Stanton Parish History Recording Project

Personal Reminiscences File:- PR004

Memories of Stanton upon Hine Heath – Vanessa Shuker

My maternal grandparents Frederick and Ruth Prince moved to 15 Stanton in 1923 when Frederick started working as an agricultural labourer for Sam Leighton at Church Farm. My mother, Nancy was 18 months old at the time.

My paternal grandparents George and Annie Shuker moved to 20 Booley Common (now Booley Bank) around 1927. George was also an agricultural labourer. My father Donald was 6 years old at the time. George and Annie and their family later moved to Field House, Hazles Road where they had a small holding.

My mother and father were the same age and both attended Stanton School until they were 14 years old. They were married in 1955 when they were offered Laundry Cottage at Harcourt by Major Hayes, as a tied cottage. My mother worked for Major Hayes and had previously worked for his mother and father before he took over the estate. My parents moved in to Laundry Cottage following their wedding at Stanton Church in 1955 and were living there when my sister Sandra and I were born. We continued to live there until 1977 when we moved to 2 Booley Road, Stanton (where I still live today).

Laundry Cottage Memories

Laundry Cottage is across the yard from Harcourt. Our nearest neighbours were therefore Major Hayes and his family. I particularly remember his daughter Diana and his son Simon who were a similar age to my sister and myself. Some of the people I remember working at Harcourt at that time, with my mother (who was the cook) were Primrose Mumford and Margaret Powell who were both indoor staff, Tommy Morris who was the Chauffer, Alfred Edwards who was the Gardener, Harry Ainsley who was the Groom and Will Ash who was the Carpenter/Handyman.

The woods at the back of Laundry Cottage would be covered in a blanket of yellow double daffodils in the spring, followed by a blanket of blue bluebells. There was also large groups of primroses on the bank as you go down the drive towards Harcourt. When Harcourt farm had milking cows we used to get our milk daily straight from the farm. During the foot and mouth outbreak in 1967 I remember having to dip my shoes in the trough of disinfectant at the top of the drive by Stanton Lodge.

At the top of the wood opposite the cricket pitch there was a ‘cave cottage’. This was built into the sandstone rocks but has since been demolished as it was falling down and dangerous. Another property at Harcourt that has now disappeared is the bungalow next to the workshop which was used by Will Ash. This was situated down the track at the back of Stanton Lodge but it burnt down in the late 1960’s.

Primary School

Although I did not move house I attended 4 different primary schools. The 1960’s was a time when many small village schools were closing because they were becoming unviable.

1. When I started school Stanton School was still open, but I only went there for one year as it closed in 1964. It had 2 classes, an infants and a juniors, but only 14 pupil’s altogether. It was heated by a large stove and the toilets were outside in the playground. The head teacher, Mr Dixon lived in the schoolhouse next door to the school, but he left for another job in 1963 in antici-

pation of the school closing.

2.

3. In 1964 we transferred to Moreton Corbet School, this was another 2 class school, but that also closed after 2 years and a term. It too had outside toilets. And the head teacher was Mr Vic Hughes

4.

5. In 1967 we were transferred to a wooden demountable school on the RAF camp in Shawbury, while we were waiting for the new St Mary's school to finish being built.

6.

7. We moved to the new St Mary's school early in 1968. The new St Mary's school was located down the road opposite the main entrance to the RAF camp. It was a modern five classroom school, with an intake of up to 200 pupils.

8.

The pupils I remember from Stanton School are Janet and Terence Page, Lindsay and Richard Norris, Celia and Edmund Trevor, Stephen Rhodes, Gerald Kelly, Sandra Shuker and John and Ann Armstrong

Secondary School

At the age of 11 children from Stanton either went to the secondary school in Wem or one of the grammar schools in Shrewsbury. I went to secondary school in Wem on the school bus. It picked us up opposite the shop in Stanton, and then picked up children from various other villages on the way to Wem, dropping us off in the school car park. I used to cycle from my home at Laundry Cottage with my sister to the village to catch the school bus, and we left our bicycles at my aunt and uncles house (Mary and Tommy Thomas's) at 8 Booley Road for safe keeping. It was just under a mile from our home to the village. Easier coming down Booley Lane in the morning than biking back up the road at night!

My sister did her secondary education at the Wakeman School in Shrewsbury. She had to catch the midland red bus to get to school, which was a public service bus. At that time the midland red bus for the route from Shrewsbury to Market Drayton ran every hour throughout the day. It would come through Stanton every two hours, and go straight along the A53, through Edgebolton, the other hour. The bus would drop her off the at the bus station, which was then in Barker Street, and she would have to walk from there to the Wakeman School which was down Wyle Cop just over the English Bridge.

Early memories of Stanton Church

As children in the 1960's we would walk to the village to attend Sunday school which was held once a month. The vicar was Reverend Cyril Shufflebotham. My main memory of Sunday school was the vicar's use of a ventriloquist dummy called 'Ima Duffa' to tell the bible stories. I also remember:-

- the Carol Services at Christmas,
- taking a basket of fruit to church at harvest (which would then be auctioned with the other harvest gifts to raise funds)
- the church fetes held at the vicarage (now called Glebe House)
- picking daffodils with my mother from the wood at Harcourt (with permission from Major Hayes) to decorate the church for Easter and
- As I got older attending the evensong service and being in the church choir.

Water and Electricity

At the top of the wood opposite Harcourt there was a reservoir which provided water for Stanton village until it was put on the main water system. I recall Will Ash regularly going up the wood to check that the pump for the water was working. Church records show that the school and school house

were connected to mains water in 1971.

Stanton was one of the last places in the country to get electricity. The village was connected to the electricity grid during 1963. I was too young to remember much about life before we had electric, but I do remember having a table in the middle of the living room with a paraffin lamp to provide light and that we had a coal fire. I also remember getting our first television after we had electric, which was black and white with only three channels (BBC1, BBC2 and ITV) and we also got a 'twin tub' for doing the washing. With a twin tub the washing was done one side then it all had to be moved to the other side to be spun.

Post Office and Shop

The post office was at 10 Stanton and the postmistress was Mrs Gladys Moore. The door that was used to enter the post office has since been blocked up. The post box was in the wall next to the door, but was blocked up when it moved to its current position next to the bus shelter when Gladys Moore retired as postmistress in 1979.

I remember the red telephone box being located just through the gate of Mill House before it was moved to its current position next to the bus shelter.

The shop was opposite the pub and was run by Mrs Dorothy Doxey. The shop sold a full range of grocery items and would take orders and do deliveries in addition to serving people in person. We used to have a delivery once a week as well as going in in person when we were in the village. I particularly remember that one wall had rows of traditional sweet jars which when chosen would be weighed out into quarters and put in a white paper bag.

Snow

In the bad winter of 1963 Booley Lane was blocked by snow drifts. I remember walking up the drive at Harcourt with my mother, sister and Diana Hayes to see the snow which completely cut us off until the snow ploughs came to clear it.

In 1976 although not as bad as 1963 the drifts blocked the road again. I was at Shrewsbury College at the time and they closed it at lunch time to allow everyone to get home as they had been told the buses would be stopping at 3pm. I caught the last midland red bus that was running via Stanton to Market Drayton, but when we were part way back we were told it would not be coming through Stanton as the snow was too bad, so it would be going straight along the main road. I got off the bus by Yew Tree Villa and started the walk back to the village with Joan Millington who was then at Shrewsbury High School. I then had to make my way up Booley Lane to get home, but had not gone very far before the snow was up to my knees, so I climbed over a gate to get into a field. This was easier to walk on because most of the snow had blown off the field in to the road! However it was still snowing heavily and also freezing as it was now getting towards evening. I found a gap in the hedge to squeeze through when I got to Stanton Lodge and eventually got home. I had very long hair then and the snow had frozen in it so it looked like icicles.

What happened to the School when it closed?

When Stanton School (which was an aided school) closed, the Education Authority and the Diocese decided it should be sold together with the school house. The vicar of Stanton at the time Reverend Cyril Shufflebotham had been a business man before he became a vicar, and thought it might be a good investment for the church. It was eventually agreed that the school and schoolhouse could be purchased by the church for £600, and that as the church did not have that capital at the time that they could pay it back to the Diocese over 10 years at £60 a year.

I remember the school being used for rummage sales, the sale of harvest goods after the harvest festival and meetings of the PCC and mothers union. It was also used for a temporary post office once a week, after Gladys Moore retired (run by the post office from Shawbury), until a new perma-

nent post office became available in the shop. The school was sold in 1984 to someone who converted it in to a house.

The school house was rented out to provide an income for the church. I remember the first tenants were Dennis and Minnie Lloyd and their daughter Suzanne. They lived there from the 1960's until the 1980's. By the late 1990's the school house needed a lot of money spent on it so the decision was made to sell it to the sitting tenants who would undertake the repairs. The sitting tenants who bought it were Simon Robinson and his wife. Simon Robinson was the son of Anthony and Marie Robinson who lived at the White House. Anthony Robinson and Simon were specialists in hand forging stainless steel. They ran their business from the forge next to the White House. As well as making items for places all over the world, including the gates for the Great Hall at Winchester Castle, in the early 2000's they designed and made the 6 lights for the nave at Stanton church.

Village Hall

My mother and father had their wedding reception at the old village hall. The new village hall opened in 1971. Events I remember in the village hall:-

- Harvest Supper
- New Year's Eve parties (which stopped after 1999 because it was too expensive to hire the music for the year 2000)
- Christmas Bingo
- Cheese and Wine evenings
- Country and Western evenings
- Coffee mornings
- Quizes
- 'Caterpillar' racing

Memories of moving to 2 Booley Road

We moved to 2 Booley Road in 1977. The person who lived there before us was Miss Florence Bayley. She had lived there since it was built in the 1950's. Florence was a teacher at Moreton Corbet School from 1917 until 1947, when she transferred to become a teacher at Stanton School. Florence was also the church organist at Stanton.

Neighbours

When we moved in, our neighbour at 1 Booley Road was Mabel Davies and at 3 Booley Road Les and Marian Rowe. When the bungalows on Blacksmiths Lane were built, Mabel Davies moved to 1 Blacksmiths Lane and Richard Higgins moved in to 1 Booley Road.

My Auntie Mary and Uncle Tommy Thomas lived at 8 Booley Road, my Uncle Dick, Auntie Nellie and cousin Ralph lived at 2 Moreton View and my cousins Josie and Roger Humphreys and their sons Christopher and Shawn lived at 3 Moreton View.

Significant Changes

There have been significant changes in the village since we moved in 1977 these include:

- All three farms in the village have had their barns converted in to housing
- The barns opposite 5 Bank Cottage have been demolished and houses built in their place
- The blacksmiths shop and lock up opposite the village hall have been demolished and 2 bungalows have been built in their place
- The houses at the back of the village hall have been built
- The house has been built in what used to be the pub garden
- The bungalow has been built in the garden of 5 Bank Cottage
- The bungalow in the garden of the old shop (between the shop and the White House) has

been built

- The barn at Mill House has been converted in to a house
- The house in the garden of Greenfields has been built
- The bungalows at Blacksmiths Lane have been built.
- The 2 houses to the right of the village hall have been built in what used to be the orchard of village farm

Soon after we moved in to the village Mrs Doxey retired and sold the shop to Norman Pickles, who also took on the running of the post office in the 1980's. He later sold the shop and post office to Pat and Ray Beach. When they left it reverted to being a house and the village no longer had a shop or post office.

Bonfire and Firework Nights

The bonfire nights were originally held on the field where the bungalows now stand on Blacksmiths Lane. They were then held at Mill House (the home of Dr David and Mary Latto) or River Cottage (the home of Tim and Wendy Cope). Josie Humphreys and Brenda Grundy used to serve soup and Brenda's Mum used to make treacle toffee. In the mid 1990's the bonfire nights were held at the bottom of the garden of Rathbarron (the home of Roy and Elaine Lee), before the lower part of the garden was sold for another house to be built.

Memories of Covid Lockdown

- Going for a walk each afternoon with my cousin Ralph
- Easter service on zoom which I had not encountered before
- Facetime on whatsapp with my nephew and niece
- Meeting my niece and her children at Moreton Corbet Castle when we could meet outside
- Having more time to keep in touch with people by phone as the pace of life was slower

Vanessa Shuker

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