

STEDMAN COUSINS



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Newsletter No. 8

Summer 2012

Dear Cousins,

During an amazing and unusual Summer (how else should we describe “the wettest drought on record”) of celebrations for the Queen’s Jubilee and the Summer Olympics, nineteen Cousins met for the fifth Stedman Cousins Reunion.

This all took place last weekend and began with a visit to Stowe Church. For those who have been before, they will know that it ‘sits’ on a hillside where even the car park is at an ‘interesting’ angle. All this poses challenges for someone like myself who comes from the flat side of the country! We found a record in the church of a Fred Stedman who died in WWI from the parish of Stowe.



We haven’t yet been able to determine which Fred Stedman this could be. Thankfully for our next place, we had the expertise and local knowledge of Clive to guide us to “The Cave” house, which lies on the Stanage Estate near to ‘Heartsease’. It was the farm/home of Charles Menlove Stedman and family. (His father farmed



at ‘Heartsease’). The countryside around ‘The Cave’ once again illustrated the relatively unspoilt beauty of this part of the country.



In a convoy of five cars, Clive took us to Knucklas and Heyop, two small villages 'over the border' in Wales, where we found the graves of Charles Menlove Stedman and other members of his family



Chris looking pleased to have found the grave of his ancestors at last

We also located the house in Knucklas where Charles Menlove and family had lived prior to his death. We knew from the census that he had lived at 'Sunnyside' in Knucklas. It was only after we had discovered that 'Bryn Heulog' (the present name of the house) was in fact Welsh for 'Sunnyside' that we could confirm that we had indeed found the correct house. Chris and Denise later visited the house and learnt more. This is what Chris discovered: *"The present property was built on the site of two previous dwelling houses in 1901 and then Charles Menlove Stedman, his wife Laura and some of the family occupied 'Sunnyside' as tenants. In 1912 it was sold to William B Stedman, retired ironmonger of Knighton! My great grandparents continued to live there and eventually it was conveyed to Laura Stedman, widow, on death of William in 1912. Then as we know 'Sunnyside' was sold in 1954 following the death of Katherine Stedman"* William B Stedman, was William Burlton, the son of Richard Smallman Stedman and his wife Mary Burlton (i.e. cousin of Charles Menlove).

About 13 Cousins met for the meal on Friday evening at the 'Horse and Jockey' for a happy evening of fun and 'catching up' since we had last met.



The next morning (Saturday) we met at Yarkhill, a village just a few miles NE of Hereford, where we met up with our 'new' Cousins, Sue MacDonald and her sister Judy and Judy's husband Barry. Yarkhill was the birthplace of Fabian Stedman and his siblings. His father had been the Vicar of Yarkhill for 47 years and it is to be supposed that it was here that Fabian learned the art of bellringing. The vicarage, now no longer visible, was sited to the north side of the church. We were met at the church by Ashley Fortey who himself a bellringer and involved in the Bell Restoration Project, gave us an excellent informal talk on Fabian and his work in devising the method of Ring Changes for which he is so well known and respected by all bellringers. He is described by many as the "Father of English Change Ringing".



to Francis Stedman.

With Ashley in front of the plaque

Ashley took the 'bravest' Cousins up the restored tower to show how the work is progressing to restore, strengthen and prepare the tower for the eight new bells and the four restored bells, due to be installed in October. In order to reach the top of the tower involved climbing a vertical ladder, closing a trap door and climbing two more ladders (definitely not for the feint-hearted).



Ashley describing how best to tackle the climb.



top . On the right, Yarkhill Court



Views from the

(This was the home of Harry James Stedman and family) Harry James' son, Harry Shelley Stedman and his family was still living at The Court in 1911.

After lunch at nearby Tillington, we think we have discovered 'Court Farm' lying between Tillington and Burghill. This was the former farm/home of Edward Bright Stedman and his family, the gt grandfather of our two 'new' Cousins, Sue and Judy.



Court Farm

We intended visiting Eardisland next, but since we all got lost and as we had little time before our meal, we decided to head back to Knighton .

There were 19 Cousins for Saturday's meal together and we were not the only large party to be looked after by the very friendly and professional staff at the 'Jockey'.



Pauline had devised a fun quiz of photos of us as youngsters and we had to guess who each of them were. Interestingly amongst the errors I made was to think the one of Tom was Chris. Many thanks to Pauline for organising this.

Sunday, despite drizzly weather (until then we had had very warm, sunny days), Clive took us on a tour of Knighton, showing us where members of the family had lived, worked, gone to school and eventually buried.



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William Burlton Stedman's former Ironmongery shop



St Lawrence's Church, Knighton

Our last 'port of call' was to Bedstone, to visit the church and see Bedstone Manor Hall Farm where Page Smallman Stedman and after, his son William, had lived and farmed.



Manor Hall Farm



Bedstone Church

As you can see, we really had a good weekend together, and we are all looking forward to the next one! If you were unable to come this time, perhaps you might be able to join us for the next one.

Best wishes to you all.

Sandra