

The Stedmans of Corvedale

Sandra Lee

There is mention of a STEDMAN as early as 1256 in Corvedale, when the unfortunate John Stedman was murdered by Richard the Long [from the 'Shropshire Eyre']. In 1403 Roger Stedman was Chaplain at Stoke St Milborough. There were known to be four members of the Stedman family who were Rectors of St Michael's Church, Munslow between the years 1422, when Roger Stedman was Rector, and yet another Roger in 1614.

From 1336 until 1946, the White House was the home of the main branch of the Stedman family. This old house (now the property of the Landmark Trust) is sometimes regarded as an 'architectural oddity', and by Constance Purser, the last owner before the Trust took over, as "four houses in one". The earliest parts of the house are the 'undercroft', possibly dating from the 13th century. There is an Elizabethan cross



wing. The earliest part still standing is contained in the Tudor long wing running from east to west. This is a cruck hall, in which the main trusses are formed from two great curved timbers rising from ground level, meeting at the top, parts of which can be seen in the bedrooms, a later development.

The 'newer' Georgian wing, the last phase of the house to be built, dates from between 1780 and 1800 and includes a beautiful hanging staircase –



In the garden are the remains of a 13th century dovecote

Also in the grounds, and adjacent to The White House, is a building thought to have formerly been a house before being converted to stables, part of which dates from 14th century and partly from the 16th. It is strongly believed, by a learned expert, that this could be The Banke House, home of another branch of the Stedman family line (probably a younger son).

It is from this Banke House branch that most of the Cousins now in regular contact with each other stem. There were known to be three branches of the family living in Aston Munslow. We have managed to link two of the branches to-



Some Stedman cousins enjoying their annual reunion

gether, but that missing piece of paper confirming the link of the Banke House family to the main branch still eludes us, though we can trace them all back to about 1500.

Stedman Cousins was formed in 2008 when twenty 'cousins' from the Stedman family met, most for the first time, for a first Reunion. This included eight cousins from Australia. It was intended that the Cousins would meet up biennially. However, the cousins have so enjoyed meeting, that it has become a yearly event.

The fourth Reunion took place in August 2011, beginning with a visit to The White House.

Between wining and dining, the cousins also visited Ludlow, Diddlebury church and Munslow church, and were fascinated to see the Stedman plaque on the wall at Munslow, containing the Stedman crest topped with a mermaid holding a mirror and a comb. We were to see this mermaid again during our visit to St Laurence's church in Ludlow, though whether there was a connection or not, we have yet to discover.

The White House Stedmans eventually 'daughtered out', but the Banke House Stedmans who gradually migrated south via Diddlebury, settled in Bucknell. There the family expanded into the Radnorshire forest area and north Herefordshire, farming large portions of the land there. The last Stedman family member farming in Bucknell died in 1963 at the age of 90.

Stedman Cousins has a website, set up in 2008, at www.stedman-uk.com. If anyone thinks they may have a connection to the family, do please make contact, we'd love to hear from you. The website contains lots of interesting items, photos etc., and the cost of joining Stedman Cousins is just £5 a year.

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Left: plaque in Munslow church
Right: part of the carving in St Laurence's church, Ludlow