

Newsletter Number 13 for September 2016



Introduction

Thank you for the emails I have received appreciating the content of the most recent newsletter. For this September 2016 issue I will be adding one small change. In addition to sending out the newsletter using the most up to date Microsoft Word I will also send out a PDF version.

The focus for Newsletter 13 will be on a selection of people who have lived in Winchcombe and made a contribution to the town. If you can add any further information for these people or you would like to suggest additions to the list please email me.

George Greening

George Greening was born on the 24th December 1874 in Bull Lane Winchcombe. He lived and worked in the town and served on several committees related to the town.

Harold Greening

Harold Greening was born in Winchcombe in 1903 and lived all his life in the town. He was employed by the Cheltenham Rural District Council.

Carol Harris has supplied me with some photographs of the Greening family.



The museum holds a mass of information on this family. If you would like to help sort the information out please contact me or Carol Harris.

Carol writes:

Harold was mad on motor bikes. Here he is with Grandfather Henry. The second image is of the Greening family by George's shed in the garden, with parents, and Erias Ebeling, one of the two daughters of POW Otto Ebeling, George's best friend. The other child Renate also stayed.

Charles Sexty

In the 1850s Charles Sexty held a private "Classical and Commercial School" at 'The Hermitage' in Queens Square. William Sexty, was born in Gretton and attended his uncle's school in 1863 at the age of six. He rode to and from school on his pony. William Sexty died at Bangrove Farm in 1956 aged 103. [Note this is what the records state but the dates do not add correctly].

George E. Wiggins

George Wiggins started work at 14 and apart from time in the services in wartime lived and worked in the Winchcombe area all his life. He was apprenticed to Mr. J.A. Oakey, builder and undertaker. Mr Oakey had managed several estates locally including Stanway Estate, the home of the Earl and Countess Wemyss. George was under the care of Dick Oakey, the third son, who was a very good tradesman. Apprentice life was hard, wages were small and George was expected to buy his own tools and pay for his lodgings. He earned some extra money by fitting locks and window fasteners for local people. He could not afford to buy a bicycle so walked everywhere. If work was short he worked in the workshop where he planed and prepared coffin boards.

George was part of the team that built the cricket pavilion at Stanway. The work was paid for by Poet Laureate Sir James Barrie of 'Peter Pan' fame. Sir James wanted an all wood construction using local timber. To improve weather proofing the pavilion was erected on staddle stones. The pavilion was opened in 1926. George joined local football and cricket clubs and kept himself fit. He also raced at several local flower shows.

George's workplace was in Langley Road next to the now demolished Workhouse and Infirmary. Unemployment and sickness benefits were administered through the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows. The Rural District Council employed a Relieving Officer - destitute people had to see him and he decided whether they stayed out or were admitted to the workhouse.

In the depression of 1931 George was out of work for 4 months after the firm J.A. Oakey closed down. His next job was at Evesham, building 110 council houses.

These notes represent the early years of employment for George Wiggins. The museum holds a copy of "Ramblings of a Country Bumpkin" which detail the many interesting years of wartime, married life, learning to drive, more employment and gardening and showing at various flower shows. A read that is recommended for those interested in how life has changed for us all.

Fred Russell

Fred Russell started work at the age of 14 in 1928. His first job was to rake the cut hay into rows in the field. The rake was called 'a lion'. Work began about 7am and ended about 5pm. Fred said 'Some winter days were really nasty.' He was promoted to third ploughman with 2 horses cutting a single furrow 9 inches (23cm) wide and 6 inches (15cm) deep. It could take several weeks to plough a 30 acre (12 hectares) field. Work was on a 2 weeks' notice. Fred remembers the arrival of the first Ford tractor.

The museum holds a much longer account of Fred's life on the farm and helping at the local garage. He recalls the gift of a joint of beef from her ladyship on Christmas Eve. In the museum there is an extensive collection of the implements Fred used for his farm work. In addition there is a model Gloucestershire farm wagon that Fred built and donated to the museum. Come and have a look and read the longer account of his experiences.

June Cunningham

This is a new addition to the museum collect kindly supplied by Barbara Gill.



June Cunningham was an evacuee to Winchcombe during the 1939-45 war. She lived in a cottage in Hales Street and went to school locally. In the photographs we see June on the cover of Picturegoer for 19 January 1957 and in a still from her first film 'Smallest Show on Earth' which starred Peter Sellers, Bill Travers, Margaret Rutherford, Virginia McKenna and Bernard Miles in April 1957. The comedy film tells the story of The Bijou cinema and its decrepit and eccentric staff and the young couple who try to make a success of their inheritance. Former Winchcombe resident Barbara Gill is still in touch with June.

Peter Bindon Royle

This is a new addition to the museum's collection kindly supplied by the family.

Peter Royle was born in 1928 and educated at Merchant Taylor's School, London. On leaving school he joined the army and became an equestrian trainer working with horses which he loved. This took him to countries such as Egypt and Italy through difficult times in the post-war years. He met his future wife, Kathleen Green, (fondly re-named Kathy) at a dance in Ealing near his childhood home, Perivale Grange and they married in 1952. They bought land on the Fosse Way near Bourton on the Water and built their first home alongside their business, a garage which sold petrol and sweets. This fulfilled Peter's life-long passion for cars – which he then collected, sometimes sold, but worked on, both for himself and his customers.



After their first two children were born (Heather & David) they moved to Willersey where Peter worked for the Evesham Journal and added two more children to the fold (Vincent and Caroline). In 1963 the family moved to Abbey House, High Street in Winchcombe where he continued to work for the Evesham Journal and Kathleen started an estate agency on the High Street opposite the Methodist Church as a qualified MNAEA, calling on her experience of working at an estate agency in Chiswick. After a while Peter joined her and grew the business to also take on a Halifax Building Society agency. A reader reminded me of how kind and helpful Peter Royle was when he found her a property within her very limited price range.

In 1970 Kathleen left the business to run their new home on Sudeley Hill – St Kenelm's Chapel – and to look after their growing family. The business flourished, and the couple decided to buy an established gentleman's outfitter's shop already in the town (next to The Wesley House) and make it their own County Outfitters, selling country clothing.

A few years later the couple took on Peter's brother's pet and garden business, Bloodworths, from North Street, and re-located it to where Cat's Whiskers Hairdressing is today. This business was called Vincents, named as such to encourage their son, Vincent, to take over when he left school. Today Vincent's ophthalmic business occupies the old premises where The County Outfitters once was.

In later years Peter and Kathy Royle helped to found the Winchcombe Leisure Centre Association to encourage sport in Winchcombe. Peter was also the Honorary Treasurer for the Parish Hall Committee in Cowl Lane for many years, with his wife as Honorary Secretary. This committee was formed to organise the property for the community as a venue for jumble sales, parties, brownies, badminton club amongst many other uses, with its final occupation to serve the community as an early years children's nursery playgroup. The building unfortunately fell into dis-repair in the late nineties, and was condemned for use as a public venue unless substantial amounts of money were spent on it. After much consideration it was decided that the best way forward for Winchcombe was to sell the property and use the proceeds to fund other projects for the benefit of its community.

When Peter Royle died in 2008, the Parish Hall was put up for sale, and Peter's children decided to buy the property and develop it as a tribute to their parents' dedication to the town.

Frank Green

Frank Green's grandfather & grandmother lived at The Sawpitts Inn at Littleworth from around 1904. The Inn sold 'Flowers Ales from Stratford on Avon' as well as rough cider and perry which F. J. Green brewed over the road on the site of the house called Aberfoyle. Rough cider was a popular drink each year when the "Shroppies" (people from Shropshire) came to the area fruit picking. Grandfather also did a complete undertaking service.

Transport was good in the area. Cheltenham could be reached by train or horse bus. Later on the Midland Red Company ran a bus service to Evesham. Bristol Blue ran services over Cleeve Hill. There is much more to read of the 1930s-40s in the folder in the museum.

Responses to the August Newsletter

John Silcock writes:

"Thank you for the most recent Newsletter. A small piece of additional information, prompted by the 1960s picture of the Town Hall clock, part of the caption of which reads "George Hotel with petrol pump". The petrol pump belonged to the cycle shop next door to The George in the premises most recently occupied by The George Antiques. The cycle shop was run by (if memory serves) Mr Harding. The fuel was delivered through a pipe mounted on a right-angle arm which swung out to reach one's vehicle and the pump itself was one of the half-rotary kind which had to be operated by hand backwards and forwards through about 60 degrees.

The other source of petrol in Winchcombe itself was Jim's Garage at the east end of Queen's Square. Then there was the garage on Cleeve Hill, more recently a second-hand car dealership and now modern-looking housing. Between that garage and the (now disused) church was a shop.

After the cycle shop closed, the premises was incorporated (or re-incorporated??) into The George and became part of their function room. I think the cycle business itself may have been taken over by the late Pat Smith who operated the garage at The Anchor previously run by Mr and Mrs Bessant, but others may know better."

Anne Crowe has kindly supplied this photograph of the cycle shop next to the George Inn.



Town Clock

In the August newsletter we featured the Town Hall clock. Gerry Whitby, who receives our newsletter in Shropshire, wrote to inform us that J. B. Joyce, the makers of the clock, came from Whitchurch in Shropshire. The company claim to be the oldest clock manufacturer in the world, originally established in 1690. The company became Smith of Derby Group in 1965. J.B. Joyce also made the clock at Hodnet church near where Gerry Whitby lives.

Museum Display at the Winchcombe Country Show

With the help of Sarah Day and John Harkness the museum volunteers were able to mount a stall at the August 2016 show. Carol Harris and Anne Crowe put up a display of photographs on themes related to change in Winchcombe, the 1914-18 War and the changing role of women in the area. The display was very well received by the large number of visitors to the site. We heard many stories of people's experiences as they looked at the display. We must find a way to capture this rich source of oral history. On display were copies of the Greet & Sudeley tenements map which the museum will be selling for £5 each. The map shows clearly the land holding in the area from the edge of Gretton through Winchcombe to Sudeley. The ownership of each parcel of land is clearly shown. It's quite an adventure finding the plot where your house stands today and seeing how boundaries have persisted or changed. Copies are available from the Museum.

Stop Press

Anne Crow reported to the Museum Committee a visit by Dr Paul Roberts, the Sackler Keeper of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum. He told us that the cup we had labelled as Roman was, in fact, made in the Iron Age! It's in very good condition, but the top part of the handle has broken off. We have no record of where it was found, so Anne wonders if anybody remembers handing it in to the Museum.

	<p>Helpful approximate dates would be:</p> <p>Iron Age dates are 1200-600BC.</p> <p>The Romans were in Britain 43AD to 410AD.</p> <p>Paul Roberts is Keeper in the Department of Antiquities at the Ashmolean Museum in Oxford. Sackler academics are dedicated to the training and education of specialists in their subject.</p>
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Some are now using CE and BCE to replace AD and BC. This secular move uses the words Current Era and Before Current Era to replace AD and BC. The zero point remains the same.

Thanks

My thanks are due to Carol Harris, Barbara Gill, Anne Crowe, John Silcock, Heather Holt, Barbara Edward and Gerry Whitby for sharing their expertise in the preparation of this newsletter. Despite all their efforts the mistakes are mine.

John Hancock

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