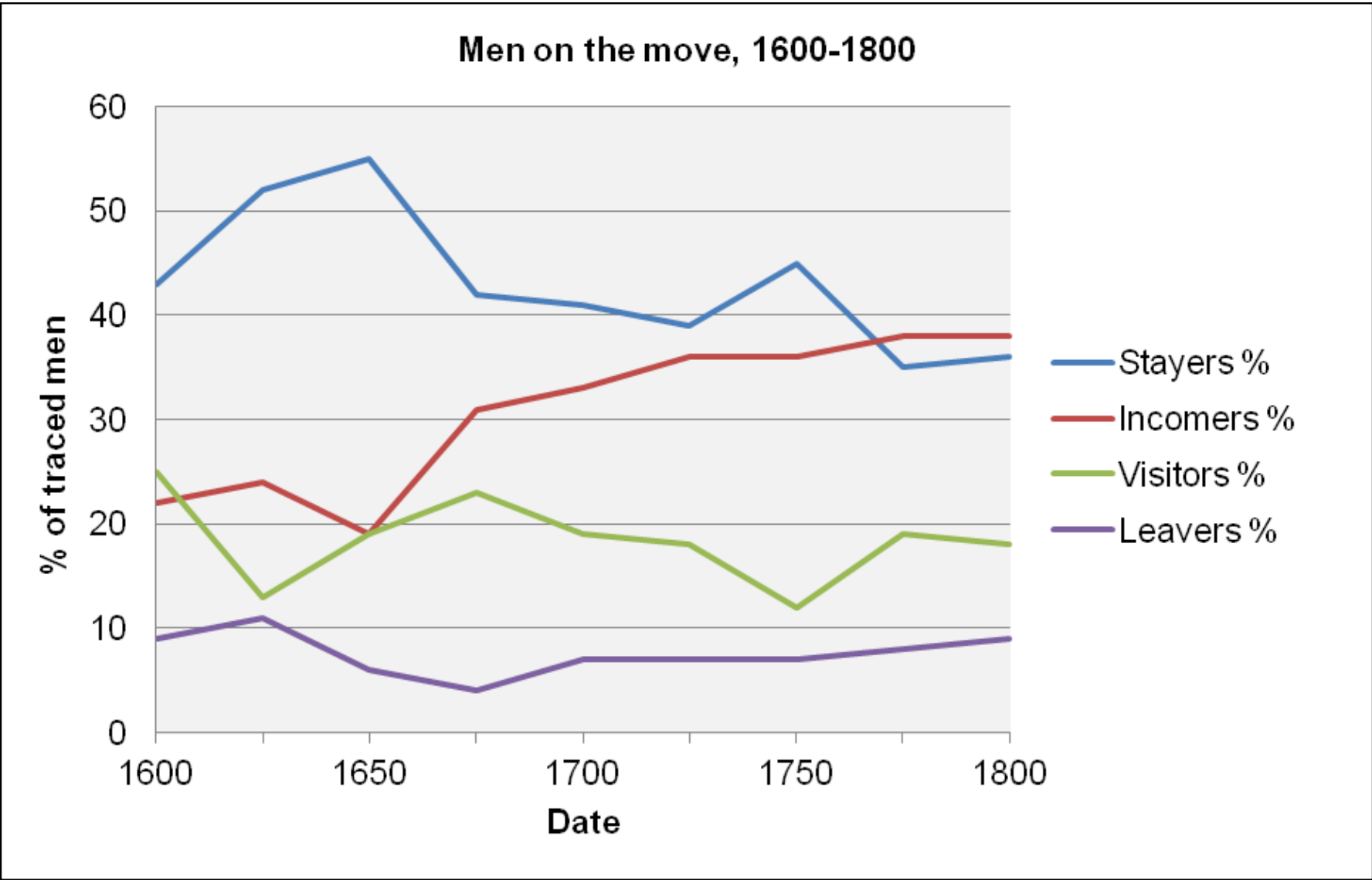


Stonehouse 1600-1800: who moved?

The old parish and manor of Stonehouse covered twice the area of the modern town. The population grew from about 450 in 1600 to about 800 in 1750, then faster to about 1412 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.

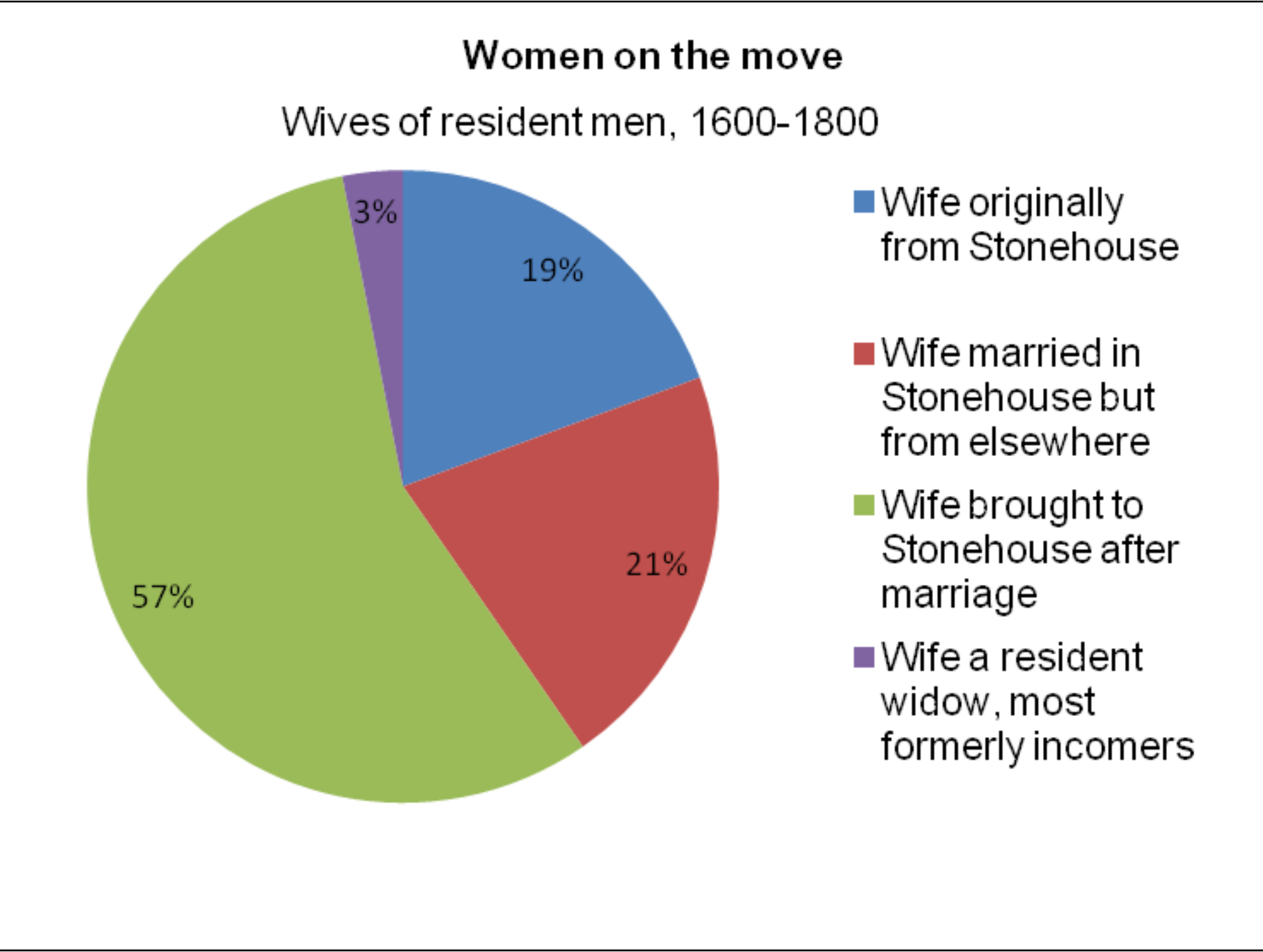


The main movements of about 90% of the men, aged over 16, who lived in Stonehouse between 1600 and 1800, have been tracked from original records.

These men would have provided about a third of the population. However, married women and children would have moved with them, so they can suggest what happened to many people.

Fewer than half of the men stayed based in Stonehouse for life. However, in 1600, net immigration, the excess of permanent incomers over permanent leavers, stood at about 10% of the men. This proportion increased in the 18th century, adding to the natural population rise. About 5% of the men could not be sufficiently tracked before 1750, rising to perhaps 25% after that. Most of these were probably incomers, a group growing relatively larger towards 1800 than is shown here.

Women were also mobile. Manorial records do not include them, but many may be traced as residents through the marriages made by two thirds of the men. Many young men and women found partners while working away for a time as apprentices, live-in labourers or servants.



Four fifths of these marriages throughout the period were to women who came into the parish, before or after marriage. Young women would also have left Stonehouse.

About 70% of the unmarried men left to settle elsewhere, although three quarters of these leavers had come in as visitors.

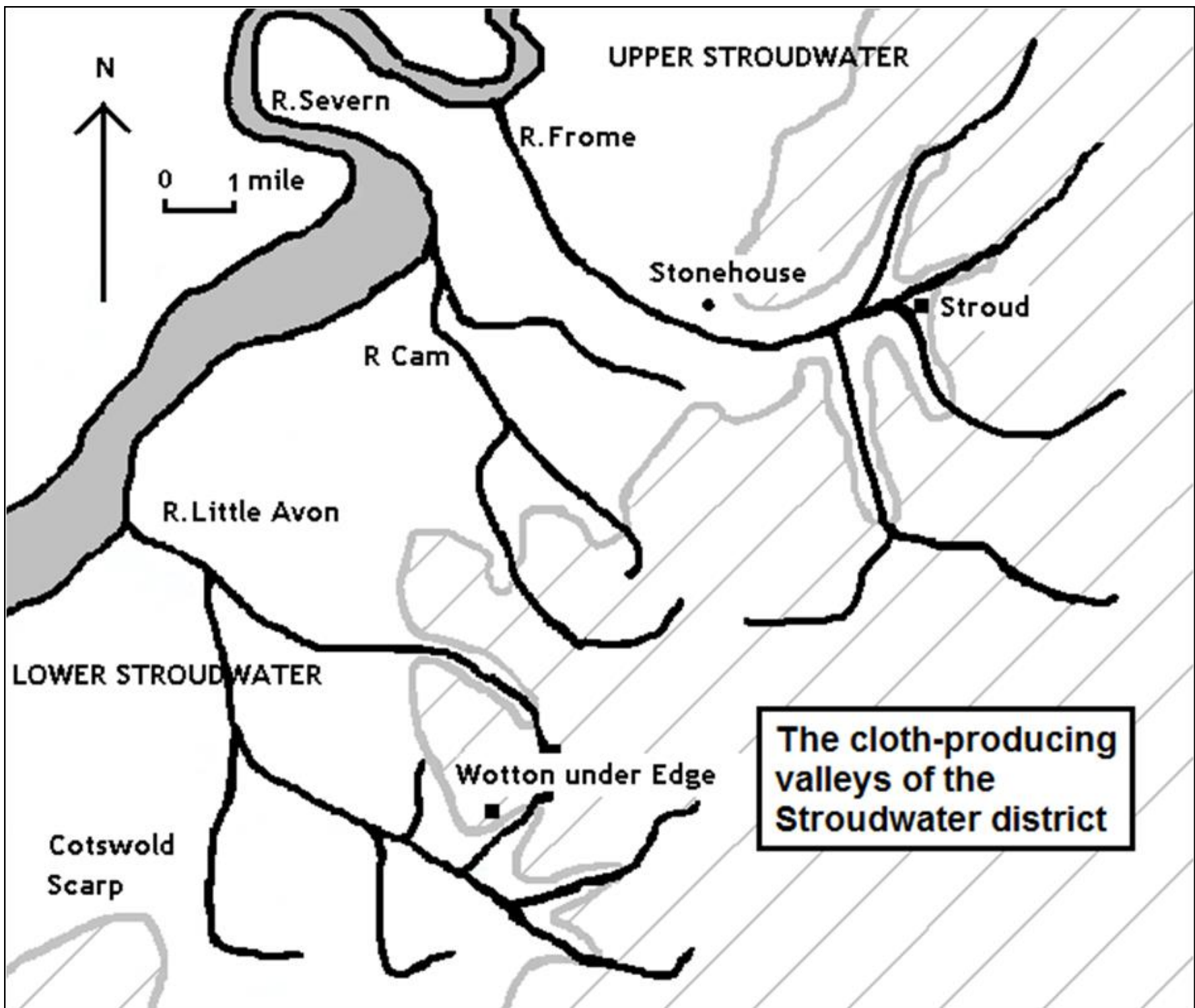


Former Swan Inn, Stonehouse High Street. Now Orchard House.

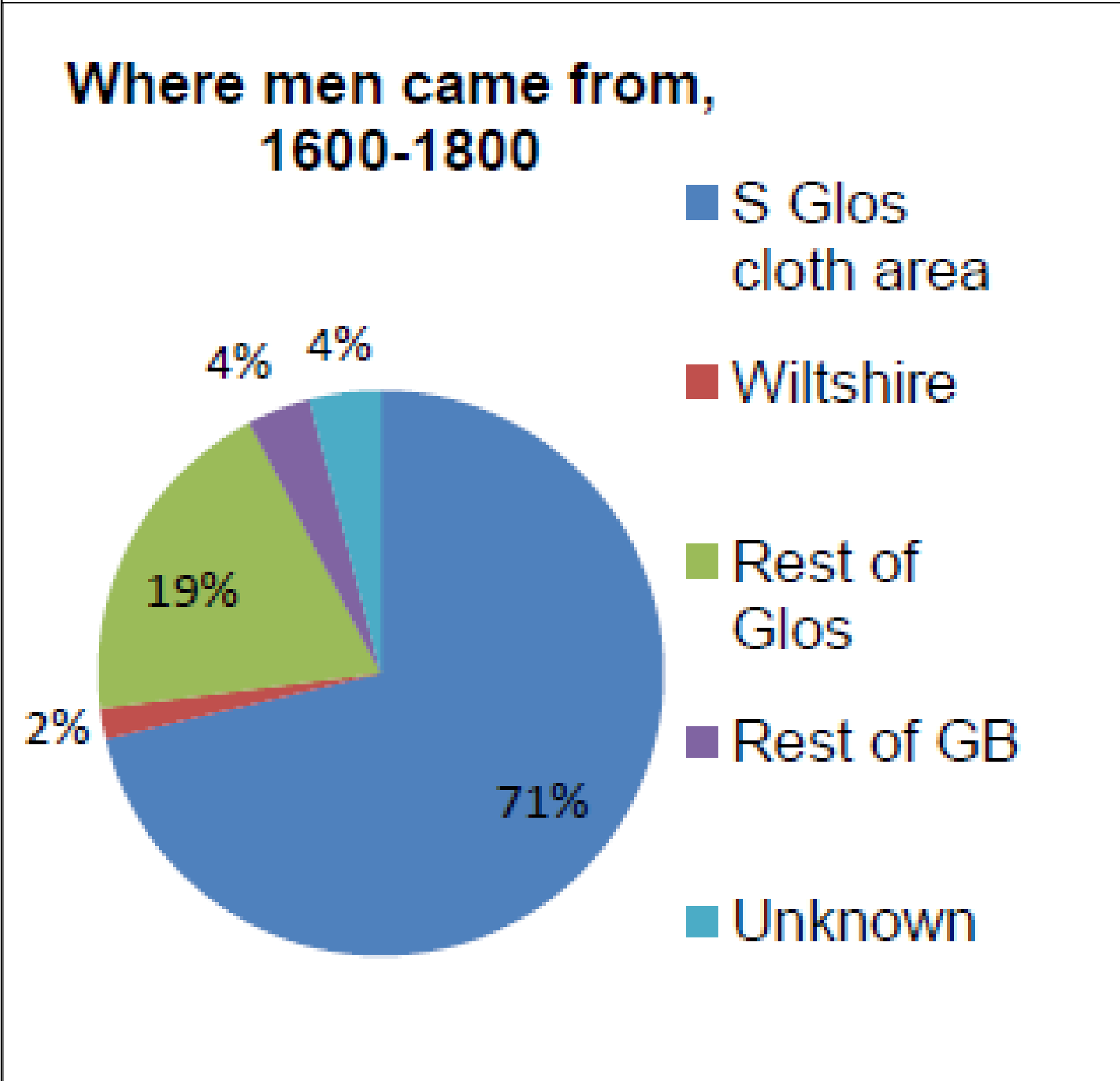
Women could gain property by marriage, and also provide access to it for their husbands. Sarah Taylor came to Stonehouse from Quedgley in 1727, when her father William became landlord of the Swan Inn, Stonehouse. She had three husbands who settled in the house in turn, the first from Longney, the second from near Cricklade in Wiltshire, and only the third born in Stonehouse.

Stonehouse 1600-1800: why did people move?

The woollen cloth industry in the Stroudwater district, although centred on water-powered mills, was still largely home based. As its fortunes changed, cloth workers moved to where their skills were in demand. At least 70% of both incomers and leavers moved within the local cloth valleys, but others went to cloth areas in west Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and the north. After 1750, the lower Frome valley coped better than some other parts with severe depression, and attracted cloth workers.



The men who stayed in Stonehouse often held manorial properties with an agricultural base, but 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.



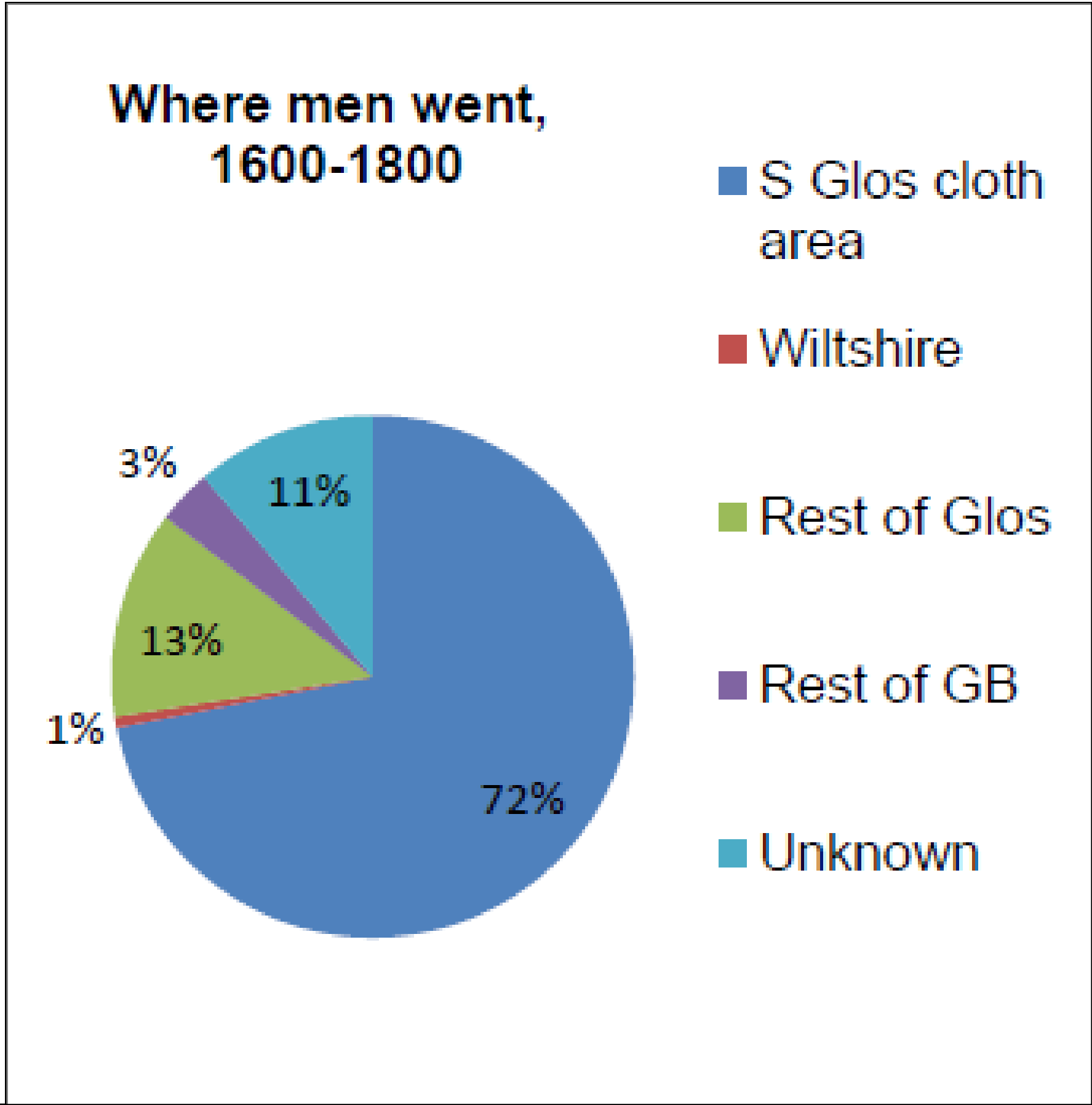
A few men are known to have served temporarily as soldiers. Captain William Hopkins Hill, the son of a Stonehouse clothier, was killed in the South Seas in 1793. No cases of deliberate migration to or from places outside Great Britain were found, although there were one or two indirect links to Ireland, and not all movers were tracked.

Roger Parslow, born in Minchinhampton in 1595, was a blacksmith who settled in Stonehouse in about 1630. He prospered, and left property to his family in 1669.

John Budding, born in Stonehouse in 1632, was a weaver who went to the Slad near Stroud, where he left a ‘business’ in 1687.

William Rudman, a cloth worker from near Malmesbury in Wiltshire, was in Leonard Stanley as a trainee shearman in 1780. He drowned while living in Stonehouse in 1793.

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.



Stonehouse 1600-1800: moving on

People moved before 1800, sometimes at the speed of a horse, but mainly on foot, in short stages. The Elizabethan poor law of 1601 brought together measures against vagrancy. Parishes could now raise poor rates to help their own, but there was no help for those moving to look for work. Many still travelled long distances, pushed onwards by parishes. Manors also discouraged ‘strangers’, and where possible kept control of housing provision.

In 1662 the settlement system was introduced. Armed with a certificate, a person could stop in a new place. 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 these laws were applied shaped many lives.



Stonehouse Church and Court, parish and manor



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. 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.

A turnpike trust took over the main road from Gloucester through Stonehouse in 1726, and the Stroudwater Canal opened in 1779, both improved travel routes which challenged movement controls.

*18th century milestone
on the turnpike road
at Cainscross, in the old
parish of Stonehouse*

The navvies who built the canal were temporary visitors, but some of the people who managed and worked it settled at Newtown, on the edge of Stonehouse in neighbouring Eastington.

Thomas Lewis, a labourer from Kidderminster in Worcestershire, lived in Wiltshire with his wife before moving to Ebley in Stonehouse. He was appointed the first keeper of Ryeford Double Lock in 1780, and moved into the new lock cottage, built in 1784. He moved again to Eastington after 1815.

Stonehouse before 1800 offered many opportunities, and would probably have attracted more incomers, but for the controls set by parish and manor. Economic and political change began to challenge these, and led people to move in new ways in the new century.



Ryeford Double Lock, keeper’s cottage built 1784

Sources available from Stonehouse History Group

War workers arrive 1939-1940

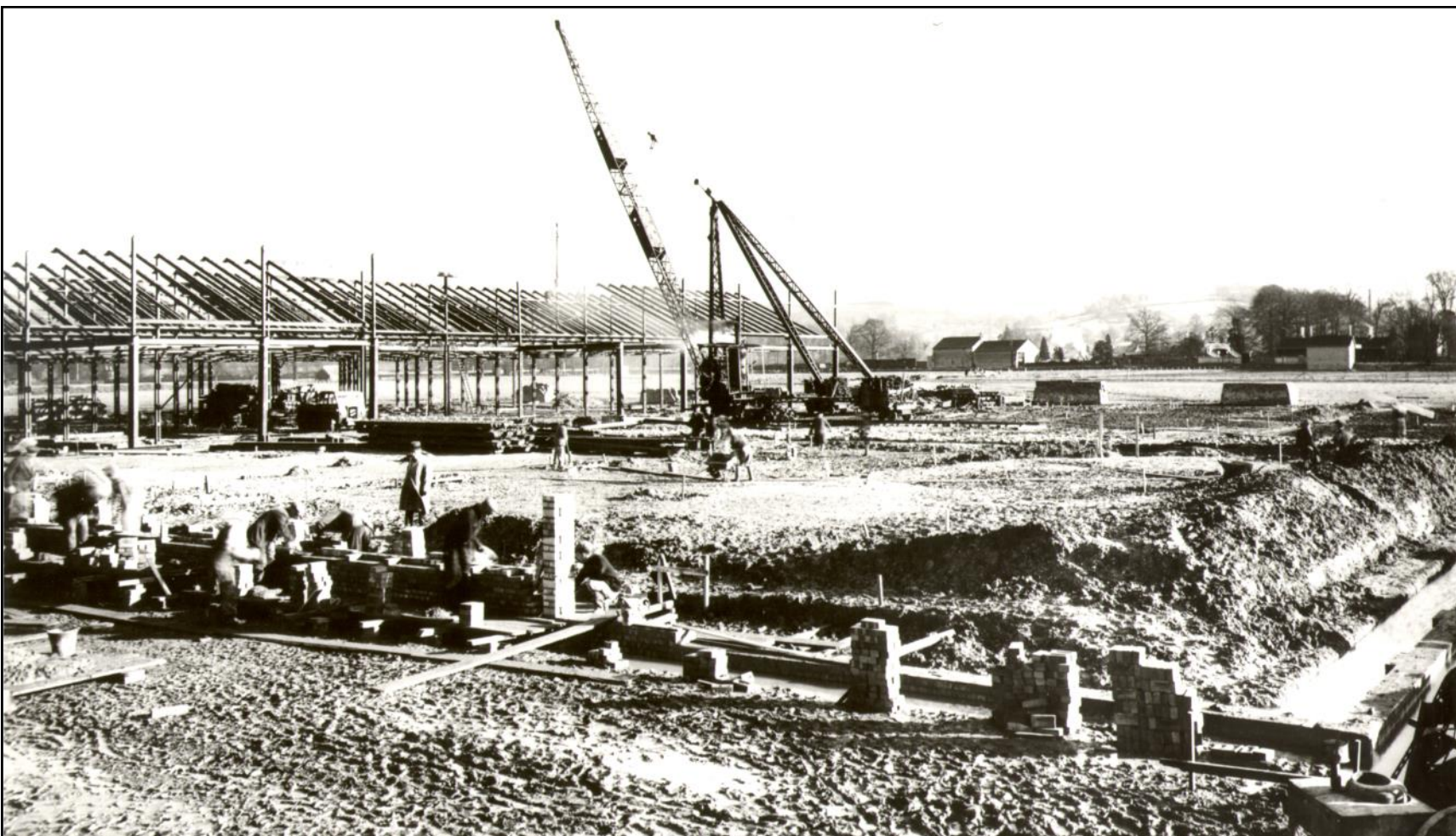
The impact of the Second World War

During the War the population of Stonehouse almost trebled (from around 2300 in 1931) - largely due to the importation of workers by the Hoffmann and Sperry Gyroscope companies for their “shadow factories” (back-up for their parent factories near London).

At the end of the War, many of the workers who had come to work in the shadow factories remained in Stonehouse.

Frank Woodyard was born in February 1918. From 1934, he worked in Hoffmann’s ball bearing factory at Chelmsford near London.

Hoffmann’s “shadow factory” was under construction from 1939, in anticipation that there would be war with Nazi Germany. Frank was one of a number of the workers who were asked if they were prepared to move to Stonehouse (there was no compulsion) and he agreed, not least because he thought it would be well away from any bombing.



Construction photo taken in November 1939.

Workers were transferred to Stonehouse in small batches as construction progressed and different sections became ready for use.

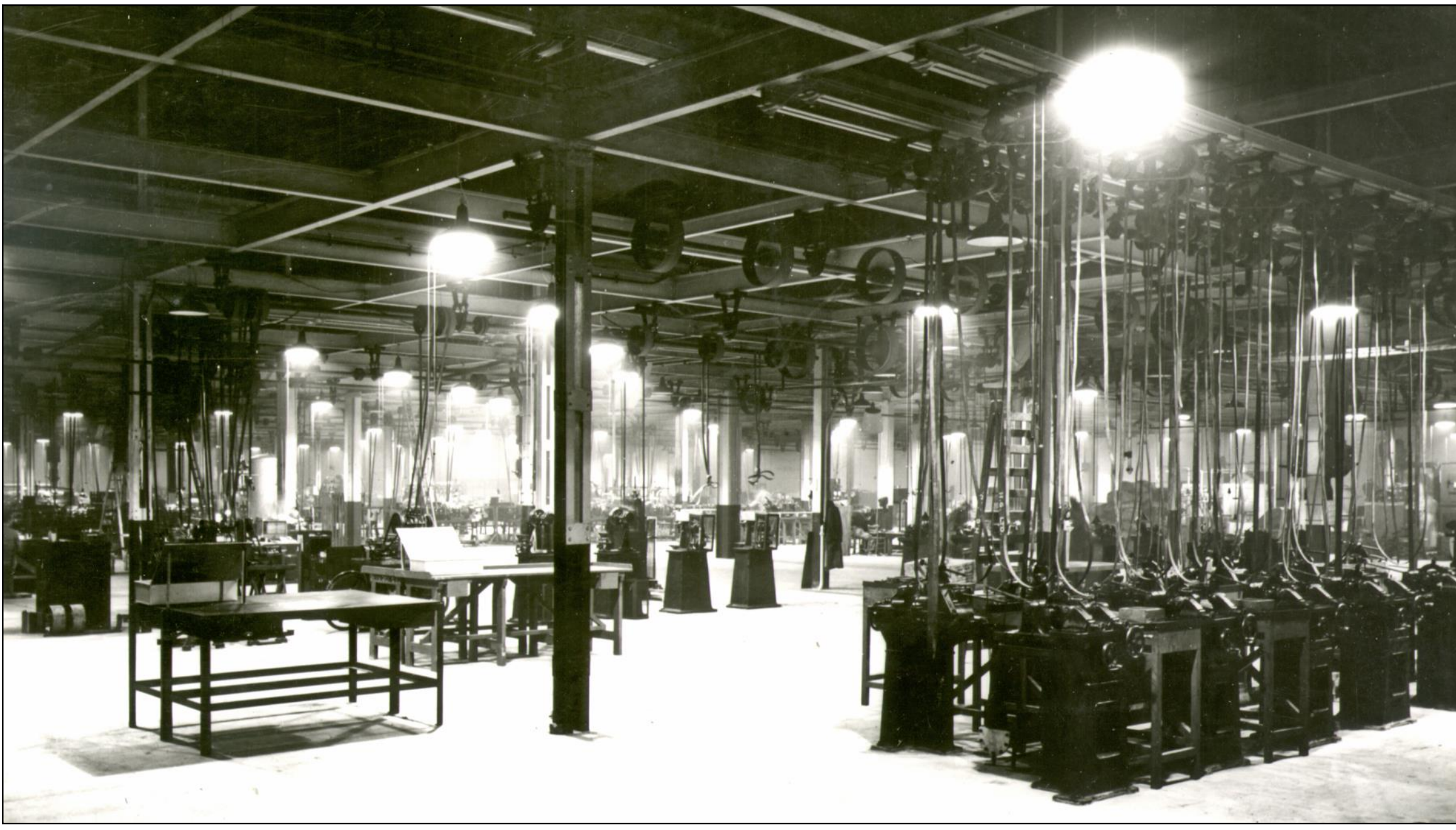
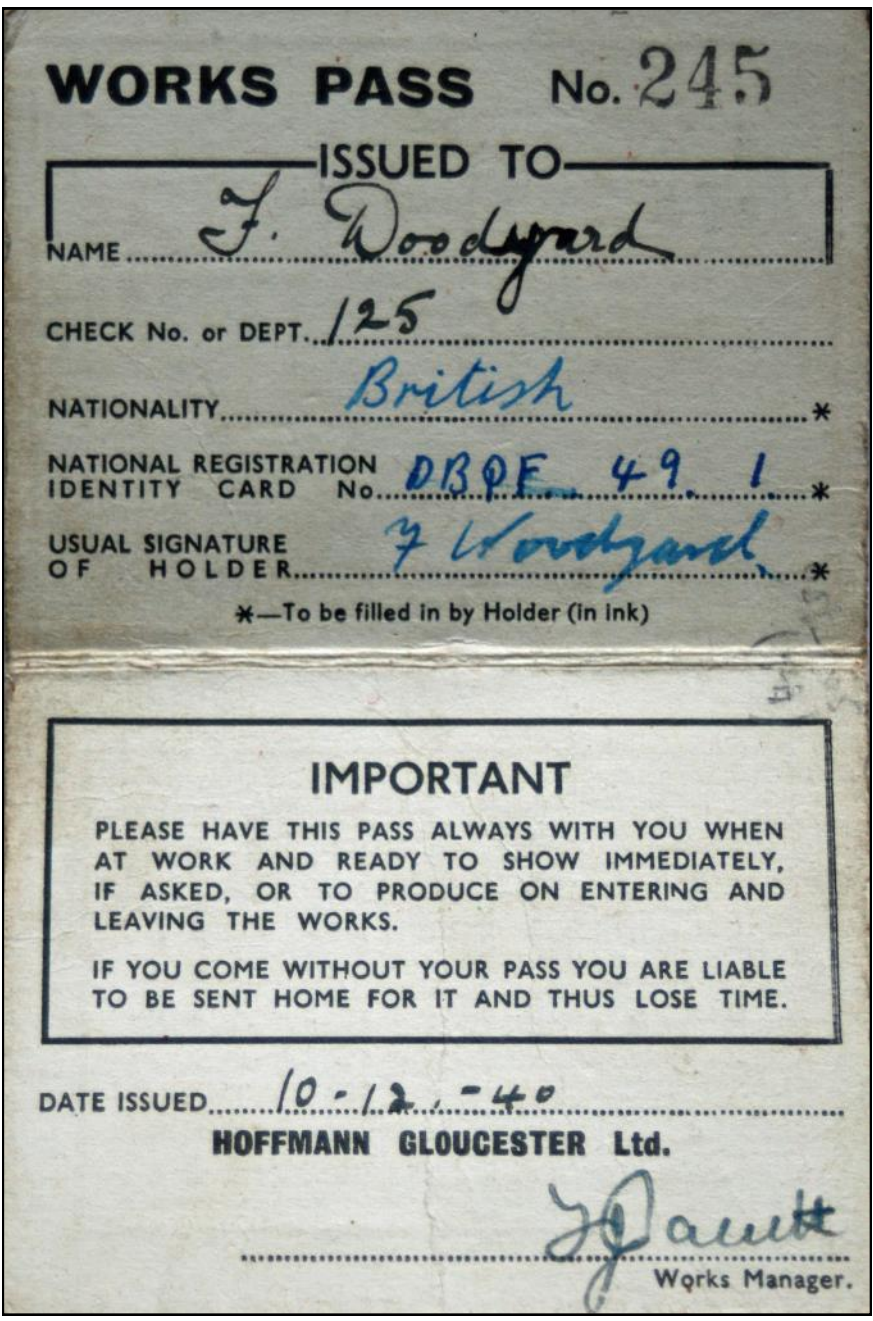


Frank came to Stroud by train, with 3 others, and they were met at Stroud Station by Jack Praill, chief inspector at the Stonehouse factory.

Jack took them to a café, then to Stonehouse by bus. He then took Frank and one of his colleagues to lodgings at “Pendennis” on St Cyril’s Road. The owner, Mrs Keating, was their landlady.

“Pendennis” in 2015

Frank started work at the Stonehouse factory on 10th December 1940 and he worked there until his retirement in 1983.



Photos show Frank in his Hoffmann Home Guard uniform, his works pass and part of the factory on the day he started work.

Accommodating war workers 1940s



Frank remained in lodgings at Pendennis for more than 2 years. Then he and his wife, Rose, rented “Hilby”, fully furnished, with another couple, Jim and Louie Tween.

Hilby is an Edwardian house on Pearcroft Road which belonged to one of the teachers at Wycliffe College (he and his family were away with the school, and its pupils, at Lampeter in Wales for the duration of the War). Both couples had a daughter with them.

“Hilby” in 2015

New maisonettes

As more war workers came to Stonehouse the Air Ministry decided to build some flats, or maisonettes as they became known. In 1941, land was requisitioned at the western end of the town and rows of houses erected “almost overnight” along the edge of Woodcock Lane leading to Doverow Avenue and Copner Road. Workers who had been boarding with local residents moved into these along with families conscripted to work at Hoffmann’s or Sperry’s.

The Air Ministry proposed to name the new roads after the towns from which the “shadow factories” came. Stonehouse Parish Council was not in favour! Doverow Avenue was named after the nearby hill and Copner Road after local farmer John Copner.

Frank and his wife were allocated a maisonette on Woodcock Lane. After the war, Frank moved with his wife to Midland Road on the Park Estate. In later years he lived in a retirement flat in Orchard Court at Laburnum Walk.



Woodcock Lane before the maisonettes were built on the fields to the left of the photo.



Frank, with his wife Rose, in 1969 having received a company award for a production improvement suggestion

Frank died in October 2012 and was buried in **St Cyr’s** Churchyard, Stonehouse.



Frank aged 92

New maisonettes 1940s

Peggy Deuten née Axford (at right in adjacent photo) lived in a council house in Woodcock Lane opposite the fields where the maisonettes were built.

“The maisonettes for workers at Hoffmann’s and Sperry’s grew like mushrooms. I went to school one day and there was a field opposite. When I came home at lunchtime the houses were half up!”



Yvonne with her dog Rex at 23D Doverow Avenue.

Yvonne Bennet née May moved to 23D Doverow Avenue with her family in 1942. Yvonne’s mother worked for Sperry’s and was offered this new accommodation in order to continue working there.

Yvonne was very impressed with their new flat - it had a coal fire in the living room and a gas fire in the bedroom. There was a gas cooker and water heater. The bathroom was their greatest joy with a flush lavatory and a bath!

They had good neighbours from many parts of the country. Some returned to their homes after the war but many stayed on, contributing to the doubling of the population between 1931 and 1951.

Maxine Winstone née Millman and her family moved from their home in Devon to Copner Close.

“In 1943, my dad, Bert Millman, was drafted to work at Sperry’s making equipment for aircraft. Mum took one look at the maisonettes and said “Oh my God, we’ve come to military barracks!” That was Copner Close. We didn’t want to leave Devon and I hated it at first.

We never had more than a 3-bedroomed flat so it was a good job we were all girls – eight sisters all together! It was fun and you always had someone to play with. The maisonettes were clean and tidy then, not like they became later on.



Maxine with her dog at Copner Close.

I can remember how we could all play outside – we didn’t have to worry about cars. Everybody had a pushbike. We used to go and meet Dad from work sometimes. At turning out time there were about 2000 bikes coming up Oldends Lane!

I lived at Copner Close until I got married in 1959. Shortly after that Mum and Dad moved to a 4-bedroomed house at Midland Road on the Park Estate. A lot of people went home after the war but families like us stayed on.”



Sisters Diana and Deborah Millman at Copner Close c1960.



Maxine Winstone 2015



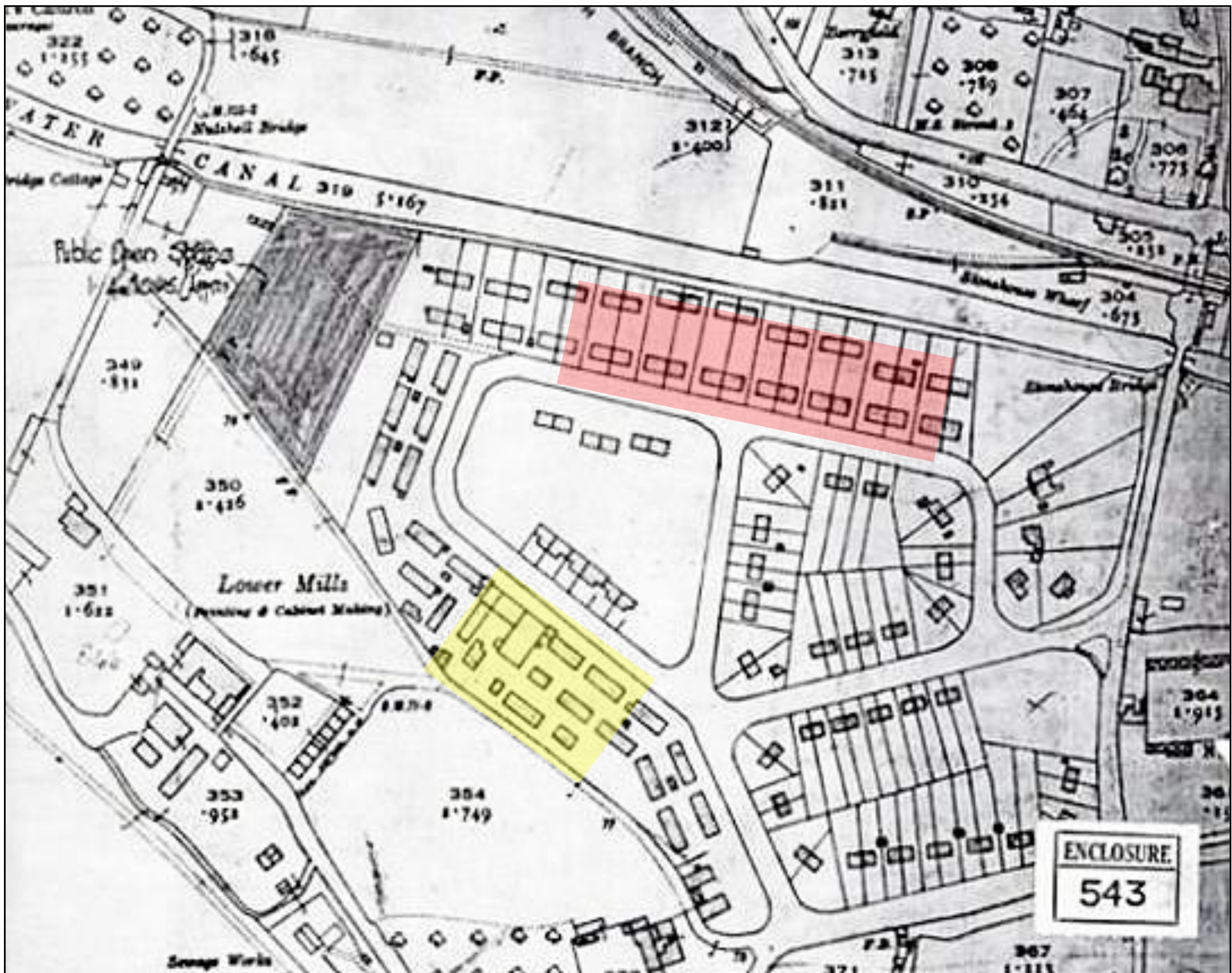
Bert and Kathleen Millman at their home in Midland Road.

Bridgend Hostel 1940s

Bridgend Hostel

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

The map shows the Hostel buildings. The area highlighted in yellow is the welfare centre, canteen and staff buildings. The area in pink, next to the Stroudwater Canal, was called the married quarters, but families were housed in all areas.



During the war, the hostel was mainly used for women who were drafted in to work at the shadow factories.



Women on war work at the Hostel.

Winnie Wyman (née Walker) - bottom right in the photo - moved up from Devon and worked as a domestic assistant in the Hostel. She worked from 8am until 5pm looking after the rooms of the women who were out working in the factories. Because of shift work some of the women would be in their rooms sleeping during the day, so Winnie had to work some evenings.

When the war came to an end, some of the young women returned home. Some married local men. Winnie Walker married Ray Wyman and settled in Leonard Stanley.

Looking for work



Tom Shiers in 1945.

After the war Tom Shiers arrived from New Tredegar in Wales seeking work. He found work at Hoffmann's, got married and remained in Stonehouse all his life.

“In 1948, I lost my job in Wales. I was engaged to be married to Peggy, who lived near Stonehouse, so I came to this area looking for work. I got a job at Hoffmann's.

I rented a room at Bridgend Hostel. There were lots of different people who had come here to work; men from Bristol, Cornwall and Wales. There were some German girls who worked at Hoffmann's. Some, like Lottie and Anna, married local men.

When we got married we lived with my wife's family until 1950, when we were fortunate to be allocated a maisonette at the top of Woodcock Lane. Flats were allocated to each factory and I got the last one allocated to Hoffmann's.

We had a 2-bedroom maisonette and the rent and rates together were 11s 4d (59p) per week.”

Later the Shiers family moved to Park Estate. Tom now lives in a bungalow not far from his old maisonette.



Tom in 2015

Displaced persons 1945-55

A new use for Bridgend Hostel

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

Tony Reynolds remembers young Austrian women like Maria Serchnich and Ernastina Gattmeyer who both found work at Marling & Evans Cloth Mill, Ryeford.



Local girl Pam Cave and Maria Serchnich

Polish and Hungarian people also worked at the mill.

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



Adolf Kardynal at Bridgend Hostel in 1947

In 1941 Adolf joined the Polish Forces under British command in Italy. He fought at the battle of Monte Casino.

After the war Adolf chose to come to England and joined the Polish Resettlement Corps. They found him work and a place at Bridgend Hostel, where his brother Andre and their mother later joined him.

In 1949 both Adolf and Andre joined Marling & Evans' where they stayed until their retirement. Adolf left the hostel to live in a cottage in Ebley and later moved to King's Stanley.



Adolf pictured in 2003

Adolf died in 2012, a much-respected member of the local community.

Park Estate

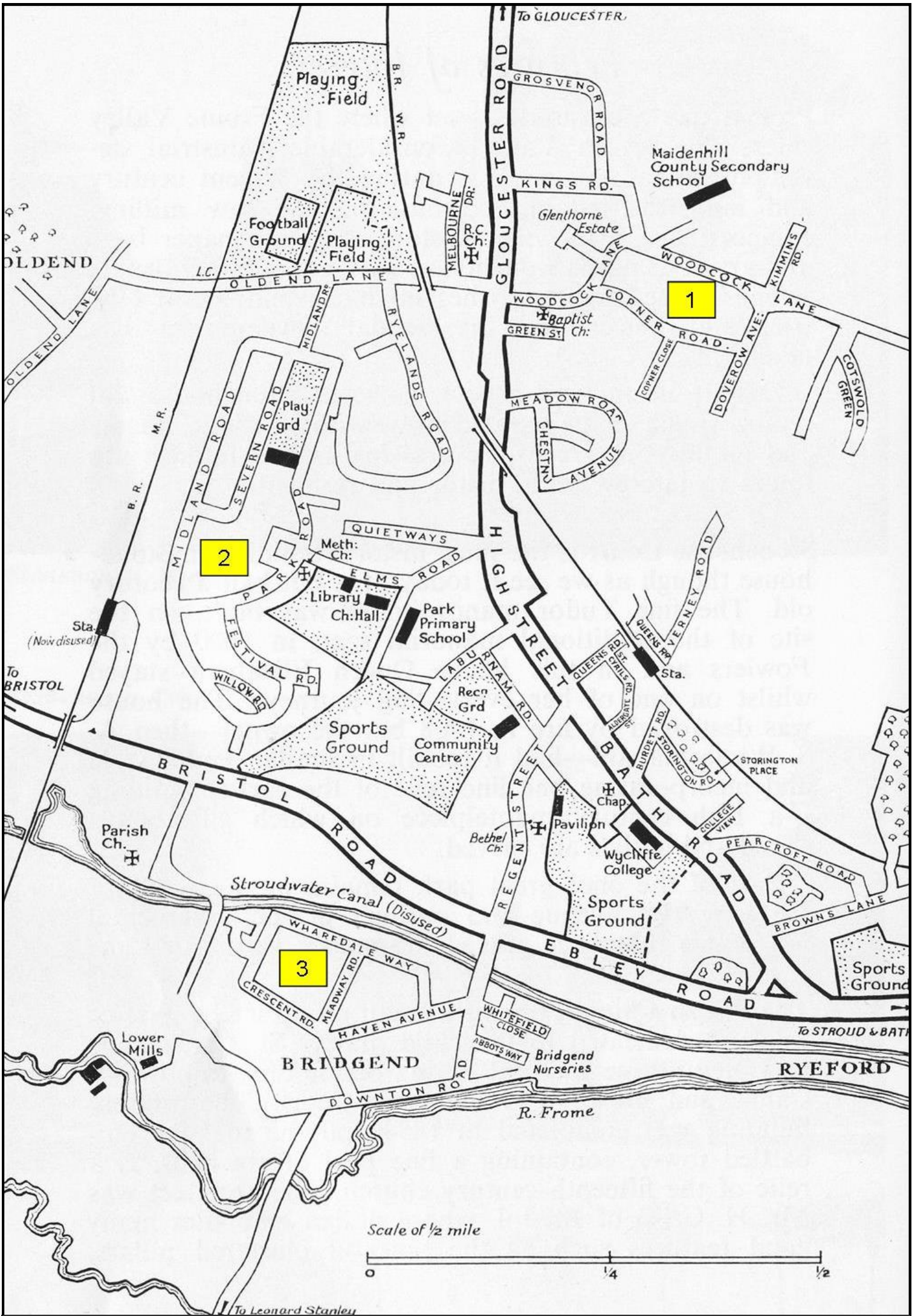
As many of the war workers, displaced persons, evacuees and refugees had decided to stay on in Stonehouse, the council decided to build a big new estate on the fields of what had been the Manor Park.

Building started in 1951 and one of the first roads was named Festival Road after the Festival of Britain held in that year.



The Park Estate from the corner of Festival Road turning into Park Road. Midland Road ran along the edge of the Midland Railway.

Many of the original families housed in the maisonettes moved to bigger houses on the Park Estate.



Map from 1960s showing the new estates built to house the families staying in Stonehouse after the war.

1 Woodcock Lane Estate, 2 Park Estate, 3 Bridgend Estate

Refugees from Egypt 1956-59

Suez Crisis

By the late 1950s most of the workers had found new accommodation. In 1956, after the Suez Crisis, British citizens and those with British passports, who were living in Egypt were given 10 days to leave the country. Most of the families who came to Bridgend Hostel were of Maltese origin.

Robbie Bonello



“There were several hundred of us with British passports, who had to leave Egypt.

My father, Spiridon Bonello, had died in 1948. My mother Mary, my brother John, and me Robinson, plus my uncle, aunt and 7 cousins left Alexandria by ship. When we arrived in England we were taken to Yorkshire.

In 1957 my cousins decided to emigrate to Australia and Canada, and in October 1957 we were moved to the Bridgend Hostel. We lived there until we got a house in Leonard Stanley in 1958.



*Mary Bonello
at Leonard Stanley*

John and I went to work at the Brushworks factory in Upper Mills, then I worked in the foundry at Lister’s, Hoffmann’s, Cape Asbestos and Fenworth. My brother John was the manager of Merrywalks Shopping Centre in Stroud for several years.”

Nora Abela

“My husband John and our two young daughters were arrested by Egyptian policemen. Within a month we were told we must leave Egypt and we would be taken to England because my husband, being Maltese, had a British Passport that included me and the children.



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

We were in Bridgend Hostel for about 18 months before being found a house in Brimscombe where we stayed for about 6 months. Then the council offered us a house in Midland Road in Stonehouse where we lived for many years before moving to the flats just off Park Road. I still live there, on my own since my husband died.”



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

Vilma is the girl with the big bow in her hair right of centre.

The man in the centre is the mayor of Cheltenham, Charles Irving, with Josephine Abela and Joe Spiteri.