

# Stoney Middleton

A Working Village



## **Stoney Middleton: A Working Village**

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy  
might; *Ecclesiastes - Chapter 9, Verse 10*

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*Cover: Watercolour of Stoney Middleton by Norman Tomlinson*

## *How it all began*

The idea for a book about Stoney Middleton began early in 2000. All over Derbyshire villages were going into print: Eyam did its map, Calver had a booklet for the Millennium, Hathersage and Baslow produced handsome volumes. Surely it was worth trying to capture something of what living in Stoney Middleton means today?

Around twenty people came to a meeting under the auspices of Stoney Middleton Interest and Leisure Enterprise (SMILE) to talk about doing a book about the village, an encouraging number. To make sure that everyone who wanted to be involved knew about the project we sent a flyer to all 220 households. We held another meeting to plan the contents of the book and decided to investigate applying for funds.

From the start it was agreed that the book would not just look back at the past. Our book would help future generations if it included information about our families, households, jobs and leisure activities in 2000. We decided on a village census, and questionnaires were delivered to most houses in the village and were returned by over 50% of households. We tried to contact every household but inevitably some have slipped through the net.

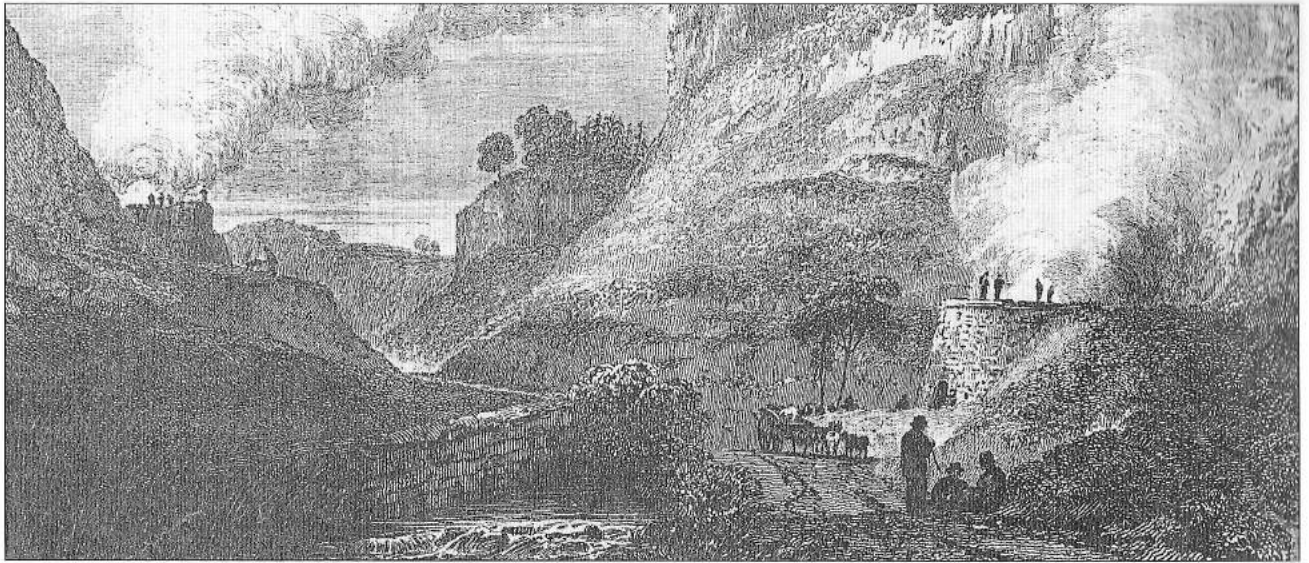
In July 2000 we were awarded a Peak Potential Millennium Award. As we followed up leads from the census it became clear that many people in the village had stories and photographs they were happy to share. Suddenly the book looked like being twice as long as originally planned. We have also tried to check for accuracy but apologise for any mistakes. We would like to thank you all for your interest and help! Any surplus funds from the sale of this book will be donated to village charities.

Whether you are reading this as a present day inhabitant of Stoney Middleton, as part of the Stoney Diaspora in Derbyshire and beyond (yes even you, Nigel, in Australia!) or as a visitor here just for our Well Dressing in July we hope you will enjoy finding out more about:

### Stoney Middleton: A Working Village - April 2002



## *From Stone Age to the Motor Car*



*View in Middleton Dale F.Chantrey 1822*

The first people known to have visited the area which we now call Stoney Middleton were occasional bands of hunters (the Neolithic people), followed around 2300 BC by the Celts, migrating to this country from Europe. The Celts were the first people to settle and farm in the area and they have left abundant evidence of their activities on the surrounding hills.

Their religious beliefs included a deep reverence for water and they were particularly fascinated by the thermal waters, which flowed throughout the year from the junctures of limestone and gritstone rocks, believing these to have been specially blessed by the spirits of the underworld. Finding these waters flowing in an area, which they called 'The Nook' at Stoney Middleton, they built a small shrine surmounted by an effigy of their goddess Arnemetia. Here they would gather to offer prayers and to make sacrifices, a form of worship which probably continued after the Roman occupation of the region.

Roman interest in the region lay in the rich seams of lead and they set up a small encampment on the adjacent hillside, which they called *Castra Bank*, the main purpose being to supervise the slaves working and processing the lead ore.

Anglian occupation led to the naming of the settlement as *Middletun* (a circular enclosure, housing a small settlement) and though the eventual arrival of Christian monks resulted in an end of pagan worship the water shrines were allowed to remain, though now dedicated to a Christian saint - in the case of *Middletun*, that of St Martin - patron of cripples.



Norman subjugation of Britain saw great changes to the settlement, as it now lay astride an important junction of trade routes. In order to extract taxes from passing merchants and to keep an eye on the rebellious native population, a deep channel was cut through Castra Bank, allowing a small stone fortress to be built on its steeper western flank (Castle Hill).

Under the harsh laws imposed by the Normans a degree of stability now allowed the re-establishment of lead mining as an organised industry and Stoney Middleton and Eyam were given a charter under John, Earl of Mortaigne, setting out the rights and taxes required of those taking part in the extraction and processing of the ore.

These conditions also allowed 'yeomen' farmers to settle in the area and to build themselves 'Manor Houses'. One such was built on the lower side of Eaton Fold and a windmill erected (Mill Croft) for the grinding of corn from the fields of both the lord and his tenants. The importance of this particular dwelling however would appear to have been rather brief, as after several decades the family moved to a more prestigious house at Padley, forsaking their surname (Bernake) in process.

The Hundred Years War with France and the Black Death of 1348 led to a serious shortage of labour throughout the country and all forms of trade declined as a result but by the end of the fourteenth century the lead industry was again able to re-assert itself. Stoney Middleton began to grow in size and importance, a fact that was given some impetus on the return of Sir Nicolus Eyre from Agincourt in 1415, when his wife Joan (heiress to the Manor of Padley) ordered the building of a stone church to replace the existing small wooden chapel, in thanksgiving for his safe homecoming. Dedicated (like the springs) to St Martin, the Church was intended to serve the needs of the local community and the pilgrims who now came to visit the village seeking relief from their pains and afflictions in the thermal waters of the nearby bath-house.

The village appears to have escaped the worst ravages of the Civil War (1642) though the region saw much military activity, with Bakewell changing hands several times. Stoney Middleton, part of the estate of the catholic Padley family, was sequestered by the protestant government and subsequently sold to a Robert Ashton of Castleton, who was attracted by its abundance of lead ore. The sale included a farmhouse standing near the back of the Church and this he had enlarged and remodelled to form his seat of residence - it became known as The Hall.



*Stoney Middleton Hall*

Thanks largely to measures taken by the people of Eyam, the village was spared the ravages of the bubonic plague of 1665, which so devastated that community. The Cliff Top became of great importance as a trading post, where the beleaguered community could place money in vinegar filled holes drilled into the top of a rock (to act as a disinfectant) in payment for food and goods left at the side for collection.



*The Roman Baths*

New ideas in agriculture and science during the eighteenth century led to building of kilns in the Dale to meet a demand for burnt limestone for the improvement of arable land, together with lead smelting cupolas of advanced design.

It was during this period also that the notorious state of the roads throughout the country led Parliament to establish 'Turnpike Trusts', under which landowners, gentry and local merchants were permitted to erect gates or bars (turnpikes) and demand fees from passing travellers in return for carrying out reconstruction and widening. In 1743 a turnpike route was established through Stoney Middleton. It proved profitable and led to the village becoming an important staging post, where horses could be changed and travellers refreshed at the local hostelry, the Moon Inn, then situated in the Nook.

The nave of the Parish Church was destroyed by fire in 1757 though the tower survived and the present octagonal nave and chancel were added two years later.

In 1761 the Hall was acquired by Dr Joseph Denman of Bakewell and on his death it passed to his lawyer nephew Thomas, who took up residence in 1806. He quickly began enlarging and modernising the Elizabethan building to cope with the needs of his growing family and his own rising social status (he died a Baron in 1854). He had the mediaeval bathhouse demolished and the present 'Roman' bath built (1815) to serve the bathing needs of his many tenants and workers.

By this period further improvements were needed to the road system and the present main road was cut through the village, bypassing the Bank and the old Moon Inn and leading to the building of a new Toll House (now the Chip Shop). A large number of new inns and several lodging houses opened to cope with the many visitors from the industrial towns for whom Stoney Middleton was now a popular venue.

Several small factories opened in the village making boots and candles and there was increasing demand for limestone to be used in road building. There was a marked decline in the number of cottage industries towards the end of the nineteenth century but education was now given a higher priority. Stoney Middleton School dates from 1835 and was enlarged in 1845. It was designed to



provide 'a sound basic education, together with guidance in self-discipline'.

The rich history of the village now lies hidden in its rocks and the layout of its landscape and buildings, but with basic knowledge, even a casual look around can reveal much evidence of its past.

Edward Longworth aged 10 says: *'I live in Spa Cottage.*

*My house is probably the oldest house in the village. People say it was pub and a nursery and the building dates back to Saxon times. We believe that the house was once three cottages. It stands next to St Martin's Church, which is a very important building because it is octagonal in its shape. My bedroom colour is gold and I have an old bed, a play station and a TV in my room. I also have a wardrobe and a fish tank where I keep my tropical fish.'*

Another old house is Church View in the Nook dating from before 1400. The Old Post Office also in the Nook was built in the 16th Century. Sarai Mason aged 9 who lives in the Nook says: *'In my house there is a secret passageway that no one knows about. It used to hide people from their enemies and now I am the only person who knows about it. It starts in my room and ends in another house. I have been through the tunnel but I ran back quickly.'*

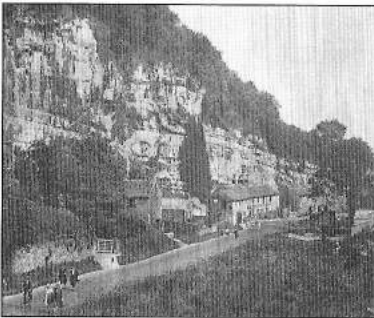
Houses built in the 17th Century included Bridge Cottage in the Nook, The Old Grouse Inn at the bottom of the Dale, Pine View opposite the school on High Street and Hill Top Farm at the junction of High Street and Middleton Lane.

Houses built during the 18th Century included The Old Coach House in the Nook, South View at the bottom of the Dale, Fold House and The Old Barn at the top of High Street. Jessica Critchlow aged 11 writes: *'My Great Great Uncle Jim used to live in Fold House but Mrs Beth Ely, our head teacher, lives there now. There is a stone in the wall at the front of the house that says 'EH' and stands for Emily Heginbotham, a lady who owned the house about 100 years ago. The reason it is there is because Mrs Heginbotham wanted another room and she turned an outhouse into a living room. She said to the builders, 'I'll buy you a pint of beer if you carve my initials in the wall'. They did it and it cost her fourpence, about 2p now.'*

The village expanded rapidly in the first half of the 19th century with further building on the Nook, Nook House Farm and the building on the corner of the main road, which includes the hairdressers. Mill Cottage was built on Mill Street, Pingle Cottage on the Fold, the Cottage on the Dale and at least six properties on High Street including Willows View, Hill Crest, Manor Cottage, Moorland View, Stag House and Stag Cottage.

The second half of the 19th century saw further building on High Street, Craigstead and Curbar View, in the Dale, Dale Terrace, The Bank and Dale Brook View. The Old Vicarage was built on Vicarage Lane overlooking the village and the Church.

## *The Dale Remembered*



### **The Dale Remembered**

The road was oh so peaceful then  
And tales were told by local men  
And women chatted to one another  
And children played with sister and brother

By the roadside coltsfoot and daises grew  
And the grass was green with an emerald hue

The children played no fear of danger  
All knew each other no one a stranger.  
Babies delivered by neighbours and mothers  
Each delivered one another's.

Happy siblings gathered round the bed  
Vying to touch the baby's head.  
And mother planning one more to be fed  
But never a moan, just bake one more loaf of bread.

Then at night came the bathtub in front of the fire  
A memory to cherish nothing more to desire.  
Flannelette nightshirts cosy and warm  
Four to a bed was often the norm  
Imagine the laughter at night in the bed  
Happy faces together all scrubbed and well fed

*Lovers Leap, Stoney Middleton*



## The Changing Scene

At the beginning of the twentieth century Stoney Middleton was a mixed farming and industrial village with houses, farms, quarries, boot factories, trade and commercial premises including numerous pubs clustered round the Nook, the Fold, the bottom end of the Dale and straggling up High Street, which was the old road from Sheffield to Manchester. The exception was a number of outlying farms at the top of High Street (Town Head) and on Middleton Lane.

### Where we live now

One of the first houses built in the twentieth century was Belmont House on High Street, which replaced a thatched cottage. The Denman Estates built Beech and Thorn Cottages on the Nook for their employees. Their gardener resided in Thorn Cottage and went to work through the green gate opposite the spring. Beech Cottage was home to the Headmaster, Thomas Cowen, who wrote an early history of the village. Harold Warren farmed the 'Meadows', on the east side of Stoke Brook. Nook Farm was owned by Denman Estates and farmed in the early part of the century by George William Mason who had twelve children. His daughter Polly married Alfred Hancock and their daughter Myra married Jasper (Jack) Fletcher, Archie's father, who was the last to farm from Nook House.

The houses on the Avenue were built in 1930 on land previously rented by John Furness who farmed all the land between Trinkey Lane and the Moon from his farmhouse next to the Moon. Chapman House on High Street, West Winds at the corner of Eaton Fold and Sherwood on the opposite corner were all built before the war when building was also started on Mill Lane and Trinkey Lane.

Denman Crescent was completed in 1935 on Butchers Piece, which was previously farmed by Harold, the father of John Hancock who still runs the butcher's shop opposite the Moon, and his brother Stan Hancock. Matthew Critchlow - aged 9 says: *'My grandparents live on Denman Crescent. Their house is nicely painted white. It has three bedrooms and double-glazing. My Grandma grows over a hundred different plants in her garden. I live in Tideswell but I go to Stoney Middleton School.'*

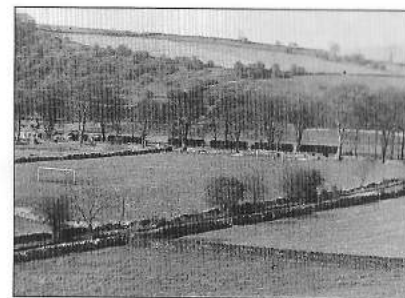


High Street

Harold and Stan also farmed Fanny Hillock at the top of High Street and John remembers hand milking in the field barn now owned by Harry Wright before and after school. Mr Heginbotham farmed the steep field, the Willows, below Vicarage Lane, which is now owned by Bill Glossop and farmed by Tony Mason and Harry Wright.

Before the war the land from the main road to Stoke Brook was known as Unwin's Meadow and was farmed by Bill 'Owd Shiner' Unwin who lived at Derwent House in the centre of the village on the corner of the Nook and Main Street. During the Second World War, Unwin's Meadow

was used first by the Lancashire Fusiliers with a searchlight battery then as a camp for Italian prisoners of war. In preparation for D-Day the Rifle Brigade and an Airborne Regiment used the camp for training. Immediately after the war it was a camp for German prisoners of war and finally housed Eastern European and Irish refugees who were employed helping farmers in the drive to



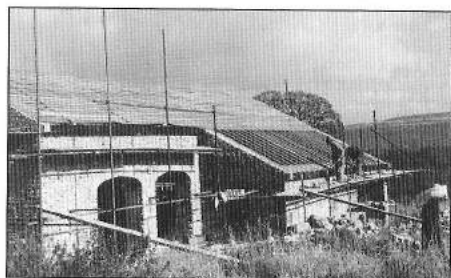
*The Camp on the Avenue c.1943*

improve food production. At least two of the Latvians found the Stoney Middleton girls too attractive to leave and stayed to raise families. Lois and Janis celebrated their Golden Wedding this April. Eventually the council purchased the land and Meadow Close was completed a few years after Avenue Close during the Macmillan building boom in the 1950s, which also saw building in Trinkey and Mill Lanes. Harley Southern aged 8 says: *'I live down on Meadow Close. I have a big room for my bedroom because I have to share with my big sister. I like the house I live in, but I like my first house in Sheffield with my Nan. I like the house in Stoney Middleton because it is bigger.'*

The fashion for replacing or converting old buildings began at the top of High Street in the early 1970s when Roughlands was built on the site of three former cottages. Further up High Street Top, Middle and Bottom Cottages replaced farm buildings attached to Edwin Baggaley's farmhouse - Town Head Farm now Hardy Croft House. Edwin farmed land behind and below the farmhouse and on both sides of Middleton Lane above Highfields Farm. The Denman Estate sold the walled garden belonging to the Hall behind the Church to develop Old Hall Gardens in the mid 1970s when there was also new building in the Nook, on Mill Lane and Eaton Fold.

The Old Barn, at the top of High Street, which was converted in 1975, was previously farm buildings serving all the land from Middleton Lane to the top of the Frith, farmed by Reg Rowland who lived at the Mount and George Worsencroft who lived at Hillside Cottage. Some very fine horses were stabled at the Mount.

Shirley Holt comments that 'the complicated and ever changing pattern of land use and ownership in Stoney Middleton is well illustrated by The Barn which I bought from the Denman Estates. The front step and garden still belongs to the parish and Geoff and Denys Mason sold me two small sheds,



*Barn Conversion 1979*

which are now the stable. Joe Moseley, who lived at Moorland View before the war, used 'The Barn' as farm buildings. When Margaret Hancock came to Stoney as a Landgirl in 1947 she milked twelve cows belonging to Edwin Baggaley in what is now my kitchen and dining room since conversion in 1980. The calf pen is now a shower room. Polly the cat uses the sheep jump as her private entrance and I am writing sitting in the hayloft looking through the pitching hole to 'Riley Graves' where the Hancocks were buried during the plague. The room is lit by a chandelier made from gourds decorated in Bauchi, Northern

Nigeria hanging from a wooden wheel with metal tyres made by G & D Mason for a miner's wheelbarrow'.

The 1980s and early 1990s saw barn conversions and new buildings at the top of High Street. Derbyshire Dales Council developed Edge View as starter homes in 1984 to 1986. The last new two houses, The Old Croft on High Street and The Poplars on Trinkey Lane were completed in 1992. Since then the stables and coach house where the village fire engine was kept at the side of the Stoke Brook in the Nook have been completely refurbished. Finally in 2002, Prefect House, originally a boot factory and latterly a garage, has been converted to residential use and the Old Malt House is being converted to flats.



*The Grove*

### **The Grove Garden**

The Grove Garden, which was created in the 1980s on land given by the Groves family, is now a very pleasant place to sit. 'As a little girl I remember,' says Lois 'a little wooden hut in the garden that sold sweets. I called here each day to spend my one penny a day on biscuits on my way to school. In the war years the hut was made into a home, three or four different families lived there at different times - it made a lovely home'. Now all has gone and only the Grove Garden remains but each year the Church and the Chapel meet and have a joint service.

### **2002 and the beyond**

There were 218 residential properties listed on the electoral roll in Stoney Middleton of which eight were empty in 2001. The total population of Stoney Middleton was approximately 478 made up of 397 adults and 81 children. This was an average household size of 2.25 made up of 1.87 adults and 0.38 children.

Our survey shows that in 1950 the average household was 3.21 persons, but the population in the 1951 census was 527 indicating approximately only 164 inhabited houses. By 1990 the average household size had fallen to 2.86 and the 1991 census gave the population as 515. This would indicate approximately 180 houses, a net increase of only 16. In 2001 the average household size had fallen to only 2.32. If this trend continues by 2020 the average household will be only 2.0. To maintain the population at approximately 480 the number of houses needs to be increased to at least 240. This is a conservative estimate as it assumes that the rate of fall in household size will be similar to the 51-year average. The rate of fall in household size in the last 11 years has, however, been much greater and the average household size could have fallen to 2.0 by about 2007.

The composition of the village has changed dramatically over the last ten years. The main differences between 1990 and 2001 are the fall in the number of under 18s from 27% to 19%, a fall of 30% and the increase in over 65s from 14% to 23%, a rise of almost 70%. Unless starter homes are provided for the children growing up in the village these trends will continue. There will be no one to run the shops, pubs and family businesses and no children to keep the school open. The village will become a geriatric ward with no services.

## *The Dale Today*



### **The Dale Today**

But life is very different now  
Articulated lorries replace herds of cows.  
No time to slow down they have a deadline to meet  
People wait for a chance to cross the street.

No friendly greetings exchanged any more  
No mothers in white aprons standing there at the door  
Waiting for children arriving from school  
Had they been good or felt the sting of the rule

Yet the rocks still send an echoing sound.  
But coltsfoot and daisies are seldom found.  
It's no longer safe for children to play  
At hopscotch or tag at the end of the day.

All this dear friends  
Is progress, well that's what they say.  
Is it really? I wonder,  
Or the price we must pay.



## *To be a Farmer's Boy*

Farming in Stoney Middleton, as in the rest of the United Kingdom, was in a constant state of flux during the twentieth century. In the early part of the century small villages were relatively self-sufficient. In the 1881 census farming was the main occupation. There were 15 full time farmers, five farm workers and a further seven who combined farming with other occupations, lime burner, publican and butcher. Large numbers of smallholders, many with just two or three fields, made a living by selling fresh milk from a few cows, eggs from the farmyard hens and they kept pigs fed on kitchen waste. The cows were milked in little stone buildings and the milk distributed fresh in churns from which the warm milk was ladled into the housewife's jug. Louisa Mason, Geoff and Denys Mason's grandmother, who farmed at Janes Close at the end of Vicarage Lane, also made butter for sale. Only a few farmers had sheep and these were mainly those with extra fields that could be used in rotation. In any case sheep could not be kept on many of the fields near the village because of the high lead content in the soil.

In Stoney the Denman Estate and the Duke of Devonshire owned most of the land and villagers were tenant farmers with no right of inheritance. Pre-war there were a lot of separate pieces of land all over the village farmed by different people often in conjunction with other jobs and trades. Town Head and Highfields on Middleton Lane were the largest farms. Gills farmed Highfields Farm until after the war when it was sold to Arthur Warren's father. Highfields was the first farm with a tractor, a Fordson, before the war, and the last dairy farm in Stoney when the black and white Friesian cows were sold in the late eighties. A memorable part of the Jubilee celebrations in 1977 was the Barn Dance held in the newly built 'slats'.

The depression in the 1930s which led to the formation of the milk marketing board and the shortage of imported foods during the war led to the development of much larger specialised dairy farms even on land which traditionally was more suited to beef and sheep farming. The shortage of labour during the war led farmers with larger herds to purchase milking machines and tractors and develop more

intensive methods of production. When Margaret Hancock came to Stoney at the end of the war, corn, potatoes and swede were being grown.

Pre-war, horses were the only source of traction but during the war years the tractor came into its own tackling some of the backbreaking work including haymaking and harvesting the small acreage of oats. Edwin Baggaley had one of the first tractors in the village, Field Marshall. Previously he had an old car, which made a lot of noise and smoke up and down the hill.

Some welcomed the change, as horses sometimes have an off day and put the operator of a horse



drawn implement in peril and sometimes the horse was injured. Not that tractors were any safer but they were at least controllable (except on High Street!) with the stop button. A lot of the implements, which were originally towed behind horses, were adapted to fit a tractor by changing the shafts to a drawbar. These machines can sometimes be seen in a bed of nettles in the corner of a field around the countryside.

In the last twenty years with the decline in milk consumption and the imposition of quotas there has been yet another change in the farming scene. The last cows were milked in Stoney in the eighties and many villagers have not met the milk lorry on the hill at eight every morning. The development of plastic has led to a change from hay to silage production. Another major change has been in the colour of the cattle, gone are the black and white Friesians to be replaced by brown and cream continental beef breeds, Limosin, Charolais and Simmental though we still see the white faces of the occasional Hereford cross. In the fields above Stoney Middleton stone walls have been removed to make them more manageable with a smaller work force and efficient machines.

## Life at Hill Top Farm

By pre-war standards Hill Top Farm, at 100 acres, was large but the farmhouse was very small for such a large family. It had only two bedrooms and the whole house was heated by one coal fire.

There was no hot water and only paraffin lamps for lighting. Water came from the well and we didn't have any proper plumbing - an ash pit was emptied at night when no one was about!

My mother used to make her own bread, which produced an appetising smell when it was being baked. She always used produce from our own farm. But I well remember having a banana and cream off the milk every morning for my breakfast!

Life was very hard on the farm but we got used to it and did our jobs without complaining. I can remember helping with haymaking and delivering milk round the village. The horses that we kept were great companions and everyone in the village knew them. They were all characters in their own right. The favourite one was a golden coloured horse called Prince. He lived to be about 22 years old. Another horse of ours had never been in a cart before and he kicked it so hard it fell to pieces and then the horse bolted. We did get it back, but it didn't stay with us for long. We took it back to Bakewell where we sold it again. I can remember the horses and carts being used to carry materials away when they were preparing the land to build the houses on Denman Crescent.

We kept our own meat and there was always a ham hung from a beam in the house. Pigs were a popular animal to keep because they produced so many different items of meat and hens too were very popular.

Life then was very different from life on a farm today. It was hard physical work whereas today machinery has taken over. Even so most of my memories are of happy times spent together with my family.

Christine still has free-range hens at Hill Top Farm and the cocks provide a cheerful alarm call.

### **A Land Girl comes to Stoney**

In 1945 I was fed up with nursing and wanted to join the WRNS but my father wouldn't sign the papers. Instead I went into the Land Army for five and a half years. For the first three months I went to Agricultural College at Pangbourne outside Reading to learn to milk. Times were hard - we had to get up at 3.30am and for breakfast we had half a slice of dry bread and tea. After breakfast



we were driven to different farms where we learnt to milk by hand and machine and later to make butter. We went back to college about 10am for lectures. After three months armed with my certificates for hand and machine milking and making butter I was sent to a large farm outside Newbury, 10,000 acres with 30 Land Army girls. After another two year posting to a large dairy farm near Reading I finally came to Stoney in the winter of 1947 - the big snow.

I was posted to Edwin Baggaley at Town Head Farm and milked 12 cows in The Barn where Shirley lives. In those

days there was no electricity, no bathroom, no sewerage and we all lived together although I had my own bedroom.

One day when the snow was still thick I was carrying two 4-gallon churns of milk down the hill. I was just below 'Roughlands' when I slipped. A group of five men including my future husband Lance Hancock and his father, Urban Hallam and his sons George and Cyril were coming up the hill and Urban says 'Just like a woman 'thaaaat' she doesn't like a fellow to see her on her arse - she just jumped up quick'. And would you believe it I didn't spill a drop. Six months later I started going out with Lance although it was three years before we got married.



I nearly had another accident with the milk when I was driving the 'Field Marshall' down the hill with Gill's milk from Highfields and Edwin Baggaley's on an icy morning. I realised I couldn't stop at the bottom but luckily Sergeant Holmes, Stoney's own bobby was sitting on the cross. I shouted, 'Is anything coming?'. He waved me across and I finished up, with the milk still intact, outside the church.

### **Farming in the 21st Century**

The 21st Century began disastrously for the farming and particularly the livestock industry but luckily due to prompt action by all the local farmers in closing the footpaths well in advance of the government, there was no Foot and Mouth in Stoney.

In many ways farming has come full circle, there is no longer a shortage of food and the intensive methods essential to feed the nation after the war are no longer appropriate. Suckler herds for beef production with calves born in the fields are the main type of enterprise particularly in the smallholdings near the village. Harry Wright farms Fanny Hillock and Tony Mason farms the land that previously belonged to Joe Mason. Lance and Gary Hancock now run beef cattle from new buildings on most of the land between Town Head and Highfields, which was farmed by Reg Rowland, Urban Hallam and Edwin Baggaley.

On the other side of the village the Meadows are still farmed by Sandra Warren but the dairy herd no longer flows down the track morning and evening. Jim Thorpe has animals on most of the land behind the fold below 'Jinnie's Side', the village name for a man-made wedge of flat land used as an orchard. Jane (Jinnie) Goddard used to sit up there and scare the birds away.

### **Highfields in 2002**

Helen Spalton aged nine says: *'I live at Highfields farmhouse which is attached to a stable and is near two other houses which used to be barns. We have got two horses and one pony in the stable at night. There is another building that we built. In the winter it is used as a cowshed and in the summer we set up a badminton court and we've got a table tennis table. In the spring we have lambs in there and sometimes pigs. We have also got a cockerel, a rabbit and a sheep dog called Jet. When I am home from school I get changed and go out to help feed the animals.'*



## *Flowers of Field and Hedgerow*

One of my childhood memories is of walking to Stoney Middleton to see the Lilies-of-the-valley that grew in abundance on a steep limestone scree slope. I can remember climbing among the slippery stones to pick the sweet smelling flowers and then carrying them home. Sadly, probably because of over-picking and grazing sheep, they are no longer to be found there. But, on the many lovely walks round the village, a great variety of wild flowers are to be found, some growing best on the limestone, others on the gritstone.

One of the earliest of the spring flowers is the Dog's Mercury, easily overlooked because of its small green flowers and growing in shady places. How cheering it is after a long dreary winter to see the Celandine shining in the spring sunshine, along with the Coltsfoot and the lovely blue Speedwells or Bird's-eyes, as we called them. The Coltsfoot was the apothecary's best herb for treating lung complaints and the Celandine's root was used to make an infusion to treat haemorrhoids.

At this time there will be Pussy-willow, Catkins and the Blackthorn covered in dainty white blossom. As spring gets underway the fields abound with Dandelions and Buttercups (do you remember dabbing one under your chin to see if you liked butter?) Cowslips, Primroses and the Common Violet can all be found around the village and where the fields are damper, the dainty Lady's Smock or Cuckoo Flower, grows. The Wild Arum or Jack-in-the-Pulpit can be found in all sorts of unexpected places and in autumn brightens the countryside with its bright red berries. There are Bluebells, pink Campion, white Stitchwort and Forget-me-nots.





*Sweet Cecily at the top of High Street*

These are some of the more common wild flowers along with many others, such as the lovely Foxgloves, Harebells, Ox-eye daisies and Meadow Cranesbill, but we are fortunate in Stoney Middleton to have some less common varieties of wild flower such as rare Orchids and the Water-aven. Pignut is also found here, its roots used to be grubbed up by children and eaten as nuts (probably the nuts in the old rhyme 'Here we come gathering nuts in May').

Due to modern farming methods in the 1980s many of our meadows are no longer a wonderful mixture of grass and flowers, so that we no longer find e.g. the Yellow Rattle. However to those who look carefully, the small blue Milk-wort can still be found growing by one of the steeper footpaths and there is 'a bank where the wild thyme grows'.

Next time you go for a walk see how many flowers you can find, I have mentioned only some of them, but please look and pass on, so that the flowers will drop their seeds and grow for future generations to enjoy and Stoney Middleton will remain a place to see wild flowers.

One of the good things to come out of the recent changes in farming is the re-establishment of many of the meadow flowers. Many of the farmers in the village have agreed not to cut the hay until these have seeded. Have you seen the Ox-eye daisies in Tony's and Harry's hayfields and harebells where Arthur has 'set aside' the field above Coombs Dale? What a good use of our taxes! Even Derbyshire Dales Council plays its part and no longer cuts the verges in High Street and Middleton Lane until the Sweet Cecily and Scabious has finished flowering.

Lastly we should not forget the daffodils - these may not be native but they are a wonderful sign that winter is over!!

## Complete Cobblers - A Century of Footwear Manufacture

The first recorded evidence of a boot factory in Stoney was in 1797 at Pine View now the house of Jennifer and John Bettney. In 1881 the shoemaking industry was the second largest with 17 people employed. At the turn of the last century (1900) there were several boot and shoe manufacturers in Stoney Middleton. Many started as 'cottage industries' literally making footwear in their houses or sub-contracting to other makers both in Stoney Middleton and Eyam.

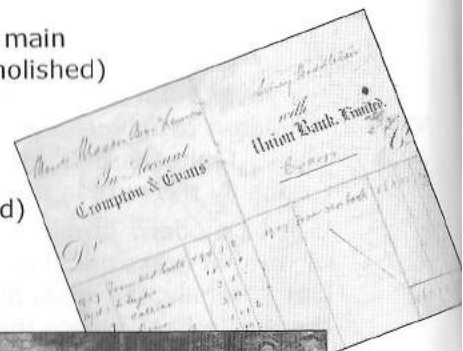
At this time the main producers were:

|  |  |
|--|--|
| Ezra Cocker                                | In Beth Ely's garage on the Fold and the building opposite                                       |
| Benjamin Hallam & Acky (Archilaus) Hancock | In various cottages (small scale)  |
| Heginbotham Bros. (Harry & Matthew)        | High Street  |
| Luther Heginbotham & Father Joseph         | Craigstead - Built factory below the school  |
| John & Frank Nugent                        | Next to Veranda Cottage, Town End (on the main road below the Moon Inn car park, now demolished) |
| James Goddard                              | Top storey of the Malthouse on The Bank  |
| Mason Bros. & Lennon                       | Cottage at the top of the Dale Mouth   |
| Mycock & Hinch                             | Dale Bottom (both had worked for J Goddard)  |
| George Mycock                              | A factory which is now the Old Studio  |

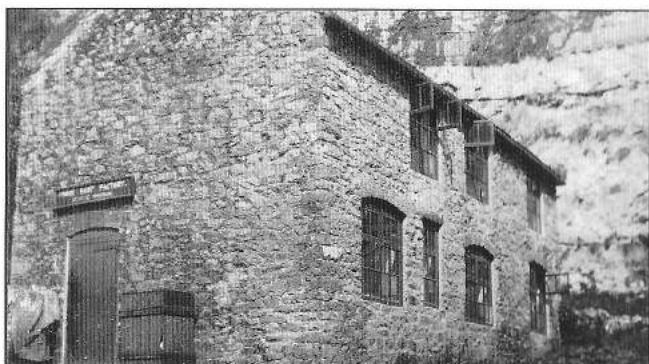
There was no electricity at this time, so most of the work was done by hand or manually operated machines. There was a demand for working boots for the mines, quarries and farms, but this does not explain why several firms made and even exported ladies' and girls' shoes.

A contributory factor to the success of the industry was probably the local supply of materials from a tannery at Grindleford located in what is now Grindleford Laundry.

Most of the owners had large families and these quite often formed the major part of the workforce. Another source of labour was



Striking footwear workers - the Dale 1913



*Rock Boot Factory*

apprentices from local poor houses - these youths came to live with local people, often the owner's family. The earliest source of power was steam, probably first used by Heginbotham Bros. Paraffin engines followed this. Lennons installed one in 1912. Electricity came to the village in 1933 and at this time the latest machinery was installed by those still in production.

From 1900 some of the firms began to fade away and many changes occurred in the remaining ones. Ezra Cocker's failed but was revived by Fred, Ned and Clara Cocker until a fire in 1938. The small firm of Benjamin Hallam closed gradually in the early years of the century, some of the workers moving to other areas of shoe manufacture. The 1880s partnership of William Heginbotham (Les Lennon's great-grandfather and eldest son of Joseph Heginbotham) and James Goddard closed early in the century. Mycock & Hinch were in the now demolished factory next to the Royal Oak. Alan Hinch died suddenly in his early forties and George Mycock moved to 'The Old Studio' (Colin Mason's house) until retiring just before the Second World War. Phillip Mycock and Alfred Wilson carried on the original firm until closing on their retirement about 1960. The Old Studio has an interesting history - originally a boot factory it was then used by the Local Defence Volunteers before being rented to Walter Bell a very handsome man with grey crimped hair who was an artist but also the village uni-sex hairdresser.

John and Frank Nugent moved to the Craigstead factory when Luther Heginbotham's firm failed. Frank's son John was a navigator in the Dam Buster raid. Their nephew Percy Nugent carried on their business until closure in the late 1950s or early 1960s.

## **Heginbothams**

Joseph Heginbotham (Les Lennon's great grandfather) was born in 1835 and died in 1911. He went to Eyam to learn shoemaking and after his apprenticeship took various shoe making jobs in Lincolnshire, Sheffield and Chesterfield before finally managing Harrison's Boot Factory (formerly Ashton's) in Stoney Middleton. In 1884 he took the firm over with his four sons, Luther, Matthew, William (see above) and Harry.

Joseph and Luther left the partnership when they went to Craigstead (1896-97) and had the brick factory built. Harry and Matthew were left to form Heginbotham Bros. and had their premises (now Prefect House) enlarged to three storeys (by Sheldon's) and 'modern machinery' installed. Following a serious fire around 1905 only two storeys were rebuilt. The factory was worked by steam (see the big chimney) using the slack belt system. The hoist, to be seen until recently on the back outside wall opposite the Post Office, took power from this to lift the heavy bales of hides from the railway company's drays parked on the main road.

When Joseph and Luther failed at Craigstead, Joseph worked for Heginbotham Bros. again and Luther





*Lennons Boot Factory, Heginbothams in the background*

for ten years, were sold. It is worth mentioning that Harry invented steel toecap boots - the forerunners of the modern safety boot, originally for miners in 1933. This eventually led to the introduction of a British Standard for Safety and Foundry Boots.

### **Mason Bros. & Lennon**

William Lennon was born in Lancashire in 1873 but was orphaned at an early age and taken in at Chorlton-cum-Medlock poorhouse. An indenture dated 25 February 1887 made him apprentice to Joseph Heginbotham and he lived with the family. He married Charlotte Goddard (a daughter of Henry Goddard) on 23 November 1895. In 1899 he formed a partnership with Joseph Mason (his brother-in-law and Geoff Mason's grandfather) and Gilbert Mason, initially repairing and later making working boots, in a cottage on the Dale Mouth. They moved to the Old Corn Mill up the Bank in 1904 but the partnership was dissolved before the First World War. William Lennon continued repairing army boots until after the war. The lawn of the boot factory used to be the millpond, source for the water wheel that powered the corn mill.

William had six sons and three daughters and with the four surviving sons (Ebenezer, Sidney, Arnold, Percy) and the daughters (Lottie, Lily, Maggie) formed William Lennon & Co and began manufacturing heavy boots.

The Mill premises were bought in 1926 (after the second rent increase in 22 years!). Modern machinery was installed in the mid 1930s when electricity replaced the Ruston paraffin engine, which had been used since 1912. The engine continued in service driving a fluorspar plant at Hucklow until the early 1960s when it was sold to Norwich City Museum. The waterwheel was removed in 1936 to make more room (it was inside the building). Originally the benches were set up on the millstones (there were four sets), the stones later being broken up and used to form the coping stones which top the high wall between the main road and the waterfall.

William died in 1940 after a long illness. The family carried on through the Second World War making army boots under ration for essential workers.

'emigrated' to Liverpool and then Plymouth. Matthew left to go to Liverpool and ended up as a repairer in Old Colwyn, North Wales. He had married Mrs Blackshaw, a young widow who came from Wales to Stoney Middleton as a teacher.

Harry Heginbotham formed Heginbotham Bros. Ltd and bought land at Calver to build a new factory there. From the early 1920s until approximately 1936 both factories were used.

Heginbotham Bros. finally ceased production at Calver in 1984 and the premises, after being a shop

The next development was the manufacture of steel toecap safety boots just after the war, which has since that time formed the majority of goods produced. The factory was extended in 1981 and the offices modernised in 1994-5. A further extension is now nearing completion.

Heavy-duty quality safety boots are now a niche market and this has helped the viability of the business considerably against the ever-increasing tide of imports from the Far East.

Arnold Lennon, the last survivor of William's sons, died in April 1999 having completed 74 years in the factory. Now William's grandson Les, great granddaughter Elizabeth and great grandson Daniel run the business, which celebrated its centenary in 1999.

### Employees' Tales

One essential material for the boot factory was boot nails, delivered and stored in canvas bags. Local youths could not afford proper sports gear, but found a discarded nail bag was just the right size, when filled with an inflated pig's bladder, to serve as a football. On one occasion two young employees were carrying new stocks of nails up past the manager's office to the store. One boy always carried two bags but the other was carrying only one each time. The manager called this boy in and asked why. He said, 'I'll tell you sir, Jim's so idle, he'll not go twice'.

Marjorie Elliott started work in Lennon's Boot factory in 1938 on leaving Stoney Middleton School at the age of 14. 'I must hold the record for the longest serving employee with 62 years completed,' she says. 'At the outbreak of war many of the young girls from the village were sent to work in the munitions factories in Huddersfield and Derby but I was allowed to stay at home to look after my mother. In those days we worked from 7.30am to 5.30pm Monday to Friday and 7.30am to noon on Saturday, 49½ hours a week with an hour for lunch.'



*Making boots at Lennons in 2001*

## *Between A Rock and A Hard Place*

### **Underground**

The village of Stoney Middleton lies on the north eastern edge of the huge area of Carboniferous Limestone that forms the 'White Peak' of Derbyshire. To the east the limestone plunges deep beneath more recent shale and sandstones, and the steep eastward slope of the beds, (the 'dip') can be seen in the cliffs along the main road in the village. To the west of the village the limestone rises quickly, and the main road plunges through a deep limestone gorge, Middleton Dale.

The stream flowing through the village originates almost entirely from springs in old lead mining drainage levels 'soughs' and natural caves in the Dale. Near the Church is the largest of the risings, Moorwood Sough, begun in the late 1700s and completed in 1830. Its large discharge causes flooding problems in wet weather, but if the sough was not there all the water would come out at Carlswark and flow through the village, causing even more trouble. It zig zags beneath the village and the fields to the north before following a straight course to Glebe Mine at Eyam, where it picks up the bulk of the water from the natural caves.

There are about seventy cave and mine entrances in Middleton Dale and its tributary valleys, Eyam Dale, and Cucklet Delph. Some are blocked or too small after only a few metres, but some are very extensive, and more than three kilometres of passages have been surveyed in the longest cave system, Carlswark Cavern. In 1734 Dr Short, writing about Carlswark Cavern, said, 'by another of its grottoes it opens near Fowlow (Foolow) passing quite under Eyam Church'. The claim was almost certainly exaggerated, but his statement has inspired generations of cavers to search for the 'master cave' that undoubtedly exists and extends far to the west.

Over hundreds of thousands of years, a complex network of caves has developed at several levels. Unfortunately for the explorer the higher caves, abandoned by their streams, are often filled with clay, sand, and gravel. By digging out blockages, cavers can still walk into passages and chambers, which have never before been entered. A comment I always remember is 'More people have been on the moon than have stood here'. We were deep beneath the fields!

Carlswark Cavern provides a popular caving trip for most of it is on one level, and until you stray off the beaten track the passages are generally a decent size. Other caves involve a lot of crawling and squeezing, often in water and mud. Waterfall Swallet and Hungerhill Swallet, to the north west, where water that reappears at Stoney Middleton disappears underground, are both graded 'super severe', and involve vertical descents, tight squeezes, awkward climbs, and large rushing streams in wet weather.

Occasionally completely new holes are found, either by deliberate searching or by chance. They are eagerly examined wherever possible, and are often fascinating. It is believed there are still an awful lot of cave passages and old mine workings to find and explore.

### **The Quarries**

By the middle of the nineteenth century quarries in Stoney Middleton were quarrying limestone commercially. In 1881 eight people plus two part-timers were involved in mining. During the 20th

century at least nine quarries were exploited in the village. Locals used stone from the parish quarry in Cliff Bottom for building. On the left hand side of the Dale there was a quarry and limekiln opposite the Old Studio, Goddard's Quarry now owned and operated by RMC, Darlton Quarry now owned and managed by Tarmac, County, Cupola and Eyam. On the right hand side of the Dale the garage was Dooley's quarry. In the latter part of the century there were two multinational construction companies, RMC and Tarmac and a multinational chemical company, Laporte Industries with plants in the village.

### **Goddard's Quarry**

Henry Goddard founded Goddard's Quarry in 1869. His son James, with two of his sons, George and John (Jack) carried on the business, which was then known as James Goddard & Sons. Over twenty local men worked in the quarry producing burnt lime, which was supplied to the steel industry and for agriculture. It was also used for lime washing - the forerunner of decorating emulsion.

The ownership of the quarry after the death of Jack in 1944 and the retirement of George, when lime burning ceased, was taken over in 1960 by The Storey Organisation and subsequently by T.W.Ward and RTZ. RMC (Roadstone) are the current operators.

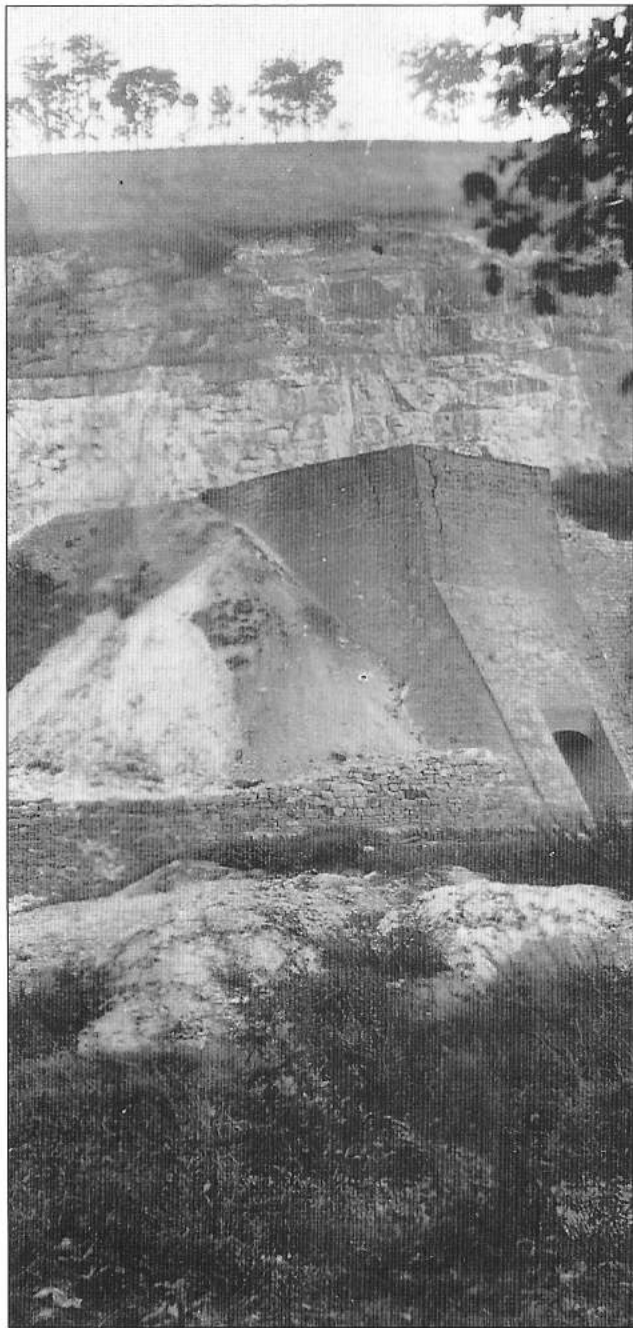
### **The Limekilns**

In addition to the quarries there were limekilns and a barytes mill. The stone from the quarries was burnt in two big limekilns. The limestone was tipped into the top of the kilns to be burnt and wagons were backed into small tunnels to collect the quick lime. The stone and lime was originally carted away in horse drawn carts. Later steam wagons were used to take the quarry products to Grindleford Station. It is only since the 1960s that processing has finished and the limestone is taken away in

*Mineral extraction above Stoney Middleton*







*Limekiln in Stoney Middleton Dale 1950s*

lorries. The dust from the limekiln could be seen shimmering in the sunlight, and in the summer it painted all the trees down the Dale pale grey until the early 1970s. If you lived in the Dale the washing needed a good shake before it was folded and taken inside.

Villagers used to go to the kiln for a lump of lime, which was two pence. This was then thrown into a bucket of water to slake. The lime spat and bubbled and you had to stand well back. The slaked lime was used for whitewashing walls in washhouses, pantries, toilets and stables. The smell was very clean and fresh.

Farmers used the parish kiln, at the bottom of Black Harry Lane, to produce lime to spread on the fields.

### **The Paint Mill**

Rock Mill was originally known as the Paint Mill and was powered by a waterwheel. This place of work was very important as its end product, barytes (barium sulphate), was used in the manufacture of paint.

The land at top of Farnsley Lane was rich in barytes. The land and spoil heaps from earlier lead mines were mined and the material extracted was called 'Caulk' or 'Tush' and was taken to Farnsley Lane (now known as Cavendish Mill) where it was washed and put through a screen and a 'Jig' which separated the galena (lead ore, lead sulphide), and fluorspar, from the barytes. The lead went to Darley Dale to the foundry and the fluorspar was taken to the steel works in Sheffield, leaving the barytes to be processed at Rock Mill.

After the barytes was brought to Rock Mill, it was placed over a fire on steel sheets and the material

was spread out and turned every half an hour with a long rake until it was dry - a very hard job on a warm day. It was then taken from the drying place by wheelbarrow to the next process where it was put into a hopper, which filled individual small buckets moving along a conveyor belt and then finally emptied on to large millstones, which are still to this day scattered around the area. As the barytes fell out of the buckets into the hole in the middle of the top stone another stone underneath



*Millstone for grinding barytes*

the first rotated together grinding the barytes into a fine powder. This dropped through the bottom hole and into another hopper where it was later bagged after it had cooled down. It was later taken by lorry to Liverpool Docks where it was exported worldwide for the production of paint!

Attached to the mill was a large storage shed and yard where stockpiles of gravel would be kept so that there was always a good supply to keep the mill running. Bags of barytes would be stored in the shed until the time arrived when they were taken to the docks. In later years when the mill was too old to function the barytes was processed at Cavendish Mill.

In 1967 Rock Mill was sold to Francis Hall by Laporte Industries who had purchased Cupola Mining and Milling in 1962. Francis Hall bought the waste material, tailing, from Cavendish Mill, which was used in the aggregate industry. It is still used in exactly the same way today 40 years on by the Company who have taken over the late Francis Hall's premises - Eagle Aggregates.

Part of Rock Mill was sold when it could be no longer used for its original purpose and a haulage company now use the premises, which have been converted into a garage.

In 1986 the stocking yard was sold to Francis's two nephews Colin and David Hall, and with their own bare hands they completely re-built the old building converting it into an impressive new kitchen and bedroom showroom, offices and workshop. As the years have passed they have totally transformed this area, which now boasts ten individual office units and is now known as 'Rock Mill Business Park'. It is good to see the old mill and surrounding area still being worked as it was all those years ago, even though the modern world is a very different place to what it was then!

### **Fluorspar Processing**

The ancient lead mining 'Liberty' of Stoney Middleton and Eyam had its origins sometime in the first millennium AD. Lead ore, galena (lead sulphide) occurs with barytes (barium sulphate), fluorspar (calcium fluoride) and calcite (calcium carbonate) in the local mineral veins. These veins occupy fissures in the limestone. The content of each associated mineral was variable in the lead mine waste material which was later utilised as the raw material for barytes and fluorspar. Stoney Middleton possessed the better barytes ores and Eyam the fluorspar. Barytes processing was established in the

19th Century but fluorspar became dominant as a flux in smelting at the start of the 20th Century firstly with shipments to the tin smelters of South Wales and secondly with large shipments to the USA in 1904 for the new basic open hearth steel furnaces.

By 1922 the huge fluorspar dump from the lead mines of Eyam Edge was depleted and small barytes processing plants such as that up Farnsley Lane became fluorspar producers. Fluxing required purities of 75% fluorspar but in the late 1930s a hydrofluoric acid producer was established at Rotherham. A primitive processing plant at Glebe Mine in Eyam was at first unsuccessful and the Farnsley plant at Stoney Middleton supplied the first high quality product, 95% fluorspar for the hydrofluoric acid plant.

The demand for high quality fluorspar in the Second World War was met by a new process known as froth flotation, which involved the removal of finely ground fluorspar from a slurry by means of soap bubbles. Glebe Mines developed the process but the fourfold increase in demand for high-grade fluorspar (97%) obviated a move from the confines of Eyam village to the spacious Farnsley Lane site around 1962. By this time Laporte Industries who also purchased the barytes plant from Head Wrighton of Stockton had bought Glebe Mines.

About 1954 Glebe Mines achieved the world's first commercial separation of fluorspar and barytes by froth floatation. All the ores in the Derbyshire mineral field could now be processed in a central plant producing fluorspar, barytes, lead, silver and stone.

*Lime Burners 1930s*



A new plant was built at Farnsley Lane and the Duke of Devonshire renamed it 'Cavendish Mill' on opening it in 1965. Stoney Middleton now dominated the production of fluorspar in Britain for the remainder of the 20th Century and into the 21st. The original Glebe Mines was sold by Laporte Industries at the end of the century and is now operated under the original name.

Substantial quantities of fluorspar are required for the electrolysis of aluminium and there are countless chemical derivatives from hydrofluoric acid. It is true to say that without the utilisation of the element fluorine our mode of living in the 21st century would be very different. The old lead mining 'Liberty' of Stoney Middleton and Eyam is where it all started and where lead, fluorspar and barytes are still being produced in the 21st Century.

### **The Slurry Dam Bursts**

John Hancock remembers the Felons' dinner on the first Monday in February 1968, which was held in the Maynard. 'White's buses were used for ferrying members and guests to the Maynard and George Lomas was the bus driver. The first we knew something had happened was when George returned for the second busload. He told us that as he passed Wimpey's offices and Carlwark he had been met by a rolling wall of sludge, sleet, and snow, which had evened out as it came towards the bus, enabling him to drive through and up Eyam Dale.

'Gordon Fletcher, Foreman at Glebe, and I were on the second busload which went via Eyam New Road and Black Harry. When we arrived home between midnight and two in the morning we decided to investigate and found sludge coming down Oakenedge Lane and Black Harry Lane.'

Lois adds: 'Houses in the Nook were badly flooded. The mud came in through the back door and out the front. Alex Fairey's house was one of the worst. Six of us spent all day trying to ladle sludge into buckets. At one point we were up to our knees - a very cold and dirty job. But one had to laugh. Bert Roe (Alex Fairey's father-in-law) was in bed downstairs when the sludge swept through! It stopped an inch from the bottom of his mattress. He was marooned all day!'

Andrew Palmer remembers: 'It was the 5th February 1968. I was seventeen years old at the time and working my notice leaving Wimpey's for Derbyshire Stone. The bus didn't turn up on the Tuesday morning because of the snow. Mr Hunt, my boss, picked me up in his posh, white Vauxhall car, K reg. You can imagine the state of the vehicle when we arrived at Wimpey's after travelling through all the mud'.

'The sludge had come down the footpath, past the old lime kiln and into the quarry. It had also brought down the power cable. The yard was under two feet of mud. It even filled up the weighbridge, blocked the brook and had then made its way down the road into the garage and houses. The road through Baslow and beyond turned brown, the mud being carried by the lorry wheels. It was like that for weeks.'



## *I work at the Building Trade*

In 1881 there was one joiner but in 2001 there were at least 11 businesses involved in various aspects of construction operating in Stoney Middleton including:

|                       |  |
|-----------------------|--|
| Builders              | Frank Sheldon, Howard Peters, Heath Construction and John Ball |
| Joiners               | G & D Mason, Peter Edge and David Middleton                    |
| Electricians          | Archer Fletcher  |
| Painters & Decorators | Philip Fairey, David Oakley and Brush Strokes                  |

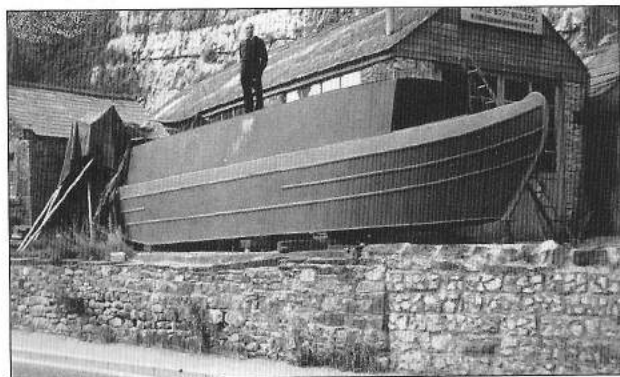
### **G & D Mason - Carpenters and Joiners**

G & D Mason is one of the oldest businesses in the village having been formed by Geoff and Denys's great grandfather, George William Mason, who farmed from Nook Farm approximately 150 years ago. George's brother James Clayton was also a joiner operating from the workshop next to the Old Studio. Farmers would go for a price to George, then to James, who would undercut his brother. Finally the farmer would return to George who would reduce the price again. And all this trouble for sixpence!

The history of the business reflects the many changes in Stoney Middleton over the period. Originally the firm were wheelwrights and undertakers as well as joiners and carpenters. There are still the remains of the old Smithy, where the iron tyres were made prior to hammering round the wooden wheels, behind the present workshop in the Dale.

The Blacksmith, William Barnes, befriended a jackdaw, who often hopped around the anvil looking for titbits. One day William threw a hot nut on the ground to trick the jackdaw who promptly picked it up and dropped it. Then he flew up above William's head and swooped down and pecked him right in the middle of his bald patch.

When rubber tyres were introduced early in the last century the carts had to be redesigned, as the



*Dale Queen*

previously straight shafts were too low to harness to the horse. Carts used on the farms and in the quarries all had to have new elegant curved 'Dobbin' shafts fitted. When the cart was ready, the Masons employed their skills as sign writers to decorate the sides. With the demise of horse drawn transport the carts had to be returned to Masons for yet another change when the shafts were removed and a tow bar fitted. Later still the firm made and decorated lorry bodies for local businesses.

When George William retired three of his sons couldn't work together so they set up workshops in the surrounding villages, Lincoln in Stoney, Garfield



*Carts in the Dale*

in Eyam and Henry in Calver. When Geoff and Denys followed their father Evelyn, who worked for his uncle Lincoln, into the family business they moved between the three villages, working for their great uncles and uncle Bill, Henry's son, depending on where the work was.

G & D Mason was established when the three brothers retired in the 50s. With the increase in lorries made by the international vehicle manufacturers, the company specialised in joinery with work for the quarries and increasingly co-operating with builders to convert houses and barns.

Traditionally the village joiner was also the undertaker, making the coffin, laying out the body and providing the pallbearers. The body was laid out in the front room and everyone came to say good-bye. Then the undertaker had to close the coffin and arrange pallbearers to carry it down to the Church. It was no mean task from the top of Stoney High Street when relief bearers frequently had to be provided. By 1970 more and more people wanted to have the body in a Chapel of Rest and this was not viable in Stoney and so another village service ceased.

It was nearly replaced by boat building - in a village as far from the sea as possible and with no navigable rivers or canals. Geoff and Doreen had had a narrow boat for some years but decided they wanted a new one to their own design. A steel 35-foot hull was purchased and installed in front of the workshop in the Dale. Geoff and Denys built the steel decks and cabin and then fitted it out and called it 'Dale Queen'.

## High Days and Holidays



Well dressing 1936



The Cross decorated for the Jubilee, 1935

Well Dressing in Stoney Middleton dates from 1935 Jubilee Year, when it was started by Oliver Shimwell, the Headmaster and has continued ever since with the exception of the war years. From 1948 to 1953 there was also a carnival procession and fair at Well Dressing. The Carnival Queen and the retiring Queen competed as to who could have the most beautiful float which processed round the village to the carnival field, between the Hall and Meadow Close. Elaborate constructions were built and decorated on lorries and the last year a white swan competed with a golden eagle. All the houses on the route were decorated with paper flowers. Unfortunately after 1953 the main road became too busy and the procession had to be discontinued. At this time the fair also came to Stoney Middleton playing fields at Well Dressing.

### The first Stoney Middleton Carnival

In the spring of 1948 the idea of holding a carnival was born. It was to be held in conjunction with the annual Well Dressing festival at August Bank Holiday (which was the first Monday in August then), on the closing Saturday. There was great enthusiasm as the community was still in a celebratory mood following the Second World War. A dance was held in the Reading Room to choose a Carnival Queen and four attendants. Contestants being the girls of the village aged from 12 to 16.

I, Margaret Milner, was honoured to be chosen by a panel of independent judges with attendants Mary Bettney, Phyllis Lennon, Mary Roe and Kathleen Gilbert. So began a summer of feverish preparation. A framework of wire netting was built to fit the back of a lorry and this netting was filled with crepe paper and paper roses made during the summer months by volunteers. Because the decorations were made of paper the construction had to be kept under cover and this was in a garage in Mill Street. Dresses, cloak and

crown were hired from the Sheffield Theatrical Supplies because clothes and materials were still in short supply.

The day arrived, fine but cloudy. The Queen was crowned by 'Aunt Edith' of the Gloops Club from the Sheffield Star. Huge crowds had gathered in The Nook and I was led from the church gates to the crowning platform by my father, Ben Milner, the designer of the main well. The platform was situated in the corner of The Nook by the pump, and as I was led on the road I felt very proud, just like a bride being led up the aisle. After the crowning ceremony I had to present prizes to the winners of the fancy dress competition and lead the procession through the village.

The route went from the Nook up the Dale, turned round opposite Goddard's Quarry, returned down the main road to the Carnival Field which was 'The Meadows' in front of the Hall, where all kinds of stalls and side-shows had been erected. This route would be impossible now because of the vast increase in the volume of traffic but in 1948 most of the traffic was holiday vehicles and very little of that except at the 6.00pm parade when buses returning from Blackpool were held up. These buses were boarded by the collectors and collecting boxes rattled in the faces of the passengers. We loved it, they loved it, happy to be joining in the fun.

The Carnival continued to be held for several years after this following a similar pattern until it became over-ambitious and spiralling costs made it non-viable. Perhaps with the advent of television in the 1950s people were not satisfied with home entertainment and were able to travel further afield to greener pastures. Still it was great fun at the time.



Coronation Sheepshead 1937



The First Carnival Queen



Queen's Attendants





## **Wakes**

Stoney Middleton Wakes was the second weekend in October. The children looked forward to donkey rides (one old penny) on Billy Ball's Donkeys. Rides were held near the chip shop and in the newly built Jubilee (1935) Estate, which is now Denman Crescent.

## **Easter Monday**

Easter Monday was 'Shaky Bottle Day' when a bottle containing boiled sweets and 'Spanish Juice' and water was shaken and drunk. Originally the water had to come from Betty Brewers well - a spring over the fields where Lance's land meets Arthur's.

## **Well Dressing in 2002**

The custom of Well Dressing in Derbyshire is a Christian expression of an ancient thanksgiving for abundant water. It takes the form of pictures made up of flowers, petals, seeds,

leaves, moss, bark and other natural products set in clay. A service of praise and prayer and the asking of God's blessing on the wells form the focus of all that goes on. Donations made and profits from sales are used to support five local causes - St Martin's Church, the Wesleyan Reform Chapel, Stoney Middleton School, the British Legion and SMILE (Stoney Middleton Interest and Leisure Enterprise).

Well Dressing now is very different from 50 years ago. Three wells are dressed - two in the Nook and one near the Roman Baths. Local people design the pictures and interpret a religious or a worldwide theme. The children draw a picture and petal it themselves.

Maypoling is now danced to a tape and everyone has a turn afterwards. The Well Dressing shop held in a local garage has been a huge success and sells lots of interesting items for all ages. The WI does teas in the Hall grounds for everyone and SMILE has a stall. There is also a barbecue so you never need be hungry.

The Nook is always full of people and it is really lovely to feel and see the community spirit spreading itself and making everyone feel welcome. Families and friends from long past meet up and reminisce just like they did when there was Wakes Week.

## **Dressing the Wells in Stoney Middleton**

Well Dressing is not just a matter of collecting a few flowers and sticking them into clay. Weeks of dedicated work is required and some of these jobs have been performed by the same families for years while at the same time many in-comers have been introduced to the numerous tasks. In 2001 48% of the village took part in the Well Dressing festivities.

## **The Frame**

The care and attention needed to produce a good strong framework for the well picture to be fixed to has been the task for G & D Mason - local joiners in the village. They have religiously made, inspected and repaired the frames since Well Dressing was introduced in 1935.

The frames vary in size and structure with added 'dollies' to complete the picture. In total there are eight frames to complete the three wells. Each piece has to be painted every year so that the chairman of Well Dressing Committee could be mistaken for a painter and decorator.



*Petalling in the 1950s*

## **Clay Puddling**

The clay used for puddling occurs where limestone meets gritstone so that local supplies are readily available. After extraction, hard clay is stored in sacks for a year. The clay is soaked in water butts for a few weeks and given an occasional stir to aid water penetration. Puddling involves working the now softer material by hand to remove stones and other debris and to produce a creamy plaster-like final product.

The puddled clay is applied to the picture boards several days before the design is traced onto the fine surface and petalling begins. Preparing up to five hundredweight of clay in this manner is heavy, time consuming, dirty and thirsty work. Correct choice of the work site is vital to encourage volunteers. The site must be within tray carrying distance of the local hostelry - we have the ideal site - The Moon Inn yard so we reckon our clay is the best in the area and in a normal summer the pictures stay bright for the full week.

## **Designing the Picture**

The main picture in the Nook always has a religious theme. The wells in the gardens next to the Roman Baths and the Children's Well can be religious or secular. Ideas come from a biblical text or a specific incident. Source ideas have been taken from Bede's Ecclesiastical History, the Book of Kells and Celtic motives. Preliminary sketches are made, discarded or reworked until a satisfactory idea emerges which achieves the desired balance, rhythm and impact. The colour and theme of the picture often determine the style and colours of the frame surround. A scaled down colour design of the whole board is then created.

This gives the petallers a colour reference point, although colours may change depending on availability of certain flowers each season. Next the designer takes over the house and litters every available floor and space to produce a full-scale line drawing from the squared-up original design. Doubts creep in!! Will the picture work? Is that arm too long? Should that cloth fold like that? Shall I go on holiday tomorrow? But a week before the Well Dressing, you lay the paper on to the clay and transfer the designs by following the pencil lines with a dressmaker's wheel. Wooling can now begin.

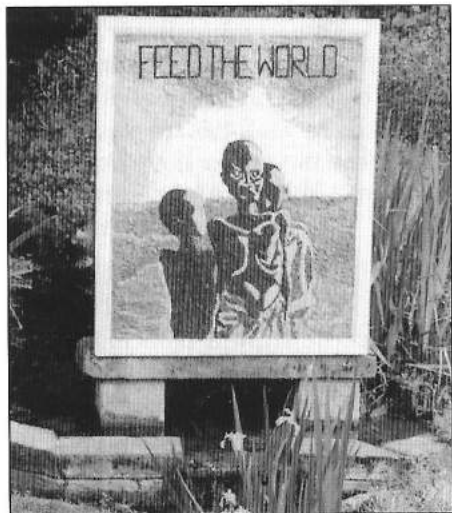
### **Collecting Flowers and Other Materials**

The job of collecting petals and other materials such as moss, bark and alder cones falls to a small band of dedicated helpers who scour the countryside, gardens and supermarkets!!! in their efforts to secure materials of the right texture and colour to allow the designers' pictures to become a reality.

We start collecting 'dry' materials several weeks before but the actual flowers must be picked during the three days of petalling. This means endless trips to local gardens but also going further afield for hydrangeas - essential for the sky - driving hundreds of miles and braving barking dogs, thistles, nettles and brambles to satisfy the petallers. Most people give willingly but some need friendly persuasion to part with prize blooms.

### **Petalling**

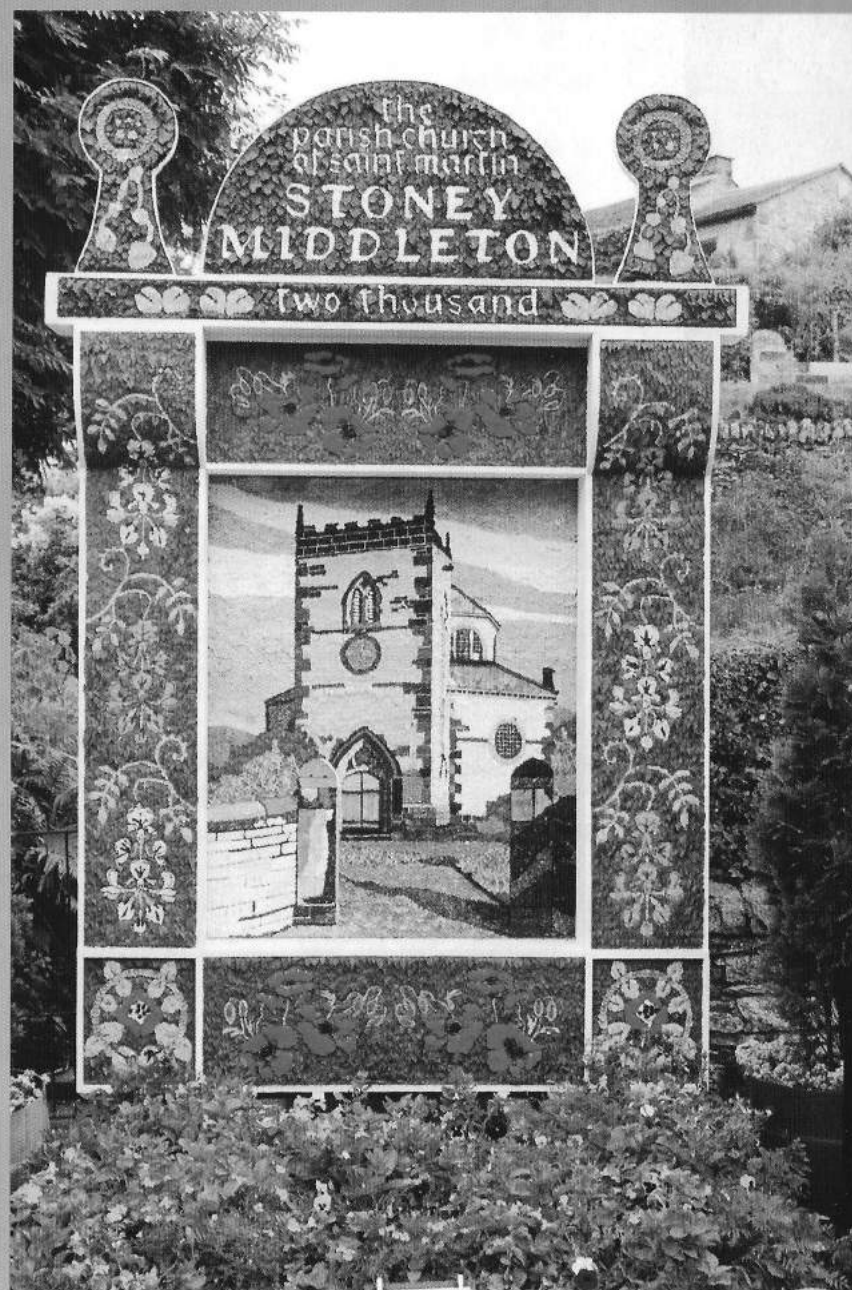
When the design has been traced on to the clay the petallers begin their work by outlining the picture by pressing wool into the clay with a cocktail stick. The background is then gradually filled in with long lasting natural materials such as mosses, bark, crushed stones, alder-cones and statice.



The petals of the flowers that have longer lasting qualities such as marigolds and hydrangeas are put in first with red carnations last. Each individual petal is fixed into the clay by pressure with a small peg or cocktail stick at the base of the petal. Working from the bottom of the picture upwards the petals are placed pointing downwards so as to overlap the row below. This ensures that the rain runs off down the picture and doesn't disturb the petals. Constant spraying with water is necessary to keep the clay moist.

Then we all wait with bated breath as the frame is fixed in position hoping nothing will fall off and if we are lucky and have had plenty of helpers we just make the pub before closing time!!

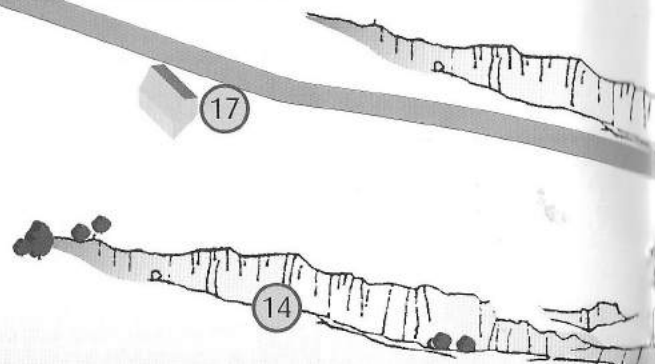
*The Bath Well 1991*







- 1 The Cross
- 2 The Moon Inn
- 3 St. Martin's Church
- 4 Stoney Middleton Hall
- 5 Site of Roman Baths/  
Natural Hot Spring
- 6 Castle Hill
- 7 Boot Factory
- 8 Chapel
- 9 Chip Shop
- 10 Lover's Leap
- 11 Primary School
- 12 The Old Vicarage
- 13 Highfields Farm
- 14 Goddards Quarry
- 15 Route to Coombs Dale
- 16 Meadows
- 17 Rock Mill Business Park
- 18 Caravan Site



The Nook

Middleton Lane

Highfields Farm

The Bank







In the 1881 census, in addition to the businesses and trades which still exist today, Stoney Middleton boasted several other trades. There was a brewer, corn miller and people involved in broom making, silk weaving and umbrella making in addition to a sergeant of police, an auctioneer and a groom. There were also four annuitants and four others simply described as retired.

### **15 to 1 - The Pubs of Stoney Middleton.**

Over the last two hundred years there have been 15 pubs in the village. In the 1881 census there were six publicans although only three were full time the other three combining other jobs with their main occupation of licensee. The only pub remaining today is 'The Moon', situated on the Main Road. It was originally called 'The Old Moon' and was on the other side of the road. When they moved it to its present position it was renamed the 'New Moon' and later became just 'The Moon'. Other pubs that have existed from time to time include the Stag's Head - a coaching inn on the steepest part of High Street. The Royal Oak where the local hunt would meet twice a year, the Lover's Leap, the Bull's Head and the Grouse, also known as the Boot & Shoe, were all situated a few yards from each other at the bottom of Dale Mouth while The Ball Inn was further up the Dale at the junction with Eyam Dale.

The Half Moon, the Miners Arms, the Castle, opposite the Church with a castellated wall and the Sun which seems to have become the Denman Arms for one year and then reverted to its original name, were all situated in the Nook. The Barrel Inn is listed in Piggott's Directory for 1835 but we can't locate it.

There are legends about some of these old pubs.

Some time in April 1758 a young man and lady, both richly attired, arrived early one morning at the Royal Oak. The visitors called themselves "Allan" and "Clara." It appeared they were lovers intent on reaching Peak Forest where they could get married. After lunch they remounted their horses and were quickly out of sight. Legend has it they were murdered by five miners in the Winnats, near Castleton. The saddle belonging to the horse ridden by Clara was kept for many years in the Royal Oak. It can now be found in the Peak Cavern Museum.

The Lover's Leap is renowned for the exploits of Hannah Baddeley. She is supposed to have thrown herself off the cliff above the pub in 1762. Fortunately her petticoat billowed out like a parachute and so she sustained little injury from her fall, but the incident gave the pub its name.

There was formerly bull baiting and bear baiting in the Royal Oak yard and some of the older residents remember seeing the ring about a yard or so from the corner of the present premises.

In the outbuildings of the Moon a Scottish peddler was murdered, unknown to the landlord.



*The Moon Inn*



Afterwards his body was taken on horseback into the cavern at Carlswark in Middleton Dale. His remains were found some 20 years later.

## **Shops**

In 1881 there were five retail businesses including two butchers, a chandler, postmaster and grocer. There were also part-time a butcher and grocer.

## **John Hancock Butchers**

John Hancock's butcher's shop on the main road behind the cross is probably the oldest business in the village having been founded in approximately 1829 and has been continually owned by the same family. In the early days it was a traditional beef and lamb butchers, as pork was a separate trade. The facilities were very crude, there may have been an icebox to keep meat in but mainly it was just hung in the shop. The shop door had a gate across to keep animals out and wooden shutters were put up at night to keep the shop secure. Over the years the business has developed with successive generations to the present day, when to call it a butcher's shop in the true sense would not be correct as the business now takes up two floors. The upstairs bakery produces meat and other savoury baked goods and bread. Downstairs a whole range of delicatessen, cheese and ready meals in addition to traditional and innovative meat cuts are sold from modern refrigerated counters. This is a far cry from one or two lumps of meat on the counter at the beginning of the last century.

## **L W Hancock & Son (Farmers and Butchers)**

The business known today as L W Hancock and Son was started by Lance's grandfather, John, and was recorded in the 1871 Census. He established the butcher's shop at Pine View, High Street, in the premises joined to a row of four cottages, where the family lived.

John was joined in the business by two of his children, William (Bill) and Edith. While Edith ran the shop, Bill went out 'hawking' in the horse and cart to Hathersage and Grindleford. Bill went to serve in the First World War, and his cousin Jack from Calver came to help out. On his return Bill increased the farming side of the business, by renting land around the village on which to keep his stock. In those days slaughtering took place in the shop, and many told the tale of being taken out of school to hold on to the rope (that passed through a tube in the shop's outside wall) while the beasts were slaughtered. Their reward was a pig's bladder to use as a football.

Around 1940 an icebox was purchased for the shop. The ice would come on Hulley's bus from



Chesterfield Ice Works, and Bill would collect the 1cwt blocks, carrying them up the Dale Mouth on his shoulder. The ice was broken up, mixed with freezing salt and put into the tank in the icebox. This process had to be carried out twice a week. In 1947 Bill was taken ill, and Lance returned home from the Air Force to run the business. Several years later, Bill and Lance took on Jack's business in Calver.

Garry joined his father Lance in the business in 1976, and since then the farm side has grown considerably. The old horse drawn implements have been replaced with modern machinery, and new barns and buildings for the cattle have been erected. Stock raised on the farm is sold through the shop, and the business is renowned for its naturally produced 'Farm Assured' beef. The butchery part of the business is still run from the same premises on High Street, however, these days the cattle are taken to Chesterfield for slaughter, and modern fridges are used for storage. Garry continues to deliver meat around the district.



*The Village Shop & Post Office*

### **The Village Shop and Post Office**

The Marples family built the unique wooden village shop along with the three adjoining cottages on the Main Road in Stoney Middleton, in the early 1900s. When Walter and Vera Nettleship owned and ran the shop they let part of their home and at night slept in the shop themselves. Later the Bacon family had the premises for ten years selling groceries and delivering papers. At another time there was a bank in the corner of the shop and a hairdresser's downstairs in the cellar. Betty Wright and Maureen Mason used to run the Cubs in the shop once a week.

In the early seventies Mike and Brenda Tomlinson sold groceries and papers for 18 months followed for two years by the Crispins who closed the shop. Jennifer (Jenny) and Howard bought the shop in 1978 and have run it ever since. They took over the Post Office from the bottom shop (now Hairworks) in 1979. Jenny says: 'It is a village shop and we want to keep it as such, selling everything from cottons to cucumbers (and even celeriac), postage stamps to Bureau de Change (and Euros!)'.

### **Stoney Chip Shop - a Grade II Listed Building**

When the new road from Calver Sough to Stoney Middleton was cut through, a new Toll House was necessary. The contract for building was signed on the 11th November 1840. Its unusual octagonal shape was designed to match the church and was intended to be two storeys. Unfortunately due to lack of funds only a single storey was built. William Morton of Froggatt, Audrey Morton's husband's great grandfather, was stonemason and George Buxton of Stoney Middleton, the joiner. The work was



Eleanor Hall 1912-1990

to be completed within two months at a cost of one hundred and fourteen pounds, fourteen shillings.

Early memories of the chip shop start around 1926, when Herbert Ford opened the Toll House as a chip shop. His daughter, Dorothy and Nellie Eidson, later Groves, Mrs Ford's niece, helped.

The fresh fish and potatoes were delivered to the family home on the Bank, where the Pembertons now live. Hilda Williams lived in the flats opposite as a young girl, and remembers Mr Ford rumbling the potatoes in the lean-to at the back of the house. Sometimes Hilda helped take out the 'eyes'. The potatoes were then carried down to the chip shop in buckets. Fish arrived in woven baskets and had to be carefully filleted before being fried. Mr Ford would only use Kilvert's Pure Lard, which he bought in large blocks. Chips were sold in halfpenny or one penny bags. Fish was one penny or 'tuppence' depending on size.

In late spring 1944 Eleanor Hall bought the chip shop. Friends had told her, 'this was the business to be in'. She slowly built up a reputation for good fish and chips. Saturdays were particularly busy, very often finishing in the early hours of Sunday morning.

The boiler was fuelled by coal at that time. Folk still remember Eleanor telling them to 'move off the bench', so she could pass with the coal buckets. In later years she had gas installed. It was around this time Eleanor had the doorway, which opened onto the roadside, built up and a new entrance made on the side. Eleanor sold the business in 1970. She is remembered as being a true village character.

From 1970 to present day there have been four owners. Don Hancock who had the business from 1970-1986 had the power strikes to contend with and often used candles to light the chip shop. Customers would often ask for, 'Fish, chips, and a wick!'

Terry and Ann Elliott owned the business for ten years from 1986 to 1996 and installed new windows and a brick counter. Geoff, Pauline and Paul Booker had the business from 1996-1998. Paul left to work as a chef and now works in a company headed by Gary Rhodes. Chris Eshelby purchased the business in 1998 and is the current owner.

Is it the only Grade II listed chip shop in Britain?

Franny Ruane - aged 11 says: *'The chip shop used to be used as a Toll House but now it is a chip shop. It is owned by Chris Eshelby. The garden next to the chip shop was owned by Mr Groves. He gave it to the people of Stoney Middleton and now*



some people eat their chips in there'. Jessica Collins aged 10 adds: *'They sell curry, mushy peas, sausages (battered or not) and onion rings as well as fish and chips and pies. It is just next door to a place with a river called the Grove'.*

### **Stoney Middleton Post Office**

As this book goes to press postal services in Britain are facing changes. The history of the post in Stoney Middleton goes back almost two hundred years. In 1805 post was brought on horseback from the Rutland Arms at Bakewell to the village. In 1816 an advertisement appeared in the Sheffield *'Iris'* for a *'person willing to undertake conveyance of the Mail from Sheffield to Stoney Middleton on horseback - send proposals to Postmaster Sheffield, the distance 15 miles. N.B. Contractor to find Horses, pay the Duty and all exes.'*

By 1845 Stoney Middleton had its own Post Office with a Sub-Post Master or Mistress in charge. Now known as the Old Post Office it is the second house on the right in the Nook. In 1858 Michael Marshall took on the job and it stayed in his family for 105 years.

Michael Marshall's granddaughter Rhoda Worsencroft ran the Post Office with her sisters Mary Ellen and Edith from 1925 to 1963.

The post reached Stoney Middleton by train from Sheffield to Grindleford Station, where it was transferred to Teddy White's bus. One of the sisters met the bus and collected the mail. There were two deliveries, morning and afternoon and the round was very extensive, covering many outlying farms - Farnsley, Oakenedge, Black Harry and Longstone Moor all on foot. The furthest farm was Black Harry, which has now been demolished. This meant walking all the way up Middleton Dale to the Ball Corner (the site of the Ball Inn at the bottom of Eyam Dale), then over a small bridge to Bank Farm. From there the route went up Oakenedge Lane to the cross roads at the limekiln on Middleton Lane, right to where Cavendish Mill now stands, then over the fields to Black Harry Farm in the fields behind the sludge dam. She returned to the village down Black Harry Lane and Middleton Lane into High Street. The round trip is at least five miles and involves climbing from 400 to over 1000 ft.

Some mornings Mary Ellen rode up to Highfields Farm on a tractor that had just delivered milk in churns to be collected on the Main Road and delivered the mail on her way back down the High Street. A nephew, Reg Rowland took milk down to the Post Office carrying it in buckets with yokes and Mary Ellen delivered it with the post in the Nook and the Avenue. In the evening the milk was delivered by Reg Rowland's nieces, the Goddard sisters.



*The Old Post Office*



Before the Second World War you could post a letter on the 9.30pm Sheffield corporation bus to Sheffield, which was fitted with a post box.

The Sheffield Star reported in 1959: 'There has been virtually no modernisation of the building, which is very tiny, and there is just enough room for the sisters to stand behind the counter.' In 1963 when Rhoda Worsencroft was 83 the sisters gave up the Post Office and it transferred to the General Stores (now Hairworks) where Tom Dyson, Peter's father ran it in an adjoining room. In 1979 the Post Office moved to its current location in the Village Shop on the Main road.

A 1940s child recalls: 'My childhood memories of the Post Office are of the lovely aroma of freshly baked bread and ginger biscuits. Mrs Tyler often gave me some ginger biscuits wrapped in greaseproof and in a brown paper bag. If you visited the Post Office around quarter to five in the afternoon the distinct smell of candles and sealing wax met you. The ladies in the Post Office tied up the mailbags and sealed them with wax before carrying them to the bus stop. Teddy White's bus took the bags to Grindleford Station to be put on the 5.30pm train to Sheffield.'

### **Once upon a Summer Day**

It was Candlemas day when I arrived in Stoney Middleton - plus a husband and a ginger tom. At that time the post mistress, Rhoda Worsencroft, asked if I would like the job of delivering the post round the village for two weeks in May. I was delighted. The birds were in full song and the May blossom was in flower.

My first delivery was down the lane. A full chorus of rooks in an overcrowded rookery met me. I was pleased to reach the new houses built after the war named 'Avenue Close' and near to the houses in Trinkey Lane.



*The Avenue*

I returned to the village delivering the post round the Nook, the Bank and the Fold followed by the Dale. By this time Miss Rhoda had a breakfast set out for me - a boiled egg, bread, butter and tea. Never has a breakfast tasted better.

The next challenge was High Street (The Town), which included 24 houses on Denman Crescent and most of them had steps. I walked up the steep hill visiting many familiar cottages and felt like singing 'And did those feet'. I was well on my way to Highfields Farm - and then on to Black Harry Farm, which reminded me of Lorna Doone country. Mrs Marples met me at the gate - she was pleased to see me, but I didn't tarry as I had a long walk down Farnsley Lane.

As I walked across the fields I heard the thunder of hoofs behind me coming closer and closer. I thought it was a horse and rider. I was horrified upon looking back to see a cow chasing me. I ran like the wind (gale force). Sheer panic overtook me, as I knew she was gaining