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NEWS

On the 27th May the Chair of the Board of Trustees, Jonathan Russell, wrote to the Museum volunteers to bring them up to date with the present plans for the re-opening of the Museum:-

'I want to give you an update as to our current status and our plans for the immediate future. I last wrote to you back in April. At that time we had just closed the museum and were working hard to secure funding while we remain closed with a somewhat uncertain future.

I am happy to report that through the JustGiving campaign, Friends donations and grants we have received over £20,000. Although £5,000 short of our target this is a superb achievement and has put us in the black and onto a firm footing to re-open when the time comes.

In the short term our two staff, Verity and Helen, remain furloughed and we continue to explore additional fundraising opportunities. More recently though, the focus of our Covid-19 recovery meetings - you will be pleased to hear - has been the re-opening of the Museum. We are putting together all the necessary arrangements for health and safety, taking advice from government and industry best practices. For example we expect to install a perspex screen around the desk and have PPE equipment available for staff and volunteers.

Our timeline for reopening is as follows (subject to change):

Step 1 (August): Staff return in some capacity - Museum remains closed.

Step 2 (Late August): Museum opens in a limited capacity - reduced hours and perhaps only 2 days per week. Tickets would be sold online in advance and visitors would be restricted to pre-determined date/time slots.

Step 3 (Sep onwards): Museum incrementally opens further on additional days and/or longer hours.

October: Expect to be operating on the 'new normal'

Kind regards and thank you for your continued support and patience

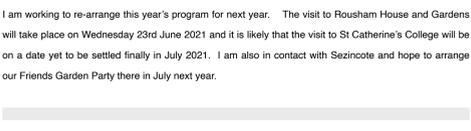
Jonathan

The Trustees wish to publicly acknowledge and sincerely thank THE BROADWAY TRUST for its very generous grant of £1,500 towards the recovery fund.

I hope you will agree that this represents a considered and sensible plan and one which will see the Museum re-open in the foreseeable future.

Regrettably, I have had to cancel all the Talks and Trips that were planned for this year with the exception of the Talk to be given on Friday 6th November by Maurice Collins. At present, I think there is still a realistic possibility that this will go ahead.

I am working to re-arrange this year's program for next year. The visit to Rousham House and Gardens will take place on Wednesday 23rd June 2021 and it is likely that the visit to St Catherine's College will be on a date yet to be settled finally in July 2021. I am also in contact with Sezincote and hope to arrange our Friends Garden Party there in July next year.



Friday 6th November 2020 1730 for 1800 in the Edinburgh Room, Lygon Arms, Broadway

TALK BY MAURICE COLLINS

**"BRITAIN'S BEST COLLECTOR":
'ECCENTRIC CONTRAPTIONS AND
INGENUOUS GADGETS OR GRANNY HAD
ONE BUT SHE THREW IT AWAY!'**



This is a real TREAT. Maurice will share with us the fruits of a lifetime collecting Eccentric Contraptions from the Carbolite Smoke Ball to the Hand Operated Page Turner. Maurice has written prolifically about his passion for collecting but he was also the co-founder of the Charity Kith and Kids which provides services to families with disabled children and he has been awarded an OBE for his services to people with learning disabilities.

Nearer the date of the Talk we will announce details of a Quiz for those who attend with a tantalising prize for the winner.

COST: VOLUNTEERS FREE, FRIENDS £5, OTHERS £10.

A Booking Form will be available with the September Newsletter if it seems likely that the Talk will proceed.



TOWER CLOSE, SNOWSHILL

We have been sadly robbed of our chance to visit Tower Close, Snowshill which was to have taken place on Thursday 28th May this year. In anticipation of a re-arranged visit in 2021 let's explore the Russell family connection with this house.

By 1915 Sydney Russell and his family had been living in the Lygon Arms for 11 years and he wanted a home away from the business. An opportunity arose in June 1915 when Tower Close came up for auction. This former Yeoman farmer's house dating from around 1800 had been split into three cottages at a later date. It was then abandoned and left derelict. The roofs were so bad that one had fallen in. The floors were unsafe but, although the two feet thick walls were still sound, it had been condemned for occupation.

Sydney turned to the renowned Midlands architect, Charles Bateman to draw up plans for the renovation of Tower Close. Bateman had become a partner in his father's practice at 59 Colmore Row, Birmingham in 1887. The partnership also had an office in Evesham which specialised in altering and updating older properties at a time when the value of these older houses was being re-discovered. This work had instilled a deep love of the Cotswold vernacular in Bateman and, in 1924, he purchased and renovated two cottages in Bourton on the Hill for use as his family home.

Sydney knew Bateman's work as he had employed him in 1910 to draw up plans for the Great Hall at the Lygon as well as designing other alterations and extensions in the years that followed. Bateman had also planned alterations to a 17C house at West End, Broadway, and at Green Close, Snowshill.

Bateman's brief was to create a substantial family home for Sydney and his family. The main block of the house was renovated and new dormer windows with a hipped roof were inserted in the red sandstone slate roofs. A single storey extension was demolished and replaced by a two storey structure (which included a maid's bedroom on the first floor). Inspired by the 17th century square tower at Daneway House in Sapperton, where Gimson and Barnsley had their showroom, Bateman incorporated a new three storey tower within the inside angle of the T shaped plan of the house. The tower windows give far reaching views across the countryside.

The main building work took place soon after the house was purchased but much of the internal work had to wait nearly four years as war work and services took priority. Sydney sent Bateman's plans to his son Gordon in France who wrote: "I practised visualizing them in three dimensions...and I wrote detailed reports on different aspects of the planning and the carrying out of the repair work." The whole of the oak panelling in the house was designed by Gordon and included two large glazed cabinets to house Sydney's large collection of English drinking glasses.

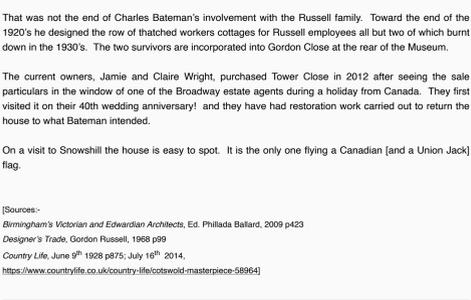
At the end of the War the joinery and furnishings were completed, and a start was made on the garden, also designed by Bateman, which presented the architect with considerable difficulties as the land sloped steeply. As a whole, the house nestles delightfully into the hillside of the village.

Sydney and his wife were certainly in occupation by January 1919 because Gordon recalled staying there following his demo that month. Tower Close was listed Grade II in 1960.

That was not the end of Charles Bateman's involvement with the Russell family. Toward the end of the 1920's he designed the row of thatched workers cottages for Russell employees all but two of which burnt down in the 1930's. The two survivors are incorporated into Gordon Close at the rear of the Museum.

The current owners, Jamie and Claire Wright, purchased Tower Close in 2012 after seeing the sale particulars in the window of one of the Broadway estate agents during a holiday from Canada. They first visited it on their 40th wedding anniversary! and they have had restoration work carried out to return the house to what Bateman intended.

On a visit to Snowshill the house is easy to spot. It is the only one flying a Canadian [and a Union Jack] flag.



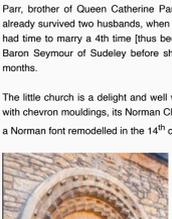
STANLEY PONTLARGE

On my perambulations pre Covid 19 lockdown I came across the hamlet of Stanley Pontlarge and its delightful, tiny Norman Church dedicated to St Michael.

Stanley Pontlarge and its nearby neighbours, Middle Stanley and Far Stanley lie just to the west of Winchcombe near the village of Gretton. The hamlet takes its name Stanley from ancient ownership and Pontlarge, or 'pounde-large', refers to a body of water believed to have been a moat constructed around the Church and Manor House in the 12th century.

Quite a few well known figures and families had their historical fingers in the Stanley Pontlarge pie. In the 11th century it formed part of the estates of Ralph the Earl of Hereford, an ancestor of the Sudeleys, of Sudeley castle fame. The three Stanleys were given to Roger Little in the middle of the 12th century, as dowry following his marriage to John de Sudeley's daughter Margery. He promptly ejected all the tenants and this church was built as a private chapel for the couple. By 1386 Stanley Pontlarge was part of the possessions of the nearby, and now ruined Hailes Abbey. Then, in 1549 the parish was granted to William Parr, brother of Queen Catherine Parr, the last of Henry VIII's six wives. She was only 31, and had already survived two husbands, when she married Henry in 1543. He died within 3 1/2 years and she just had time to marry a 4th time [thus becoming the most married English Queen] to Thomas Seymour, 1st Baron Seymour of Sudeley before she too died in childbirth in 1548 having outlived Henry by just 20 months.

The little church is a delight and well worth a visit when it is open again. It is noted for its Norman door with chevron mouldings, its Norman Chancel arch which leans extravagantly outwards on the left side and a Norman font remodelled in the 14th century.



DEWPONDS AND TURES

Leave Broadway on the Snowshill Road, take the left fork in Snowshill Village and follow the road for half a mile or so, take the right hand bend on to the old Roman Road of Buckle Street, which runs from Bourton-on-the-Water in the south up to Bidford on Avon in the north and beyond. Take the first turn on the left after about half a mile. Drive slowly and after a few hundred yards you will see this sign at the right hand side of the road.

Explanatory sign



Stone stile from inside Ture

Stop and find out about the [I think] fascinating history of Tures and Dewponds in the upland parish of Cutsdean, source of the River Windrush, which has retained an air of seclusion as undisturbed as anywhere in the Cotswolds. It is cut off to the North and West by the 600' Cotswold escarpment. There are no towns nearby and its economy is entirely agricultural. This air of isolation was emphasised (until 1931) by being a detached island of Gloucestershire entirely surrounded by a sea of Gloucestershire, by the presence, as late as 1865, of gates on all its public roads and by the fact that Cutsdean farmers lived in the village at the western end of the Parish, and not on their farmsteads stretched out to the east.

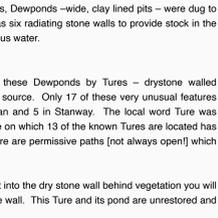
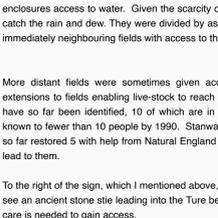
A peculiar feature of Cutsdean is its system of Dewponds and Tures designed to solve the most intractable problem of the uplands - lack of drinking water for the flocks of sheep. The Inclosure Award of 1777 had led to a division of the great open fields by stone walls and it was essential to give the new enclosures access to water. Given the scarcity of springs, Dewponds - wide, clay lined pits - were dug to catch the rain and dew. They were divided by as many as six radiating stone walls to provide stock in the immediately neighbouring fields with access to the precious water.

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More distant fields were sometimes given access to these Dewponds by Tures - drystone walled extensions to fields enabling live-stock to reach a water source. Only 17 of these very unusual features have so far been identified, 10 of which are in Cutsdean and 5 in Stanway. The local word Ture was known to fewer than 10 people by 1990. Stanway Estate on which 13 of the known Tures are located has so far restored 5 with help from Natural England and there are permissive paths [not always open] which lead to them.

To the right of the sign, which I mentioned above, and cut into the dry stone wall behind vegetation you will see an ancient stone stile leading into the Ture behind the wall. This Ture and its pond are unrestored and care is needed to gain access.



Ture, looking towards dry Dew Pond

Dried up Dew Pond

Christopher Hotten
June 2020

