22 ft 10½ in, which remained the world record until beaten by C.B. Fry in 1892. For many years he was an active participant in the winter games at St Moritz – the forerunner of the Winter Olympic Games. He was also a member of Clifton Rugby Club. In later years he took a great interest in Stonehouse Football Club, being its President in the early 1900s.

In the 1870s and 1880s Edward's father William and his elder brother, also William, were employing over 300 people in their woollen manufacturing business. Edward returned to Stonehouse to join them.



*Edward aged about 25*



*Haywardsend House in 1910*

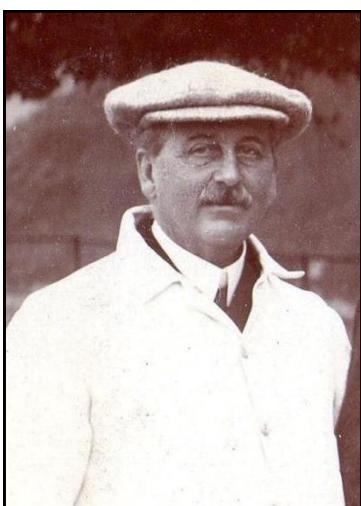
In 1879 he married Helen Hayward, whose family were living in Haywardsend House (see article on page 14). They lived in The Lodge on Bristol Road which is now part of Wycliffe College. The family employed a 21 year old cook, a 17 year old nursemaid for their baby daughter, and a 14 year old page-boy. Edward spent some time as a Lieutenant in the Gloucestershire Yeomanry, resigning his commission in 1886. In the same year he and his wife inherited Haywardsend House where they lived for the rest of their lives. They had four daughters and two sons who, sadly, both died as babies.

By 1890 Edward was keen to start his own business. Brickmaking was already a successful industry in the area, for example Jefferies' brickworks at Ryeford, and Edward could see the opportunity to use the clay from Doverow Hill. He joined with his wife's father Martinus Peter Hayward, and her uncle Johnson Frederick Hayward, to form the Stonehouse Brick and Tile Company Ltd. They engaged Arthur W. Anderson to manage the works. Although Anderson was aged only 31 he had been working in his father's business since the age of 15 and had already managed four smaller brickworks. The combination of good investment and an innovative manager proved to be a success and the company did well despite some difficult times during 1914 when Arthur Anderson died. The Brickworks provided secure employment for many Stonehouse men and Edward Jenner Davies was respected as a good employer.

Mr Jenner Davies gave a huge amount of time to the community. Like his grandfather and father before him, he became a Justice of the Peace. He was one of the first members of the Parish Council when it was formed in 1894. He was one of the original members of the Mid-Gloucestershire Conservative Working Men's Benefit Society (now the Holloway Benefit Society) founded by his friend, Mr. George Holloway. He was for many years Chairman of the Stonehouse Conservative Association.

He was President of the Stonehouse Horticultural Society and lent out his grounds for the annual Flower Show. In 1902 he was the referee for the Sports Events and gave out prizes in the bicycle race and flat race. At the same Show a potter's wheel was provided by the Brick and Tile Co. All the Davies family contributed donations towards the Show.

He acted as treasurer for many associations including the Stonehouse District Nursing Association, the Soldiers and Sailors Relief Fund and the Stonehouse National School. The list of subscribers to the school includes R.S. Davies & Sons, Stonehouse Brick and Tile Co., William Davies, Edward Jenner Davies and his three sisters. He was a member of the committee that raised funds for the War memorial in 1919 and his sister Emily Davies unveiled it.



An article in the Gloucester Citizen in 1924 includes this paragraph: "*Mr Jenner Davies....is looked upon as the Squire of Stonehouse, and his beautiful home, Haywardsend, has been the mecca of parochial and social gatherings for a great many years. He has, indeed, practically all his life taken a leading part in the life of Stonehouse, and in all his parish work he has had the assistance of his wife and his talented daughters. There has never been anything promoted for the welfare of the parish – in fact of the district - in which Mr. Jenner Davies has not taken the leading part. He has never been appealed to in vain to subscribe to any charitable or good cause, while as an enthusiastic educationist he has for years identified himself with the direction and management of the Stonehouse Council Schools. How much the youth of the parish owe to his influence in this connection will never be known, and many men now holding good positions in different spheres of life attribute their success to his fostering care and interest.*"

The photograph shows Edward acting as umpire in a cricket game organised by his daughter Kathleen in 1911.

Edward Jenner Davies died on October 4<sup>th</sup> 1926. The large attendance at his funeral in St Cyr's Church bore striking testimony to the esteem and respect in which he was held. The coffin was carried in a motor hearse followed by a farm cart laden with beautiful flowers from his family and all the organisations he had helped over many years.

Following his death, colleagues from the magistrates' court and the police paid this tribute, "*Mr Jenner Davies was an ideal magistrate. He gave the greatest possible attention to every case and was accessible to everybody. He was kind and considerate in all ways, possessing all the attributes of an English gentleman.*"

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## Lieutenant David Wingfield RN

by Darrell Webb

I first came across Lieutenant Wingfield while tracing my wife's family tree. In the 1851 census he was living in Stonehouse High Street next door to Anthony Neinenger, a German watch & clock maker. There is a reference in the Gloucester Archives for 1854 that can give us a clue to the house he lived in. From the description in the archive there were three newly erected properties in the High Street, now occupied by the Barber Shop, the Perfect Gift and Hurn's Electrical. It seems that David Wingfield may well have lived in the house that is now Hurn's. The 1851 census recorded that David's occupation was Lieut. H.P. Royal Navy (H.P. is half pay which indicates he was retired from the Royal Navy). He was aged 58 and living with his wife Abiah, two sons and five daughters all born in Stonehouse. This was as much as I knew about David until my nephew John Parker did a search on the internet and found that he was a very famous naval officer who went to sea at a time when we were at war with the United States.(1812 - 1815)



*The house on the front right with ivy growing on it is probably where David Wingfield lived in 1851. Photo c1930.*

### David Wingfield's early life

David Wingfield was born in Windsor, Berkshire, in 1792. He joined the Royal Navy on November 23rd 1806, aged just 14 years old, and retired in 1816 after 10 years service. During his time with the Navy he spent three and half years - from May 15<sup>th</sup> 1813 to September 30<sup>th</sup> 1816 - serving on the Great Lakes in Upper Canada in the midst of the hostilities of the War of 1812. His role was to protect that colony from aggressive attacks by their American neighbours. America declared war on Britain and Canada on June 18<sup>th</sup> 1812. The war occurred because America was not happy with the overbearing attitude of the British and didn't like the British and Canadian fur traders trading with their native Indians. Lieutenant Wingfield was sent to the Great Lakes to protect these traders.

While David was away serving in Canada he wrote a journal about his time as a young enthusiastic junior naval officer including a spell as a well-treated prisoner of war. David called his journal – *Four Years on the Great Lakes of Canada 1813, 1814, 1815 and 1816 by a Naval Officer Under the Command of the Late Sir James Lucas Yeo, Kt., Commodore and Commander-in-chief of H.M. Ships and Vessels of War Employed on the Lakes.* Wingfield added: *Also Nine Months as Prisoner of War in the United States of America.*

The journal David kept was said to be a very fine journal, clear, perceptive and sensible; it was clear he was a well-educated young man.

## His journal

From this journal David wrote his memoirs during his retirement back home in Gloucestershire in 1828. His recollections in these memoirs are vivid, detailed and complete. The story of David Wingfield and his life in Canada tell us of a time when very little was recorded about Canadian history.

David's story would have been lost forever if it hadn't been for his youngest daughter Christiana. She obviously thought this old document in her possession was worth something as it had been passed down through her family for around 100 years. In 1932 when she would have been aged 76, she decided to pass this journal to the Canadian Government Trade Commissioner in Bristol, Douglas S Cole. A note with the hand written document dated December 28<sup>th</sup> 1932, reported that Miss Wingfield, daughter of the late Commander David Wingfield, had delivered the journal that day to Mr Cole. Christiana died in 1944 aged 88. The manuscript was stamped and dated as received in Canada January 19<sup>th</sup> 1933. The original 68 page journal has been available as a reference document to be consulted in the Canadian Library and National Archives for 80 years. It was well known to historians of the war of 1812 and is now kept out of circulation because of its fragile state.

David's Journal is acknowledged as an important document in the social and urban history of Upper Canada and the North Eastern United States, because it gives an otherwise unknown view of the wild state of the north country of Canada at this time and shows how the American towns and farms were much more developed.

## Naval career

David begins his story by telling us he sailed on the ship Woolwich, out of Plymouth, on March 31<sup>st</sup> 1813 and arrived in Quebec City, Canada, on the evening of May 5<sup>th</sup>, a distance of some 4300 miles. He didn't return until 30<sup>th</sup> September 1816.

It is said that his actions during the winter of 1815-16 were outstanding. Wingfield and his men made a perilous crossing hauling a fully laden bateau (a whaler type rowing boat) over land and water on the nine mile portage (an ancient trail used as a shortcut into the upper Canadian Great Lakes) to make sure fresh meat was available for his men. This was at a time when the seasons mingled between freeze and thaw, leaving both the waterway and the land crossings dangerous. Some say this expedition alone elevates his stature to rival that of more famous adventurers and explorers, such as Sir John Franklin, Martin Frobisher, Robert Falcon Scott and Henry Hudson. Two Canadians, Dom Bamford and Paul Carroll, decided that it was such an important document they painstakingly transcribed it and published it in 2009 along with additional information on the history of the times and biographical information about David Wingfield. (Bamford)

## Prisoner of war

As a Midshipman, David Wingfield was captured while commanding a small supply ship on Lake Ontario. Anguished, the young man threw his "sword and belt on the deck and walked down to the cabin" where he "could scarcely refrain from shedding tears." Wingfield's misery was interrupted by an American officer who returned his sword to him and told him not to have any regrets, "for it might not be long ere he was in the same situation." The American spoke the truth; in less than a year, after Wingfield had been exchanged and returned to service, he captured the same American on the Bay of Quinte.

## Wingfield Basin

In 1815, when the war was coming to an end, David spent some time sailing with Captain William Owen who was a member of the Royal Navy's pioneer hydrographical survey of the Georgian Bay coast. They were surveying the East shore of Lake Huron and Georgian Bay, near present-day Victoria Harbour, looking for a site for a new naval base. During this time Owen named this area after his fellow officer who assisted with part of the survey work. Wingfield Basin and Wingfield Point in Ontario, Canada, now bear David's name. Wingfield Basin is today a tranquil calm harbour which offers an anchor for pleasure boats and activities for nature lovers.



## Returning home

David returned to England in 1816 on the warship HMS *Prevoyante*, captured from the French in 1795. He chose to live in Gloucestershire. His first son John was born in Stonehouse in about 1832. Two daughters were born in Bisley and one in Stroud. By 1841 he was living near Painswick and in 1851 was back living in Stonehouse.

His wife Abiah died in the third quarter of 1858 in Stroud, aged 47. In the 1861 census David was aged 68 and living at Newmarket, Horsley, with one son Arthur, aged 9, who was born in Stonehouse. In July 1861 David married his second wife, Penelope Corbett, at Stroud.

David Wingfield died in the first quarter of 1864 and is buried at Horsley graveyard, but no gravestone has yet been found. The inscriptions on many of the 19<sup>th</sup> century tombstones have been eroded away by the weather, beyond recognition, but in his journal, we have a very good memorial of his life.

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Wingfield house, in a deed of 1854 [GA ref D1347/T30]

# Alexander John Ball

by Darrell Webb

While on holiday in Malta I came across a magnificent stone monument to Alexander John Ball overlooking the Grand Harbour in the capital city, Valletta. I had known that it was there somewhere and I knew he had a link with Stonehouse, but I never realised how special his life had been. Since then I have done some research and found out quite a bit about the man who became Admiral Ball. (Ball).

Alexander John Ball was born at Ebworth House, Painswick, Gloucestershire, and baptised at Painswick on 22 July 1756 (sadly Ebworth House is no longer there). He was the fourth of seven children born to Robert Ball and Mary Dickinson, who married in 1751. Robert Ball inherited Stonehouse manor in 1730, but lived at Ebworth House from 1744. He was High Sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1748. Stonehouse Court was let to tenant farmers, but the family kept a part of it for their own use. Robert was still at Ebworth in 1760, but spent his last years in Stonehouse. His son Levi was baptised there in 1761, and his daughter Harriett in 1764. He sold Ebworth in 1766, the year of his death, and was buried in Stonehouse. His son Ingram owned the manor until it was sold in 1781, but the family had stopped living there by 1772. (Family).

Alexander therefore probably spent time in Stonehouse as a boy, while he was a pupil at the Market House School, Stroud, then directed by Samuel Purnell. An anecdote surviving from his school days is that, after the execution of some thieves at Gloucester, the boys decided to set up a mock court in which a prisoner was sentenced to death and then play at hanging in the Shambles. Alexander volunteered for the experience and after being suspended for some time in mid-air, everyone thought his performance very life-like. When an older boy came by and cut him down, he was black in the face! (Fisher)

Alexander joined the Navy at an early age, at a time when the world was enduring turbulent times. He rose rapidly through the ranks, obtaining the rank of Post-Captain in 1783 when only 26 years of age. Horatio Nelson (later to become Lord Nelson), who was a year younger, met Ball at St. Omer, where both men were studying French. Nelson wrote to his former Commander, Capt Lockyer, “*Two noble Captains are here, Ball and Shepard, you do not know, I believe, either of them, they wear fine epaulets.*”

Ball commanded the ship “Alexander” which had 74 guns and 590 men, one of the small squadron of ships under Nelson which sailed into the Mediterranean in search of Napoleon’s French fleet in the spring of 1798. While in the Gulf of Lyons a terrible gale sprang up at midnight and carried the main-topmast of Nelson’s flag ship, “Vanguard”, over the side, the mizzen top-mast following soon afterwards. It was reported that the ship was saved by Captain Ball’s seamanship and courage. Previously there had been coolness between Nelson and Ball but, from the time of the gale, Nelson recognised Ball’s extraordinary qualities and a firm friendship sprang up between them, which lasted for the remainder of their lives. Nelson was quoted as saying to Ball –

“*A friend in need is a friend indeed*”.

(Navy).



Rear-Admiral Alexander John Ball



*The destruction of L'Orient at the battle of the Nile.*

When her oil-based paintwork caught fire *L'Orient* was doomed. The detonation turned night into day, and deafened everyone.

Later Ball organised the British naval blockade of Malta and afterwards came ashore to organise the resistance to the French occupiers. On February 9, 1799, while he was blockading Malta, the island's legislature elected him president and commander in chief. After driving the French out, Captain Ball was made the first Civil Commissioner of the Island, (1799-1801). After the French had surrendered Malta (September 1800), the British Admiralty withheld Ball from naval service despite Nelson's plea in his favour. In 1801 he was created a baronet and became the unofficial governor of Malta, where he remained for the rest of his life. He was praised highly by the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, who was his secretary on Malta in 1804.

Sir Alexander John Ball died in Malta in 1809 and was buried in a leaden coffin encased in wood under the walls of a bastion of Fort St Elmo in Valletta. His remains are there to this day. (Malta)

*Extract from Sir Alexander John Ball's Grave Memorial Stone (translation from Latin):*

*Here lies Alexander John Ball, Knight Baronet, Knight of the Order of St Ferdinand, raised among the Captains of the British Navy to the third degree. He was commissioned with the highest authority to help the Maltese oppressed by the French domination and fighting for their country. A very cautious Commander, with his effort and firmness of mind he usefully and completely devoted himself to help the Maltese to free themselves from French domination.*

*Having done this duty well he was appointed Royal Commissioner for Malta and Gozo, and administered, to his credit, with justice, kindness and mildness. He was also very careful to foster education, commerce and agriculture, and governed these islands for ten years as befits the prestige of His Most Serene Majesty King George the Third, enriching and embellishing them with new works, buildings, roads and gardens. He lived fifty two years and died on 25th October 1809. The grief and mourning of all the people was obvious at his public funeral, which the whole population attended.*

At the Battle of the Nile later that summer, Captain Ball in the "Alexander" engaged the French Admiral's ship *L'Orient*, which burnt and blew up as the result of the English fire. The *L'Orient*, a 120 gun three deck ship, was the largest ship afloat at the time. Under Admiral Francois Brueys she led the French invasions of Malta and Egypt, only to be caught at anchor, at the heart of a powerful French fleet, in Aboukir Bay, by Nelson and his "band of brothers" late on the afternoon of 1<sup>st</sup> August 1798.

Arriving after dark, Alexander Ball and Ben Hallowell manoeuvred their ships onto the French flagship's bow and quarter, where few guns could bear.



*Grave of Alexander Ball at Fort St Elmo, Valletta, Malta*



A magnificent stone monument was also built to remember him by in the beautiful Lower Barrakka gardens overlooking The Grand Harbour in Valletta, a great epitaph from the people of Malta who regarded his memory with love and veneration.

Alexander Ball had married Mary Smith, daughter of a London alderman, at Westminster in 1785, and their son, William Keith Ball, was born in 1786. Mary survived him, and died in 1832. She and William, who died in 1874, are buried at Poynings, Sussex (Memorials).

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Monument by Simon Slator via Wikimedia Commons. Portrait of Ball by Henry William Pickersgill via Wikimedia Commons. [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander\\_Ball](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alexander_Ball)

# Bridgend Hostel

by Bob Lusty

In 2015 SHG received an enquiry via their website concerning Jan Ludwik Masny, a Polish man who died in December 1950 while staying at Bridgend Hostel. I talked to some of the people who lived at or near the hostel from 1943 until it closed in 1959. I have been unable to discover any more information about Jan Ludwik Masny but here is what I have discovered about the hostel. There is still more to find out so if you have any information please contact me via SHG (see p2).

1942- 45

The Bridgend Hostel was built on green fields along the length of Crescent Road in 1942-1943. It was built by the Ministry of Works to provide living quarters for war workers.

There was a collection of brick buildings consisting of a large welfare centre, canteen, staff accommodation, a sick bay and boiler house. This was surrounded by a number of prefabricated huts spreading around the corner to Wharfdale Way backing on to the canal.

During the war, the hostel was mainly used for women who were drafted in from the south of England to help in the war effort by working at the Hoffmann and Sperry Gyroscope shadow factories. Both companies had set up these factories in Stonehouse, while continuing full production at their parent factories in the South East. It was thought that the Stonehouse factories would be safer from attack by the German Luftwaffe.

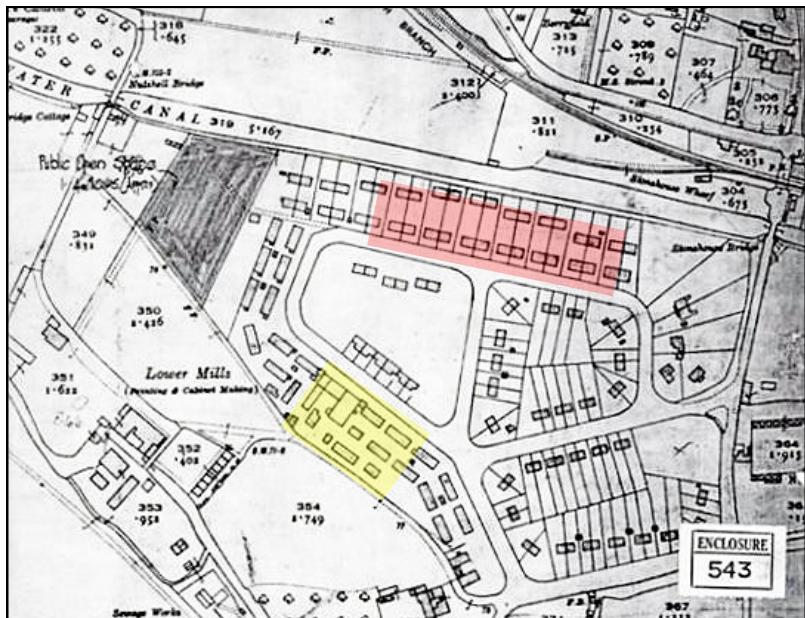
**Allen Grant**, who lived in Bridgend throughout the war, remembers the hostel was used to house American soldiers before they left for the invasion of Europe. Allen can remember American tanks being on Downton Road. Also he remembers Italians living in the hostel and families being housed in two rows of bungalows located parallel to the canal.

**Winnie Wyman (nee Walker)** moved up from Devon and worked as a domestic assistant in the hostel along with Una Cook, Esther Carnell and Kathleen Rice.

They worked from 08.00 hours until 17.00 hours looking after the rooms of the women who were out working in the factories. Because of shift work some of the women would be in their rooms sleeping during the day, so Winnie would have to work some evenings.

On Saturday nights the canteen was occasionally used for a dance provided by American servicemen bringing their own band with them. They were stationed locally, possibly at Minchinhampton, where Tony Reynolds, who lived there as a young boy, remembers seeing American servicemen and tanks driving down the roads.

In 1945, when the war was coming to an end, some of the young women went back home. Some married local men. Winnie Walker married Ray Wyman and settled in Leonard Stanley.



*Extract from OS map shows the Hostel buildings in a crescent shape. Area highlighted in yellow is the welfare centre, canteen and staff buildings. Area in pink, next to the canal, was called the married quarters but families were housed in all areas.*



*Women on war work at the hostel.  
Some names are missing. If you can  
name anyone please contact us.  
Left to right -  
Back : ? Una Cox, Esther Carnell  
Centre row: Kathleen Rice, ?, ?  
Front row: Gladys Cook, Evelyn  
Muggeridge, Winnie Walker*



## 1945 – 1955

*Pam Cave and Maria Serchnich*

After the war, displaced persons from all over Europe were being found living accommodation in various camps across the United Kingdom, including Bridgend Hostel.

**Tony Reynolds** told me that these included young Austrian women like Maria Serchnich and Ernestina Gattmeyer who both found work at Marling & Evans Cloth Mill, Ryeford. They were friends with local women Pam Cave, who became Tony's wife, and Thelma Harrison.

Also working at the Mill were Polish and Hungarians, one Hungarian known as Laurence had served in the German Army. He was most likely a prisoner of war who decided to stay here.

**Les Pugh** recalled many of the Polish men working in the foundry at Lister's in Dursley where Les helped to train them.

Among the Polish persons living at the hostel was **Adolf Kardynal** who arrived in 1947.

As a youngster, Adolf and his family had been sent to Siberia by the Russians. In 1941 he became separated from his family and joined the Polish Forces under British command in Italy.



He fought at the battle of Monte Casino and was one of the few of his unit to survive. After the war Adolf chose to come to England and joined the Polish Resettlement Corps. They found him work at R W Smith, West Wharf Wire Mills, Brimscombe, and a place at Bridgend Hostel, where his brother Andre and their mother later joined him. In 1949 both Adolf and Andre joined Marling & Evans where they stayed until their retirement. Adolf left the hostel to live in a cottage in Ebley and later moved to King's Stanley. In 1954 he joined the British Legion for whom he was proud to wear the poppy and raise funds.



## **Tom Shiers**

It was not only people from Eastern Europe who came looking for work. Tom Shiers arrived from New Tredegar in South Wales to live at the hostel. He found work at Hoffmann's, got married and remained in Stonehouse all his life.



*Tom Shiers in 1945.*

*"In January 1948, I lost my job in Wales. I was engaged to be married to Peggy, who lived at Moreton Valence, so I decided to come to Gloucestershire to look for work. I came down on the Saturday and on the Monday I went to Hoffmann's to see if they had a job. I started there on Wednesday, January 12<sup>th</sup> 1948.*

*I had nowhere to live so I went to Bridgend Hostel and rented a room there. I was there for about six weeks while my mother-in-law got a room ready for me at their house. My room was on Crescent Road with the Paper Bag Factory behind it. The room was fine and the food was good. There were lots of different people who had come here to work. One bloke lived in Bristol, he worked at Hoffmann's and stayed in the hostel during the week. I can remember Johnny Babcock from Cornwall and Tom (Chick)*

*Morgan and Mervin Collier, from Wales, living at the hostel. Then there were about ten German girls who worked at Hoffmann's. Some, like Lottie and Anna, married local men. There was lots going on down at the hostel and I would have been happy to stay longer."*

## **1956-1960**

In the late 1950s most of the workers had found new accommodation and so the huts were used to house refugees from Egypt. In December 1956, after the Suez crisis, British citizens living in Egypt were given ten days to get out with whatever they could carry. Most of the families who came to Bridgend were of Maltese origin.

### **Robbie Bonello**

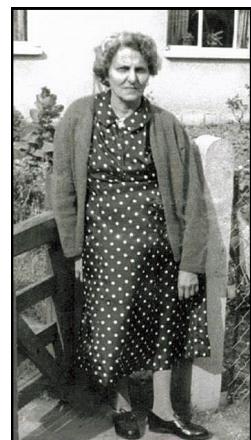


Malta was a British colony and we were Maltese British subjects possessing a British passport, so we had to leave the country. There were several hundred of us who became refugees and it became the responsibility of the British government to take us. The ones from Cairo left by plane to the UK, and the ones from Alexandria by ship.

My father, Spiridon Bonello, had died in 1948. My mother Mary, aged 56, my brother John, 16½, and me Robinson, 15, plus my uncle, auntie and seven cousins left Alexandria by ship. We travelled via Greece and Italy and finally arrived in Marseille, France. On the ship we were met by the Red Cross who checked our medical condition and hygiene.

From Marseille we went by train to Paris and on to Calais where we took the ferry to Dover. Then we were taken by coach to Yorkshire. In early January 1957 we stayed in an empty military barracks in Horsforth. Others were sent to military barracks in Warrington, Kidderminster, and Bridgend in Stonehouse. We were looked after very well.

In March 1957 my cousins decided to emigrate to Australia and Canada, and in October 1957 we were moved to the Bridgend Hostel where we lived until we got a house in Leonard Stanley in 1958. John and I went to work at the Brushworks factory in Upper Mills, then I worked in the foundry at Lister's in Dursley, Hoffmann's (later RHP), Cape Asbestos in Chalford and Fenworth, Woodchester. My brother John was the manager of Merrywalks Shopping Centre in Stroud for several years. My mother (photo on right) died in Leonard Stanley and her ashes are in the church cemetery.



### Nora Abela

My husband John and our two young daughters aged 2½ and 3 months were woken at 1 o'clock in the morning by loud knocking on our apartment door. I went to the door and found two Egyptian Policemen there. They insisted that all the family, still in our night clothes, went with them. I asked them if I could get some milk for the baby, but they refused. They took us in a van to an English School where there were other people. We were locked in and left there with nothing but what we were wearing, no food or drinks.

At about 7 o'clock in the morning the police separated out all the men and then took all the women and children to another building. We were there for several days with no food or water, although we asked the guards for some. Eventually one guard gave me some tea which I gave to my daughters to share. We had no money to pay the guards for food and water, however one guard brought us a tin of corned beef to share between 14 persons.

Because I was Italian the police eventually allowed a relative to come and collect us together with my husband and take us to their house in Cairo, where we got some clothes and had to stay until told what was going to happen to us. Within a month we were told we must leave Egypt and we would be taken to England because my husband, being Maltese, had a British Passport that included me and the children.

We were taken by the Red Cross train to Alexandria to get on a boat bound for Marseille in France. We were put in the very bottom of the ship where we had to lie on the floor, no beds or clothing. Some people were being seasick all over the floor so I had to hold my two daughters on top of me to keep them out of the smelly and messy floor. It got so bad that I decided to take them on to the outside deck for some air before being made to go back down until we arrived in Marseille.

When we got to England we were taken to a camp near Leeds. It was winter time and very cold which we were not used to. When the camp was closing down the manager asked me and my family if there was any other place we would like to go and I said somewhere warmer, so he suggested Bridgend in Stonehouse in the South of England.

We were in Bridgend Hostel for about 18 months before being found a house in Brimscombe where we stayed for about six months. Then the council offered us a house in Midland Road in Stonehouse where we lived for many years before moving to the flats just off Park Road, where I still live, on my own since my husband died.



*The Abela family before being sent out of Egypt.*



*In December 1956, 5 year old Vilma Cini came with her Maltese parents, Yolanda and Camelo, and lived in the hostel for a short time before moving to Quietways.*

*Vilma still lives and works in the area.*

*Vilma is the girl with the big bow in her hair right of centre. The man in the centre is the mayor of Cheltenham, Charles Irving, with Josephine Abela and Joe Spiteri.*

Another family who lived at the hostel was **Joe Spiteri** and his mum Eleftheria. She was Greek and his dad Frank was Greek/Maltese. Joe was only three years old when they arrived so he doesn't remember much, other than making friends with local boys. Today he works in computers.

**Mrs Neale (née Chetcutia)** was a Maltese woman who had lived in Cairo, She arrived at the Bridgend Hostel on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 1956, aged 27 years old. After the warmth of Egypt she told me she found it very cold and the food was very different to what they had been used to. At the start of 1957 she got a job at Hoffmann's; half of her earnings was used to pay for her keep at the hostel. She later moved to the maisonettes in Woodcock Lane and met her future husband Norman whom she married in 1959.

**Eddie Calenti** and his mother Gilda and father Giuseppe also lived in the hostel until they moved to Leonard Stanley.

I (Bob Lusty) recall being asked to help the refugees to settle in. I was a member of the Congregational Church Youth Club and a group of young people went along to befriend the families. I enjoyed visiting them, especially hearing Italian pop music and watching Italian and French films. I helped out for several years until the hostel closed in 1959.



*The Spiteri family at the hostel.*

## **Staff at the hostel**

**Jenny Kent (née Strange)**, who was a Junior Clerk/Typist, remembers some of the staff.  
I started there when I was 16 years old and spent two years enjoying every minute of my job, especially Saturday mornings when I was in charge of the post room. Each resident had their own pigeon hole where I put their mail. By doing this I became friendly with many of them as they came to collect their post and some I am still in contact with today, especially the Stock family, Eddy, Rudy, Vicky and Lucy.

### **General Manager - Mr Gautier**

**Rehabilitation Officer - Phillip Willcox.** Phillip was well-known and liked. He had suffered from polio and had to use a wheelchair to get about round the hostel.

**Secretary - Mrs Josette Matthews.** As she was French, she also helped as a translator.

**Nursing Sister - Mrs Maureen Hebron.** 1957-58. She remembers going on her morning rounds and being invited to take Egyptian coffee at each place she called at, it was very thick! Also she remembers the rooms being infested with bugs and the residents would collect them for her to see, hoping that she could perform a miracle and get rid of them.

The Doctors on call for the hostel were **Dr Murray-Brown** and **Dr O'Dowd**.

## **Demolition**

By 1959 there was less need for accommodation for displaced persons. The prefabricated huts were becoming uninhabitable as conditions worsened. They were described in sale documents in May 1960 as "infested with vermin". The Ministry of Works decided to sell the whole site. Planning permission was granted to demolish all the hostel buildings and to build 44 semi-detached houses on the site. In November 1960 the site was bought by building firm Shuker Ltd for £7000. Originally a green recreation space was planned but this was filled with the bungalows at Crescent Close.

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# Stonehouse Post Office sends Land Army girls to Devon

by David Flagg

My Mother, Muriel Flagg (née Malpass), who lived in Leonard Stanley, worked at Stonehouse Post Office from 20<sup>th</sup> April 1942 to 11<sup>th</sup> May 1945. During the Second World War she found it very upsetting when telegrams were received by the Post Office informing the next of kin that a son or husband was missing or killed in action.



*In the field with potato baskets. Mum far left, Sandy in middle.*

Since a large portion of our food had to be imported, the sinking of food supply ships by German U-boats meant that additional home grown food was required. To help the war effort, Stonehouse Post Office sent Mum and her work colleague, Sandy, to the Devonshire Volunteer Agricultural Camp at Dreamland Café, Okehampton, where they were employed planting potatoes.

So Mum and Sandy, although employed by Stonehouse Post Office, became part of the Land Army working in Devon.

In May 1945, Mum left the Post Office and went to work at Mullins the Drapers at the top of Regent Street.

*Mum in headscarf at the back of the potato riddler, Sandy to the left of her.*



*Evening entertainment at Dreamland Café. Note the blackouts on the windows. Mum is left at the back of the piano, Sandy to the right of her.*

## Ernest Weaver, evacuee

by Vicki Walker

When we were researching life in Stonehouse in World War Two for an exhibition in 2009, I read the log books for Stonehouse County School which describe the arrival of evacuees from Birmingham. Two young lads who were mentioned several times in the log book were Dennis and Ernest Weaver, who arrived in Stonehouse with nothing but the clothes they stood up in.

In 2012 I visited Park Junior School to help Year 5 with their World War Two history work. I was talking about evacuees when one of the boys told me that his grandfather had been evacuated to Stonehouse and his name was Ernest Weaver! I was amazed to find that Ernest is alive and well and still living in Stonehouse. We arranged to talk to him about his memories of that time and this is what he told us.

I was born in Ladywood, Birmingham, at the back of 16 Sherborne Street. I was the second youngest of 11 children. My father was in the Air Force and my mother was left to bring us up on her own. It was a hard life. Our street was bombed. I don't remember anything about Birmingham – I wouldn't recognise it if I went there now.

In 1939, my younger brother Dennis and I were evacuated to Stonehouse. I was nine years old then and the first thing I can remember was seeing the green fields from the train - all we had in Birmingham was back to back houses. I remember getting off at the station and being billeted with someone living by the Brick Works. Dennis and I had no suitcases, only a tag and a gas mask when we arrived, only the clothes we were wearing. I took up a paper round and bought my own clothes. We were given some as well but they had a lot of children to give to. We had no proper shoes on our feet - we came from the slums. But a lot of others were the same so we were no different. Some people were kind and some were not. We were moved around a lot. I think we gave them a hard time as we were not always well behaved. Can you imagine my grandson Daniel, aged nine, being shoved on a train and sent 100 miles away to live in a stranger's house? It must have a terrible effect on you in the long run.



Sherborne Street in 1961



Birmingham children boarding buses for the villages



Evacuees in Stonehouse

Dennis could not get anyone to keep him. He was only 6, but nobody wanted him - he was shoved from pillar to post. We went to Cheltenham at one point, where I remember going to the Park, getting the gold fish out of the pond and taking them home and putting them in the bath. We had the police after us!

*Extract from the Log Book of St Barnabas School, Birmingham, written by the Infant teacher, Miss Smith.*

*July 1940*

*Dennis Weaver (Infant) staying with Mrs Gwinnell, Lyndhurst, Regent St.*

*Ernest Weaver (Junior) staying with Mrs Parker, 26 The Reddings.*

*Both children have a bad name in the village and no-one would take on the responsibility of them. I now find that during his stay in Cheltenham, Dennis received a bad cut over his eye due to another boy jamming his head in the door. Dennis had to have 12 stitches in this wound. Both boys are now back in Stonehouse and re-bilketed separately in the village. On visiting billets I find that both are spoken highly of. Foster parents are well satisfied with both children. Children are now happily settled and I hope will remain so.*

It wasn't long before I was moved to live with the Parkers. They were quite an old couple, probably a bit old to cope with me! I went to Stonehouse School for a couple of years but I don't remember much about it. I didn't learn much because we were in big classes and if you couldn't read you were stuck at the back and ignored. I was in the choir at St Cyr's Church. I went down with a boy called Tony Cave who lived opposite The Reddings. When we walked down to the church by the school it was all fields and big trees. They had an anti-aircraft gun in the field and one day an enemy plane went over and they fired at it. I can remember there being a shop called Bramwell Parker's and the lady in there was very kind to me.

Then in about 1941, I moved to live with a lady called Ada Hill at Oakridge Lynch. She helped a lot of evacuees right through the war. Sometimes she had as many as six of us. She was a retired nurse and she was strict. She cared for me from the age of 12 until I was 20. I went to Oakridge Lynch Parochial School where I finally learned to read and write. I left school at 14 and went to work on Pete Barker's farm at Far Oakridge. I enjoyed my time there, mainly milking the cows. I remember the land girls working there during the war. I got paid £1 and half a crown (£1 1/2s/6d = £1.12½p) for a 60 hour week. I gave £1 to Miss Ada and kept the half a crown for myself.

Finally Dennis went to live with a lady at Brownshill and she got him into music. He turned out to be a good singer and became a tenor in the church choir. He went on to become the choirmaster and verger at Amberley Church and taught singing. He went to Marling School and became an engineer. So he did very well.

I left Ada's at the age of 21 and went to live with Dennis at France Lynch, boarding with Mrs Coventry. We lived with her for 18 years. Mrs Coventry moved a couple of times and we moved with her. Our last move was to the Dalloway Estate at Brimscombe, where I met my wife Val. I worked for Ray Smart the coalman for about 5 years carrying bags of coal and then as a bread delivery man for Harding's of Stroud. Then Dennis got me a job at Waller and Son at Brimscombe. I trained as a skilled Radial Driller and then got a job at Daniels as a Radial Driller Setter Operator. I finished my working career at Springfield Engineering, retiring at 65.



*Tony Cave and Ernest Weaver in  
St Cyr's Church choir.*

After the war we didn't go back to Birmingham. I thought we had been deserted by our family. We never heard anything from them during the war. I didn't see my dad or mum again. We found out later that my brother Gerald came to find us but we never saw him. I think Miss Ada must have sent him away because she didn't want us to go back. Then in 1977 when my father died, there was some money left in his will and they tried to find us. There was a message in the Citizen and we got in touch. My brother Frank came down to see us and we arranged a meeting with all the family in Birmingham. It was great to see them all and we have kept in touch since.



*Dennis, Frank and Ernest Weaver in 1978*

Val and I got married in 1968 and bought a terraced house in Caincross where we lived for 38 years. We didn't want to move from Cainscross because it was convenient for us both to walk to work. We have two children, Dawn and Dale and 8 grandchildren. We moved to our bungalow in Bridgend in about 2005.

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SHG Oral History interviews – Ernest Weaver 2012.



*Val, Dawn and Ernest in 2012*

# Captain Eric Dixon, Royal Flying Corps

by Jim Dickson

## Introduction

In Issue 4 of this Journal, we included a short note about the first successful landing of an aeroplane in Stonehouse on 9<sup>th</sup> August 1916. Stroud News reported that the plane landed in the field between Downton Road and the railway viaduct at Beard's Mill. It was flown here from Northolt Aerodrome by Captain Eric Dixon of the Royal Flying Corps (RFC). Stroud News reported that Captain Dixon landed close to his home (Downton House, Stanley Downton, which is a few hundred yards beyond the bridge over the River Frome on the road to Leonard Stanley) and that hundreds of people came to see the plane and to await his departure.

In August of the following year, Stroud News reported that Captain Dixon had died from serious injuries sustained in a crash.

## The pilot



Henry Eric Dixon was educated at Bradfield College, Berkshire and attended Leeds University Engineering Department. He was then apprenticed to Wolseley Tool and Austin Car Company, Birmingham, and later worked at Cleveland Bridge Engineering Company. He enlisted in the Army in September 1914; his medical examiner noted that he was 24 years old, 5 feet 9½ inches tall and weighed 10 stones. Eric joined the Public Schools Corps, was given a commission in the Middlesex Regiment, and later transferred to the RFC.

## The flight to Stanley Downton

The RFC was formed in 1912 as part of the British Army since the military recognised the potential of aircraft for reconnaissance and for observation in support of artillery. Northolt Aerodrome (now RAF Northolt, about 6 miles north of Heathrow Airport) was opened in May 1915. Then, in 1916, No. 43 Squadron RFC was formed under the command of Major Sholto Douglas who became Marshal of the Royal Air Force during the Second World War.

Captain Dixon had been given permission for the flight from Northolt to Stanley Downton (probably by Major Douglas) to come to see his brother Hugh before he left for service in France. Presumably this was granted because his widowed mother had already lost another son, Cyril Maxfield Dixon, who had been killed in Belgium in the first month of the War. Nevertheless, it is surprising that Captain Dixon was granted such permission, since he had only gained his flying certificate on 28 July 1916 – less than a fortnight before his flight to Stanley Downton.

## Captain Dixon's final flight

On 17<sup>th</sup> August 1917, Eric Dixon was severely injured in a flying accident after suffering engine trouble while taking off from Coal Aston, Sheffield. He died two days later from his injuries and was buried in Fulwood (Christ Church) Churchyard, Yorkshire. Coal Aston is some 5 miles from Fulwood which is a suburb of Sheffield. There is an inscription on Eric's gravestone, "Killed whilst flying on duty", but examination of the facts makes this seem unlikely.

Henry Isaac Dixon bought Stumperlowe Hall, Fulwood, in 1854. He was a successful businessman and a generous benefactor of the Fulwood community - one of the beneficiaries being Fulwood (Christ Church) Churchyard. One of Henry Isaac's sons, Albert Edward Dixon, was born at Stumperlowe Hall and buried in Fulwood Churchyard in 1901, aged 36. Captain Eric Dixon, who was Albert Edward's eldest son, was buried beside him. Following the death of Henry Isaac, the Hall was occupied by his son James who had taken over the running of the family firm in 1877. In 1887 James was elected as one of the youngest ever Master Cutlers at the age of 36.

At the time of his crash, Eric Dixon was a Flight Commander with No.62 squadron which was based at Rendcomb, a few miles north of Cirencester. The type of plane he was flying was a Royal Aircraft Factory R.E.8, a two-seat reconnaissance biplane. Intriguingly, the Station Historian at RAF Northolt, Sergeant Mark Bristow, has advised that the squadron does not appear to have been officially equipped with R.E.8s. However, he also advised that it was not uncommon for squadrons to have a 'hack', for use as an unofficial transport plane, usually for use by the squadron's commanding officer. These hacks were mostly obsolete or near-obsolete aircraft. The R.E.8 mentioned (serial number A4694) was probably used in that way.

Sources report that the R.E.8 was widely regarded as a "death trap". From a number of sources it seems that the main problem was its poor stalling characteristics. Of the 4282 R.E.8s which were built, 163 were casualties while not in action. But it is important to appreciate that aircraft design was relatively primitive during the First World War.

Captain Eric Dixon's Uncle James and his family lived at Fulwood, Sheffield, where he landed in an "unofficial" aircraft. The nearest RFC station to Fulwood was some 20 miles to the north east at Finningley (now Robin Hood Airport, Doncaster). It seems reasonable to conclude that he was on a similar trip to the one he made to Stanley Downton – visiting relatives – even if his ultimate destination was RFC Finningley or some more distant destination. Sadly, on this occasion, Eric was fatally injured.

At the time of his death, Captain Eric Dixon was 27 years old and had been married for only 9 months to Muriel Agnes Seymour Metford. In his file, there is a sad, lengthy, correspondence between his widow, her representatives, and official bodies (including the War Office) concerning a gratuity that she believed was payable following his death. On 11 December 1917, for example, Muriel, wrote: "*..... I should very much like to know when I may expect to receive my late husband's gratuity as it is now four months since he was killed. I am in great need of the money at once.*" It would appear that several more months were to pass before the money was paid.

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*Stumperlowe Hall*, [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stumperlowe\\_Hall](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stumperlowe_Hall)

*The Vintage Aviator Ltd.*, <http://thevintageaviator.co.nz/image/tid/205>

# The Stroudwater Navigation Canal at Stonehouse

by Jim Dickson

By the 18<sup>th</sup> century the woollen industry in the Stroud area was becoming increasingly dependent on supplies of coal for processes such as dyeing and finishing. This was due to the reducing availability of local wood as the industry and the local population grew. Coal was brought from the West Midlands to Framilode or Gloucester via the River Severn, and later from the Forest of Dean, and thence by cart or packhorse on roads which were poor in good weather and could be impassable in winter. This was slow, costly and unreliable. A more effective, cheap and reliable means of transport from the Severn was therefore sought, particularly by those operating local woollen businesses.

As the River Frome (or Stroudwater) flows from Stroud to Framilode, it falls more than 100 feet (30 metres). This provided a valuable source of water power to drive machinery at the mills. However, the Frome is small with limited water supply. This is made worse by the division of the Frome into two streams for much of its length (and three between Ryeford and Bridgend). So it was inevitable that any plans to adapt the river to make it more navigable would raise concerns, and objections, from some mill owners. The usual means of raising or lowering boats as they progressed up or downstream was through a lock. Each time a lock operated there was considerable loss of water. The main concern of mill owners was that such loss would result in insufficient water to operate their mills, particularly in summer when it would be in shortest supply. Those who are familiar with the Frome will know that their concern was well-founded. The coming of steam engines to Gloucestershire mills from around 1800, but particularly in the 1820s and 1830s, increased the demand for coal considerably.

Construction of the canal to the A38 was straightforward and Bristol Road/Whitminster Wharf was conveniently located beside a busy road. So the first toll-paying cargo of 60 tons of coal was brought there on 17 December 1776. Earnings from such business made a useful contribution to the finances of the Company of Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation ("the Company") prior to the opening of the whole canal on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1779.

Canal revenues peaked in 1841 followed by slow decline due to competition from the railways. By the end of the 1930s, it was obvious that the Navigation was not viable. The last commercial boat journey was to deliver coal to Stroud Gas Works in 1941.

## Features of the Canal between Ryeford and Bond's Mill

The first **Upper Mills Bridge** was a swing type. In 1838 the new owners of the Mills, R.S. Davies, clothiers, complained about a number of matters associated with the bridge – including that it was open too long for the firm's convenience. Mr Davies made further complaints in 1846 when he alleged that the bridge was insecure. In 1851 the bridge was repaired and moved to replace the worn out one at Stroud Gasworks and a new bridge installed at Upper Mills. From around 1914, the bridge was sometimes called Brush Works Bridge when Messrs. W. H. Vowles & Sons Ltd ran a brush factory in the Upper Mills Estate. It became a trading estate in 1968.



*Remnants of the bridge abutment,  
to the south of the canal, 26<sup>th</sup> October 2010*

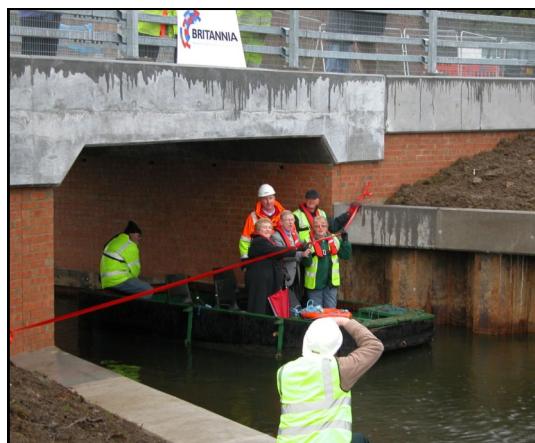
The fixed bridge must have been installed after navigation ceased in 1941 since boats would have been unable to pass under it. That bridge was removed in October 2010 and the new fixed bridge officially opened on 25 January 2011.

It was fixed to avoid the likelihood of traffic into the industrial estate having to queue back onto the busy A419 road, causing traffic jams.

*Official opening of the new fixed bridge  
at the entrance to Upper Mills from the A419,  
25<sup>th</sup> January 2011.*

Gloucestershire County Council (GCC, responsible for highways) was very concerned about the state of some bridges – **Stonehouse Bridge** (its official name, but also known as Downton Road, The Ship or Bridgend Bridge) being one of particular concern. GCC could only take over responsibility if an Act of

Abandonment for Navigation was obtained – which was passed by Parliament in 1954. The concern was the potential danger associated with the narrow hump-backed bridge which was the only route to Bridgend from the rest of Stonehouse. GCC replaced the bridge with a flat concrete structure with concrete culverts underneath. Unfortunately there were continuing problems with build-up of silt around these culverts – which encouraged reeds to grow and choked up the watercourse. In the drought conditions of Summer 1962, Hoffmann's bearing factory nearly had to close down due to shortage of its water supply from the canal. A new Stonehouse Bridge was opened at Easter 2000 – built in conjunction with improvement of the junction of Downton Road with the A419. Demolition of the Ship Inn was part of that work.



**Stonehouse Wharf** was originally a canal wharf. But it was altered to have joint use with the Stonehouse to Nailsworth Branch Railway line (which opened in 1866) and had a sizeable railway siding.

**Nutshell House & Bridge** is well recognised, according to Joan Tucker (the Company's Archives Director for some thirty years), as one of the beauties of the whole English canal system. In about 1778, the Bridge (originally known as "Mr Hill's Bridge") was built of bricks made close to the site.



*Nutshell House and Bridge, 1910.*

Nobody knows why or when it became "Nutshell" (some of us suspect it was given this name because the shape of the arch looks rather like half of a walnut shell). By 1987 major repairs were required to the Bridge. A key problem was the poor quality of the bricks. Damage had also been done when the Gas Board laid pipes to supply the Church. After major restoration work the Bridge was re-opened in December 1988.



*Nutshell Cottage, Bridge and House  
viewed from St Cyr's, 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2012.*

By April 1803, Edward Hill, a wealthy clothier who owned Lower Mills, had built Nutshell Cottage on the Company's land and then, with permission, erected a warehouse on the other (eastern) side of the bridge. The warehouse was altered into a dwelling, possibly in the 1820s. Its only function mentioned in the Company's records was as a warehouse.

According to Joan Tucker there is a round-arched tunnel, approached through a double arch down three well-worn steps, from the kitchen of what is now Nutshell House (and may have been deeper). It extends westwards into Nutshell Cottage next door – but the two parts are now separated by a dividing wall beneath the steep approach to the bridge from the south. Joan believed it was an internal dock or boathouse constructed as an arm of the canal for unloading goods, or even passengers. Edward Hill had become a prominent member of the Committee of the Company in 1805 and Joan believed that the Company would have "turned a blind eye" to this feature! Joan further speculated that the warehouse may even have been converted into a boarding house and rooms let out to passengers.

The original **Ocean Bridge** (previously known as **Stonehouse Court Bridge**) was a swing type. By 1953 it had already been fixed. In 1958 it became necessary to replace the bridge since the old timber joists were rotten and the whole structure was dangerous to traffic and pedestrians.

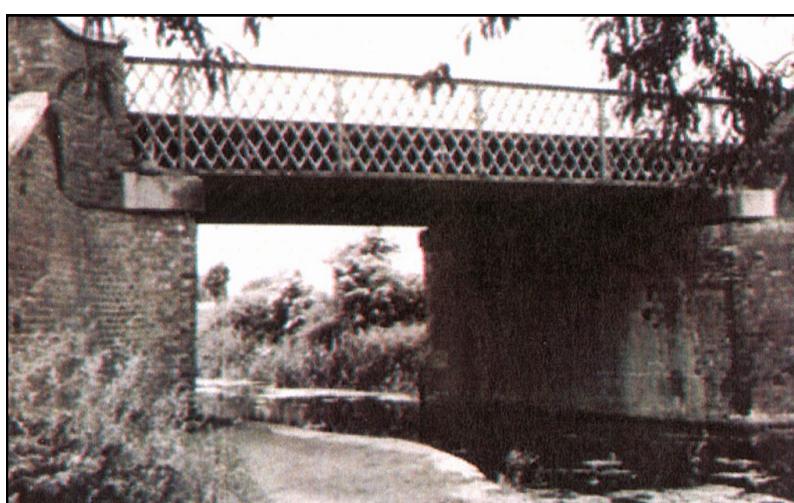
During September 1958, Ryeford Saw Mills Co. Ltd. constructed a new, fixed, bridge with steel joists and timber decking for £400. A new, replacement, swing bridge opened in August 2012.



*Ocean (fixed) Bridge, 6<sup>th</sup> January 2010*



*The new swing bridge at the Ocean,  
17th August 2014*



In 1841, work started on building the Bristol & Gloucester Railway (Isambard Kingdom Brunel was the Chief Engineer). The broad-gauge line was opened from Temple Meads to Gloucester in July 1844. In February 1967 the Company was notified by British Railways that the **Railway Bridge by the Ocean** needed costly repairs due to cracking of the southern abutment.

*Railway Bridge by the Ocean,  
c.1960*

Their intention was to substitute a solid embankment (which was in accordance with the 1954 Act of Abandonment for Navigation) in order to minimise expenditure. However, since 1954, right of way had been granted for the towpath under the Bridge. In addition, the Hoffmann bearing factory on Oldends Lane (now owned by SKF) was extracting water from the canal some 100 yards west of the Bridge. So two Armco tubes were inserted – one for the towpath, the other for the flow of water. The construction was done over a weekend in Summer 1968. It is believed that the Bridge is still in place, given the short time taken for the work.

The reconstruction of the Railway Bridge forms part of the Phase 1B restoration project which will link Phase 1A (the 6 miles section currently under restoration) with the Gloucester & Sharpness Canal at Saul Junction. The Cotswold Canals Trust (CCT), with the support and assistance of other groups, is currently putting together a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a substantial grant. The Railway Bridge, together with the M5 underpass and crossing of the A38/A419 roundabout at Whitminster, comprise the three most complex engineering challenges in Phase 1B.

Assuming that the bid to the HLF and the raising of £4 or 5 million in additional matched-funding for Phase 1B are successful, it is anticipated that we might expect to see the new Railway Bridge in 2019. CCT is already in discussion with Network Rail and a time slot is likely to be allocated shortly. The rebuilding of the entire bridge is expected to take little more than 48 hours because of the importance of the railway line.

The current **Bond's Mill Bridge** was installed in 1994 and was the world's first composite plastic vehicle-carrying bridge. Shortly after it opened, problems with the foam-filled panels between the road surface and the main structural elements became apparent. The foam was crushing where the road surface sections joined, leaving voids. The panels were replaced once but, when the problem recurred, the company that designed the bridge refused to take any further responsibility. A temporary steel deck was put over the deck to prevent the continued expansion of the voids and this has worked. However, it is not possible for the lifting equipment to function effectively because of the considerable additional weight of the steel deck. The plan is to replace the current bridge as part of the Phase 1B restoration works.



*Bridge at the entrance to Bond's Mill, 6th May 1994.*

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## Stonehouse names

by Darrell Webb

**Abbot's Way, Bridgend**, commemorates the monks of St Peter's Abbey, Gloucester, now the Cathedral, who were given Upper Mill in 1085. They are thought to have dug or enlarged the branch of the Frome providing its mill race.

**Aldergate Street** is named after George Alder, butcher of Leonard Stanley, who sold building plots here in the 1880s and had built a "new road" in 1882.

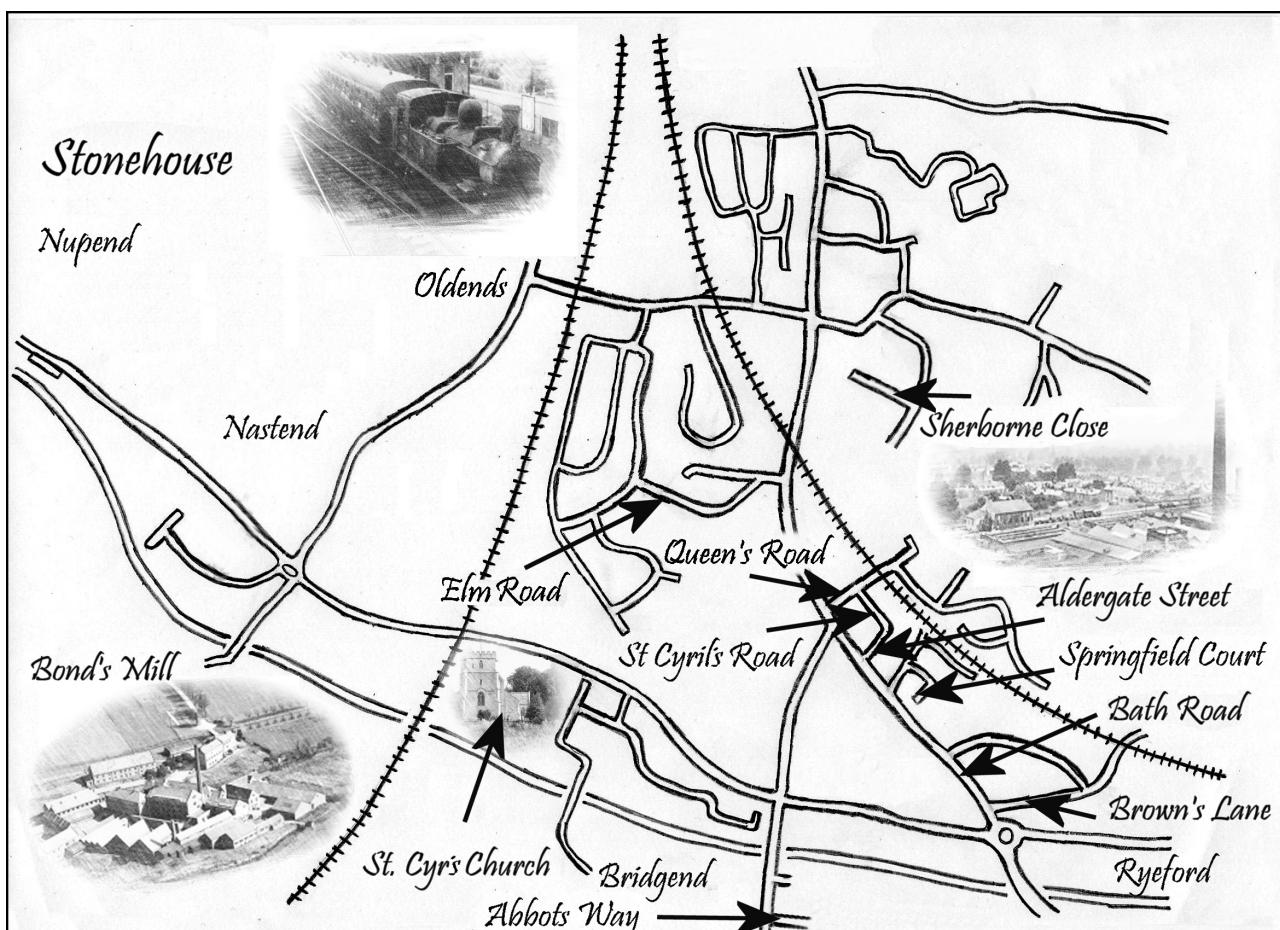
**Bath Road** refers to the new cut made from Haywardsend to the Horsetrough in 1839 to make life easier for the horse-drawn coaches travelling from Gloucester to Bath. Previously the coaches had to negotiate the sharp corner at the bottom of Regent Street either on to the Stroud Road or up to the Woolpack Inn.

**Bond's Mill** is one of the oldest cloth mills in the area. It is named after John Bond, father or son, clothiers who were renting it from Stonehouse manor in the years around 1700.

**Bridgend** is Anglo-Saxon for the "district at the bridge", describing an area of the parish.

**Brown's Lane** may be derived from an old name. Brown's Furlong was the name from at least the seventeenth century, for a field on the southern slope of Doverow, east of The Grove, on the north side of the old road of which Brown's Lane is part.

**Elm Road** is named after the huge elm trees that bordered its northern side. This was once a main road to Whitminster and Framilode. It declined into a footpath until the Park Estate was finished around 1960, then it was enlarged to become the road it is today.



**Nupend and Nastend** are districts in Eastington, in Anglo-Saxon “atten up end” and “atten east end” of that parish.

**Oldends** (plural) was thought to be another “district” name, but is now believed to mean a place of “ancient boundaries”.

**Queen's Road** was put in to allow transport for the Brick and Tile Co. Ltd. to go under the railway bridge rather than up Burdett Road and over the railway at the station crossing. In October 1896 it was named New Street, but in May 1897, to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, it was re-christened Queen's Road.

**Ryeford** may have been named because there was a ford across the River Frome here before the bridge was built. Tradition suggests that there was a royal farm at King's Stanley which may have collected in the rye harvest across the river. The name Ryeford may also be a corruption of Royal Ford. A river crossing is recorded from as early as 1340 and there has been a mill here since about 1500. Initially it was used for grinding corn, and later it was used for the cloth trade. The site was converted to a saw mill about 100 years ago.

**St Cyril's Road** was named after the parish church, which, at the time when the road was built in the 1890s, was incorrectly called St Cyril's instead of St Cyr's.

**Sherborne Close** is built on land bought in 1847 by James Dutton, Lord Sherborne. He owned the massive Sherborne Estate in Gloucestershire, including Standish House.

**Springfield Court** is named after Springfield, a Wycliffe College boarding house, which was demolished in the late 1990s. Springfield had a part flat roof which was used as an observation post by the Observer Corps during the Second World War to look out for German bombers.

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## A not-so-lost cricket bat willow plantation near Stonehouse

by Geoffrey Fryer

In Issue 4 of this journal I was surprised to read an account of a site near Stonehouse where willow trees were grown for cricket bats. Also, that the last consignment of trees was thought to have been harvested more than 80 years ago. The account directs attention to a now much overgrown series of concrete channels that served to divert water from the adjacent arm of the River Frome and irrigate the ground on which the willows grew. Photographs in the article, taken in Spring 2014, show some of the remnants of the now derelict irrigation channels. It appears that the willows have managed without these channels for many years. However, we don't know why the channels were built. Perhaps Arthur Winterbotham (who lived nearby at Stonehouse Court) was trying to enhance the growth of the willows, optimise the effectiveness of the plantation or similar. We are unlikely ever to find out.

To my surprise, a number of willows were harvested at the plantation in late 2014. Of these, some 13 large individuals were felled and taken away to be converted into cricket bats. Even after their removal, more than 30 trees of this species remain on the site and will doubtless be felled on some future occasion. The remaining trees have been supplemented by some 22 young trees that have been planted to replace those felled.



*Photo shows some of the remaining mature willow trees and, to the right, some of the young ones planted in late 2014. The large viaduct on the Bristol to Midlands railway line can be seen in the background.*

In late 2014, the felled trees were trimmed of all side branches and the main trunks were cut into manageable lengths that were dragged out of the plantation by a tractor. They were stacked near the road from Bridgend to Stanley Downton then taken away for use as the raw material for cricket bats.

That growth in the cricket bat willow tree is rapid was apparent from the widely separated annual rings of the felled trees, of which no more than twenty were present, even in the largest trunks, which had a diameter of about 23 to 28 inches (58 to 71 cm) at the level of severance.

The core region was indistinct and made precise aging difficult, but it was evident that they had been planted only about 20 years or a little more before harvesting. So, it appears that the trees may have been harvested one or more times since the plantation was operated for Arthur Winterbotham some 80 years ago. It would be good to know if this has happened since the 1930s and, if so, who carried out the operation.



# **Stonehouse History Group**

## **Annual Report 2014 - 15**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Chair - John Peters

Vice-Chair - Shirley Dicker

Secretary - Vicki Walker

Treasurer - Andrew Walker

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

## **Stonehouse History Group** **Events 2014/15 (attendance in brackets)**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Linda Howell** - Living History.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

A fascinating explanation of how the canal network was constructed.

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

**Keith Creighton** - WWI Trench Art.

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

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

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

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

## **2015**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

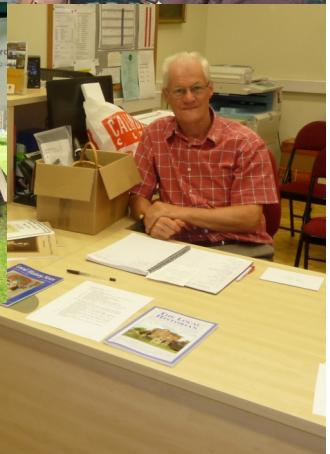
**Paul Barnett** - Fore and Aft - A pictorial journey through the Purton Ships Graveyard.

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

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

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

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



2014 - 2015



