



Stonehouse History Group
Annual Report May 2022 – April 2023



From May 2022 we started to return to normal meetings following the lockdown restrictions. Initially, attendance numbers averaged only 36 per meeting. However, numbers attending have gradually increased to an average of around 50. Although we have lost some members, paid-up membership being at 71, we have attracted quite a few new attendees and we hope they will become members this year.

We have continued to work on our community projects. Jim Dickson organised the restoration of the milestone near the High Street Medical Centre, enlisting the help of expert David Lovegrove. The plate was carefully removed and the stone stabilised and repaired before refixing the newly painted plate. Thanks to Paul Dicker for the painting and Andrew Walker for assisting with the work.

In September 2022, we took part in the Stonehouse Walking Festival with Vicki Walker, Shirley Dicker and Jim Dickson offering two history walks: a High Street walk and one to St Cyr's Church, the canal and the railway viaduct. Vicki and Shirley have also visited Moreton Hill Care Centre and Stonehouse Pensioners' Club with our presentations about the town's history. We have assisted Maidenhill School in preparing a history walk for Year 7 students and accompanying them on the walks. Shirley took members of the WI on the High Street walk.

We have created another Information Board on the history of Blick's Builders, sponsored by the late Valerie Blick, which has been fixed to the wall of the Town Hall in Queen's Road.

Shirley Dicker has continued to manage our Facebook site, which generates many interesting comments and photographs. We have added information to the website and hope to continue to add more as time allows. We have done our best to answer a variety of enquiries about different aspects of Stonehouse history, including local people, individual houses, the GWR railway station, and local farms and industries. Quite often the enquirers have given us old photographs to add to our extensive collection.

Kate Quarry has taken over the role of Events Manager, booking speakers and organising visits.

We produced a calendar for 2023, containing historic photographs re-coloured by Rich White. Issue 10 of our Journal was published in February 2023 and is selling well.

Our bank balance has now risen slightly with increased attendance at meetings and opportunities to sell calendars and journals. However, the cost of hiring the hall and fees for visiting speakers has increased considerably and so we are proposing to increase the entrance fee for meetings for the first time in 15-years, to £2 for members and £3 for non-members from June 2023.

Thanks to Simon Lewis for auditing the SHG accounts.

Committee, May 2022 - April 2023

Chair - Jim Dickson

Vice-Chair and Facebook manager - Shirley Dicker

Secretary and Website manager - Vicki Walker

Treasurer - Andrew Walker

Events Manager - Kate Quarry

Committee - David Bowker-Praed, Linda Collazo, Janet Hudson

Stonehouse History Group
Events 2022-23 (attendance in brackets)

May 11th (41)

AGM followed by:

Vicki Walker – *The history of Police Stations in Stonehouse.*

Vicki gave a presentation of photographs showing where the police stations were from 1851 to 2012, and talked about some of the policemen who lived there.

June 8th (37)

Diana Humphrey from Whisper and Shout – *The world of puppets.*

Diana showed how puppetry has developed in different cultures through photographs, video clips and demonstrations using genuine puppets collected from around the world.

July 13th (31)

David Saunders – *More to this case than meets the eye.*

David explained the mysterious case of a murder Police Sergeant that took place in Calais in 1918.

August 10th Via Zoom (20)

Vicki Walker repeated - *The history of Police Stations in Stonehouse.*

September 14th (35)

Howard Parker – *Bringing back the Railway to Berkeley and Sharpness.*

A historical perspective of the Severn and Wye Railway on the eastern side of the Severn and how the Vale of Berkeley Railway Trust is building a new heritage railway attraction for Gloucestershire.

October 12th (56)

Vernon Harwood – *The BBC at war.*

The role of the BBC in World War II.

November 9th (38)

Andy Meller – *The Glosters at Waterloo.*

The Glosters are a unique regiment and, in the talk, we followed them as they took part in the battle at Quatre Bras on 16th June 1815 and then two days later at Waterloo itself.

December 14th (45)

Kirstie Bingham – *A Tudor Christmas.*

Kirstie, from John Moore Museum in Tewkesbury, talked about how the Tudors, from the King to the common man, enjoyed the festive period. Followed by seasonal refreshments.

2023

January 11th (57)

Tony Conder – *Gloucester's Victorian Docks.*

Tony brought the stories of people who worked at the docks to life with a series of historic photographs.

February 8th (47)

Short talks by our members.

Roy Edwards - *Anglia Provincia – the Nuremberg Chronicle 1493: part 2.* **John Peters - *Heirlooms Deferred: items relating to Gloucestershire tobacco, left to him in 1938 and received 2022.*** **Phil Bischler - *The history of corrugated iron (CGI), a versatile building material.*** **Cresby Brown – *Local Tollhouses.*** **Alex Walmsley - *Arthur William Anderson – first manager of the Stonehouse Brick & Tile Works.***

March 8th (52)

Kate Peake and Angela Rendell – *Gloucester Cathedral and the Abbey of St Peter.*

Kate and Angela's short films and photographs of the Cathedral showed close ups of aspects rarely seen.

April 12th (52)

John Putley – *Witchfynder: a history of witches.*

A history of witches through the ages, revealing how they were discovered and treated, plus tales of Gloucestershire witches.