

# MINCHINHAMPTON LOCAL HISTORY GROUP

## ANNUAL BULLETIN NUMBER 8

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### COMMITTEE MEMBERS 1990 - 91

Mr. C. Turk - Chairman  
Mrs. S. Smith - Secretary  
Mrs. D. Wall - Treasurer  
Mrs. J. Grover  
Mrs. B. Robson  
Mr. C. Brown  
Mr. J. Cooper

### PROGRAMME 1990 - 91

1990	Nov.	Guy Fawkes and the Gloucestershire Connection - Mr. B. Jerrard
	Dec.	Social Get Together
1991	Jan.	Minchinhampton Town Band - Mr. T. Picken
	Feb.	Minchinhampton Children - Mrs. S. Smith (Joint meeting with Minchinhampton Society)
	Apr.	Are you killing your house with kindness? - Mrs. J. Bailey
	May	Guided walk around Tetbury
	July	Minchinhampton Past and Present - An exhibition of Life in the Town (Joint organisers with Minchinhampton Society)
	Aug.	Guided walk around Box
	Sept.	The River Severn and its Bore - Mr. E. Collins

Members have continued with their individual research, much of which was on show at the exhibition. They have participated in events organised by the Local History Committee of the Rural Community Council. Mr. C. Turk and Mrs. D. Wall helped with the production of the booklet 'A walk around Minchinhampton' and continue to guide groups on walks around the Town.

# THE STONEHOUSE AND NAILSWORTH RAILWAY

## Roy Close

On the 13th July, 1863 a newly-formed, independent Company, the Stonehouse and Nailsworth Railway Company, was authorised to build a line from the Midland Railway main line (Birmingham to Bristol) at Stonehouse, to the Cotswold market town of Nailsworth, following the Frome Valley as far as Stroud.

Earlier that year a notice in the 17th January edition of the Stroud Journal had announced the formation of the Company, by raising £65,000 in 3,250 shares of £20 each, the bulk of which would be raised by a number of prominent local businessmen, with the rest to be provided from subscriptions from the general public of the district, applications for which were to be made to G.B. Smith, Solicitors, of Nailsworth.

The decision to launch the Company had been taken after negotiations with the Midland Railway had resulted in agreement to go ahead; this after the original Bill for the line had been defeated, when a proposal to include a station at Woodchester had resulted in objections from shareholders, who thought it would encourage the use of the Catholic Convent on the edge of the village.

Although the eventual branch line was destined to become a rather sleepy railway backwater, the promoters originally had some rather grandiose ideas, mainly originating from the Midland Railway. They intended to continue the line beyond Nailsworth, crossing the Cotswolds via Tetbury and Malmesbury, and eventually terminating at Southampton, giving the Midland a route to the south coast, and the opportunity to cut across the heartland of the Great Western Railway.

Had these schemes come to fruition the railways of the area might well have been very different. Unfortunately however, the money ran out and the line never got beyond Nailsworth, where the terminus with its odd track layout remained to remind travellers of the ambitious but impossible scheme. It would have been very expensive to build, needing steep gradients and large earthworks, and the eventual size of the task was far beyond the funds and resources available at the time.

The original local committee consisted of the following prominent local citizens:

William and Charles Playne, S.S. Marling, A.M. Flint, A.S. Leonard and J.E. Barnes, all in Cloth Manufacture, and Isaac Hillier, J.G. Frith and George Mills, who were in Provisions, Tea and Meal respectively. One assumes they would have held the majority of the shares.

The building of the line went ahead more or less as planned with stations at Stonehouse, Ryford and Nailsworth, and several sidings along its route, serving cloth mills and other industries. It was eventually opened on February 1st 1867. Although no major earthworks were required, completion had been delayed through the failure of the contractors to meet deadlines and the constant slipping of bridges over canals and streams, which the track crossed and recrossed.

Although the turning of the first sod at Nailsworth by the M.P. the Hon. A Horseman in February 1864 had caused great excitement in the small town, with flags, bunting and a brass band, the opening of the line was generally low—key, apart from decorating the engine. There was some celebration in Nailsworth, with cannons being fired at High Beeches and the Subscription Rooms (later the cinema and now the Boys Club) while the band played in the streets as people celebrated.

There were three regular journeys between Nailsworth and Stonehouse at first, with a fourth added later that year, and in the early 1880's a fifth. The early trains ran between 8.00 a.m. and 8.30 p.m. with each journey taking approximately twenty minutes. After the opening of the Stroud branch, between the town and Dudbridge in 1886 (possibly later than was intended originally) services were increased to seven daily; the last ended at Stonehouse at around 9.00 p.m.

Despite these increases in passenger services, the line relied heavily on goods traffic, especially until the Stroud branch was opened. This was reflected by the large number of private waggons based at Nailsworth with at one time at least nine different firms being represented. The goods yard at Nailsworth was a busy place, containing a turntable, engine shed, goods shed, cattle dock and a large warehouse with several smaller buildings near the entrance from the town. The warehouse is still in regular use today, mainly as a timber store, and still carries the original name of C.W. Jones & Co.

The station buildings at Ryeford, Dudbridge and Nailsworth were all built to the company's own design, with walls of Cotswold stone and a grey slate roof. That at Nailsworth rather dominated the short platform, being much larger than those

normally found on a small branch-line terminus, perhaps reflecting the main line status envisaged by the founders of the original plans. The meetings of the board of the original railway were held there, in what later became the booking hall.

The original station at the Stonehouse end was probably only a small temporary affair and was replaced by one in the Midland Railway design of wood on a stone base with a stone chimney and a wide canopy. It was possibly built at the same time as the one at Stroud, when the additional branch from Dudbridge was completed in 1886. The one at Woodchester was also to Midland design but was much smaller, built rather as an afterthought and possibly influenced by letters in the press complaining of passengers having to walk to Dudbridge for trains.

These buildings underlined the backing given by the Midland Railway almost from the start and they were soon involved in supporting the line's financial affairs, as these were fully stretched by debts incurred in its building. In 1869, for instance, the Stroudwater Canal Company were awarded over £1000 damages against them for interruptions to traffic on the canals whilst the bridges were being built. They were apparently unable to meet this until 1878, when they had been invested in the Midland and they were eventually dissolved as a separate company after the completion of the branch to Stroud in 1886, when the running of the complete line became the responsibility of the Midland.

The Stroud extension probably relieved the passenger traffic on the line and also added to the goods traffic several lucrative contracts, including the supply of coal to the Stroud Gas Works. This continued until well after World War II, and at times was over 3000 tons of coal a month. Passenger trains consisted of four and six—wheeled coaches, drawn by locomotives such as the Kirtley 0-6-0 and Johnson 0-4—4 tank engines. Amongst the services provided were a number of excursions to Gloucester, Bristol and Birmingham, while the connection to the Midland main line at Stonehouse enabled many to have a day by the sea at Weston Super Mare, especially in later years. I well remember being taken on some of these just before World War II.

However, passenger services were gradually affected by the new local bus services, and despite combining passenger and goods services, by using one coach along with several trucks, they were temporarily suspended in 1947. They never resumed and by the middle of 1949 their departure was made official, but goods traffic remained fairly constant. Eventually the arrival of Dr. Beeching in the 1960's sharpened the knife and the line finally closed in June 1966, almost but

not quite reaching its centenary.

Today all the track has long-since disappeared, although its recent conversion to a combined walking and cycle track between the two original termini has meant that it still provides an amenity for the local people, although rather removed from the intentions of its founders nearly a century and a quarter ago. Some buildings still remain, particularly at Nailsworth, while at other places semi-derelict walls and other reminders can be seen amongst the undergrowth. Nailsworth has recently had a new fire station built almost on the entrance to the old goods yard.

The last scheduled passenger service ran on the 14th June 1947 when, although leaving Stonehouse empty, it was completely full after leaving Ryford with passengers having to find room in the guards van and apparently some even travelled on the footplate. Amongst those embarking at Ryford were some 60 boys from Wycliffe College and their Headmaster, Mr. Sibley.

At all the stations on both branches, and at other vantage points such as bridges and level crossings, it was cheered on by crowds of people all wishing to witness the historic journey. At Dudbridge detonators were let off, and the engine was suitably decorated with flags, bunting and greenery. At Nailsworth it was detached and backed along the rails to the water tower for replenishment before commencing its final run back to Stroud and Stonehouse.

Several excursions were run by the Gloucestershire Railway Society in the following years, culminating in a final one on the 7th July 1963 when three coaches, packed with passengers, were hauled by a 1934 L.M.S. 0—6—0 engine, specially brought down from Redditch for the occasion.

During its lifetime there were, obviously, a number of varied and unusual incidents, including a number of accidents, two of which caused fatalities. One occurred at Stroud when John Griffith, a carter of Stroud, was kicked by one of the two horses on his dray when he was driving for the L.M.S. in 1908. He was driving from the shafts (apparently not officially allowed) and a verdict of accidental death was recorded by the Coroner at the inquest, when he also praised the bravery of a witness, William Harrison of Brick Row, for pulling the victim clear of the shafts when the horses bolted.

Another tragic accident occurred, this time at Nailsworth, when a porter, Charles

# MIDLAND RAILWAY.

## OPENING OF THE

# NAILSWORTH BRANCH.

### On Monday, February 4th, 1867,

AND UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE,

The undermentioned Trains will run between **STONEHOUSE** and **NAILSWORTH**, in connection with Main Line Trains.

This Table shows the Times at which the Trains may be expected to arrive at, and depart from, the several Stations, but their departure or arrival at the time stated is not guaranteed, nor does the Company hold itself responsible for delay or any other consequences arising therefrom.

FARES FROM NAILSWORTH.		Return Tickets.		1st and 2nd class.		1st and 2nd class.		WEEK-DAYS.								
								1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
1st class	0 0 0	1st class	0 0 0	1st class	0 0 0	1st class	0 0 0									
2nd class	0 0 0	2nd class	0 0 0	2nd class	0 0 0	2nd class	0 0 0									
3rd class	0 0 0	3rd class	0 0 0	3rd class	0 0 0	3rd class	0 0 0									
4th class	0 0 0	4th class	0 0 0	4th class	0 0 0	4th class	0 0 0									
5th class	0 0 0	5th class	0 0 0	5th class	0 0 0	5th class	0 0 0									
6th class	0 0 0	6th class	0 0 0	6th class	0 0 0	6th class	0 0 0									
7th class	0 0 0	7th class	0 0 0	7th class	0 0 0	7th class	0 0 0									
8th class	0 0 0	8th class	0 0 0	8th class	0 0 0	8th class	0 0 0									
9th class	0 0 0	9th class	0 0 0	9th class	0 0 0	9th class	0 0 0									
10th class	0 0 0	10th class	0 0 0	10th class	0 0 0	10th class	0 0 0									

Paish, (52) of Horsley Road was engaged in shunting operations in the goods yard in November 1918. He was caught between two cattle trucks and crushed beneath the wall of the cattle pen, death being instantaneous.

In 1892 another accident had occurred in circumstances which can only be

described as unusual, to put it mildly. A passenger train, which had left Stroud at 7.55 a.m. was approaching Nailsworth station before its due time, when surprised staff saw it charge through the station, with full steam on, and end its journey against the stop, some 150 yards further on, fully embedded in coal and dirt. Luckily, although one coach derailed, no one was fatally injured, but one young lady, Lottie Tarrant, broke her leg and had to be taken to Stroud Hospital for treatment. The rather surprising end to this incident came at the enquiry, when it was found that the signals which warned approaching drivers of their nearness to the station had been removed some years previously. Needless to say the Company admitted liability and paid damages.

During the floods of 1889 a landslip occurred on the line at Rodborough which required prompt action from officials to keep it open for traffic. A gang of men had to be engaged to clear away the fallen earth and debris in order to ensure that the traffic was not impeded. Flooding also occurred at the level crossing at Woodchester, causing passengers either having to go on to Nailsworth or walk back along the track to Workman's (now Quaker, Chemicals) to make their exit, which could only then be achieved by wading through a good depth of water. The ladies were favoured when those willing to entrust themselves to the strong arms of company servants were safely delivered to terra firma. The last train from Stonehouse to Stroud could not pass Ryford and passengers were conveyed in a hired vehicle to Dudbridge before entraining there for the short journey to Stroud.

Finally, an indication of the rather high fares charged during the latter 19th can be seen from the following examples of excursion fares. In 1868 from Nailsworth to Birmingham, First Class cost 7/6d (37½p) and Covered Carriage 3/9d (18p) whilst to Bristol fares were 5/- (25p) and 2/- (10p), respectively. In 1936, however, fares seemed more realistic as the return fares from Dudbridge to Gloucester, Bristol and Birmingham were 1/- (5p), 3/- (15p) and 7/11d (40p).

Thus the story of the 'Dudbridge Donkey'.

## **VICTORIAN AND EDWARDIAN MINCHINHAMPTON - AS SEEN IN THE PAGES OF THE PARISH MAGAZINE**

### **Mrs. Sue Smith**

In 1879 Holy Trinity Church, Minchinhampton, issued its first own Parish Magazine. At first it was published with a national magazine 'Home Words' but gradually more and more local news was included. It is from these monthly accounts of happenings in the Parish, in the years up to World War I, that we can gain an insight into the lives of the ordinary people of the Town. In this first selection I have concentrated upon the celebrations of the period.

### **ROYAL OCCASIONS**

Jubilees, Royal Weddings and Coronations provided an excuse for a celebration in the Town. In the days before deep freezers and refrigerators there were marvellous feasts prepared for the participants.

The celebration of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee took place in 1887. On Monday 20th June all the children of the ecclesiastical Parish, between the ages of five and sixteen, were invited to a Jubilee Tea by Mr. & Mrs. Playne, at Longfords. Four hundred and seventy children assembled at the schools and after having a Jubilee Medal pinned on, formed up four abreast behind the Hampton Band and marched down amidst "a forest of flags" to the grounds of Longfords House, to be welcomed by the host and hostess.

Punch and Judy were there, and it is to be hoped that it was not taken too seriously as Punch "is a naughty old man and should be locked up in Nailsworth". "We are afraid we saw at least one Justice of the Peace actually laughing at him when he was beating his wife so cruelly". Tea followed the show and then everyone adjourned to the meadows for sports. Each child was given more refreshment before leaving and "with hearty cheers they all went home happy and grateful".

Jubilee Day was later in the week and started with the pealing of bells and a service of thanksgiving. On Camp Field a tent had been erected and beautifully decorated. Here 930 people were able to sit down for a meal, served by a small army of volunteers - 52 carvers, 104 waiters and 26 serving beer and lemonade. Mr. Baynes proposed the Loyal Toast, the National Anthem was sung and

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# HER MAJESTY'S DIAMOND JUBILEE

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## REJOICINGS AT MINCHINHAMPTON QUEEN'S DAY, JUNE 22nd.

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### PROGRAMME.

- 6.0 a.m. ROYAL SALUTE.  
7.0 a.m. PEAL ON THE BELLS—also at intervals during the day.  
11 to 12. TOWN BAND will play "God save the Queen" and a varied selection in the High Street.  
1.0 p.m. FREE DINNER in the SCHOOLS to all inhabitants 60 years of age and above.  
2.0 p.m. CHILDREN'S SPORTS in the CAMP FELD, among the events being a  
~~MEMORABLE TIME~~ ~~WARR~~ ~~CARR~~ ~~PARADES~~.  
4.0 p.m. TEA FOR ALL CHILDREN in the Parish between the ages of 4 and 14, and Presentation of Medals in the Schools.  
5.0 p.m. FOOT RACES, TUGS OF WAR, BICYCLE RACES, JUMPING COMPETITIONS, SACK and OBSTACLE RACES, as per Programme.

*N.B.—All Competitors must give in their Names at the Cricket Pavilion before One o'clock.*

### DANCING WILL FOLLOW THE SPORTS.

- 9.0 p.m. AN IMPOSING TORCHLIGHT PROCESSION will start from the Market Place, and headed by the Band, march to Tom Long's Post, where it will meet the Brimscombe Procession at 9.40.  
10.0 p.m. BEACON FIRE, which is included in the Government List, will be Lighted

Hampton Band played. Later the volunteers sat down to their lunch, as sports were being enjoyed by many people.

In the evening there was a torchlight procession to the Common, headed again by the Band, meeting at the bonfire, some 35ft. high. As 10.00 p.m. arrived the

Rector lit the fire, by means of a long pole, and all around on the hilltops could be seen other beacon fires, and the sky was lit by signal rockets. "Let us hope that we shall not only be one on this day, but that we shall keep united and that we shall be known henceforth as 'Merry Hampton'. God Save the Queen".

Ten years later, on 22nd June 1897, the Diamond Jubilee was celebrated, a fact commemorated now by the clock on the Church tower. The organising committee had tried to arrange a programme to occupy everyone, from the youngest to the oldest inhabitant. The day was hot and fine, the streets were decorated and an illuminated star hung in the High Street. A free luncheon was provided for the over 60's, tea for the children and again there were sports and dancing. The Hampton Band took an important part, and the bells sounded again.

The torchlight procession met with another from Brimscombe at Tom Long's Post, and proceeded to the bonfire site. Those at Rodborough, May Hill and Malvern could be seen and "it was nearly eleven before these hill fires abated."

Queen Victoria died in 1901, and the Coronation of her grandson, Edward and Alexandra was planned for June 1902. However, the King fell ill, and the actual ceremony had to be postponed. In Hampton, like so many small towns and villages the plans for festivities were at an advanced stage, and the King let it be known that he wished all these to go ahead. Thus, the schools were closed from 23rd to 30th June, and although the bells remained silent, and the bunting was put away, the children enjoyed a tea, with 500 adults sitting down an hour later. The traditional bonfire was lit by Mr. Ricardo on 30th June, and was "a fine sight, a token of joy for the King's recovery."

On August 9th the Coronation took place, and the bells were duly rung, and services held. Edward's reign lasted just nine years, and at his death, as a mark of respect, the Sunday School treat was cancelled.

July 11th 1911. was the Coronation Day for George and Queen Mary. Unlike its predecessors, the day was wet, with frequent heavy showers. In Minchinhampton the day started with 8.00 a.m. Communion, followed by the pealing of bells. Just before noon there was much amusement caused by a parade of animals walking in line from the Market Square to the Park, led by the Town Band and flanked by outriders in fancy dress, for which prizes were awarded.

At 1.30 p.m. the Union Flag was hoisted on the Park, the sports were held and the

children entertained to tea in the Schools. This year 800 adults sat down to a meal in a tent on the Park, and the day finished with the traditional bonfire.

Just three years later the rejoicing had turned to horror at the outbreak of war.

### **PATRIOTIC CONCERTS**

Even before World War I, the people of Minchinhampton had been exposed to the realities of a country at war. The outbreak of war with South Africa in 1898 (Boer War) brought patriotic fervor to a high pitch. The girls in the school were told to include national slogans in their samplers, and several examples of these still exist. On January 15th 1900 a Patriotic Concert was held in aid of the War Fund, and the sum of £11.9s.11d. was raised. Of the 48 volunteers from the Town, 25 were called up for service.

Empire Day was celebrated in great style in the Edwardian era. On May 23rd 1906, the school assembled at 10.00 a.m. in the playground and the flag was hoisted. The National Anthem and 'Flag of Britain' were sung. The children then marched to the Market Square where Robert Sparkes read Tennyson's 'Charge of the Light Brigade'. The children then sang 'Rule Britannia'. After this the Patriotic Address was given, in this particular year by Major Ricardo. The boys then sang 'Union Jack' (possibly the same song as previously sung at school; there seems confusion about the name of the flag and the song!). Finally, everyone joined in the singing of the National Anthem before keeping the rest of the day as a holiday.

It seems Empire Day in Minchinhampton was celebrated in much the same form for many years.

### **LONGFORDS SHOW**

Another important point in the Victorian calendar was the Longfords Show, held under the auspices of the Playne Family. In 1886 the Longford Valley Horticultural and Industrial Society extended an invitation to the children of the Parish to exhibit their needlework. This was later extended to allow cooking and dried flower arrangements by members of the Girls Friendly Society. When Miss Playne was speaking at the prize-giving for the cookery she commented, "good cooking is far more important than some of our cottagers seem to think"!

By 1889 the Show had grown to include 1600 exhibits, and three years later the

Cheltenham Band was engaged to play at the proceedings. In 1894 it was decided to limit the show to cottagers only, but the festivities extended well into the evening, as the grounds were illuminated, and there were fireworks by the lake. "Everyone trudges home; even the children were tired."

The summer of 1896 was hot and dry, but the Show was still held. There was the added attraction of a bicycle tournament and "a display of fireworks seldom seen outside Crystal Palace". Children from the Infant School gave a display of Maypole Dancing and the needlework from the older girls was much commended.

This is just a small selection of some of the 'high days and holidays' with which the people of Hampton amused themselves. At times life must have seemed hard, with the threat of illness and hardship a burden for many families to bear, and yet within the community there were the opportunities for enjoyment and laughter. Perhaps the 1992 Country Fayre will again invoke the spirit of 'Merry Hampton'.

## **A HISTORY OF THE GLEBE ESTATE**

### **Diana Wall**

In 1989 I undertook a Diploma in Environmental Education course, which involved, amongst other things, researching various aspects of life in Minchinhampton. Although we have such a wealth of historical sites in the Town, I decided to see if it were possible to undertake research into a modern council housing estate. The following article shows what was achieved.

The word Glebe comes from the Latin 'gleba' and is defined as "Church land forming all or part of a benefice." Certainly by the 17th all of the land to the east of Butt Street, from Friday Street to Blue Boys Farm is listed in the Terrier (catalogue of property belonging to Holy Trinity Church). Later the Rectory (now Stuart House) was built on part of the land, to the south was built the complex of buildings now known as the Coigne and the Priests House (another former Rectory) and the current Rectory, dating from the 1970's also lies on this land. The parcel to the north, however, remained as farmland.

The turnpike roads of the 19th by-passed Minchinhampton, so there was little growth and the Town stagnated, with many empty cottages. There was no pressure to use the farmland for building. In the 1830 Survey of the Town a

parcel of just over 7 acres is listed as Glebe Pasture, with the occupier one John Hitchings, and having a rateable value of £7.4s.0d.

Minchinhampton saw a return to a more prosperous role during the C20th. Following World War I there had been a change in social philosophy, and a desire to provide cheap housing for those that needed it. 'Homes for Heroes' were provided in the larger cities; at St. Marks in Cheltenham an estate was laid out on the 'garden city' idea, providing reasonably sized houses for rent. In Minchinhampton the then R.D.C. provided the first of the 'Council Houses' - those at the top of Tetbury Street, and parts of Box Crescent and the Tynings were built before 1939.

However, it was in response to the post-war baby boom that the R.D.C. began to develop the land it now owned to the east of Butt Street. After initial problems with drainage, which caused more than one hopeful occupier to write to the press, sixty-two houses were completed in Phase One, by 1959. These were built by traditional methods, of concrete block which was later rendered, in terraces of four or six. All had individual front and rear gardens, and were laid out around three cul-de-sacs called simply 'The Glebe'.

By the mid-sixties it had become apparent that further housing was needed, and the road was continued to the east, necessitating the re-numbering of half the existing properties. The new houses were of pre-fabricated 'Reena' design, and were composed of pre-cast concrete sections which were bolted together on site. To the south of the road semi-detached houses were built; on the north there were bungalows.

Changes were taking place in society, and in the sixties the R.D.C. recognised that many of the older houses were family-occupied, and provided a playground on the site. Increased lifespan and the recognition of the problems of old-age led to the provision of the bungalows, and also the building of George Pearce House, an elderly persons complex staffed by a warden. The sixties also saw an increase in car ownership. None of the houses in Phase One or Two had garages, but these were added in the form of rows, to the rear of some older properties.

Phase Three was completed in the early 1970s. The land around George Pearce House was filled with bungalows and semi-detached houses. These were of reconstructed stone, built in the traditional way, and many of the houses had integral garages. The front gardens were now open-plan, although this meant that

a cattle grid had to be provided on Summersfield Road, to avoid damage by straying cattle. The rear gardens are also much smaller than on the previous Phases.

With the additional building and especially infilling it became obvious that houses would again have to be re-numbered and new street names provided. The Parish Council was consulted, and their recommendations as to names were accepted by the R.D.C. They provide an historical record in themselves. The Glebe was renamed Glebe Road and off it ran Trinity Drive, from the dedication of the Parish Church. Syon Road was so named because Syon Abbey owned the Manor of Hampton in medieval times and Eastfield Road retained the name of one of the open fields which had lain adjacent to the Glebe.

By the mid 1970s there was only a small parcel of land which remained undeveloped, on the extreme east of the site. The County Structure Plan was published, and was seen to discourage any further development in the area, The Stroud District Council was exhorted to concentrate its development on prime greenfield sites, with access to the M5. At the same time there was a move towards private ownership, and the remaining block of land was sold to a private developer, who built eleven luxury bungalows on the site. (These were the last major housing development, private or public, to take place in Minchinhampton until this year.)



George Pearce House

The latest chapter in the story of the Glebe Estate has been brought about by political will. The Tory 'Right to Buy' legislation has encouraged tenants to buy the properties they live in, and a fair proportion of the houses are now privately owned. This finds expression in the increasing individuality of the houses and gardens, although the provision of accommodation for elderly people is safeguarded, so that these properties remain in Council ownership.

The Glebe Estate is a good example of how a housing area evolves through the years. It may not have the architectural gems that can be found in the High Street or Market Square, but it exemplifies how social and economic trends can be investigated in an historical context.

## **MINCHINHAMPTON PAST AND PRESENT - AN EXHIBITION OF LIFE IN THE TOWN held on JULY 12th to 14th 1991**

This was our major event of 1991, and was held in conjunction with the Minchinhampton Society in order to raise funds for the Nursing Home Appeal being mounted by the Minchinhampton Centre for the Elderly.

The Market House, Vestry Room and Porch Room played host to over one thousand visitors, including on the Sunday H.R.H. The Princess Royal, who was guided around the exhibits by Mrs. Diana Wall and Mr. Peter Grover.

The Market House was dominated by the inn signs for the Ram and the Swan, and against one wall stood the Blue Boys sign - all enhancing the explanation of town inns. After studying the Manor in the 13th visitors were encouraged to find out more about what was beneath their feet - the geology and the water supply. On the stage hung the Mutual Benefit Society Banner, and here too were other aspects of social life - Scouting, the Post Office and various small artefacts. Modern technology was employed in an analysis of 17th families and weapons, using a computer programme everyone could understand. The exhibit on Longfords Mill was staged by the Textile Group of Stroud Museum Association, and alongside was the re-creation of Ben Bishop's workshop by the Museum itself.

The Vestry Room was devoted to displays of the Fire Brigade, the Town Band, the Mutual Improvement Association and the Churchyard Survey. Finally, in the Vestry Room the visitor was able to trace the growth of the Town in old maps, as well as enjoying a cup of coffee.

A glance at the comments in the visitors book will convey the impression that the exhibition was enjoyed by all ages. Some visitors made return trips, and others came from some distance to 'look and see'. Children took part in a quiz and the numbers of the Local History Group have been strengthened by new members enrolling at the exhibition.

The organising committee handed over a total of £1607 to the Nursing Home Appeal, a tremendous sum for which we thank everyone very much. Let us hope that the interest in our history will continue in the months ahead.