

Bridgend Nursery

Early days

Originally the nursery site was a kitchen garden attached to Upper Mills. When the nearby mills and surrounding lands were sold by the Davies family in 1904, it became part of Holme Place.

In 1911 William Driver was running Bridgend Nursery and living in the recently-built nursery house.

Just after the First World War, the nursery and house were bought by George Hubbard to provide employment for his sons Bertram and Harry. Later his sister Amy and her husband Cecil White came to help run the gardens.

Harry Hubbard died in 1921 and George in 1927. Cecil White bought the nursery and ran it with his wife Amy and their four children.



*Aerial photo 1920s.
Holme Place is at the bottom left corner.
Bridgend Nursery house and greenhouses can
be seen in the centre of the photo,
Upper Mills at the top.*

Kathlyn White



Cecil White with baby daughter Kathlyn.

Kathlyn was born at Bridgend Nursery in 1933 and recalls what life was like there.

“My father Cecil was the nursery and seeds man and we also owned 3 retail shops in Stonehouse.

The house was originally a 3-up 3-down gardener’s cottage attached to the big house. The design was a copy of an Irish crofter’s cottage where the cattle were brought into the middle room for warmth.

The nursery consisted of 4½ acres with 7 greenhouses which specialised in chrysanthemums, with a few exotic plants like freesias and orchids. We ran a florist side with cut flowers and wedding and funeral orders.

We grew mainly soft fruits and vegetables on the land. There were neat box hedges around the beds and long rows of raspberries and strawberries which we all had to help pick.

We had apple, pear and plum trees heavy with fruit, “tom putt” apples with as many windfalls as you could eat, and Victoria plums as big as pears.

I remember the village shows we always entered at Stonehouse and Frocester. My mother often judged the fruit and vegetable classes.”



The Old Nursery house 1930s.

Bridgend Nursery

Greengrocer

"The Nursery had two shops in the High Street. In 1937 when the new housing estate was built in Bridgend, on the site of Holme Place, we added another shop in the grounds of our nursery.

When the war started our greengrocery shops became grocery shops. The Ministry of Food required basic rations to be sold at all local shops. My job was to weigh sugar from large sacks into 2lb blue sugar bags and to check all the ration books.

War restrictions prohibited the use of fuel to heat greenhouses for growing flowers so we changed to growing tomatoes and cucumbers.

I remember the excitement when the first consignment of bananas was due to arrive after the war. Word spread like wildfire around the estate that there were bananas at White's and a queue had formed before the delivery arrived. I had never seen a real banana - only in pictures. When we opened the crate it was a disappointment to see tiny green things smaller than one little finger and quite inedible. Imported fruit came in wooden crates and orange boxes were highly prized for furniture.

My father ran the nursery. I helped him put the seedlings in the trays and also with the puddling-in as he planted the leeks."



Cecil White

Florist



Amy White and her son Henry.

"My mother managed the floristry side. She made magnificent wedding bouquets by standing in front of a mirror and placing each bloom correctly in the reflection.

Wreaths were very elaborate and cost around 4s/11d or 5s/11d. Fresh wreaths to be taken to the cemetery on Christmas Day were the fashion and my parents would stay up all night making them. They would be delivered by the errand boy on a bicycle. If it was a white Christmas, with the roads too icy to ride a bicycle, the wreaths would be tied on to a ladder which in turn was tied to the bike and the whole thing pushed along by hand.

My mother was very over-worked. She ran the shops, the house and four children and managed all the money and paper work.

We got a telephone in 1937 - Stonehouse 232."

Mr and Mrs White retired in 1950 and the nursery was bought by C. R. Croome.

C. R. CROOME

Fruit
Flowers
Vegetables
Seeds



Wreaths
Bouquets
Floral Designs
Garden
Sundries

Bridgend Nurseries - Stonehouse

Telephone : STONEHOUSE 232