

# WINCHCOMBE MUSEUM



## Newsletter Number 15 for May 2017

### **A new name and logo for the museum**

The management committee of the Museum recommended to the Board of Trustees that we change our name to Winchcombe Museum. At the same time one of the volunteers, Alastair Robinson, offered to design a new logo. I am pleased to say that the Trustees approved the name. The logo, which shows the Winchcombe maces, was also approved and appears at the head of this newsletter. These changes reflect the broader balance of the museum as the collection of materials for Winchcombe and its surrounding area has grown over the years.

### **New acquisitions to the museum**

From time to time the museum receives generous gifts from people living in Winchcombe or further afield. January 2017 was special when Sue Duffell from Eastbourne wrote to the museum. She explained that her grandfather George Dowsell was in the Gloucestershire Police and stationed in Winchcombe as a constable in the early 1920's. She explained that she had a silver plated cake stand inscribed 'To Constable G.H. Dowsell from Sergeant J.G.O'Rouke, Winchcombe, 29 April 1920'. Sue Duffell explained that this was the date of his wedding. She also told us that she had a silver inkstand presented to him on his retirement from the force in 1947 when he had reached the rank of Inspector. Sue Duffell explained that she is his only descendant and she wondered if Winchcombe Museum would be interested in the two items plus some photographs and his Certificate of Service. The museum team responded quickly and we are pleased to state that the items are now on display in the new cabinets at the museum.

We found that George Henry Dowsell was born on November 12, 1890 in Thornbury, Gloucestershire. He served in the army from 1914 to 1920. George married Lucy Trull in 1920 in Uley, Gloucestershire and they were married for 45 years. They had two children. Christina was born on March 5<sup>th</sup> 1921 in Winchcombe and Barbara Joan on the 19<sup>th</sup> June 1922. Lucy died in 1965 George in December 1975 at the age of 85. The family can be traced living in Gloucestershire back to 1748.

Winchcombe Museum thanks Sue Duffell for her gifts which are now an important part of its collection.

FORM C 12.

**GLOUCESTERSHIRE CONSTABULARY**

Certificate of Service.

THIS IS TO CERTIFY THAT

*George Henry Dowell*

born *Hill Topfield* in the County of *Gloucester*  
 joined this Force on *22nd May 1911*  
 and was promoted on completion of service  
 as an *Inspector* on *28th February 1947*

Length of service: *35* years *283* days

His conduct was EXEMPLARY.

DESCRIPTION OF ABOVE-NAMED.

Date of birth *22nd Nov. 1890* Height *5* feet *10* inches  
 Eyes *Brown* Hair *Brown*  
 Complexion *Fair* Marks *None*

*D. H. C.*  
 Chief Constable of Gloucester.

Headquarters Office  
 Cheltenham *28th Feb. 1947.*



### A changing face of sporting Winchcombe

For quite a long time, some years ago, Winchcombe had an active cribbage league. At its peak the league had 8 or 9 teams. These included the Conservative Working Men's Club in Winchcombe, the Harvest Home in Greet with A and B teams, the Royal Oak, Gretton, The Bell, Stanton Club, Gretton Exiles [when they could not use the Bugatti], the Bugatti, Aston Somerville [they had two teams in some years], the Corner Cupboard and The Sun. Teams of six would play home and away against all the other teams. In the spring there were knockout cup matches for the Tom Willett Trophy. At Christmas and Easter each year the Working Men's Club hosted a singles and a doubles evening. To finish the season there was a prize giving event. The key organisers of this happy crowd were:

Chair: Wyn Taylor; Vice Chair Bruce Waind; Secretary A.R. [Reg] Green; Treasurer Walter Morrison. In 2005 I have a note that the income to the league was £617 and a donation was made of £50 to the Air Ambulance.

Popular names on the score sheets were W. Taylor, P. Orzel, B. Kent, D. Gore, N. Vickery, B. Hayward, C. Edwards, J. Hays, A. Lee, C. Hancock, J. Moore, R. Green, C. Mellars, A. Wright, P. Mellars, D. Roberts, D Barrett, J. Shorter, A. Philpott, N. Walters, K. May, P. Smith,, Nick Coe, Bill Newman, S. Waind, B. Waind, W. Morrison, P. Andrews, Dave Cornwall, D. Amos, M. Whittaker, John Silcock, Graham Williams and John Hancock.

[Let me know if the spelling is incorrect. I took these from score sheets written in the pubs].

My understanding is that the Winchcombe League has merged with the Evesham League and is doing well. It would be good to have confirmation of this news.



Conservative Working Men's Club

Harvest Home, Greet

## Modern History

Modern history is a new venture for the Newsletter. In this section we turn to people still living in the Winchcombe area who, during their time here, have made an important contribution to the life of the town. They have created twentieth and twenty-first century history. This section will run regularly and allow us to talk with these special contributors. In this first of the series we are pleased to introduce Judy Stagg.

Judy Stagg was born in Lichfield and attended Friary Girls Grammar School. The staff of the school were female (except the gardener who was expected to disappear during break times). School was strict, perhaps too strict. Rules, for example, were to 'keep to the left in corridors', 'walk don't run inside school' and always to wear house shoes in school. Judy came from a prominent Methodist family and her mother was a school secretary and father was a project manager for a large building company.

Judy left school at 17 and went into employment as a trainee administrator in a hospital. This was a 'baptism of fire' as she was faced with a battery of telephones when there was no phone at home. She stayed for 4 years in this post and loved working in the hospital. Judy married at 20 and stayed at home with her two girls until the eldest was 7. In those years Judy thought about the future and what career she wanted. She decided to be a teacher and that meant getting 'A' levels. She worked hard looking after the family by day and studying in the evenings. She achieved her goal and was admitted to Wolverhampton Teacher Training College where she specialised in teaching Junior Aged children. She passed the examinations with distinction and became a qualified teacher. After two years teaching at Lichfield Primary School she moved reluctantly, as she was leaving friends and family, to Winchcombe. One year later, in 1976, she realised how much she loved the town and its children.

On moving to Winchcombe, Judy saw a vacancy for a teacher at Winchcombe Primary School [the school was situated in the new Abbeyfield Community Centre building]. There were 80 applicants for the job and Judy was selected with 5 others for interview. The selection panel was formidable with the Head teacher and 8 governors. They asked if she was going to live in Winchcombe and have children? The Head asked how she would teach Maths to a class of mixed ability. After this gruelling Judy got the job and never regretted it. This was 1975 and she stayed 25 years at the school.

During those years Judy taught each of the 4 different year groups. The curriculum was relaxed, no prescription and the days longer with a 4.00pm finish. Although teachers had some leeway they were very much accountable. Art, needlework and mixed sport were included. After school clubs catered for team sports like rugby and netball. Assembly took place every day. The school consisted of 8 classes with a two form entry as new family homes were built in Winchcombe. An active Parent Teacher Association played its part in the school's success.

Christmas was a special time when each class put on a show. Judy remembers the 'Hansel & Gretel' show and a special Victorian Musical Evening where a 7 year old magician had the audience in helpless laughter when having a problem producing flowers from his sleeve. For the Nativity the shepherds brought toy animals with the audience surprised by a 'Rod Hull' type Emu.

The school also ran trips to Winchcombe Museum, the Forest of Dean and Sudeley Castle. Also they had an annual residential trip to Wales. Judy's speciality was needlework. She told me 'People today still mention having their children's needlework picture'.

Looking back Judy remembers the children who had academic success including a Foreign Office Civil Servant, a Double First at Oxford, a Publishers Editor, a female surgeon, a head teacher, several doctors and one the head of a city investment bank. Equally important, Judy pointed out, are the many children now grown up and living locally that run businesses in plumbing, building, electrical installations and landscape gardening. On the bus or in town former pupils still stop and chat to "Mrs Stagg". She recalled 3 sisters and she taught all their children. On taking early retirement Judy became a governor of Winchcombe School.

Judy Stagg is proud to have been part of a very successful Winchcombe Primary School. We parents and residents are fortunate to have such dedicated and talented teachers, such as Judy, in our local school.

In a later newsletter we will tell the story of a very special link that one child made for the school with an orphanage in India.

### **Further comments on items raised in earlier newsletters**

#### **From Barbara Edward**

Re Burt Butler

Dr Bond, (one of our retired Winchcombe doctors), encouraged Bert Butler to write down for him his recollections of the many changes in health care he had seen during his long life. Bert then wrote, by hand, an article he entitled Medically Reminiscent and presented it to Dr. Bond, who very kindly let me borrow, scan and transcribe it. It is on display in the museum in a Folder. It's a fascinating read. Bert's nephew, Rex Butler, supplied a portrait of his uncle for the cover picture.

Also included, in a piece written earlier, are pen-portraits of unsung Winchcombe Worthies (like Sergeant O'Rourke) and others, though he also describes in contrast Charlie Morris, a schoolteacher he did not like.

Re Jacobean House (built as the King's School, the present name came much later). When the Town Hall was rebuilt in 1853 the Town Corporation couldn't afford to fund it without having a mortgage loan from the Dent family. This was further increased to fund the later 1871 wing. To reduce this debt the Corporation passed to J. C Dent the King's School, which fortunately the Dents restored for their own use.

It was said to be by Inigo Jones, but I do not think anyone believes that now.

Barbara writes 'I knew Fred Russell well. He loved wildlife and hated killing, so did not like having to work as a beater on shoots organised by his employer. His land was a wildlife haven, full of birds and their nests. At the end of his life he gardened from his zimmer frame, a shadow of the man who once prided himself on being the strongest man on the farm.

He liked creating things in wood etc. and let me choose, from several he'd made, the model wagon that is displayed in the museum.

Although he loved reading he found writing and spelling difficult, but eventually I persuaded him to write his memories of his life as a carter's boy and farm worker. Deciphering his writing was quite a challenge, so later on I found it easier to take his words down verbatim. You can read his accounts of life in Great Barrington (and see a photo of him in his large plot) in the 20th Century Memoirs & Memories Folder'. [Please come and have a look in the museum].

#### **John Silcock**

Thank you for newsletter 14. Re Zoe Brooks' photo: Joyce Scudamore is number 5, not 6. Number 14 is certainly Dr Shortt (note the two Ts) -- Cyril deVere Shortt to give him his full name.

Re Fred Russell: before moving to (indeed, having had built, I think) the bungalow on Greet Road, Fred lived for many years in Littleworth, in one of the pair of cottages towards the east end of Marsh Lane (aka Littleworth Lane). Fred was a local milkman and when we first moved to Littleworth in 1962 and were both working, we were probably Fred's last stop to deliver milk before he got home. We used to leave a long stick outside the house and Fred would use it to rap loudly on our bedroom window to ensure we woke up for work.

**Paul Hughes**

Sue confirms figure 14 in the photo as Doctor Shortt. She guesses that the photo was something to do with the hospital league of friends.

We do hope that you enjoy Newsletter 15. The next issue is due in June and we welcome comments from our readers.

John Hancock

[The Winchcombe Town Trust, Registered Charity No. 234734]