

House mysteries become house histories

In March last year a group of All Stretton people arranged an exhibition in the committee room of the Village Hall. It took place at the same time as the annual art exhibition - you were probably there! We wanted to tell everybody that we were planning to involve as many local people as we could in the history of All Stretton, its houses and the people who lived in them.

Since then, things have been happening. There is now an All Stretton History Group in existence, and we have been given generous financial support in our work by the Local Heritage Initiative. The aim of the project is to involve the community in the history of the village. We are doing historical research and have created a website. We will also be producing a book containing histories of houses and people and arranging events in the village, all to be done by the end of this year. We shall certainly have our hands full in getting the work done in time, so anyone who wants to take part will be given a warm welcome!

We have drawn up a short list of properties that we want to include in the book. If you would like other houses to be included, and you wish to take part in creating the book, please get in touch. This is the list of buildings:

- High Park House
- Womerton
- Roseleigh (Farm Lane)
- Rowley House
- 1603 (Batch Valley Road)
- Minton Cottage (Heighways Lane/Farm Lane)
- Essex Lodge (Shrewsbury Road/Farm Lane)
- Inwood farm house
- Dudgley farm house
- Dudgley Mill
- St Michael and All Saints church
- Stretton Hall Hotel
- Old Hall Farm
- Yew Tree Inn



Heighways Lane, Christmas Day 2004: Minton Cottage looking mysterious in the snow

During the autumn and winter we have been busy working on the skills and the knowledge that are needed for working out what information is needed, where to find it, and how to process it. Until now we have concentrated on the people part of the project, studying census returns, parish registers, electoral registers and trade directories.

Now we are about to start looking at the manor court rolls and other records that will tell us about the ownership and occupancy of these houses in the past. This will add to our understanding of who lived where, and it should also be of help in telling us when houses were built and something about the changes they have undergone.

For the finer points of architecture we shall probably have to turn to professional experts. Meanwhile, if you would like to contribute in any way, do get in touch. No previous experience is necessary. If you do not think that taking part in the work is for you, then we would be grateful for any pictures or artefacts or memories of All Stretton that you might like to share with us.

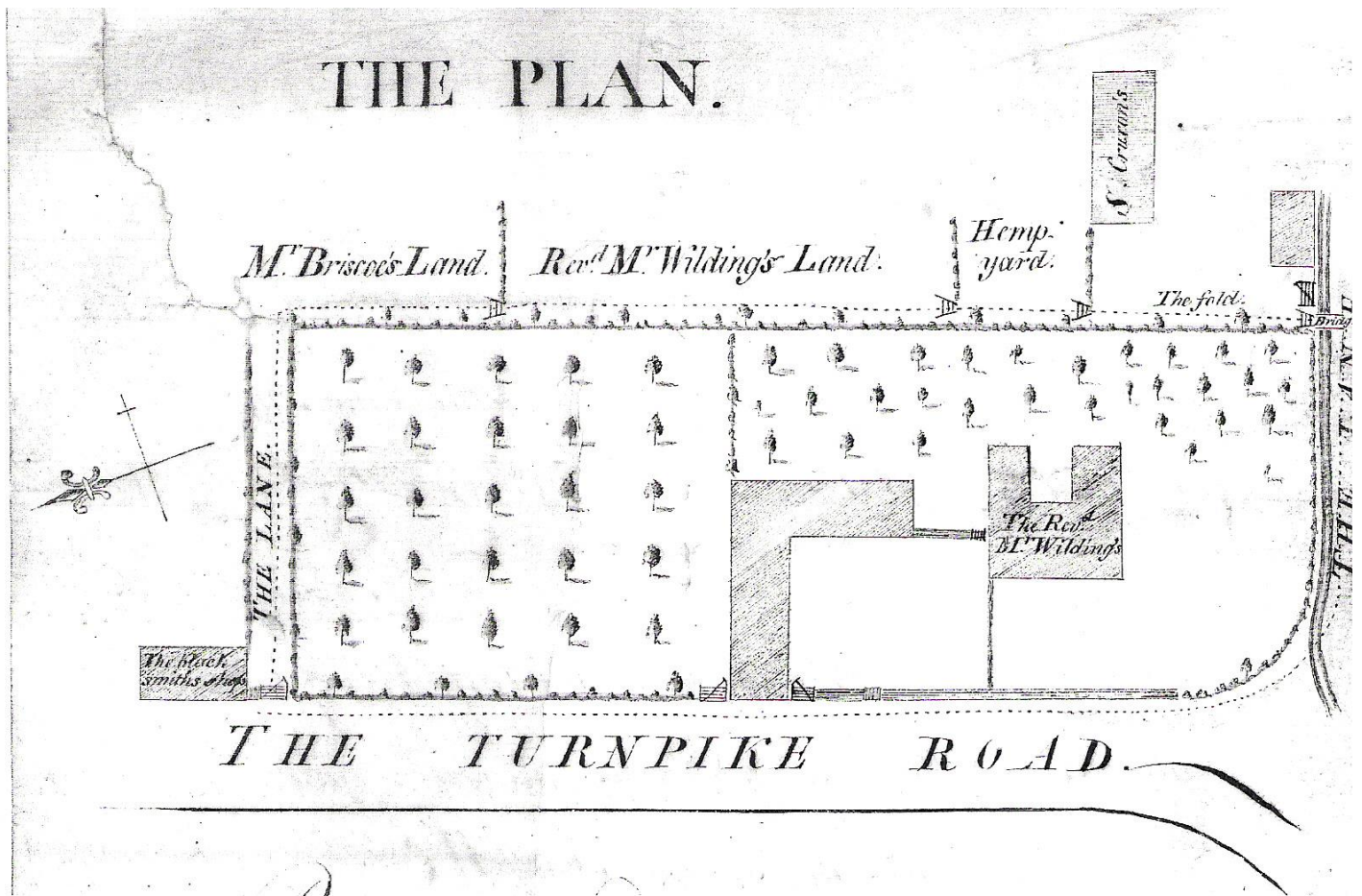
Here are some people for you to get in touch with:

John Hathaway, Minton Cottage, telephone 01694

Eric Huff, Plush Hill, telephone 01694 723706

Ivar Romo, Bratton Villa, Heighways Lane, telephone 01694 723804 or 07950 352231

Oldest map of All Stretton to be discovered so far All Stretton Hall in 1779 revealed



Map of All Stretton from Quarter Sessions Roll 1779 (Shropshire Archives ref. QR/118/8). To get your bearings, compare this with the map on the opposite page and its caption.

Before the Local Government Act came into force in the 1880s, a variety of questions that now are laid before the County Council were decided upon by a body of magistrates (JPs) at court sittings known as Quarter Sessions. Among such questions, then as now, some concerned public rights of way. To have a public access stopped up, it was necessary to make a good case for it and present it to the justices of the peace.

This map is part of the evidence presented in the case of one half of the footpath that ran around the garden and orchard of what is now Stretton Hall Hotel. It is a crude survey, but it shows many interesting details, such as gates, stiles, and a bridge that are no longer in existence.

The track (The Lane) that runs from Shrewsbury Road (The Turnpike) between Caradoc Lodge and Hall Cottage to the Hall Meadow remained a public right of way, but the Lane on the other side of the property disappeared, and soon the Reverend Richard Wilding annexed Cruxon's hempyard and fold to the Hall property, as an extended garden.

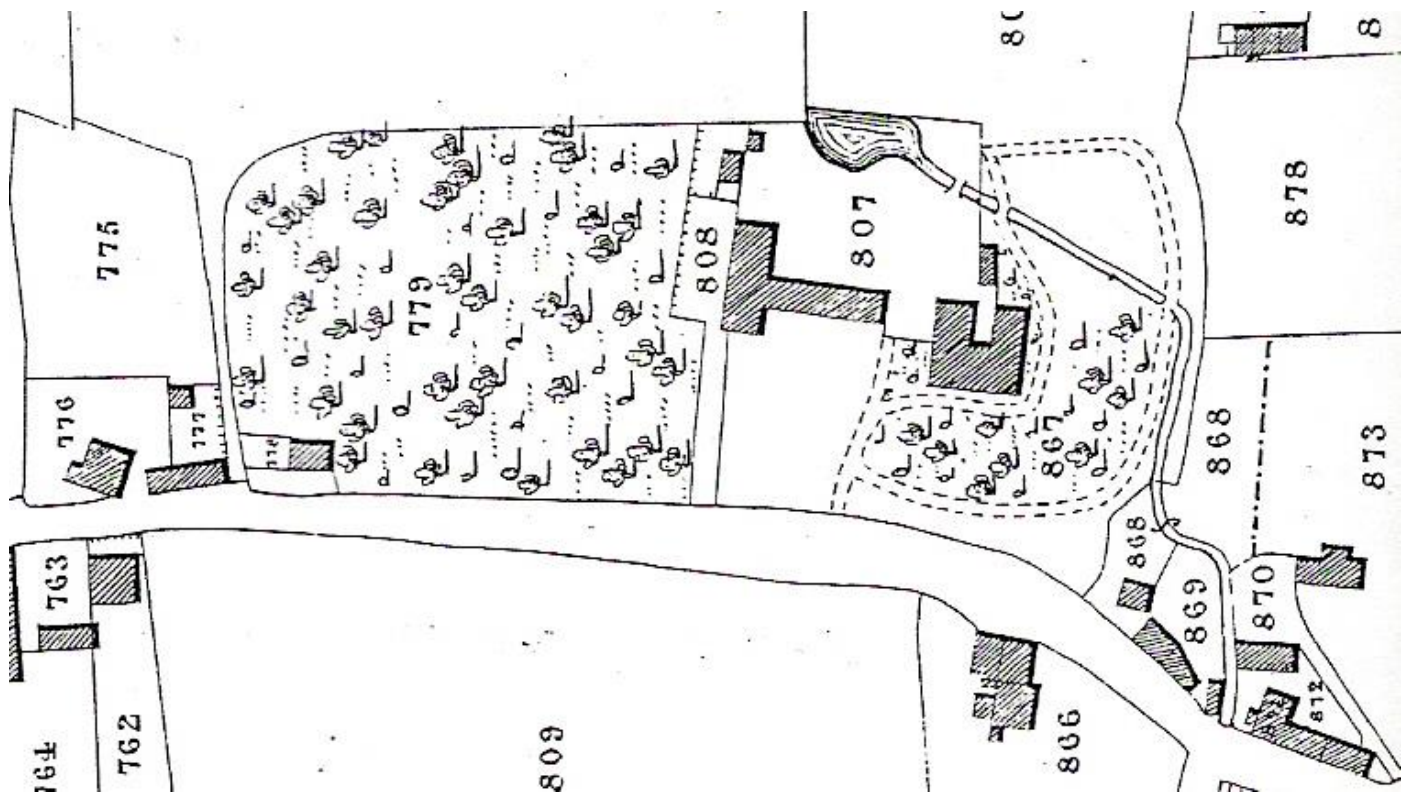
There is some text to supplement the map, and this is the wording of it: "Remarks. From the gate at the Blacksmith's shop to the end of the lane leading to the next field and from thence along the

footway to the end of the Bridge over the brook at Mr Cruxton's fold gate in the lane adjoining is 239 Yards and a foot. And from the first said gate along the turnpike road to the end of the said bridge is 238 Yards & a half, both which are further shewed by the dotted line in the Plan.

Measured the 10th day of April 1779
By me J Poundley".

This is the case as presented in court:

"Whereas there is a Footway leading from the blacksmith's Shop through several pieces of land to the fold of Samuel Cruxon on the south east side of the village of All Stretton in the County of Salop: Which footway being of no Use but rather a Nuisance and the turnpike road thro' the said Village being nearer and more commodious to the Public, as will appear by a Plan hereunto annexed on the other Side. We Thomas Harries & Robert Corbett Esquires two of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace for the said County having view'd the said ffootway and also the Turnpike Road, and finding the same to be true, do hereby direct and order that the said ffootway be entirely stop'd up, Witness our hands at a special sessions held at All Stretton in the hundred of Munslow this 18th day of Sept 1779".



Extract from the tithe map, 1840. The u-shaped Hall is at No 807, the old smithy is at No 777. No 866 is the Yew Tree Inn, and No 869 is now All Stretton Stores. The oblong building at No 870 is another smithy, still standing, now part of the Roseleigh property. Roseleigh itself is at No 873. Farm Lane runs down along the right-hand edge of the map.

Until the map of 1779 came to light, the oldest map we knew about was the tithe map, printed in 1840, covering the entire old parish of Church Stretton in six sheets. This is a section of it, showing the area covered by the map opposite, in the context to other properties. The old smithy is still there, on the land where Caradoc Lodge stands now. The original part of Hall Cottage has appeared since 1779, and the Hall's outbuildings have been re-built in new positions.

There was still a gate across the footpath between the old smithy and the Hall orchard and no footpath at the other end of the Hall property, so the right-of-way decision had been acted upon.

The most dramatic change that had taken place between 1779 and 1840 was the alteration in the course of the brook. Where is used to run in a smooth curve towards the north, by 1840 it had acquired a dog-leg to allow for the building that is now the Stores to be built. In 1779 the brook evidently ran straight on down to the Count as it does today, but by 1840 it had been diverted into an ornamental pond in the Hall garden. A trace of the diversion exists today, in the form a small channel or leet across the top of Hall Meadow, and the original course must still have existed in 1840, but it is not shown on the map. Cruxon's farm had disappeared.

Learning from the Census

As in 2001, every 10 years a national census is carried out to collect information of the entire population. Such details include name, age, sex and occupation of all inhabitants of a property. This information is then stored and not released to the public for 100 years.

The first national census to include information about individual residents was carried out in 1841. Details of this and all the censuses up to and including 1901 for the county area are stored at Shropshire Archives in Shrewsbury.

Our group decided to investigate the censuses available to us to extract information about the history of All Stretton. The census returns are stored on microfiche in their original hand-written format, which makes it quite a difficult and time consuming task to decipher the entries. Various members of the group undertook to copy out the All Stretton census

information to make it easier to read. These copies were then entered onto computers by three of us.

Now these details are on computer it becomes easier to search out the specific information concerning our chosen properties under investigation. I say easier but it is still quite time consuming since on some censuses there are no house names and you have to work out by a process of elimination which property is which. Also the enumerators used to vary their routes around the village from census to census, thus making that task more difficult.

However, the necessary information has now been collated and we are starting to compile the histories of our chosen houses and the people that lived in them. This is being supplemented by information gathered from local trade directories and other sources, such as electoral registers.

1891 History Day, Sunday June 26th 2005

As part of the bid for Lottery Money to help fund the discovery of the history of All Stretton, a commitment was made to hold a history day in All Stretton, and the date of 1891 was chosen by the working party. This is just over 100 years ago, and having studied the census for that year, we have an accurate record of the houses, the people who lived in them and their occupations.

We are going to try to re-create the All Stretton of that time, by re-enacting some of the more popular trades of the time, and dressing up accordingly; perhaps, a Victorian School in the Village Hall, hopefully a blacksmith, maybe a shoemaker and certainly a dressmaker etc., etc. An offer has been

made to provide horseback riders dressed in Victorian dress to ride around the village to add to the atmosphere. We might try to re-create the shop at the bottom of Castle Hill or a Victorian sweet shop with homemade sweets of the time. There might or might not be a return of the maypole dancers! Of course, we shall have to seek permission from garden owners or landowners around the village to be able to use spaces.

To this end, we shall form a small committee to plan the event in February. We are encouraging all ideas and all participation from everybody who would like to become involved in this event. Please ring Heather Hathaway on 01694 722537 if you can help.

For your amusement ...



... here's a mass mugshot of some of the people who have been active in the group so far. From left to right they are: Derek Thompson, Tom Beaman, Pat Beaman, Mary McKenzie, Lyn Townsend, John Hathaway, Pauline Traill, Margaret Drury, Jean Huff, Joy Brightman and Eric Huff. Ivar Romo wisely stayed behind the camera.

Situation vacant

Our website has been up and running for some time now, but we have not been able to make it quite as vibrant as we would have liked. We want to add on news items and updates, and publish the research data that we have brought together, so that people

can study their own local ancestors and the histories of their own houses. To help us achieve all this, we are looking for a keen and able **web editor**. If you feel you might be this person, please get in touch **now** with Ivar on ivar_romo@hotmail.com.



Local Heritage *initiative*

LHI is a partnership between the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Countryside Agency and Nationwide