

Stonehouse History Group Journal



Issue 6

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info@stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk



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Front cover photograph shows Petty Officer Tom Round-Smith in 1944 while in service with the Royal Navy in Trinidad.

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Editorial Team

Vicki Walker - Co-ordinating editor. Tel 01453 826334

Jim Dickson - Production editor. Tel 01453 791182

Shirley Dicker

Janet Hudson

Darrell Webb

Why not become a member of our group?

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

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

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

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

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

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

Annual membership £5 due in May.

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Welcome to Issue 6

This year several of our articles feature the memories of people who have lived in Stonehouse, either for many years or just for a short spell. Their time in our town has influenced their lives and we are glad to record their experiences. Both Audrey Broomhall and Roy Edwards have recently re-visited the scenes of their youth with great enjoyment.

We hope to disseminate the results of our members' research into the history of our town via displays, presentations by our members or articles for our Journal. The article on *The Woolpack Inn* developed from our talk on *Pubs of Stonehouse* that we have given to several local groups. The article on *Ryeford bridges* stemmed from a visit to Gloucestershire Archives to search for information about the *Stroudwater Canal in Stonehouse* (another of our talks).

Janet Hudson's article *Movement among the people of Stonehouse 1600 - 1800* came about as a result of the display on Immigration and Emigration that we created for the Gloucestershire Local History Association's Local History Day in October 2015. Janet has done a great deal of research on this topic and the article is a summary of some of the information she has discovered and recorded.

We continue to interview residents past and present about their recollections of life in Stonehouse. Indeed we have several articles in the pipeline for Issue 7. There are only a few of us involved in writing and editing, so please understand if we have recorded your memories and not published them yet. We talked to *Tom Round-Smith* several times over the past few years and were very sorry to hear of his death on 13th March. We learned a huge amount of historical detail from the records his grandfather kept, and from Tom's own memories.

As always we would be glad to hear from you if you have information to add to the topics covered in this Journal. Contact details on Page 2.

The editorial team July 2016



This photograph was presented to Anne J.G. Roberts (Daughter of the late Councillor C.L. Roberts) to mark the occasion of the Tree Planting ceremony on the site of the new County Secondary School (later Maidenhill) on December 19th, 1953.

Left to right: Joanna Simmons (pupil), Alderman Cole, Mr D. Mills, Anne Roberts (now Lawson), Mr Jack Anderson, unknown, Mr Leslie Arrowsmith, Mr C.Thursby (headmaster), Mr Ben T. Parkin (MP), unknown, Mr W.A. Sibly, unknown, unknown, Mrs Emily Anderson.

The Woolpack Inn

by Shirley Dicker, Janet Hudson and Vicki Walker

The earliest recorded mention of the name 'Woolpack Inn' is in a directory of 1820, but there was probably a building on the site long before that. Restoration work in 1998 suggested that what is now the main building may once have been a timber-framed barn with undaubed woven lath ventilation panels. The site appears to have belonged to the Sandford family as part of their share of the manor. In 1572 William Elliott, a butcher, was punished by the bishop's officials for selling meat in service time. He may have been living in a cottage in the forecourt area, on the site of the sewing and kitchen shops, and keeping stock for slaughter in the barn and the field to the south.

During the 17th century the butchery work probably continued as part of general farming. However, transport links were being developed at this time, especially for sending woollen cloth to London. Francis Bachelor, a waggoner or carrier of goods who died in 1686, probably lived in the forecourt cottage. The timber-framed barn may have been at least partly developed into a house around 1690, perhaps by Stephen Merrett, another waggoner, who had a large household there in 1709. All the existing chimneys are of brick, which was not a common building material in Gloucestershire before 1700. The south-eastern end appears to be a later stone extension with a brick upper storey.

In 1726 the roads surrounding the site were turnpiked, but during the 18th century the property returned to being mainly butchers' premises, rather than capitalising on the roads. The tenants from 1720 to 1750 were the Veisey family of butchers, and from 1750 to 1790 Samuel Hogg, a butcher, and his son Richard. Slaughtering was probably kept separate however, as the property was shared with other occasional tenants, such as farmers and clothiers. In 1763 the Sandford estates were bought by Ambrose Reddall of Upper Mill. From about 1780 the Bath coach ran through Stonehouse, turning round the Woolpack corner down what is now Regent Street, but the main coaching inn was probably what became the Crown and Anchor. Between 1790 and 1804 the future Woolpack was owned and later occupied by William Wetmore, a former parish officer who is not called an innkeeper.

Land tax records from 1810 show a new owner of the premises, Joseph Jeens, a gentleman of Uley. It seems that this was when the house and surrounding land and buildings began to be developed as an Inn. It may have been serving travellers in casual ways before that time, by waggoning or by selling ale, which many people brewed in their houses. An 1820 Directory lists William Savage at the Woolpack Inn, the first known reference to this name. 'The Woolpack' probably derives from the local wool cloth industry.

By 1823 the forecourt buildings had been replaced by stables. In 1839 a new road, extending what is now Bath Road to the site of the Horsetrough Roundabout, was cut to make an easier through route for the Bath coach, and the Woolpack continued to benefit from passing traffic in the High Street.

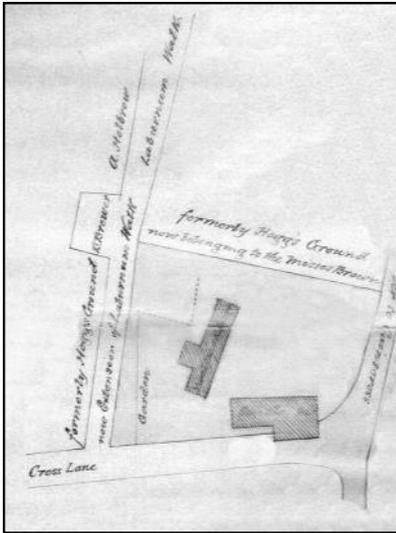


The Woolpack Inn at the beginning of the 20th century

Development of the Inn

During the nineteenth century the Woolpack had various owners who rented it to tenants who managed the pub.

Richard Hopson was the landlord from about 1823 until 1839 when his son-in-law Daniel Pincott took over. In the 1841 census Augustin Holland is recorded as landlord. From 1851 – 1871 Henry Roberts was in charge, then Edwin and Eliza Perkins ran it for 10 years.



In his will of 17th June 1863, John Sharpe, Brickmaker of Stonehouse, left the Woolpack Inn and the adjoining land and premises (see map to left) to Timothy Hadley of Purton (farmer) and Sidney Thomas Hadley. John Sharpe died on 25th January 1865. The Hadleys sold it on to George Holloway of Stonehouse (furniture broker) for £600.

The property is described as “All that messuage tenement or dwellinghouse known as the Woolpack Inn and the malthouse, brewhouse, stable, garden and land thereto adjoining and belonging bounded on or towards the North by property belonging to the Misses Brown, on or towards the East by the turnpike road leading from Gloster to Cainscross, on or towards the South by Cross Lane in Stonehouse, on or towards the West by the extension of the Laburnum Walk.”

The site was developed further and by 1880 included newly built brick dwelling-houses, showrooms, warehouses, outbuildings and gardens.

1881 saw the first of the King family when Elizabeth Roach (George King’s mother) took it over. For the next 70 years the pub was managed by people connected to the King family.

The Kings and the Taylors

George King and Eliza Smith were married in 1888. They ran the Yew Tree Inn in New Town near Eastington and by 1891 they had taken over the Woolpack Inn from George’s mother.

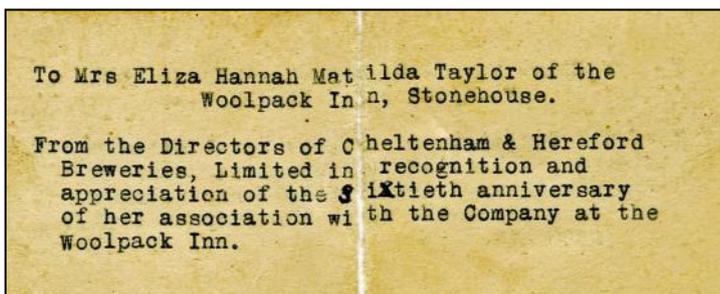
In 1896 the Woolpack Inn and surrounding lands were bought by William and Joseph Clissold who ran the Nailsworth Brewery. It was the start of the practice of breweries controlling the pub trade. So, from publicans brewing their own ale or buying from a variety of sources, they began to be restricted to the rules of the brewery owners.

George King drowned in the canal in April 1906, aged only 40, leaving his wife, Eliza, a widow with 5 children. His name remained on the rent book till 1909 even though Eliza King was landlady.

In 1909 the Nailsworth Brewery was taken over by the Cheltenham Brewery Company. In the same year Eliza married Alfred Taylor and they continued to run the pub together.



A rent book from 1901 shows George King paid a quarterly rent of £4.



Their son Alfred Frank was born a year later. Alfred senior died in 1926 but Eliza continued as landlady with the help of her son Frank until the early 1950s. Frank Taylor then ran the Swan Inn in Minchinhampton until 1966.

When Eliza retired after 60 years all she was given was this note.



*The family in the Woolpack garden c.1914. Alfred & Eliza Taylor seated with Frank Taylor.
Back row - the King family: Cecil, Violet, Charles, Evelyn & George*

Len Taylor

After an appeal for information about the Woolpack, we were contacted by Frank Taylor's son Len, who lives in Bussage. He was able to tell us about the family and allowed us to copy some of his large collection of old photographs.



Len was born in 1942 and lived at Holly Bank House, Regent Street, until 1950. He can remember his grandmother, Eliza, keeping rabbits in a room above the bar. She had them for pets and also to sell for food or fur. He has a photo of her with one of her rabbits and remembers she used to keep a variety called Blue. The children often had rabbit furs as comforters.

He can remember being in the bar as a child in about 1947, when a man came in with a sack over his shoulder. He opened the sack and Len was shocked to see it contained a human skull, which the man said he had dug up in the grounds of Wycliffe College!

Eliza Taylor c.1940s

Len's dad, Frank, worked at Sperry's during the war and was in Sperry's Home Guard unit. Frank used to ride Len around on the crossbar of his pushbike. He also went shooting for rabbits with his spaniel dogs.

Len remembers one of his dad's dogs being killed by a car on the road by Stanley Downton. The car was driven by his friend Bob Bingle but, nevertheless, they remained good friends for years.



Members of Sperry's Home Guard unit during practice at the Brickworks. Frank is front centre.

The Hemmings Family

We interviewed landlord Chris Hemming about his time at the Woolpack Inn with his parents Brian and Maureen Hemming and brother Andy.

“Our family moved to the Woolpack Inn on Thursday 2nd May 1985. My dad, Brian, had taken early retirement from the RAF as he had had enough of travelling away from home. We lived in Swindon at the time and he worked in a couple of pubs there. Then the Woolpack came up and he saw the potential straight away.

“The pub was very different to now, with small rooms and the cellar was in the middle of the two bars. The public bar had a dart board and a quoits board and an old fruit machine. It was dark and dingy with Formica tops on the bar and a few bits of furniture. The landlords before us were Jack and Doris Smith. They had run the pub from the 1950s to 1980s.

“We did a lot of work over the next two years, changing the bars, putting in new toilets and a new beer garden. The Public Bar hasn’t changed much apart from the addition of the Pool Room. This was an old bottle store with a door at the front. I had an idea one day and we looked at opening it up and it worked. We did it up and it was a big success.

“In 1985 we started to do food, which was hot pies and jacket potatoes or sandwiches. The Co-op had a bakery then and we had an account with them; we were forever running up the road for more French sticks or loaves. In those days the Co-op had a separate shop for bread and the bakery was at the back of the building. This was at the end nearest the Woolpack. You used to go in and they had a turnstile. I remember going round the back and shouting for the bread so I didn’t have to go all the way round to the front. Behind the pub bar was a small freezer where we kept the pies and the mixes that we’d made for them, like minced beef and onion.

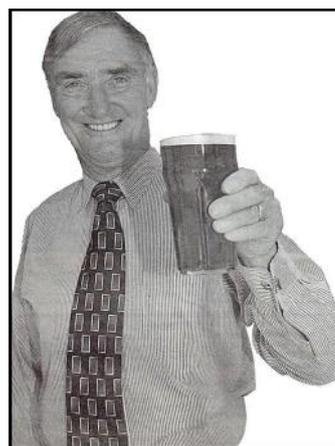
“There was a spiral staircase (where the stone pillar is now) that went up to the flat. There was a door at the bottom and it went up to a corridor all the way along the length of the building. The kitchen was up there and we used to do the sandwiches there. We should have had a walkie talkie system because we often had to run up and down with requests from customers. We had to come down the stairs and through the entrance into the bar. It worked for a while but gradually the word got around that the Woolpack was doing decent food. I remember when Mum and Dad decided to go away on holiday for three weeks and left me in charge with a relief manager. They went off leaving no contact number. In the end I had to shut down the food operation because it got so popular I couldn’t cope. We had one microwave to cook the jacket potatoes and pies so if you got an order for five it just took too long.

“I had decided to stop the food because we just didn’t have the space when I heard that Whitbread’s were doing a competition for the best sandwich. A mystery guest came in and we

actually won an award for a good sandwich! It was all made fresh to order, not kept warm in a cabinet. After that we added the kitchen on and we got busier. We did parties in the lounge. Those days were more laid back and happy-go-lucky.

“We had two pub quiz teams that were very successful and three dart teams. The Sunday lunchtime league was always a laugh. The ladies played on a Monday night and the men on a Thursday night.

“We had a Woolpack football team which my dad said he would sponsor. They got a Sunday League Team together playing at Oldends Lane. We had big crowds of up to 100 and, of course, they came back to the pub for a drink.



Brian Hemming ,1999



Chris and Andy Hemming
behind the Woolpack bar, December 2011



“A few years later, in around 1995, the restaurant building was added. Where the restaurant is now there was a lobby leading out on to the garden patio and the lawn. The toilets were out there as well. We put on the restaurant extension plus a new kitchen and toilets (see photo left) During the refurbishments we found the blocked up window which had been in the alleyway to the lounge (see photos below).

“I inherited a cracking business from my parents. They saw the potential and had a vision and I carried on. But it’s time for a change for me.”



The Woolpack in 2015

Chris Hemming left the Woolpack on 15th December 2011 and Mike Warman and Janet Goldstone became the new landlords.

Sources of information

Documents: GA = Gloucestershire Archives, GDR = Gloucester Diocesan Records

1572 William Elliott in bishop’s visitation, GA GDR 29 pp.203-4.

1686 Inventory for Francis Bachelor, GA GDR inventories 1686/281.

1709 Vicar’s tithe accounts, GA P316/IN3/1.

1763 Sale of Sandford lands to Ambrose Reddall, GA D846/III/20.

1775-1832 Whitstone Hundred land tax assessments, GA Q/Rel.

1804 Survey of Stonehouse by John Elliott, GA P263/MI9, associated map 1803, GA D1347.

1820 Gell and Bradshaw Directory of Gloucestershire, in GA library.

1823 Consolidation of boundaries round Woolpack, GA D62.

1830 Pigot’s Directory of Gloucestershire, in GA library.

1839 Stonehouse tithe map and award, GA GDR.

1839 Bath Road extension cut, GA Q/Rh/1839D.

1841 - 1911 census, GA and www.ancestry.co.uk

Photocopies of the Deeds of the Woolpack Inn obtained by Brian Hemming from Whitbread Breweries Ltd.

SHG Oral History interviews – Chris Hemming 2011.

Tom Round-Smith – a remarkable life

by Jim Dickson



*Tom aged 8 outside his home
("Greenways" on Verney Road).*

Tom died in Cheltenham Hospital on 13th March 2016, aged 92, of a heart attack. All who knew him will remember that he was the finest example of a 92-year old – down-to-earth, fun and with a remarkable memory.

Tom was a twin, born in "Hill Rise", Upper Queen's Road, Stonehouse on 5th February 1924 (next door but one to June Sturm who remained a lifelong friend). His twin brother, Geoff, died some years ago. His sister "Bobby" (Joan), who was a receptionist at Standish Hospital "*for donkey's years*", died in 1999, aged 83.

His elder brother, Austin, died in a plane crash in August 1940, aged only 19, shortly after gaining his RAF "wings" as a fighter pilot. His grave at St Cyr's is marked by an official War Graves Commission memorial. The funeral service was conducted by the Vicar and Rev. R. E. Pryce, Chaplain at Wycliffe College. Captain B. D. Parkin played the organ.



*Tom's older brother
Austin in 1940*

Tom married Gwen Clark, daughter of a Gloucester solicitor, in 1964. She was a magistrate for 35 years, and became head of Gloucester Juvenile Bench. Gwen died in 2003 having been unwell for a few years. In his later years, Tom lived in Bussage. However, he retained friendships with Stonehouse people and had many fond memories of the town and its people.



*Dr Prout in 1930
aged about 60*

Dr Edward de Carle Prout delivered Tom into the World. Tom remembered Dr Prout as an interesting, Edwardian man who continued to practise until 1948 when the NHS came into existence.

Tom only remembered Dr Prout as an elderly man. He considered him to have been very good but had some tales to tell about him! In his later years he had to be chauffeured about by a friend (Fred Lewis). Fred told Tom that he arrived for work one day and Dr Prout came out of the door – shuffling and looking troubled. He said to Fred that he couldn't walk properly and didn't know what was wrong. Fred took one look and explained to the doctor that he had tied his shoe laces together!

Dr Prout's sight began to fail and Fred told Tom about a patient who came to have his ear syringed. The doctor got to work and, suddenly, water was pouring down the patient's neck – the syringe having been put in the wrong place!

Dr Prout's practice was in 'Elgin Lodge' (where he lived, complete with large garden, now the site of Elgin Mall). In these days, medicines were dispensed from large bottles. There were shelves of these bottles (containing coloured liquids) on a shelf in his waiting room. Tom commented that "*Dr Prout would shuffle out, pour some liquid into a bottle for the patient – and that was dispensing!*"

Tom also talked of Dr Murray-Brown whose practice and home were in 'The Mount' (bottom of Regent Street). On several occasions when Tom's family doctor was not available, he had to go to Dr Murray-Brown. "*All you saw of him was his back – he sat with his back to you.*" One of the women who worked with Tom told him that she had said to Murray-Brown that she "*would get more attention from him if she had been a cauliflower!*" (the doctor was a keen gardener).

Tuberculosis (TB), Standish Hospital and school days

When Tom was 6 years old, he had a tuberculous gland in his neck and believed that was the result of drinking unpasteurised milk. The family's milkman (Willie) had a joint small holding up Standish House Lane (the farmhouse to the left before the entrance to the Hospital). Willie used to bring the milk round in a churn carried by a horse and trap. He wore a brown smock and trilby hat and always had a fag going. He ladled the milk from his churn into your jug. Tom commented that, while you were waiting for him to dispense the milk, you waited in anticipation that the fag ash would drop into the milk!

Tom's father took him to visit Dr Dickson, the head man at Standish Hospital. The doctor said "*The lad's got a tuberculous gland.*" Tom's father didn't want to accept that. However, the doctor eventually convinced him so Tom stayed as a patient at the Hospital for a couple of years. Treatment involved getting lots of fresh air and building up the body's resistance. In the winter months, the patients were also given ultraviolet radiation treatment. There was no cure for TB at that time (early 1930s) and it remained a major problem, until the development of streptomycin in the late 1940s made effective treatment and cure of TB a reality.



*Tom (at left) in early 1930s at Standish Hospital
"with other little urchins"*

There was a small school at the Hospital and that was where Tom's education began. He was there for some 2 years and had fond memories of his time at the Hospital, considered it to be well run, and was much saddened by what has happened to it following closure. During his time there, his parents visited on Saturdays. There was a tuck shop. There was a big wooden hall with a 35 mm projector at the back where films were shown. Nativity plays and the like were performed around Christmas time.

While he was a patient at the Hospital, Tom remembered that, in the main building, there were still patients who had been gassed in the First World War. He believed they remained there until they died.

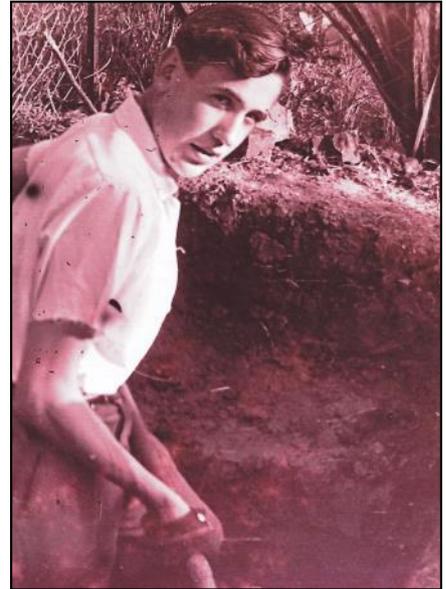
When Tom left Standish, he became a pupil at Stonehouse Council School (now Stonehouse Park Infant School). He considered Captain B. D. Parkin to have been a very good headmaster. Infants were at one end of the building, older pupils at the other. Toilets were outside. There was a workshop and gardening was on the curriculum. Pupils stayed there until they were 14 – or went to grammar or technical school.

In September 1935, aged 11, Tom moved on to Stroud Boys Technical School (now part of Marling School). He found the head, Mr W. G. Elliot, to be inspiring. Mr Elliott moved to Marling when the two schools were amalgamated. He was an Associate Member of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (or a similar professional engineering body) and had worked in the Naval Depots for some years.

Tom remembered the cinema when it was by Laburnum Walk (1933 to 1936 when it was destroyed by fire). Kids would fight to be first in. When they didn't have sufficient money to go in, they would stand outside and listen (since its walls were only corrugated metal panels). The cinema had been set up "*on the cheap*" so bigger people could find the seats collapsing under them! At the end of the first showing, Mr Stratford, who owned the cinema, was standing with "*his face as red as a beetroot*", while people were leaving since the show had suffered from several delays including broken film. Cinema owners had lots of such difficulties at that time.

Second World War

This photo shows Tom's twin brother Geoff at the top of the garden of their home, 'Greenways' on Verney Road, digging an air raid shelter in the days immediately after the Declaration of War in 1939. The family had no idea what was likely to happen. The shelter was never used. The photo was taken by Tom, who was always "snapping away". Later, Geoff joined the Royal Marines.



Tom moved from Stroud Boys Tech to Stroud Technical College, encouraged by W.G. Elliott, to prepare to take the Cambridge School Certificate. In September 1939, he and his brother Geoff started at the College (one section of the building was at the top of George Street, over Bateman's, and the other was along Lansdown). Tom took and passed his Cambridge School Certificate exams at the end of 1940.

Tom vividly remembered being in a science lesson in May 1940. The teacher, Mr Dixon, was "like a frightened rabbit and was white as a sheet" saying things like: "What are we going to do when the Germans get here?" At that time, the German Armies were only 25 miles away on the opposite coast of the English Channel, and the British Armies had left most of their weapons and tanks in France. There seemed nothing to stop the Germans. But, as youngsters (Tom was 16 years old at the time), the students didn't understand why their teacher was so upset - probably because the newspapers, radio and newsreels were working to keep up the nation's morale - to persuade the British people that it would all be OK.

In 1941 he got a clerical job with the Meteorological Office of the Air Ministry (which was based at Wycliffe College throughout the War). He worked in Haywardsfield House and was introduced to the general workings there by an older man named James Collett. Tom found him to be an excellent mentor.

Tom then got a job in an insurance firm in Gloucester. He travelled there every morning on the railcar. One day, he was chatting with a young man he sometimes sat beside. He worked for the Gloster Aircraft Company and started "wittering on" about the Company having flown a plane without a propeller. Tom "thought he was mad!" He didn't enlarge on the subject and Tom sat in disbelief. [The first prototype jet aircraft, the Gloster E28/39, was built by the Gloster Aircraft Company. On 8th April 1941, it made a series of short hops at Brockworth. On each hop it lifted 6 feet off the grass airfield for 100 - 200 yards. The first official test flight took place at RAF Cranwell, Lincolnshire, on 15th May.]

The Home Guard



Early in the Second World War, Tom, his brother Geoff, old friend Derek Moore (whose father, Frank, had a tobacconist shop on High Street where Lloyds Bank is now located) and others joined Stonehouse Home Guard. This photo was taken on the lawn at the Old Vicarage by Edwin Peckham, in 1941. As a keen photographer himself, Tom recalled that Peckham waited for the sun to go behind a cloud before taking the photo - to ensure that nobody blinked. He only took one plate.

Clockwise from top left: Les Pugh, Tom, Tom's twin brother Geoff & Derek Moore

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www.stroudphotos.co.uk

Those in the Stonehouse platoon were mainly in their late teens or were middle-aged - most men of intermediate ages were in the armed forces or in reserved occupations. Tom said that he remembered clearly standing on guard duty at the pedestrian crossing over the railway behind the Globe Inn and hearing the characteristic throbbing engine sound of German bombers as they made their way up the line of the River Severn on their way to bomb Coventry (autumn 1940). He said they were "going over" all night. He also remembered hearing bombing raids on the aircraft factory at Brockworth and on Bristol, Cardiff, Swansea and Newport.

Immediately after the evacuation of the British Expeditionary Force (BEF) from Dunkirk in May/June 1940, there was a considerable shortage of weapons and ammunition in this country since most of the BEF's equipment had been abandoned in France. As a result, until the evacuated army was re-equipped, Home Guard units were deprived of such equipment for some time. When they were supplied with weapons, they were imported. Those supplied to the Stonehouse and Hoffmann platoons were from Canada - rifles of 0.300" (7.62 mm) bore - slightly smaller than that of standard British rifles which had a bore of 0.303" (7.70 mm). Tom



Rifle practice by members of Stonehouse Home Guard at brickworks (now Rosedale Estate)

explained that this tiny difference was sufficient to cause British-size bullets to jam in the barrel of the Canadian rifles. So a broad red band was painted round the fore end of these rifles to warn users against loading standard British bullets into them. Tom said that, during his time in the Home Guard, this limitation meant that they had to use ammunition sparingly.

When volunteers were sought for the Home Guard in a radio broadcast on 14th May 1940 (known as Local Defence Volunteers until Churchill insisted on the change of name on 22nd July), they were to be supplied only with an armband with LDV printed on it. Tom commented that this caused unease among volunteers since, if captured by German soldiers while dressed in civilian clothes, they would have had no protection under the rules of war and been likely to have been shot. He said that being supplied with a uniform undoubtedly helped morale.

Tom was in the Home Guard throughout 1941 and that included taking part in exercises. The platoon (51, E Company) used to gather on Sunday mornings for drill, firearms practice (at the brickworks), hand grenade training (at a quarry near Dursley), etc. The members of the platoon regarded themselves as competitors with the Home Guard unit at Sperry Gyroscope's factory at Bond's Mill. However, in Tom's time with the platoon, the attacks on the Sperry factory were always foiled. For a time the Stonehouse platoon did occasional guard duty at night at Marling & Evans' Mill (Stanley Mill) part of which was being used by the Royal Navy as a storage depot.

The platoon's headquarters was in a shop on the corner of Bath Road at the bottom of Burdett Road (it is no longer there). Lieutenant Frank Moore (Derek's father) was the main officer of the platoon. Richard Thomas (who had a farm or small holding at Oxlynch) and Bert Gardner were the other officers. They also had a Sergeant-Major - Charlie Williams who had served in the Grenadier Guards. Tom regarded him as "a proper regular soldier".

Tom told of the platoon's 'Private Pike' (of 'Dad's Army' fame) - a chap named Ivan Rowan. His mother and sister had come to Stonehouse with the Air Ministry people and they lived on St Cyril's Road. Rowan became Military Correspondent of the Daily Telegraph - in spite of having "two left feet"! Tom said he retired to Horsley and died in 2006.

One of the members of the Home Guard was a Naval Commander who lived by Standish Church. One day they were doing rifle practice in The Park. Tom was standing behind him while he was fiddling about. After a time he turned around and said, "Do you know, I can't see a damned thing!" Clearly not much use as a defender of our country! All in all, Tom commented with much laughter, "Dad's Army wasn't all that far out."

Service in the Royal Navy

In August 1942 Tom was called up (aged 18½) having volunteered for the Royal Navy since, at that time, they were advertising for those with interest and skills in photography. Tom found that that was only a magnet to attract young men to the Navy. He attended a recruiting centre in Bristol. *"They just put a thermometer over you – if you were warm and breathing, you were in!"* He found that they didn't want photographers, they wanted technical people to deal with their communications equipment.

Tom received his call-up papers and was told to report to Malvern where there was a Naval shore station (HMS Drake) which was an entry point for recruits. While he was at Malvern, he had his first encounter with a Naval dentist. He needed a filling but the dentist didn't bother with that – he simply pulled it out! Tom didn't think the dentist was long qualified. He told Tom that he was fine until the blood started flowing then he *"couldn't see a damned thing!"* That put Tom at his ease!



Tom in Trinidad 1944

In November 1942, Tom was moved to the headquarters of the Royal Navy's Fleet Air Arm at Lee-on-Solent (HMS Daedalus/HMS Ariel). In addition to its role as a Naval Air Station it had facilities for electrical, radar and ground training. From there he was posted to the SW Essex Technical College in Walthamstow for basic grounding then to Culcheth (another RN Aircraft Training Establishment near Manchester) for some months of further training. At the end of it, Tom was qualified and promoted to Petty Officer.

During his time with the Navy's Fleet Air Arm, Tom was attached to Observer/Navigation Training Centres, first in Dundee in 1943. Their main role was maintaining communications equipment aboard flying boats – Supermarine Walrus type with a big pusher propeller. Tom commented that it was frightening to be on board one when it was taking off .

Early in 1944 Tom was posted to Trinidad in the West Indies (near Venezuela in the Caribbean Sea) to the Royal Navy's main training site (HMS Goshawk; 1500 – 2000 staff were based there). For the first stage of his trip to Trinidad, Tom sailed to New York on the Queen Mary which he boarded at Glasgow. The liner left at night and *"travelled at quite a speed"*. Tom slept in a hammock above the cocktail lounge and was required to do watch duty. When the liner reached New York harbour, it tied up at Pier 92. Those on board disembarked and joined US Navy staff in a US Naval barracks which had been converted from one of the dock buildings.

Tom remembered that the food in New York was fantastic (no doubt because, in contrast to the UK, there was no food rationing) and he and his colleagues were entertained well. If they wrote letters home, they were microfilmed (after some of the text had been censored out) then printed off when the film reached the UK prior to sending to addressees.

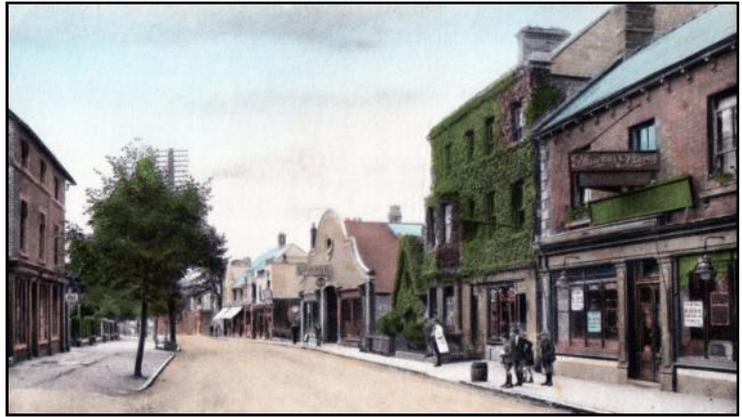
For part of their journey from New York to Trinidad, they sailed to New Orleans via the River Mississippi. Again, Tom had fond memories of meeting with Americans, that *"the food was sumptuous"*, and that the officer in charge would hand out Cuban cigars. He recalled, with wry amusement, that his American companions were all grumbling that there was too much chicken on the menu!

At the base in Trinidad, there were quite a number of obsolete aircraft – Fairey Swordfish, Fairey Albacore, etc. There were also some American Naval aircraft– which were exceptional by British standards. Tom said that the radio equipment in those American planes was far beyond anything in the British aircraft. *"They did a lot of flying from there – all the time. There were some casualties – very sad."*

When the base in Trinidad was being closed in 1945, at the end of hostilities, the British aircraft were flown onto an aircraft carrier. They were then taken some 10 miles out to sea where they were all pushed over the side. That wasn't done with the American aircraft which, Tom believed, returned to the USA.

The family business

Tom's ancestors moved to Stonehouse in the early 1800s. Tom's great-grandfather, Richard Smith, who had a farming and bakery business, bought the property where Broomhall's butchers' shop is now located. He had it rebuilt and enlarged. When Tom's great-grandfather retired in 1890, he persuaded his son, Charles Lister Smith (Tom's grandfather), to give up his job as a draper's clerk in London and return to Stonehouse to take over the baking business.



The Smith's family home (covered in greenery) and bakery in the centre of High Street c. 1940

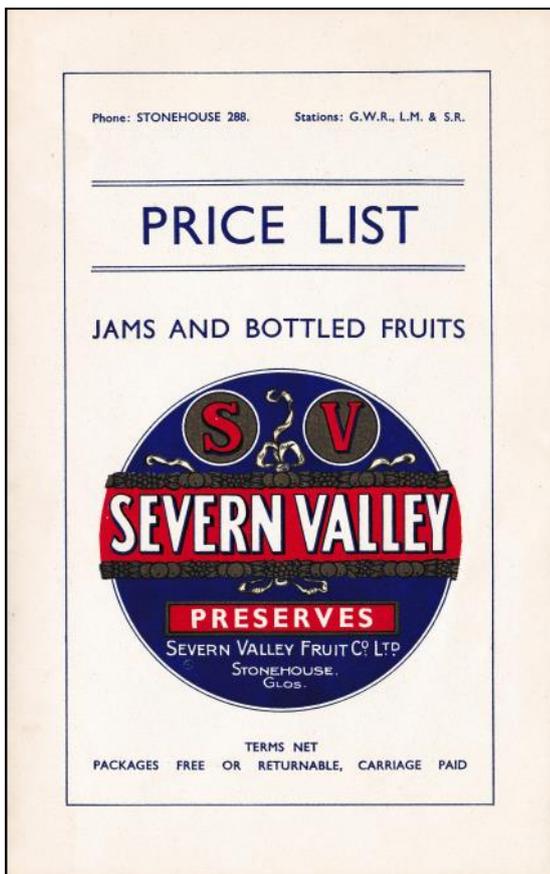
Cakes were made in a big bakehouse behind the property (now demolished and replaced by blocks of flats) and, in the next building, was another big shop (now the Peking Chef takeaway). That shop and the institute behind it also belonged to Tom's great grandfather. They were held in family trust and sold off in 1925. The property extended to where the retired people's flats are now located (Orchard Court).

In 1908, Tom's grandfather sold the family's bakery business and founded the Severn Valley Fruit Co. The new factory, which made jams and bottled fruit, was located just off High Street (in Orchard Place behind the Delta Nine computer shop and Hurn's Electrical) and extended almost to Park Infant School. The reason for setting up this new business was explained in Charles' obituary in Stroud News in March 1945: "It was during his visit to the local farms in the early 1900s that he was appalled at the waste of fallen fruit that was allowed to lie under the trees and rot. The markets could not absorb it and he started experimenting with bottling. He must have been one of the first to commercialise bottled fruit."

History Group members Darrell Webb and Colin Wood remember collecting fruit for the factory and returning old jam jars in the 1950s. Colin remembers that he got an old halfpenny for each old jam jar (2.5 new pence for a dozen); Darrell remembers collecting blackberries and getting 6 old pence (2.5 new pence) per pound.



Workers at Severn Valley Fruit Co. (before First World War). Tom's father Herbert is at right, grandfather Charles is next to him



1930s price list

In 2002, Cotswold Life published the following account by Dorothy Baker, née Arnold, of working in the factory when she was a schoolgirl “When I was 13, I went to work in the jam factory for the summer holiday..... It was my schoolmaster, Mr Parkin, who asked me if I'd like a holiday job, and he put me in touch with Mr and Mrs Smith who kept the factory.

“I went on a Saturday morning, to give it a try, and I started work washing jam jars and sorting out fruit. You had to be careful that there weren't any broken bits of glass around. I sorted out the strawberries, and Mr Smith would give me a little box of them to take home. I worked Monday to Saturday for ten shillings (50 new pence). We used to do strawberry jam, plum jam, tinned pears, plums, gooseberries and apples.”

Dorothy was married in 1939 in the Subscription Rooms on Regent Street, so her summer job at the factory would have been around 1930.

After the Second World War, the factory moved over to canned products for catering, including hospitals (but not for shops). The business was all done by contracts. Sadly, once the motorways opened in the early 1960s, the business ceased to be successful due to competition from far and wide. The factory closed in 1964. Tom then worked as a photographer with the Ministry of Defence for a few years.

Tom's grandfather, Charles Lister Smith was a keen local historian. In the course of our research we discovered that Tom owned a number of books and diaries compiled by Charles. He was kind enough to lend us the books to copy and also to share his memories of life in Stonehouse. We have been able to copy some of his extensive collection of historic photographs which we have used in this article and in the article “Helping to defend our country” in Issue 1 of this Journal.

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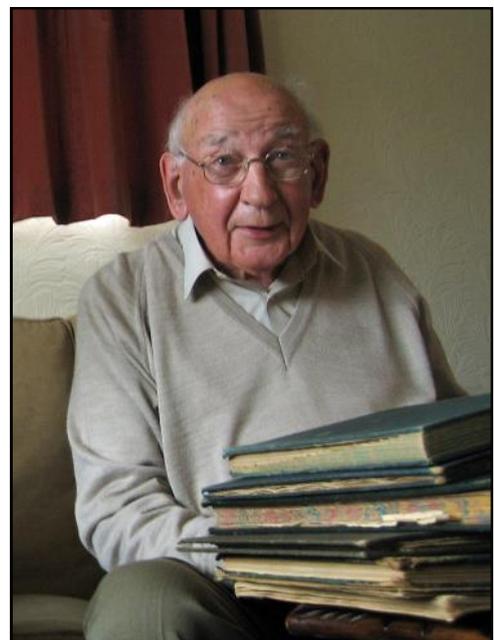
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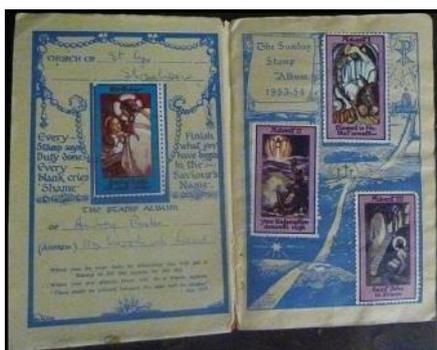
Tom in 2012 with books by his grandfather Charles Lister Smith.

My life in the Church

by Audrey Ricks

My family moved from Chalford to Stonehouse on a snowy day in April 1952. At the time it felt as if the whole of Chalford was moving to Stonehouse, where new homes were being built on the Park Estate. Some families moved to the new estate from the Maisonettes in Woodcock Lane leaving a vacancy for us.

Like many before and since, my parents assumed that the Wycliffe Chapel was the Parish Church and it took them a while to discover where St. Cyr's was hidden. Meanwhile I had made friends with children in the street who attended the Bethel Sunday School and my mother, reluctantly because denominations did not mix in those days, allowed me to go with them. Mary Coopey (not Coopey then) was my Sunday School teacher.

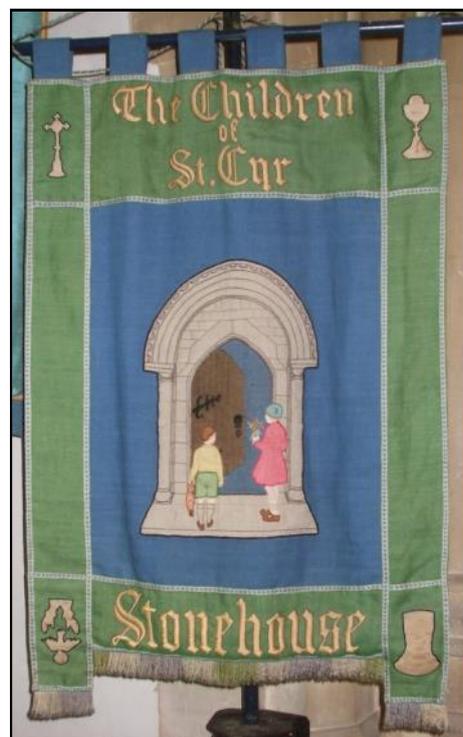


Audrey's Sunday School attendance book 1953-54.

In those days, on Ascension Day, the whole Primary School marched down Church Way to attend a service and thus my mother discovered where the church was. The following Sunday she took me there for the Children's Service. It began with a hymn, followed by a talk from the vicar (at that time the Revd. Frank Springford) a further hymn, prayers and another hymn to close. Mothers of younger children often attended with them, and helping at the service was Cicely Jones who gave us our pictorial stamps to stick in our books to prove our attendance. At the end of the year a full book resulted in the award of a medal featuring one angel for the first year, two angels the second, a prayer book the third, a Bible the fourth and a hymn book for the fifth. I don't know what those who attended longer received but I still have my full collection of those.

We had a Christmas Party in the Church Hall but in the summer at St. Cyrstide, we had a party at the vicarage (now Quietways House) and had games in the large garden. The Revd. Springford left in 1954 and the Revd. Hilary Way arrived and moved to a new vicarage in Bristol Road (now Berryfields House). Things continued as before except the summer parties in the old vicarage garden ceased. It was at this time that the Cathedral began to hold annual children's festivals on a summer Saturday and, under the care of Miss Jones, we gathered at the railway station to travel to Gloucester on the railcar to attend – one adult with a large group of children! During the service children from other churches took part in a procession carrying banners with their church's name. We, sadly, had no banner, so on our return Miss Jones set to and made the one still displayed in church. The collage on it shows a boy and a girl entering the church. The children used as models were Charles (later Lloyd-Baker) and Caroline Murray-Brown the twin children of Dr Murray-Brown for whom Miss Jones worked for many years.

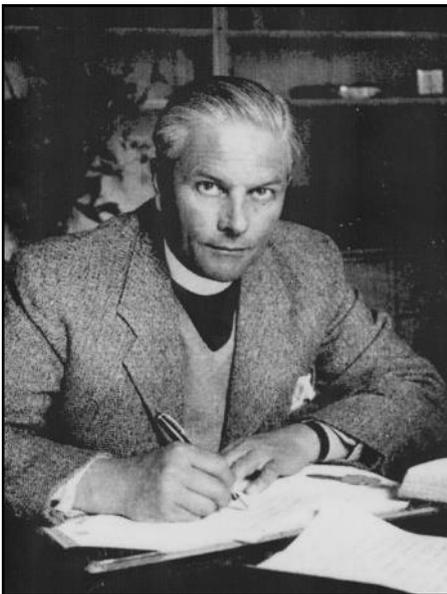
We children were trusted with another task – the care of the South Chapel (sometimes called the Lady Chapel). On a rota, under the direction of Miss Kathleen Smith, we went to the church on a Saturday morning and dusted and polished and, except in Advent and Lent, decorated it with flowers from our parents' gardens. When we were older (about 10 or 11), if Miss Smith thought us trustworthy, we were allowed to do this unsupervised. We are so protective of children now it seems a little strange that it was thought completely normal for children to walk from Woodcock Lane to the church and work there alone.



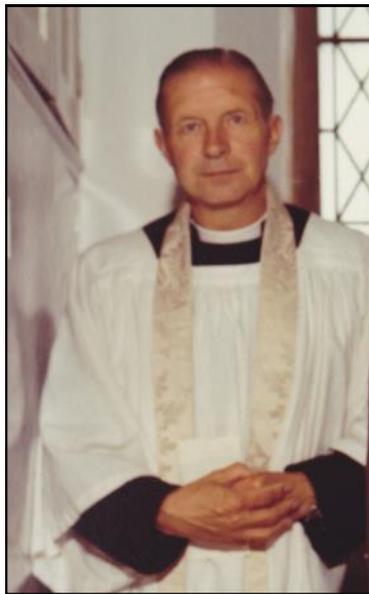
The children's banner on display in the church.

In the late 1950s, sadly it was discovered that the organ, housed in what is now the North Chapel, had dry rot or some equally nasty problem and it had to be taken out. Music for a time was provided by a grand piano supplied by Mrs Hayward of Haywardsend. This was placed in the chancel. Fund-raising took place to provide a replacement – I vividly remember collecting cards were issued with a picture of an organ with keys, stops and pipes. The idea was to collect money, or persuade friends and relatives to give money linked with the picture. A key was worth a penny, a stop 3d and a pipe 6d. A completed card raised £1. Eventually a second-hand organ was located but it was too big for the old position. Someone had the idea of building a platform at the back of the church for it to be placed on and it was installed with much rejoicing. In later years no one realised that the overhead gas heating would in turn damage it and yet another organ would need to be purchased.

The Revd. Hilary Way had been a cathedral chorister in his youth and was keen on music and he suggested that the Children's Service form its own choir and I, with others, eagerly joined. We had to get to church half an hour early to practise the hymns for the service. Many of us went on to join the adult church choir.



Hilary Way 1955 -1968



Lionel Ford 1968 - 1982



Jim Harris 1982 - 2002

When I joined the choir in 1958 it was quite large even for those days - about 25 to 30 people. At one stage, we had about 12 boys, in addition to the men, women and teenage girls, and were able to perform quite demanding anthems and always sent large groups to Royal School of Church Music festivals and courses. We also regularly attended Standish Hospital for its Harvest and Carol Services to lead the singing. We were entertained afterwards by the matron with mince pies and drinks.

The choir once made the national press and local television. Hilary Way decided to include a particular processional hymn one Easter. This hymn has irregular syllables to fit into a tricky tune – some of the (elderly) basses stated that it would be impossible to sing in procession and if he insisted in including it they would leave the choir. The press got hold of this. Despite the mutiny the hymn was included and Bramwell Parker carried out his threat to leave the choir. However Mr Parker remained loyal to the church and was later elected as a church warden.*

As teenagers, our social life was also centred on the church. There was a junior Youth Club for the 11 -13s called the Junior Cyrians and the Young Cyrians catered for the older group. These met on Thursday evenings in the Church Hall. We had games evenings, country dancing led by June Sturm, rambles, talks and regular joint activities with the Youth groups of the other Stonehouse churches. Of course we all joined in the various other church social activities – the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Beetle Party, Harvest Supper – cider and perry were kindly supplied on this occasion by a local farmer and I remember Eric Lewis always making sure we teenagers had our share of that (!) and there was always the Christmas Party.

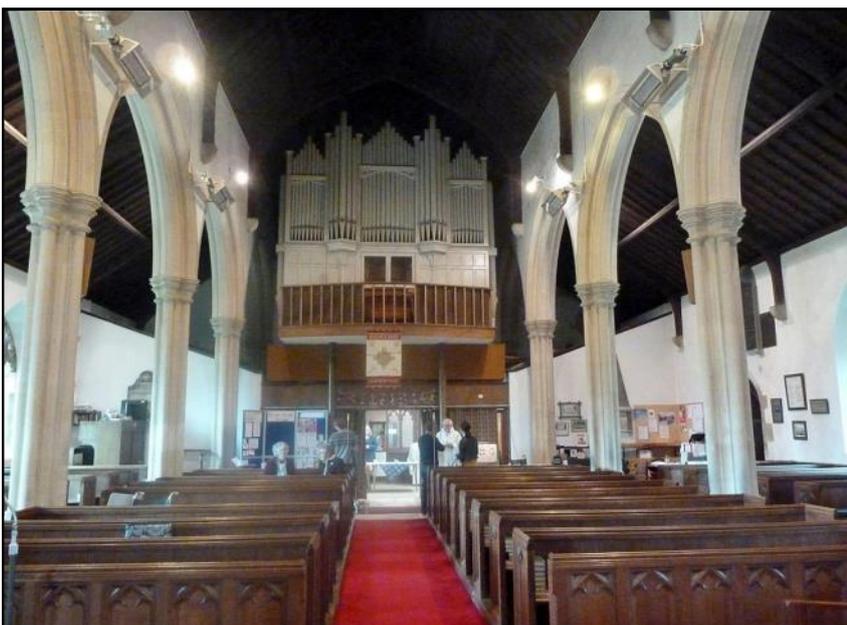
*Parker, Laurie, *Memory Lane*, 1972. SHG has a copy.

During the 50s the idea of Stewardship arrived in churches – the concept that members should regularly donate to their church whether or not they attended on a particular Sunday. A campaign was launched in the Parish and a team came to assist. As part of the process it was decided to invite all those on the electoral role to a three course meal held in the Hoffmann's canteen. The canteen was very full – sadly the congregation now would not fill that space – we Young Cyrians were given the job of being waiters for the evening – I can't remember any disasters!

As we got older, friends married in the church, and had their babies baptised and, inevitably there were funerals. In 1968, about the time Hilary Way left and the Revd. Lionel Ford replaced him, I went off to college in Birmingham but still came back for weekends and holidays. When I left college my first job as a librarian was in Bishop's Cleeve and I lived in Cheltenham for a while but usually came back at weekends. I returned briefly to live in Stonehouse before moving to Churchdown in 1977. That should perhaps have brought an end to my link with St. Cyr's but having tried my new local church and found it, unlike St. Cyr's, not very friendly, I continued attending St. Cyr's. Later my son Robert was born and became part of the St. Cyr's family. It was a pleasure to me when he and his wife chose to be married there.

Afternoon Sunday Schools gradually disappeared. For a while in the 1960s a Sunday School was held at the Church Hall, but that was not well supported and gradually families began bringing their children to the morning service. It was agreed that the children would have their own activities for part of the time and initially they withdrew into the choir vestry and the bell ringing chamber, before the decision was made to create small rooms under the organ platform where there could be better provision – as part of these changes a toilet was installed!

Jim Harris became Vicar in 1982. He already knew Stonehouse well, having been confirmed in the church and attended Wycliffe College. Our present vicar, Charles Minchin, replaced him in 2003. Over the years the congregation has changed but St. Cyr's is still a friendly church. Now I have retired I attend my local church in Churchdown (no longer unfriendly) for weekday services but I still enjoy coming to Stonehouse on Sundays. Plans are now afoot to make changes to St Cyr's to improve the way the building can serve the community. The church has served Stonehouse for around a thousand years already and I am sure it will continue to do so in the future.



Inside St Cyr's Church 2016 showing the old organ.



*Audrey Ricks
by the South Chapel in 2016*

Movement among the people of Stonehouse 1600 - 1800

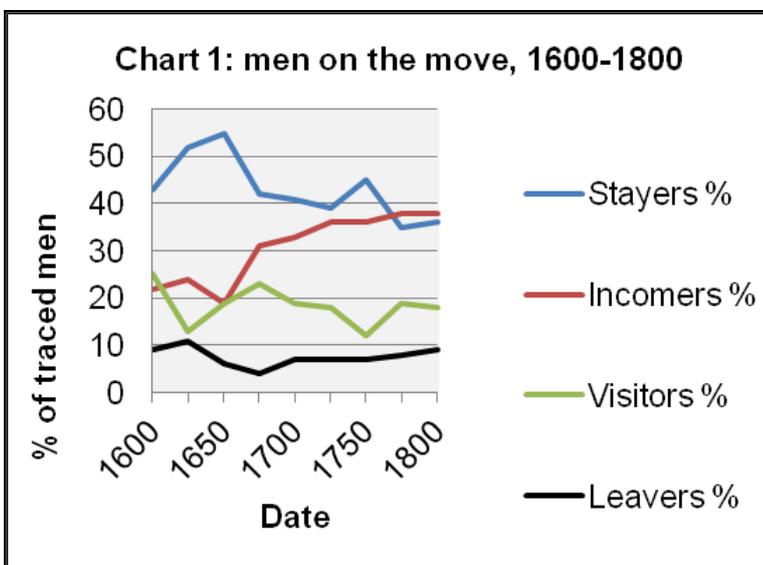
by Janet Hudson

People in the past moved about more than is sometimes appreciated. Before 1894, the old parish of Stonehouse included most of Ebley, Cainscross and Westrip. Among those who lived there, between 1600 and 1800, who may have moved, and why?

How much of the population moved?

The size of any population is decided by the number of people who are born, the number of those who die, and the difference between the totals of those who come in, and who leave, the net migration in or out. It is difficult to work this out accurately before the National Census began, in 1841, to record details of individuals. The records available before then have to be interpreted and used to make deductions. Research shows that, over the whole of England, the population grew strongly in the 16th century, then more slowly, until growth speeded up again after 1750. Using these studies, the population has been estimated for the pre-1894 parish of Stonehouse from original documents. The population grew from about 450 in 1600 to about 800 in 1750, then faster to about the 1412 recorded in the census of 1801. There were a few incomers from Europe before 1500, but by 1600 the population seems to have been drawn from England, Wales and Scotland. These countries composed the Kingdom of Great Britain, from the Union of the English and Scottish Crowns in 1707, to the formation of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland in 1801. However, the same monarch held the Crowns of both England (and Wales), and Scotland, from 1603, so for convenience they will be referred to throughout the period as Great Britain, or GB. (Population).

Working out the part played by net migration before 1800 is always challenging. Parish registers alone cannot always show whether an individual lived in a place at a given date. Linking registers to other documents, known as 'family reconstitution', can provide remarkable statistical information, but is a lengthy and demanding process. Stonehouse is fortunate in having a census-type 'short cut', an unusually full series of manorial residence lists. These were produced for every manorial court, at least annually, and in theory named all resident men old enough to swear 'fealty', or loyalty to the Lord of the Manor, commonly at about age 16. In practice the surviving lists are not so frequent or comprehensive, especially after 1750. Nevertheless, as men aged over 16 are thought to have provided about a third of a normal population in this period, the numbers in the lists can be compared to the population estimates. It appears that the lists include about 90% of the men, aged over 16, who are thought to have lived in Stonehouse between 1600 and 1800. Using the lists, together with many other original documents and online resources, these men have been traced as fully as possible, and their main movements followed. The men's wives and children would have moved with them, so their movements can suggest what happened to many people. However, because the sources have to be interpreted, all the calculations in this article are at best reasonable estimates (Records).



All the traced men were sorted as to whether they were born, or they died, in Stonehouse. When parish registers could not help, other records were used to establish whether their parents were living in the parish at the time of their birth, or whether they were resident themselves at the end of their lives. They were then placed into four groups: stayers, incomers, visitors and leavers.

Stayers began and ended their lives in Stonehouse. Many will have spent time elsewhere during their lives, but for this study they have been counted as permanent residents.

Incomers originated elsewhere but settled permanently until their deaths in Stonehouse.

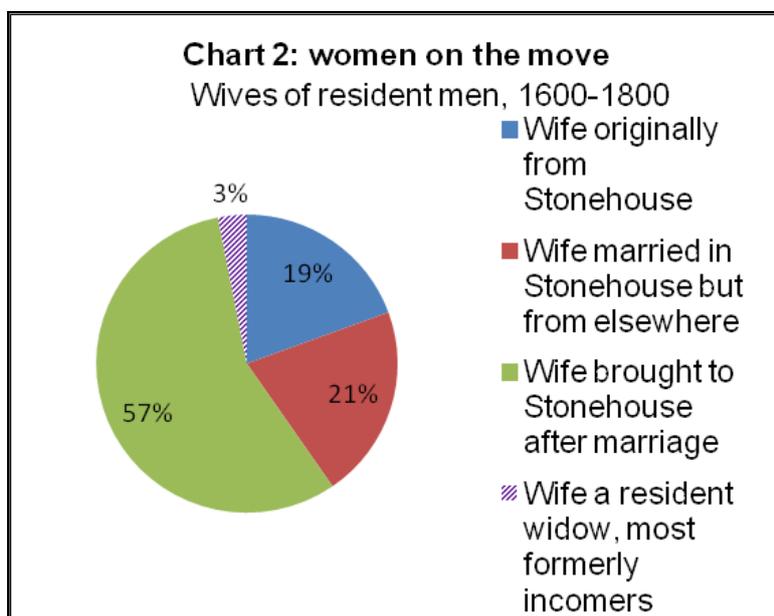
Visitors spent a time, long or short, in the parish during their lifetime, but were born and died elsewhere. Leavers were born in Stonehouse, but left permanently at some stage. All these categories apply to lifetimes rather than moments, so that at any one time many residents will have been future leavers, visitors or stayers, as yet undefined.

Chart 1 shows the relative proportions between these groups over time. Fewer than half of the traced men stayed based in Stonehouse for life, a pattern which has been widely observed in rural populations. Proportions of visitors and leavers remained fairly steady. In 1600 the difference between the levels of permanent incomers and leavers, which may be regarded as the net immigration over those lifetimes, stood at about 10% of the male population. This difference increased in the eighteenth century, adding to the natural population rise.

The traced men represent about 90% of the resident men over the period, but the level of 'unknowns' was only about 5% for most of the time, rising to perhaps 25% after 1750. There would have been a constant low level of the most transient population who did not appear in any records, but the later rise in 'unknowns' is largely due to the manorial records of residence giving less information. Rising religious nonconformity may also have affected parish registration, and was beginning to be significant in Stonehouse at the end of this period. The parish registers were searched from 1788 to 1798 for men not in the manorial lists, including the fathers and husbands of persons registered. Although this search only produced candidates for about a quarter of the estimated 'unknowns' in 1793, the results suggest that the proportions of incomers and visitors in chart 1 would be higher after 1750 if the 'unknowns' were to be included. Nationally, the share of young people in the population was rising. In particular, young single men not born in Stonehouse would not have appeared in the parish registers unless or until they married and started families, or died (Movers).

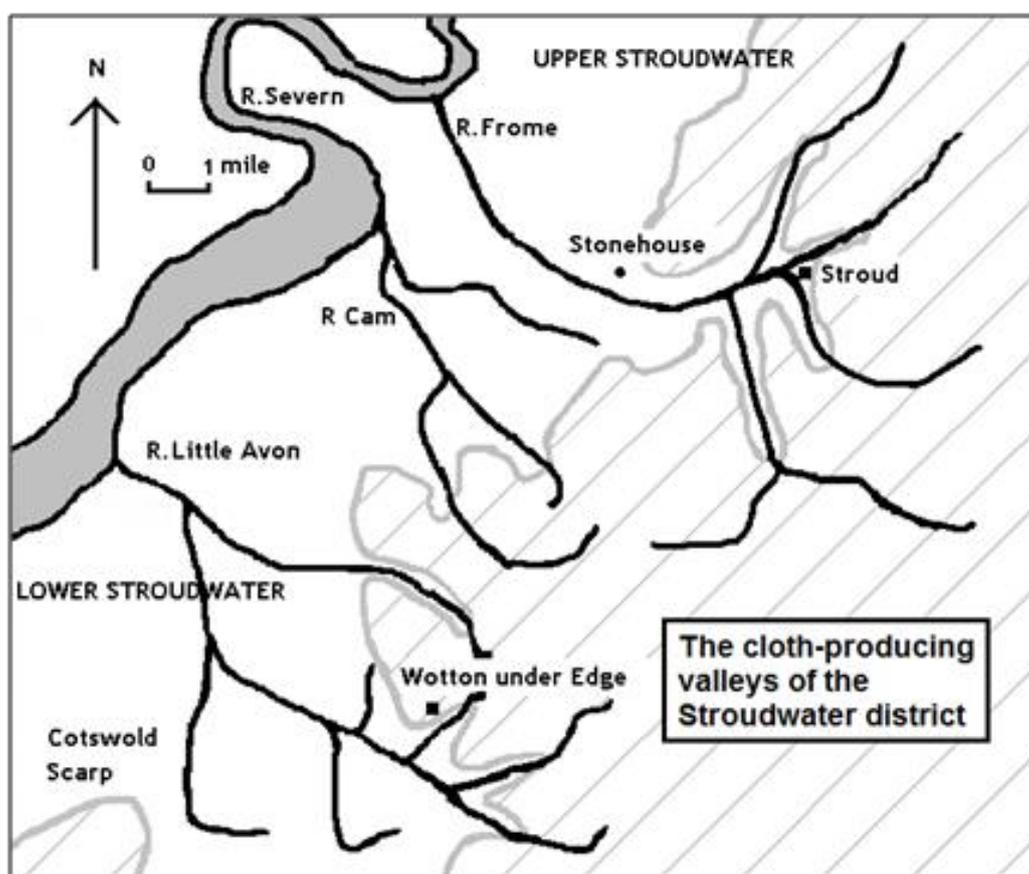
Women were also mobile. The manorial records which help to identify and trace the men do not include women. However, many women can be traced as residents through the marriages made by two thirds of the traced men, shown in Chart 2. Four fifths of these marriages were to women who came into the parish, before or after marriage. The minority of marriages to women originally from Stonehouse were fairly evenly distributed across all groups of men.

Many young men and women found partners while working away for a time as apprentices, live-in labourers or servants. A third of the traced men were unmarried while in Stonehouse, half of whom were visitors who left again while still single. A further one fifth came from Stonehouse but left unmarried. Considerable numbers of young single women would also have left, most to marry elsewhere. Women could gain property by marriage, and also provide access to it for their husbands. Sarah Taylor came to Stonehouse from Quedgeley in 1727, when her father William became landlord of the Swan Inn, Stonehouse. She had three husbands who settled in the house in turn, the first from Longney, the second from near Cricklade in Wiltshire, and only the third born in Stonehouse (Marriage).

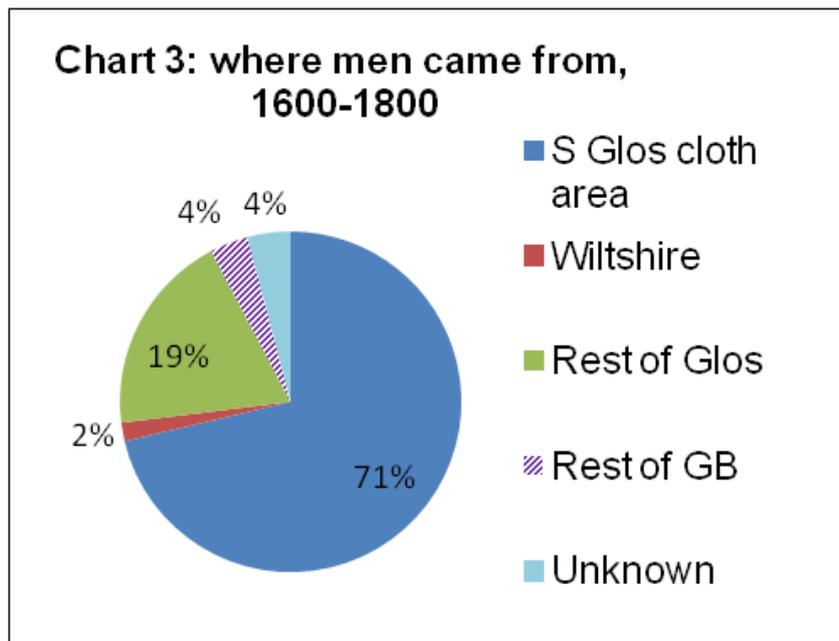


Why did people move?

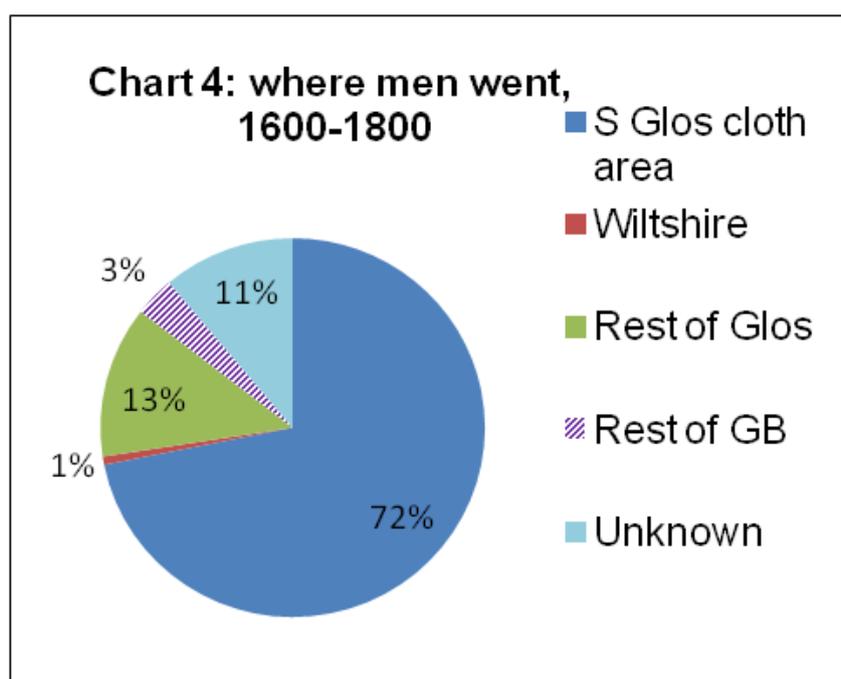
Where were all these men coming from or going to? They were searched for, using many original documents and genealogical sources. Those moving within Gloucestershire and Wiltshire could often be traced with fair certainty, but some more distant identifications are provisional, and some men remained undiscovered. The results are shown in charts 3 and 4. It is known that agricultural labourers often moved in the countryside, but on average only within a range of about ten miles. Occupations in the Stroudwater district, (shown on the map), are hard to define, as many people made a dual living from cloth and farming or other trades, but about a fifth of those men who moved in and out of Stonehouse are thought to have been labourers on the land. Studies have also shown that the stayers among the rural population tended to be those with property, and an ancestry linked to holding that property. The men who stayed in Stonehouse often held manorial properties with an agricultural base, although only about a fifth of them were primarily farmers. However, during this period (1600—1800) farming here moved away from arable towards pasture and dairy, and smaller farms tended to be absorbed into larger estates. This contributed to greater mobility among agricultural workers and the reducing proportion of stayers (Land).



The great majority of the men in this study were cloth workers or cloth managers to some degree. The woollen cloth industry in the Stroudwater district, although centred on water-powered mills, was still largely home-based. Cloth affected farming, as food prices were also linked to the cloth economy. Many trades also depended on it, and its management might require travel to London and other centres. However, it did not dictate all movement. Joseph Ellis, a clothier, died in 1771 while at Spa, Germany, for his health. Thomas Carruthers, a mercer and possibly a Jacobite, came to Stonehouse from Annandale in Scotland in about 1703. He prospered, and in 1811 his great-grandson became lord of Stonehouse manor. A few men are known to have served temporarily as soldiers. Captain William Hopkins Hill, the son of a Stonehouse clothier, was killed in the South Seas in 1793. No cases of deliberate migration to or from places outside Great Britain were found, although there were one or two indirect links to Ireland, and such long-distance moves are more likely to be among those which could not be easily traced (Travel).



The cloth workers' range of mobility was mainly local, but defined by their need to go where their skills were in demand. At least 70% of both incomers and leavers moved within the local cloth valleys. John Budding, born in Stonehouse in 1632, was a weaver who went to Slad near Stroud, where he left a 'business' in 1687. Others went to cloth areas in Gloucestershire west of the River Severn around Westbury and Newent, in Wiltshire, and in the north of England. The lower Frome valley coped better than some other parts with severe depression after 1750, and attracted cloth workers. Many would have been young single men, the 'unknowns', although they were not necessarily 'unknown' to the population they joined. Between 1660 and 1800, a steady proportion of about two thirds of the traced men, including half of both incomers and visitors, bore surnames which had been established in Stonehouse for longer than their own lifetimes, or had apparently reappeared there after a gap. Some of this may have been due to those names being common in the district, but it is also likely that family ties, sometimes quite distant, played a part in movement between the cloth working parishes. A draft census return for Horsley, in 1811, ends with the comment that the reduction of population since 1801 'may be well attributed to a great number of Males having enlisted in the Army and Militia, and to a Decay in the Cloth Manufactory which has occasioned many families to emigrate to other parishes'. It is likely that some of these emigrants went to Stonehouse, part of a wider community which was fluid yet contained (Cloth workers).



What controls were there on movement?

The movement of most working people, and those without work, was very much influenced and controlled by the Poor Law of 1601, a consolidation of various Elizabethan measures. Vagrancy and begging had come to be seen as increasing threats to society, partly because the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII removed many sources of help for the poor. The law accepted that the 'deserving' poor, the old and the young, and families facing temporary hardship, should be supported, through a parish rate used to help those deemed to be 'settled' in the parish. However, this did not extend to the 'undeserving' poor, effectively most of those who chose or were forced by circumstances to move. They were all considered alike, whether they were vagrant robbers or people looking for work. They could be harshly punished before being sent on their way, with the intention of returning them to their 'home' parish. As a result many travelled long distances, pushed onwards by parishes determined not to increase the burden on their own ratepayers. In Stonehouse, parish and manor worked together to protect themselves. In 1636 the manor court issued a memorandum *'that if anie Inhabitant of this Parrish shall take an inhabitant of another Parrish to dwell in anie house of his scituate in this Parrish [they must provide a bond of £40 with two guarantors to the churchwardens and the overseers of the poor] for saveing harmeles of all the Rest of the Inhabitants of and concerning anie Charge that may arise by reason of the dwelling of such stranger among them'*. The more affluent and those travelling for social or business reasons were fairly free to move, as long as they provided the required indemnities or assurances at their destinations (Poor).

The effect in the early 17th century, as seen in Stonehouse, was to keep migration levels down, and also to keep those who did move from settling down anywhere. Some parishes recognised the need to allow for migration by those looking for work, by issuing certificates for travellers, promising support in case of need. This principle was included in the settlement system, introduced in 1662, and made more comprehensive in 1697. Armed with a settlement certificate, a person could stop in a new place. New arrivals in a parish would be put through an 'examination' to determine where their legal settlement was. If they fell into need, they could be 'removed' to the parish which had given them settlement, or be supported by it where they were. Vagrants without a settlement could be punished and moved on. The way in which these laws were applied depended very much on the prosperity of parishes and the attitudes of parish officers and magistrates, and shaped many lives. Surviving Poor Law documents for Stonehouse are especially valuable in tracing the lives of some of the more mobile residents. Elizabeth Gail married William Sparrow, the son of a Stonehouse carpenter, at Pitchcombe in 1718. He had left Stonehouse after the death of his first wife, but his settlement was still there. Under the Poor Law, his wife adopted his settlement. In 1726 the parish of Kenilworth in Warwickshire ordered that Elizabeth Sparrow and her daughter be removed to Stonehouse, where she died a widow in 1734. The Stroudwater Canal through Stonehouse was opened in 1779, attracting new incomers. Thomas Lewis, a labourer from Kidderminster in Worcestershire, lived in Wiltshire before moving to Gloucestershire. He became the first keeper of Ryeford Double Lock in 1780, and is listed as a Stonehouse manorial resident in Ebley in 1784, when he would have gained a settlement. He moved into the new Ryeford Lock Cottage, completed in that year, which was canal company property, and was then outside the parish of Stonehouse. He was not examined until 1787, but appears to have kept the support of the parish (Settlement).

It seems that the men and women who lived in Stonehouse at this time moved about a great deal, but mainly within the area defined by the local cloth industry. Their options were limited by the politics of manor and parish, which began to change after 1800. After the end of the Napoleonic wars in 1815, the settlement laws became too costly to enforce, especially under the New Poor Law of 1834, and the railways made movement easier for everyone from the 1840s. New technology and changing working practices brought restructuring and eventual decline to the cloth industry, but gave scope for new businesses which employed both locals and incomers. The population of Stonehouse in the 19th century would be fluid in different ways.

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Abbreviations:

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“Founded Upon a Rock” Stonehouse School Days 1953-56

by Roy C Edwards

Dedicated to Frank Robson: Many people who attended Stonehouse Secondary Modern School (later Maidenhill) will remember Mr Robson as a great teacher. He was a role model for me in my own teaching career and I was fortunate to keep in touch with him for many years.

1953 was an important year in my life. In late September the Edwards family moved into a new home in Bridgend, Stonehouse. One of the first tasks my parents had to undertake was finding me a new school to attend. After a number of meetings with Mr Thursby, headmaster of the Secondary School, I was offered a place. The school used a grading system of ‘A’, ‘B’ and ‘C’ and I started in 2C.



Roy in the 1950s

Stonehouse School was mixed, admitting both girls and boys. Pupils attending the school came from villages and hamlets around Stonehouse, arriving at school by walking, cycling, public bus services, local train or special school bus. The main school buildings were located in Elm Road, where Park Infant School and Children’s Centre are now.



HORSA huts at the edge of the school grounds

The secondary school buildings were primarily a series of pre-fabricated huts, built to accommodate the extra pupils due to the raising of the school leaving age to 15. The 'Hutting Operation for the Raising of the School-leaving Age' (HORSA for short) resulted in the concrete walled, asbestos roofed and metal-framed windowed huts. They provided classrooms, workshops and dining areas. I believe some of these huts remained in use at Park School until the 1990s.

The huts were arranged around the old 19th century school building which housed the primary school. There were separate playgrounds for girls and boys, one of which could be used as a netball court. Other sporting activities were undertaken in the Laburnum Recreation Ground, just around the corner from the school.

The school day started with morning assembly at 9 am at the Community Centre. Assembly was traditional; pupils sat cross-legged on the floor whilst we had presentations and readings. It was an organised, structured and disciplined procedure. We had lessons in the morning, meals were provided at lunch time, lessons or activities in the afternoon, and we finished at 4 pm.

The school had four different Houses using the names of four Gloucestershire rivers: Coln (green), Avon (blue), Frome (red) and Windrush (yellow). Each house had teams and a Leader and points were allocated throughout the year for a number of activities, resulting in a Winning House. Uniforms were worn by many, but not all of the pupils. My parents decided I had to wear the uniform which consisted of a green blazer, school cap, and grey trousers, either short or long. Girls wore green jackets, cardigans, grey skirts and socks.

My first group of friends at my new school were those in form 2C. They made me very welcome and helped make settling in much easier than I thought. In those days I had a considerable stammer when nervous, that made me a bit of a target for “micky taking”. We used to meet up on our way to school. We crossed the Bristol Road by the Ship Inn, and walked up Regent Street with friends from the Stanleys, to the Community Centre for assembly.



Roy with friends in Laburnum Rec.

Returning to school after the Christmas break, I was transferred to the 'A' group of students and had to make new friends within that group, but to some it seemed unusual that I still had friends in the 'C' group. Thanks to my upbringing, I had a desire to see people for what they were, helpful and friendly towards me when I needed it.

In the 'A' groups we followed a traditional educational programme of academic study as well as French lessons, given to us by Mr Thursby. But Sport was to me what life was all about. That was how I met Mr Robson, who was our Sports Master. I can also remember Mr West the R.I. teacher and Mr 'Pop' Wheeler (Science) who both lived on the Bridgend Estate. Mr Ward taught English, Mr Jones took us for Gardening and Mr Hebbs for Music. Mrs Bailey was the girls PE teacher. For our Art classes with Mr Lauder, we walked to rooms situated at the rear of the Stonehouse Congregational Church, with an entrance off Laburnum Walk. Sometimes we had lessons in rooms at Standish Church – we often had to travel about as there wasn't room on the main site.



Stonehouse Junior School Football Team 1953-54

*Brian Holland, Mike Cole, Roy Stinchcombe,
Colin Brewer, Colin Badham, Roy Edwards,
Derek Gale, Rob Gregory, Brian Norman,
Brian Wiltshire, David Vick.*

As with all young people, I found parts of school learning fine, but others were not for me. Personally I had a dread of woodworking classes, as this subject had not been covered in my previous school in Slough. It was not unusual for me to try and skip these sessions, by one means or another. But for most of the learning activities I was well up for it. Sports activities included Football, Cricket, Athletics and in the summer we had a coach ride to the open air swimming pool at Stratford Park in Stroud. We had Country Dancing lessons, which we often had to undertake if it was too wet for outside sports lessons. One of the unique factors of attending this school was that the school football teams played their home matches at Hoffmann's factory sports ground. It had a lavish tiled changing room, with lush showers and pool facilities. We were the envy of every visiting team.

I had an enjoyable time doing Drama led by Frank Robson and Mr Ward. When preparing for the school plays and pantomimes, they involved as many pupils as they could, both in performing roles, and back stage organisation. They used the art and carpentry facilities to prepare the background and props, and the girls helped design and make costumes. My first performance was in the 1954 production of the Christmas Pantomime "Cinderella", performed in Stonehouse Church Hall. My role was as the Sheriff of Nottingham. My first words, off stage, were supposed to be a bellowing out of 'What the heck is going on here!' However, on opening night, my voice broke, and the best I could muster after all those hours of practising sounded like a tingling horror shriek, which did however, get an unexpected peal of laughter from the assembled audience. For the rest of the evening, I just about got away with it, and when performing in one of the many dance routines my voice didn't matter anyway. The show was much enjoyed by audience and participants. One of the aspects of my drama work was that my stammer was almost completely eliminated.



Dancing Girls: in the school pantomime 1954.

My next drama memory is of performing in a comedy play 'The Man in the Bowler Hat'. This was a much smaller event, performed again at the Church Hall, but went down well and at times required a fair bit of ad-libbing, as lines were forgotten, and initiative had to take over. Mr Robson played the non-speaking part of the Man in the Bowler Hat. For the Christmas Pantomime of 1955, many more of my class mates were participating in 'Aladdin'. I was the Emperor of China and my friend Dave Vick was the Grand Vizier. The show went well and if I remember correctly, we also gave performances to Senior Citizens in the Community Centre.



School Lake District Holiday 1956. Left to right:
Roy Edwards, Tony Brown, Sheila Grove,
Hazel Butcher, Ray Stinchcombe.

A lasting memory is the school trip to the Lake District, staying at a hostel in Ambleside. This journey was, in itself an adventure. We travelled by coach from Stonehouse; this was way before motorways and not many of my friends had travelled very far in a motor car. Upon our arrival at the hostel, in the late afternoon, the teachers told us we would be going on a short walk! Well, after about an hour or so, Dave Vick and I thought it would be a good idea to find a quicker way back, so we dropped behind the main party and did a bunk over to the nearest mountain. We calculated it was just a matter of walking up one side of the mountain, and down the other, to get us back to Ambleside. But, Oh Boy, had we got it wrong! We were found about a couple of hours later after quite a search, and reprimanded in no uncertain

terms by Mr Robson. We were well and truly embarrassed and apologised for all the stress our misguided idea had caused.

One of the optional classes available to us during my last year 1956, was the school Printing Group - using facilities provided for hand typesetting and "Adana" letterpress printing machines. The facilities provided us with material to design and produce publications, such as the Annual School Prize Giving ceremony. Little did I know where this introduction to Printing and Composition would lead. But that's another story.

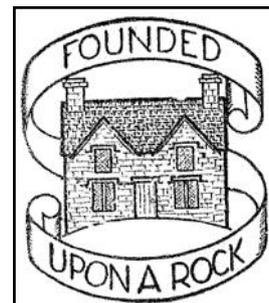
My final school memory was of the end of year School Prize Giving in July 1956, which was the first to be held at the newly built secondary school, later to be named Maidenhill. Judy Innes and I made short "vote of thanks" speeches. Form and year prizes were distributed during this event, as well as School Leaving Certificates to those who had achieved the expected standard of achievement, including me. As we departed from this event, there was much waving and some crying as we left the school premises, and began our journey to new adventures.



Roy with friend Johnny Blick

To determine the value of my time spent at the County Secondary School, Stonehouse, it is important to identify what is meant by education. If I choose to determine that the objectives were: to give people the opportunity to identify their own value, to accept responsibility for their actions and decisions, to help students to become confident and capable members of society and to recognise that opportunities for the future were in their own hands - then I consider that my time was truly well spent. For me, this had been achieved, and was in no small way due to the help and support of my friends and teachers at this school. We were indeed "Founded Upon a Rock". To all of those people I say thank you.

To read a longer, unedited, version of this article and the following one by Roy Edwards, visit the SHG website.



“These were our Rock’n’Roll years” Memories of a Stonehouse Youth 1953 - 62

by Roy C. Edwards

In 1953 my family moved from Slough to Stonehouse. It was noticeable that the village housed people from a wide range of social backgrounds. Housing varied from the traditional Victorian and Edwardian semis and terraces to the new estates built to cope with the increase in population after the war. There was also a wide range of educational establishments. Stonehouse County School had divided into Primary and Secondary phases with the promise of a new secondary building to come. Children could attend the Grammar or Technical Schools in Stroud, if they passed the 11 plus exam. There was also the option of private education at Wycliffe College or several smaller schools nearby.

So children were divided by both their home and their education. However, outside school, the young people of Stonehouse socialised together. There were the Church Youth Clubs: the Congregational Church in the High Street, and St. Cyr’s Church Hall in Elm Road. We also had the Regal Cinema with its wide Panoramic screen (the first in Gloucestershire), and the Youth Club at the Community Centre. We used to play football in the Laburnum Recreation Field as goal markers. In the summer months we would play cricket there as well.

Our primary enjoyment in the evenings was visiting friends’ homes, and walking around Stonehouse meeting and chatting to other groups of young people. For some of us, Saturday nights meant a trip to Miss Lord’s Fish and Chip Restaurant in the High Street, opposite the Crown and Anchor pub (now the High Street doctors’ surgery). There was also a fish and chip shop on Bath Road, and during the daytime, the Corner Cafe in the centre of town. In these after-school activities there was the release from having to wear those all-defining school uniforms. For many of us it did not matter what school you attended, we were all united as fun-loving, carefree teenagers.



High Street in the 1950s

A new style of music

It was my friend Colin (Slim) Roberts, who in the summer of 1956 told me about an amazing singer he had heard over the music system at the Fair being held in a field at Horse Trough Junction - Elvis Presley. Without doubt, for many of us just turning fifteen in 1955/56, the main life-changing event was popular music. We moved from listening to the type played by our mums and dads to one of the new styles; Skiffle, Jazz and Rock’n’Roll. We listened to this new music on radios tuned to various ‘AFN’ (American Forces Network) stations broadcast to US bases in Europe. Another popular station was Radio Luxembourg.



In Stonehouse we had our own record shop - Lewis’s Electrical, run by Rodney Lewis. Every Saturday some of us would gather in his shop and listen to the BBC radio show with Brian Matthew called Saturday Club. We heard the songs, asked Rodney to order the ones we liked and so justified the time he gave us listening in his shop. Throughout the village, lads and lasses were getting together to listen or play these new types of music.

1960s - Lewis’s shop can just be seen to the right



Radiogram late 1940s
©Nigel Hughes

It may be interesting to note what types of machines we were using to play these 78 rpm records. Some people were able to play them on radiograms, large electrical units that held radio tuner/record playing unit/speakers all together. Others had 1930s wind-up furniture style gramophone units, record turntables and speakers. The latest style was the popular Dansette electrical unit. For me it was a strange contraption my brother acquired, which was an electrical turntable that had to be started by spinning the table. Power was generated by the friction of magnets in the unit to continue playing. Sound was achieved by plugging a connecting wire into a radio, and using its speaker for sound output. It worked, and many hours were spent by all my friends listening and dancing to the likes of Chuck Berry, Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis. Whatever equipment was used, it was always the music that was important.

Skiffle

For our older brothers and sisters there was a weekly Ballroom Dance band performing at the Community Centre where they could dance away to their hearts' content, but we the younger ones were NOT welcome! At the youth clubs we managed to get a record player from someone, and others supplied the records, and we taught each other to jive to one or other of the pop music styles. Gradually we gained in confidence, and guess what? boys started dancing with girls - 'Wey Hey'! From these early get-togethers a unique Stonehouse jive style was developed, allowing easy interaction on the dance floor as you moved from partner to partner.



1960s record player
©British Library

Around this time there began an original Rock'n'Roll dance session held on a Wednesday evening at a room on the second floor of the Marling and Evans Mill at Ryeford. This was started by a number of rebellious older teenagers; it was noisy, alarming and exciting to be involved in such an activity. I first attended the Mill when my brother and his mates' skiffle group were giving a performance. At one stage in the evening they gave me the microphone and I attempted to give a performance of *Tutti Frutti*, a record just released by Little Richard. It went down like a lead balloon and I was never asked to sing again. Perhaps I was ahead of my time!

Trust me, Skiffle was big; Lonnie Donegan, the Vipers and Chas McDevitt sang songs that made the radio waves exciting. Many of the songs were originally performed by artists such as Woody Guthrie and Lead Belly, which as time passed merged the original styles of Country/Folk/Rhythm and Blues into Rock and Roll music. We loved it.

Rock'n'Roll Dances

As more and more villages around the district let their young people organise Rock'n'Roll dances, teenagers in Stonehouse felt as though we were beginning to get left behind. Some people at the Community Centre youth club were trying to book an evening on a Saturday for a Rock Evening, instead of the Ballroom Dance Evenings, but could not get permission. All the usual excuses were given; it was decadent, too rough, only jobs were into such music.



The Community Centre, opened in 1944

"Look at all the trouble the movie Rock around the Clock is causing; fights and hooliganism everywhere - Oh no, Rock Dances are not suitable for the young of Stonehouse. Look at the trouble from that crowd at Ryeford Mill!"

There was a chance that we could try a Jazz Dance evening as that was thought to be from a more cultural and intellectual background. But NO we wanted to hold Rock'n'Roll Dances. The Community Centre already had an audio system installed. All it needed to get things started was my record collection.

I believe it was due to the effort of my good friend Barry Powell (Ganger to his friends) who persuaded the Community Centre Manager, Charles Thornton, known as Charlie, that we got the green light to hold a Rock'n'Roll Dance evening at the Centre. We were told it had to be held on a Wednesday evening, but that meant we would have to compete with the Ryeford Mill event, thereby reducing our appeal. As expected when we held our first session, we were down on numbers. We only had 34 people in attendance, and whilst we enjoyed ourselves, it was a bit like dancing in an aircraft hanger, the atmosphere was lacking. We were told by some that it was a waste of time holding it on a Wednesday because of the competition of the Ryeford Mill event. Barry and I did not agree. We thought we should take them on because we had a better hall, better sound system, better location, we had to be able to give it a go. Well we did. By week two we had doubled our numbers, week three we trebled them, and had to close the doors because we had a full hall. Oh yes, we had a winner.

Something had to be done to limit the numbers attending, so we made Dance Sessions into a members only admission. This new club was called 'Discs A Go Go' and membership cards were issued. Once this was done, we held regular Saturday Night sessions, and Bank Holiday evenings. Sometimes we could hold three dances in a week and fill the hall to maximum capacity (about 150 people a session). Boy did we have some fun. The number of lifelong relationships that were started at that time, and are still in existence, is quite surprising. We all loved it and I remember it quite well, as I hope this article has shown.

The Day The Music Died*

The evening of the 3rd February 1959 will always be remembered by the youth of that time. The atmosphere that Wednesday evening at the Community Centre, was one of disbelief and sorrow, at the news of the plane crash that had killed Buddy Holly, Ritchie Valens and Jiles P. Richardson - known as the The Big Bopper. These were our heroes; some of us had seen Buddy and the Crickets at the Colston Hall in Bristol the previous year, and now they were gone. But not their music, to our generation they would never be forgotten.



***“A long, long time ago
I can still remember how that music used to make me smile” ****

Don McLean's song, American Pie, released in 1969, brought back the shared community feeling we all had with the death of our heroes. It was not until the Aberfan School disaster, that I can remember such a national trauma.

Growing up in these times gave us the opportunity to see many of our heroes appearing live on stage in local cinemas, such as the Gloucester Regal, the Odeon at Cheltenham, the Colston Hall at Bristol. Many of the local clubs hired coaches and buses to take us there. It was always fun, noisy and exciting, allowing us to share memories of the night, when we got back to our get-togethers. Towards the end of these times, when we were in our twenties, many of the lads had motorcycles, some of us owned cars and we were able to venture further afield.



Guitarist Roy c1960

Around this time, Charlie left the Community Centre, and set up a coffee shop in the former Miss Lord's cafe in High Street, called "The Trevi Bar" (now the Peking Chef shown right). This venue became the local top spot for young people to meet, drink coffee and listen to Rock'n'Roll music on the Juke Box.



By 1962, many of us had completed our apprenticeships and could look for work away from home. Some had gone off to University, some had even got married, and we were all setting out of on life's next adventure. But always, we would be able to keep our memories of our teenage years, growing up in and around Stonehouse with our Rock'n'Roll loving friends.

**From American Pie by Don McLean*

Ryeford bridges

by Jim Dickson

Background

The story of the bridge over the river at Ryeford, where river and canal run side by side, says much about how the canal company found a balance between its finances and its public responsibilities. The Act of Parliament which authorised construction of the canal from Framilode to Wallbridge passed through Parliament, then received royal assent on 25th March 1776. The Company of Proprietors of the Stroudwater Navigation ("*the Company*") was authorised to raise £20,000 in shares. If this amount proved insufficient, the Company was authorised to raise a further £10,000. Constraints were imposed: for example that construction must not deviate more than 60 yards from the line shown on the approved plan. Also, the total width of land, inclusive of towpath and fences, must not exceed 30 yards, except where provisions were required for boats to turn, or to pass each other.

By Christmas 1778, with the canal open only as far as Ryeford bridge, more than £28,000 had been spent of the £30,000 raised. The Company was advised that it would be impractical to raise additional capital so the directors agreed to **concentrate on completing the canal itself** to Wallbridge and to **delay ancillary works** (thus reducing their outstanding financial requirements from £10,000 to £2,000). By completing the canal to Wallbridge as soon as practicable, the directors sought to increase the Company's income from tolls. The Company had already been collecting tolls since the first cargo of 60 tons of coal arrived at Bristol Road/Whitminster Wharf (by the roundabout on the A38) on 17th December 1776 following completion of the canal from Framilode to that location. However, such income was insufficient to cover the cost of completing construction of the canal. So twenty of the Proprietors subscribed £100 each to raise the sum of £2,000, that being the amount estimated to guarantee completion of the canal to Wallbridge.

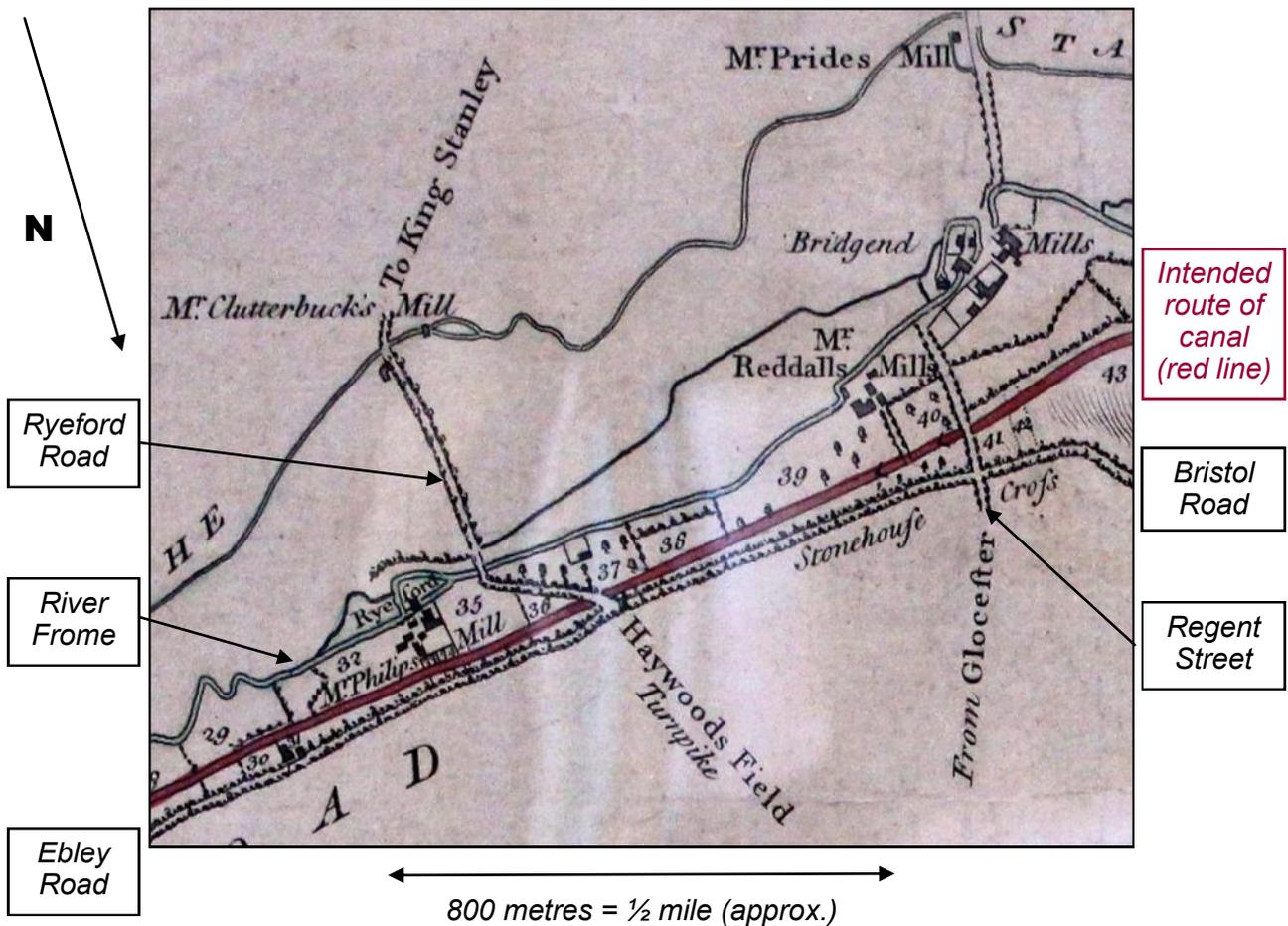
The canal was officially opened on 21st July 1779. At that stage, the cost had reached some £32,000 – and was to rise appreciably. From what followed in the 19th century, it seems certain that the Company did the minimum amount of work at the Ryeford crossing over the canal and river as part of its cost reduction measures taken in its drive to ensure completion of the canal.

The river crossing at Ryeford before the coming of the canal

In the late 18th century, the main road from King's Stanley to Stonehouse crossed the river at Ryeford then headed diagonally to the north-west to meet Ebley Road. The portion of a map of the "**intended canal**" (c.1775) (see *opposite page*) shows the road before it was straightened. Note also that the canal was built further from Ebley Road than is shown in this map. On this map, the river is diverted via sluices into what was, in 1778, Ryeford Mill and is now mainly Kellaway's yard (builders' merchant). In 1880, the building and site became a saw mill and timber yard. The water channels carrying the diverted river water across the site were culverted (by constructing Victorian stone arches) so that railway lines could criss-cross the yard and link to the Stonehouse-Nailsworth Branch Line.



This photo shows the river water as it emerges from the culverts under the former mill and flows under the road bridge. One channel flows away from the camera. This is the Banty Ditch, believed to be the original course of the River Frome. The other channel (flowing to the right) is the millstream for the former Upper Mill (believed to have been dug in Anglo-Saxon times).



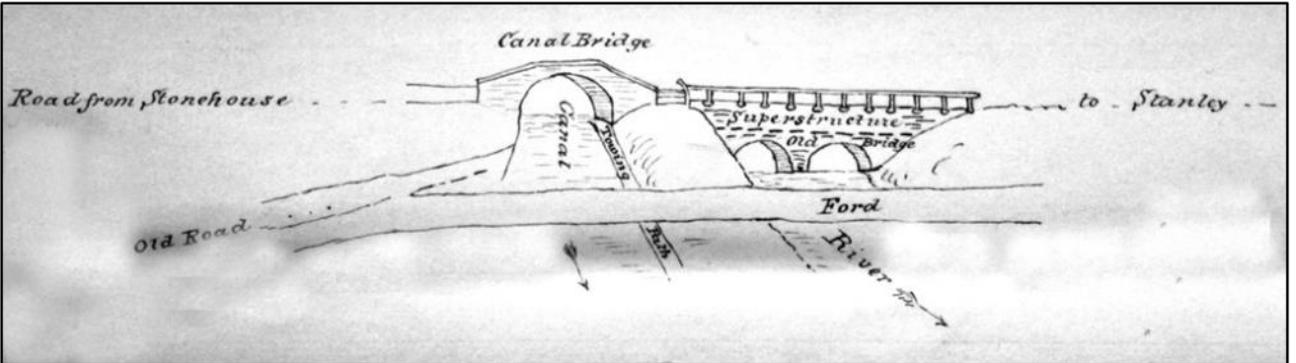
The ancient ford crossed the river on the west side of the bridge position. Fifty years before the canal was created, a narrow bridge was built to carry the road over the river for horses and pedestrians. Wheeled vehicles continued to use the ford. When the canal was built, it was appreciably higher than the river: the difference in water levels appears to be of the order of 10 feet, or 3 metres as is still apparent to those walking the towpath.

Problems at Ryeford following completion of the canal

In 1817 the parish of Stonehouse wrote to the Company asking it to repair the footbridge over the river. At that time, according to Joan Tucker, the ford was still in use by wheeled vehicles. That must have been quite a challenge for those attempting to cross the canal since it was so much higher than the river – but would have been necessary since the crossing carried the main road from King’s Stanley (and Stanley Mill) to Stonehouse.

Having taken legal advice on what was required of it, the Company paid to have the old narrow bridge raised by several feet (see the sketch below which was produced by the Company’s legal advisers) by:

- adding a brick superstructure on top of it;
- widening the roadway by adding wooden beams which projected on both sides;
- fixing planks and handrails on top of these.



This modified footbridge was then suitable for carrying wagons and carriages in addition to horses and pedestrians. However, this transformation was achieved by adding a good deal of weight on top of the original simple narrow bridge and, of course, it could now carry much heavier loads. Unsurprisingly, the pier of the old bridge sank over the next 7 years.

The Company sought legal advice on whether it had an obligation to repair the old bridge. It was advised that, since the canal had blocked the ford, it had an obligation to keep the old bridge in a satisfactory state. Counsel also observed that the sinking of the bridge must have been caused by the additional weight of the superstructure and the heavier loads carried over it. A second Counsel advised that the best solution would be to reconstruct the bridge, sharing the costs with those formerly liable. The Company then made repairs to the masonry and superstructure of the old bridge.

Then, in 1832 (53 years after the canal was completed), Messrs Maclean, Stephen & Co of Stanley Mill wrote to inform the Company that a wagon, piled high with wool for delivery to their Mill, had overturned and fallen into the river. It had travelled from London without incident. Apparently the road over the river bridge was so steep that, when travelling south towards King's Stanley, those driving heavy vehicles had to tie or lock their wheels to cope with the steep descent. Also, the canal and river bridges were not aligned fully where the road passed from one bridge to the other and this was inconvenient and could be dangerous (this was the location where the wagon had fallen into the river). Counsel strongly advised the Company to adapt the river bridge and road for the convenience of modern vehicles and modes of travel. So, in 1833-34, the Company:

- built a new bridge over the River Frome (see earlier photo of river water emerging from culverts at the former Ryeford Mill);
- widened the canal bridge (when walking the towpath it is obvious that the bridge on the East (Stroud) side (see below) is in the style of the other bridges on the canal (e.g. Nutshell); on the West (Stonehouse) side (see opposite), it is coursed stone topped with red bricks);
- raised the road so that the two bridges met in reasonable alignment.

Thereafter the crossing at Ryeford appears to have settled down to a relatively untroubled existence. And, of course, since the construction of the Ebley Bypass, it no longer carries through vehicles between Stonehouse and King's Stanley.





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An evacuee in Stonehouse

by Audrey Broomhall (née Taylor)

In 1939, just before the war, our family had moved to Seaford in Sussex, letting out our home in Upminster, Essex. Then, in Sept 1940, when the Germans starting bombing the South coast, we were all evacuated to the West Country. I well remember that day waiting for the coach to take us. My father had joined up and he waved my mother and me, aged 5, Geoffrey aged 10, and Jill aged 4, off to an uncertain future. It was hard but families were all in the same boat.

The first night we stayed in a very large hall at Ebley. Then we moved to Dr Prout's home at Elgin Lodge, opposite the Post Office in Stonehouse. That wasn't for long. My mother was talking to Mrs Bainton in the Post Office and told her she wasn't happy at the doctor's. Mr and Mrs Bainton offered us the chance to stay at their house, Rose Cottage, and we remained with them for the rest of the war.

Rose Cottage was a two-up two-down with a lean-to kitchen and toilet at the end of it. It was hidden away behind the red brick terraced houses in Regent Street and backed on to Laburnum Recreation field. We could see the field from the back window. Stonehouse has such happy memories for us. Jill and I often talk of those years there. I'm quite sure we would not have been so happy without that time in that tiny little cottage, secure as we were at a time of war.



*Mrs Mabel Bainton outside
Rose Cottage, 1940s*

Mr and Mrs Bainton, James Henry (known as Harry) and Mabel, were a dear couple. Jill called Mrs Bainton "Mine". They had no children of their own and they loved us. I believe they were caretakers at the local Methodist Church. Mr Bainton was a carpenter by trade. They had a dear little garden running along the side of the recreation ground. At the top of the garden were some sheds in which he kept bantams, chickens, rabbits and mice which he used to show in the local agricultural show. Mr Bainton's parents, Matthew and Sarah, lived in one of the terraced houses in Regent Street with his aunt Martha. Matthew was a gardener at Wycliffe College for over 36 years and still took pride in his roses!

It must have been hard for them to give up half their home and share the kitchen. There was gas lighting downstairs – no lighting upstairs, except candles, and certainly no running hot water. There was no bathroom. Bath time was in a large galvanised bath in front of the fire – cleanest in first – Jill, then me, and last Geoff. We had just one bedroom for the four of us and one single wardrobe for all our clothes. Geoff had a single bed while the rest of us slept together. Later Geoff stayed with Mrs Bainton's sister, Mrs Allen, a few streets away.

My father seemed to get a lot of leave and we spent hours waiting for his train at Stonehouse Station. Then it was a case of four in one bed!

We attended Stonehouse Council School. The school at that time looked out on fields – now there are countless houses in front of it. Miss Latham was my first teacher, then there was Miss Tyler, Mrs Clutterbuck and finally Mrs Harrison. I remember I stole a biscuit from the teacher's desk one day and had to sit up in front of Mrs Clutterbuck until I owned up – horrible child! Mr Wright was the headmaster. The school was full of evacuees and children whose parents had come to work at the factories. I can remember some lessons being held in the Church Hall nearby.



*Martha, Sarah & Matthew Bainton admiring
his prize roses at their home in Regent St.*

We loved the "Rec", Doverow Hill and walks along the canal. We spent many happy hours in the open air. We had virtually no toys or books but made our own games. We didn't seem to go without much, though our monthly ration of sweets was gone in the first day! I have happy memories of Miss Horsham. She and her brother had the hardware store in the High Street. She taught us in the Methodist Sunday School which we attended, held in a small room at the side of Wycliffe Chapel. I can picture her now – eyes running with tears as she told us the stories of Jesus. How very impressive it is to have happy childhood memories – as we get older it's not last week we remember, but those days as children, having simple enjoyments even though under the cloud of war.

May 8th 1945 was a pleasant warm day and that evening Geoffrey, Jill and I were allowed to stay up late as the war in Europe had at last ended. We had double summer time and it was still light at 10 pm, as I remember. This date heralded the end of our time in Stonehouse, for we were soon to return to our home in Essex. I had passed the scholarship and was to start at Palmer's Endowed School for Girls in Grays, Essex in September. Jill was to join me the next year and Geoff was transferred to the Palmer's Boys School from Marling School.

Jill and I visited Mrs Bainton a few times over the succeeding years. The last time we saw her was when we both had small children. Mrs Bainton was permanently in hospital. She was so glad to see us and remarked that she was glad she'd had a bath that day! She told us she was soon going to her "long home". She died in 1973 and her husband Harry in 1977.

My brother Geoff followed my father into the building trade after a time in the Army as a tank instructor. Jill became a dental nurse and married first. I trained to be a nurse at University College Hospital, London and became a part-time staff nurse for many years until retirement in 1998. Jill had three sons and a daughter, I had four daughters and Geoff had one son and one daughter. Sadly Geoff died of cancer 12 years ago. Jill's husband died in 2014 and my husband died in October 2015.

I have visited Stonehouse a couple of times since those days; once in 2004 when we visited Rose Cottage, and again in May 2016. Truly I am most grateful for those five years in Stonehouse.



*Fancy Dress competition,
Community Centre Carnival c.1944.
Jill won first prize dressed as
"Salvage" (recycling for the war) while
Audrey was a "Sailor"*



*Jill and Audrey
in 2004*



Stonehouse History Group Website and Facebook by Darrell Webb

Website

We set up our website in September 2010. It was very easy to do using Serif WebPlus software which was not expensive. The software allowed us to create web pages of our own design and we could add as many old photographs and local memories as we liked. We then used the 1 & 1 web hosting site to create our own name <http://www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk/>

We now have around 100 web pages consisting of Stonehouse photographs dating back as far as 1864 and many members' memories. We also keep a programme of our events on the main home page and a place for visitor comments. Visitors can also look at members' contributions and view previous issues of our journal. We get many emails contacting us and sending us information about old Stonehouse.

Using the software we can keep track of statistics such as the number of people who look at our site and even which country they are in when accessing the site. Since we started we have had over 60,000 visitors from all over the world, an average of 30 per day. 90% of our visitors are from the UK, but we get visits from many other countries including USA 3%, Brazil 1.5%, Australia 1%, Canada 1%, NZ 0.5%, France 0.5%, India 0.5%. For some reason the website seems to be very popular in Brazil.

Most of our visitors are using desktop computers but visits from those using a mobile device such as a tablet or phone, around 40%, are increasing. We expect them to increase even more, so we have recently upgraded the web software to allow better access from these devices.

Enquiries

We regularly receive email enquires via the website requesting information about the history of Stonehouse and its people, which we try to answer promptly. For example:



We are often asked to identify old photographs. We had such a request from Gina in Ottawa, Canada, to help identify an old house. She told us the photo (left) was found in her grand parents' photo album marked Stonehouse, Glos 1922, and she wondered if anyone knew where this house might have been. It turned out to be the Malthouse on the Gloucester Road at Stroud Green. We sent her an up to date photograph and she was delighted.

Another request received was —*"I used to be a young parishioner at St. Cyr's in the 1960s and now live in Australia. I would really like to know if there is a set of the ten commandments on screens near the altar. Can you direct me to a picture of these please?"*

This photograph (right) was discovered among the papers of the late June Sturm and we were able to pass a copy to the enquirer.



Memories

We received an email from two sisters **Christina Haynes and Jacqui Sollars** who saw the video of their mother who was the Hoffmann's Carnival Queen in 1945.

Christina told us:

"My sister and I cried when we saw this footage. Our mum told us it had been filmed and subsequently shown years later at Stonehouse Community Centre, but she never saw it herself.

Mum originally came from Co. Galway in Ireland, as a very young woman to work at Hoffmann's and lived at the Bridgend Hostel. She was engaged to be married to an American serviceman she met in Stonehouse, probably at a dance. When he returned to America, she was due to follow him but decided against it and stayed in Stonehouse. Later she met my Dad, Harold Colcombe, who also worked at Hoffmann's after he returned from war service in the Navy."

Her sister Jacqui also wrote to us:

"My sister Christina Haynes just sent to me the picture and ciné film of our mother, Mrs Mary Ann Colcombe, My dad lives with me and I have shown him the film, we are all very emotional and delighted to see it as my mother was a very special lady and died on 20th Sept. 2000. She often spoke about her memories of how she had been a beauty queen for Hoffmann's and had the picture but unfortunately it was lost. Thank you for sending through the picture, it means a lot to us all."

Christine Hodges, née Brinkworth, contacted us and sent us her very interesting memories of school days in Stonehouse during the 50s and 60s. These were added to our Journal Issue 3.

We were contacted by **Arthur French** who was brought up in Regent Street during the 1920s. He was a pupil and later a teacher at Wycliffe College. He sent us his very vivid and interesting memories of his time in Stonehouse especially when Wycliffe was moved to Wales during World War II. These memories are now on our web site.



Facebook

We set up our Facebook page in February 2015 and found this to be even more popular than our website. We try to add a photograph per day to our Facebook page to keep it interesting. Many people follow it and comment on its content.



One of the most popular subjects is old photographs of Standish Hospital. In July 2015 we added a photograph of Standish Hospital C block women's ward 5 which was opened by the Duchess of Beaufort on 18th September 1947. This photograph reached 13,334 people – and we had 182 comments informing us of fond memories working and visiting or as a patient there. People also commented on how very sad it is to see the place in such a dilapidated condition now.

In April 2015, we also added a video of Stonehouse High Street and surrounding streets taken in 1945 by local shop keeper Cyril Chandler who was a keen amateur photographer. This video has been viewed by 11,556 and reached 23,336 people.

We often add a photograph and ask people to guess where it is and maybe the date of the photograph, this is also very popular.

Please have a look at our website and our Facebook page for local history information; I'm sure you will find them very interesting. <https://www.facebook.com/stonehousehistorygroup/>

Our Aims

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

Do you have any interesting historical photographs of Stonehouse?

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 relatively modern photographs are also of interest and often hard to find. Do you have any photos of the old Church Hall - now demolished?

Research Projects

Could you help with research on the history of Stonehouse? If you would like to write an article for our next Journal, we would like to hear from you.

Please note - we are interested in all aspects of local history. If you have a topic that interests you, please tell us about it. From Archaeology to Zoology!

Our next research project for the GLHA Local History Day is

Gardens for fun, food and flowers

Do you have any memories or certificates from horticultural shows or gardening competitions? Did your ancestors run a plant nursery?

If you have memories of life in Stonehouse many years ago we would like to talk with you. 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.

Our Website and Facebook

www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk

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

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).



Annual Report 2015 - 16

In May 2016 we celebrated the eighth anniversary of the formation of our Group. Our membership is now 64 (up from 51) with 113 names on our contacts list. This year we have had 11 events, with an average attendance of 45, plus a visit to Purton Hulks and the Gloucestershire Local History Association Summer Afternoon in Lechlade.

A highlight of the year has been the completion of four local history Information Boards around the town and at the entrance to Doverow Wood. We are grateful for the support of the Midcounties Co-operative Community Fund, the Town Council and the Doverow Hill Trust in funding these. We intend to create more boards over the next few years with leaflets to enable people to follow a heritage trail.

The Stonehouse History Group website, www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk, continues to be maintained and developed by Darrell Webb. This year he has also created a Facebook page for the Group, featuring historic photos, which has proved very popular. It reaches a wide range of people including former residents keen to revisit their past. Thanks to those people who have contributed photographs and memories of the town.

We have continued to interview local residents about their memories of Stonehouse. Shirley Dicker, Jim Dickson, and Vicki Walker have interviewed Tom Shiers, Audrey Broomhall, Tommy Smith, Diana Humphreys, David Smith, Maxine Winstone, Diana Bilton, Audrey Ricks, Eric Lewis and Tom Round-Smith on different aspects of life in Stonehouse. We also talked to Stanley Paskey (Ryeford Sawmills), Philip and Alex Walmsley (the Anderson family) and Nick Parkin (the Parkin family). Bob Lusty has talked to a number of people about working on local railways. We have still to write articles on many of these memories but we have used some of the information and photos in our displays and on our website.

We have continued to provide local walks and talks for other organisations. We have taken two groups of Wycliffe College students on the Canal and Church walk. Talks to five different groups included "*Stonehouse Then and Now*", "*Pubs of Stonehouse*", "*Some History of the Canal at Stonehouse*", and "*Stonehouse in the Second World War*". At our monthly meetings, we have enjoyed presentations by our members at "*Show and Tell*" evenings and talks about our latest research. In April we welcomed 40 members of the McLannahan family from around the World for a visit to The Mount in Regent Street, the home of their ancestor, Dr McLannahan. Eight of them attended our meeting to talk about their family.

We have increased our range of displays including:

- *A Timeline of the History of St Cyr's Church* which was displayed during our visit there in June.
- *Immigration and Emigration* for the GLHA Local History Day in October.
- *Stonehouse Soldiers at The Somme* for an exhibition in Stroud to be held in July 2016.

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.

Our bank balance has been reduced this year due to a substantial contribution towards the Information Boards. We are hoping that future boards will be sponsored either by local organisations or possibly by a grant from bodies such as the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Committee, May 2015 - April 2016

Chair - Jim Dickson

Vice-Chair - Shirley Dicker

Secretary - Vicki Walker

Treasurer - Andrew Walker

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

SHG Events 2015 - 16 (attendance in brackets)

May 13th (42)

AGM followed by members' Show and Tell

Terry Fulton –small WW1 item, **Eric Winder** - gardening gloves, **Jan Dyer** –WWI photo album, **John Peters** – 1910 mug, **Peter Morton** – canal box, **Carolyn Wathan** – washing machine, **Janet Hudson** – milk bottle and dairy items, **Jim Dickson** – family photo and history, **Vicki Walker** – small china items and pub token

June 10th (50)

Visit to St Cyr's Church. Members of the Church arranged a display of the history of St Cyr's.

June 28th 2 pm (16)

Walk around Purton Hulks with Paul Barnett. Viewing the old barges at the edge of the River Severn.

July 8th (34)

Shirley Dicker and Vicki Walker - Stonehouse Then and Now: Photographs old and new.
An update on our photo collection

July 11th (8)

GLHA Summer Afternoon at Lechlade. Guided walks around the town and a delicious tea.

September 9th (46)

Val Kirby - Update on Stroudwater Canal Restoration Project.

October 14th (50)

Alan Pilbeam - Old Paths of Gloucestershire.

November 11th (47)

Jim Dickson and Vicki Walker - C.L.Smith and J.H.A.Anderson: Two Stonehouse history enthusiasts. Local historians who collected information and photos of our town.

December 9th (50)

Pat Furley - Lantern Slide Show. Followed by Christmas Refreshments. Pat showed us his collection of gramophones and some of the old music as well as lantern slides.

January 13th (45)

Show and tell. Richard White told us the story of the German bomber that was brought down in the Stroud Valley in 1940, **Peter Morton** showed a special walking stick and **Don Gaunt** presented photographs of the railway bridge.

Feb 10th (50)

Keith Walker - Redler of Stroud. A detailed history of the engineering firm at Dudbridge

March 9th (45)

Steven Blake - The Cotswold Way: 100 miles of history. A marvellous collection of photographs of Cotswold scenery and ancient artefacts.

April 13th (38)

Dr McLannahan and his family - life in Stonehouse and beyond. Forty members of the family visited The Mount in Regent Street and five of them came along to tell us their story.



