

## Derek Hurn – D H Hurn, 23 High Street, Stonehouse

Derek was born in Nailsworth in 1947. His parents were Frederick and Edith Hurn who had a radio shop in Nailsworth, which they started before the war.

Derek's uncle Alec set up a radio shop in Stonehouse in central High Street between the Police Station and the Crown and Anchor and next to what was White's Sports shop. Alec was a baker before the war, but then turned his hand to radio, like his brother Frederick. Hurn's shop opened c1939; the family purchased the whole building post war. They actually owned the building, which was uncommon in those days, as most people only rented their shops.



*Shops in c1940 (with white awnings)*

Frederick continued to run his shop in Nailsworth with his wife, but went to help his brother run the Stonehouse shop. The family stayed in Nailsworth while Derek was growing up. Derek recalls his father having a tannoy system, which they took around all the local fetes. It ran off accumulator batteries that they would charge one week and collect the following week.

There were two shops, the original radio shop and then the hardware shop next door, which they kept separate for a while before knocking them into one large shop during the 1960s.

Alec lived above the shop, while Frederick stayed in Nailsworth. There was a kitchen at the back of the shop with a staircase in between which led up to the flat; a second staircase, from when there were two shops, led to a storeroom. Behind the kitchen was another storeroom, where they kept wallpaper and paraffin, and then behind that were wooden garages.

Frederick left the Stonehouse shop in the late 1950s and continued to run his shop in Nailsworth. Derek remembers this period fairly well from when he was out helping his Dad and Uncle on flat roofs, putting aerials up at the young age of 10 – no health and safety then!!

Alec's son, Leslie, was interested in the radios and televisions and use to repair them in the wooden garages at the back of the old shop. So, in 1969, he set up a business in a shop over the road – 42 High Street - the end one of a row of what had been three terraced houses whose ground floors had been turned into shops.



*Hurn's Electrical shop c1994*

Leslie's son, Steve Hurn, later took ownership and ran it for many years; the shop closing 30th November 2019, after 50 years of specialising in small and large domestic appliances. Steve continued to keep the Hurn name alive with his venture as 'Steve Hurn Domestic Appliance Services'.

After Derek left school, he attended college doing a Photography course. His first job was in the photographic department of Berkeley Nuclear Laboratory. Derek's role was to take photos of the experiments both before and after so they could record the results. One thing he was involved with was the exploding of big pressure vessels that they tested at Stinchcombe Quarry. Derek did this for about 3 years, but then spent the next 2 years on day release, studying photography, going back and forth between Gloucester and Birmingham.

In 1971, Alec Hurn wanted to retire, and move down to Sand Bay, Weston, where he bought a small caravan site. The shop, including the whole building, was put up for sale, at which point Derek thought, "*Oh well, we'll give it a try!*". Derek bought the shop from his Uncle Alec on 15th February 1971, decimalisation day!

Derek moved in with his wife and young son, and about 9 months after they had moved in, their daughter was born. It was quite a big flat, with a large kitchen dining room area, and living room on the first floor and upstairs it had 3 bedrooms and a bathroom on the 3<sup>rd</sup> floor.



*Hurn's Hardware shop c1970s*

Derek gradually expanded the business, enlarging the back area to make a much bigger shop space, also knocking down all the garages out the back and rebuilding for storage purposes. Upstairs Alec had had a little wallpaper show room, which they kept for some time, but eventually it became a drapery, selling materials, curtains etc. Derek kept increasing the range, filling up the bedrooms upstairs with stock – hence he decided to move house. He converted the upstairs space into two flats, which they rented out.

Derek remembers many troubles with a few shoplifters and recollects one young man in particular that would walk up and down the town's shops, once or twice a week, visiting each of them in turn to see what he could get his hands on (in order to buy his drugs). Derek recalls, *"You'd be stood right on his shoulder, watching him wander about the shop, as he'd touch this and that - hoping the shop staff would be distracted, so he could take something to sell on"*. On one occasion, this lad brazenly attempted to take a full 30-piece boxed China tea-set from the shop, but one of the ladies behind the tills had spotted him and shouted out, *"He's going out the door with it, stop him!"* Well the lad heard her shouting out to Derek and stopped in his tracks only for him to say, *"I was just looking at it in the daylight"*, and so he put down the crockery set and carried on walking around the shop to try his luck again!

The attached Fish & Chip Shop used to be a café when Derek first moved in, but this has always been a separate building to Hurn's and has a couple of flats above it too – it was never owned by Derek or the Hurn family.

Derek could recall the butcher's opposite the shop run by Gillo. It was a time when Hoffmann's still employed many Stonehouse residents. Mr Gillo told him that the two weeks shutdown in the summer would be their quietest weeks but actually Derek found it the busiest weeks as everyone was doing DIY!

H. E. Beard's, further down High Street, was also providing the same sort of products as Hurn's. They both used to sell a lot of wallpaper in the 1970s and 1980s.



*Hurn's Home Hardware, Jubilee 2012*

Derek had the shop for 42 years, from 1971 to 2013, when he sold the name Hurn to a new owner. But with the struggles to compete with the likes of B&Q and the Internet, Hurn's Home Hardware sadly closed its doors in 2023 and was taken over by Shaunak's Pharmacy, opening on September 1st 2025.



*Hurn's Home Hardware Feb 2023*



*Shaunak's Pharmacy Sept 2025*



Derek Hurn April 2024