



NEWSLETTER 63

July 2020

Welcome to the latest edition of the Stourport Civic Society Newsletter. We hope you have all managed to stay safe and are starting to emerge from lockdown and get some normality back into your lives. It certainly has been a strange time for us all.

As we are aware, the recent health crisis has had a major effect on the functioning of various local organisations. The Civic Society hopes to resume activities once it is possible, to comply with any restrictions.

We have a varied and interesting programme of speakers, for our 2020/21 season, shown on the last page. We do not know when we can restart our meetings. Whilst some sports and social activities are restarting, and pubs and cafes opening, there are no signs of theatres and community facilities being given a green light yet.

Therefore, **the programme is only provisional and subject to confirmation of our restart**, which may not be for some months. Because of this uncertainty we shall not be printing our usual programme/membership leaflets this year.

COME TO THE AID OF THE CIVIC SOCIETY

We provisionally plan to have a mini- AGM after our first meeting (which we hope will be in September). However, we really need more Committee members. We have not had a Vice-Chair for the last two years. Pauline is prepared to continue as Chair, but her role will be limited until the health crisis is resolved as she is "clinically vulnerable". Sue Bridgwater intends to step down as Secretary and we could consider splitting up the Secretary's role if anyone is willing to take on part(s) of it. We have struggled for the last couple of years with a diminishing membership and a very small committee, but the problem has now become much more critical. We don't want Stourport Civic Society to be one of the casualties of Coronavirus but if more members are not prepared to play an active role in running the organisation, it is going to be difficult to continue. **It is your Society. Please consider volunteering, we need your help.**

LOCAL HISTORY AWARD 2020

There were five excellent and varied entries for this year's competition. They made interesting reading for our judges during lockdown. The winner will be announced at our first meeting (which we hope will be in September).

BRIDGE STREET PLANNING APPLICATION

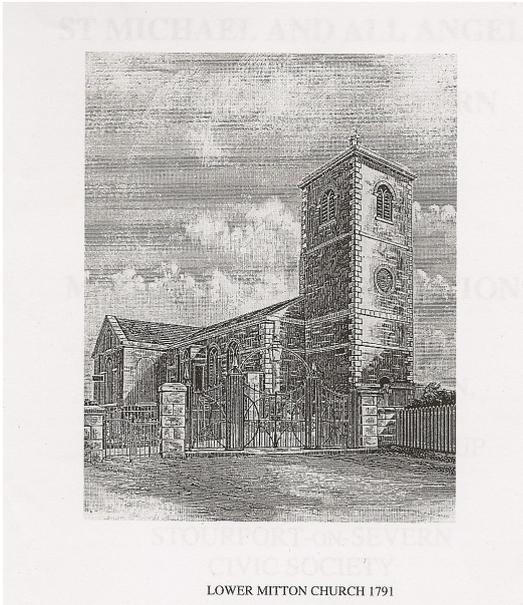
Just to remind you if you have not yet commented, it is not too late to do so. This is because of technical issues, the Wyre Forest DC Planning page was not originally accepting comments. **Therefore the closing date has been extended to 16 July.** Remember that Lloyds Garage was demolished to make way for a new tourist access to Stourport Basins and not housing.

The planning application number is: **20/0385/FUL** . If you are on the internet the link to the WFDC planning page is here: [WFDC Planning](#). Please note that if you wish to make a comment online you will have to register. Written comments should be sent to : Planning Department, WFDC, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster DY11 7WF

St MICHAEL'S & ALL ANGEL'S CHURCH

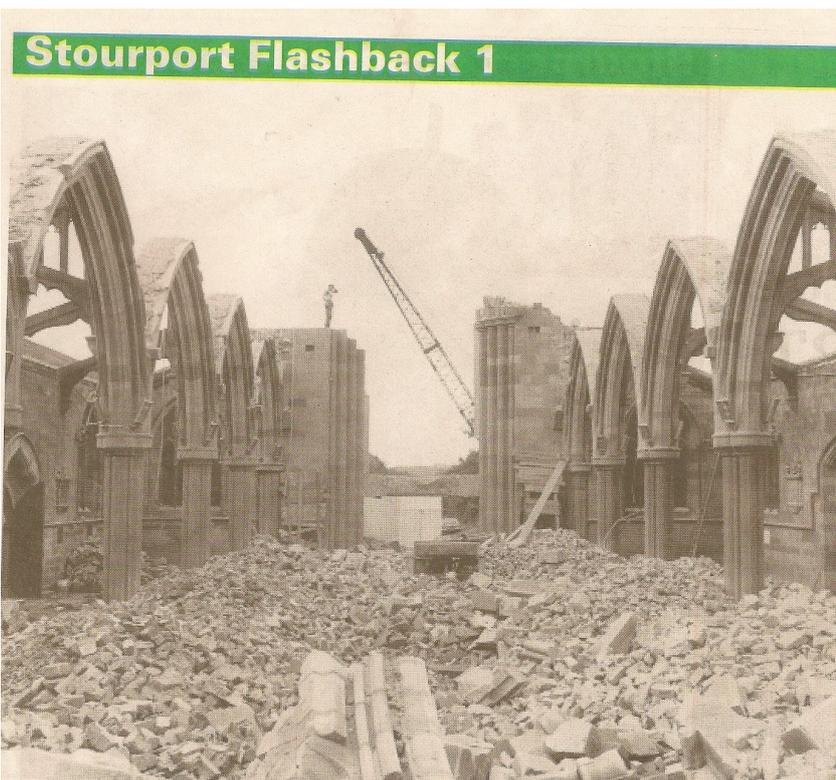
by *Pauline Carroll*

St Michael's & All Angels is the parish church of Stourport on Severn. The present church is the fourth one to be built on this site. As far back as 1195 a tiny stone chapel of ease stood on this site, with Father Phillip as the first priest. However, the ground around the chapel was consecrated in 1625 so local residents would not have to carry their dead to Kidderminster any more to be buried.



The church was first built in 1792 and was called The Georgian Mitton Chapel, as in those days Stourport didn't exist but here was a tiny village called Mitton (Mytton). These foundations can still be found to the south of the present church and is now used for the interment of ashes after cremation. This chapel was demolished soon after WW1. In 1844 the parish of Stourport was formed and the chapel was too small for the growing population, so a new church was built with a local man Reverend Charles Wharton as vicar.

During 1876 when the Reverend Benjamin Gibbons was vicar, he asked Walter Scott to design a Gothic Parish Church which he helped to fund from his own private income. The corner stone was laid on 3rd April 1882. The porch was added in 1887. Owing to lack of funds the church was never finished completely but was consecrated on 2nd October 1910. In 1976 a terrific storm damaged the church beyond repair. I do remember this storm very well. While discussions were ongoing as to whether to build a new church the congregation shared services with the United Reform church in Vale Road. Once the decision was made, the church was rebuilt.



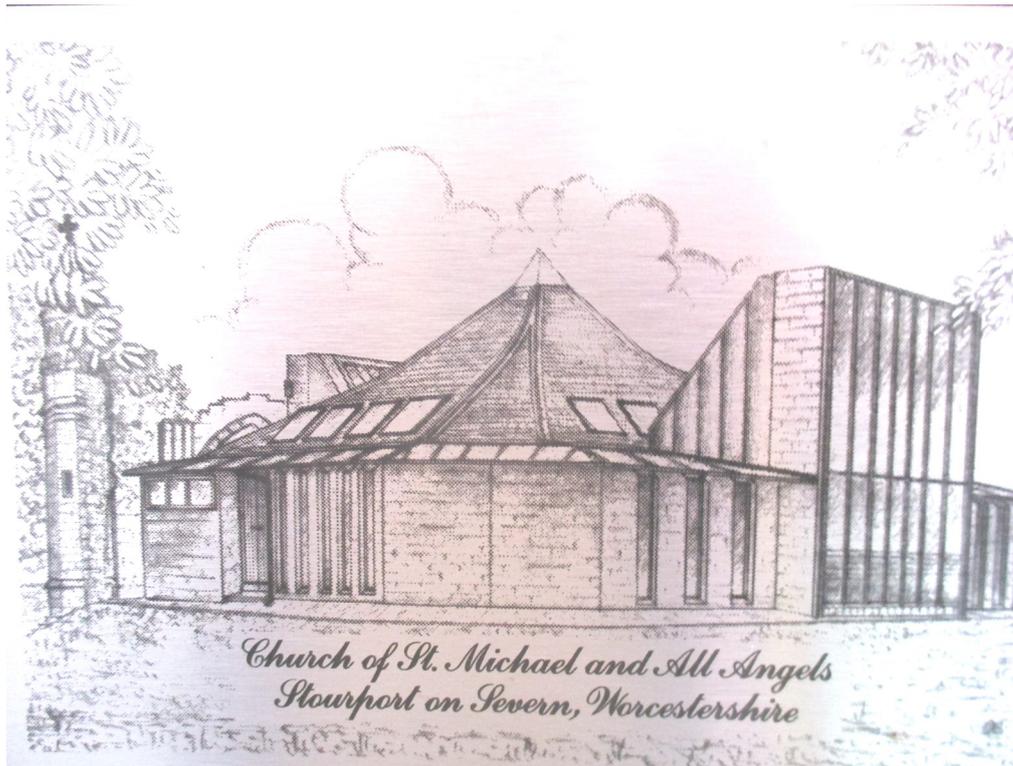
The foundation stone for this new church, which we have today, was laid in April 1980. This church is unique as the altar is in the centre rather than the traditional east end of the church.

The large churchyard here at St Michaels is reputedly to be one of the largest churchyards in England. It is very interesting as both Church of England and Methodists are buried here in the old part just behind the present building.

St MICHAEL'S & ALL ANGEL'S CHURCH



There are quite a few famous people buried here, and to name just a few Aaron York who helped develop the canal in Stourport, George Nicholson who was a well-known publisher, and Richard Dukes a surgeon of Stourport whom Sir Charles Hastings was apprenticed to. There are also quite a few ancestors of Stanley Baldwin one of which was Jacob Stanley who was President of the Methodist Conference. There are also war graves of men who were killed in action in both world wars and we also have graves of John Murray a veteran of Trafalgar and George Harris who was one of our earliest carpet manufacturer and founded the Farm Bed carpet factory and was also a veteran of Waterloo.



A POLICEMAN'S LOT

by Ann Taylor

The Police Forces in the British Isles once consisted of 200 separate organisations. Full-service records began in 1840 and built up a detailed picture of each recruit, including a history of their life in the force.

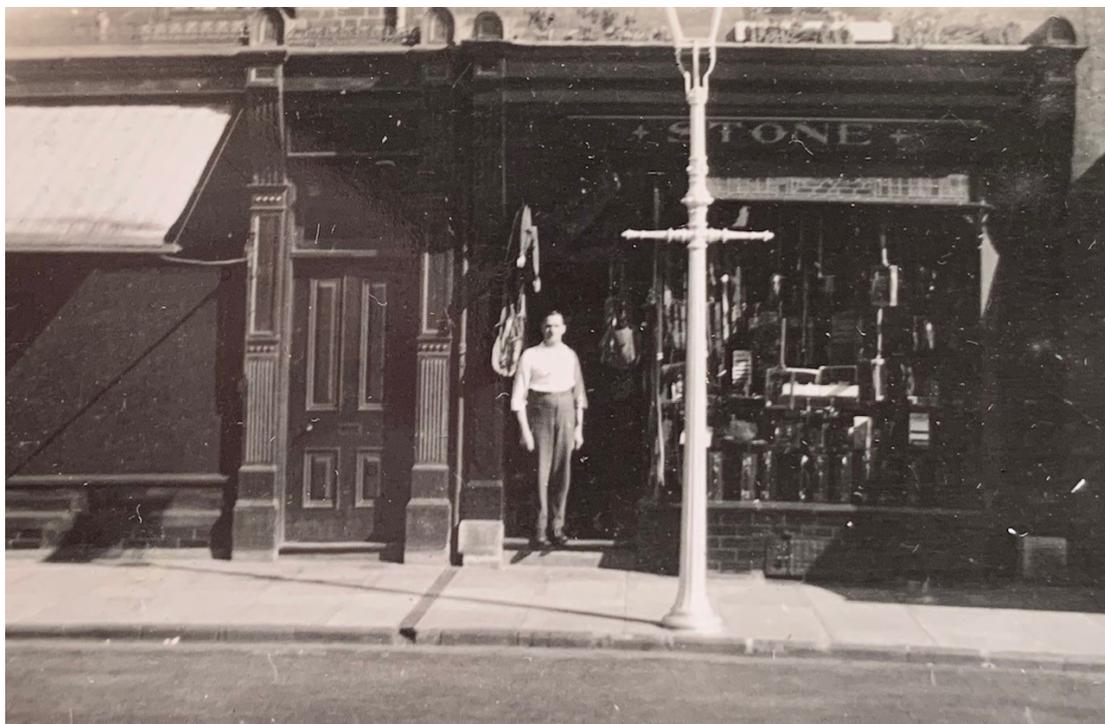
From 1900 to 1902 William Nobes was a Police Sergeant stationed at the Police House, Stourport on Severn, on the Areley Kings side of the bridge. He lived there with his wife, Anna Marie and their three children. His rate of pay at that time was four shillings and thre'pence per day. William had joined the police force as a constable on 6th August 1889 aged 22 years and did his initial training in Worcester. He then took up a position at Priory Street Dudley before moving to Stourport on Severn.

According to the police records held at the County Record Office he was a slight built man who stood 5ft 9inches tall and prior to becoming a police constable he had been employed at Batsford Park, Moreton in Marsh.

30 HIGH STREET STOURPORT



An interesting article and photo recently emailed to the society.



I'm tracking family history and thought you might be interested in a photo I have of my grandfather, W H Stone, taken in the 1920s/30s outside of his saddlery shop at 30 High Street. I see that you have a record of the occupants of 30 High Street so thought this photo would be of interest. Please feel free to use it if you wish.

We recently took my daughter and our granddaughters to Stourport and bought shoes for them from the current occupiers Blunts. A nice touch we thought!

Thank you for your work on Stourport's history. My dad and aunty who both lived there used to recount many fond memories.

*Jeff Stone
Solihull*

Jeff then followed this up with information, an earlier photo and reference to one of our leaflets produced for the "Unlocking Stourport's Past" project.

I'm glad you liked the previous photo of my grandad, William H Stone's shop, but a distant second cousin has sent me a much earlier photo of grandad in his shop doorway.

At first I thought it a different shop as this one has three steps at the entrance and a different window to the one I sent you, but thanks to your informative leaflet, 'Unlocking Stourport High Street', I spotted exactly that shop front as it was around 1904. I can only think there was some re-modelling of the shop front before that next photo, in I guess the 30s or 40s.

30 HIGH STREET STOURPORT



Burial in Wool

by Ann Taylor

The following article came about following a particularly challenging transcription I have been doing for BMSGH. The vicar had managed to cause initial confusion regarding the names of the deceased and the names of the witnesses recorded in the affidavits. To add to the confusion, he had managed to blunt his quill pen and water down the ink. Happy days!

The first Burial in Wool Act was passed in 1666 during the reign of Charles II and stated that the act would take effect from and after the 25 March 1667. The act was brought in to protect the wealth and prosperity of the English wool industry from the introduction of new materials and imports. A second act repealing the first one was passed in 1678 and stated that the act would take effect from and after the 1st August 1678. The act stated that all bodies, except those that had died of plague, should be buried in any shift, sheet or shroud made of wool and that the coffin linings should also be made of wool. No other materials could be mixed with the wool or used as trimmings. An affidavit had to be sworn, within eight days of the death, before a Justice of the Peace or Mayor, by two responsible persons. If the area where the person was to be buried did not have a J.P. or Mayor, the Vicar or Curate could administer the oath. The affidavits were recorded in several ways.

Burial in Wool

continued

Some churches had special forms, others had a special register or recorded them in the main parish register. The record consisted of the name of the deceased, date of death, names of the witnesses and signature of the person that had administered the oath and on what date. 'Penalties were ordered of £5 on the estate of every person not buried in woollen, on the householder in whose house he died, on persons connected with the funeral, on ministers neglecting to certify the non-receipt of the affidavit, and on overseers neglecting to levy the penalty' The monies from the fines were to be distributed between the poor of the parish and the person that informed that the burial did not comply with the act. Many were prepared to pay the £5, and a member of a family would become an informer so that in effect only half of the fine would be paid. The wealthier in society would sooner pay the fine than their relatives be seen 'dead in wool'. The Burial in Wool act was finally repealed in 1841 although it had been largely ignored for some time before that.

*Information taken from: The Parish Chest by W.E Tate 1983 edition
www.britishhistoryonline.ac.uk www.historyhouse.co.uk*

Martins Bank Stourport

Barclays Bank in Stourport closed two years ago. It had originally been Martins Bank and opened on 16 March 1938. In December 1969 it became Barclays Bank.

Below is a view of the 1960's Martins Bank in Stourport. Note the gap to the right, which was soon to be infilled with the Woolworths building (now B&M). Also shown is a later photo when it had become Barclays Bank.



STREETS NAMED AFTER WOMEN

Harper Adams University are conducting a national poll to find out how many local streets are named after women. So far, we have only come up with two in Stourport: Betty Dawes Bank and Dorset Road. Has anyone got any other suggestions?

And finally, something *raily* random!

Two historical newspaper reprints about problems on the Severn Valley Railway which like us has been in lockdown but soon to restart.

Reprinted from
Birmingham Daily Post
26 May 1873

Reprinted from
Worcester Evening News
14 August 1957

**12 CHILDREN
IN RAILWAY
TUNNEL**

Hearing noises at the Bewdley end of Foley Park railway tunnel, Pol-Cons. Smart went to investigate. He saw some children in the entrance to the tunnel and when he called to them to come out, eventually ten boys and two girls emerged from some distance down the tunnel.

As Pol-Cons. Smart got the children out of the tunnel and to safety on to the embankment, a train came speeding along.

The boys, aged between nine and 15, and the girls, aged nine and ten, appeared before Kidderminster Juvenile Court to-day and admitted trespassing on the railway. They said they had been playing.

The 12 children, who were lined up in Court, accompanied by their parents, were told by the chairman, Mrs S. Stone. "It would not have been quite fair to the engine driver if he had come along and wiped out the whole lot of you."

SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER

The 15-year-old boy, who was told he should have known better than to lead the children on to the line, was fined £2. The others were ordered to pay fines ranging from between 10s. to 4s.

Det.-Insp. H. J. Perriton, of the British Transport Commission Police, stated that the offences were committed on July 29. "We have had considerable trouble with trespassers on the railway," he said.

"Not so long ago, it was the Foley Park end of the tunnel where the trouble was being caused and the Commission went to the extent of spending £2,000 on erecting fencing here. Since then, there have been no prosecutions, but now it is the other end of the tunnel that is receiving attention."

"It is between two large housing estates and we and the local police have spent hours trying to stop this business."

"The children were some 60 to 70 feet below in the tunnel, which is set in a deep cutting."

"The thing we do not want to happen will surely happen there one day. These cases are brought by the British Transport Commission to try to prevent that."

arrived here at 9.30 this morning.

**ANOTHER MALICIOUS ACT ON THE
SEVERN VALLEY RAILWAY.**

Information was given to the county police, on Friday evening, that a rail had been placed on the Severn Valley Railway, the previous night, at Sandbourne, some little distance from Bewdley. The rail was of wood, and about eight feet long, and a passenger train, which passed about nine o'clock, went over the obstruction, cutting it in two. Fortunately no mischief was done to the train or its occupants. The police complain that the railway officers show great tardiness in giving them information of these occurrences, and hence they were not able to make that examination into the matter which earlier information would enable them to prosecute. In the case of turning the points at Bewdley station, a short time ago, no information of the affair was given to the police till the second day after, and then the police-sergeant who went to the spot was treated as though his presence was not desired. In this last instance information was again withheld till nearly twenty-four hours after the offence. The public will not be satisfied with the railway authorities glossing these matters over as if things of no consequence.

We hope you have enjoyed reading our newsletter. If you have any articles, reminiscences, photos or stories large or small do share them with us for the next newsletter.

If you are not already receiving our newsletters and other correspondence by email, and would like to, please let me know.

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David More
Newsletter Editor

