Audio Tour of St Cyr’s Churchyard

New Audio Guide by local resident

Download the New self-guided audio tour of St Cyr’s Churchyard at your convenience, using your mobile phone

The audio guide uses Guide.AI, which is an app developed by a young man called Ben Floyd. He is supported by the Prince’s Trust and mentored by Stinchcombe Hill resident, Paul Creamer.

The App

The app itself is free but you pay for each audio guide you download. Once purchased you can save the audio guide to re-use or download it again without further payment. As well as supporting a fledgling business you would be donating to St Cyr’s and the Stinchcombe History Society, which each get 20% of the purchase price.

Amongst other attractions, the existing range of guides includes some Cotswold walks. More guides are being added all the time. Paul is currently working on a guide to Stinchcombe Hill on behalf of the Stinchcombe Hill Trust.

Street Lighting for

Stinchcombe?

I have bought a month on the British Newspaper Archive website and been reading up on old news! I found this little bit of history about Street Lighting in Stinchcombe which I thought might amuse you..and leave you to drawn your own conclusions.

A little "Light" History

The "Lighting and Watching" Act of 1833 allowed groups of property owners to form committees and organise local street lighting. It also allowed for the creation of local police forces (the "watching" part of the Act's title.) These committees were then empowered to levy a rate on other householders to pay for the lighting.

Street lighting as we know it today is the result of many years of development and investment. The legislation relating to street lighting has been introduced piecemeal over the years, with varying degrees of responsibility and authority conferred on various bodies from parishes to national government. As of 2005 there was not legal responsibility on anyone to provide street lighting. There is no statutory requirement on local authorities in the United Kingdom to provide public lighting.

In England and Wales, the Highways Act 1980 empowers a Highway Authority to provide lighting for any highway or proposed highway for which they are, or will be, the Highway Authority.

From the Gloucester Citizen – *Friday 19th August 1949*

From the Gloucester Citizen – *Friday 16th September 1949*

- *Street Lighting*
- *English Street Light on-line*
- *Historic Hansard*
- *Our Virtual Village*

The Pitman Plaque

Found in Wotton

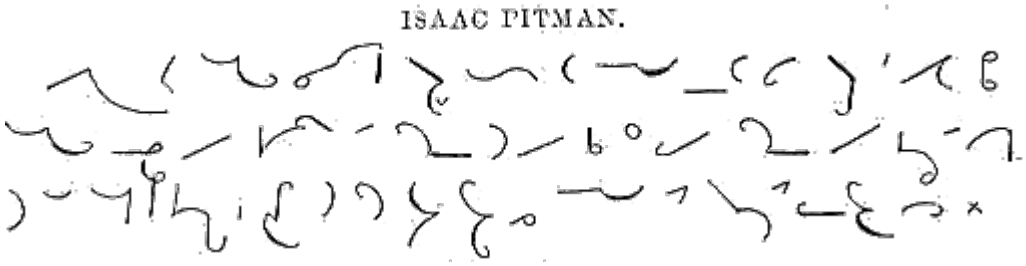
I was cycling through the backstreets of Wotton under Edge for my lockdown cycle ride and came across this plaque on the side of a house.

"Pitman invented his system of shorthand know as Phonography here"

I can remember well my sisters learning shorthand at college and I would assume that many people in Stinchcombe remember learning as well. But who uses it now? Does anyone still learn it? Does anyone under 30 know what it is?

First, what is Pitman?

It's fair to say that *Pitman shorthand* was the first widely used method of shorthand. Invented by *Sir Isaac Pitman*, himself a fascinating character, It is a system of writing just using symbols using symbols to represent sounds. This allowed a much greater speed of writing.



From the 1897 book Eclectic Shorthand by Cross. Scanned by Marlow4 and placed in public domain. It shows shorthand method of Isaac Pitman Cropped

So, does anyone use Pitman now?

Good question. A quick search of the Internet says that according to the BBC website and the article ***"Is the art of shorthand dying?***", Pitman, or at least one of its newer variations, is alive and well. It is still used by journalists and court recorders. Well it was in 2016.

Comments and Retrospective Reminiscences are welcome for this article in the comments section of this post on the website. Look forward to reading them.

- Wotton Area C.A.N.
- Living the new way
- St Cyrs

Our Virtual Village – A Village Property

Our Virtual Village – A Village

Property

A new feature for the Village in 2021 is a new Heading on the website called ***Our Virtual Village***. Each month about different Village property will be featured featuring the History of a Village Property.

Our Virtual Village

In the Virtual Village, each page added will be written by house owners themselves or Villagers who have researched a specific property. It's history and it's owners, with interesting stories and facts.

We welcome owners or Villagers to put forward an article for publication. On the Our Virtual Village page on the website. We give some guidelines and how to get involved. This new feature is designed that each House page can be expanded. Other people might want to add further information or stories to a property.

Our forthcoming articles

- January – ***Combe House, Street Farm, and Granary Barn***
- February – ***Langside cottage, the history of its place in village life from the 1700s to the present day Langside.***
- March – Melksham Court
- April – Old Clingre Farm
- May – The Buildings
- June – Court Barn
- July – Lamport Court

The first article on Combe House, Street Farm and Granary Barn is written by Roger Batty and is now ***live on the website***. Further detailed and interesting information can be found in the article if you click on the words typed in red.

- Our Virtual Village
- The story of the Oxford vaccine
- A Village Property
- Stinchcombe Local History Society

In Flanders Fields

Flanders Fields and the Poppy

In Flanders fields the poppies blow

Between the crosses, row on row,

That mark our place; and in the sky

The larks, still bravely singing, fly

Scarce heard amid the guns below.

We are the Dead. Short days ago

We lived, felt dawn, saw sunset glow,

Loved, and were loved, and now we lie

In Flanders fields.

Take up our quarrel with the foe:

To you from failing hands we throw

The torch, be yours to hold it high.

If ye break faith with us who die

We shall not sleep, though poppies grow

In Flanders fields

Lieutenant Colonel John McCrae

The history behind the poem

The Story of the poem. John McCrae was a Canadian doctor, a professor of medicine at Canada's McGill University. On the evening of May 2 1915 during the second battle of Ypres, McCrae officiated at the burial of Lieutenant Alexis Helmer. The next evening he took a twenty-minute break from his duties and scribbled a short poem.

He was interrupted by a Sergeant Major Cyril Allinson with his post. So he handed the pad and poem to the Sergeant Major and read his mail. As McCrae read his mail, Allinson read the poem. Returning the pad to McCrae after he had finished the mail, Allinson watched in horror as McCrae crumpled his poem into a ball and tossed it aside.

Sergeant Major Allinson had been deeply moved by the poem and retrieved it. After showing it to other soldiers, he sent it to several newspapers in England. The following December is was finally published in "Punch"

About John McCrae

John McCrae was a doctor and a teacher, who served in both the South African War and the First World War. Born in Guelph, Ontario, on November 30, 1872, John McCrae was the second son of Lieutenant-Colonel David McCrae. Described as warm and sensitive with a remarkable compassion for both people and animals, John McCrae began writing poetry while a student at the Guelph Collegiate Institute.

On August 4, 1914, Britain declared war on Germany. Canada, as a member of the British Empire, was automatically at war, and

its citizens from all across the land responded quickly. Within three weeks, 45,000 Canadians had rushed to join up. John McCrae was among them. He was appointed a medical officer with the First Brigade of the Canadian Field Artillery with the rank of Major and second-in-command.

He took with him a horse named Bonfire, a gift from a friend. Later, John McCrae sent his young nieces and nephews letters supposedly written by Bonfire and signed with a hoof print.

In April 1915, John McCrae was in the trenches near Ypres, Belgium, in the area traditionally called Flanders. Some of the heaviest fighting of the First World War took place there during what was known as the Second Battle of Ypres.

On April 22, the Germans used deadly chlorine gas against Allied troops in a desperate attempt to break the stalemate. Despite the debilitating effects of the gas, Canadian soldiers fought relentlessly and held the line for another 16 days.

The day before he wrote his famous poem, one of McCrae’s closest friends was killed in the fighting and buried in a makeshift grave with a simple wooden cross. Wild poppies were already beginning to bloom between the crosses marking the many graves. Unable to help his friend or any of the others who had died, John McCrae gave them a voice through his poem. It was the second last poem he was to write.

Soon after it was written, he was transferred to No. 3 (McGill) Canadian General Hospital in France where he was Chief of Medical Services. The hospital was housed in huge tents at Dannes-Cammiers until cold wet weather forced a move to the site of the ruins of the Jesuit College at Boulogne.

When the hospital opened its doors in February 1916, it was a 1,560-bed facility covering 26 acres. Here the wounded were brought from the Battle of the Somme, the Battle of Vimy Ridge, the third Battle of Ypres and from Arras and Passchendaele.

For respite, he took long rides on Bonfire through the French countryside. Another animal companion was a casualty of the war, the dog Bonneau, who adopted John McCrae as his special friend.

During the summer of 1917, John McCrae was troubled by severe asthma attacks and occasional bouts of bronchitis. He became very ill in January 1918 and diagnosed his condition as pneumonia. He was moved to Number 14 British General Hospital for Officers where he continued to grow weak.

Source

- Veterans Affairs Canada

Stone Age to Corinium

Stinchcombe History Society

Due to the Covid issue, History Societies around the county have had to cancel all their planned history talks this year. This includes the Stinchcombe History Society.

Some societies are now trialing history talks via Zoom. We have been contacted by Cam & Dursley Society who are trying this Zoom method. They have invited Stinchombe History Society to take part .

Stone Age to Corinium

Dursley and Cam Society Zoom talk will be on Tuesday 10th November 2020 at 7:30. The subject of the talk from the Corinium Museum, in Cirencester, entitled “Stone Age to

Corinium". This is a talk on the Archaeology of the Cotswolds and will cover from prehistory to early Roman times, it covers the Cotswolds in general with the exception of the Oxfordshire part of the Cotswolds. The talk will be around 45 minutes with some time afterwards for questions.

The Corinium Museum has embarked on an exciting £1.87 million project – "Stone Age to Corinium: Discover the Archaeology of the Cotswolds" and has been successful in securing support from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

No cost involved, you just need to register your interest by email. A link will be sent to you for the Zoom meeting. If anyone would like to join us on the evening, they can lodge their interest by emailing and we will then send a link to join the meeting.

Bengad Stud

The Ponies that have been a part of our village.

We will all be familiar with the lovely Bengad ponies that we have walked past, enjoyed as foals, mares, geldings, stallions and generally much admired on the hills in Stinchcombe.

The Bengad Stud

The Bengad Welsh Pony Stud started by Mrs Doris Gadsden in the 1960s began its life at Piers Court. It then moved to Southend Farm and latterly to Wick Lane. Laura Hutchins and Di Talboys who used to work with Mrs Gadsden, have bred, looked after and

loved these ponies for many years. At their height there were hundreds of ponies on the hills, but now the last 3 youngsters have gone to a new home in order to be shown and brought on as children's ponies.



Laura in 2004

The last 3 – Lily (Bengad Lily of the Nile), Poppy (Bengad Desert Poppy), and Lizzie (Bengad Lisianthus) have moved locally to Benhill Performance Ponies. Below is a picture of these lovely ponies just before they left Stinchcombe – it feels a bit like the end of an incredibly happy, successful era, but the Bengad name and genes will live on both nationally and internationally.



Welsh Ponies at Bengad Stud

Laura also sends a big thank you to all the kind people who sent the ‘Hello Laura’ booklet and photos in May of this year. She is still getting enormous enjoyment out of it.

Julie Thomas