

STEDMAN COUSINS



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President: *Sandra Lee*

Chair: *Sandra Lee* **Webmaster:** *Tom O'Dea* **Historian:** *Fred Steadman-Jones*

Genealogist : *David Stedman* **Secretary:** *Ruth O'Dea* **Treasurer:** *Stephen Lee*

Newsletter No.6

Summer 2011

Dear Cousins,

Last weekend we had a mini Reunion with good weather, which we were thankful for. A visit to the White House on Friday began our weekend. On arrival cousin Pauline (with tongue in cheek) announced to the housekeeper and staff that she was taking up residence and claiming squatters rights, much to their amusement. Again we were allowed access to



the barns. There are so many interesting tools and implements from 'days gone by' tucked away, including these blacksmiths bellows –



After lunch at the 'Sun Inn' in Corfton, some of us went to Munslow and Diddlebury churches, before meeting up again for an evening meal at the 'Horse and Jockey' in Knighton. There was a "Town Criers Convention" taking place in the town that weekend, so it was a lively atmosphere. Some of us were waiting for others to arrive at the 'Jockey' having a chat. As Pauline arrived, she was met by a lady who hugged and kissed her, saying to her husband that she (Pauline) was "*the person who had done all the hard work*". Pauline was baffled and we were in hysterics, because she hadn't a clue who this person was!

Our next day began at Bromfield Church, where some of the ladies of the congregation were busy polishing and dusting. They were very helpful (and probably amused) by the invasion of Stedmans during their quiet morning's work. The brasses were gleaming despite damage by bats in the rafters. The painted ceiling above the chancel described as "the best example of the worst kind of ecclesiastical art work" was much more impressive than we'd been led to believe.

Joy kindly agreed to be our guide for the day, for which I would like to thank her. After lunch at the Ludlow Food Centre, and an unscheduled Vintage Car Rally,



Joy guided us around her home town of Ludlow. St Laurence's church was so interesting and we were particularly interested in seeing the carved figure of a mermaid holding a mirror in her right hand and the remnants of a comb in her left, just as appears on the Stedman Crest in Munslow Church and in Sidney Stedman Smith's papers (something else to be looked into).





As we continued around the town, we heard the carillon (from St Laurence's) playing "Home Sweet Home". It could be heard all over this lovely town.

There was a larger group of us for Saturday evening's meal, enjoying good company, stories and lots of jokes. So much so, that we were the last to leave the dining area of the 'Jockey' that night.



With our 'Smallman' hats on, we visited Wilderhope Manor on the Sunday afternoon. Despite being converted for use as a youth hostel and venue for weddings, the National Trust have retained much of the Grade I listed buildings plasterwork (with its Smallman initials intact), fireplaces and the beautiful spiral oak staircase from the 16th century.



After Wilderhope, everyone went their separate ways home. Before leaving Shropshire, Stephen and I went in search of Broadstone chapel, where our Thomas and his son Samuel no doubt worshipped in the early 1600s. We eventually found it in the middle of a field. There does not appear to be even a path to it and the fence and gate surrounding it are locked, but I'm in the process of finding the key holder and permission to visit it on a future occasion.



Though Tom and Ruth were not able to be with us for this Reunion, we met up with them at Pauline's home in London in July. They had been for a holiday in Ireland and were about to return to Australia.

We hope some of you who were unable to come to this year's Reunion will be able to join us next year. We have already begun to plan it and thought about looking at some of the villages of North Herefordshire where some of our ancestors migrated, as well as the White House family, in the early 1800s: Villages such as Yarkhill, Burghill and Eardisland. Yarkhill was the birthplace of Fabian Stedman and also the home of Henry James Stedman (1865) gt grandson of James (1777) of the Banke House family.

Do let me know what you think of this suggestion and any other ideas you might have for places you would like to visit.

Best wishes to you all.

Sandra