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Front cover sketch "Stonehouse GWR Station at Burdett Road c1950" ©Darrell Webb.

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- Production editor

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Why not become a member of our group?

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

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

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

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

We hold meetings on the second Wednesday of each month,

at 7:30pm.

£1 members; £2 visitors; annual membership £5

Everyone welcome – come along and join us.

Stonehouse History Group Journal Issue 2, December 2012

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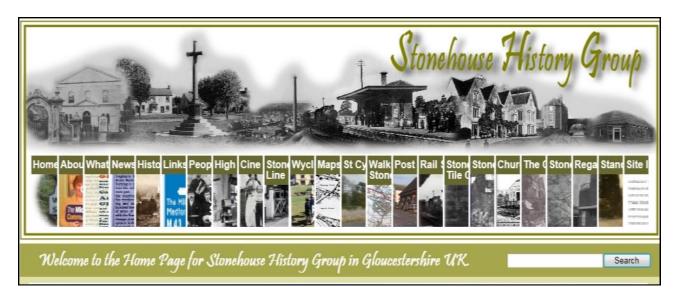
Stonehouse History Group Journal Welcome to Issue 2

In our first issue, produced in May 2012, we concentrated on the theme of The Impact of World War Two on Stonehouse. Since this left us with a number of articles which did not fit into this theme, we decided to produce the present issue using these, plus other contributions from our members. In the future we intend to produce an annual issue and we would be delighted to hear from anyone who would like to contribute an article on any aspect of the history of Stonehouse. Guidelines for writing articles for the Journal can be found on our website.

We have received many positive comments about Issue 1 and also one or two corrections to details given in articles. One or two of the names given for people featured in the old photographs may have been incorrect. Much of the research we did on life in Stonehouse during the war was by talking with residents living at that time. These people are elderly now and their memories are not faultless. We did our best to corroborate information given but, in some cases, this was not possible. We will include a list of corrections in Issue 3 which will be available for sale at our Annual General Meeting in May 2013.

Our website (www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk/) has had more than 20,000 visitors since it started in September 2010. This represents an average of 25 per day. It receives visitors from all over the world including countries such as Latvia, Columbia, China, Belarus, Russia, Bangladesh and Panama. Most of the visitors use desktop computers but 3.2% are using mobile devices. The software used for the website has been upgraded in anticipation that the use of such devices will increase.

The website continues to receive enquiries via email (<u>info@stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk</u>) requesting Stonehouse history information. We try to answer these promptly.



Our research is continuing and we have received new information as a result of people reading the first issue of our Journal. If you can give us any more information on any of the topics covered in this or our previous issue, please contact us via our website, phone Vicki Walker on 01453 826 334, or come along to one of our meetings at the Town Hall on the second Wednesday of every month (except August) at 7.30 pm.

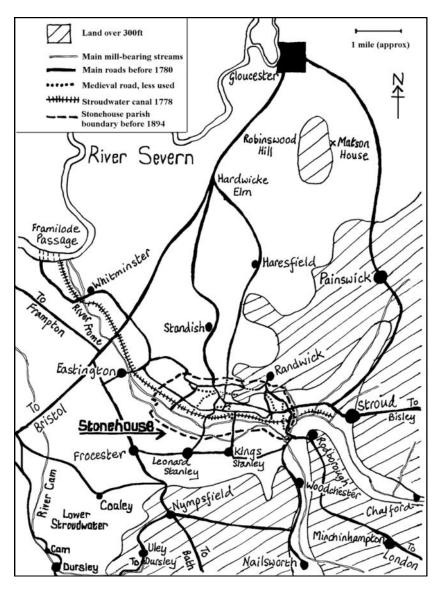
The Editorial Team

December 2012

Stonehouse town area c. 1610

by Janet Hudson

In 1610 the parish of Stonehouse covered an area of about 3.5 square miles, running in an oblong shape along the north bank of the river Frome and over Doverow Hill. It included parts of Ebley, Cainscross and Westrip and had a total population of around 450, about a third of that of Stroud and in the lower middle range for the valley parishes. The map on page 8, however, covers only the modern town, the western half of the old parish. The layout of houses and land reflects the medieval pattern, with a cluster on the High Street probably formed from more scattered early hamlets. Most houses were on long-established sites related to sources of water and old roads. There were several more east/west road routes available than exist today, although some earlier roads, continuing Brown's Lane and Regent Street as through routes, had fallen out of use. The old main road from London through Minchinhampton, Dudbridge and Whitminster to the river Severn, which once ran over the top of Doverow, had already moved downhill twice. The first move was to a hub at the Grove, then on to form the High Street, and the second to a newer road through Ebley. The modern Ebley by-pass simply marks a further shift. Stonehouse was as ever well in touch with the wider world of trade, politics and religion.



Sketch map of the Stroud district in about 1780, based on the earliest known detailed local map, by Isaac Taylor, 1777. Although later, it shows the relative position of the old parish of Stonehouse as it was in 1610.

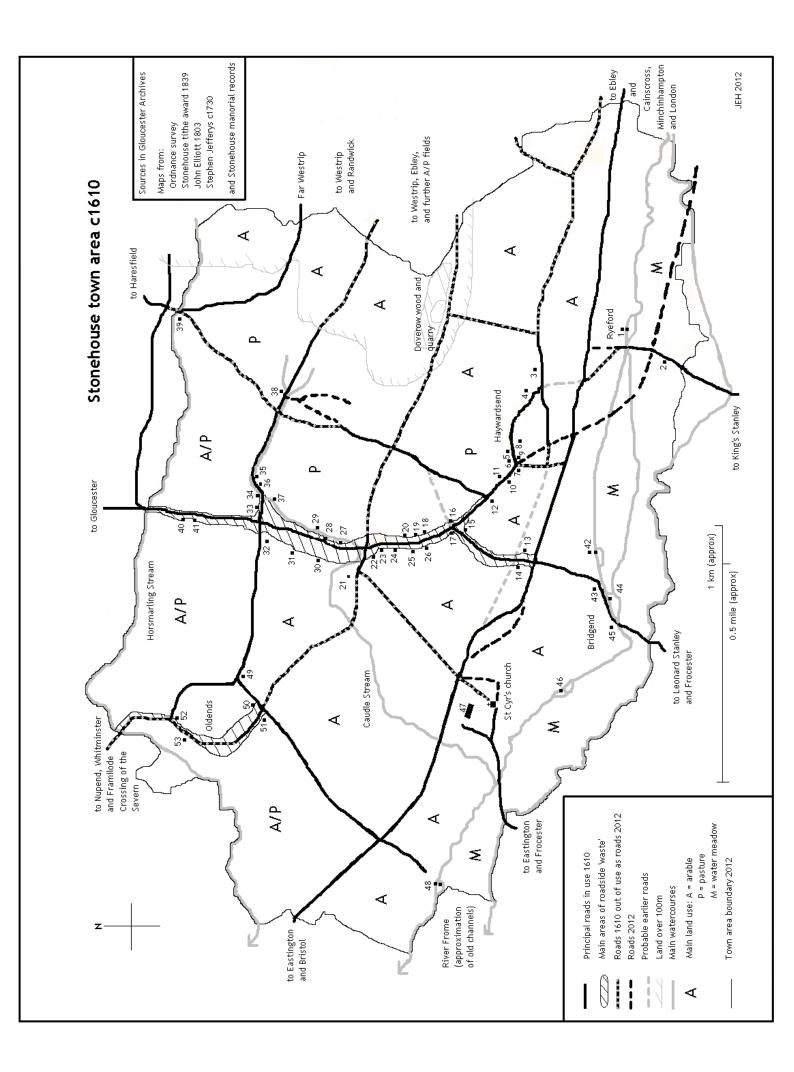
The manor matched the parish in area, and was the main secular authority. The lordship lay with Daniel Fowler, a descendant with William Sandford of the two local clothiers, or cloth industry managers, who had bought the manor in 1558. Lord and tenants together used the 'court leet' to manage tenancies, run the agricultural system, keep roads and ditches clear, and settle minor disputes. The wide roadsides were the 'lord's waste', open to all but under manorial control. A few houses appear to have been added in the previous fifty years, at 17, 22, 28, 32, 35, 38, 41 and 49, some by building cottages on the 'waste', but all with manorial approval. The manor house had probably always been in stone, but had been rebuilt by 1601. Most other houses were probably timber-framed, although 18 had been rebuilt using both stone and timber in about 1580, and a new house at 23a also used stone, some perhaps from Doverow quarry. The 'Woolpack' did not yet exist, but there was at least one aleseller, working at 18. The parish church of St Cyr regulated family life, operated the Poor Law and probably ran a basic school, among people who had generally accepted Protestantism without being very nonconformist. Estimating from the number of households, there were close to 300 inhabitants in this town area, many having family links or having spent time outside the parish. Some occupations are given in documents of the time: a 'tucker' was a fuller, processing cloth, and a 'husbandman' was a small farmer, while a 'yeoman' had higher social status.

The economy was dominated by the cloth industry but combined with mixed farming. The lord of the manor, based at Stonehouse Court, had a large 'demesne' estate of about 340 acres (138 hectares) lying mainly between the Court, the High Street and Oldends Lane. The surrounding fields were still 'common', in that they were largely divided into small strips or plots and, in theory, each holding had a share in each field, including those between Ebley and Cainscross. In the list on page 9, no holding apart from the demesne was larger than about 50 acres (20 hectares). Large ones (L) were in the top half of that range, medium ones (M) in the second quarter, and small ones (S) below a quarter. Larger holdings included the vicar's church land, (the 'glebe') and the lands of several clothiers. Doverow was arable land, and the winding channels of the river Frome flowed through managed water meadows. There were no large common pastures. Instead, animals grazed on varied plots, and seasonally on arable stubble and meadow. Enclosure and the merging of plots into larger fields were already in progress, however, and the inhabitants increasingly varied the size of their holdings by renting land from the lord, and between themselves. Some had acquired several holdings which they could sublet.

The cloth industry had been here for three centuries or more because local conditions made fulling mills profitable, and it persisted even though Cotswold wool alone could no longer supply the quantity or quality of raw material required. Cloth was produced on a 'putting out' system: the clothiers bought in the wool, then paid workers in their own homes and workshops to prepare, spin and weave the yarn. The rough cloth then came back to the fulling mills to be processed, then went to be dyed, if required, and finished. The clothier then sold it at cloth fairs locally, in Bristol, or increasingly, in London. The production of 'white' cloth was declining, but coloured cloth was on the rise. Dyeing was mainly done 'in the piece', after fulling, which retained colour. Most dyes were of vegetable origin, but cochineal dye from Mexico had recently been introduced to Europe as a result of Spanish colonisation. This 'fixed' especially well in the local water, producing the first 'Stroudwater scarlet' cloth. Almost every family was involved in these processes in some way, as well as farming, whatever the nominal occupation of the head of household. Stonehouse in 1610 was a busy and fairly prosperous place, which had done well out of Elizabethan social change and the enterprise needed to produce fine cloth.

Sources of information

Hudson, J., *Residence and Kinship in a Clothing Community: Stonehouse, 1558-1804*, PhD thesis, University of Bristol, 1998, in Stonehouse library, in Gloucester Archives, and at https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do;jsessionid=8A4DDD80BBC8FBFFA47FF6733E686087? https://ethos.bl.uk/OrderDetails.do;jsessionid=8A4DDD80BBC8FBFFA47FF6733E686087? <a href="https://edu.org/distails.doi.org/distails.do



Stonehouse town area c1610, key to houses: H = estimated households, A = relative amount of land held, see text

Ref	Ref Location 2012	Probable main occupier c1610	Ξ	4	Ref Location 2012	Probable main occupier c1610	Ξ
	1 Parts Ryeford Lodge + Mill	Edward Sandford gentleman	2	٦	27 Site of railway E of bridge	John Collier weaver and yeoman	-
2	2 Site next Noah's Ark	John Dangerfield	1	S	28 Site 1 & 3 Gloucester Rd	Maurice Guy tailor	1
3	3 Site of Grove	Edward Harmer	1	W	29 Site 5-7 The Square	Bartholomew Gibbes	2
4	4 Site of Graylands	Thomas Myll yeoman	1	_	30 Site of railway W of bridge	Lawrence Seaver	1
2	5 Site of Carinis & Crantock	Simon King	-	5	31 Site 10 & 12 Gloucester Rd	Toby Myll husbandman	-
9	6 Site of 54 Bath Road	Thomas Fowler weaver	2	S	32 Site row corner Oldends Lane	Giles Gibbes clothier	_
7	Parts Haywardsend House	Richard Bence	-	W	33 Site Huntley, Woodcock Lane	William Dangerfield veoman	2
80	8 Site The Croft & Fairfield	William Pegler veoman	1	_	34 Site of 10,12,14 Woodcock L	John Hill mason	_
6	9 Site of Pearcroft Lodge	Derelict, held by Richard Bence	0	W	35 Site of 9 & 11 Woodcock Lane	John Gardner shoemaker	_
10	10 Site School House, Wycliffe	William Warner clothier	1	_	36 Site Stream Cottage Wood L	James Heskins weaver	-
1	11 Site of 44 & 46 Bath Rd	Richard Andrews clothier	_	¥	37 Bede Cottage, Greenstreet	Samuel Halliday	-
12	12 Site of Ivy Grove, Wycliffe	William Dangerfield yeoman	1	_	38 Site The Glen Woodcock Lane	William Harmer senior, yeoman	2
13	13 Site of Regency Home	William Andrews	2	W	39 Site opposite hospital lodge	Edmund Kitson clothier	-
14	14 Site N side of The Mount	Richard Dangerfield weaver	-	W	40 Site of 48 Gloucester Road	William Winston husbandman	2
15	15 Site of Regent Buildings	William King weaver	2	S	41 Site of 42,44,46 Gloucester Rd John Winston husbandman	John Winston husbandman	-
16	16 Queen Anne Cottage	Margeny Myll widow	1	S	42 Site of Upper Mills	William Sandford gentleman	_
17	17 Site shops 1 Regent St	Peter Watkins butcher	-	S	43 Site of mill Downton Rd	Edward Mayo tucker	-
18	18 Parts Apsley House, High St	William Gibbes clothier	-	_	44 Site of 2 & 3 Downton Road	Stephen Dangerfield weaver	-
19	19 Site behind Hurn's Hardware	Thomas Bremiard	2	S	45 Site of Bridgend House	Richard Holliday dyer	-
20	20 Parts Health Centre, High St	Simon Veysey butcher	-	¥	46 Site of Lower Mill	Edward Daniel miller	_
21	21 Site of 1-4 Quietways	William Norris vicar	-	_	47 Shell of Stonehouse Court	Daniel Fowler gentleman	-
22	22 Parts 68 and 70 High St	Richard Kerry tailor	-	S	48 Site of Bonds Mill	Henry Fowler gentleman	-
23a	23a Orchard House High St	William Harmer junior	2	S	49 Site of Fairview, Oldends	Roger Smith	_
23b	23b Fishing shop High St	Thomas Spokes baker	1	5	50 Site of Spa Inn, Oldends	Thomas Gabb yeoman	-
24	Site Choices to Hurn Electrical	24 Site Choices to Hurn Electrical Wm Gabb husbandman, + smithy	-	S	51 Site of Oldends Hall by Spa	Mathew Colwell clothier	-
25	25 Site of Phoenix/Delta Nine	Thomas Collier tailor	-	S	52 Oldends Farm	Nicholas Gabb clothier	-
26	26 Tudor Tandoori	William Russell tucker	1	W	53 Site SW of Oldends Farm	John Moody weaver	_

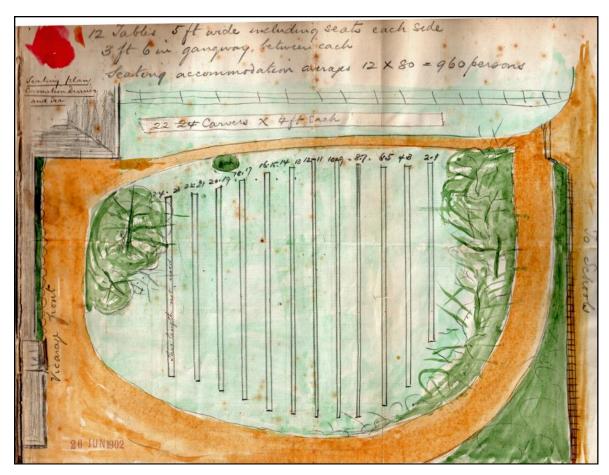
Charles Lister Smith Collection

Recently Stonehouse History Group has borrowed a collection of notes on the History of Stonehouse written by Charles Lister Smith (1858 -1945), a renowned local historian. We are grateful for the loan of this by his grandson Tom Round-Smith. We have made copies of the information and photographs. One of the interesting books we have copied is a record of Stonehouse in 1902, the year of King Edward VII's Coronation. In this book C. L. Smith has included many newspaper cuttings from Stroud News, often articles he contributed. Among many reports of the actions of the Parish Council, of which C.L. Smith was an active member, it also details the extensive Flower Show held by Stonehouse Horticultural Society in July 1902 and the rejoicing and thanksgiving for peace in South Africa (the Boer War ended in May 1902).

C. L. Smith also preserved the original records of the Coronation Committee, including the accounts of the cost of the celebration dinner and tea, seating and table plan, and the names of the men who were to carve the beef! There are the notes of the address to be made by the Reverend Lee at a service on the Green and the coloured Programme of Festivities printed by Whiley. The telegram that announced the postponement of the Coronation due to the King's illness is also preserved.

	7
26 JUN1902	26 JUN1902
Coronation Dinner	Coronation Tea
Lest of barvers	Ladies Committee
1 Once WHarry	
2 Mastin a &	Mis Ed Smith
3 Langford Ed	Miss Davies (the Lodge)
4 Rodgerson W J.	Mrs John Price (Ryeford)
5 box F J.	elle & d Pollard
6 Bramley Ino M.A	elles Langford
7 Anderson A.W.	Mrs Stephenson
8 Smoth Edward	Mrs Geo Harrison
9 Jevennell Alan	This representative
10 Master J W.	committee prowed the
11 Price Ino (Ryeford)	assistance of any other
12 Townsend Philip	Ladies they descred.
13 Hoppins Wa	
14 Paulin -	
15 Rees. 6 S.	
16 Beard W X.	
17 Novis Hapage	
18 Nevelle W.	
19 Pollard Edward	
20 Blick AR	
21 King Henry	
22 greanes Nevi Edwin	

List of carvers



Seating & table plan

	RECEIPTS	£ s. d.	EXPENDITURE.	£ s. d
E. J Davies, Esq		20 0 0	Medals and Carriage	6 3 2
Collected by			Crockery and Carriage	5 16 8
Mr King		27 14 0	Glasses	6 19 0
Rev E Lee		20 6 0	Sports Prizes	10 5 6
Mr Norris		10 11 10	Sick and Aged	2 7 6
Mr Langford		8 13 0	Subscription Rooms—Hire and Caretaker	160
Messrs. Mastin &	Cox	5 17 0	Bonfire	1 18 0
Miss French		5 12 3	Dinner and Tea (Tabling and Cloths)	12 5 10
Mr Anderson		4 18 6	Dinner	51 6 7
Mr Whiley		4 13 6	Tea	18 1 6
Mr Alder		4 4 0	Printing &c	6 17 6
Mr Pile	TAPE TO	2 19 6	Band	5 0 0
Mr Pollard	**	2 3 0	Secretaries and Treasurer's Expenses	. 1 13 10
Mr Hill	A STATE OF THE STA	1 7 9		
Visitors' Dinner Ticket	ts	0 11 3		
Sales.		10 14 3	Balance in hand	0 16 5
Balance from Bonfire (Committee	0 7 3	Datanee in haird	0 10 3
Returned Empty		0 4 6		
		The state of the s		Company of the Compan
		£130 17 7		£130 17 7

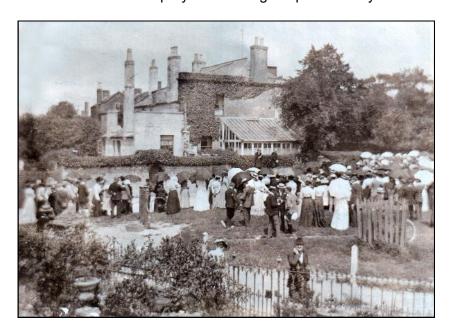
Cost of the celebration dinner & tea

Shirley Dicker has compiled the following account of the Coronation celebrations in Stonehouse using C. L. Smith's notes and cuttings.

"Coronation postponed – King ill – official" Post Office telegraph causes consternation for Parish Committee

The people of Stonehouse were getting ready for their biggest event for a long time - the King's coronation on Thursday 26th June 1902. A Programme of Festivities had been arranged with a United Service on the Green, a Coronation Dinner and Tea, Children's and Adults' Sports and the crowning glory was a Bonfire on Doverow Hill to be lit in the evening. The Committee hoped that all inhabitants would assist in the decoration of the Town.

A big party with free public dinner was to be held in the vicarage grounds. A whole ox had been ordered and around 600 people were expected to attend. Then, on 24th June, news reached them by telegram that the King had been taken ill, and the coronation would have to be post-poned. This caused great consternation as there had been no indication that the King had been unwell (he had suffered from appendicitis). The King wanted the celebrations to go ahead but the committee did not think that was fitting. They decided to take down the street decorations and abandon the Sports and the Bonfire, but the Dinner and Tea party would go ahead as arranged. The service on the Green would be to pray for the King's rapid recovery.



The service on the Green (see photo above) took place at 12.30 on 26th June, led by the Rev. Ed Lee who prayed for the King's recovery, and called for sympathy for the Royal Family and rejoicing for the success of the operation performed on His Majesty that day. More hopeful bulletins had been received as to the improvement of the King and so some of their anxiety was relieved.

The dinner at the vicarage followed with plenty of food and good humour. 548 persons sat down to eat followed later by the Committee and the Waiters. Twenty one carvers had been appointed to carve the meat along with a group of ladies to serve the tea. Stroud News reported that: "There was a bountiful supply of comestibles, a cold collation being provided. After dinner a vote of sympathy was telegraphed to the King by the Coronation Committee. The Chairman (Mr J Westacott) received the following reply: "To the chairman of the Committee, Stonehouse. Many thanks for your telegram, which will be laid before the King. His Majesty is progressing satisfactorily.""

Afterwards a tea was laid on for 649 women and children with plenty of tea and cake. The Committee had catered for 800 so there was a lot of food left over. One resident went round with a large clothes basket full - offering the lot for 9 pence - or 10 pence including the basket!

The Coronation Beacon Fire

Initially the Bonfire Committee had sent round handbills announcing that the bonfire would be lit on Saturday night (28th June). However there was disagreement within the committee and they decided that the lighting of the beacon fire would be deferred until the King was announced quite out of danger. This postponement was loudly criticised and complaints were rife. On the Saturday evening a large crowd of around 200 people gathered by the beacon on Doverow Hill.

The committee, along with Sergeant Smith and PC Gale, were there to prevent the pile from being lit. Selsley Beacon was already burning and, when it started to die down, men came over to Doverow Hill gathering round the bonfire and calling for it to be lit. One small boy meekly asked if he could light it with a glow-worm! The Committee thought he had better not!

After a while, the crowd started to throw matches into the pile to light it themselves, but the committee were ready to put each flame out, one even climbed to the top of the pile to put a small fire out. A small fight broke out between the defenders and the crowd and the Sergeant had to intervene. Eventually the matches ran out and the crowd gave up and went home. By Sunday morning only the committee was left and a crate of ginger beer and bread and cheese were produced, which they ate while keeping watch. New watchmen arrived to protect the pile and there was a general sigh of relief when it was still intact by Monday.

Had the Stonehouse bonfire on Doverow Hill not been lighted on Monday evening, it is positively believed that the members of the Stonehouse Bonfire Committee would have gone grey with worry and anxiety! Finally at 10 o'clock, members of the committee set light to parts of the bonfire and it was burning well within minutes. The cost of the pile was £10 and it lasted several hours. Residents from surrounding villages came to see it and there was singing and merriment.



Bonfire & Committee
Adults from L to R:
AW Anderson,
WR Hopkins,
JC Huntley,
J Lapage Norris,
CJ Rees,
G Dobson,
AR Blick,
Miss de Carle Prout,
Harold Field,
Grace Blick,
WH Beard,
John Westacott,
Dr de Carle Prout

Coronation Day 9th August 1902

The bells of St Cyr's Church rang out at 8 o'clock in the morning followed by a communion service and at 9 o'clock the church choir sang the National Anthem from the top of the church tower. At 10.30 a public church service was held and the King's message was read by the vicar to the congregation. The church was tastefully draped with various national flags, the cross of St George being the most conspicuous.

A united religious service was held on the Green at 2 o'clock, attended by about 400 people. It was presided over by Mr Lapage Norris, Mr C.L. Smith and Mr A.W. Anderson, accompanied by the ministers from all the churches. It was a very hearty service and, when the portrait of the King was uncovered, the crowd cheered "God save his Majesty". All of the children were given coronation medals by the committee as they paraded past the platform. A procession was formed which marched up to the top of High Street and back down to Haywardsend, through Regent Street to the Berryfield - lent for the day by Mr William Hill.

Many of the parishioners stayed for the afternoon of sports, and prizes were given out to the winners of numerous races for both children and adults. The best decorated houses and business were also awarded prizes. The decorations at the Crown and Anchor, the Post Office and the Police Station were most effective. At night the illuminations of Mr Chandler's store drew a large crowd and Messrs A.R. Blick and Mastin's were very pretty. It was noted that the absence of rowdiness and drunkenness was a satisfactory feature.







Young and Wolf Ltd

by Vicki Walker and Shirley Dicker

We interviewed Terry Jefferies and Colin Wood about their time working at Young and Wolf Ltd's plastics factory in Bridgend, Stonehouse. The factory closed around 1990.

Terry Jefferies

Terry was born in 1950 and lived at Whiteshill where his father was a shepherd. In 1960 they moved to Stonehouse and lived on the Bridgend Estate in an Airey house (constructed from concrete slabs). These have now been demolished and red brick ones built in their place. Opposite them were the prefabs where refugees from Egypt lived following the Suez Crisis in 1956. They were built from asbestos and have all been knocked down.

Terry left school at 14 and went to work in Walker's Stores in Stonehouse which was on the end of Barnard Parade (where the betting shop is now). This became Keymarkets and Terry was transferred to Keymarkets' store in George Street, Stroud, where he served on the delicatessen counter. It was modernised and the



Terry Jefferies in 2012

firm wanted him to work behind the scenes cutting up and preparing the meat. He didn't enjoy that as it was not working with the customers so in 1967, aged 17, he left.

Terry took up a job as an extrusionist with Young and Wolf Ltd which had a small production unit at Bridgend Works, Stonehouse (at Lower Mills - over the little bridge into the mill behind the paper & bag factory). From about 1930 the firm manufactured mainly rod, button blanks and knitting needles and pioneered the slicing of casein button blanks from rod in the UK. Mr Young had started the business in his garden shed. Terry remembers him as a very clever man. "He was a real gentleman who would come round on a Thursday with your wages and shake your hand and thank you for your work." Terry found it a good place to work - with a family atmosphere and where you were appreciated. He admired Mr Young who would always speak to his employees when he met them in the street.

The factory made plastic items from rennet casein. They imported this from countries such as Australia and Denmark. Terry enjoyed learning about the different processes that went into making the plastic items. He began on an extrusion machine making plastic rods. The casein came in 25 kg bags (about half a hundredweight), was mixed with titanium powder, dyed whatever colour the customer wanted and then put into the extrusion machines. It smelt milky and cheesy and looked a bit like marble. Terry used a tin mug to pour the mixture in at the top of the machine which had two turning screws forcing the mixture through. There was a gas heater on top of the machine to keep it warm and a hot water jacket around it to keep the mixture pliable. The mixture was heated up and pushed, under pressure, through holes to create long rods which were chopped off at the end.

The machine couldn't be left as it worked 24 hours a day. Terry topped up the powder at one end, chopped off the rods at the other and made sure that the machine was at the right temperature. Differences in heat would change the size of the rods. He wasn't given much training – he was shown how to carry out the operation once and then had to get on with it. The machine didn't have any safety guards; there was a large space by the screws - like a mincer - which you could have caught your hand in. It wouldn't be allowed today but Terry cannot remember anyone being injured – "You knew the risks and you were careful".

Water was pumped out of the river to cool the rods which were put through a trimmer to take them down to the rough size needed, then cooled again. Then the rods were put through a Cincinatti machine, where they were ground to the finished size and polished.

From there the rods went into big tanks of formalin, were left to harden then dried and double-checked that they were round and smooth. Then they were

cut up into lengths for knitting needles or crochet hooks. Rods for buttons were cut into the round blanks then put into formaldehyde to harden off. They were dried and sorted into sizes. They also made beads.

Terry worked 8 till 8 for four days a week and 8 till 5 on a Friday. Sometimes he worked overtime on a Saturday - 8 till 12. The machine ran 24 hours a day. There were about seven people plus the foreman working on days in the extrusion shop and four or five men on nights. There were other shops with about the same numbers. People worked in tracking, making hooks, putting eyes in needles, sorting button blanks, etc. Women did many of the jobs as well.



Young and Wolf products

Terry thinks his pay was about £6 a week (compared with £4.10 shillings a week when he worked in the shop). They had paid holidays including a fortnight shutdown during the last week in July and first week in August. In those days you had to have a medical. He saw Dr Mould in Stroud and it turned out he had jaundice so was off work for quite a while (he thinks he must have had some sick pay).

Terry remembers Young and Wolf as one big happy family where they all got on well and helped one another. There was no social club. Lots of the workers were married women who had work to do at home when they finished at the factory. Some women worked part time - like 5 till 8 pm.

Terry worked his way through all the different departments. After working in extrusion, he moved to the knitting needle department, putting knobs on by hand. The firm tried to automate the process but was unsuccessful. The knobs were glued on with animal bone glue ("like thick brown treacle which used to smell awful"). The needles were dipped into the pot of glue and the knobs tapped on to the ends. A small grinding machine was used to put the points on and polish them up. Then they were packed into big boxes in different sizes - the higher the number on the knob, the smaller the needle.

For a while Terry worked outside on the formalin tanks. He had an old sack tied round his waist and gloves for protection. He also did some loading and unloading. Then he moved into the sorting shed where he was in charge of sorting the blanks for buttons and rejecting any with defects. The factory didn't make buttons, only the blanks — these were sent to button manufacturers who put the holes in.

Mr Young got a very good match on tortoiseshell buttons; the colours were just right. These were made by a different method using two different hoppers of powder and forcing the two colours together. The colours were mixed up at Hampton Colours at Toadsmoor Mill, Brimscombe (this firm is still in business).

Young and Wolf exported all over the world. They bought some of Erinoid's machines (Casein plastic was made under the trade name "Erinoid" at Lightpill Mills in Stroud for about 70 years from 1912) and old Cincinnattis from RHP (successor of Hoffmann) which were used for the grinding. In the late 1960s they ceased casein production and introduced injection moulded ABS knitting needles, restricting the colour range to grey.

Terry worked at Young and Wolf's until 1974 when he went to Selby's Builders merchants.

Colin Wood

I attended Stonehouse Primary School and the brand new Stonehouse Secondary School. I was one of the first to go up there in 1956. When we arrived they were still finishing the buildings. It was officially opened in September 1957. I left school in 1959 aged 14.



<u>Back row:</u> ?, Peter Remes, Peter Hale, Gillian Hill, Audrey Ricks, ?, Jennifer Gillo, ?, Peter Knight, ? Mrs Clutterbuck?

<u>2nd back row:</u> ?, Pat Poulter, ?, Rosamund Croome, Kathleen O'Rourke, Muriel Lancy, Jean Hastings, Caroline Weaving, Gill Jones, Angela Wicks, Tova Wright, Angela Adams

2nd front row includes: Gillian Clarkson, Glenys Stephens, Pat Emery, Sheila Groome, Ann Lawrence, Carol Kimber, Margaret Lawrence, Irene Corkhill, Lyn Ackhurst, Diane Davis [we are unsure which name matches which child in this row—one name is missing]

Front row: ?, Brent Taylor, David Poulton, ?, ?, Colin Wood, ?

My father was an electrical engineer, G.A. Wood, Electrical Engineers, based at 42 Haven Avenue, Bridgend. When I left school I started work as an apprentice with him. That's when we

first did a job at Young and Wolf's. From then until I was about 20 we went to Young and Wolf's about twice a week. We also got the contract for re-wiring Stonehouse Court which took 3 months. Another big job was working at Frampton Court Estates, owned by the Clifford family.

I first went to Young and Wolf's in 1960 and continued to do work there until it closed around 1990. When we first went there they had four extrusion machines. It was a crude system. Water was heated in a huge galvanised tank by an immersion heater for circulation round the jackets on the machines. The water for the processes was pumped from the brook up the stairs into a thousand gallon tank.



Extruders were in lower floor of this building, engineer's workshop in top floor

The process was like Terry says. The extruded casein plastic was fed continuously onto a moving belt where lengths were cut off with a pair of tin snips. Lengths of rod were cut off the machine at the right length and a number of them were held together by bulldog clips. Then groups of these clips were suspended so that the rods would hang straight. Some of them were pickled in formaldehyde which used to stink. I don't know for how long - about 3 or 4 weeks I think? They also extruded fatter rods for button blanks which were chopped to size (as button blanks) while the rods were still soft. A lot of the button blanks were sent somewhere for finishing. Young & Wolf also worked in conjunction with Erinoid in Stroud and Tubbs Lewis at Wotton under Edge.

Terry is right in what he says about old man Young - but he never saw Mr Wolf. I suspect that Mr Young, who was a chemist, was one of the developers of the Casein products at Erinoid and that he then branched out on his own. He was a gentleman and came round with a box with all the wage packets on Fridays at dinner time – and handed them out personally, thanking staff for their efforts. In 1960 his son Derek came into the firm. Mr Young was well into his seventies and Derek took on the running of the firm in the 1960s.

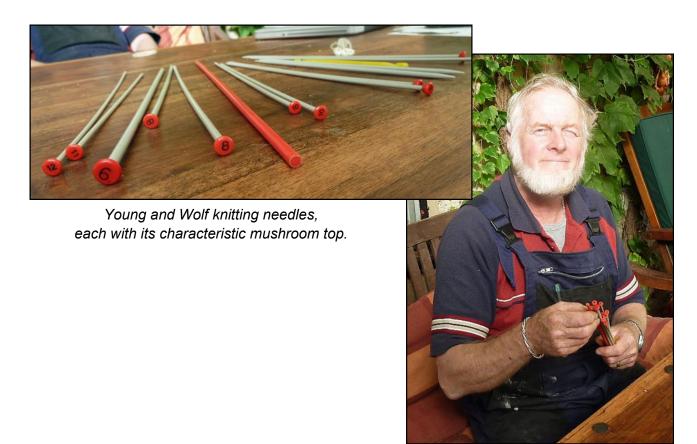


Shed which contained the rotary dryers (which those passing Lower Mills can see today)

Another person who eventually became a director was Horace Fudge, the engineer. A lot of the chopping machines were designed by him and, later, drilling machines. Terry omitted to mention that when they took the rods out of the pickling vats, they went into dryers. Drying machines rotated with heaters underneath. Originally they were gas heated and the rods went round and round in cages. The rods had to be rotated because, if they were left still, they would have become distorted. Buttons went into a polishing machine but were still rotated - making a hell of a row! Then all were stacked and put through Cincinnati grinding machines. The firm had two of these and then, later in 1960s, they built a new factory alongside the old one called "Austin Young's" - created by Derek Austin Young. Two of the grinders came from Hoffmann's (where they had ground the casings on Hoffmann bearings). All of these machines were water-cooled. The water was taken from the brook, circulated round the grinders, then returned to the brook. Rod size was critical - within a thousandth of an inch (about 0.025 mm) when the rods were to be made into knitting needles. It's surprising that the size of a plastic knitting needle could be so accurate.

The new company (Austin Young) imported Swiss machines for making the knitting needle tops. You can always tell a Young and Wolf needle by the round mushroom top. Originally they had different colours for different sizes. The tops were stuck on with glue at first, later by machines. Several machines were designed by Horace Fudge and adapted to do the things they needed. They made duffel coat toggles like the ones that looked like stag horns. They used two different nozzles on the extruders, each supplying a different colour of plastic to give the "mottled horn" look.

The firm continued in business until around 1990 when it closed.



Colin Wood in 2012. He is holding some Young and Wolf knitting needles.

Sources of Information

More information about Young and Wolf, and Casein Plastics, can be found at http://plastiquarian.com/?page_id=14228 accessed Nov 2019.

The following extract is taken from BBC website http://www.bbc.co.uk/ahistoryoftheworld/objects/ZlmnlY2MT5a9ecQAnfJyKA Accessed Nov 2019

"It would be difficult to imagine a life without plastic. The first plastic was cellulose nitrate developed in the mid-19th Century, which was popular for collars and cuffs. The second was casein hardened with formaldehyde and patented in Britain in 1911. Casein plastic was made under the trade name "Erinoid" at Lightpill Mills in Stroud for about 70 years from 1912. Unlike the later plastics such as Bakelite, Casein plastic could be dyed in many bright colours. It could withstand the rigours of washing and ironing, dry cleaning solvents etc and became popular for buttons and other household goods. It was eventually replaced by oil-based plastics for most uses but is still made today on a small scale for high quality goods."

Further information on this topic has been received from Geoffrey Young, whose father, also Geoffrey Young, ran the factory.

Geoffrey has told us that, up until the start of WW2, the casein mostly came from the La Rochelle area of France. During the war, supplies came from New Zealand, a little from Ireland and latterly also from Denmark. His father was the first person to make artificial tortoiseshell, mainly in sheet form, used for such items as dressing table brushes and combs. The likeness to the natural material (turtleshell) was so good that it could not be distinguished by many experts.

An attempt to create a unique canal

by Jim Dickson

By the eighteenth century the growth of the woollen industry in the Stroud area was becoming increasingly dependent on supplies of coal, needed to supplement the diminishing supplies of local wood, for processes such as dyeing and finishing. Coal was brought from the West Midlands to Framilode or Gloucester via the River Severn, and thence by cart or packhorse on roads which were poor in good weather and could be impassable in winter. This was slow, costly and unreliable. A more effective, cheap and reliable means of transport from the Severn was therefore sought, particularly by those operating local woollen businesses.

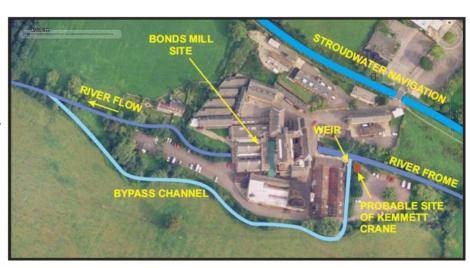
The River Frome (or Stroudwater), which falls more than 100 feet (30 metres) as it flows from Stroud to Framilode, provided a valuable source of water power to drive machinery at the mills. However, the Frome is small with limited water supply. Any plans to adapt the river to make it more navigable therefore raised inevitable concerns, and objections, from some mill owners. The usual means of raising or lowering boats as they progressed up or downstream was through a lock. Each time a lock operated there was considerable loss of water (Hadfield pp.40-1; Burton, pp.72-3). The main concern of mill owners was that such loss would result in insufficient water to operate their mills, particularly in summer when it would be in shortest supply.

The Kemmett Canal

In the eighteenth century there were a number of schemes to create a canal between Framilode and Stroud. The most radical, in the late 1750s, was the scheme by John Kemmett, an iron-master, and three other Tewkesbury men. They devised a novel scheme to create a navigable River Frome between Framilode and Stroud which addressed mill owners' concerns about loss of water. It was based on:

- following the line of the (then) River Frome wherever possible and also using the large millponds at the mills. These held considerable quantities of water, often stretching upstream to approach the millpond of the nearest mill;
- straightening and deepening parts of the river;
- creating an additional navigable channel to bypass each mill, separated from the mill-race (the river on its way to the mill machinery) by a weir;
- installing a crane by the weir, to lift one-ton cargo containers from a boat at one level to a boat at the other level;
- connecting the bypass channel to the tail-race (the river downstream of the mill machinery); incorporating and refurbishing much of the navigable river developed by Richard Owen Cambridge in the 1740s as a private venture. This extended from the River Severn at Framilode, past the Cambridge family seat at Whitminster House, to the A38 near Fromebridge Mill.

The water flow channels, the weir, and the probable location of the crane at Bond's Mill. The background aerial photograph is from © Google Earth





The weir and likely site of the crane at Bond's Mill, viewed from the bypass channel

This first attempt at containerisation is the only known example of a waterway which used cranes and weirs rather than locks to effect the required changes of level.

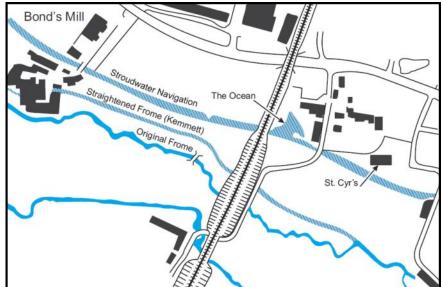
The Kemmett scheme was sanctioned by Parliament in April 1759 and work began soon afterwards. Straightening of the River Frome got as far as Stonehouse. Clear evidence of this straightening, and of the river's former twisting route, can be seen on the meadows on both sides of the Midlands-Bristol railway embankment, just to the south of the Stroudwater Canal.



The straightened River Frome between the Midlands-Bristol railway embankment and Bond's Mill



The original winding channel of the River Frome (on the east side of the Midlands-Bristol railway embankment) prior to its straightening by Kemmett and his partners



The original winding route of the River Frome and the channel today, as straightened by Kemmett and his partners during the work to make the River Frome navigable

By walking alongside the river, it is apparent that straightening of the river did not quite reach the gardens of the block of four homes ("Valley View") at the lower corner of the lane from Nutshell Bridge to Lower Mills. Intriguingly, there is a small bridge on the meadow, just to the west of the Midlands-Bristol railway embankment and some 30 paces to the south of the straightened Frome, which once crossed the winding river.



The bridge which crossed the winding river prior to its straightening (the bridge's location is indicated on the previous diagram)

Problems that led to abandonment of the project

It is believed that Kemmett and his partners had to raise the height of some of the mill dams in order to provide sufficient depth of water as far as the next millpond upstream. Also, according to Handford, there is "some evidence that the partners found their boats, designed for up to 10 tons at a time, were too large for the River Frome" (Handford 1, pp.104-5). For the first few miles from the Severn, the gradient is gentle so they would have encountered little difficulty in ensuring there was sufficient draught for the cargo boats. However, the further the project progressed upstream, the steeper the gradient, so arranging that there would be enough depth of water to allow their boats to operate from each mill to the next mill upstream would have become progressively more difficult. At Stonehouse, the bed of the Frome is around 50 feet (15 metres) higher than at the Severn at Framilode, and it rises to more than 100 feet (30 metres) at Stroud. In order to cope with this steepening gradient, the only practical choices for the partners would have been to: (1) raise the mill dams and river banks higher as they progressed further from the Severn or (2) add extra weirs on the river between the mills. Either of these options would have added to their difficulties and costs.

Additional boats were required on the Kemmett, at least one for each stretch of river between mills, and the 1-ton containers had to be transferred between boats at each weir. So the cost per ton of transporting material on the Kemmett Canal would have been appreciably greater than for a canal, such as the (later) Stroudwater, which employed conventional locks. When the Stroudwater Canal was opened from Framilode to Bristol Road Wharf, by the A38, in 1776, the first cargo was 60 tons of coal - at least six times more than the cargoes carried by the Kemmett boats (Handford 3, p.45).

Kemmett & his partners may have thought the project would be easier than it turned out in practice since the initial section of their scheme, from Framilode to the A38 near Fromebridge Mill, involved adapting and refurbishing some of the earlier (private) Cambridge canal. It seems likely that the Cambridge project had included clearing away trees and vegetation which overhung the river and it is known that some straightening of the original river had been carried out (Handford 1, p.74).

The cranes had novel features. One of these was the means of transferring each loaded container from one boat to the boat on the other side of the weir:

- Water was added to a large bucket which, as it filled, raised the cargo container from one of the boats via a rope and pulley arrangement.
- As the container was raised, the crane jib would be swung to position it over the second boat (on the other side of the weir).

 When the bucket reached its lowest level, a valve would be opened, allowing the bucket to empty, causing it to rise and the container to be lowered into the second boat.

In the mid-eighteenth century, there would have been little technical knowledge and experience available to help the designers of these cranes, which were required to lift and move heavy loads regularly. Some of the critical components such as the valve on the water bucket, or the bearings for the crane jib, would have had to be created from scratch - not simple matters. It is therefore likely that the cranes would have suffered from lack of reliability. It is known that repeated loading and unloading by the cranes caused damage to goods.

Judged by today's standards, the developers agreed to a most unusual contractual arrangement. They agreed to build the navigation from Framilode to Wallbridge <u>at their own expense!</u> Once the project had been completed and was operating satisfactorily, the commissioners would pay the developers (Kemmett and partners) £10,000, provided that, for the following 10 years, any later improvements were incorporated <u>at the expense of the developers!</u> If the navigation was not completed by 29 September 1761, then Kemmett and his partners were to forfeit all the works without compensation (in 1761, a meeting of the commissioners agreed to give the partners another 6 years to complete the navigation). Given the novel features of the scheme, and the state of technology in the mid-eighteenth century, this was a high-risk agreement by the partners, and a no-loss one for the commissioners. (Handford 1, pp.93-5).

Failure

Construction on the Kemmett project stopped during the late summer of 1761 and the works were abandoned in 1763. The partnership was dissolved in April 1763 and some of the partners were left in financial difficulties.

In Handford's judgement, "it seems probable that the navigation never operated successfully beyond Churchend and that the work at Bond's Mill was merely preparatory." As late as 1775, mill owners at Framilode and Fromebridge were reported to be using the Kemmett canal for carrying goods between their mills. Two of the cranes were reported to be still visible in 1777 (though in a dilapidated state) at Churchend and Common Platt. (Handford 1, pp.106-7).

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Acknowledgements

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Stonehouse railway stations from 1845

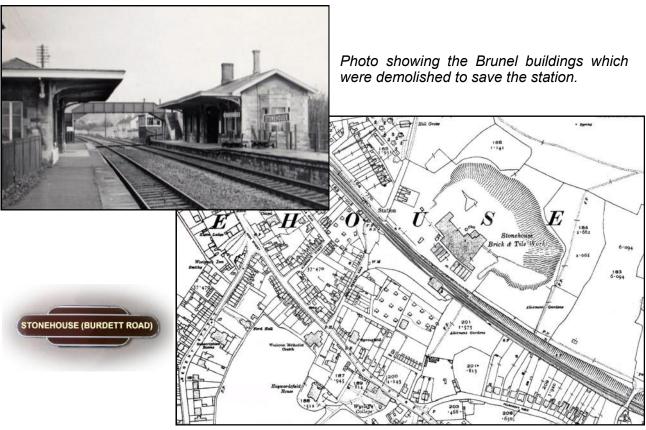
by Darrell Webb

"I have found a place which is served by three railway stations", G.W. Sibly was heard to say, when he was looking for a place to set up Wycliffe College in 1882. He was of course talking about Stonehouse, which has been a very busy railway town since 1845. It has had three railway stations and a fourth only half a mile away at Ryeford.

Burdett Road Station

The Great Western Railway (GWR) line which goes right through the centre of Stonehouse was designed and built by the great Isambard Kingdom Brunel in 1845. The original survey had stated that the line should travel by way of Tetbury and the Nailsworth valley; this would save the costly engineering work needed in the Golden Valley. But in those days there lived a very great man, Mr Brunel, the engineer, and he simply desired to be told the shortest way, which was 'Going down the Golden Valley' and he said, 'That's the way I will go".

The first train on the GWR line passed through Stonehouse from Swindon to Gloucester on 14th April 1845. On board were dignitaries of the Great Western Railway as well as the line's engineer IK Brunel. Stroud Station was opened on the same day. Only a fortnight before, the road bridge over Rowcroft was still being constructed, after the demolition of a block of houses. After the final Board of Trade inspection in early May, the GWR line was officially opened on 12th May 1845.



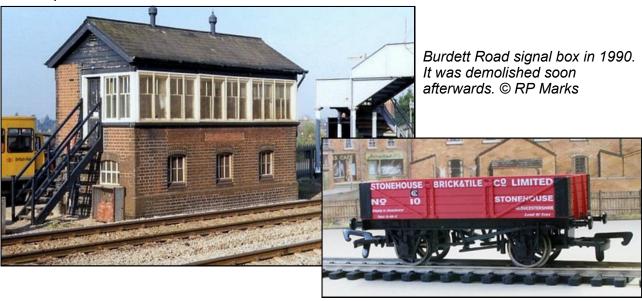
Map showing the siding for the Brick & Tile Co Ltd © Ordnance Survey 1922.

The track layout at Burdett Road station has been far more complex than that of today. There was a siding for the Stonehouse Brick and Tile Company, who used its own wagons built by Gloucester Wagon Works, not only for transporting their newly manufactured bricks away to places all over the world but also for bringing in coal and other raw materials required for the manufacturing process.

There was another siding stretching from the station up to the bridge at the top of Pearcroft Road, the Royal train used this siding to wait for the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh after it brought them for a visit to the Wild Fowl Trust at Slimbridge in 1966. There was a 48 lever signal box alongside the station buildings and a large goods shed opposite the Brickworks. There was also a siding up to the bridge over High Street. Complaints were made to the Parish Council in April 1901 about trains in this siding blocking the footpath across the railway line near the Globe Inn. As a result the present zigzag path came into being.

In 1902 the Great Western Railway Company decided to introduce steam rail cars to provide a more frequent service and increase passenger numbers. This was done to counter the competition it was getting from electric street trams and horse drawn buses. The first steam rail cars (numbers 1 and 2) operated on the Stroud Valley line between Stonehouse and Chalford. The Steam Rail Car terminated at Stonehouse and according to GWR driver instruction No 7 issued in 1903, "When the train arrives at Stonehouse on the down journey passengers for the up journey must take their seats at the down platform, and the train, when ready, must be started away from that platform over the cross-over road."

At the end of 1928 there were more complaints to the Council about people being prevented from using this same railway crossing behind the Globe Inn because of the length of goods trains standing in the siding and the particular danger that children might duck beneath the coupled wagons in order to cross the line. As a result the Great Western Railway Company ordered that wagons should be uncoupled and a space left for pedestrians when waiting trains were impeding the footpath.



Model of Stonehouse Brick & Tile Co. Ltd 4-plank brick wagon. © Alan Drewett

Burdett Road Station and the original buildings on both platforms were designed by Brunel. They were fine looking buildings but were demolished in the 1970s to make way for the present "maintenance-free" buildings after a long deliberation between Stonehouse Parish Council and British Rail which wanted to close the station as a part of its latest cost cutting.

It was 1972 when the station was threatened with closure. A public inquiry was held and the Parish Council objected to the proposal - but the Government gave its consent to close the station. British Rail told Jack Anderson, the Parish Clerk, that if the local authorities would meet the costs of demolishing the existing buildings, providing a new smaller building, and raising the platforms – some £13,500 (at least 10 times as much in today's money) - then no difficulty was expected in keeping the station open. The Parish Council agreed to raise the sum from the rates while seeking financial support from the District and County Councils.

In May 1974 Mr Anderson sent a cheque to BR for half of the agreed sum. Everything appeared to be going well until - in November - news arrived that the station had been listed as a Building of Special Architectural or Historic Interest – because of its association with Brunel and the Great Western Railway. That resulted in a flurry of correspondence, a greatly increased cost estimate for the work required, and concern that permission to demolish the buildings was unlikely. BR stated that, if the local councils could not raise £35,000 by July 1975, the station would be closed. A legal expert advised the Council that - since BR had accepted payment - an agreement had been made and the price could not be altered. Mr Anderson was advised that, if a repayment cheque arrived from BR, he should not accept it. After much correspondence, BR applied for permission to demolish the listed buildings. The work originally discussed was carried out at the original cost to the Council of £13,500 and the Department of the Environment agreed to meet any cost increase.

The District Council then promised to pay one third of the total cost - and the County Council did the same. By August 1977 everything was completed and the final payment was made soon afterwards. It had been a long fight, but the station was saved! The Parish Council had judged it more important to keep a working station than listed, but redundant, historic station buildings.

On 2nd October 1975 'Jonathan' had written in the Stroud News & Journal: "The possibility of success seemed remote - in Stonehouse there were those hardy souls who were not prepared to bow to what seemed inevitable - democracy is very grass-rooted down Stonehouse way - what a story and what an outcome - so we have seen one of those rare David verses Goliath battles fought successfully at Stonehouse."

Jack Anderson made a powerful point when he observed: "It showed that small Parish Councils could stand up to the larger bodies and win".

Bristol Road Station

The railway which became the London Midland Scottish (LMS) line was opened through the western edge of Stonehouse in 1844 and the station, Bristol Road (originally called Eastington Road), with its Cotswold stone waiting rooms was opened on 8th July that year. The platform sign proclaimed "Stonehouse" "Change for Stroud and the Nailsworth Branch". The area around this station and the Nailsworth Branch line station, only about 120 yards away, was an unusually complex set of railway sidings, points, buildings, and foot bridges.



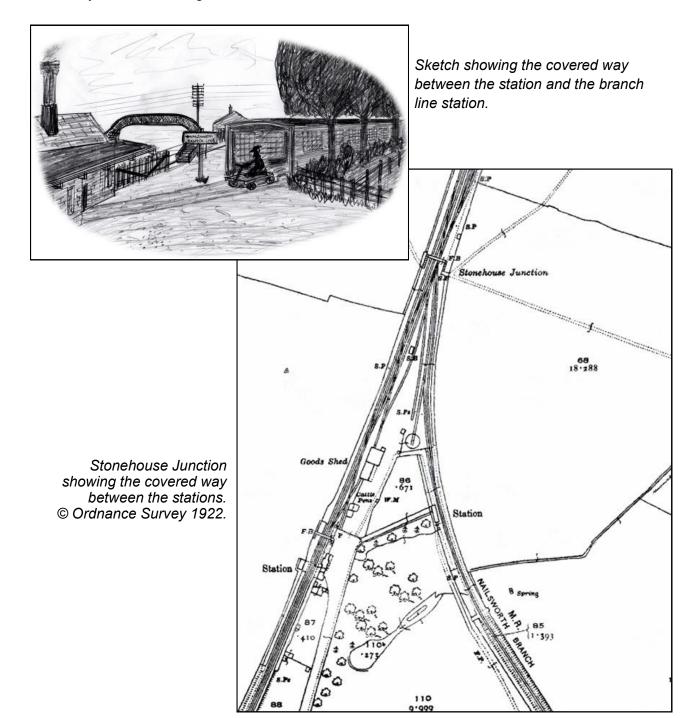


There were three sidings stretching from the station area all the way up to and terminating at Oldends Lane level crossing. There was a siding that went off to the Hoffmann's engineering company premises, which was used from 1940 until 1966, and also a goods shed and a signal box. There was even a small siding alongside the Ocean, by the canal. There was also a turn-table which was used until about 1934. After the station was closed, the area and its buildings were used as a coal concentration depot set up by CW Vick Ltd from October 1966 until 1989.

John Vick worked there on his father's lorries from an early age and mentions in his memoirs that, during the late 1940s, there was a nasty accident on the line. He says that, one morning when he was loading his lorry, there was a great commotion. Apparently the station master, who was "a hell of a nice fellow", had been struck by the train. He'd been supervising a horse box being loaded onto the back of a slow train down to Bristol (all horses went into railway horse boxes in those days) and, after making sure the thing was coupled onto the southbound train, he stepped back, straight into the path of the Pines Express which went about 80 miles an hour.

No man could survive that. Of course they were picking up the pieces of the poor soul and they put him in the waiting room in the branch line station, just out of the way, because everything had to go on just the same. Afterwards John explains: "I was talking to Ernie Partridge, the Red Cross man, who supervised the clearing up operation. I said, Mr Partridge, I admire you for doing that. He said, my son, he never hurt me when he was alive; he isn't going to hurt me when he's dead!"

All that remains of this former busy site today is the station master's house, which is used for offices by an HGV training school.



Nailsworth Branch Line Station



Branch Line Station in 1940s. Sign for the covered way to Bristol Road Station can be seen clearly.



Stonehouse junction in 1920s, showing the Branch Line going off to left.

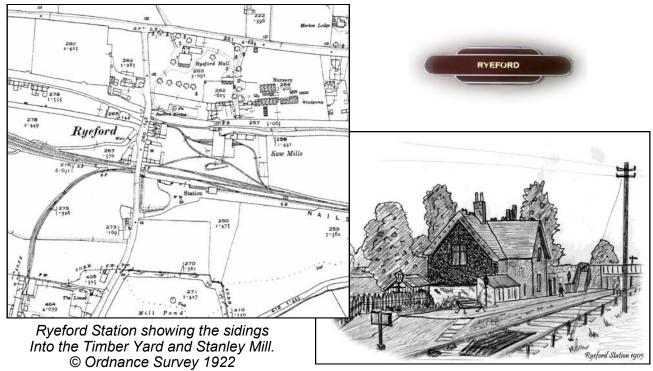
The station building on the Nailsworth branch line at Stonehouse was not like the other grand station buildings; it was made from timber and was opened by the financially struggling Stonehouse and Nailsworth Railway company in 1867. It became part of the Midland Railway (MR) in 1878. The Branch was extended from Dudbridge to Stroud (Wallbridge) in 1885 and the train became known locally as the "Dudbridge Donkey". The line was very busy in its heyday and in 1886 it was possible to make the journey between Stonehouse and Stroud 18 times per day. Intermediate stations were provided at Ryeford, Dudbridge and Woodchester. Passenger traffic ceased in 1947 but the line remained open for freight until 1966. Much of the line was converted into footpath and cycle path in the 1980s.

In June 1901 the footbridge over the branch line near the end of the Park footpath was finished and it replaced the previous level-crossing. There was a covered walkway on a slight slope between the Bristol Road station and the branch line station (see map and sketch on previous page). It was made of corrugated metal with occasional windows each side and was about 120 metres long, which can be clearly seen on the Ordnance Survey map of 1922. The station staff were said to have ridden luggage trollies down the slope for fun. It was demolished in the early 1960s.

Ryeford Station

Ryeford Railway Station, with its unusually wide platform, was half a mile down the branch line from Stonehouse Junction and was also a busy industrial area with sidings into Stanley Cloth Mill and into Ford Brothers' Timber Yard. The station master's house was stone built with a grand porch supported by an ornate pillar. There was a signal box opened in 1885 and a goods shed with a weighbridge in the station yard. In its heyday in the 1920s and 30s, Ryeford was a busy station for passengers, as shown by this extract from the book, Wycliffe College - The First Hundred Years, describing a rag organised by one of the senior boys, after the head master had announced his suggestion for a Wycliffe Campers and Explorers Club:

"An elaborate notice invited all Wycliffe boys to join an expedition on foot and by train, referring to the picturesque Ship Inn which they would pass, and to the romantic journey by train from Stonehouse to Ryeford where refreshments would be available from slot machines.140 boys obtained permission from the master on duty to leave the premises and walked to the Midland Station, where they gueued for tickets costing 1½ d (0.5p in today's money) to Ryeford.



Sketch of Ryeford Station. The siding off to Stanley Mill was to the left under the bridge.

The booking office clerk, realising that his year's supply of tickets would be well nigh exhausted, had the presence of mind to issue the tickets without date stamping them and telephoned his colleague at Ryeford to collect and return the tickets. Some of the station staff became harassed and when one boy asked, "Do we change anywhere?" he received a curt, "Damn you."

The famous "Beetle-squasher's" seating capacity was taxed to the utmost and there were loud cheers as the train passed the Canal and the Boathouse. The supply of refreshments at Ryeford was rapidly exhausted and the boys walked back to school where a conscientious master on duty checked off their names."

Ryeford Station was prone to flooding as is the area today. There are quite a few instances of trains being hampered at Ryeford by floods after a heavy rain storm - in 1901, 1931, and 1947 and again in 1964. The station closed to passengers in June 1947 and to goods in June 1964. However, a special rail tour ran on 7 July 1963, sixteen years after the last passenger train.

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Model of Stonehouse Brick & Tile Co. Ltd. Red 4 plank wagon. © Alan Drewett.

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Stonehouse Burdett Road signal box © RP Marks

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Stonehouse Brick and Tile Company Ltd 1891-1968

by Darrell Webb

The Stonehouse Brick and Tile Company was founded in Stonehouse in 1891 and was set up at the north side of the town alongside the Great Western Railway line, where there was evidence of brick making at that location in 1870. There was a loop line in the nearby railway at Stonehouse which was utilised by the brickworks. This was the brickworks' private siding which was in use from 1891 to 1959.

Stonehouse Brick & Tile Works viewed from Doverow Hill, showing the 202 feet high chimney.



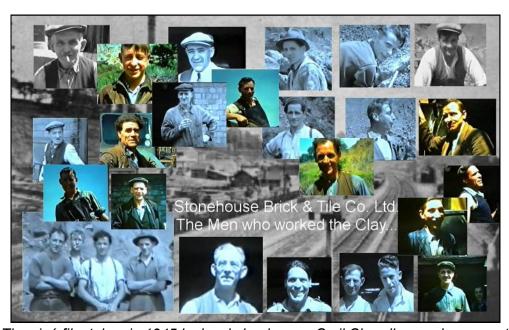
Brick found in my garden in Rosedale Estate

In 1890 the prominent local businessman, Mr Edward Jenner Davies engaged Mr Arthur W Anderson, who was the Manager of Bracknell Brickworks in Berkshire at the time, to investigate the possibility of an economical investment for a brickworks on the Doverow site. Arthur Anderson's site report stated that the place seemed perfect to accommodate itself to the conditions. Anderson, who was only 31 at the time, was appointed as the first works manager and charged with the job of setting up the works from scratch; he stayed in Stonehouse and raised his family here. His grandson, Jack Anderson, later became a JP and chairman of the Parish Council.

Production started a year later and, at its peak, the site covered 20 acres (8.1 hectares) of land and could produce more than two million bricks a year. The bricks were obviously of good quality because they were mainly used in the building of first class residences, railway stations, churches, schools and public buildings, including Stonehouse Post Office which was built by local builder Leo Blick (see photo on page 42). Many local houses were built from bricks produced in Stonehouse including the houses in Queen's Road, Verney Road and Upper Queen's Road, and also many houses in Rodborough. Ridge tiles gave these properties a distinguished look. Bricks were also exported to countries such as Canada, South America and South Africa.

In 1900, the 202 feet (62 metres) tall chimney stack was built by local builder Orchard and Peer to replace two smaller stacks. Some say that it was planned to be only 190 feet tall, but word got around that a chimney in Bristol was taller, so they built it a little over 200 feet which made it the tallest chimney in Gloucestershire! It was a local landmark in the district for a long time and is reputed to have been an aid to navigation for Hitler's bombers on their way to bomb Birmingham in the Second World War. The machinery house and the drying sheds were totally overshadowed by the stack.

In its infancy, the company made handmade bricks and curios on a small scale. However, it grew to become a major brick-producer. The bricks were made from clay obtained from the hillside situated behind the works. The clay had as many as four different seams which added to the quality and variety of the products. The clay was dug out by hand by only a few men, using picks, shovels and wheelbarrows.



The ciné film taken in 1945 by local shopkeeper Cyril Chandler can be seen at http://stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk/stonehouse-brick-and-tile-company-ltd-1891-1968
It depicts the men working at Stonehouse Brick and Tile Company, including Lionel Hill (stoker) and Cyril Hyde (manager).

This collage is made up of photos taken from the film.

The company also made several models of decorative small animals such as rabbits and frogs, which were made at the end of a working week when there was little to do but fire bricks and leave them. There were a lot of pattern makers about who would make a private pattern for a shilling or two; a mould was made from this and the clay for slightly less than a brick would be inserted into the jaws of a sort of large tongs, with the mould, and squeezed. When the tongs were opened, out would come the animal which would be put into the brick furnace to be fired with the bricks. The tong and mould mechanism was ordinarily used for making all the ornamental moulding that you see on local houses; the rabbit is what was called a toy - in other words, something of no real use, made for fun. There is another clay model, not a rabbit, somewhere in the Museum in the Park collection. It is similar to the early garden gnomes.



Examples of some of the decorative models made at the Brickworks



Some fine examples of the buildings made from Stonehouse bricks still remain to this day, some 100 years later, and still look as good as new, which indicates the fine quality brick. The following are examples of such buildings.

The imposing looking St. Philip's Church in Swindon was built in 1904 with Stonehouse bricks and opened in 1905. A local architect (William Masters of Stanton Fitzwarren) was responsible for the design of the present building and the foundation stone was laid by Edith Arkell. There have been many alterations and additions to the church building since it was built. The chancel was not built until the church was six years old and the bell turret was not added until another seventy-five years had elapsed. The single bell originally hung at Nythe Farm – instead of calling farm workers to meals, it now calls parishioners to worship!



St Philip's Church in Swindon
© Rev Carol Stone



English Clock Tower in Buenos Aires © Jorge Gobbi

This beautiful English Clock Tower which was built in the centre of Buenos Aires, Argentina, in 1916 at a cost of £90,000 was built from Stonehouse bricks. It was built to celebrate the centenary of Argentina's independence and provided by the British community. All the materials, including the bricks from Stonehouse, were brought from England, as well as the technical staff. The tower is 75 metres (246 feet) high and has eight floors.

Other buildings include: the "Fairy Tale Castle" type St George's Church in Worcester, built in 1895 (see adjacent photo); Tidworth and Bulford Barracks on Salisbury Plain in Wiltshire built c.1905; Clarence Street and Euclid Street Schools in Swindon built in 1897; and the large and imposing Presbyterian Church of England, designed by William Wallace of London, which was built in 1898 of Stonehouse bricks and Bath stone.



Stonehouse Post Office in Queen's Road was built by local builder A.R. Blick & Son, and opened in 1933 (see page 42 and adjacent photo).

It is said that Stonehouse Police Station (see photo on page 45) was built from Stonehouse bricks. However the building has the date 1890 on its front wall and Stonehouse Brick and Tile Co Ltd did not start until 1891. It is likely that bricks came from the Atlas Works which was a Stonehouse brickyard started



in 1860 and operated by Samuel Jefferies and Sons. It was located in Ryeford, south of the Great Western Railway line. The Police Station was not finished until 1892 so it is possible that Brick and Tile Co. bricks were used in the later stages.

In early 1968 the family decided to close their operation at Stonehouse and concentrate on their other brickworks. It took several months to dispose of the stockpile of some 3 million bricks. After closure some of the main buildings were used for a few years by various small firms.

The dear old Stonehouse Brick and Tile Company's chimney stack was demolished in 1965 (adjacent photo © Don Gaunt). It had been pensioned off after standing over Stonehouse and working for 65 years. I remember my father telling me a story that one of his mates climbed to the top of the stack one dark night in the 1930s, and left his jacket up there to prove he'd been there. I bet it was a big surprise for the brickyard workers to see his jacket the next morning.



The operation inevitably despoiled the local landscape. Over the years a great slice of Doverow Hill was removed and people standing on the hills near Cinderford could look across the vale and see a golden gash in the Cotswold chain. It was unsightly, and in those days there were no industrial planning regulations to ensure that proper restoration of the landscape took place. When production ceased and the Parish Council discussed the area from a planning point of view, it was surprised and pleased to find that the Nature Conservancy considered the clay face to be of high geological interest, and learned that students from schools and universities, as well as experts from the British Museum, often came to Stonehouse to study it, as the area was of considerable educational value.

As the Local Planning Authority, Stroud District Council chose to turn the site into residential development. It was felt that this was preferable to industrial use because of the close proximity to the Town Centre. During the development in about 1978, the derelict buildings and flues presented particular problems. In addition there was no drainage and the clay face was considered dangerous because of slippage. About 135 houses were built on the site to form the Rosedale housing estate and they had to have specially designed foundations because of the clay and former workings. The three new roads were named Rosedale Avenue, Oak Way and Anderson Drive. The latter is in honour of the man who laid out the brickworks and was also its first manager.



In 2000, the Millennium Stone situated outside the High Street Surgery, was sculptured to reflect the history and the character of the town. Several of the symbols pictured upon it celebrate long and successful local industries. A special feature is a Stonehouse brick made from the local clay and inset into the Stone.

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Clock Tower photo ©Jorge Gobbi http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Torre Ingleses Buenos Aires.jpg

St Phillip's Church photo ©Rev Carole Stone

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Rosedale Estate viewed from Doverow Hill, 2012

Arthur French, who was born in Stonehouse in 1920, recalls his interest in the fossils to be found in the Brickworks quarry.

In the 1930s, the area now occupied by Rosedale Estate was an active brickworks. You could walk over the footbridge by Stonehouse GWR station, turn right, and see red-hot bricks being baked in giant kilns. The clay had come from an ever-expanding quarry which was eating away the lower slopes of Doverow Hill.

That clay was of a similar age to the strata of the "Jurassic Coast" of Dorset, and it had plenty of rocks well supplied with fossils like spiral ammonite shells and pointed belemnites. Provided I kept away from the areas where clay was being dug, I could climb over the debris and collect specimens. The Curator of Stroud Museum helped me identify them. He was interested in the terraces of gravel laid down by the River Frome during the Ice Ages. I helped him record any exposures of gravel in the Stonehouse area, on six-inch maps.

In 1938-9 I stayed on for an extra year at Wycliffe College Sixth Form, to try for a university scholarship. Most of my friends had left, and I was a bit lonely. Somehow, I found a group of youngsters, mostly from Springfield, and persuaded them to come fossil-hunting with me. They included Barrie Lavender, Michael Young, Peter Falla (from Jersey), and Frank Brown.

I came back to Stonehouse in 1943 to teach at The Grove. The Curator had died and had not been replaced. When war ended in 1945, people started building large housing estates, and that revealed previously unknown ice-age gravel beds. I got the maps from Stroud Museum, and updated them, in consultation with the Curator of Gloucester Museum. He got to know me well, and when, in 1947, I needed a new job, he helped find me one, with Derbyshire Museum Service for schools. So I can say that the fossils of Stonehouse Brickworks eventually pointed me in the direction of an interesting career.

I left my collection in Gloucester Museum, except for one item. I had found, in the quarry, the remains of a small creature like a crayfish. It's in the Natural History Museum in London, and I have a certificate to prove it!

Station

Station

Station

Stonehouse

Brick & Tile Work

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Brick & Tile Work

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Stonehouse Brick and Tile Company: Site Plan, OS 1:2500 Maps, Glos. 41.14 and 49.2, © Ordnance Survey 1923

Working at Stonehouse Telephone Exchange

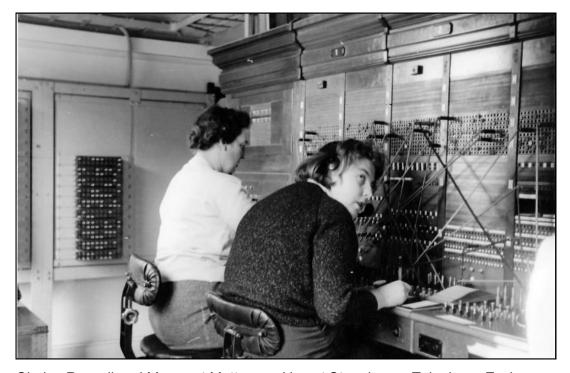
by Margaret Levy

When I pass the Lord John pub in Russell Street, Stroud, I remember when it was the home of the General Post Office (GPO). Just prior to the Second World War my father was training to be a telephone operator at the GPO's Stroud Exchange, after years of unemployment. For a special treat I was allowed to visit the Exchange and was seated next to Dad on a chair which spun round (amazing stuff!). I watched and listened carefully and saw a small red glow. Dad said, "Emergency – which service, please?" As soon as the caller replied, "Ambulance", I knew I was going to be an operator. I was perhaps six years old.

In 1948, when I was about sixteen, I applied to join the GPO Telephone Service. After an interview and a medical check I was appointed. On a wild, dark February evening my father took me to Bristol Station to catch a train to Plymouth, where I was going to stay and train as a telephone operator. It was a step into the unknown. I was deeply shocked at the sight of the war damage in Plymouth. The building where I trained seemed to be one of the few left intact after the bombing. My stay there was six weeks and I lodged with a kind couple, Mr and Mrs Williams, who took me sightseeing along the coast.

When I came back from Plymouth I trained for a month at Stonehouse Exchange where Miss Perkins, the Supervisor, insisted on a high standard of work. There were three switchboards, indicators, rows of tiny lamps, and two rows of plugs and call panels. There were "doll's-eye" indicators (which showed the operator whether or not a circuit was in use) immediately in front of me. When somebody wanted to make a call, a flap would appear: the operator then plugged into the jack alongside and would say "Number, please." To the right was the Visible Index File (VIF). Our pencils (for noting each call) had dialling tops so that there would be no broken finger nails!

In the photo below you can see, to the operator's immediate right, a row of small keys about one inch high. To speak to a caller, the operator had to throw the key forward; to call a number on the Stonehouse exchange the key had to be pulled backwards. This produced the ring to alert the subscriber. A local call was simply recorded but if, for instance, the call was to Bristol (BS) or Swindon (SWN), tickets recording these calls were sent to Gloucester daily. If I picked up an emergency call, all I had to do was to plug into Stroud Direct. Stroud would then ring the required service.



Clarice Russell and Margaret Mutton working at Stonehouse Telephone Exchange.

Margaret may well have been looking at the clock to time a ticket

There were party or shared lines, prefixed with 6. Stonehouse 6404, for example, was the number of Farmer Spencer, a most delightful man who always had a kind word for the operator. One Christmas he came to the Exchange with gifts. He was a man of old-world courtesy.

After a month I was tested by the Gloucester Travelling Supervisor, Miss Ada Mary Smith, during a very busy period. The practical test lasted an hour. After that I had to sit my Establishment Exam and became an operator.

The Stonehouse Telephone Exchange was above the bank on the corner of Queen's Road. When I pass on the bus my thoughts fly back to when I worked there. The room was heated by a coal fire, and there was a coal scuttle that was often replenished; there was a table for the signing On/Off Duty book and various files; at the table would sit an operator sorting tickets for the previous day and making them into neat bundles for despatch to Gloucester in a blue canvas bag. I recall that the floor of the exchange was dark brown lino and our headsets, heavy by today's standards, hung on hooks. There was a sliding panel in the door which could be used to check a would-be intruder.

The staff consisted of three operators who came on duty at 8am when they took over from Mrs Maud Clark, the caretaker operator (*see Maud's photo on page 39*). She resumed her duty at 8pm and, on retiring to bed, she would set the alarm bell to waken her if there were any calls. At a later date I remember Mr Reg Coombes and Mr Fellowes, two male operators, who took over from 8pm until 10pm, which gave Mrs Clark more free time. Once a month, each of us had to work a Sunday shift from 9am to 1pm.

We had a break of ten minutes at 10am. Should we wish to go to Mr Anderson's shop in Queen's Road, we had to get permission from Miss Perkins. Our lunch break was forty minutes. We had a comfortable "rest room" with a single gas ring to boil our kettle, and an armchair and a gas fire. It was the task of the operator, no later than 8.30am, to test the following lines: Stonehouse 123 (King's Stanley Police Station); Stonehouse 155 (Stonehouse Police); 480 and 481 (Standish Hospital); 333 and 334 (Hoffmann's factory); and 340 and 341 (Sperry's factory). The results were recorded as satisfactory or otherwise: if necessary, an engineer would visit (I remember Pete Baxter, Bob Ratcliffe, and George Denton).

I remained at Stonehouse Exchange until 1955.

I still recall some numbers:

113 Ryeford Station

144 Dr Kinsella

145 Dr Murray-Brown

147 Dr O'Dowd

148 GWR Station (now Burdett Road)

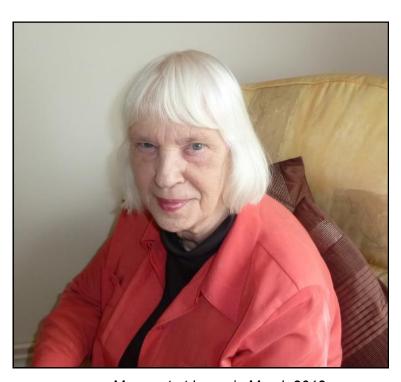
149 Ebley phone box, near the Coach and Horses

258 Brick and Tile Works

259 LMS Railway Station (Bristol Road)

359 Bridgend phone box

496 phone box outside the Post Office



Margaret at home in March 2012

Memories of Stonehouse: Eric Clark

by Vicki Walker and Shirley Dicker

Since our Group was founded in 2008, we have been collecting the memories of people who have lived in Stonehouse. This has been done by talking to people and recording their memories, asking for written accounts and scanning personal photographs. We have published these accounts in our Journal, in Stonehouse News and on our website. We have also saved them in our archive for future use.

It is a time-consuming process and we cannot keep up with the number of people who would like to take part! If you would like to volunteer to record the memories of someone you know, to write down your own memories or arrange for us to come and talk to you please contact us via our website.

In October 2012, Vicki Walker and Shirley Dicker interviewed Eric George Clark about his life in Stonehouse. He lived with his father, Francis, his mother Maud, his brother Douglas and sisters Eveline and Lilian. In 1959 he married Brenda at the Congregational Chapel in High Street.

Eric Clark

I was born in Ruscombe on 20 June 1927. After a couple of years we moved to "Happylands" (Avenue Terrace on the Bristol Road). We lived there for a few years. My Dad, Francis, was a very good gardener and looked after the greenhouses for Mrs Winterbotham at Stonehouse Court and Mrs de Lisle Bush at Eastington Park. He was very good at looking after the special plants like nectarines and melons. The big houses used to have their own hounds. When they went out on the hunt my father used to sit me on the back of his bike and we would follow the hunt. It was a bit rough on the back of the bike, I'll tell you - but we loved it. They gave me the fox's brush once.



Eric's father in WWI uniform.

My father also worked as a postman and he used to walk from here right up to Nympsfield. He was a bit like me really, very joyful and got on well with people. At Christmastime I'm afraid mother didn't get on very well with him because in those days in country places everyone said "Come in and have a drink!" It was all home-



Eric's mother and father on their wedding day c1915.

made wine. He would have so much wine that he was very late home. I remember one day in Avenue Terrace, it was 4 o'clock in the afternoon and my mother was getting het up. She said "Oh, here he is coming along the road!" I can see it now! I was upstairs with my sister when we saw him walking down the road. He had a bit of string and he had a duck on the end! Somebody had given him a live duck! We had it for Christmas dinner.

At that time the Post Office was in the building now occupied by Hurn's Hardware shop (in High Street). My father used to look after the telephone exchange which was in a little room there. After a while they decided to build a better exchange in the house at the corner of High Street and Queen's Road (where the HSBC bank is in 2012). My mother and father became the caretaker operators there in 1931 and our family moved to live there.

I was about four when we moved up to Queen's Road. I remember them building the new Post Office opposite our house in 1933. It was a tough job being caretaker operator. It was seven nights a week. My mother used to go on duty at 8 o'clock at night until 8 o'clock next morning. She'd have to answer any calls. At the weekend she did 4 o'clock on Saturday right round until Monday morning. Of course it was coal fires then and we had to keep all the coal fires going. All the floors were covered in brown linoleum and it was my brother's and my job to keep them clean. We got down on our hands and knees and polished them every week. That's the only way you can polish a floor, get down on your hands and knees. They looked lovely when they were done.



Queen's Road in the 1930s. Our home was the rear and upper part of the building now occupied by HSBC Bank.

It was a beautiful house. You went in the main door and it was all tiled floors and the skirting boards were ten inches high. We had a beautiful front room with a moulded plaster ceiling and a big stone fireplace. There was a very small kitchen with a black range that had to be polished. There was a coal bunker out the back - mother had to order a ton of coal at a time - and a garden beyond that. There was a shop in the room facing on to High Street, it wasn't a bank then. The telephone exchange was in the room above that, facing over the road on to Elgin Lodge where Dr Prout lived. He had a big lawn with a walnut tree. He held whist drives at his place and my mother and

father used to play. Sometimes I would help out by turning the cards over. Upstairs there was a bedroom at the back and then on the top floor a big bedroom where my brother and I slept, and one at the back where my two sisters slept. My brother Douglas was four years older than me and, when the war started, he went in the Navy (I was only fourteen). Then I'm afraid my father died. During the First World War he lost a lung because he was gassed. He always worked outside and eventually he got bronchitis and TB. He was up in Standish Hospital for about five years on and off and he died there in 1939. My mother was left with four children to look after and she took on the job of caretaker operator with our help. We had to learn everything about it. They weren't employing just one because mother couldn't do it all on her own so we all had to help. Then my sisters got married and my brother was in the Navy so it was just me in the end.



Maud Clark, Eric's Mum

My mother was short but she was tough - she ruled the roost! She worked there for thirty six years and we never had a holiday. When we first went there, there were two switchboard positions but they wanted to make four so they took the main bedroom away from us. There were four telephonists then and Miss Perkins was the supervisor. Then they took the front room for a retiring room for the ladies to have their rest. They put a toilet for the telephone girls in the big old larder, so all we had was the little kitchen and our bedrooms. Mum and Dad's bedroom overlooked the back garden and Mr Blick's builders' yard. When my Dad was ill in bed he could hear them making the coffins and he would say, "Oh, somebody else has gone!" I remember there was a tree in Blick's builders' yard. Being a boy I had a pellet gun and liked to aim at the birds. Mr Blick used to have a go at me. He said "I don't mind you shooting the birds but don't you hit these chimney pots!" We got on OK though. Leo's father, Andrew Blick, built our house.

I got to know all the girls. I can remember Margaret Mutton and Clarice Russell (see photo on page 22). The supervisor, Miss Perkins, lived with her sister in a little cottage on High Street where Hurn's Electrical is now. She lived in Stonehouse all her life. I used to shoot pigeons and Miss Perkins and her sister loved pigeons and would give me sixpence for one. We would have some laughs! My father always used to call me "earache" because I kept talking. If anyone left their receiver off there was a plug to put in to make a warning noise. If you put it in your ear it would make you jump! This bloke would ring up and try to chat mother up - she would get fed up with this so she would put him on to the time: "At the third stroke the time will be...." and the bloke would say "I don't want to know the time!" During the war it was very busy. Sometimes the electric went and we had to get the engineer from Ryeford. You got to know who the important people were. We always answered the Police Station first.

I wasn't happy with the Post Office. My mother worked there for thirty six years and all the recommendation she had when she retired was just a little piece of paper saying thank you. She had no pension. She did all the same work as the operators but they were established and they wouldn't do the same for a caretaker. We had the house free of course but we had to keep it clean and tidy. Three or four pounds a week I think she got for long hours and weekends. It was impossible to do it on her own so the family helped. It annoyed me that they didn't recognise her more when she retired.

Stonehouse in those days was so different to what it is now. Mr Sirett used to be the man to shoe the horses. In those days people had big shire horses, and Mrs de Lisle Bush used to bring her hunters. He was only a little man with these big horses and often the horse would begin to push him over! He used to make the horseshoes and I loved it. Have you ever smelled it when they put the shoes on the hooves? I can remember it well. I spent hours there with him working the bellows, and I was often late for school. His workplace was located just round the corner here, towards the community centre, where there is now a house called "The Forge" - that was where the Forge was. Next to it lived a man who made wheels for the wagons.

Of course there was the Queen of Stonehouse - Mrs Timpson! She looked like the Queen, acted like the Queen and came down to Stonehouse in her Rolls Royce. She lived up Standish Lane. She was a nice woman, very good to my mother, and she always sent us something at Christmas. I went shooting with my friends and often took her up two or three rabbits and she was thrilled to bits. One day I was out walking with my sister and we were getting through the hedge just outside her place when my sister had a fit. Of course I came running home, my brother stopped with her. By the time I got back they were bringing her down in a horse and cart from Mrs Timpson's.



I went to Stonehouse County School. This class photo was taken in 1941 just before I left to go to work at Hoffmann's.

Eric is in the top row, fourth from left.

Quite a few of the children in the photo were evacuees. Mr and Mrs Barton were the teachers. Mr Barton sometimes brought his dog to class. I remember when I was in Miss Gleed's infant class, she would line us all up and give us a piece of tissue paper that oranges used to come wrapped in. Then she taught us how to

blow our noses using the tissue paper – and I've been blowing my nose properly ever since!

I served my apprenticeship as a carpenter at Hoffmann's starting when I left school at fourteen. There were six carpenters in the workshop there. Sid Smith used to teach me and took me out rabbit shooting as well.



I was called up in June 1945 when I was eighteen. I wanted to go in the Army as a carpenter but I couldn't at first. They sent me to Catterick to the Royal Corps of Signals. I was the only Englishman among a group of Scotsmen from Glasgow. I was trained to be a Lineman. I had to put big posts up and then climb up them with irons on and a strap round me and put the power lines up. Eventually they said I could take the trade test, which I passed, and I became a carpenter in the Royal Armoured Corps. The first place I went to was Trieste in Italy. I could never get enough food in the Army - I used to get fed up with bread and cheese. I always remember going to a little village near our barracks. I used to go to this little taverna with a friend of mine who was a Colonel's batman. We would go in and have steak and chips and a nice bottle of red wine. The young lady who served us was called Rosita; she couldn't speak English. We used to go in so regular that her mother invited us to eat with them in their parlour. She was a lovely woman and very good at crochet. I did 3 years National Service with the 4th Hussars at Trieste, the 9th Royal Lancers in Egypt and Palestine and the King's Dragoon

Guards in North Africa. I enjoyed my time in the Army.

When I came out of the Army I went back to work as a carpenter at Hoffmann's. We had some good times there; when I look back now they were some of the best years of my life. However, as time went on I thought I wanted something better so I applied for a job as a civilian instructor in the prison service. I had all my City and Guild certificates from Stroud Technical College. I went for an interview and I got the job. I was a relief instructor for a while and went to all sorts of places covering for people. I went down to Portland Borstal a lot. It was good working at Leyhill Prison which had different workshops for the prisoners to learn trades. I was in the Production Shop and we used to make everything under the sun. I was getting on quite well but I was married then and I needed a permanent post. I looked around and they wanted an instructor at a new Wellingborough Borstal. I had a good interview and was offered the job. As a civilian I would have needed to get my own house but they offered me a house for three years. I contacted the Home Office and asked if I could take the job but they insisted I went to Hull for a year first. I had worked at Hull and I wouldn't wish anyone to go there. It was a top security place and you couldn't get the men to do anything. I wouldn't do that so I packed it in.

I got a job in Gloucester with Bang and Olufsen, repairing cabinets. Then they asked me to do complete shop fitting which I had always wanted to do. I was in charge of several men. I enjoyed refurbishing old shops; measuring up, building the furniture and fitting it. Then I had a call from the prison service asking me to go back on better money. I went to Bang and Olufsen and told them and they promoted me to shop fixture manager. I didn't know what to do but I stayed there. A year later they called me into the office and said they were shutting down my section and I was out of work. I went to the MoD at Quedgeley and started again back on the bench, refurbishing furniture for the Army and Navy - maybe two or three thousand dining room tables or chairs to mend. After a year I became a charge hand and then two years later got the job as Principal Technical Officer. A firm called Serco came in and took over for five years. I had to apply for my job again but they were a good firm to work for. They asked me to increase production by 100% from twenty five carpenters to fifty! I was also in charge of six paint sprayers and seven upholsterers. Then they put in for the tender again and lost it! In the end it was all shut down. That was the story of my life at work - lots of ups and downs!

I moved out of Queen's Road in 1959 when I got married. We had rooms at the end of Aldergate Street with Emmie Townsend. She was a real Stonehouse person who used to support Gloucester Rugby. Then we had a flat in High Street over Mr Wilcox's chemist shop. It was a beautiful flat but we had to carry the coal upstairs. Then we bought a new house in Little Australia in about 1971 and lived there until 1977 when we moved to Rosedale Estate. When my wife died in 2007, I bought this flat in Elgin Court.

Eric in 2012

Stonehouse Post Office – a building to celebrate

by Shirley Dicker and Vicki Walker

In 1932 a new telephone exchange was opened in Stonehouse above Blick's Builders' shop on the corner of High Street and Queen's Road (where HSBC Bank is in 2012). A Stroud News reporter visiting it commented unfavourably on the existing Post Office which was in a former draper's shop in the centre of High Street (now Hurn's Hardware). He noted "a faint but obvious advertisement on the plate-glass windows, for somebody or other's corsets!" However, he also informed his readers that a brand new Office, with all the latest improvements, was being planned.

Local builder Leo Blick had already been approached by the General Post Office (GPO) to use the land opposite his house and shop on the corner of Queen's Road. This land had been used as the garden for his property. Mr Blick agreed to this and he was asked to present a design for a new Post Office. His design having been accepted, A.R. Blick and Son were awarded the contract. Mr Blick intended that it should be a timeless building of which Stonehouse residents could be proud. Not only was it built of local bricks made in Stonehouse, but Blick also tried to obtain all other materials locally and employed local men to do the work.

The new Post Office was seen as a credit to both the postal authorities and the contractors and a symbol of the growing prosperity of Stonehouse and its district. The exterior of the building remains very similar today (see adjacent photo).

It has large windows and a pair of oak panelled doors on the corner entrance. The public part is still a spacious and airy room with traditional counters (see adjacent photo). Unfortunately it no longer boasts a black glass desk for the writing of telegrams or inkwells selected with an eye to beauty! Other "modern features" included an automatic stamp machine and a posting box which received

letters straight into the sorting room. There was a telephone cubicle built into the interior wall.

Adjoining the public area was the post master's office and the sorting room (see adjacent photo). A newspaper reporter, after the official opening on 2nd November 1933, noted the sensible design of the rooms with no timewasting corridors or inconvenient steps. He was most impressed with the retiring rooms for both male and female staff, where "nothing had been skimped in maximum providing comfort cleanliness". There was electric light throughout the building, with the latest strip lights in the public area and shadow-less lamps in the sorting room.





Lady Beatrice Marling, in the temporary role of postmistress, sold Mr Robert Perkins, MP for Stroud, a penny stamp. ©The Citizen

The grand opening was seen as an opportunity for the officials to meet community leaders and to keep in touch with the public. Sir Stephen Tallents, Public Relations Officer of the GPO, opened the doors with a golden key. In his speech, he noted that some 900,000 letters came into Stonehouse annually, whereas only about 600.000 went out. He joked that perhaps Stonehouse people were more up-to-date than their correspondents and replied by telephone! Neither Mr Perkins nor Mr W. A. Sibly, Headmaster of Wycliffe College, could resist a political plea for the return of the penny post! Chairman of the Parish Council, Captain B.D. Parkin, stressed the geographical importance of Stonehouse and paid a tribute to the efficiency of the local postal staff, not forgetting the messenger boys. Mr Leo Blick presented Sir Stephen with a souvenir key and Master Alan Blick, aged three years old, presented Lady Marling with a bouquet of flowers.

Around September 1993, the sorting room became redundant when new premises were opened at Salmon Springs in Stroud. In February 2002. Stonehouse Town Council bought the Post Office building from the Blick family, and converted the former sorting room into our fine Town Hall retaining its splendid mapleblock floor. The Town Council moved into its new premises on 10th November 2003 and the Post Office remained open for business.



Guests at the opening Capt. B. D. Parkin, C.A. Jackson (GPO Surveyor), Leo Blick, Caroline Winterbotham, Sir Stephen Tallents, Lady Marling, Robert Perkins, W.A. Sibly, Arthur Winterbotham

Those at the sides may be Captain F.G. Lee (Postmaster at Stonehouse), Mr H.D. Macdonald (Head Postmaster at Stroud), Mr Hill and Mr Foxworthy (Post Office staff).

Sources of Information

The New Stonehouse Post Office, Stroud News and Gloucester County Advertiser, November 1933.

SHG Oral History interviews of Mrs Valerie Blick in 2010 and 2012.

Acknowledgements

With thanks to Valerie Blick for sharing her memories of the Blick family's part in the design and construction of the building, the loan of an original newspaper article and access to an extensive collection of photographs, some of which are reproduced here.

Memories from Stonehouse Police Station by Ken Dicker

"Have you put the kettle on?" were the words which started many a day's work at Stonehouse Police Station! I had transferred to Gloucestershire in the early 1970s, from Glamorgan where I started my career. At the time Gloucestershire had a very good reputation as being a family friendly Force to work for, and it was this in particular which had attracted me, and others, to the County. Having had a couple of years in Coleford, I made the move to Stonehouse and was happily based there for eleven years. In Glamorgan being a member of the Dog Team meant that I was working on all the major crimes in the County, so the move to Gloucestershire was a complete contrast. Getting back on the beat meant meeting many people from the local community and getting to know them and their families well. This for me was the real appeal of the job and a memory which I treasure.

When I arrived, Stonehouse was little more than a large village. The housing estate of Little Australia had not been built and much of the Oldends Lane industrial area was still fields. The majority of the residents worked locally - with the High Street shops catering for most people's everyday needs. It did not take too long before I knew most of the locals by sight, name and reputation. Those were the days when there was respect for the Police and a word from the local bobby would generally be followed up by parents at home, should their youngsters be misbehaving or causing a problem. We knew the good families and the bad, those who were likely to be involved in crime and naturally those who would feed us information about what was going on. Involvement with the community was at the heart of policing in those days and meant that much of the crime could be solved promptly and by officers the locals knew. Most of what we dealt with was what would nowadays be classed as petty crimes: break-ins, fights and theft. Riding bicycles on the pavement and motorists not using their headlights were the common issues. The lawbreaking of today - violent assaults, murders and drug-related crimes were not a daily feature of our lives. I believe I am right in saying that, at this time, Station provided 24 hours a day Police coverage. There were three shifts per day generally with two policemen on duty at a time, as well as the sergeant who often worked split shifts and was frequently based at the station. There was also an inspector overseeing the Stonehouse area.



Ken with his dog Cora, in the early stages of training, outside Police Headquarters, Bridgend. Glamorgan in the early 1960s.

Inside the main door at the front of the Police Station there was another door leading into the interior of the building. The floors were always brushed thoroughly by the cleaner who arrived around 8.30am and who took a pride in polishing the thick linoleum until it shone. Behind a long wooden-topped counter (complete with a hinged drop-down section that allowed access) stood the duty officer, to whom the members of public spoke when they came to report crimes, ask advice, to show their driving licences or hand in items of property. To the rear of this was the main office area to which members of the public did not have access, with desks and filing cabinets. There was a big oak table in the centre of the floor and a smaller one against the far wall with steel baskets on top relating to various officers and work to be done. In here was an old, iron, coal-fired stove for heating the immediate area and a door which opened onto a passageway to the two cells at the rear of the Police Station.



Stonehouse Police Station and Petty Sessional Court around 1900

The cells had no heating and so they were very cold, particularly in winter. I do not remember there being prisoners held in these cells as they were collected and taken to Stroud. Each cell had a large heavy door with a spy hole, a little glass window high up and an electric light. It also had a bed made of planks and the prisoner, should there be one, was to be given blankets. There was a toilet within the room and, outside, there was an exercise yard. Beyond this were two Police Houses similar to others which were found throughout the district and were owned by the County. The Court House was originally next door in the same building and when this closed around 1985 all matters were dealt with at Whitminster.

For the Police officers there was a cloakroom which was heated by the coal boiler and electric fires. Leading from this was a drying room with extra heaters and it was here that wet coats could be hung before going off duty - in hope that they would have dried off when you got back for your next shift. Behind the cloakroom was the kitchen and our restroom complete with table, chairs, water heater and a sink, and steel lockers allocated for personal use. There was also a noticeboard which had the usual mixture of notices - from those containing information for immediate attention for an officer coming on duty to the rude personal notes with blunt hints to clear up after vourself! There were, naturally, the inevitable disagreements over who had or had not washed out mugs and who had left them for someone else. Those with a more hygienic attitude had their own mug which was kept in their own locker. We were told by the sergeant what times our meal breaks would be each day. We brought our own sandwiches and there was a gas stove which was sufficient to warm a tin of soup. We contributed to the cost of coffee and tea and regular callers such as motor patrol would put a shilling in the tin. There was no fridge provided but we had a friendly arrangement with the Dairy next door whereby, when we ran short of milk, we went through the back door, helped ourselves to a pint or the smaller ½ or ½ pint bottles and left the money on the table.

There was a small telephone room, fitted out with a seat and wooden desk on which were paper, pens and pencils. Every telephone message was written down on the 'signal pad'. The page was then taken out and placed in the 'signal folder' to which all officers had access. The sergeant would detail the officer required to attend by writing his name on the 'signal pad' against the message. We also had a switchboard to contact the men on duty at the sub-stations, such as King's Stanley, which were responsible to Stonehouse. At that time we were reliant on the telephone at the Station for all communication.

This was before personal radios - and of course mobile phones - which allow immediate contact anywhere - day or night. Should a member of the public telephone the Station while it was unoccupied, the message would be put on an answerphone/tape-recorder system which could only be retrieved when an officer returned to the station. There were no means for diverting a call or passing on a message. It could only be dealt with when someone returned and checked the telephone. Communication was also by telephone with the local Headquarters in Stroud and other local stations such as Whiteshill, Rodborough, Minchinhampton, Chalford and Bisley. In the main office on a noticeboard there was a map of the area we covered, along with notices regarding forthcoming local events such as shows or processions which would need our attendance. Posters showing the faces of wanted criminals were on display so we could familiarise ourselves with their features. There was an *In* and an *Out* tray in the main office. Anything needing attention was in the Out tray for whoever was on duty to deal with: reports of incidents, requests for help, warrants and summons making up the majority of tasks. Anything which was addressed personally to a Police constable was also here for collection. The *In* tray held items such as new summons to be served, warrants to be executed and files sent back from the sergeant marked with alterations required to be made by the officer completing them.

Once you had left the Police Station you were literally 'out of contact' and communication could be made only by speaking face-to-face with either a colleague or member of the public. If you were needed, someone had to come and find you. Anything which needed to be relayed to a constable on foot patrol would be done personally by the sergeant, who would occasionally come and meet you somewhere. Before leaving the Station to start patrolling, these 'Points' were fixed by the Sergeant so that he could meet up with you at pre-arranged times, to relay important messages or pass on information about any local incidents which had occurred after you had left the Station. You would then go ahead and deal with it. In today's world where instant communication is the norm it seems hard to believe that, as a foot patrol officer, you knew nothing about incidents happening even on a nearby road because there was no communication other than verbally from members of the public or the sergeant. If you needed support you had to ask a member of the public to request assistance on your behalf from the Police Station. In time, important messages could be sent to Stroud who had early radio contact and they would send a man from Stroud to find you and assist if it was an emergency.

Most patrol duties were undertaken on foot, with the seven or eight Beats associated with the Police Station to be patrolled over a period of time. We were told at the start of our shift which Beat was allocated for that day - these being known by number. It was then up to us to cover that area in our own time attending any incident that arose and dealing with warrants or summons. The beat covering High Street, for example, went to the junction for Ryeford, along the Bristol Road to the bottom of Regent Street, past the Ship Inn and the Upper Mills Trading Estate. Bridgend was covered and we went as far as Hoffmann's and back up Oldends Lane to the top of town opposite the Plough Motors. It was our duty to speak with members of the public and to check that cars and properties were secure. We also offered advice about crime prevention. Although officers on duty were allocated a Beat to patrol, they attended any incident occurring within the Stonehouse area regardless of which Beat they were on.

Our shifts were 6am - 2pm; 2pm -10pm and 10pm - 6am. There was also an evening shift 6pm - 2am which overlapped the main shift. Constables would arrive around 15 minutes before their shift started. We had to book on, writing in the thick, leather-bound ledger which we called The Journal. The Journal had started on the day the Station opened and was a continual daily log of all events - who was on duty, what incidents had occurred. Against the time, which was our first entry in the initial column, a comment such as 'PC Dicker on duty - posted to ...' recorded. The ledger was a complete record of all happenings which occurred relative to each shift, day by day. Completed Journals were stored along with other documents in the office cupboards and the new one would take its place as required. The lined pages were smooth, thick, top quality writing paper and everything was cross referenced with numbers being allocated to incidents for easy reference. Entries varied in length and detail, depending on what was happening in Stonehouse that day. On returning to the Station from walking his Beat the constable would firstly check whether any telephone communications had been missed - from the wandering stray dog to reports of a theft. A number was then allocated to this call and this information was recorded in the signal book before being entered into the journal with the same incident number being logged here in the left hand column. Often the officer required to deal with this would have their name added. Consequently the next person who opened the Journal could

see the record of the incident, who was dealing with it, what action had been taken and could also cross check against the same number reference made in the signal book where the original message had been recorded. The Inspector from Stroud came once or twice a week to sign the Journal to indicate that he was up to date with goings-on in the area. If you were there when he arrived you would get out your pocket book and he would sign the bottom line on it to show he had seen your notes regarding what you had done that shift.

It was very rare that we ever went on duty in twos. We were always on our own, apart from an occasional Friday or Saturday night, when a pair might be told to be in the general vicinity of pubs in centre of town. We then patrolled this area together until around midnight. At night time you patrolled the area as best you could - checking that property was secure being a high priority. This was literally checking that doors and windows to premises were secure as only a few buildings were fitted with alarm systems in these days. Sometimes Stroud might request assistance and a vehicle would be sent across to collect an officer from Stonehouse. He would patrol the town centre thus releasing the Stroud town officers to the more crucial operation for which they were needed. When I first arrived we had no police cars at Stonehouse but, in these early days, there was a pushbike at the station for longer trips or a speedier response. At one period I did use a water-cooled motorbike which was very reliable although not particularly fast. Later a 250cc BSA motorbike was allocated to us.

Looking back on those days I have two main impressions. Firstly, regarding the changes in communication and what this has meant to the service which can now be offered to the public. In my lifetime we have gone from the sergeant walking the streets to pass on a message, to the on-line and hand-held computer systems with instant messaging. My other thoughts concern the importance of being a part of your community and building relationships with members of the public. The sudden population increases with housing and industrial/business developments have forced this to change and the police have had to get into cars to facilitate the quick responses which are demanded now.



P.C. Dicker receiving his long service award.



Ken on his 80th birthday

Yet this community spirit is what is once again being regarded as being at the centre of good policing. In my day, you were out patrolling the Beat — taking your time, with the Beat being wherever you walked. You were there amongst the people. It was your job to become part of that community and to be aware of the things which were going on - to build a picture of the district. Information was gathered from people you knew or by engaging in conversation - just having a chat or over a cup of tea — "Ah! There it is that cup of tea!"

Memories of Stonehouse: Betty Powell

by Vicki Walker and Shirley Dicker

We interviewed Betty Powell about her life in Stonehouse. She worked at Standish Hospital from 1937 to 1940. Then she moved to Gloucester Aircraft Company from 1940 to 1943. She worked at the hairdressers by the Globe Inn from around 1947 to the late 1960s when she returned to work at Standish Hospital as Catering Manager, until she retired in 1983. Betty has always been involved in community activities. She and her sister helped at the Community Centre for many years and Betty is still treasurer of the Pop In Club and helps organise entertainments for the members.

Betty Powell, née Price, was born in Wales in 1921. She lost both parents when she was 12 and lived with her auntie. In 1937 she met an old school friend who was working at Standish Hospital and suggested that Betty could get a job there. So Betty went to work at Standish Hospital as a catering assistant at the age of 16. Her sister, who was working in London, joined her the following year.

Betty remembered.....

"I started at Standish in the catering department. I was living there in the staff accommodation - a building three stories high and my room was on the top floor. Pay was 2 guineas per month, plus lodging and uniform included. We had a pink striped uniform with a frilly hat. They were very particular about cleanliness; everything was spotless. There was a matron - believe me, she was strict!

We had one Sunday morning or afternoon off a week. We weren't supposed to go out at night but the local lads used to come up to see us so we would sneak out. We had to watch out for Postie Davis who patrolled the grounds! We did sneak out but Sister Townsend, the night sister, came to the building to check up on us. The building had a massive door which she had locked at about half eight or nine. She came back later to check we were in and left the door open while she went upstairs. She would shout, "Goodnight Betty" - and of course I was not there. We were scared because we were only 16 and we'd have been dead if we were caught out. I used to run in through the open door and slip into my friend's bedroom on the bottom floor. I would get my coat off and be lying on her bed relaxing when Sister came round, pretending I didn't know it was so late! Then I went back to my



Catering staff at Standish Hospital; Betty is at the right end of the back row

own room. Some years later I was working at the hairdresser's in Stonehouse, next to the Globe. I used to wash Sister Townsend's hair, pin it up and comb it out. She said to me one day, "You must think I'm green! I know just what you did!"

The lads used to come up to see us. Things today are entirely different; we never thought about sex and things like that. The furthest we got was a kiss and that was it. I met my husband, Jack Powell, the second week I was here, although I didn't know it then! He thought I was all right and I thought he was all right. Of course the most they had was a bike. My boyfriend would come up on roller skates and I'd have one skate and he'd have the other. That's the sort of fun we had. We went to the cinema in Stonehouse sometimes. We used to walk miles.

We had a small shop at Standish which I helped with. My sister and I would buy things like a small tin of Heinz beans with a bit of fat in it or a tin of mixed fruit and a tin of cream. We used to go down to Mullins and buy material or Bradley's shoe shop to buy a pair of shoes. We went in one day and bought suede court shoes. I had bought the wrong size, so I borrowed my sister's shoes to go out and lost one of them in the mud!



Standish was a beautiful place to work with the gardens and the peacocks but it was also very sad. TB was raging and lots of people died. We had to have a TB injection. The wards were full of children and I remember they had prunes and rice pudding every day. We had dances once a year at Standish which the doctors organised for the staff. I was there when a lot of the new blocks were built.



Staff at a dance in December 1938.

One time an electrician asked me out. I refused at first because I had a boyfriend, but eventually I agreed. In the meantime I went into Stonehouse and met my boyfriend and he asked me out that night. His friend Nigel Brockley worked as a chauffeur for Frocester Manor and he had borrowed the car. I said I couldn't come out as I had to wash my hair! He said, "Oh forget your hair and come out," but I said no. Come eight o'clock I was walking along. The chap was stood there with a motorbike and my boyfriend was there with his pushbike. He asked me where I was going and I

said, "Just getting some fresh air!" He said, "You might as well come for a walk with me then," and walked me right past the chap I was meant to be seeing. He didn't ask me out again! It was all a bit of fun and I enjoyed life.

I was working at Standish when war was declared. One of the girl's boyfriends was in the forces - the Browns who lived in one of the old houses on the Green. She was determined to get married even though Matron said she couldn't have time off. She got a special licence and we all gave her something towards her wedding.

I got married in 1941 to Jack Powell. He was 21 and I was 19. We were married in a small town called Bethlehem in Wales. I was keen to start a family and had a son, Barry, but he never saw his father until he was 3 years old because Jack was away in the army. We often did not hear anything from him for weeks when he was away. I was living at Crowcumpill Cottage, just past Horsemarling Lane, with my sister. Eventually Jack came home on leave and I had a daughter but this time he came home again before she was born. Eight years later I had another two daughters.





Crowcumpill Cottages, Gloucester Road

One day a glider came down in the field next to us. The Army came to see me and my sister to see if we would feed the soldiers looking after the glider. We were out at Captain Gibbs' garden party at Malt House and they came looking for us and asked us to feed them. We only had a black grate to cook on and our rations, but we said yes. Four men slept in the glider and came to the house to eat. We had a box of chocolates each for feeding them for a week. We had lots of people coming to see the glider.

It was quite hard when we lived in Crowcumpill because we had this black grate. You were only allowed so much coal, so my sister and I used to go up the hill and get some wood. One day we saw some coal on the railway line so we crawled down there to get it and, as a train went past, one of the men threw us a bit of coal. One day we went and the side of a coal wagon had come off so we went up and filled our sacks. A little while after officials came to ask us about it but we said we didn't know anything about it!

In about 1940, I went to work at Gloucester Aircraft. I made spars for the planes for war work. My sister came as well. Although I was married in 1941, I carried on working until I had my son Barry in 1943.

When Barry was only four months old he was rushed into Stroud Hospital and a German doctor operated on him. I had to go up there several times a day to feed him – it was touch and go. A car from Gardiner's Garage took me to hospital a couple of times. Other times I stayed overnight at a B&B and went to Stratford Park during the day while I was waiting to visit him.

I used to have my hair done in the hairdressers by the Globe. It was kept by a Canadian family called Davis. When I was living in Wales I would help in the hairdressers sometimes. One day I was saying about how I had finished with my baby's pram — one of the big high ones — and I thought I would turn it into a tea trolley and go round the houses! Mr Davis said "Betty do you want a job?" I said I hadn't really thought of it, but the older children were going to school and my neighbour would look after the youngest, so I went there to work and stayed for twenty years.

I went back to catering at Standish in the late 1960s and worked there until I was 61. I ended up as Catering Manager. We had a lovely time at Christmas, they really went to town. We catered for 130 -140 people in two sittings. Everyone helped with the decorating. The women there made a lot of decorations and people loved it. They gave me a big send off when I retired.

I remember the bad snow in 1963. It was really heavy and drifting. We were walking along the road by Standish and suddenly I kicked something and thought that's funny! I had only walked on top of a Mini! They wouldn't believe me when I got to Standish!

We lived at Crowcumpill for 50 years. It had big lawns and a tennis court which eventually became too much for us. So we moved to Ryelands Road in 1992. I lived there for 8 years with my husband and stayed 4 years on my own. Jack died aged 80 in 2000. I bought my flat in Orchard Court opposite the Co-op in 2004. I am lucky to have a close family, four children and eight grandchildren, who gave me a lovely 90th birthday party this year. I count my blessings that I have such a good life."

Sources of information

Atkinson, Gillian (Telephonist/Receptionist, Main House, Standish Hospital), *A photographic history of Standish House and its occupants*, 2004 (photo of Standish staff)

SHG Oral History interviews – Mrs Betty Powell, May 2012. Photographs © Betty Powell



Betty in 2012

Do you have any interesting historical photographs of Stonehouse?

Shops or pubs
Stonehouse industries
Schools
Streets or houses
Roads, bridges, railways
Fetes, fairs or other activities

We would like to borrow them to scan for our collection.

We can scan them in your home using our laptop 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.

May we record your memories?

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

At the moment we are researching the pubs, Stonehouse during both World Wars, industries and the development of High Street. If you think you could help with information on any of these topics please phone Vicki Walker on Stonehouse 826 334 or contact us via our website www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk

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