The History of Hoffmann's in Stonehouse

Hoffmann at Chelmsford

The UK's first ball bearing factory was established in Chelmsford in 1898 by Geoffrey & Charles Barrett and bankrolled by American ball bearing machine manufacturer Ernst Gustav Hoffmann.

The Hoffmann Company rapidly expanded and soon achieved worldwide fame for their precision-made bearings.

Since the early 1900s Hoffmann supplied all the major motor vehicle manufacturers including Rolls Royce, Bentley, Daimler, etc

1969 The firm became Ransome Hoffmann and Pollard (RHP) after the amalgamation with the Ransome and Marles Bearing Company together with the Pollard Ball and Roller Bearing Company.

The Chelmsford factory that once employed 7500 employees in its heyday was wound down during the 1980s and finally closed for good on 23 December 1989.

Aircraft Industry and the war effort

Hoffmann at Chelmsford supplied the Aircraft Industry throughout both world wars.

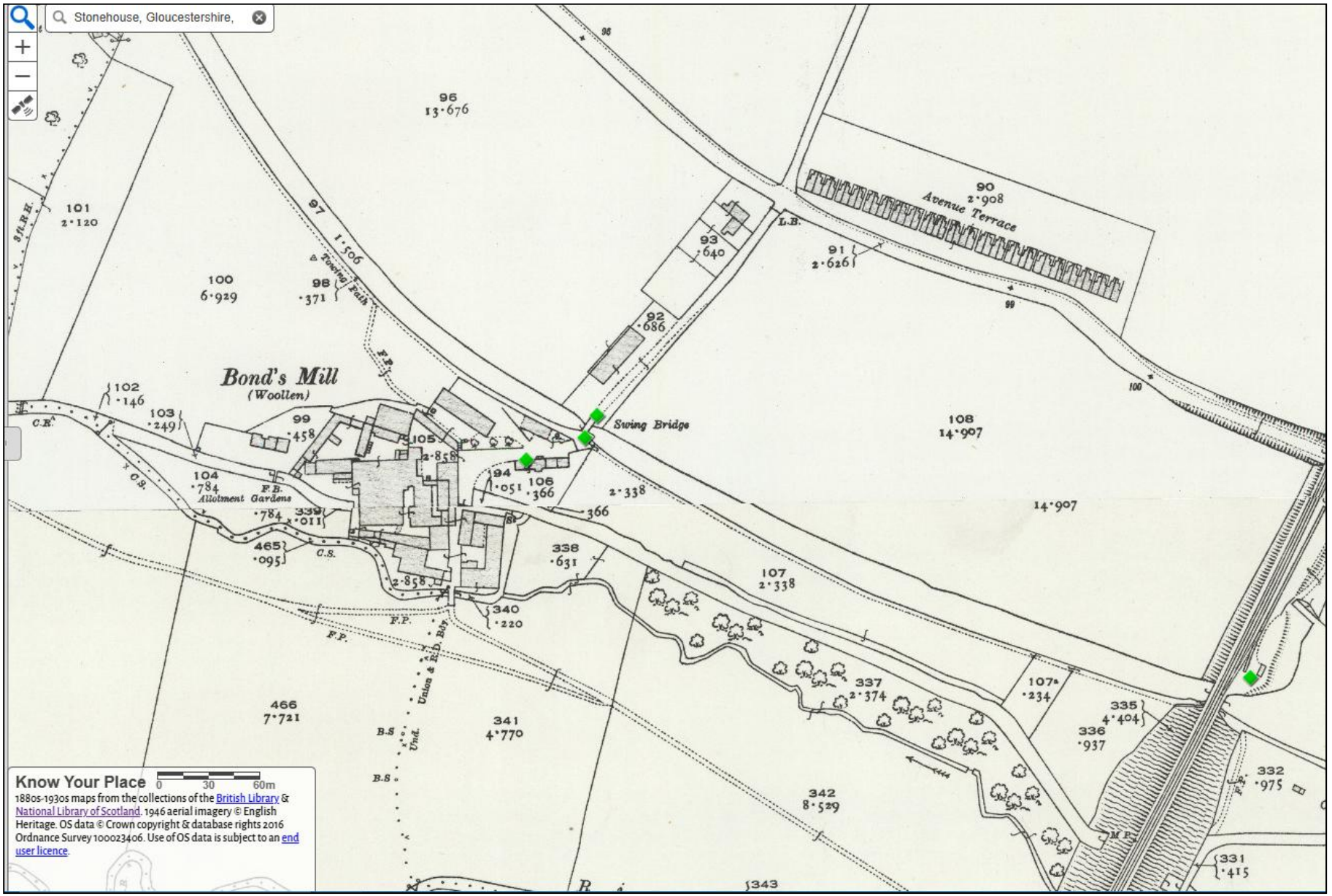
Dispersal factories

- Many factories were built across the country as part of the dispersal scheme designed to reduce the risk of a total collapse of production if existing aircraft factories were bombed.

- 1938 - Sperry Gyroscope of Brentford set up a new factory in Bond's Mill

- 1939 - 41 - a new factory was built for Hoffmann Manufacturing off Oldends Lane. Hoffmann (Gloucester) Ltd

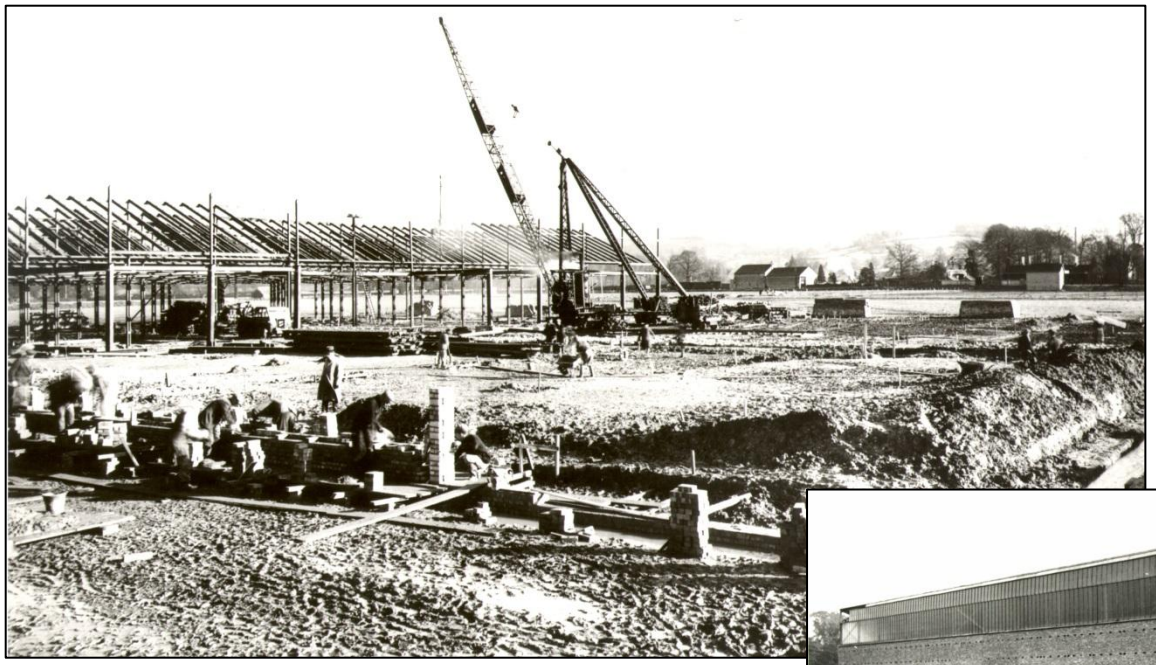
Stonehouse Map before 1939. Bond's Mill (woollen). Avenue Terrace. Farmer's fields



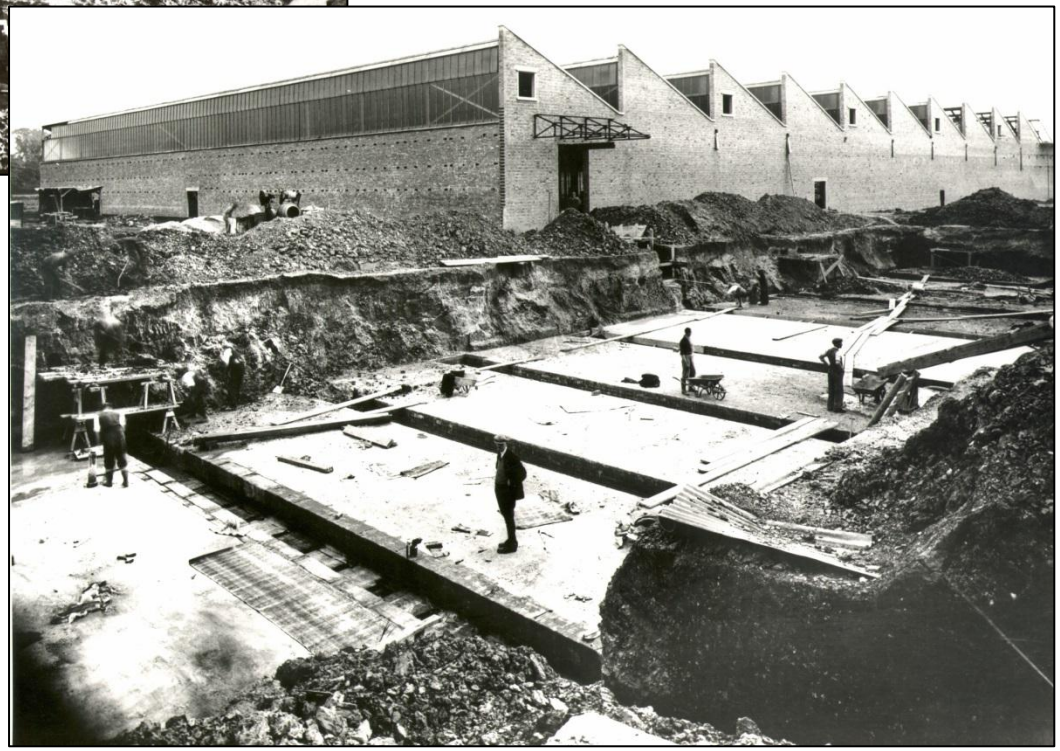
Bond's Mill 1920s



Hoffmann's being built



29th November 1939

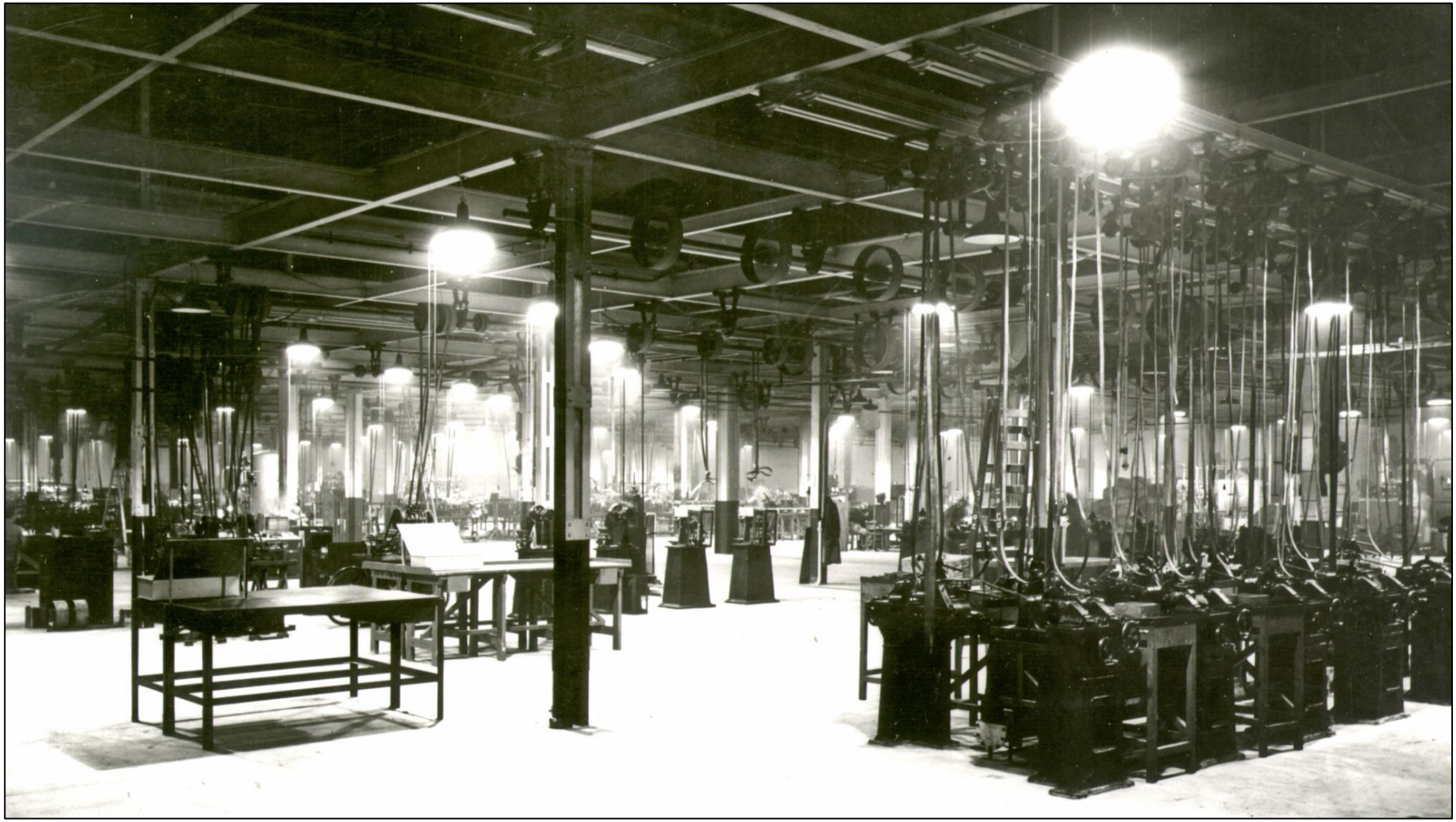


7th May 1940

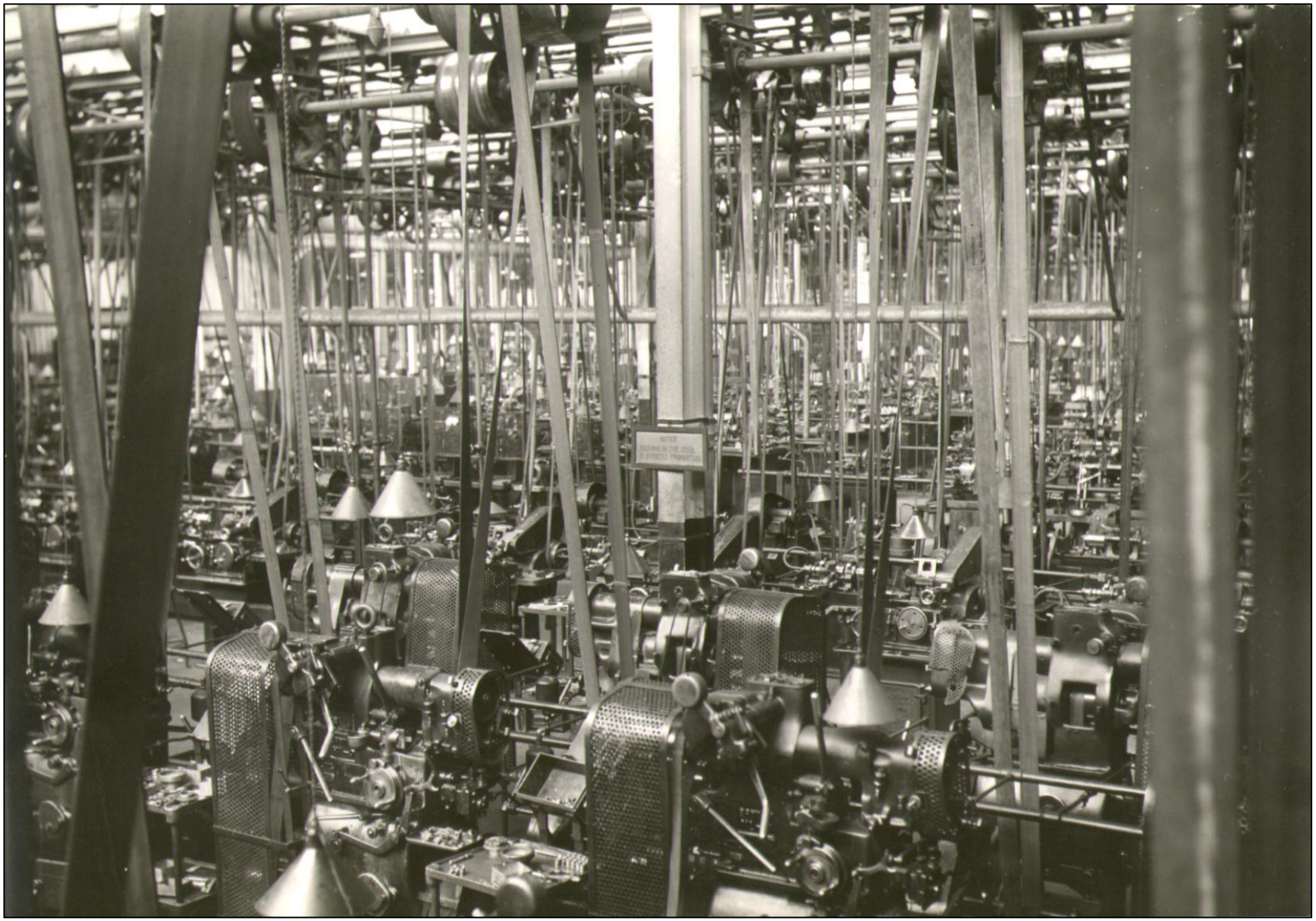
December 1940?



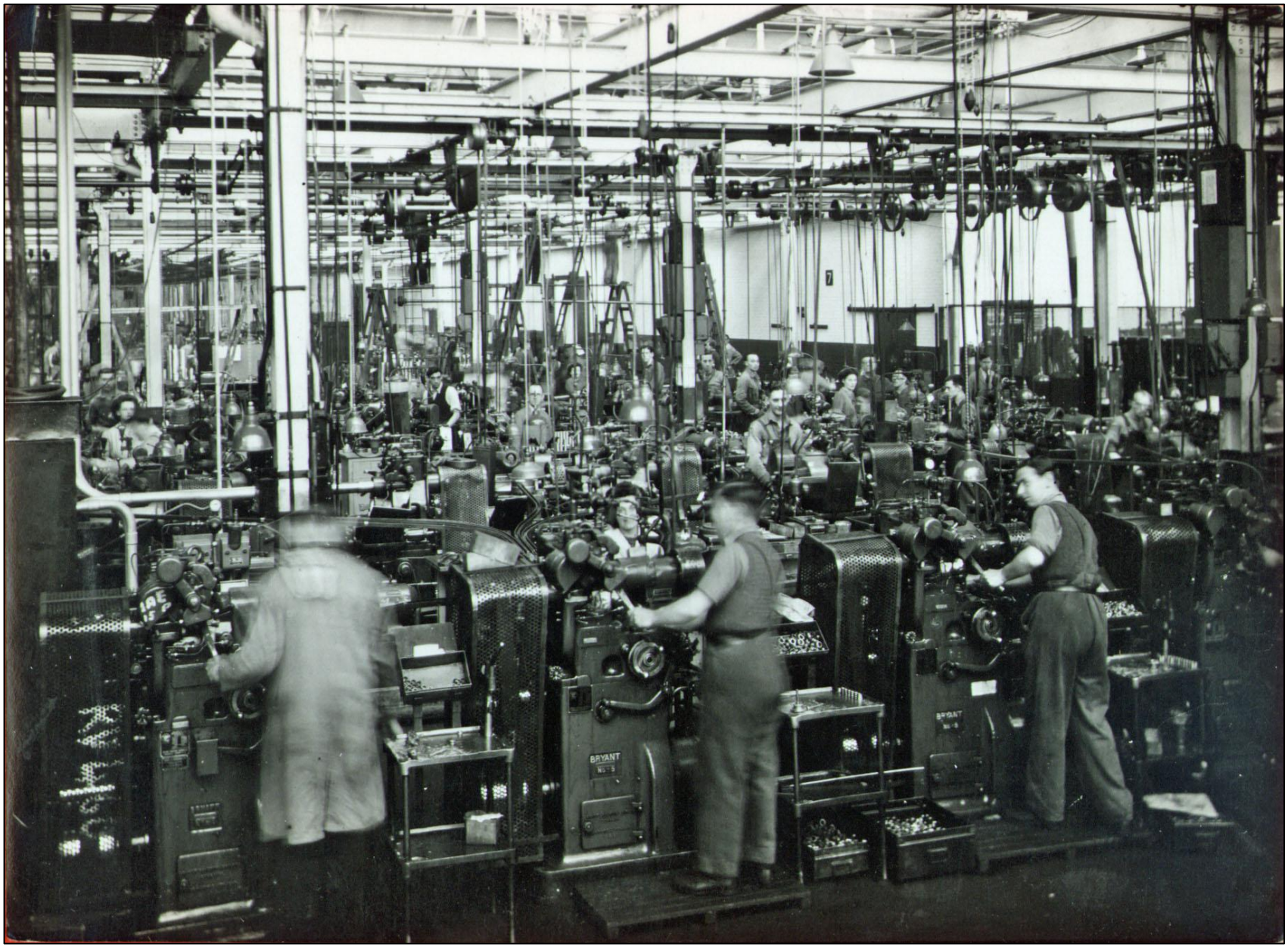
10th December 1940



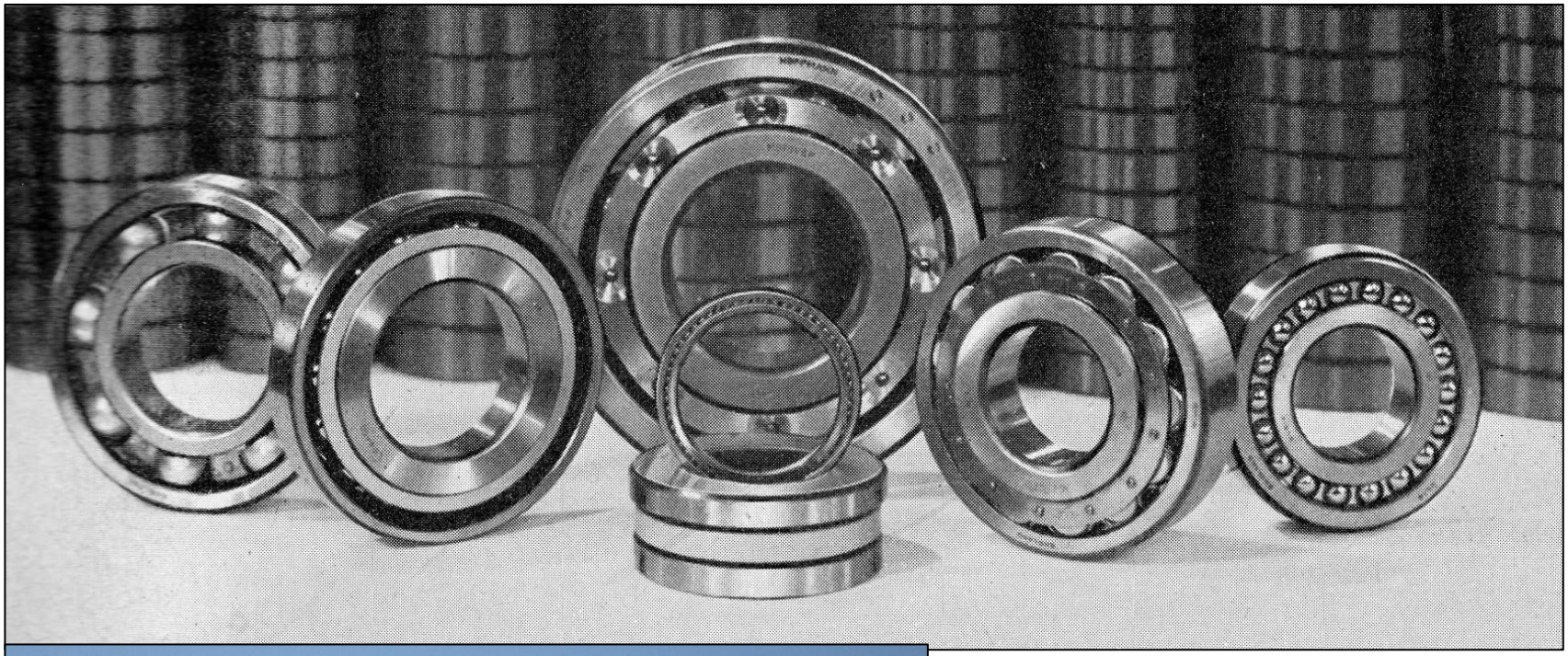
Completed factory



Busy factory



Ball & roller bearings





More than 950 bearings in a Lancaster bomber

Miniature bearings



Queen Mary's visit,1941

Ken Wilkins aged 16

The nurse pictured is Sister Rowlands



Imperial War Museum Collection

•Souvenirs of Queen Mary's visit to the Engineering Works of the Hoffmann Manufacturing Co. Ltd. at Stonehouse, on 3rd November 1941.
•**Bearings No. 4666,** the smallest size but one in standard production in this country.
•**An aerial dart** made from the bar and left over from production of bullet cores.
•**Various bullet cores** of which 553 million were produced by Hoffmann's between 1st September 1939 and 1st May 1945.



Home Guard in Stonehouse

Platoon, Company	HQ	Strength
51, E Company	Shop at junction of Bath Road & Great Western Road	3 officers, 46 other ranks
55, E Company	Air Ministry, Wycliffe College	2 officers, 26 other ranks
H(?) Company	Sperry Gyroscope's factory, Bond's Mill	5 officers, 100 other ranks
H Company	Hoffmann's factory, off Oldends Lane	1 officer, 30 other ranks

Hoffmann's Home Guard



Frank Woodyard 1918 - 2012





Frank's Home Guard proficiency certificate



A.F.W. 4026.

Certificate of Proficiency

HOME GUARD

On arrival at the Training Establishment, Primary Training Centre or Recruit Training Centre, the holder must produce this Certificate at once for the officer commanding, together with Certificate A if gained in the Junior Training Corps or Army Cadet Force.

PART I. I hereby certify that (Rank) Pte. (Name and initials) WOODYARD, F. 7/640

of "H" *~~Battery~~ Company 8 Glos: *~~Regiment~~ Battalion HOME GUARD, has qualified in the Proficiency Badge tests as laid down in the pamphlet "Qualifications for, and Conditions governing the Award of the Home Guard Proficiency Badges and Certificates" for the following subjects:—

	Subject	Date	Initials
1.	General knowledge (all candidates)	10.5.44	F.W. 2/Lt.
2.	Rifle	8.5.44	[illegible] 2/Lt
3.	36 M Grenade	10.5.44	[illegible] 2/Lt
*4.	(a) Other weapon Sten Carbine.	8.5.44	[illegible] Sgt
	(b) ~~Signalling~~:		
*5.	(a) Battlecraft, (b) ~~Coast Artillery~~, (c) ~~Heavy A.A. Bty. work~~, (d) "Z" ~~A.A. Battery work~~, (e) ~~Bomb Disposal~~, (f) ~~Watermanship~~, (g) ~~M.T.~~	8.5.44	R.P. Colin Jr.
*6.	(a) Map Reading, (b) ~~Field works~~, (c) ~~First Aid~~. . ..	10.5.44	[illegible] Sgt

Date 11th May 1944 Signature [illegible] Maj.
* President or ~~Member~~ of the Board.

Date .....194.... Signature .....
* President or Member of the Board.

Date .....194.... Signature .....
* President or Member of the Board.

Date .....194.... Signature .....
* President or Member of the Board.

Date .....194.... Signature .....
* President or Member of the Board.

PART II. I certify that (Rank) Pte. (Name and initials) WOODYARD, F. 7/640

of "H" *~~Battery~~ Company 8 Glos: *~~Regiment~~ Battalion HOME GUARD, having duly passed the Proficiency tests in the subjects detailed above in accordance with the pamphlet and is hereby authorized to wear the Proficiency Badge as laid down in Regulations for the Home Guard, Vol. 1, 1942, para 41d.

Date ~~10th May~~ 23 May 1944 Signature [illegible] MAJOR

Commanding 8 Glos. BN. H.G.

Air Raid Shelters at Hoffmann's



Property of

THE HOFFMANN MANUFACTURING CO. LTD.

CHELMSFORD, ESSEX.

Name Mr Woodyard Check No Dept G 116.

PERMIT TO AIR RAID SHELTER

No. 21 GREEN ZONE

SMOKING IN SHELTERS IS PROHIBITED.

Bridgend Hostel

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

Left to right –
Back :
?,
Una Cox,
Esther Carnell

Centre row:
Kathleen Rice, ?, ?

Front row:
Gladys Cook,
Evelyn Muggeridge,
Winnie Walker



Increase in population

- 1931 population of Stonehouse 2255
- 1951 population almost doubled to 4232
- 1961 was 5311
- 2021 – population approx 8300

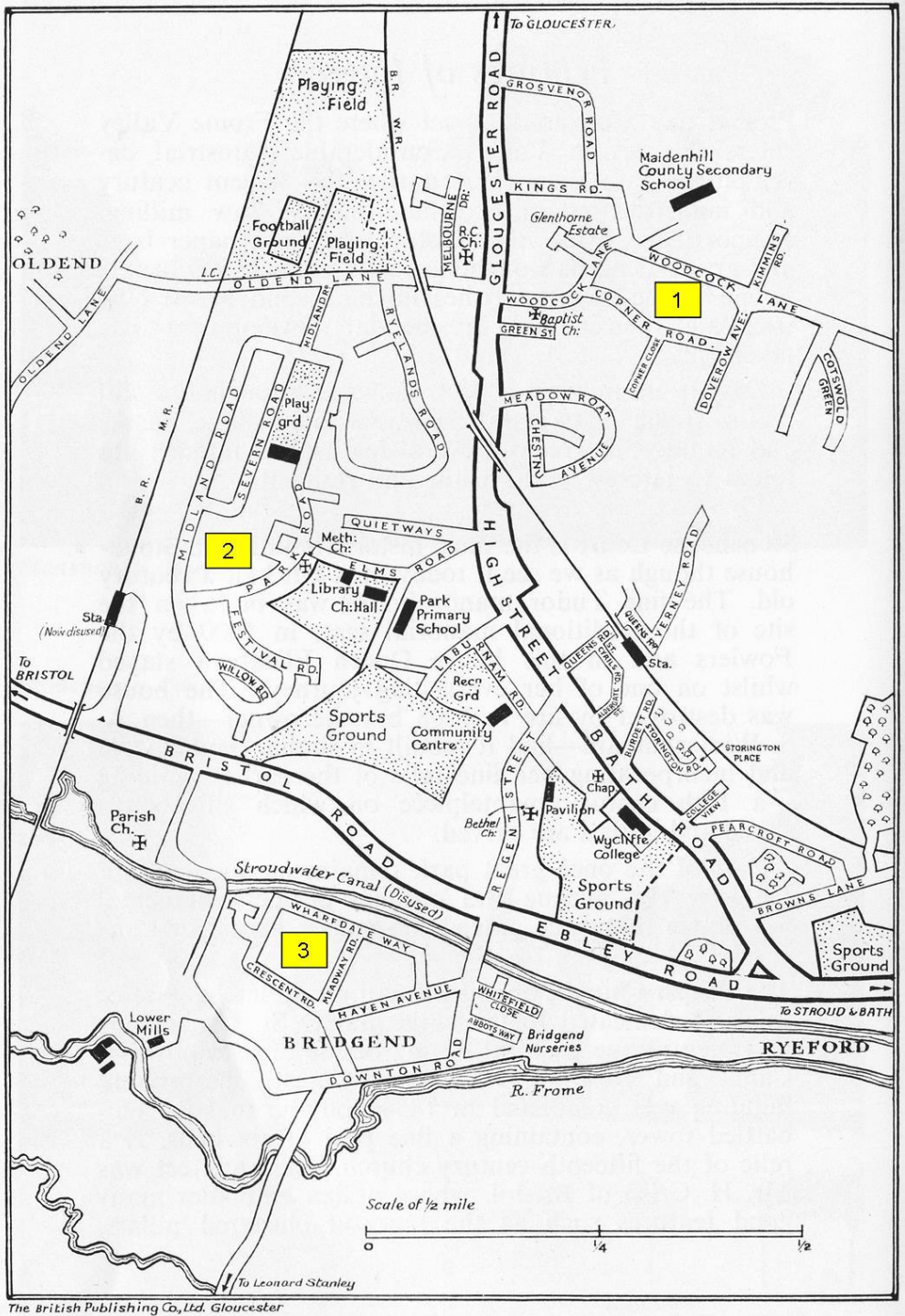
The coming of the factories had changed Stonehouse from being a country village, albeit one with many small industries, to a small town with an influx of new people to the new estates.

New houses

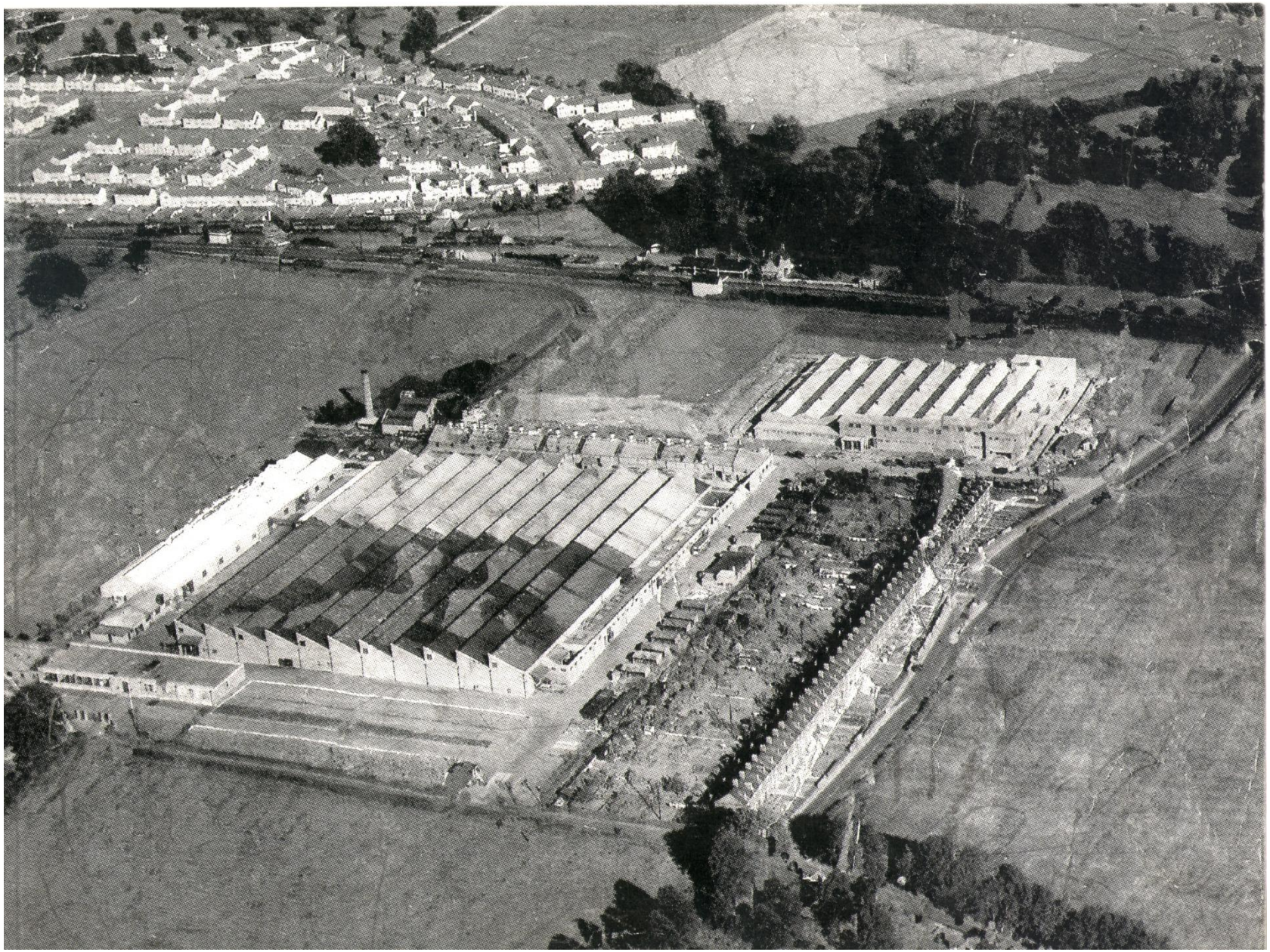
1 Woodcock Lane maisonettes

2 Park Estate

3 Bridgend



1950s



Post-war development

Nuffield Study on Engineering Light Mechanical Industries

Mr Parrett (Manager) comments

- Present employment is 1120 of which two-thirds are women
- The firm had built 250 houses, local builders 250 more
- Did not anticipate any fall in demand for their products etc

Beatrice Woodyard



1960s

See further talk

1970s 1980s

In 1969 the three major British bearing companies, Ransome & Marles, Hoffmann and Pollards were brought together to form RHP.

Stonehouse lost all commercial bearing manufacture and became the Aerospace division, concentrating on bearings for aircraft engines, gearboxes, and also Airframe bearings for various control systems and ancillary items.



C-SUPERVISORY
MR.A.RESTALL (CHAIRMAN)
FOREMAN TOOLROOM.

No. 6. JULY 1962

HOFFMANN

news sheet

Bringing notes of news and happenings of Hoffmann interest during the month

VC 10

world's most powerful airliner takes to the air.

G-ARTA

TALK OF THE FLYING world during the past few weeks was the maiden flight of the world's most powerful jet air-liner, the Vickers VC10. Urged upwards by the 33,000 h.p. of the tail-mounted Rolls-Royce Conway engines the VC10 as good as leaped into the air, lifting its 80 tons after a run of only 2150 ft. down the 4,500 ft. strip at Weybridge.

Climbing at a rate of 4,500 ft. a minute, the VC10 levelled off at 3,500 ft. and landed ninetcen minutes later at Wisley. Landing was almost as swift as take-off, for

Handling the VC10 on its maiden flight were the Captain, G. R. Royce, Chief Test Pilot, British Aircraft Corporation; Co-pilot E. B. Trubshaw, Chief Test Pilot, Vickers-Armstrongs (Aircraft) Ltd.; and Third Pilot, W. B. Cairns, Test Pilot, Vickers Armstrongs (Aircraft) Ltd.

M. Bryce, awarded the O.B.E. in 1959, has been responsible for most of the test and development flying of the Viscount, Valiant, and Vanguard. He scores some 7,000 hours of flying experience on some 50 different types of aircraft.

Hoffmann Bearings in the Picture

1990s - 21st century

1990 RHP was purchased by NSK of Japan (Nippon Seiko) and the Stonehouse factory remained the major Aerospace facility within the group.

2002 the factory was acquired by SKF (Swedish: *Svenska Kullagerfabriken*, 'Swedish Ball Bearing Factory')

2018 SKF announced that:
• production was moving to their aerospace bearing manufacturing sites in Italy and France.
•**The bearing manufacturing site in Stonehouse, UK would be closed at the end of the year.**

The factory finally closed in 2021 with the loss of 185 jobs.

By the end of February 2024, much of the main manufacturing building had been demolished

Hoffmann's before demolition



Hoffmann’s in 2014



Reception in entrance Feb 2022



Empty factory Feb 2022





Demolition



Demolition



Demolition



March 10th 2026



Hoffmann Apprentices 1965 -1970

Andrew Walker and John Wilkins



Apprenticeships

In 1965 many boys took advantage of the opportunities in the local engineering industry.
An apprenticeship was the key to obtaining a skilled “job for life”

- Circa. 1965 Apprenticeships
- Modern Apprenticeships
- Hoffman Apprenticeships
- Indentures

Finding a job

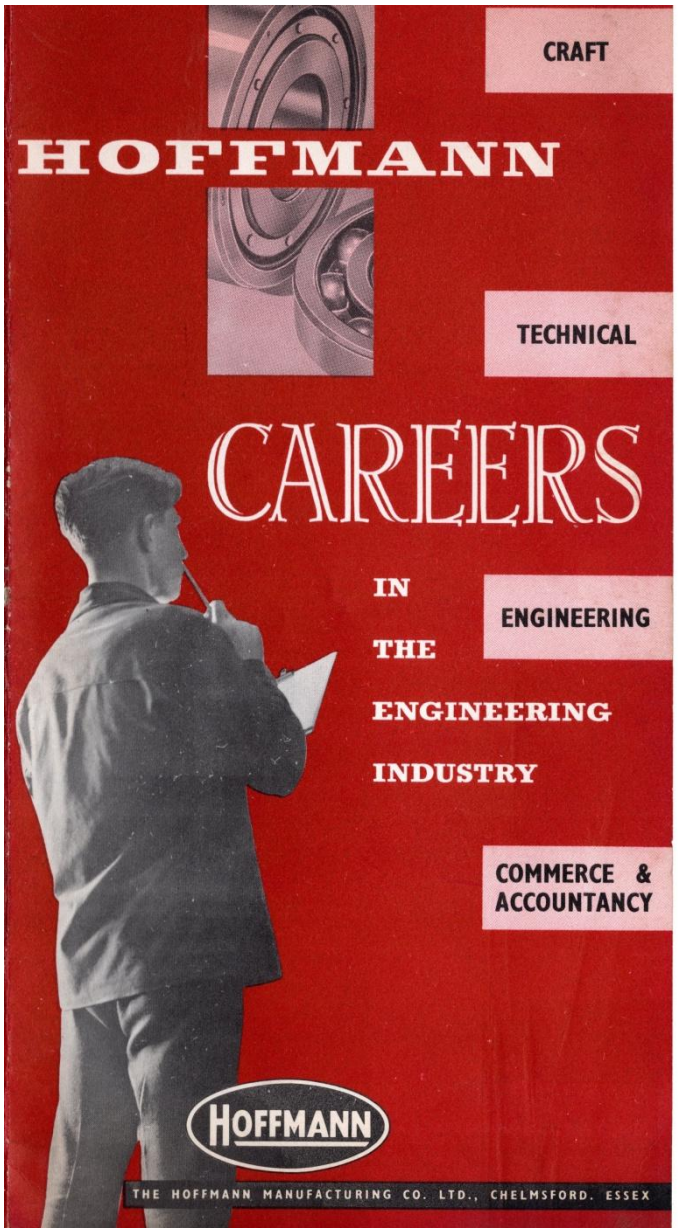
1960s - Stroud News and Journal was full of adverts in the ‘situations vacant’ section, many offering training and apprenticeships.

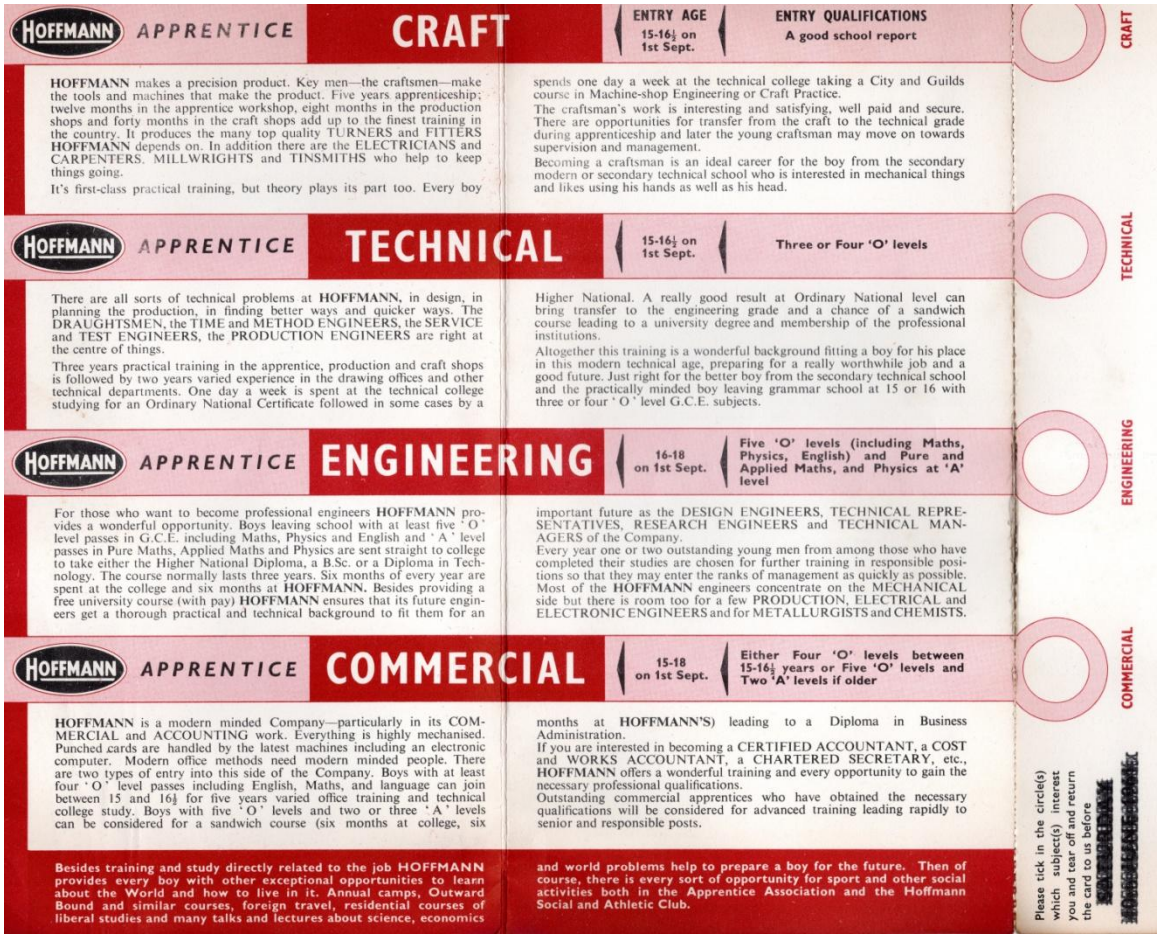
Many local engineering companies offering structured apprenticeships, including Daniels, Sperry Gyroscope, Redler, Newman Hender and Hoffmann.

Most boys would respond to the job adverts in the local press or be informed of a suitable position by a friend or relative already working in the company.

Hoffmann preferred boys who had stayed at school for the 5th year and had a good academic record. There were both craft and technical apprenticeships available and Hoffmann usually chose applicants from Stroud Boys’ Technical School, Stonehouse Secondary Modern and sometimes from Marling School.

Finding a job





HOFFMANN APPRENTICE **CRAFT**

ENTRY AGE: 15-16½ on 1st Sept.

ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS: A good school report

HOFFMANN makes a precision product. Key men—the craftsmen—make the tools and machines that make the product. Five years apprenticeship; twelve months in the apprentice workshop, eight months in the production shops and forty months in the craft shops add up to the finest training in the country. It produces the many top quality TURNERS and FITTERS **HOFFMANN** depends on. In addition there are the ELECTRICIANS and CARPENTERS. MILLWRIGHTS and TINSMITHS who help to keep things going.

It's first-class practical training, but theory plays its part too. Every boy spends one day a week at the technical college taking a City and Guilds course in Machine-shop Engineering or Craft Practice.

The craftsman's work is interesting and satisfying, well paid and secure. There are opportunities for transfer from the craft to the technical grade during apprenticeship and later the young craftsman may move on towards supervision and management.

Becoming a craftsman is an ideal career for the boy from the secondary modern or secondary technical school who is interested in mechanical things and likes using his hands as well as his head.

HOFFMANN APPRENTICE **TECHNICAL**

15-16½ on 1st Sept.

Three or Four 'O' levels

There are all sorts of technical problems at **HOFFMANN**, in design, in planning the production, in finding better ways and quicker ways. The DRAUGHTSMEN, the TIME and METHOD ENGINEERS, the SERVICE and TEST ENGINEERS, the PRODUCTION ENGINEERS are right at the centre of things.

Three years practical training in the apprentice, production and craft shops is followed by two years varied experience in the drawing offices and other technical departments. One day a week is spent at the technical college studying for an Ordinary National Certificate followed in some cases by a Higher National. A really good result at Ordinary National level can bring transfer to the engineering grade and a chance of a sandwich course leading to a university degree and membership of the professional institutions.

Altogether this training is a wonderful background fitting a boy for his place in this modern technical age, preparing for a really worthwhile job and a good future. Just right for the better boy from the secondary technical school and the practically minded boy leaving grammar school at 15 or 16 with three or four 'O' level G.C.E. subjects.

HOFFMANN APPRENTICE **ENGINEERING**

16-18 on 1st Sept.

Five 'O' levels (including Maths, Physics, English) and Pure and Applied Maths, and Physics at 'A' level

For those who want to become professional engineers **HOFFMANN** provides a wonderful opportunity. Boys leaving school with at least five 'O' level passes in G.C.E. including Maths, Physics and English and 'A' level passes in Pure Maths, Applied Maths and Physics are sent straight to college to take either the Higher National Diploma, a B.Sc. or a Diploma in Technology. The course normally lasts three years. Six months of every year are spent at the college and six months at **HOFFMANN**. Besides providing a free university course (with pay) **HOFFMANN** ensures that its future engineers get a thorough practical and technical background to fit them for an important future as the DESIGN ENGINEERS, TECHNICAL REPRESENTATIVES, RESEARCH ENGINEERS and TECHNICAL MANAGERS of the Company.

Every year one or two outstanding young men from among those who have completed their studies are chosen for further training in responsible positions so that they may enter the ranks of management as quickly as possible. Most of the **HOFFMANN** engineers concentrate on the MECHANICAL side but there is room too for a few PRODUCTION, ELECTRICAL and ELECTRONIC ENGINEERS and for METALLURGISTS and CHEMISTS.

HOFFMANN APPRENTICE **COMMERCIAL**

15-18 on 1st Sept.

Either Four 'O' levels between 15-16½ years or Five 'O' levels and Two 'A' levels if older

HOFFMANN is a modern minded Company—particularly in its COMMERCIAL and ACCOUNTING work. Everything is highly mechanised. Punched cards are handled by the latest machines including an electronic computer. Modern office methods need modern minded people. There are two types of entry into this side of the Company. Boys with at least four 'O' level passes including English, Maths, and language can join between 15 and 16½ for five years varied office training and technical college study. Boys with five 'O' levels and two or three 'A' levels can be considered for a sandwich course (six months at college, six months at **HOFFMANN'S**) leading to a Diploma in Business Administration.

If you are interested in becoming a CERTIFIED ACCOUNTANT, a COST and WORKS ACCOUNTANT, a CHARTERED SECRETARY, etc., **HOFFMANN** offers a wonderful training and every opportunity to gain the necessary professional qualifications.

Outstanding commercial apprentices who have obtained the necessary qualifications will be considered for advanced training leading rapidly to senior and responsible posts.

Besides training and study directly related to the job **HOFFMANN** provides every boy with other exceptional opportunities to learn about the World and how to live in it. Annual camps, Outward Bound and similar courses, foreign travel, residential courses of liberal studies and many talks and lectures about science, economics and world problems help to prepare a boy for the future. Then of course, there is every sort of opportunity for sport and other social activities both in the Apprentice Association and the Hoffmann Social and Athletic Club.

CRAFT
TECHNICAL
ENGINEERING
COMMERCIAL

Please tick in the circle(s) which subject(s) interest you and tear off and return the card to us before

Leaflet advertising Hoffmann apprenticeships

Applying to Hoffmanns

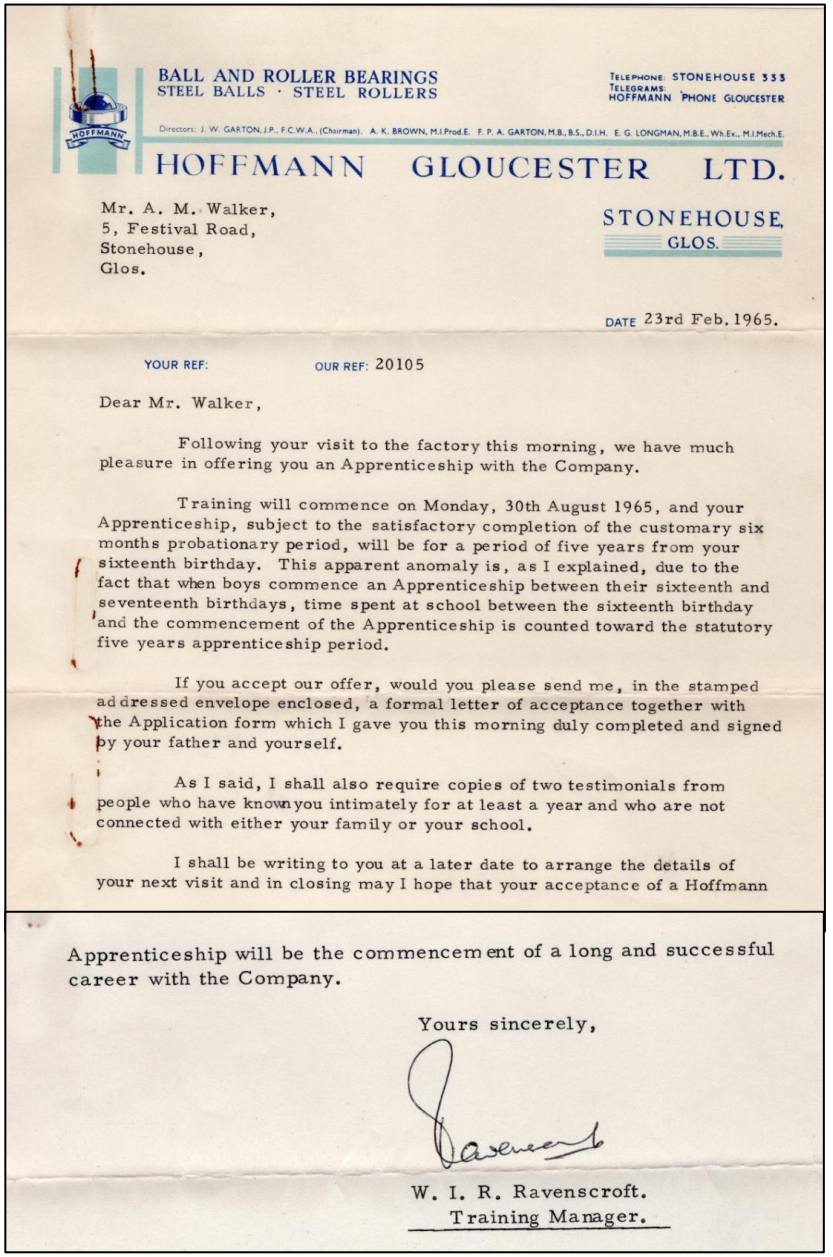
In February 1965, both Andrew and John applied for an apprenticeship at Hoffmann Gloucester Ltd.

Andrew received the letter opposite:

Following your visit to the factory this morning, we have much pleasure in offering you an Apprenticeship with the Company.

…….

Apprenticeship will be the commencement of a long and successful career with the Company.



BALL AND ROLLER BEARINGS
STEEL BALLS · STEEL ROLLERS

TELEPHONE: STONEHOUSE 333
TELEGRAMS: HOFFMANN PHONE GLOUCESTER

Directors: J. W. GARTON, J.P., F.C.W.A., (Chairman). A. K. BROWN, M.I.Prod.E. F. P. A. GARTON, M.B., B.S., D.I.H. E. G. LONGMAN, M.B.E., Wh.Ex., M.I.Mech.E.

HOFFMANN GLOUCESTER LTD.

Mr. A. M. Walker,
5, Festival Road,
Stonehouse,
Glos.

STONEHOUSE,
GLOS.

DATE 23rd Feb. 1965.

YOUR REF: OUR REF: 20105

Dear Mr. Walker,

Following your visit to the factory this morning, we have much pleasure in offering you an Apprenticeship with the Company.

Training will commence on Monday, 30th August 1965, and your Apprenticeship, subject to the satisfactory completion of the customary six months probationary period, will be for a period of five years from your sixteenth birthday. This apparent anomaly is, as I explained, due to the fact that when boys commence an Apprenticeship between their sixteenth and seventeenth birthdays, time spent at school between the sixteenth birthday and the commencement of the Apprenticeship is counted toward the statutory five years apprenticeship period.

If you accept our offer, would you please send me, in the stamped addressed envelope enclosed, a formal letter of acceptance together with the Application form which I gave you this morning duly completed and signed by your father and yourself.

As I said, I shall also require copies of two testimonials from people who have known you intimately for at least a year and who are not connected with either your family or your school.

I shall be writing to you at a later date to arrange the details of your next visit and in closing may I hope that your acceptance of a Hoffmann Apprenticeship will be the commencement of a long and successful career with the Company.

Yours sincerely,

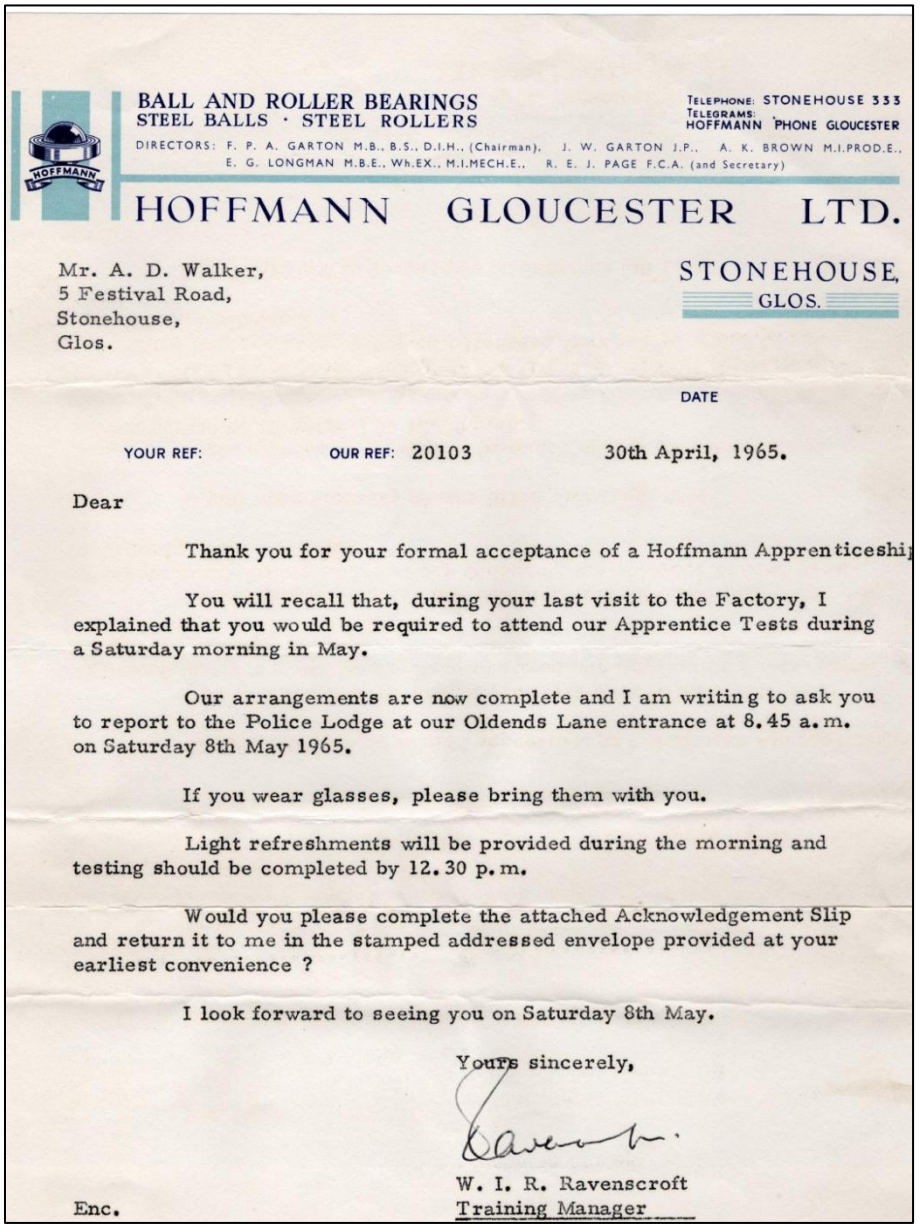
W. I. R. Ravenscroft.
Training Manager.

Apprenticeship tests and working conditions

Thank you for your formal acceptance of a Hoffmann Apprenticeship.

You will recall that, during your last visit to the factory, I explained that you would be required to attend our Apprenticeship Tests during a Saturday morning in May.

Light refreshments will be provided during the morning and testing should be completed by 12.30 pm



BALL AND ROLLER BEARINGS
STEEL BALLS · STEEL ROLLERS

TELEPHONE: STONEHOUSE 333
TELEGRAMS: HOFFMANN PHONE GLOUCESTER

DIRECTORS: F. P. A. GARTON M.B., B.S., D.I.H., (Chairman). J. W. GARTON J.P. A. K. BROWN M.I.PROD.E., E. G. LONGMAN M.B.E., Wh.EX., M.I.MECH.E., R. E. J. PAGE F.C.A. (and Secretary)

HOFFMANN GLOUCESTER LTD.

Mr. A. D. Walker,
5 Festival Road,
Stonehouse,
Glos.

STONEHOUSE,
GLOS.

DATE

YOUR REF: OUR REF: 20103 30th April, 1965.

Dear

Thank you for your formal acceptance of a Hoffmann Apprenticeshi

You will recall that, during your last visit to the Factory, I explained that you would be required to attend our Apprentice Tests during a Saturday morning in May.

Our arrangements are now complete and I am writing to ask you to report to the Police Lodge at our Oldends Lane entrance at 8.45 a.m. on Saturday 8th May 1965.

If you wear glasses, please bring them with you.

Light refreshments will be provided during the morning and testing should be completed by 12.30 p.m.

Would you please complete the attached Acknowledgement Slip and return it to me in the stamped addressed envelope provided at your earliest convenience ?

I look forward to seeing you on Saturday 8th May.

Yours sincerely,

W. I. R. Ravenscroft
Training Manager

Enc.

Apprentices 1965

Fourteen apprentices were taken on – we mostly knew each other. Stonehouse boys are highlighted in blue.

Name	School
Ian Cameron	Stonehouse Secondary Modern
Francis Clark	Stonehouse Secondary Modern
David Moore	Stonehouse Secondary Modern
John Payne	Stonehouse Secondary Modern
David Poole	Stonehouse Secondary Modern
Andrew Walker	Stonehouse Secondary Modern
Richard Watson	Stonehouse Secondary Modern
Martin Beauchamp	Stroud Boys Technical School
Michael Begley	Stroud Boys Technical School
Christopher Haynes	Stroud Boys Technical School
Edward Holford	Stroud Boys Technical School
John Wilkins	Stroud Boys Technical School
David Wise	Stroud Boys Technical School
Neil Amphlett	Severn Vale School, Gloucester

The First Year's Training

•Training began on 31st August 1965

•Points covered on the first day were: timekeeping and clocking in, provision of overalls, Health and Safety. Apprentices wore green boiler suits with Apprentice embroidered on the front so you could be easily identified.

•Ongoing Theory Training – On Monday mornings we went to the lecture theatre for films and talks on various aspects of engineering.

•Attendance at Technical College

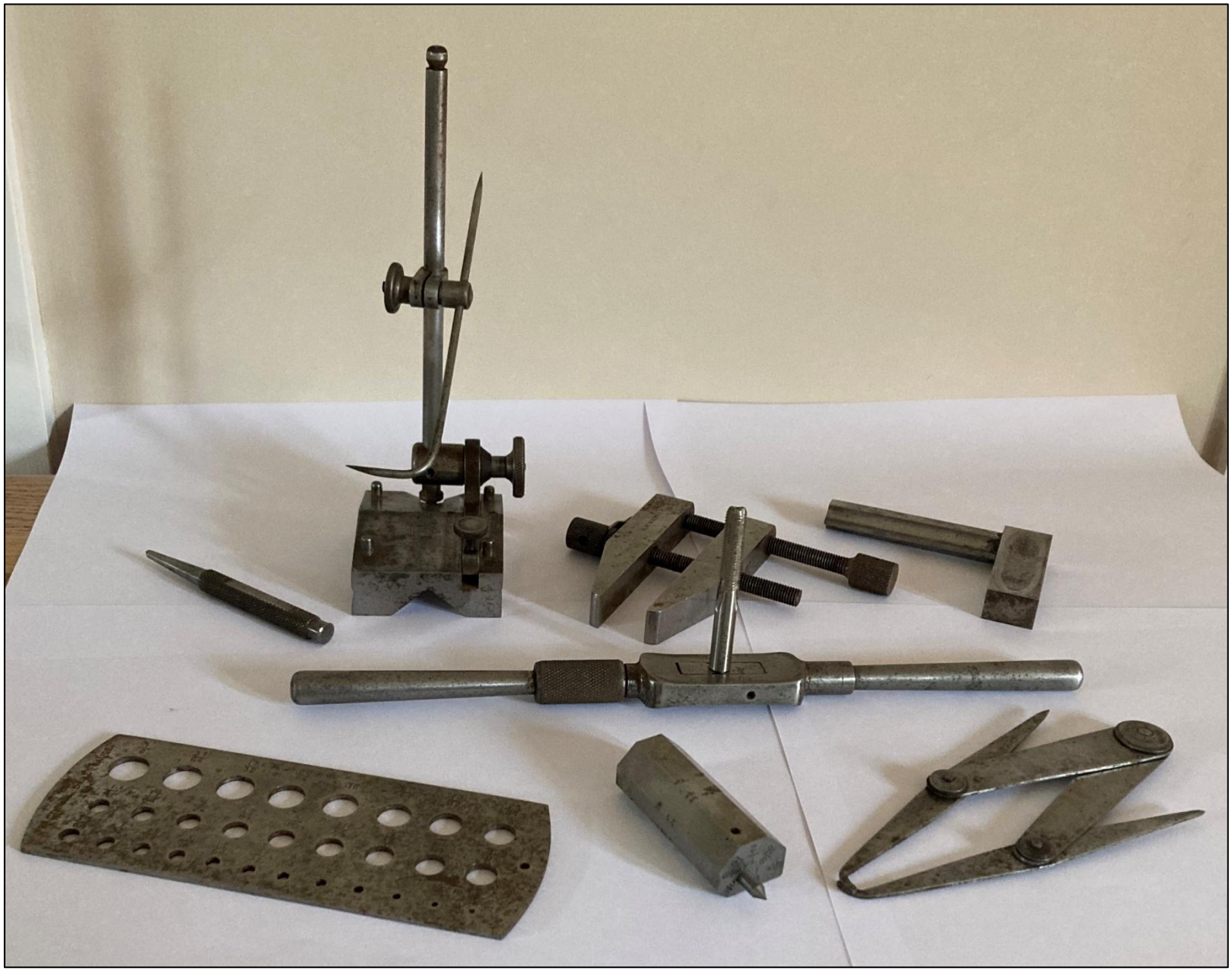
•Ongoing Practical training in the workshop:
Making workpieces and tooling (all inspected and marked) (as displayed on table)
Taking Measurements and bench fitting using hand tools
Operating machinery such as: Drilling Machines, Lathes, Milling Machines and Grinding Machines

The training workshop



The apprentice training room in 1963

Apprentice Workpieces



Signing day

June 1966 - official signing day
Indentures signed by the apprentice's father or guardian.

Parents invited to an "At Home" afternoon in the training workshop.

- Andrew - craft apprentice leading to skilled fitter and/or turner

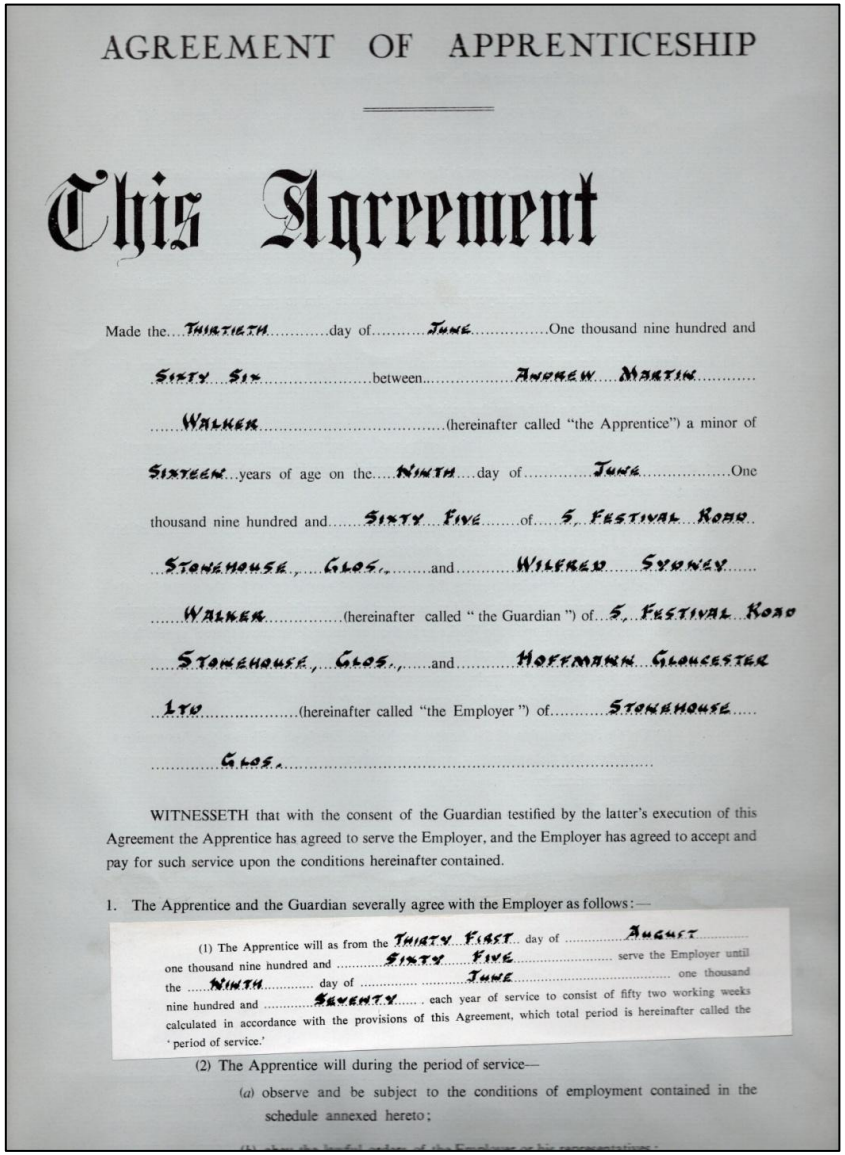
- John - electrical apprenticeship leading to skilled electrician

- Others did technical apprenticeships in different areas e.g. the design office or drawing office.





Signing day



AGREEMENT OF APPRENTICESHIP

This Agreement

Made the Thirtieth day of June One thousand nine hundred and Sixty Six between Andrew Martin Walker (hereinafter called "the Apprentice") a minor of Sixteen years of age on the Ninth day of June One thousand nine hundred and Sixty Five of 5, Festival Road Stonehouse, Glos., and Wilfred Sydney Walker (hereinafter called "the Guardian") of 5, Festival Road Stonehouse, Glos., and Hoffmann Gloucester Ltd (hereinafter called "the Employer") of Stonehouse Glos.

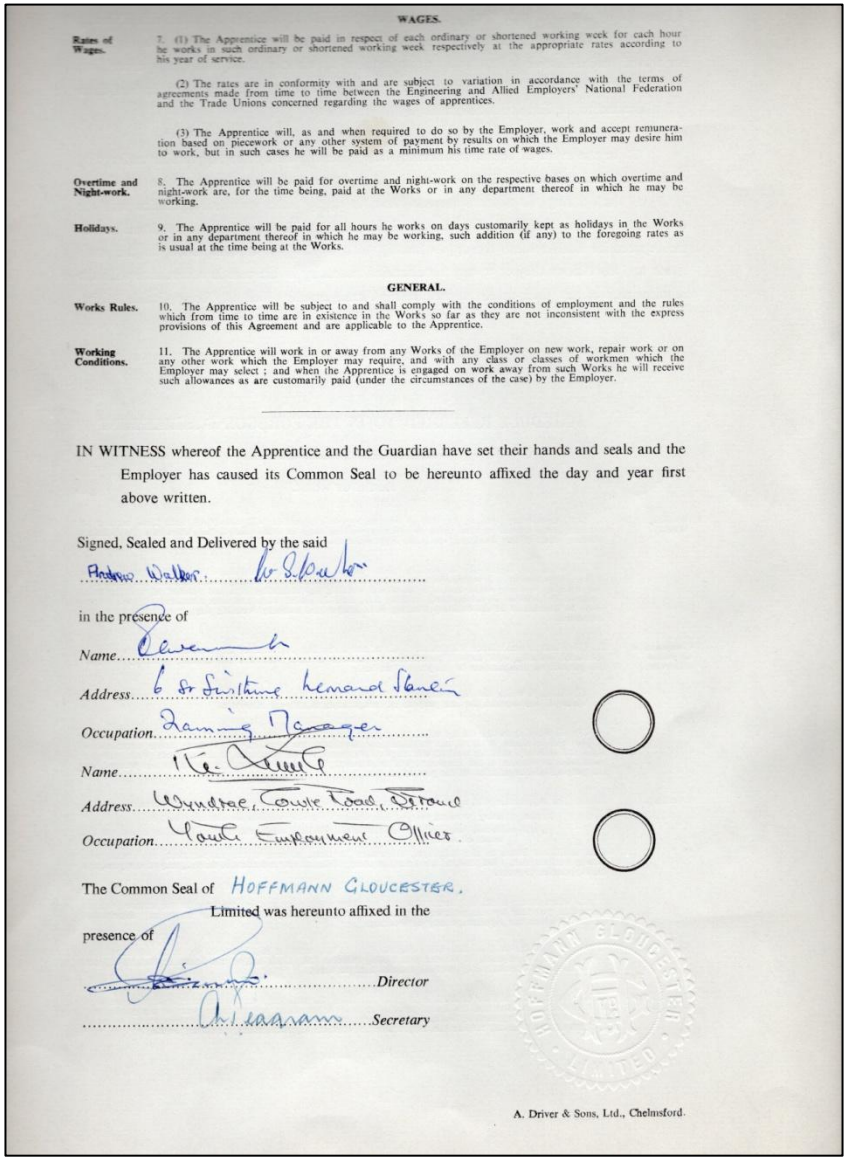
WITNESSETH that with the consent of the Guardian testified by the latter's execution of this Agreement the Apprentice has agreed to serve the Employer, and the Employer has agreed to accept and pay for such service upon the conditions hereinafter contained.

1. The Apprentice and the Guardian severally agree with the Employer as follows:—

(1) The Apprentice will as from the Thirty First day of August one thousand nine hundred and Sixty Five serve the Employer until the Ninth day of June one thousand nine hundred and Seventy each year of service to consist of fifty two working weeks calculated in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement, which total period is hereinafter called the 'period of service.'

(2) The Apprentice will during the period of service—

(a) observe and be subject to the conditions of employment contained in the schedule annexed hereto;



WAGES.

Rates of Wages. 7. (1) The Apprentice will be paid in respect of each ordinary or shortened working week for each hour he works in such ordinary or shortened working week respectively at the appropriate rates according to his year of service.

(2) The rates are in conformity with and are subject to variation in accordance with the terms of agreements made from time to time between the Engineering and Allied Employers' National Federation and the Trade Unions concerned regarding the wages of apprentices.

(3) The Apprentice will, as and when required to do so by the Employer, work and accept remuneration based on piecework or any other system of payment by results on which the Employer may desire him to work, but in such cases he will be paid as a minimum his time rate of wages.

Overtime and Night-work. 8. The Apprentice will be paid for overtime and night-work on the respective bases on which overtime and night-work are, for the time being, paid at the Works or in any department thereof in which he may be working.

Holidays. 9. The Apprentice will be paid for all hours he works on days customarily kept as holidays in the Works or in any department thereof in which he may be working, such addition (if any) to the foregoing rates as is usual at the time being at the Works.

GENERAL.

Works Rules. 10. The Apprentice will be subject to and shall comply with the conditions of employment and the rules which from time to time are in existence in the Works so far as they are not inconsistent with the express provisions of this Agreement and are applicable to the Apprentice.

Working Conditions. 11. The Apprentice will work in or away from any Works of the Employer on new work, repair work or on any other work which the Employer may require, and with any class or classes of workmen which the Employer may select; and when the Apprentice is engaged on work away from such Works he will receive such allowances as are customarily paid (under the circumstances of the case) by the Employer.

IN WITNESS whereof the Apprentice and the Guardian have set their hands and seals and the Employer has caused its Common Seal to be hereunto affixed the day and year first above written.

Signed, Sealed and Delivered by the said Andrew Walker. W. S. Walker

in the presence of

Name

Address 6 St Swithins Leonard Stanley

Occupation Planning Manager

Name

Address Wyndrae, Cowle Road, Stroud

Occupation Youth Employment Officer

The Common Seal of HOFFMANN GLOUCESTER, Limited was hereunto affixed in the presence of

Director

Secretary

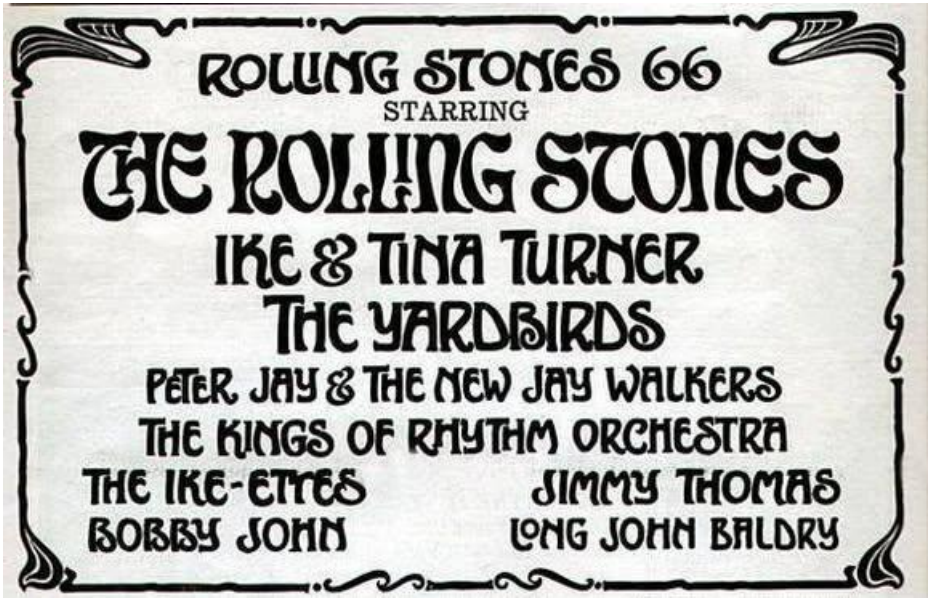
A. Driver & Sons, Ltd., Chelmsford.

Andrew's apprenticeship agreement

Apprentice association and activities

Hoffmann Apprentices Association

Skittles nights in the Hoffmann club
Annual Disco
Pop / rock concerts in Bristol
Coach trips
Hoffmann Tug-of-war championships
Potholing
Duke of Edinburgh Award



Hoffmann, Chelmsford meets Hoffmann, Gloucester

ON SEPTEMBER 14th some 80 members of the Hoffmann Chelmsford Athletic and Social Club paid a return annual visit to the Stonehouse works. During the afternoon representative teams of both clubs played each other at football, tennis and bowls.

In conjunction with this event the annual tug-of-war tourney took place on the sports field, in which twelve teams, some from as far afield as Southampton and Swindon, competed for the Hoffmann Challenge Trophy. The eventual winners were Felton Eccles of Somerset, the national champions, who beat Burlsdon of Southampton in two straight and very exciting pulls. Hoffmann's 'A' team who were knocked out in the second round, were the eventual winners of the best losers competition.

Mr. P. G. Porter, Personnel Manager and Honorary Secretary of the Club, presented the trophies.

A Social was held in the main hall during the evening and rounded-off a day thoroughly enjoyed by all.

Arrangements are in hand for a return match in June of next year when Stonehouse will visit Chelmsford.

Project at Frocester Manor



Apprentices football team Dave Moore, Andrew Walker, Neil Amplett , Martin Beauchamp with boys from Chelmsford at Frocester Manor camp.

Ongoing training to become skilled men

John achieved his Certificate of Apprenticeship
15th December 1969
aged 21.
Andrew achieved his Certificate of Apprenticeship
9th June 1970
aged 21

What happened to the 1965 – 1970 apprentices?

To the best of our knowledge:

1 - Stayed at Hoffmann most of his working life as Quality Manager.
9 - Worked in various engineering disciplines.
- 6 – Mechanical engineering
- 1 – Instrumentation
- 1 – Mechanical design
- 1 – Electrician

2 – Ran their own successful building companies

Conclusion

Hoffmann had an unparalleled reputation in providing superb training courses to apprentices over many decades, giving all of their trainees an excellent grounding in engineering and manufacturing processes, both theoretically and practically. Benefitting from experiencing a premium training programme, hundreds of apprentices went on to have worthwhile careers, whether staying at Hoffmann or at other engineering firms around the area or further afield, whatever the speciality they ended up doing.

Not only that, but apprentices also made friends for life from their own training group, other intakes, or the helpful employees in the company they met during their journey of achievement, us included. It was a great place to begin your working life, to understand the practicalities and theories of mechanical and electrical engineering, the importance of work ethic and the value of being part of a team.

Mike Cooke – working at Hoffmann's

- Left Boys Tech aged 16
- Knew nothing about Hoffmann's when I went for an interview
- Started apprenticeship in 1962



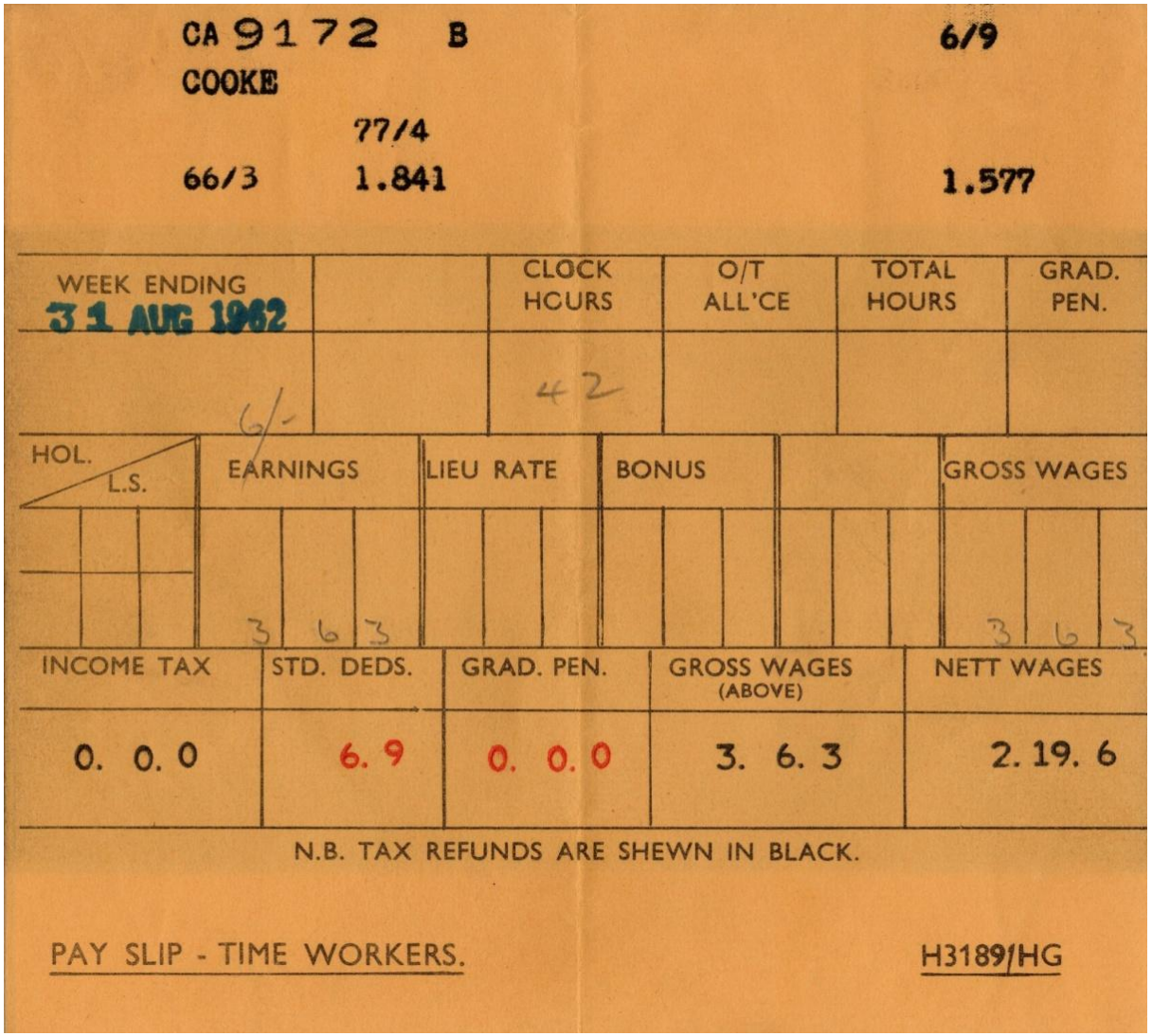
ABOVE : The new apprentices.

BACK ROW : Alan Day, Gerald Butler, Michael Daynes, Alan Hogg, Alan Hall.

FRONT ROW : Mr. A. H. Cave (App. Instr.), Michael Long, Eric Williams, Michael Cooke, Ray Blanch.

Photograph courtesy "Citizen."

- First payslip 31st August 1962 aged 16
- Take home pay £2 - 19 shillings 6 pence for 42 hour week (almost £3 in today's money - equivalent approx £56 today)



CA 9172 B 6/9
COOKE
77/4
66/3 1.841 1.577

WEEK ENDING		CLOCK HOURS	O/T ALL'CE	TOTAL HOURS	GRAD. PEN.
31 AUG 1962	6/-	42			

HOL. / L.S.	EARNINGS	LIEU RATE	BONUS		GROSS WAGES
	3 6 3				3 6 3

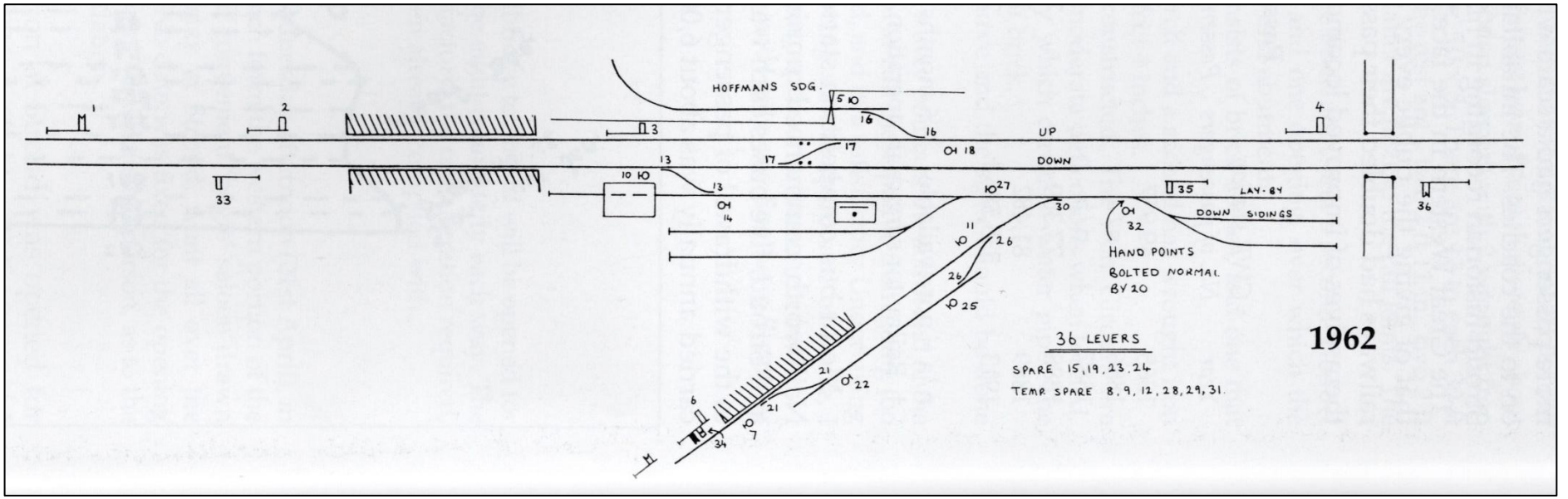
INCOME TAX	STD. DEDS.	GRAD. PEN.	GROSS WAGES (ABOVE)	NETT WAGES
0. 0. 0	6. 9	0. 0. 0	3. 6. 3	2. 19. 6

N.B. TAX REFUNDS ARE SHEWN IN BLACK.

PAY SLIP - TIME WORKERS. H3189/HG

I worked in the drawing office overlooking the LMS railway and Hoffmann's siding.

Sketch from railway book showing the LMS railway station setup in 1962 with Hoffmann's siding.
The Hoffmann siding was brought into use on 6th June 1940 and the last train ran on 10th May 1967.
The siding was worked by a 4-wheel diesel-mechanical locomotive built by Muir-Hill Engineering Ltd, being their No.29 of 1922. (see photo)
Reversal was necessary for both entering and leaving the branch



I worked in the drawing office overlooking the LMS railway and Hoffmann's siding. Seen to the right next to sports field.



BR Standard class '2MT' 2-6-0 No. 78006 at Stonehouse returning from Nailsworth on 16th August, 1965. A diesel-hydraulic 'Hymek' locomotive can be seen on a main line down goods. Hoffman's siding can be seen on the right.

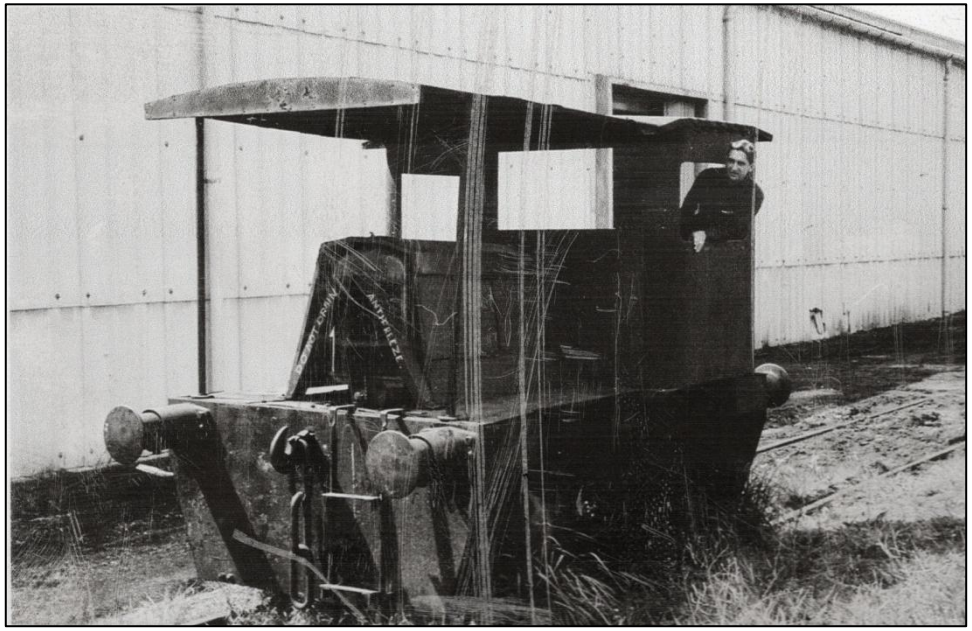
D. Payne

Trucks can be seen on the Hoffmann siding (left)



Diesel locomotive Muir-Hill no 29 driven by Mike Coopey





1976 - the siding has gone and sports field unused.



RHP from railway footbridge
Village appraisal 1976, photo 20

Apprentice Association

I became Secretary, then Treasurer
and finally Chairman.
We organised dances and outings.

Hoffmann Gloucester Apprentices' Association

DANCE

with

THE STRANGE FRUITS

and

THE ROAD RUNNERS

AT WORKS CANTEEN ON

Friday 30th September 1966, 8 p.m. - midnight.

No admission after 10 p.m.

Admission 4/- (Ticket only). *Licensed Bar.*



Weekend in Blackpool



WEEKEND IN

BLACKPOOL

FOR THE ILLUMINATIONS.

11th, 12th, 13th OCTOBER, 1968.

COST: £4-13-0. FULLY INCLUSIVE OF:

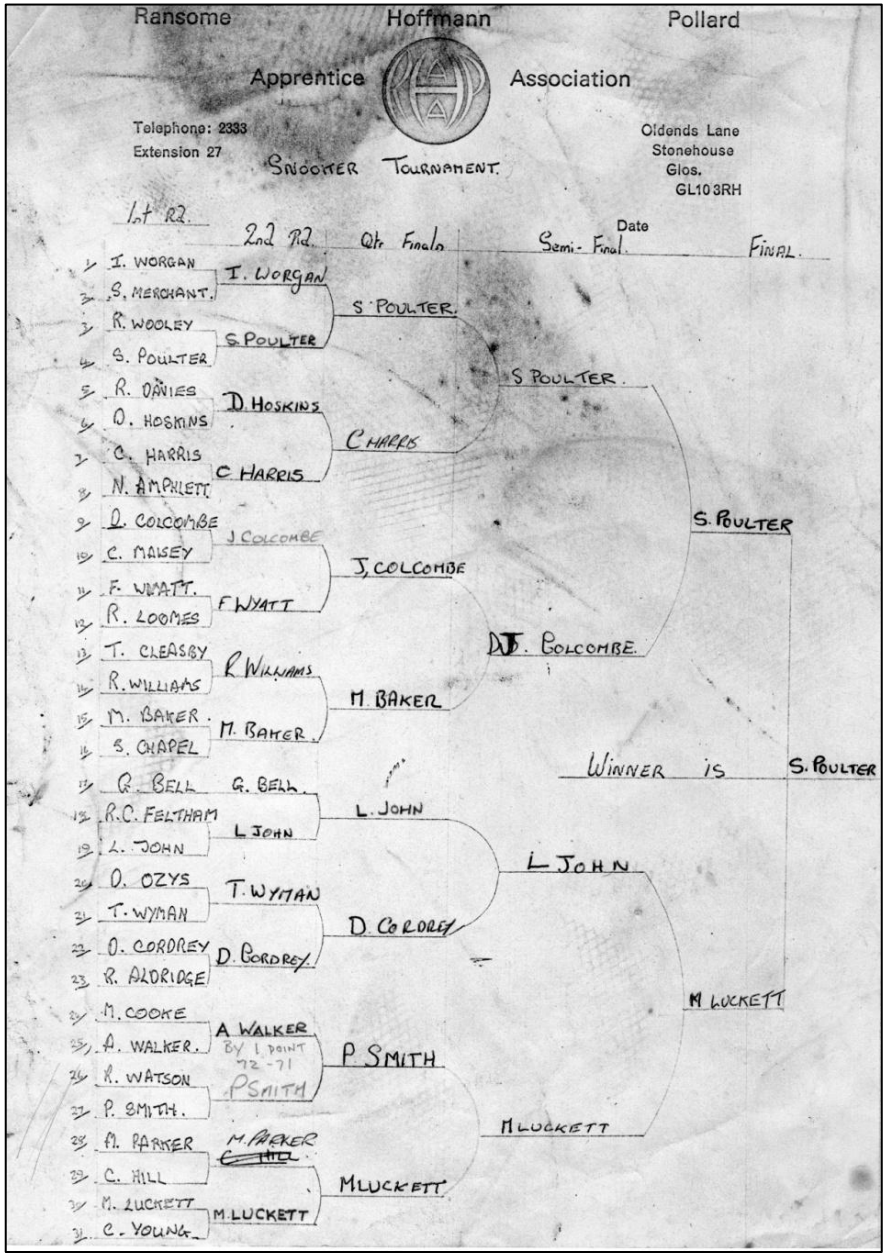
COACH FARE.
EXCELLENT ACCOMODATION & MEALS.
TOUR OF ILLUMINATIONS (OPTIONAL).

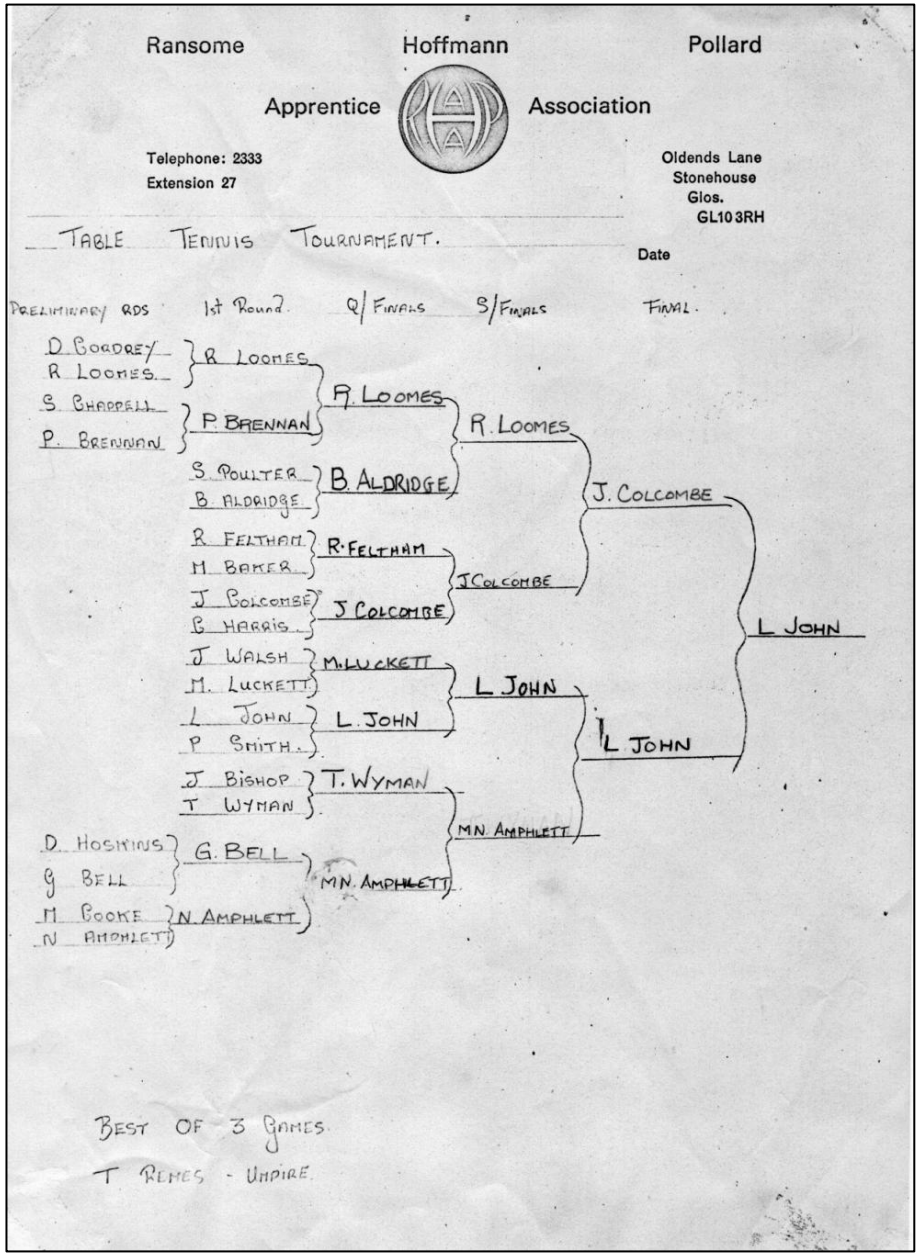
DEPART ON THE FRIDAY EVENING,
RETURNING ON THE SUNDAY AFTERNOON.

WILL ANYONE INTERESTED PLEASE CONTACT:

M. COOKE, DRAWING OFFICE.
INTERNAL PHONE, 195.

Snooker and Table Tennis Tournaments





Apprentice Association Logo competition

HOFFMANN APPRENTICES' ASSOCIATION

TELEPHONE: 333
EXTENSION 0217

OLDENDS LANE,
STONEHOUSE,
GLOS.

YOUR REF: OUR REF: DATE

HOFFMANN APPRENTICES' ASSOCIATION

TELEPHONE: 2333
EXTENSION 27

OLDENDS LANE
STONEHOUSE
GLOS.

YOUR REF: OUR REF: DATE

Ransome Hoffmann Pollard

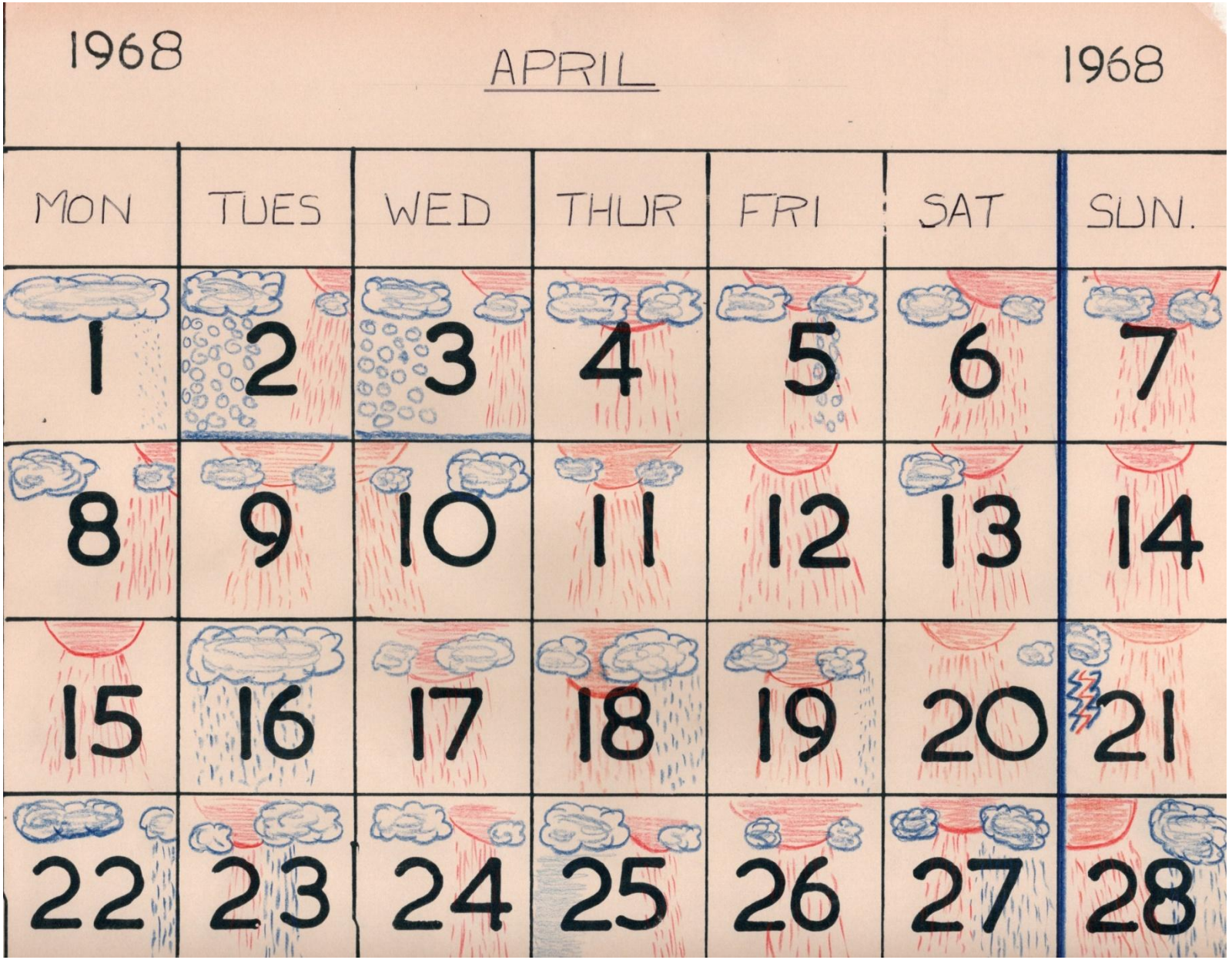
Apprentice Association

Telephone: 2333
Extension 27

Oldends Lane
Stonehouse
Glos.
GL10 3RH

Date

Daily weather map



For more memories from Mike see the separate article on our website.

Mike Cooke 2026