

# Stonehouse History Group Journal



**Issue 3**

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

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

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Front cover sketch "*The Spa Inn c.1930*" ©Darrell Webb.

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#### Editorial Team

Vicki Walker - Co-ordinating editor

Jim Dickson - Production editor

Shirley Dicker

Janet Hudson

John Peters

Darrell Webb

### Why not become a member of our group?

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Stonehouse History Group Journal

Issue 3, May 2013

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# Les Pugh 1915 -2013

by Shirley Dicker

Les Pugh died on 4th April at 2:30am, aged 97. He was our oldest Stonehouse History Group member and a popular figure in Stonehouse.



*Les, by Barnard Parade, in 2008*

Les was born on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1915 and went to Eastington Primary School, where he remembered using slate boards and slate pencils to do his work. He went on from there to Marling Boys' Grammar School and to working as a foundryman at Lister's in Dursley. He attended Eastington Church all his life and that is where the funeral was held on 16<sup>th</sup> April.

He married Peggy in 1939 and they had a daughter Rosemary and an adopted son Michael. Les was in the Stonehouse Home Guard during World War Two and shared with us many memories about his time training for the expected invasion. He wrote articles for the Stroud News and Journal and published a book called "*Les Pugh's Memories*" in 2008.

I will always remember Les as a real gentleman. Whenever he saw you he would tilt his hat. He was always smartly dressed whenever he was out. Everyone knew him and loved his stories about his childhood days and he loved to go to his old school to talk to the children. There was hardly a day when Les would not ring Radio Gloucestershire to give his views on the topic of the day and it was good to hear his voice.



*Les, in Home Guard uniform,  
in 1941*

He attended our meetings without fail, even when he started to become poorly, and thoroughly enjoyed learning about all aspects of history. Les was the first person we interviewed about his life and experiences. In 2009 he was a guest speaker for our World War Two evening, which we recorded on film.

His friend Sue Rust said he loved looking after his garden and his roses, which he managed to do until his recent illness. On her last visit to him in hospital, Les said, "*I had a wonderful life with wonderful family and neighbours and nothing to really worry about.*"

# Stonehouse History Group Journal

## **Welcome to Issue 3**

Although this is our third issue since 2012, from now on we intend to produce only an annual issue, normally in May to coincide with our Annual General Meeting. 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:

<http://www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk/>

The website contains a wealth of information about the history of Stonehouse as well as details about our meetings and an opportunity to contribute your questions and comments. It attracts interest from local and international visitors, and has clocked up nearly 25,000 visits since it started in September 2010. This includes visitors from countries such as South Africa, Turkey, Sweden, Philippines, Mauritius and Hong Kong. We have had many requests for information and also asking if we can identify locations in photographs, in which we are proud to say we have had 100% success rate.

We have received many positive comments about previous issues. Katrina Keir from Gloucestershire Archives sent us this on receipt of Issues 1 and 2: *"The journals will be on display with the new books in our Searchroom for a few weeks and then will be stored with other local history society journals on the open shelves. I must say how impressed I was with your journal. As I was indexing the articles, I had to stop myself reading them in full, they were very interesting and beautifully illustrated. We would certainly welcome your next edition when it comes out."*

Stonehouse History Group is delighted to be celebrating its fifth anniversary. From our preliminary meeting on 16th April 2008 and our first official meeting on 14th May, we have gone from strength to strength in promoting enthusiasm for local history and wider historical topics. Our research is continuing and we have received new information as a result of people reading the Journals. If you can give us any more information on any of the topics covered in this or our previous issues, 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**

**May 2013**

# Oldends: what's in an 's'?

by Janet Hudson

The hamlet of Oldends lies in the north-western corner of the parish of Stonehouse. Until the business park developed to the south, it was a secluded 'end' of the parish, containing the 'Spa' pub, a farm and a few houses, and served only by Oldends Lane. Why then does the name traditionally have an 's', when surrounding '-end' names normally do not? How deeply rooted is this difference? Few records survive for the area before 1558, but as many documents as possible, relating to Stonehouse from 1558 to 1804, were examined for a study in 1998. (Hudson 1998). These ranged from deeds to manor court books, parish accounts, estate records and wills. The name Oldends, although frequently present and with varied spellings, was never found without an 's'. The following are some examples dated after 1804, with their references. GA is Gloucester Archives, and GDR is Gloucester Diocesan Records, the bishop's church business.

**1809** Sale, piece of 'Oldens Green', manor to Daniel Compton of Spa, in GA D445/M11.

**1811** Preliminary drawing for first Ordnance Survey maps – 'Oldend'.

**1815 April 24** Auction, cottages 'at Oldens', opposite the Spa, Gloucester Journal, in GA.

**1824** Poem 'Stroudwater' by William Lawrence - 'Oldends Spa'. Stroud Library.

**1824** Bryant's map of Gloucestershire - 'Holdings', in GA maps.

**1830** Ordnance Survey first edition 1 inch - 'Oldend', Bodleian Library, Oxford.

**1836** Will of John Rodway, made 1836, yeoman of 'Holdens', in GA GDR wills 1855/268.

**1839** Stonehouse tithe map and survey nos 751-2, 785 - 'Oldlands', in GA GDR maps.

Kelly's Directory: **1870** 'Oldens', **1885** 'Oldings', **1889** 'Oldings', **1897** 'Oldings', **1914** 'Oldings', **1923** 'Oldend', **1939** 'Oldend', in GA library.

**1885** first edition Ordnance Survey 25 inch map - 'Oldend', in GA library.

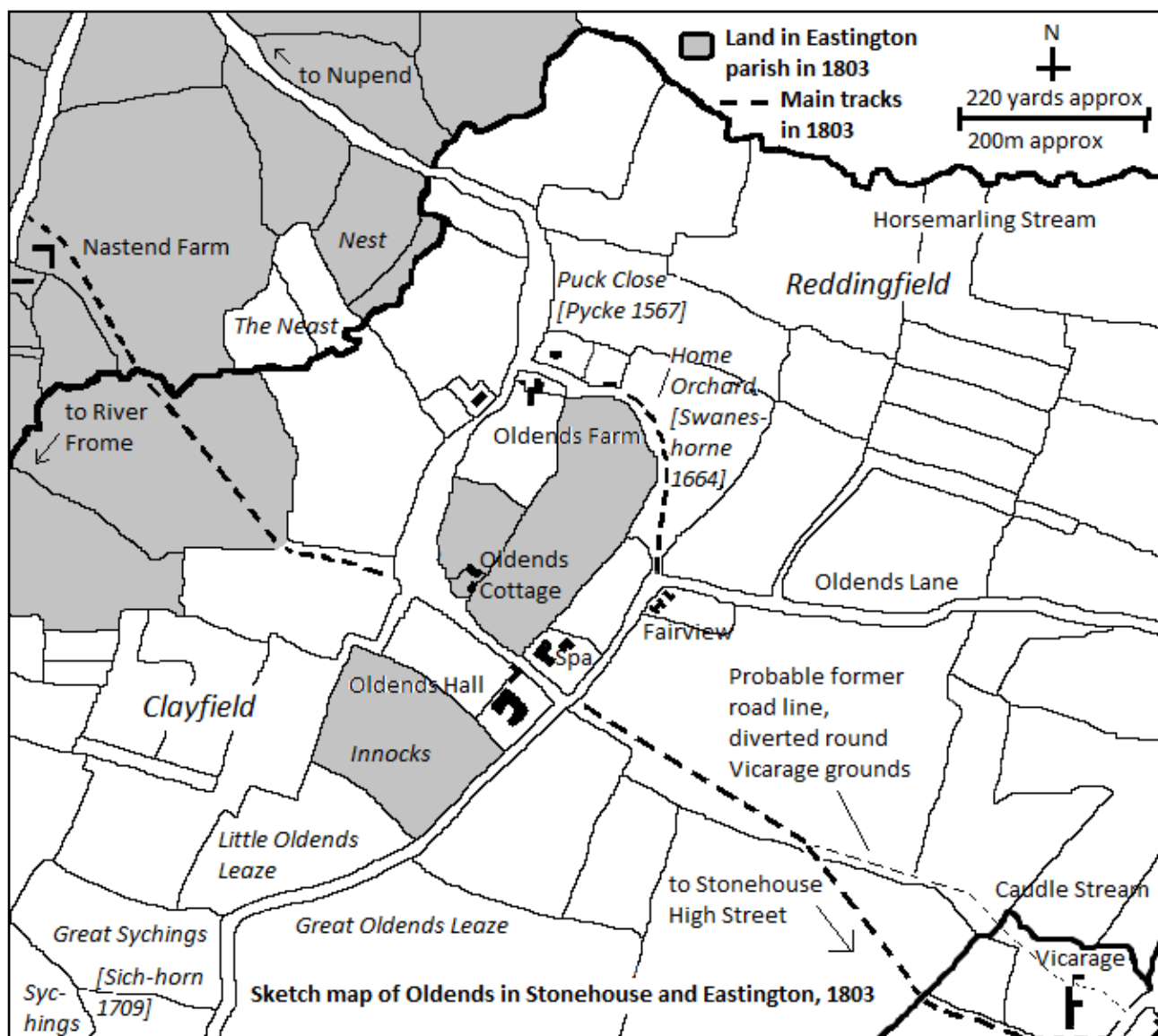
**1918** sale particulars, 'Oldends Hall, Oldends Farm', in GA D1815/14/7.

It appears that the habitual local spelling was with an 's', and that it was first abandoned by the London-based Ordnance Survey, or OS, surveyors in 1811. OS records relating to Stonehouse before 1880 do not survive, so the reasons for this change are unknown. There may have been an 'arbitration' between common local usage and a wish by some to match the name to local '-end' names. Alternatively a mistake may have been made, during either the survey, or the fair-copying process in London. The confusion is reflected in the Victoria County History of Gloucestershire, or VCH, which writes of 'Oldend', although the sources it quotes give the 's' until 1920. In 1996 the OS looked at the evidence, and consulted the people who were then living and working at Oldends. As a result they decided that either a misjudgement or a mistake had been made on their early maps, and copied ever since. The 's' was therefore adopted, and is used on current maps (Hudson 1996. VCH).

## Why might Oldends have had its 's' in the first place, and why has it been so persistent?

There is continuing debate about how far the Anglo-Saxon arrival caused changes in local populations or languages, but the area which later became Gloucestershire was firmly under Anglo-Saxon political control by AD 600. In 1935, local historian Charles Lister Smith put forward a theory that Oldends Lane was part of a salt road from Awre, on the west bank of the Severn across from Frampton, through Eastington, which 'crossed our manor at its western extremity. To the Kelts it was the big Hoel, the road, and when the Saxons came they spoke of it as the Hoel-end of the manor'. This suggestion was later repeated by local historian J.H.A. Anderson, but both writers give the modern name with an 's'.





**Sketch map of Oldends in Stonehouse and Eastington in 1803**

*Based on map of Stonehouse 1803, and survey 1804, by John Elliott, tithe maps and awards for Stonehouse and Eastington, 1839, Ordnance Survey maps, 1885, all in GA.*

*Field names in italics, as in 1803, some earlier forms in brackets.*

*House names as used in the 20th century.*

*Oldends Cottage, Fairview and the Vicarage are successors to buildings standing in 1803.*

There is a Welsh word 'heol', meaning a way through, track or path, which was thought to be part of a British/Old English hybrid name, something like 'heol(yd)-end'. However, 'heol' has not been identified as an element in English place names. Salt extraction was a seasonal activity on the lower Severn estuary, and there was a salt pan at Awre, on the west bank, recorded in Domesday Book in 1086. Nevertheless, the main supply to the east bank came from Droitwich as far south as Thornbury, along known saltways and Roman roads.

Smith and Anderson attached less importance to a road which ran from Stonehouse Vicarage across to Oldends and Nupend, perhaps because it had stopped operating as a through road during the 19th century. This was part of a main route from the Thames valley through Minchinhampton, over the Frome at Dudbridge and along higher ground on its north side to the Framilode crossing of the Severn, which may be older than the Roman occupation. When parishes came to be formed, by the 12<sup>th</sup> century, this road influenced the position of the Vicarage, not near the church, but surrounded by its 'glebe' land.

Field boundaries suggest that the road originally passed to the north of the Vicarage, approximately where Quietways now runs. By the 16<sup>th</sup> century it had been diverted round to the south, and the section from there to Oldends was gradually reduced to the track shown in 1803, perhaps because other routes were better for wheeled traffic. In 1844 it was diverted again to the footbridge over the new railway from Bristol to Gloucester, a line still represented by Elm Road and footpaths. This road was at least as well used as Oldends Lane in medieval and earlier times, and ran lengthways through the parish, rather than crossing its western end (Dyer 2002).

The English Place Name Society, or EPNS, take a different view. They suggest that the name is wholly Old English, meaning the 'old end or district' of the parish or estate. However, it is not clear why, after the parish was formed, Oldends should have been considered older than the eastern end, marked by the ancient river crossing at Dudbridge, or the manor house area, on a probable Roman site. What is more, neither 'heol-end' nor 'old-end' explain the 's'. A clue to the puzzle may lie in the wider meanings of 'old' and 'end', and the fact that Oldends was a place in both the parishes of Stonehouse and Eastington, which were interwoven here until 1882. It probably has an 's' simply because it is a plural word. 'Old' or 'eald' can mean something ancient, long-used or formerly used. 'Ende', plural 'endas', does mean a district, but another meaning is a boundary or limit. The Old English element 'gemaere' means boundary, and 'eald-gemaere' is a known phrase for an ancient boundary: 'eald-endas', would be of the same grammatical format. 'Oldends' is itself a field name as well as a place name, as the map shows. The field name 'horn', from 'hyrnan', to project, carries the idea of intrusion into another territory or estate. 'Swaneshorne' is perhaps the 'herdsman's piece', and 'Sychings' or 'sich-horn-as' the pieces (plural) by the small stream. 'Sic' or 'sike' is a word often used for a stream which forms a boundary, here draining west into the Horsemaring Stream. Puck/Pycke Close perhaps also indicates a sharp point or projection.

A house 'in olde endes' in Eastington, sold by that manor to William Clutterbuck in 1570, was on the site of Oldends Cottage. It appears to have had only the adjoining closes and Innocks attached to it in 1685, although it was later absorbed into the larger Nastend Farm estate. 'Innocks' means a temporarily cultivated enclosure. These field names suggest that Oldends is a place where ancient boundaries were interwoven, but clearly recognised by early speakers of Old English. The general orientation of both roads and fields at Oldends is on a south-east/north-west axis between the Cotswold scarp and the river Severn, a common trend on the east side of the Severn Vale between the Frome valley and Gloucester. The northern boundary of Stonehouse parish runs along part of the Horsemaring Stream and continues as the boundary of Eastington on this alignment, a line which also forms the border of early Anglo-Saxon land divisions into minster territories and hundreds. Such long line boundaries are found in the landscape in various areas of England, crossed by subdivisions into estates. Some may date from the Bronze Age and others may be later, but they usually predate parishes (EPNS 1956, Reynolds 2006).

Some kind of mingling of estates seems to have happened along a cross boundary running south-west from the line of these northern boundaries to the river Frome. The Horsemaring Stream, which might have been expected to become the parish boundary, was crossed by protrusions from both sides. Fields like Innocks and The Neast (in east field) express patterns of ownership which had become entrenched by long tradition. It is possible that Oldends Lane itself, which enclosed the main manorial 'demesne' estate, could reflect earlier ownership patterns. When parishes were established, this land may have been worked as shared common fields, but with parish attachments allocated according to ownership, and later formally enclosed. On the other hand, Nupend (up-end), Nastend (east-end), Churchend and Millend in Eastington, and Bridgend and Haywardsend (enclosure-gate-end) in Stonehouse, are more likely to be districts of the two parishes differentiated after their boundaries had been set.

## Conclusion

It is proposed that 'Oldends' has an 's' because the name has always been plural, referring to 'ancient boundaries' which predate the parishes of Stonehouse and Eastington. The 's' may have remained in local people's memory, just as the complicated boundaries around Oldends remained clear in their minds, because it represents a long tradition in the local landscape.



## Footnote

This article was sent for comment to the Institute for Name-Studies at Nottingham University, which hosts the EPNS, and they accept the proposal that the 's' is a permanent plural. They do point out that most 'end' names are later than 1066, and that there is a lack of evidence before 1500, but think the argument valid without depending on the antiquity of the name. It must be said that the lack of evidence is due to non-survival of documents.

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**Photos opposite of the Spa Inn, Oldends Lane  
See following article page 12**



*This 1926 photograph shows the Spa Inn surrounded by cottages.*

*It also shows the gate opposite the Spa turning, and the footpath which ran down to the railway footbridge. This entrance was all that remained of the ancient through road from the Vicarage, which ran beside the tree and off to the right of the picture.*

*Photo from the Wilf Merrett collection at Stroud Museum.*



*The Baker family outside the Spa Inn, 1911 Coronation (King George V)*



## Spa Inn, Oldends Lane

by Janet Hudson, Vicki Walker and Shirley Dicker

The building now called the Spa Inn probably existed as a small cottage by 1491, when John Toppe held it and about 30 acres from Stonehouse manor. In 1554 it passed to Thomas Gabb, and was perhaps extended and provided with a chimney at about that time. It was held in turn for the next 300 years by the Harmer, Selwyn and Beard families, and occupied by their various relatives and tenants. It was a small farm, but was also involved in the organisation of local cloth production. In 1790 Daniel Compton, a wheelwright from Wiltshire who had married into the Beard family, bought it from the manor, and by 1804 was promoting its well as the Spa. He modified the medieval house, updated it in stone, and added a pump room. The enterprise enabled him to buy further land from the manor in 1809 and build himself Avenue House, where he carried on his wheelwright's business. The Spa passed to other owners and was popular for a time, but had declined by 1830. By 1841 it had become cottages, and was surrounded by others, all housing clothworkers and labourers.

The Spa house began to be used as a beerhouse, but it still continued to offer the waters. In his historical notes, Charles Lister Smith comments: *"When the Midland Railway was opened in 1848, in my father's time, people came from as far as Bristol and Gloster to drink the waters."* A guide book as late as 1872 says of Stonehouse: *"There is a small pump-room over a spring of mineral water in the village."* By 1871 it was known as the Spa Inn, occupied by beer retailer Charles Walter. In the 1880s/90s Edward Uzzell is listed in Kelly's Directories and the Census as living at the Spa Inn but there are several others living nearby who are also noted as beer retailers and may well have assisted at the Inn. By 1891 Smith and Sons Brimscombe Brewery have taken it over and in the 1901 Census Henry and Emma Clayfield are living there. Henry was a stone dresser while his wife ran the pub.



An old photograph from around 1910 (see above) shows the name of Charles A P Alder over the door. But by the Census of 1911 Alder had moved on to run the Cross Hands Inn at the bottom of Regent Street and the Spa had been taken over by Eli and Elizabeth Baker and their family, who were to run the pub for the next forty years. In the census Eli and his three grown up sons are described as hay trussers so Elizabeth may have been running the pub. At around the same time Godsell's Brewery bought it and photographs show the Spa Inn developing into a successful business (see page 11).

In 1928 Stroud Brewery took over Godsell's Ales but the Baker family remained as landlords. The Spa became rather run down and, in 1951, had become dilapidated and overgrown. However the next decade was to see it transformed. Reginald Reynolds and his wife Gwendolyn had come to Stonehouse from Chelmsford in 1941 to work at Hoffman's new "shadow factory" in Oldends Lane. Reg wanted a change of career and he borrowed £50 to buy the lease from Stroud Brewery. We interviewed Barry and Wendy Reynolds who lived there as children. They remember the walls being made of wattle and daub. The floors were well trodden oak boards and it was gas lit. There used to be wood panelling, and a big fireplace with mirrors. When their family moved in, the house was completely gutted. The kitchen was behind the pub and there was a bread oven where the bar is now. During the alterations they bathed in front of the fire in a tin bath. At first they had to go up a ladder to get to bed as there was no staircase. They climbed over a "stile", between the upstairs rooms to get to their bedroom at the top of the house. (This was probably a beam that used to be in an outside wall before additional building was done in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.) The family's living quarters were at the back. There was a big 18 feet square lounge where Mr Reynolds allowed children to play while their parents were in the bar. A new kitchen was built.

The Reynolds family followed the old tradition of the husband working in a job by day while the wife ran the pub. They worked hard to build up the trade and Mr Reynolds obtained a music licence and provided entertainment which drew customers from far and wide. The pub also had two acres of land where they kept pigs, chickens and a cow. They won the best flower garden certificate. The nearby Spa cottages were paying them rent of £1.10s per week. The Reynolds had made such a success of the Spa that they were asked to do the same with the Globe Inn, where they moved to in 1961.



*The Spa in the 1950s after refurbishment*

The Spa was taken over by Whitbread's in 1963 and Wadworth's in 1991. In 2001 Pete and Babs Hunniford became landlords and, in 2005/6, oversaw major alterations, moving the front entrance and enlarging the side extension. Despite their best efforts to provide food and entertainment, the pub trade began to decline and the Spa Inn has seen several changes of landlord as people find it more difficult to attract customers. Many pubs in Stonehouse have closed over the last 15 years leaving only The Spa Inn, The Globe Inn and The Woolpack running as traditional pubs.

## **Sources of Information**

Research from Stonehouse manor court books, wills and deeds in Gloucestershire Archives, details available from SHG.

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## Oldends Hall

by Janet Hudson

Many occupied sites in Stonehouse have been built upon for far longer than is suggested by the buildings now standing on them. Oldends Hall once stood to the south-west of the Spa Inn, on the other side of what was formerly a main through road from Stonehouse to the river Severn. Thought to date from the fifteenth century, it was probably the successor to an earlier dwelling. On 14 January 1978 it was badly damaged by fire and was demolished soon afterwards. The site is now occupied by Customade (UK) Ltd.

There are few surviving records in which properties in Stonehouse manor can be traced before 1558. However, a survey of the manor made in that year lists a free tenant, Thomas Gabb, a husbandman, or small farmer, who died in 1564. Freeholds are difficult to identify, as they are hardly mentioned in the manorial records, but having considered both the future Spa Inn, and Oldends Hall, documentary evidence points to the latter. It had land in nearby Clayfield, and other manor fields, amounting to about twenty acres. According to observations made just before the fire, the house in 1558 may have contained a stone and timber-framed open hall, probably dating from the fifteenth century, with roof timbers blackened from a central fire, and service rooms at the west end. A stone and timber-framed barn stood to the north.

The wider Gabb family also held Oldends Farm, the future Spa and other cottages and lands at Oldends, as tenants of the manor. These properties were passed between relatives and sub-tenants in a family enterprise which lasted until the mid-seventeenth century. Descendants of Thomas, all farmers, added a chimney stack to the east end of the open hall. An extended service block, dated to about 1600, formed the north-west cross wing, with a ground floor and a central chimney stack of coursed rubble stone, and an upper floor of timber framing filled in with wattle and daub. The main ground floor room had a ceiling divided into nine squares by chamfered beams and joists. One door with linenfold panelling from this period survived until 1972, and there may also have been an early south-east wing [Gabb].

Alongside farming, the woollen cloth industry at this time dominated the economy throughout the Stroudwater district. Clothiers managed and financed each stage, such as weaving, as it was 'put out' to workers in their own homes, apart from the processes needing water power in a mill. The Gabb family shared Oldends Hall with tenants involved in the cloth industry, and Charles Gabb, great grandson of Thomas, was a broadweaver when he died in 1635.

In Issue 2 of this Journal, a list of probable main residents in 1610 placed Mathew Colwell, a clothier, at Oldends Hall, and Thomas Gabb, a yeoman farmer, at the future Spa Inn. However, further research for the present article exchanges these positions. The suggestion that Mathew Colwell was a tenant was based on historians' identification of manorial property, leased in 1661 to Henry Beard, as Oldends Hall, where he was known to live. The same property had been leased in 1619 to Richard Selwyn, who let it to Colwell. However, it is now apparent that these leases relate to the future Spa Inn, held in 1558 by Thomas Gabb's nephew William Harmer. Colwell lived there in person, but Beard held it as a provision for his younger sons. Oldends Hall was the home of Thomas Gabb's family, followed by Henry Beard, and Mathew Colwell occupied the future Spa Inn. Thomas, grandson of Thomas Gabb, died in 1646, leaving in his will beds and other goods to his four surviving sons, one item being 'the flocke bed in Henry Beard's chamber'. An inventory made in 1648 of the property of Samuel Gabb, his youngest son, by Henry Beard and others, lists beds and furniture in the hall, the parlour and the chamber over the parlour. This younger Thomas Gabb's grandsons were still present in 1659 [Beard, 1661].





*Oldends Hall from the south-west, showing the extended service block to the medieval hall, with the barn to the north.*  
©Nigel Paterson 1978

Henry Beard of Standish, a yeoman farmer with a young family, probably owned the house by 1646. He may have been a relative of the Gabbs, or perhaps was just looking for a viable property, which he continued to share throughout his life with tenants involved in the cloth industry. Terms such as 'yeoman' or 'clothier' were not exclusive, most people being involved in both walks of life in some way. The raising of militias during the Civil Wars of the 1640s may have given rise to local traditions about the presence of troops, but there is little evidence of military disturbance in the Frome valley west of Stroud, a strongly Parliamentary area, or of serious disruption to the cloth industry. Henry Beard was apparently able to continue his comfortable way of life, leasing additional land from the manor. His family also held the future Spa and other parts of Oldends. He died a prosperous man in 1683 and, in his will, among shares of his property between his sons, he left to his son Henry his chattels, or household goods, in his 'hall house' [Beard, 1683].

[Note: this will has now been found to refer to the future Spa, Henry Beard senior having 'retired' there, leaving Oldends Hall to his son Henry: 'hall house' is not in document. Janet Hudson 2024]

Henry Beard junior, also a yeoman, died in 1720. He had already passed Oldends Hall to his eldest son Nathaniel Beard, who also held other land in Oldends. It may have been either Henry or Nathaniel who built or rebuilt the south-east wing of Oldends Hall in fine ashlar work, surrounding the existing hall chimney stack and adding two others, at the same time rebuilding the north wall of the hall in stone, and perhaps inserting the first dividing floor in the hall. The house was enhanced with sash windows and an arched porch on its north wall.

From 1723 onwards, Nathaniel was given the title of 'Mr' and settled down to a gentlemanly existence. Oldends was by this time less important in terms of communications, the old through route to Whitminster having been superseded by the Bristol Road. The cloth industry in Gloucestershire was in some decline, challenged by new demands. Many whose involvement was casual found it increasingly difficult to recoup their investments, turning to other sources of income, and Nathaniel appears to have concentrated on farming. The manor map of about 1730 marks the position of 'Mr Nathaniel Beard's House' in large letters, and carefully indicates where his many pieces of land adjoin those of the manor. His daughter married into the Apperley family, tenants of Stonehouse manor farm [Tithe].



*Oldends Hall from the east, showing the south-east wing of about 1700.*

*The medieval hall is the lower block in the north-east front, with the service wing beyond.*

©Nigel Paterson 1978

On Nathaniel's death in 1763 he was succeeded at Oldends Hall by his son Samuel, also a yeoman, who died in 1787. Samuel's will, made in 1786, left 'the part of the house called the parlour', probably the old north-west wing, to his wife Mary for her life, the house as a whole to his daughter Hannah, and shares in his lands to his three other daughters. One of these, Elizabeth, married Daniel Compton, a wheelwright who in 1790 bought from the manor the old timber house across the road, and went on to remodel and develop it as the Spa, popular in the Regency period. Hannah Beard, married John Nicholls, a yeoman and joiner, but the land held with Oldends Hall was soon reduced to a few pieces in Clayfield. Samuel Beard's additional tenancies in Oldends were dispersed among neighbouring farmers. John Nicholls died in 1821, and Hannah in 1822. Their sons had moved to Thornbury, but Samuel Beard Nicholls returned to Stonehouse and died there in 1826, aged 37. His widow Hester was the owner of Oldends Hall in 1839, when the remaining land was tenanted by a local builder, Henry Harrison. He had perhaps converted outbuildings on the east side of the house to cottages, occupied by agricultural labourers, and may have had a hand in the new cottages which appeared around the Spa Inn at this time. Samuel's son, James Beard Nicholls, died in 1843, leaving the house in trust to be sold, proceeds to go to his mother Hester. He was called a yeoman of Stonehouse, but he and his mother were both absent from Oldends Hall on census day in 1841 [Beard, 1787].

Steam-powered mills were beginning to dominate the cloth industry and to gather their workforces nearby. By 1841 Oldends was a hamlet mainly inhabited by agricultural labourers and cloth workers, serving local farms and Bond's Mill, and further separated from Stonehouse village by the Bristol to Gloucester railway in 1844. It is doubtful whether Oldends Hall could still have been run as a single dwelling without additional means of support.

By 1873, and possibly bought in 1843, it was part of the Eycott estate, which in 1839 already included Bond's Mill and most of the other land in Oldends. A connection did continue with the Beard family, but by the time of the 1851 census the house had been divided. The main occupier was John Alder, a blacksmith from Haresfield whose wife Anne was the daughter of Daniel Compton and Elizabeth Beard. They shared the house with James Pitt, a railway labourer, and Stephen Preen, a handloom weaver, and their families. They were all still there in 1861 but, by 1871, the last link with the Beards seems to have been broken.

The main occupier was John Hewlett, a retired farmer from Moreton Valence, with his nephew George Need, a wheelwright, the Need family, and two lodgers, a railway carpenter and a retired clothworker. Stephen Preen and his family were still in residence, together with Samuel Hill, a labourer, and his family. In 1881 George Need had a lodger, a railway porter, the other residents being Miss Ann Stephens, an elderly retired housekeeper, and Edward Reeves, a railway signalman, with his family.

In 1891 the house was called the Old Farm House, to distinguish it from Oldends Farm. It was shared by George Need, Miss Stephens, Frederick Farnsworth, a railway signal painter, and Joseph Wager, a bricklayer's labourer, and their families. In 1901 a part called Oldends Hall was occupied by Elizabeth Aldridge, a widowed charwoman from Whiteshill, and her daughters. However, three other parts of the house, called Oldends Hall Cottages, were occupied by Henry Gough, a brick burner, Albert Shakespeare, a stoker at a cloth factory, and Joseph Brain, a corn porter, and their families.

In 1911 all four parts were called Oldends Hall Cottages, occupied by Arthur Cooke, a coach body maker, Albert Shakespeare, Robert Walter, a railway platelayer, and George Laurence, a drier at a cloth mill, and their families. Laurence also had a lodger, a railway plate layer. The pair of cottages in the grounds housed a labourer and a weaver in 1851, but by 1861 only a labourer lived there and, from 1871 to 1911, Rose (later Rosetree) Cottage seems to have been one house, the home of Henry Burnett, a carter, and his family [Census].

It will be evident from these Census entries that Oldends Hall had become a working complex, supporting making trades, the cloth industry, and the railway through the nearby Midland station. It still had some land attached, but this may not have been used by the residents. Nevertheless, its former agricultural character was not forgotten. When the property was sold by the Eycott-Martin estate in 1918 it was described as 'an attractive small holding' with a well-stocked pasture orchard and two old pasture fields. These had replaced the original land, in all about 13 acres adjoining the house to the south and west. The house was divided into four cottages, occupied by the Walters and Laurence/Lawrence families, Mrs Ruck, and Mrs Nicholls, apparently no relation of the former owners. The Burnetts were still at the cottage, the yard, buildings and orchard were let to the Price brothers of Oldends Farm, and the land to Mr J. H. Warner of Nastend Farm. The purchaser, for £1300 plus £39 for the growing timber, was William James Harris from London, who appears in Kelly's Directory for 1939 as a smallholder at Oldends Hall.

The Harris brothers George and William were still present during and after the Second World War, George and May at Oldends Hall, and William and Helen in the adjoining Rosetree cottage. William's grandson Barry Mclean remembers being evacuated there and visiting after the War. The Reynolds children from the Spa Inn, Barry and Wendy, remember the horse-drawn cider mill at the Hall in the 1950s, and Mike Harris, who made them paper aeroplanes. Andrew Blockley, who lived at Oldends, remembers that *'Norman Baker bought it in about 1966 from the Harris family, who were unable to repair the damaged part when it was hit by lightning in the late 1950s. The lightning hit the TV aerial and set the north-east wing on fire. I was at Stonehouse Primary School, and there was a very bad storm and lots of lightning and thunder. I remember the whole class screaming and crying, me too, as there was a lightning flash and a big, big bang at the same time. I remember walking home across the field from the railway station and seeing the fire engines'*. Another local memory is that a Miss Emmie or Amy Nicholls occupied part of the house after the War, until she moved out in the 1960s to the maisonettes in Woodcock Lane. This may have been a daughter of the Mrs Nicholls present in 1918, but is unverified. By 1978 the land held with Oldends Hall in 1918 had become the site of the new Milk Marketing Board works, now Dairy Crest [Sale].



Application to demolish the house was made in 1977 by the then owners, the haulage firm of R.W.Baker, who were using part of the house as offices and the outside area for their vehicles. It was then said to have been neglected for forty to fifty years, and owned by the applicant for ten. Part of the building had been closed in 1970 under the Housing Acts. The owners had intended to renovate, but found the project uneconomical. Debate in the application file indicates that the house might have been sound enough to restore, given sufficient funds, but that its environment had so changed that it was difficult to find a viable use for it. The fire on 14 January 1978 destroyed the older parts of the building and, with the loss of most of the historic value, permission to demolish was granted. The site was cleared, including the cottage.



*Oldends Hall from the north-east after the fire, showing the damaged roof timbers of the medieval hall and extended service block.*

*The rebuilt stone wall of the hall, with its main entrance porch, is still standing.*

*©Nigel Paterson 1978*

The longer a building has existed, the more it will have been required to adapt to changing environments. For Oldends Hall, the challenges of the twentieth century demanded an adaptation too far.

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GA = Gloucester Archives

Beard, 1661: will of Charles Gabb, GA wills 1635/13; will of Thomas Gabb, GA wills 1647/146; inventory for Samuel Gabb, GA wills 1648/22; leases of copyhold at Oldends, 1619 and 1661, GA D445/T28 and D445/M13, attributed to Oldends Hall in *A History of the County of Gloucester: Volume 10: Westbury and Whitstone Hundreds, Stonehouse*, pp. 267-273, Oxford, 1972, footnote 52, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=15885> 2012 (accessed November 2012).

Beard, 1683: will of Henry Beard, yeoman, GA wills 1683/35. The most recent survey of the Gloucestershire cloth industry is Tann, Jennifer, *Wool and Water*, Stroud, 2012.

Beard, 1787: will of Samuel Beard, yeoman, died 1787, proved GA wills 1794/4; Compton purchase 1790, GA D134/F3; Whitstone Hundred Land Tax returns, 1780-1832, GA Q/Rel/1; Stonehouse tithe award, 1839, GA; will of James Beard Nicholls, GA wills 1843/254.

Census: all census returns from 1841 to 1911 are available on [www.ancestry.co.uk](http://www.ancestry.co.uk), free access at Stroud and Stonehouse libraries; *Return of Owners of Land, 1873*, HMSO, 1875, Volume 1, Gloucester section, p17, in GA library, shows Frederick Eycott as owning almost 316 acres in Stonehouse, and does not list any of the tenants of Oldends Hall.

Demofile: application to demolish Oldends Hall, 1977-8, GA D20/103.

Gabb: survey of Stonehouse manor 1558, GA D4289/M1; will of Thomas Gabb the elder, GA wills 1554/114; will of Thomas Gabb, GA wills 1564/9; will of John Gabb, GA wills 1588/90; Hudson, J., *Residence and Kinship in a Clothing Community: Stonehouse, 1558-1804*, PhD thesis, University of Bristol, 1998, in Stonehouse library and GA. Physical descriptions of the house from Demofile.

Photographs: ©Nigel Paterson 1978. These were taken in early January 1978 for the Gloucestershire Buildings Recording Group, in response to the application to demolish, and were followed up with others after the fire.

Sale: particulars and plans 1918 of Oldends, Nastend and Stagholt Farms, Oldends Hall, Ham Meadows and eight cottages, all in Stonehouse, Eastington and Standish, for D.B. Eycott-Martin, GA D1815/accession 6324/box 14/item 7; Kelly's Directories of Gloucestershire, 1879-1939, GA and Stroud Library; SHG interview with Barry and Wendy Reynolds, by Shirley Dicker and Vicki Walker, 12 November 2011; Hudson family memories, 2012; Barry Mclean's memories at [http://www.francisfrith.com/stonehouse.gloucestershire/memories/oldends-lane\\_173101/#utmcsr=google.co.uk&utmcmd=referral&utmccn=google.co.uk](http://www.francisfrith.com/stonehouse.gloucestershire/memories/oldends-lane_173101/#utmcsr=google.co.uk&utmcmd=referral&utmccn=google.co.uk) 2010 (accessed January 2013); information from Andrew Blockley to SHG, 2013.

Tithe: vicar's tithe accounts for Stonehouse, 1709-22, GA P316/IN3/1; map of Stonehouse manor c1730, surveyed by Stephen Jefferys, copy GA PC/365.

# Stonehouse place names

by Darrell Webb

**Stonehouse:** In the Domesday Book of 1086, the name of the village was recorded as Stanhus, which can be translated from Anglo-Saxon as Stonehouse. It is likely that, prior to the Norman Conquest of 1066, the home of the local lord of the manor had been built of stone and that it was on the site of today's Stonehouse Court Hotel (formerly an Elizabethan manor house). In the 11th century, building in stone would have been most unusual so it would not be surprising if the village had been known as "the place with a stone house" - or, simply, as Stonehouse.

The UK's top four most common street names according to Zoopla:

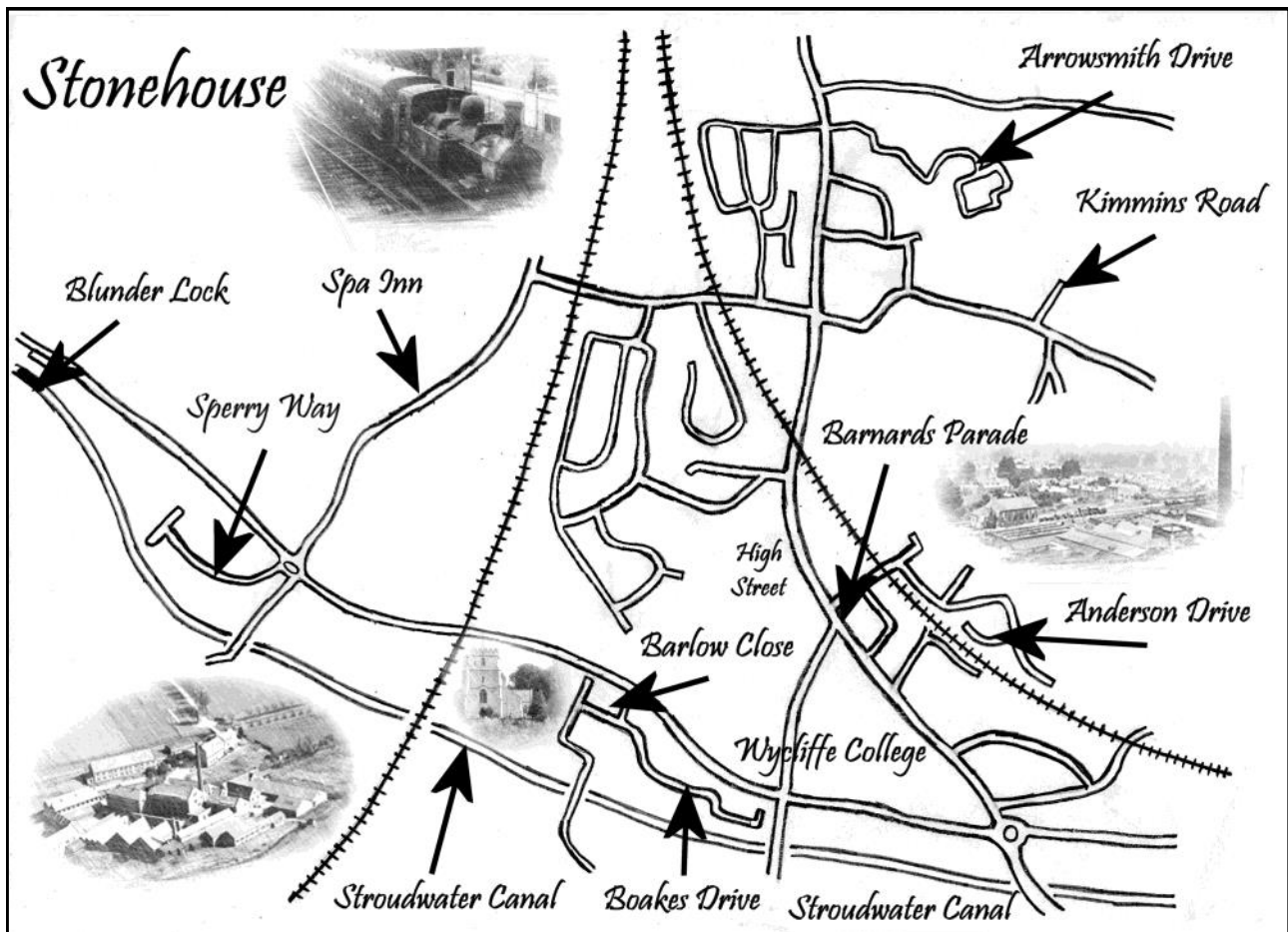
1. High St. (with 2,431) 2. Station Rd. (1,929) 3. Church Lane (1,547) 4. Church St. (1,404).

**Anderson Drive:** named after Arthur W Anderson who, in 1890, set up and was the first manager of the Stonehouse Brick and Tile Company, now the site of the present Rosedale estate. Arthur Anderson was also a very active member of the Parish Council and his son Jack Anderson was Chairman of the Parish Council from 1955 to 1959 and a local JP.

**Arrowsmith Drive** and also the **Arrowsmith Pavillion:** named after Leslie John Arrowsmith J. P. who was chairman of Stonehouse Parish Council 1952-55 and 1959-67. Les was also a railway gate crossing keeper on the LMS line in Oldends Lane for many years.

**Barlow Close** built in 1992: named after John E Barlow, who was chairman of Stonehouse Parish Council 1967-80. He was one of the longest serving councillors on the Parish Council and also a District Councillor.

**Barnard Parade:** named after Barnard House which stood for 200 years on that site named after the family that lived there many years before. The last owner, Mr Leo Blick, a Stonehouse builder, sold it to a London development company in the early 1960s to make way for the row of shops that are there today.





**Blunder Lock:** In late 1777, during construction of the canal, the number of locks and the rise of each was left to the resident engineer, Edmund Lingard. He planned three locks above Pike Bridge, Eastington. Relations between Lingard and the Canal Company deteriorated seriously that autumn and he was dismissed. When his replacement took over the work, he decided that only two locks were necessary. He soon discovered that Lower Nassfield Lock was already being excavated, and at the wrong level, thus maintaining the need for three locks! While it is possible that this error was accidental, it seems likely that Lingard had decided to teach his employers a lesson. Once news of the costly error became common knowledge, it caused great hilarity among the navies and contractors. The lock was soon dubbed “Blunder Lock”, a name which was eventually accepted by the Company.

**Boakes Drive built in 1992:** named after the late David Boakes who was the first secretary and an active and enthusiastic member of the Cotswold Canals Trust. *'Better to say here it is than here it was.'* This is the quote, said to be from David, which you will find on the commemorative plaque on Blunder Lock.

**Kimmins Road:** named after James Charles Clegg Kimmins J. P. He owned and managed the Kimmins Flour Mill at Dudbridge (where Sainsbury's is now). Mr Kimmins was a member of many local and county committees. He also gave Laburnum Recreation Field to the people of Stonehouse in 1921.

**Sperry Way:** named after the company Sperry Gyroscope which had a large factory in Brentford but wanted a safer place to manufacture during World War Two. They moved to Stonehouse in 1939 and set up a “shadow factory” at Bond's Mill where they manufactured equipment for the government, employing up to 600 people. They closed the factory in 1969.

**Wycliffe College:** named after the Translator and Lay Preacher John Wycliffe. W.A.Sibly said that his father G.W. Sibly, who set up the school in 1882 and was the first Headmaster, chose the name Wycliffe because he regarded John Wycliffe as possessing many qualities, including independence, a sturdy protestant attitude towards life and a pioneering spirit which he hoped to see embodied in Wycliffe College.

## Sources of information (Websites accessed April 2013)

**Barnard's Villa** - Stroud News & Journal, January 15th, 1960

**Blunder Lock** - Handford, Michael, *The Stroudwater Canal*, Alan Sutton, 1979, pp 294-7

Handford, Michael, *The Cotswold Canals Towpath Guide; The Stroudwater Navigation*, Amberley Publishing, 2012, pp 63-4.

**Boakes Drive** -

[http://www.cotswoldcanalsheritage.org.uk/page\\_id\\_321\\_path\\_0p103p4p43p49p.aspx](http://www.cotswoldcanalsheritage.org.uk/page_id_321_path_0p103p4p43p49p.aspx)

**Common street names** -

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<http://www.british-history.ac.uk/catalogue.aspx?type=1&gid=13>

**Kimmins Road** - [http://www.stroud-history.org.uk/articles.php?article\\_id=179](http://www.stroud-history.org.uk/articles.php?article_id=179) and <http://www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk/page63.html>

**Wycliffe College**—Loosley, S.G.H. *Wycliffe College: The First Hundred Years 1882-1982*. Wycliffe College, 1982

# Charles Lister Smith - local historian

by Darrell Webb



Charles Lister Smith (1858-1945) was an active Stonehouse trader and businessman for 55 years. He was a baker in 1890, trading as Richard Smith & Son and in 1936 was founder of the Severn Valley Fruit Company, being one of the first to commercialise bottled fruit. He was elected to the first Parish Council for Stonehouse in the year 1890; he also represented the parish for a time on the Stroud Board of Guardians and the Rural District Council and was a manager for the schools. He was also for several years a member of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society to whom from time to time he presented documents for safe keeping (Smith).

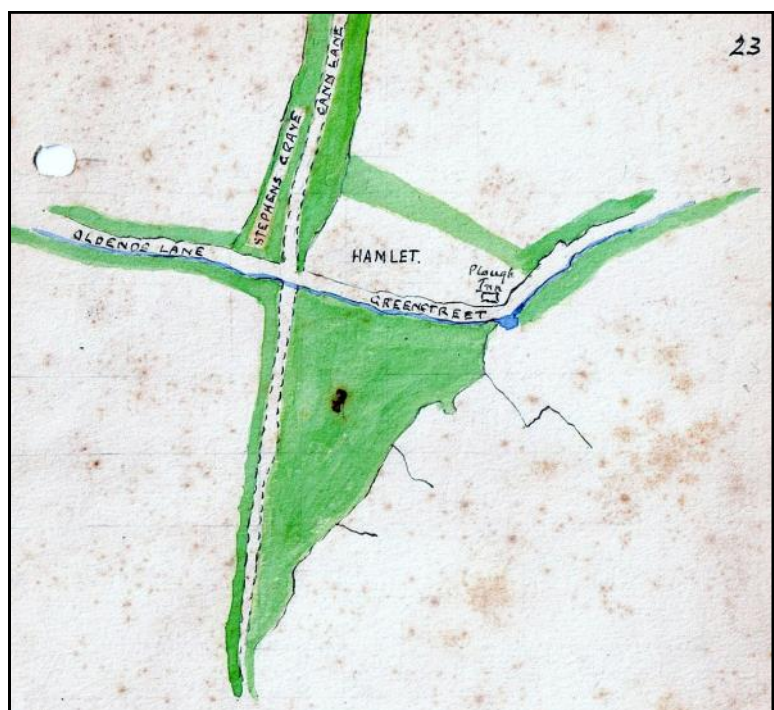
Smith championed the study of local history from original documents and as a result there are in existence a number of books and articles which contain the history of the Parish. Many of his writings appeared in the local press during the 1930s. He also

recorded many traditions and theories which in some cases generated misunderstandings.

Writing in 1938, he suggests that *'the early history of Stonehouse is the story of the Manor (Stonehouse Court) and is only loosely connected with Stonehouse town'*. He goes on to say that *'there was a little hamlet on Green Street from time immemorial, which we call Woodcock Lane. It was a community of a few manor tenants settled where water was available, and a tavern (the Plough Inn) provided accommodation for travellers on the ancient road from the salt pans at Awre on the river Severn. It traversed the western end of the manor through Oldends and continued up the slope of the hills to the east. Green Street is that portion of the road running past this little settlement.'*

Smith is here making a special case for the cluster of manorial holdings at Woodcock Lane, just one of a number of scattered farms and hamlets in the early manor. By the twelfth century most had been drawn together into a concentration along the Caudle Stream (now Gloucester Road) and the lower road round Doverow Hill (now the High Street). Manor and future town were interwoven, although the focal point of the manor was the site of Stonehouse Court and St Cyr's church.

Smith drew many fine sketch maps, based on a map of the manor lands of about 1728-30, now lost. Blurred photographs of it survive, and can be compared with his sketches. *The map on the right* shows the roadside 'waste' well, but is mistaken about the location of the Plough Inn. This stood on the corner of Green Street (Woodcock Lane) and Cann Lane (Gloucester Road), where the dentist and Blackwell Close, formerly Plough Motors, are now. Far from being an ancient tavern, it grew from a barn conversion in the early 17th century, and is not described as an inn until after 1800.





Stephen's Grave is much more likely to be Stephens' Grove, an area of trees on the manorial waste used by Thomas Stephens, a carpenter who worked on the manorial estate. By 1748 he was also the tenant of the adjoining field, and supplying wood for jobs from his property. The waste was sold by the manor in 1831 and is now the frontage to St Joseph's Church. This map also shows the main waterway as running down Oldends Lane, although this was a diversion from the Caudle Stream, running south. Understanding of the early road network has also advanced since Smith's day, and revised ideas about the roads through Oldends are described elsewhere in this issue of the Journal. Otherwise, however, the following extracts from Smith's writings give a fair picture:

*'In front of the hamlet to the South was the large area of land left open as waste of the manor or green for communal use, free to everybody for the ordinary usages of the self-contained village life of the time at that time it extended the full length of the present High Street to Regent Street.'*

*From this main road, coming in from Eastington several thoroughfares radiated in different directions. The first was a road to the left, running from Oldends, past the Spa Inn, through Oldends Farm to Nupend; higher up at the green was Cann Lane, going north over the manor boundary to Horsemaring and Standish. This is now part of Gloucester County Road. Farther up Green Street at the Glen a road branched to the right across country to come out into Pyrcroft Road. This is Glen Road, and Verney Road and Station Road are part of this highway. Green Street went on uphill where the packhorses wore down the road to the present level across Floret Acre at the back Doverly hill to Westrip.'*



Stonehouse c.1830, names in bold added by Darrell Webb

© Ordnance Survey

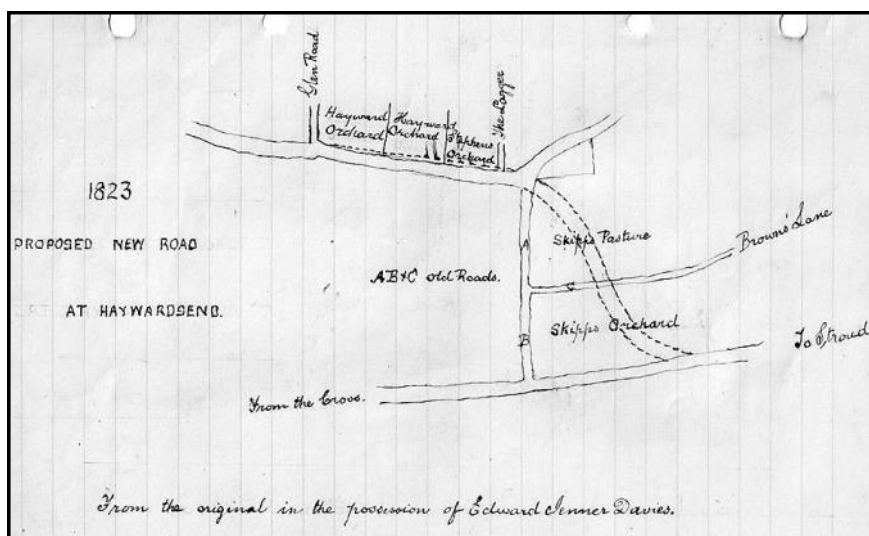


Diagram of proposed road modification to ease the Bath coach's access to Stonehouse (in C L Smith's collection).

'The old Pyrcroft Road, where Glen Road joins it opposite the Wesleyan Church (Wycliffe Chapel) is now called Bath Road, but only since the Bath coaches commenced running that way. They commenced running down the Cross Lane, but it was a dangerous and narrow right angle turning at the bottom and it was found necessary to make a new exit from Stonehouse by a cutting from Pyrcroft Road at Haywardsend to the lower end (now Horsetrough Roundabout). This was opened in 1839.

'Regent Street was Cross Lane until 1870\* when a Stonehouse tradesman opened a shop in house No 1 going down on the right. He placed a name board in the front marked "Regent Street". Passers smiled, but the name stuck and the board is still there. It is the "via Brugende" of the manor records. From its junction with Pyrcroft Road at the south end of the Green, it runs over the river at Bridgend to Stanley St. Leonards and Frocester. These are the ancient roads of the present parish as we find them described in rolls of court proceedings during the years 1490 to 1601. Where the record is in Latin, the term used is *via Regis*; where written in English the term is *Kings Road*, *Royal Road* or *Public road*. All of them appear on the old Borough map of Stroud.'

Smith ends with the comment that 'the present High Street does not appear at any time to have been repaired under ordinance. It seems to have been recognised as restricted to common rights and was never a highway in feudal times. There was a road way marked on Ball's map of 1728, by which period no doubt, the vestry had taken it in hand.' The High Street section is less likely to have been mentioned in the manorial court books because it is less likely to have been obstructed or neglected. It is called 'the street' in 1676 and 1723, and there are references to the 'king's highway' along the modern Gloucester Road in 1586, 'the highway' outside the modern Broomhall's butchers in 1689, and 'the highway' past Ivy Grove in 1629. It was central to the turnpike trust established in 1726 (Street).

## Sources of information

### GA = Gloucester Archives

Map: diversion of Caudle Stream, manor court book 1589, GA D4289/M1; partition of farm and barn 1618, GA D149/T770; map of Stonehouse manor c1730, surveyed by Stephen Jefferys, copy GA PC/365; manorial estate accounts 1740-1754, GA D445/E5, and deed 1731, D445/T13; sale of waste 1831, GA D1347/acc 1347/1/13 Sheppard; Stonehouse tithe map and award 1839, GA maps.

Smith: obituary, *Stroud News* or *Stroud Journal*, 2 March 1945 (in 1945 these were separate newspapers, archives are held at Stroud library, but 1945 is missing in both series), this copy and most of Charles Lister Smith's books and writings are in private hands and © Tom Round-Smith., although some are in GA.

Street: manor court books 1586, 1676, 1689, 1723, GA D4289/M1, D445/M5, M8, M9; Cox, C. *The Development and Decline of the Turnpike System in the Stroudwater Area, 1725-1875* (unpublished PhD thesis, London School of Economics, 1987), in GA.

\*It has since been discovered that Cross Lane was renamed Regent Street from as early as 1851.

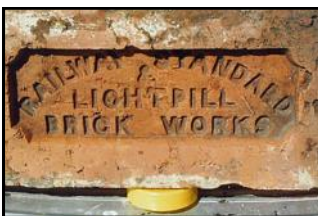
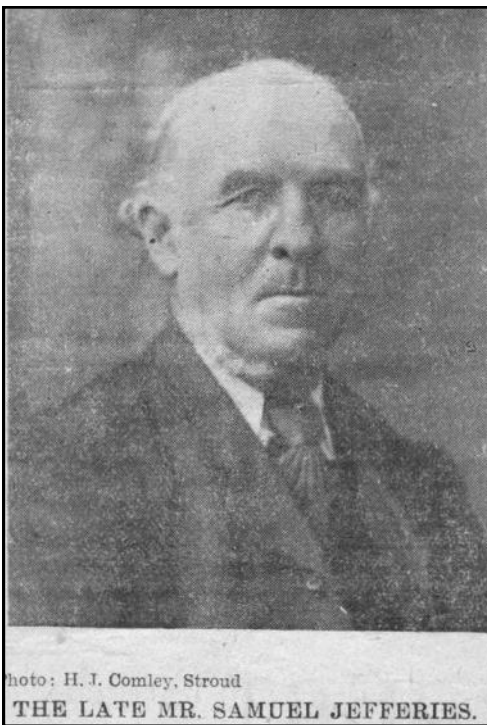


# Jefferies Brickworks

by Vicki Walker

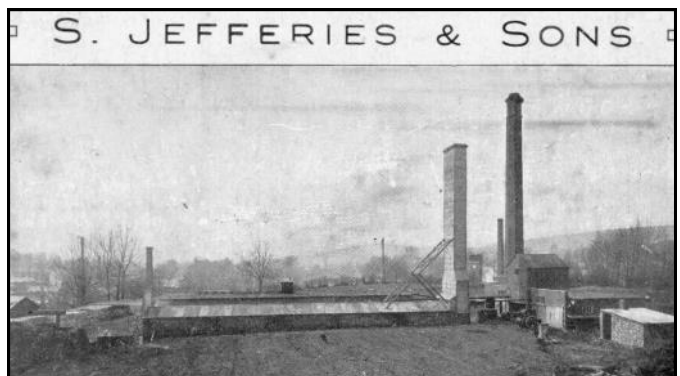
The Victoria County History notes that the soil of the parish of Stonehouse is suitable for brick making. There was a brick maker at Stonehouse in 1856 and brickworks on the south of Doverow Hill were in production by 1870. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century the building of the canal had encouraged several coal and timber merchants to set up near it. Samuel Jefferies was a Victorian entrepreneur who set up a profitable business in both bricks and coal.

Samuel Jefferies was born in Westward Road, Ebley in 1834, one of six sons of Stephen and Hannah Jefferies. The family were well respected in the area, his brother Henry being the "assistant overseer of the Parish of Cainscross". Henry was also the secretary of the Ebley and Cainscross Horticulturalists Society while Samuel was the treasurer. Another brother, Charles (*centre photo below*), was a shopkeeper and was well known for continuing to wear a traditional smock frock long after the fashion had died out. The family was also known for their interest in local politics and support of the Liberal candidates.

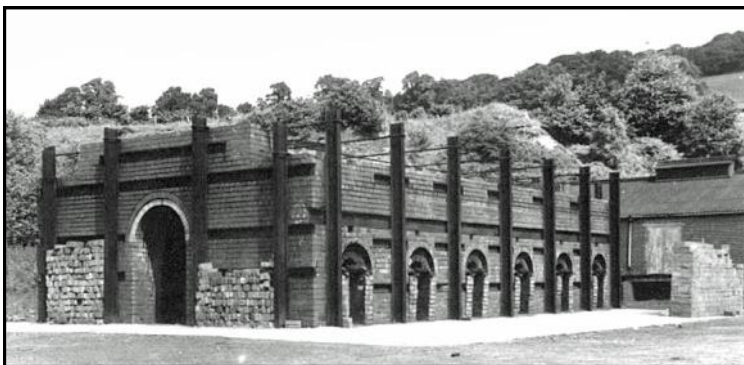


Samuel began his career in engineering and in around 1875 he opened a brickworks in a yard near the Dudbridge LMS railway station. He soon purchased some land nearby from the Marling family where he set up the Lightpill Brickworks. In 1876 he is described in a Gloucestershire Directory as "coal merchant and brick manufacturer, Railway Coal Wharf, and Railway Standard and Light-pill Brick Works". (Morris)

By 1881 he was living in Kensington Villas at Dudbridge Hill and employing 8 men and 3 boys in his business. He had a wife, Mary, three sons, Albert, Charles and Stephen and a daughter, Florence. His eldest son, Albert, was assisting him in the coal business.



In 1899, as Samuel Jefferies and Sons, he opened his largest yard - the Imperial Works at Ryeford, near Stonehouse. Like the Stonehouse Brick and Tile Works which opened in 1891, the Imperial Brickworks took clay from the side of Doverow Hill about a quarter of a mile from Stonehouse along the side north of the GWR line towards Stroud. The brickyard had its own siding and signal box. (see photo)



*Imperial Works, Ryeford*

The Atlas Works, also at Ryeford but on the side of the main road to the south of the GWR line, had been running from around 1860 and it is thought that this yard started the reputation of Stonehouse as an area producing good quality bricks. Samuel Jefferies and Sons took over this



*Bricks being loaded at one of Jefferies' yards*

yard in around 1900. In one of the firm's advertisements printed early in the 20th century, four brickyards were mentioned: the Imperial at Stonehouse; the Atlas at Haywardsfield Road; the Standard at Dudbridge Hill and the Lightpill Brickworks on the Nailsworth Road. At these centres were produced "*the best pressed and first class wire cut red building bricks.*" Jefferies bricks were used in the construction of barracks and military buildings for the Army on Salisbury Plain as well as for local buildings such as the former Gaumont Cinema in London Road. The main structures of the five bridges and the viaduct on the LMS railway between Dudbridge and Stroud were built with Jefferies brick as was the GWR Capel's

Mill viaduct in the valley below London Road, Stroud, which is now being renovated as part of the canal restoration. (Newspaper 1973)

Samuel Jefferies died on 28th January 1909. From his obituary in the local paper he appears to have been held in high esteem by his neighbours and employees alike. The floral tributes described him as a devoted husband and kind and loving father. As treasurer of the Horticultural Society he was described as "a man of sterling worth". He was buried at Ebley Chapel and his polished oak coffin was lowered into a brick vault lined with ivy and evergreens. All his employees attended the funeral.



From the 1911 census, we can see that Samuel's sons Albert, Charles and Stephen continued to run the business. Albert was in charge of the brickmaking, Stephen the coal merchant's and Charles had become a mechanical engineer. It may well have been Charles who invented a new type of brick cutting machine which helped the company to continue successful production during the 1920s and 30s. At this time, Samuel's grandsons, Douglas, Alan and Cecil, also became involved in running the company.

By the end of World War Two, the coming of concrete breeze blocks had ended a great many small brick making companies. Samuel Jefferies and Sons ceased to make bricks in 1946 but continued to run the coal business from the yards at Dudbridge railway station and Ryeford until the 1980s. In September 1975, the 196 feet (60 metres) high chimney at the old Imperial Works, built in about 1905, was declared dangerous and demolished brick by brick to a safe height of 40 feet (12 metres). Some of the bricks were sold for repairing old houses of the same type of brick.

The site of Atlas Works became Savage's Engineering Works and later Gordon's Garage. The Imperial Works has been taken over by small industries. The site of the Dudbridge Works was on the left up the hill towards the Golden Cross. It is still there behind the small shop that used to be their office. The Lightpill works was near the Dudbridge railway yard. The Dudbridge Railway Station and yards were cleared to create the Ebley bypass in 1995.



*Ted Smith who worked as a fitter at the Imperial Works in 1911*  
©Melvyn Smith

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# Robert Jefferies

by Vicki Walker and Shirley Dicker

*In 2013 we interviewed Samuel Jefferies' great-grandson Robert Jefferies who was able to give us information and photographs concerning the family business.*

Robert Jefferies was born at Cainscross in 1946, the son of Cecil Jefferies, grandson of Stephen Jefferies and great-grandson of Samuel Jefferies. By then the brick manufacturing business was over and the Jefferies family were running a coal business from the coalyard at Dudbridge railway station. When the railway station closed the coal business moved to the old brickyard at Ryeford.

Robert went to Ebley Primary School and on to Stonehouse Secondary Modern. When he left in 1961 he worked in a variety of jobs including Dangerfield's Bakery, Young and Wolf in Stonehouse, H & L Motors in Cainscross and Cope Chats at Dudbridge. Then he was offered a job in the Jefferies coal business being run by his uncle Douglas and father Cecil. Robert delivered coal around the Stonehouse area for twenty years until the coal business was sold.



*Robert in 2013*

## Robert remembers:

I think the brick making business finished just after I was born. The family were running the coal business from the yard near Dudbridge station and the office was at Dudbridge Hill. The old office building is still there on the side of the road.

After leaving school, I worked in the resin machine section at Young and Wolf and then moved to where the knitting needles were made and I worked on a saw cutting up the needles. Then I went to work at H & L Motors. On the Saturday I used to work on the petrol pumps. One day Mr Lewis came into the garage and asked me to wash his car. Of course it was a cold day and the water was too cold. On the Monday he came in and said, "*You didn't wash my car!*" - and gave me my P45 – the sack!

I worked at Cope-Chats but that didn't last long. So rather than sit at home doing nothing I asked my father if I could come and drive the coal lorries. A friend of mine who used to drive for another firm said, "*I'll give you a week and see if you can stick it. If you can stick it for the first week you'll be all right but, if not, you'll be finished.*" And I was there for about 20 odd years! Eventually we sold the coal business and I went to work for another coal merchant in Tetbury.

I have several Jefferies bricks. One was made at Lightpill (see Jefferies Brickworks article, page 25). I had never seen one of these but it was in someone's wall. When I was delivering coal I saw it had become loose so I got it out and brought it home. Even my father said he had never seen one of those. I also have horse brasses that used to be on the horse drawn coal carts, and photos of the coal trucks.



*Brick lorries at the Imperial yard c1930*



## Working on the coal lorries

When the brick business finished in the late 1940s, they had coal to fire the bricks, so the obvious thing was to keep the coal coming in and sell it to the houses. I used to go all round the district. I remember going to Orchard Road, Devereux Crescent and Park Estate. John Vick had almost all of Park Estate. We had a few there but they were mainly Vick's. Their lorries never used to go round Park Estate until later on because none of the men would have come home from Hoffmann's and they wouldn't get their money. So they started about 4 o'clock and went on until about 9 or 10 at night, delivering. They worked all day Saturday and had two lorries. One would start at one end and one the other. John Vick was a very friendly man and I knew a lot of his drivers.

When I went from door to door I used to do King's Stanley, Leonard Stanley, Stonehouse and up to Lightpill because ours was more spaced out. There were lots of coal merchants but there aren't many left now. People buy in small bags.

I remember when I was delivering we used to go from the coal yard to the Corner Café in Stonehouse where the chip shop is now (by the main carpark). Sometimes there would be as many as 15 of John Vick's lorries outside plus ours and we all used to go in there for our breakfast and then go off for the rest of the day. We just parked in the High Street – all you could see were lorries from one end of the street to the other! There was one chap used to go out on a Saturday and he would never get back until 9 o'clock at night. He used to go to Cashes Green football ground at 2pm and watch the football first and then carry on with the deliveries. They even had a song about him! You had a load and just had to finish delivering it so if you finished at 2; that was fine. Sometimes I was on my own and sometimes I would have temporary men helping, such as builders who were short of work or the men from the fairs. It was hard work lifting the bags off the lorry – we did about 6 or 7 tons a day, 20 bags to a ton. Houses had coal sheds. They often had two – one for boiler fuel and one for ordinary coal. One lorry went round with boiler fuel and another one with coal. The coal shed was just inside the back door on the Park Estate. Other places would have coal bunkers outside. Some places I delivered you would never believe it - they kept coal in the bath! One house in Malmesbury you had to walk right through the house, through the sitting room, to get the coal out to the back. At some places there were cellars where the coal was kept - we delivered down a shute from outside. A place at Woodchester had a corrugated tin shute to tip the coal down. One day I delivered at 7am in the morning and the next day the owner said, *"Don't ever deliver at that time again – all the neighbours have complained about the rattling noise!"* Houses in Stonehouse in the 1960s were still built with coal bunkers and coal-fired back boilers. There's not many who use coal now.



Photographs © Robert Jefferies

*Samuel Jefferies and Sons coal lorry*



# Bert Carter - railway signalman

by Vicki Walker and Jim Dickson

*Following on from Darrell Webb's article about Stonehouse Railway Stations in Issue 2 of the Journal, we interviewed Bert Carter who worked as a signalman for both the Great Western Railway (GWR) and London Midland & Scottish Railway (LMS). In 1948 GWR and LMS became parts of British Railways (BR) when the "big four" railway companies were nationalised. Bert and his wife Barbara bought a new bungalow in Bridgend, Stonehouse, in 1962 and still live there.*

I was born in Winchcombe in 1928 and lived in Cheltenham when I was young. When I was 14 and ready to leave school, I saw three jobs advertised at St James Station, Cheltenham. I got the job as a porter. I worked well with the stationmaster and, after a few months, they asked if I would like to work in the signal box at Malvern Road Station. My job there was to keep the bookings for the trains in the train register. I made six or eight entries for each train with the times and signals needed. It was a form of apprenticeship. The signalmen let me pull the levers and I soon learned what to do. After I had been there about twelve months, I went on to Lansdown Junction where they had two signal boxes. After a time there I went to Andoversford Station as a porter/signalman.

A couple of years later I moved on to Andoversford Junction Box. There were two lines: the MSW (Midland South Western) line to Southampton and the GWR line to Kington. I was only there about three years when I put in for a relief signalman's job stationed at Gloucester. By then I had learned how to work all the signals. I was one of the youngest men to have that job (in 1948). I had to cover for men on holiday or off sick. The first job I had was in a Class 2 signal box at Gloucester and I went out as far as Woolaston. I worked from Stonehouse to Kemble. Sapperton was one of the first jobs I did on relief. Then the GWR and Midland railway companies merged as parts of BR and I learned how to work the former Midland boxes (since they had slightly different levers). I often had to travel to the signal boxes on my motorbike as the trains weren't at suitable times. Later on I got a car.

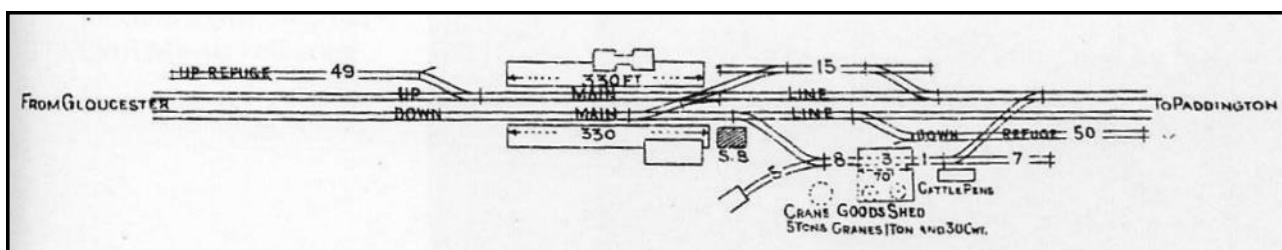
My boss was the Inspector. He would do the rosters and tell me where I was working the following week. The Inspector used to come round and check from time to time. I could also be called out at the last minute. Often I would get home from a shift and be called straight out again. I worked twelve-hour shifts and sometimes had to start at 4am. When it came to my turn to do National Service I wasn't allowed to go because my job was a "reserved occupation".

I first worked in the Stonehouse GWR signal box at Burdett Road Station in 1948. It was a Class 4 box with about 25 levers. There was a railcar every hour from Stonehouse through Stroud to Chalford (and in the opposite direction). Some of the railcars also went to Gloucester and, on



*"Railcar" leaving Burdett Road Station in direction of Stroud. A separate steam engine was attached to the carriage from well before WWII. Goods shed and signal box on right; brickworks on left.*

Saturdays, the last one went to Kemble. When a railcar had to change lines at Burdett Road Station (to go in the opposite direction), this was done using the cross-over. There were two sidings ("refuges" in the line diagram on opposite page) - one on the "up" line and one on the "down" - into which we shunted trains to allow others to pass (each siding/refuge could hold 45 to 50 wagons). The Brick and Tile Co. had a siding there as well. Trains brought coal in wagons. Coal lorries came up Burdett Road and took the coal off the wagons for delivery to local houses and businesses including Standish Hospital. The porter at the station made sure the wagons were emptied and loaded properly.



© From Maggs, C, *The Swindon to Gloucester Line*, Amberley Press 2009, p117

The sidings on the southern side of the station were located where there are now houses in Burdett Close. Burdett Road Station had a stationmaster and a porter who came on duty at 6am for the first railcar. The porter also did bookings and sold tickets.



*Goods train by the signal box on Midland line to Bristol; Nailsworth Branch line going off to left.*  
© Kidderminster Railway Museum

I also worked at Bristol Road Station and controlled the Nailsworth Branch line signals. The signal box worked in conjunction with Oldends Lane level crossing where there was a crossing keeper. I worked that as well sometimes. I have worked at all the local crossings providing relief cover. I waited for the warning bell to ring, the signal stopped the train, and then I went out and closed the gates to stop people from coming through the crossing. After the train had passed I opened the gates again.

Mostly I was on my own in the signal boxes. Occasionally there was also one other person or a trainee. Information about train traffic was communicated by bellcode and

indicator panel via a telegraph system. A telephone was also available. Every time a train was coming, a bell would ring in the signal box and a code indicated what sort of train it was (passenger, goods, etc). We had a timetable for the passenger trains but not for the freight trains. So the box at Gloucester would ring to let you know what was coming. With freight trains heading towards Gloucester, you had to check with Gloucester South signal box that the train could be accepted. We dealt with 40 to 45 trains a day.

During my working life I think I worked in 75 signal boxes. This was nearly all of the boxes in the area. There may have been a couple in Gloucester I didn't know. I can't remember there being any accidents when I was in the signal boxes, only a couple of wagons off the line.

We took our own sandwiches for lunch. I used to take slices of lemon for my tea because milk would go sour as it could get very warm in the boxes (with so much glass in them). You didn't have a break; you went to the toilet when there were no trains coming! A lot of the boxes had no toilets – the Midland boxes were the worst. There might have been a bucket if you were lucky! Some of the stations like Stonehouse had toilets which you could use.

When the "panel box" opened at Horton Road, Gloucester (around 1976), I was one of the first to work in it. It controlled all the signals from Birmingham to Gloucester. I continued to go out to one or two of the boxes that were still working. Once the Horton Road box was fully operational, all the other boxes were closed. I did the Inspector's job there for a while. On a Sunday I used to go out with the engineers working on the tracks, helping to move the engines to the right place. I was always more interested in how the tracks and system worked than the engines and never drove a train.

I retired when I reached 65.

*Bert in October 2012*



# Stonehouse Primary School: The happiest days of my life?

by Christine Hodges (née Brinkworth)

I moved from Eastington to Stonehouse when I was three. We lived in Laburnum Walk opposite the recreation ground. My mother strictly forbade us to cross the main road, the High Street; fortunately, the school was on the same side of it as our house!

## The Infants

Stonehouse Primary School consisted of a number of concrete classrooms, a playground for the junior boys, a playground for the junior girls and the original Cotswold stone building which housed the 4A class, the Hall and the Infant classes. I entered this stone building at the age of four and three quarters, just after Easter 1955.

Just before break, it was the routine to give every child a third of a pint of milk in a glass bottle with a straw. At that time milk made me sick, so I was proudly wearing a cardboard disc on which was written, "*No milk to be given*". This was attached to my cardigan by a shiny safety pin. At 11 o'clock, we were all given milk. At 11.15, I was sick and taken home. So ended my first day!

At play, I was an enthusiastic child rather than a careful one. My favourite place in the Infants playground was by the three trees which had small walls around them. The one nearest the school entrance had a wall a little lower than the others and the cemented top was really smooth. I loved to run around on top of this wall, frequently falling off. One particular fall resulted in a cut just over my right eye which bled profusely. My mum was a dinner lady at the school and patrolled the Infants playground. She took me to the little first aid room which was next to the hall. I have a vivid memory of standing in that room, holding a cloth over my eye watching my mum, head between her legs, sniffing smelling salts as hard as she could. Still, I lived to tell the tale.

I fell from that wall on numerous occasions. Once was at a playtime just before singing. I had grazed my outside thigh badly, resulting in a large red patch. The teacher put some yellow liquid on it. When volunteers were asked to sing, my hand shot up. "*Around the World*" was my favourite song and, of course, I knew every word. I stood in front of the class, trilling away and lifting my skirt to see what was happening with my stinging leg. I was fascinated to see that the whole patch was bleeding and the liquid had turned my leg into a huge orange wound. I didn't stop to think what sort of performance I was giving to my classmates but, like a true trooper, carried on to the very end of the song.

My first teacher was Miss Giles. I didn't hit it off with her, which was rather unfortunate, as she taught me again as a junior for sewing - which was never a strong point of mine! After that I had Miss Batton, who I adored. She liked singing, not sewing, so that was OK by me. Miss Neale was my last teacher in the Infants. She was very strict and, as I had a tendency to chat, we also had a slightly difficult relationship at times. This was a recurring theme as I moved up through the school!

My best friend was Susan. We were inseparable and walked around with our arms around each other's shoulders as if we were glued together. I was always getting told off for this, as Susan had had polio when she was two and wore a calliper on her leg. I was quite bonny and teachers were always saying, "*Stop leaning on that girl!*" I never told them that Susan could outrun me easily, was far more manoeuvrable when we played chasing and could handstand up the wall, which I could only marvel at. I never said anything, but I expect it showed on my face.





## The Juniors

Miss Pead was my first teacher in the Juniors. I don't remember learning much in Class 1A. My only recollection of that year was that I was outside the door every single day - another relationship problem due to talking, I'm afraid. Others seemed to talk but I seemed to be sent out the most. The dizzy height of making the grade in this class was to have a good score in the weekly handwriting test. I longed for such recognition but, sadly, every week when we looked at the wall, my piece of writing was never there. I tried really hard but, whether because I was left handed or just naturally untidy, that particular claim to fame always eluded me.

It was in this class that sewing reared its ugly head again. The girls had to make a tray cloth, which I saw no point to as tray cloths played no part in my life! When you finished, you could go onto something else. Something better I assume, as I never did finish my tray cloth. The material we used was white. Well, mine must have started out as white, but with all the sewing and unpicking, mine acquired a distinct greyish hue and a screwed-up texture. I used to dread showing my efforts to the teacher (was it Miss Giles again?) because my efforts were always unpicked, so I started each lesson in much the same place. There must have been some progress however, as I remember the glorious day when she accepted what I had done and shouted "*Hallelujah!*"

Next was Class 2A and Miss Tyler. She seemed big and old to me but as I was small and young I could be mistaken. We rubbed along fairly reasonably. She could take you by surprise at times. She seemed very severe but I recall one occasion when she asked if anyone could polka. My mum had taught me that dance, so I put up my hand. I clearly remember one, two, three, hopping around the desks in the classroom. She also read "*A Christmas Carol*" to us and I had to go outside the door again! But it was OK this time – it was to sing "*God Rest You Merry Gentlemen*" as I happened to know it.

In our third year we had Mr Brown. He wasn't keen on people who chatted! My overriding memory of this class was the incident of the ink blot. I sat next to Penelope and we were writing, when I noticed that she had splattered ink all across her book. We used wooden pens which we dipped into the inkwells set in our desks. Her head was turned away from her writing book and she was looking at her text book so I, being a bit of a busybody, nudged her and indicated with my head what she had done. Mr. Brown saw me do this, shouted at me to stand up and said I had been copying. I felt a bit sorry for myself because, if the lesson had been maths or science, copying might have been on the cards, but writing was something I found easy. The punishment came. I had to write one hundred times - "*I must play the game*".

I had to miss a playtime to do this and soon got bored, so I found a way to write the lines which entertained me slightly. By writing "I" vertically on the lines on the page and then the same number of "must" and so on, I found that I soon whizzed through the sentences. Unfortunately, Mr Brown came over to assess my progress and didn't care much for this method - and made me start all over again. This made me miss the next lesson, which delighted me, as it was the dreaded sewing and all the girls were starting to make a skirt. Unfortunately, this rather backfired on me as when Mr. Brown was eventually satisfied and I was sent along to sewing, there wasn't enough material left for me to make a skirt. So what was I asked to make? A tray cloth!



We ate dinners in a big dining hall between the main building and the classrooms, sitting on long benches which were either side of long trestle-style tables. Meal times were rather stressful, depending on the teacher on duty. No food was supposed to be left on your plate. Some kind souls turned a blind eye as the person who carried the pile of plates back to the trolley near the kitchen scraped food off the plates into the waste bowl. Others felt it was their *raison d'être* to keep this bowl completely empty. This posed quite a problem until some bright spark came up with the idea of squashing. This consisted of stuffing leftover food between the pile of plates, leaving the top one clean. If it was a bowl guarder on duty, you held your breath as you carried the pile to the trolley and breathed a sigh of relief if you managed to return to your bench undetected. We never once thought what an unpleasant shock the person washing up was going to get!

Some teachers were happy to let us talk quietly as we ate but, on a Friday, Mr Marfell was on duty and we had to eat in silence. He used to parade the room and if he spotted anyone talking he would say "*Stand - talking*" and the unfortunate child would have to stand on their bench for the rest of the meal. I frequently spent my time balancing on that bench; in fact I recall he once said to me, "*Stand - talking, always talking!*" My mum was still a dinner lady but used to be in the adjoining room with the infants. She often had to come through our room to go to the kitchen and I tried not to notice her raised eyes as she saw my elevated position.

The final class was situated in the main Cotswold stone building, off the hall. Miss Fletcher was the teacher of 4A and I had a bit of a rocky time with her. She called all the boys by their surnames and all the girls by their Christian names except Linda Bassett and me, who were always Bassett and Brinkworth. We used to have lots of tests and then we would have to sit in result order. I didn't find schoolwork difficult so this didn't bother me, but looking back it must have been rather demoralising for those who always brought up the rear. We did have a choir which I loved and we were very excited when we went to the Subscription Rooms in Stroud to join in with lots of other schools from the surrounding villages. My head used to be full of songs like "*Where 'ere you walk*" and "*The raggle taggle gypsies*".

I also used to like taking the assembly which the pupils did once a week. We were chosen to do this when the class went to Mr Marfell's classroom for R.E.. I don't remember learning much R.E. but I was chosen to do one of the assembly tasks quite often. These were announcing the hymn number, doing a reading and leading the prayers. You won't be surprised to hear that I had a loud, clear voice which I wasn't afraid to use. At last my time had come! You had to keep your eyes glued on Mr M. as he would nod when it was your time to speak, but the small moment of glory was worth the stress of incurring his wrath if you came in too soon.

We used to do country dancing in the hall which I always enjoyed. A new boy joined our school called John. He lived on the Park Estate and all the girls thought he was lovely. Usually we were given partners in country dancing but, on one occasion, the boys were allowed to choose. We all looked at John and held our breath for what seemed an eternity. He chose Julia Hayward. You could hear the collective sound of broken hearts!

Towards the end of our final year, in the summer of 1961, we went on a school trip to Wells and Cheddar in Somerset. I had a new duffel bag for the occasion. It was long, brown and cylindrical in shape and I had my packed lunch and drink in it. We had a really good day and I decided to buy my mum a present. Unfortunately, I decided on strawberries. These I placed in the bottom of my bag, with everything else on top of them. On arriving home, we discovered that everything was covered in strawberry juice and the bag was ruined. It isn't always the thought that counts!

My primary schooldays were coming to an end. They couldn't have been too bad as I love to walk by the school whenever I get the chance and remember those days. We all went our various ways, either to the Grammar, Technical or Secondary Modern School. I had to go home and tell my mum that I was going to Stroud High School. Now, how was I going to get across the road to the bus stop?

# Chronicles of a visit to Stonehouse in 1927: extracts from the diary of George A Smith

by Shirley Dicker and Vicki Walker

## A chance encounter

In 2010 while my daughter Emma was working as a waitress in the Woolpack, she chatted with a couple who were here on holiday. They said they were from Australia and had been following in their ancestor, George Smith's, footsteps around Gloucestershire. Unfortunately they had been unable to find the house where he had stayed in 1927. Emma asked the name of the house and was told "Spero" in Queen's Road. That was amazing good fortune because that is where we live! We invited them to the house and later they sent this diary of his time in England. So, from a chance meeting we have this fascinating snapshot of Stonehouse in the 1920s. (Shirley Dicker)



*"Spero", Queen's Road, 2013*

**The original handwritten diary of George Adolphus Smith of Rochester, Victoria, Australia was copied on to a CD by his grandson, Keith Forster.**

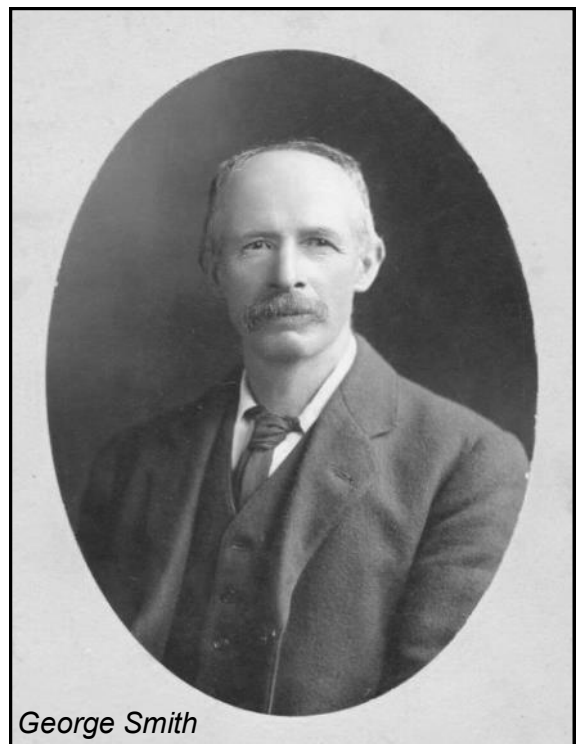
George Smith was born in Stonehouse in 1867. In 1881, aged 14, he was living with his family in Burdett Road and working as a clerk in a flour mill

Although his father was a woolsorter, it seems from the 1881 census that the children were more inclined to academic jobs as George's brother Edward was also a clerk and his two sisters were assistant teachers. In 1886 at the age of 19, George emigrated to Australia where he lived for the rest of his life. At first he worked as a Railway Porter but by 1924 he was the Station Master at Rochester, about 192 km north of Melbourne, Victoria.

In 1927 he came to England for 6 months to visit his brothers and sisters and their families after an absence of 41 years.

On **24 April 1927**, George boarded the SS Osterly at Melbourne, Victoria, to sail to Southampton. In his diary he gives a detailed description of life on board the ship and some of the ports visited during the voyage.

On **27 May**, he arrived at Southampton. He stayed for a few days in London and then made his way to Stonehouse. On 31 May he arrived at "Spero", the house of his brother Edward, in Queen's Road. George then spent the next six months visiting friends and relatives in the area and taking trips out to destinations such as Gloucester, Berkeley Castle, Stratford upon Avon and Bristol. He took many walks around Stonehouse and described in detail the places and people and what it was like to live here in 1927. There are around 100 pages of the diary and about half of them concentrate on the Stonehouse area. The following are a few excerpts from George's diary.



*George Smith*



**On 2 June**, George visited St Cyr's Church in the morning and then walked through Stonehouse and on to Stroud:

*"In the afternoon we went to that part of Stonehouse "above the bridge". In the old days it was noted for ruffianism and the slum houses but now it is transformed and fine new brick houses are everywhere in evidence. Below the bridge the old "Crown and Anchor Hotel" has been rebuilt in brick after the same pattern except for an extra story which heightens the building. The old houses and hotels are in much better condition than I expected to find them but they are gradually being superseded by the new brick buildings. In the evening we walked to Stroud through Ebley and Cainscross which used to be a familiar walk and the change for the better is very noticeable all along the road. One of the greatest improvements is apparent in the state of the roads and the immense motor traffic. This favourable condition of things is a good advertisement for old England and an inducement for tourists to travel through the country during the favourable season of the year. Arrived in Stroud, we visited the church and other familiar places of interest. The church is not nearly so old as that of St Cyr's, Stonehouse. We caught the 8.30pm bus home and arrived in Stonehouse about 8.40pm. The charge for 3 miles was only 3d (1.25 new pence). After returning I went for a walk by myself along Stroud road to Ryeford, down a steep hill, over the canal, past the railway station until I arrived at the old shop opposite the reservoir. Retraced my steps until canal bank was reached, walked along tow path until I arrived at the bridge spanning the canal, walked up the path and into the Downton Road, from thence up Regent Street to Queen's Road and to "Spero" where I reside at my brother's place. This was all done in daylight. It is not dark until 10.30pm."*

George met many well-known Stonehouse residents, including Charles Lister Smith (see page 22) who loaned him some of his papers on local history and took him around historical places of note, including Stonehouse Court.

### 16 July

*"After tea we took back some books on the history of Stonehouse to Mr Charles Smith. This gentleman is quite an authority on local happenings of past times. He showed us a house next to his own. The plaster wall was broken and exposed a stick and daub formation which he told us was the original style of building. The old stone tiles are very broken. When erected in the first place the roof was of thatch as could be easily seen from the building. We were informed that this house was built in 1601 and its main parts are still good. Renewals have been made in bricks which are cracked in places but the old stone walls are as sound as ever. This house was erected before bricks were used in Stonehouse (Editor's note: The house referred to is now the Tudor Tandoori). Mr Smith is going to take us to the manor house and church and point out many matters of interest which a casual visit would not divulge. He showed us his preserving factory. Different types of summer fruit placed in jars and bottles and put through certain processes of heat and the necessary fastenings to exclude the air from the fruit.*



*Afterwards I went to see Mr Mark Whiley, late printer and stationer. I knew him when he was an apprentice at Mr John White of Stroud. He started there at 2 shillings (10 new pence) a week and during his last year (the 7th) he received 12 shillings (60 new pence) a week. The wireless was set going and we had a pleasant talk and the time went rapidly. He was a fellow apprentice of my brother Will.*

*This shows the printer and stationer's shop kept by Whiley until the 1920s when it was taken over by Timbrell.*

*©Photo from the Wilf Merrett collection at Stroud Museum.*

*Later I went for a walk down the Laburnum and had a look at the old blacksmith's shop. I remember as a child of 7 going in to this shop and, when no-one was about, taking hold of a poker and burning myself severely. The pain was intense and I hope it taught me a lesson not to meddle when no one is looking."*

George was very impressed with Stonehouse and made favourable comments throughout about how well kept the village was and how friendly its people were.

## **6 August**

*"I love England the more for having come to see her again after so many years of absence. I love her glorious landscapes, the green fields hedged about with hawthorn, her trees of great variety but so pleasing to the view when decked out with leaves in spring and summer and from the Cotswold Hills the panorama outlook from every point is one of the very best in nature. I stood upon the hill overlooking Stonehouse and the Stroud Valley over 41 years ago and as a youth of 19 bade farewell to the scenes of my early days and now after a life's work in Australia and having returned to these scenes of my early days once more I feel that I am able better to appreciate the environment and beauty of surrounding nature than ever I was before and to come nearer home in my description of matters as I find them generally as compared with former times. In spite of the awful war and all the aftermath I find a better state of affairs than formerly. In the past period the city and country roads were traversed by horse drawn vehicles. The roads were atrocious in most places but now the scene is changed. Instead the general state of the roads is excellent and no longer horse drawn vehicles entirely but principally the motor car, the motor tractor and the bicycle. Then the sanitary arrangements in the city and country towns are splendid and in consequence sweeter air and healthier inhabitants. The people are much better dressed than in former times. The mill hands both male and female used to go about with tainted faces, hands and clothes but now they are to be seen leaving their workshops in comely garments and clean appearance."*



*Stonehouse High Street around the time of George's visit*

This is a brief selection from this interesting diary. We hope to do more research on the people and places mentioned in it and to include more extracts in the next issue of the Journal.

In the near future, we hope that you will be able to read the diary in full on our website [www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk](http://www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk)



# Beatrice Webb, 1858 – 1943

by Jim Dickson



*Standish House before it became a hospital*

## Early life at Standish

Beatrice was born in Standish House, near Stonehouse, on 22 January 1858. She was the eighth daughter of Richard and Lawrencina Potter. Beatrice's father, a highly successful businessman, was a partner in a timber business and held directorships of important companies (including Chairman of the Board of the Great Western Railway and President of the Grand Truck Railway of Canada. Various accounts indicate that he was probably a bit of a rogue. By the time Beatrice was born, her mother was in despair since she longed for a son. Having been brought up by her widowed father and brothers, she disliked women. In contrast to her mother, Beatrice's father idolised her and, from an early age, treated her as exceptional. Beatrice said that her father was unusual in his high opinion of women: *"He worshipped his wife, he admired and loved his daughters; he was the only man I ever knew who genuinely believed that women were superior to men, and acted as if he did."* Florence Nightingale, who returned from the Crimea in the year when Beatrice was born, had challenged the prevailing attitudes that women were inferior to men and unfit for mental or physical challenges. Married women had no rights over property, liberty or children and, until 1891, a man had the right to imprison his wife at home, and to beat her with a stick.

Four years after Beatrice was born, Lawrencina had a baby boy, Dicky. Although he only lived for two years, Beatrice was thereafter starved of affection by her mother. One consequence was that she spent a lot of time with the servants (around a dozen in the 1861 and 1871 Censuses). Presumably this was why she mixed so easily with working-class people in her working life. Although her formal education was almost wholly neglected, Beatrice was a determined user of the extensive family library. Given the conventionalism of the Victorian era, it is intriguing that her parents imposed no constraints on what she could read. She also benefitted from lengthy discussions with neighbours (such as Brian Hodgson, a former diplomat) and regular visitors to their home (such as the philosopher & sociologist Herbert Spencer, who was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature). She kept an extensive diary, from 1873 until her death in 1943.

In April 1882 Beatrice's mother became seriously ill with kidney failure and Beatrice nursed her, at Standish, until she died on April 13. Her mother's death released Beatrice (aged 24) from her frustration and boredom as dutiful daughter. She became housekeeper, hostess and companion to her father and became his business confidante and secretary, being present at many of his meetings and taking notes (a practice that was to prove useful). He suggested more than once that, if she did not want to marry, she might become his "recognised associate in business". Understandably, Beatrice was flattered.



In February 1883 Beatrice left Standish for London to take up her duties as her father's hostess and mother-substitute for her younger sister Rosie during the London season. She was determined to educate herself. She studied between 5am and 8am so that she could spend the rest of her days serving the demands of her family and social circle. Society, which she had enjoyed in her teens, became increasingly irksome – in particular the futility of gossip and small talk. In her diary she complained that she could not accomplish her self-education and training without neglecting her duties.

### **“My apprenticeship”**

In April 1883 Beatrice became a rent collector in the East End of London with the Charity Organisation Society (COS) in order to further her “human studies”. In the COS, poverty was seen as a failure of character which resulted in the distinction being made between the “deserving poor” – who might be helped – and the “undeserving” – who should be abandoned to the harsh Poor Law. Beatrice soon realised that the investigative casework she was involved in was no more than a cloak for dividing the poor into “deserving” and “undeserving”. She wrote of the advantages for her of going among the poor to study their lives and surroundings so that she could attempt to solve their social problems.



*Beatrice in ball dress in 1883*

In June 1883 (when she was 25) Beatrice was introduced at a dinner party to Joseph Chamberlain, leader of the Radical wing of the Liberal Party and President of the Board of Trade. Although 22 years older than Beatrice, and twice widowed, Chamberlain made an instant impression on her. He was a good looking, polished, charismatic character. At the time he was one of the most popular politicians in the country, and was known to be “in the market” for a third wife. The powerful attraction between them lasted for many years but was tempestuous and unrequited. The over-riding problem appears to have been that Chamberlain made plain that the women in his home might think differently from him but he did not allow them to express that difference.

It occurred to Beatrice that she might try her skills as a social investigator in the mill town of Bacup, near Rochdale, home of her mother's relatives. Martha Mills, the family's old nurse (and a poor relation), agreed to take her there, so that she might be introduced to the unknown world of artisans and weavers, but only on condition that she went as “Miss Jones, farmer's daughter, from

near Monmouth”. In late 1883 Martha took Beatrice to Bacup where she was introduced to respectable working-class relatives, who welcomed and accepted her. The visit left a deep impression on her, and she was curious how completely at home she felt with these people. She was struck by the contrast with the hopelessness she had met among the working class in the East End of London. She visited several mills in Bacup and had the workings of the Co-operative store explained by the manager (Rochdale was the birthplace, in 1844, of the modern Co-operative Movement).

In April 1884, Beatrice shut up Standish House for the last time. She and her father moved to the imposing former royal residence of York House in Kensington Palace Gardens. In late 1884 she was offered the management of Katherine Buildings, a bleak new block of “model dwellings” near St Katherine's Dock in London, intended to house the poorest of the poor. She began the task with high hopes since she would be meeting a cross-section of people. The building was ugly and there were primitive sanitary arrangements and no labour-saving devices. It was a strange arrangement: Beatrice and another unmarried, middle-class woman, attempting to act as “mothers” to hundreds of working-class families. Unsurprisingly the working-class culture of the tenants proved resistant to change and the two women found it impossible to impose middle-class standards of sobriety and morality.

Beatrice told her father that she waged a continuous war against drink and immorality. As her knowledge of the tenants grew, Beatrice became inspired to compile a survey of the tenants, past and present. It was to be a step towards her objective of understanding working-class housing.

In late 1885 Beatrice's father had a serious stroke and, a few months later, she and her father moved to Bournemouth to spend the rest of the winter in lodgings. Her father's failing mind and her absence from work and friends depressed her. However, she found time to study and reflect – by rising early and working for 3 hours before breakfast each day. While Beatrice and her father were in Bournemouth, London suffered serious social problems. The number of unemployed rose and revolution was in the air. Hopes that the degradation in which the casual labouring class lived could be solved by the likes of the COS schemes were revealed as futile. As Beatrice had found, poverty could not be cured easily. Resentment and misery turned to riots – shocking the upper classes. Demonstrations by the unemployed were regular events that year. The editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* wrote to Beatrice about relief work for the unemployed in the East End. She replied with comments based on her experiences. To her surprise, the editor offered to publish her article.

Charles Booth, husband of Beatrice's cousin Mary, was an enthusiastic Radical. In April 1886 Beatrice attended the first meeting held by Booth of his new Board of Statistical Research. He planned to use the Census returns to create a complete picture of the people of London, their lives and employment. This appealed to Beatrice. She promised Booth that she would spend March investigating London Docks and was soon getting up early to watch the daily ritual of "casuals" congregating in the hope of being given a few hours' work. She quickly realised the reasons for this situation, such as that the great sailing ships no longer came in on the tide to line the quays, providing weeks of work for the stevedores. By 1887 steamships came and went against wind and tide and their owners wanted their ships turned around in a few hours. Beatrice spent evenings in the Working Men's Club where she mingled easily with the men, smoking and laughing and finding herself accepted – as she had been in Bacup. She wrote up her experiences and had her article "*Dock Life*" published in *Nineteenth Century Magazine* in October 1887. It had good reviews and, when she went to a meeting of dock labourers, they cheered her. She lunched with the editor, Sir James Knowles, who offered to publish anything she might write.

Beatrice and Charles Booth decided that her next area for investigation would be the "sweating system", in which people were forced to work in poor conditions for low pay. Jewish contractors (recent Polish, Russian and German immigrants) with a staff of machinists, button-hole hands, etc turned out clothes at such a rate that they were being accused of putting English tailors out of work. In October 1887 she set off for Stepney intending to masquerade as a trouser-hand so that she might be accepted by the working girls of the East End. Dressed for the part, she got a job as a trouser-finisher. Unsurprisingly, she lacked skill and speed and was soon being told off by Mrs Moses, the person in charge. She was moved between two young girls to be shown what to do. Fortunately Mrs Moses took a liking to her. Beatrice had a popular success with her account of these experiences – "*Pages from a Working-Girl's Diary*" – published by Knowles. Beatrice's sympathy was with the women of the East End - wives and daughters of the poorest labourers. These desperate, destitute women would accept any work for any wage, and it was they who threatened the livelihood of the bespoke tailors. Beatrice concluded that it was the capitalist system which allowed sweating to exist - the "*evil spirit of the age, unrestrained competition*". Individualism, laissez-faire and minimal state interference suddenly seemed a cruel ideology. This led to a fundamental parting of the ways from Charles and Mary Booth.

## **The forming of a partnership**

Sidney Webb was born in central London in 1859. His father earned a precarious income as an accountant; his mother provided the main part of the family's income from her small hairdressing business. By his own efforts, he had reached the same grade in the Civil Service by the age of 26 as those who joined from university. George Bernard (GB) Shaw (who became a renowned playwright and Nobel Laureate in Literature) encountered him at a debate after which he judged Sidney to be "the ablest man in England". In early 1889 Beatrice was struggling with a mountain of information, for her first book, on the Co-operative Movement (published in 1891). She was making little headway, and one of her cousins suggested Sidney Webb as someone who could help with the early history of the Movement. Her cousin arranged a meeting with Webb and, by the time he left, Sidney had provided her with a list of all the sources of information she needed. From early 1890 Beatrice began to meet and correspond with Sidney and felt a rapport between her mind and his. Sidney was soon in love with her.

Unfortunately his looks and background had little appeal for Beatrice. In her diary she recorded that he was “a little man with a huge head on a very tiny body .....” Their subsequent courtship proved to be tortuous and Beatrice showed a good deal of insensitivity to Sidney’s feelings.

In 1888 Beatrice moved her father to Box House, Minchinhampton, which was owned by Arthur Playne, husband of Beatrice’s sister Mary and owner of Longford’s Mill. Arthur and Mary lived within 5 minutes’ walk in Longford’s House (now called Stroud Court). Until her father’s death, Beatrice bore much of the burden of ensuring his comfort (he had a full-time nurse and a staff of 7 servants in the 1891 Census). Richard died at Box House on New Year’s Day 1892, and Beatrice and Sidney’s engagement was announced shortly after. In March, Sidney was elected to the London County Council (LCC) and, on 23 July 1892, Beatrice married him in a civil ceremony in London. In her diary she recorded: “*Exit Beatrice Potter, enter Beatrice Webb or rather (Mrs) Sidney Webb for I lose alas! both names.*”

### “Our Partnership”

The Fabian Society was formed in January 1884. GB Shaw persuaded Sidney to join. From its first beginnings, the Society was a middle-class drawing-room left-wing political think tank. The Fabians were at the heart of much of the upsurge in socialist activity in the 1880s. In 1887 Sidney wrote “*Facts for Socialists*”, an early Fabian tract, and sold an astonishing 20,000 copies. Then, in 1889, seven of the members published “*Fabian Essays*” which sold 46,000 copies. All of the contributors rejected violent upheaval as a method of change, preferring to effect change through local government and trade unionism. When Beatrice read the essays, she was eager to meet the authors. She sent her copy to a friend, remarking in the covering letter: “*By far the most significant and interesting essay is the one by Sidney Webb; he has the historic sense*”.

None of the early figures in the Fabian Society were more significant than Beatrice and Sidney in developing the ideas that would come to characterise Fabian thinking and in developing thorough research methodology. In 1894 one of the members left £20,000 to the Society in his will and Sidney was appointed administrator. He and Beatrice decided that what was needed was a university to teach political economy. Following a great deal of lobbying and fund-raising, London School of Economics and Political Science (LSE) started in 1898 (Shaw wrote “*extracted by Beatrice Webb*” across his own cheque!). The Fabian Society and the LSE continue to work closely together. The Webbs also founded the New Statesman in 1913. This current affairs and politics magazine remains a prominent voice on the left in contemporary British politics and an effective partner with the Fabian Society.



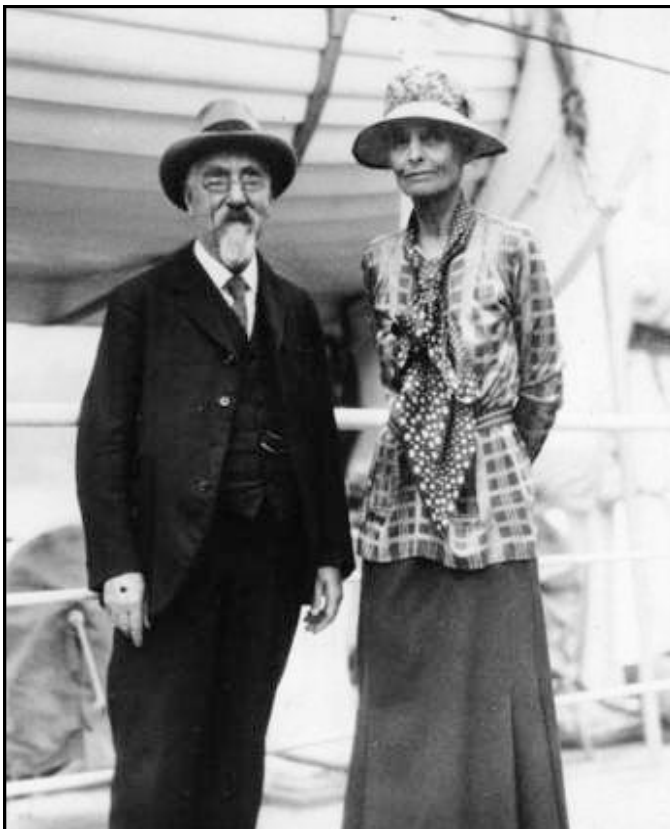
*Beatrice & Sidney working at their desk, 1890s*

In 1905 the Government set up a Royal Commission to inquire into the much-dreaded Poor Law, and Beatrice was appointed as one of its seventeen members. Throughout, she was strong, aggressive and intransigent, her ultimate aim being to rescue the poor from the miseries she had witnessed in the East End. While on the Commission, she carried out a comprehensive study of the poverty of women and children and, with Sidney, set up their own mini-commission (with three research assistants and many young Fabians). By the end of 1907 the COS and their allies on the Commission had rejected Beatrice’s draft scheme for Poor Law reform. So she set out, with Sidney, to write her own Minority Report, completed in January 1909. Beatrice and three other members signed it. It was a revolutionary document which argued for a complete end to the Poor Law.



In 1908 Beatrice had told Winston Churchill, then President of the Board of Trade, that “*If you are going to deal with unemployment, you must have the boy Beveridge.*” William Beveridge was duly appointed to set up the network of labour exchanges, and was close to the Webbs until their deaths. He and Beatrice are reputed to have argued and debated for decades! It took the Webbs a further 35 years of campaigning, research and propaganda before their great work – the Minority Report - achieved most of their aims through the Beveridge Report (published in 1942, mid-way through the Second World War). Beveridge aimed to provide a comprehensive system of social insurance. His Report proposed that all working people should pay a weekly contribution to the state. In return, benefits would be paid to the unemployed, the sick, the retired and the widowed. Beveridge wanted to ensure that there was an acceptable minimum standard of living in Britain below which nobody fell. The first post-war General Election, in June 1945, resulted in a landslide victory for the Labour Party. The new Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, announced the introduction of the Welfare State as outlined in the Beveridge Report. This included the establishment of a National Health Service in 1948, with free medical treatment for all. A national system of benefits was also introduced to provide social security, so that the population would be protected ‘*from the cradle to the grave*’. The Poor Law finally became redundant in 1948.

Beatrice & Sidney produced together a series of detailed studies of social history including their “*History of Trade Unionism*” in 1894 (which Lenin himself translated into Russian), “*Industrial Democracy*” in 1898, and “*English Local Government*” (10 volumes) between 1906 and 1929. During the First World War, Beatrice was asked to sit on the Reconstruction Committee, chaired by Prime Minister Lloyd George, and she was also a member of the Machinery of Government Committee which investigated the functions of government with a view to re-grouping them after the War. The Labour Party was strengthened by the War, and Sidney wrote its new constitution and important pamphlets. In 1922 he became MP for Seaham, County Durham and then, in 1923, they travelled to Germany and witnessed the effects of the harsh Peace of Versailles which had imposed heavy reparations on the defeated nation. Beatrice felt a sense of foreboding – and concluded that it was already too late to save Europe from another war. The first Labour Government was formed in 1924 and Sidney became President of the Board of Trade. A second Labour Government was returned in 1929. Sidney became Lord Passfield (under duress) and Colonial Secretary. Beatrice refused to accept the title Lady Passfield.



*Beatrice and Sidney on board ship  
on their way to Leningrad*

Following the Wall Street Crash, the Labour Prime Minister, Ramsay MacDonald, formed a predominantly Conservative “National” Government. The Webbs considered this a gross betrayal of the Labour Party and it undoubtedly contributed to their future enthusiasm for Russian Communism.

In May 1932 the Webbs sailed to Leningrad, where they received a huge welcome as authors of “*History of Trade Unionism*”. So began their ill-judged love affair with Soviet Russia. In their working lives, they had been well aware of the need to be free from bias and to make every effort to determine facts before arriving at conclusions. Sadly, they failed to do this in Russia. In 1935, they published “*Soviet Communism: A New Civilisation*”. It shocked their former admirers. Their friend William Beveridge, for example, protested “*Do not make light of hateful things.*”

In 1939 Beatrice was shattered by the signing of the non-aggression pact between Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany but, in June 1941, was overjoyed when Britain and Russia became allies (following the German invasion of Russia). For a time, she was in demand for talks and articles in favour of Britain's new ally. To the end, she believed that she and Sidney had been proved right about Soviet Communism.

Beatrice had had a kidney removed in 1934 and, by 1943, the remaining one was failing. She died on 30 April 1943 aged 85. Sidney died in 1947 and their ashes were buried together in Westminster Abbey, the only married couple to be so honoured.

## The verdict of history

An editorial in The Guardian on 19 February 2009 said: "*A hundred years ago the seed that was to grow into the welfare state was planted, when Beatrice Webb and other members of a royal commission on the poor laws issued their minority report. It was a document which the young William Beveridge, then working as a researcher for Sidney and Beatrice, used as a template more than 30 years later when he drew up his own plan for universal welfare in the middle of the Second World War.*"

## Acknowledgement

In May 2009 Francis Wathan gave a talk on Beatrice Webb to Stonehouse History Group. Since the talk was well received, we decided to write this article based on Francis's presentation. Sadly, Francis had to go into hospital about 4 years ago and now lives in a nursing home in Cheltenham.

## Sources of information

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Photo, *Beatrice & Sidney in the 1890s*, © Library of the London School of Economics & Political Science, reference PASSFIELD/3/8/1/59.

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# Stonehouse History Group

## Annual Report 2012 - 13

In May 2013 we celebrate the fifth anniversary of the inauguration of our group. We have increased our membership from 46 to 54 with 105 names on our contacts list. This year we have had 11 events, with an average attendance of 48, plus a visit to Byford's Farm during the summer.

Our first two Journals have been successful. We sold out of our initial run of 250 copies of Issue 1 and have ordered extra, now available. Issue 2 is also selling well, with our third issue out now. We have donated copies to the Gloucestershire Archives and Stonehouse Library. In future, Journals will be produced annually in May. Our second calendar, featuring photographs of Stonehouse in the past, also proved popular.

In October, the unveiling of our first information board was an exciting event. The board was sponsored by Valerie Blick who also provided us with photographs and information about the opening of the Post Office building in 1933. The board, which is now on permanent display on a wall of the Town Hall, has attracted many favourable comments. We hope to produce further boards in the future.

We have continued to interview local residents about their memories of Stonehouse. Shirley Dicker, Jim Dickson, and Vicki Walker have interviewed the following:

Terry Jefferies (Young and Wolf), Tom Round-Smith (World War Two), Betty Powell (Standish Hospital), Colin Wood (Young and Wolf, Stonehouse Court), Betty Baker (Parish Council), Bert Carter (Railway signalboxman), Eric Clark (Telephone Exchange), Ernest Weaver (WW2 evacuee), Robert Jefferies (Jefferies Brickworks), Martin Morris (Crown and Anchor), Barbara Dipple (Crown and Anchor), John West (Little Australia).

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



Shirley Dicker and Vicki Walker gave their presentation of High Street photographs old and new to Stroud U3A group. Vicki Walker has worked with Park Junior School to develop the children's knowledge of the history of their town. We have assisted with projects on World War Two and the Victorians, including local walks.

We have a healthy bank balance, benefiting from members' generous contributions to monthly fund raising raffles. This money goes towards paying for the speakers and the hire of the premises.

### **Committee, May 2012 – April 2013**

Chair – John Peters; Vice-Chair – Shirley Dicker;

Secretary – Vicki Walker; Treasurer – Carole Crisp

Committee – Valerie Blick, David Boaker-Praed, Jim Dickson, Darrell Webb, Colin Wood



## **Stonehouse History Group**

### **Events 2012 – 13 (number attending in brackets)**

#### **May 2nd 2012 (45)**

Annual General meeting.

Presentations by members

Jim Dickson - The Kemmett Canal

Darrell Webb - Stonehouse History Group Website

Followed by refreshments

#### **June 13th (76)**

Colin Maggs – Railways of the Stonehouse area

#### **July 11th (40)**

Pamela Tawse - Gloucestershire Voluntary Aid Detachments in the First World War including Stroud, Nailsworth and Standish.

#### **August 26th (26)**

Visit to Eric Freeman's farm at Taynton

#### **September 12th (58)**

Dr Nicholas Herbert – Road Travel and Transport in Georgian Gloucestershire

#### **October 10th (42)**

John Heathcott (a Cotswold Warden and a member of the Woodland Trust)

- Ancient Woodland in Gloucestershire

#### **November 14th (52)**

John Putley - Stand and Deliver

– a much admir'd treatise on highway robbery and the dashing highwaymen of Gloucestershire.

#### **December 12th (37)**

Patrick Furley – Christmas magic lantern show

#### **January 9th 2013 (57)**

Vicki Walker and Shirley Dicker – The Pubs of Stonehouse

#### **February 13th (33)**

David Harrison - Naughty Samuel Pepys

#### **March 13th 2013 (48)**

Ray Wilson – The Industrial Heritage of the Cotswolds

#### **April 10th (47)**

Steve Hill – Roman Gloucestershire

## Do you have any interesting historical photographs of Stonehouse?

We are interested in, for example, photos of shops or pubs, Stonehouse industries, schools, streets or houses, roads, bridges, railways, fêtes, 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. Please note that we are particularly interested in photographs from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

## May we record your memories?

If you have memories of life in Stonehouse many years ago we would like to talk to you. At the moment we are researching special houses, the pubs, Stonehouse during both World Wars and industries. If you think you could help with information on any of these topics please phone Vicki Walker on 826 334 or contact us via our website [www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk](http://www.stonehousehistorygroup.org.uk)

## Corrections

### Issue 1. Wycliffe at War, page 32, paragraph 2.

We named John Canton as contributing daily temperatures in Stroud between 1771 and 1813. This should have been Thomas Hughes. Barry Harrison has commented that "*Thomas Hughes did much more than keep temperature records, he kept a full weather diary and those records form part of the national weather records and climate base for the period and his diary is in the Met Office Archives.*"

More information can be found at <http://adsabs.harvard.edu/full/2005A%26G....46d..31H>

### Issue 2. Stonehouse town area c. 1610, page 9, Key

Janet Hudson has made an adjustment to the 1610 town key in Issue 2. See page 14, paragraph 3 of this issue.

### Issue 2. Young and Wolf Ltd, page 15.

Further information on this topic has been received from Geoffrey Young, whose father, also Geoffrey Young, ran the factory. The article stated that rennet casein is a by-product of cheese making. This is not correct. The following description of the process has been taken from <http://www.caseino.internet-today.co.uk/manufact.htm> :

*"The 'dry process' for making casein plastics starts with rennet casein. This was made at a dairy by adding rennet, an enzyme from the stomach of calves, to large vats containing highly skimmed milk. The precipitated casein was then dried at the dairy to form granules which were transported in sacks to the plastics manufacturers. Here the rennet casein granules were ground into a fine powder. After grinding, the casein powder was moistened with water containing any necessary colourants and mixed in dough mixers, as used for bread. All of the water was absorbed by the casein which swelled but appeared quite dry - although it would just bind together if squeezed in the hand. This mix was then fed into the hopper of an extruder which converted it into a continuous rod or strip which was still quite flexible but stiffened somewhat on cooling."*

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 (turtles shell) was so good that it could not be distinguished by many experts.

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