

Philip Norman Orlando Stone (known as **Norman**)
used to live at 8 Minnis Road

Norman's Grandfather – Orlando Edward Stone worked at Brooksend Farm in the 1920s. He was born in 1846 and died in Birchington in 1930 aged 84. He had at least two sons, Thomas Orlando (born 1875) who later lived at 260 Canterbury Road, where he died in 1949, aged 75.

His other son Philip Stone was born in 1882 and who married Edith (born 1886) and later managed Upper Gore End Farm for St John's College Cambridge until he retired in 1939. When Philip Stone gave up Upper Gore End Farm in 1939, he was too young to retire officially, but had decided that farming was too much like hard work. His son Dickie said that he considered himself a 'Gentleman Farmer' and could see no reason why he should get his hands dirty. He was very good at giving orders to his men, but did not pull his weight work-wise. Consequently, the farm was losing money heavily, hence Philip's rather early exit from the job. He and his wife bought 8 Minnis Road in 1939, just after the two Ward sisters vacated the house. Over the years, very little was done to the property and even during their son Norman's time, no major improvements were undertaken, not even basic decorating.

Norman's father died in 1962 and his mother died in 1978 aged 92. Both died at Homefield and Norman found himself caring for each in turn. He was then left in charge of the house after his mother's death.

Norman's Stone was born in 1918, the eldest of Philip and Edith's four children. He has twin brothers Peter and Richard (known affectionately as 'Dickie') born in 1920. Peter was in insurance at Broadstairs then worked for Short's Engineering Works at Chatham, making instruments during the war. Peter has now settled very happily in Tasmania. He has two sons, one now a doctor in General Practice, while the other works for the Post Office. At one time Peter met up with the uncle of one of the Thurgood boys, who remembered as a young man helping to build the 'Observatory' Houses in Minnis Road just before the turn of the century.

Norman was called up in October 1939 at Maidstone and joined officially by 12th December 1939. He was allowed home for Christmas, but returned to his unit with a chest infection, which turned into pneumonia. He was first taken to Parkside Hospital at Maidstone then later moved to Chatham Dockyard Hospital. There was a measles epidemic while he was there. So he was moved down to the West Country and eventually came back to Maidstone in August 1941. Norman did not get demobbed until May 1946. During his last year in the army he was guarding in a POW camp housing Germans at Papenburg, Westphalia.

Richard went to South Africa at 18 to work for Uncle Rupert who was a chartered accountant. Dickie was working in the Transvaal at the outbreak of WW 2 and joined the Second Division of the S. A. Territorial Unit – T.A. Division. He fell off a motorbike while he was there and was sent to a hospital in Upper Egypt to

recover. His unit was surrounded by a German division and the officer in charge of his own section surrendered. Thus he became a P.O.W. in Italy. After Italy surrendered to the Allies, Dickie, with some of his fellow POWs escaped, but were recaptured and sent on a death march through Germany to another camp. He was eventually released, shortly before V.E. Day. Dickie's wife Mary is 9 years younger than he is.

Dickie's present address is:

12 Beauchamp Road
Malvern
Worc. WR14 1RT
01684 565385

Norman had a younger sister Jean, who was baptized Edith Claribel Jean in 1919. She became a voluntary nurse during the Second World War. She met up with Norman in Canterbury at one period during the war and Norman has a photo taken of them together by bomb-damaged ruins near the Cathedral. After the War she worked for Girling's, the Margate solicitors. In 1948, at the age of 29, she went on holiday to Switzerland with one of her WAAF friends. There she met an American, fell in love and married him. Her husband ran his own firm in the States. They eventually had 5 children and returned to England for holidays every few years. Sadly Jean began to have throat problems and then developed a motor neurone condition and has now died. She was 80 when she died – on the 1st April 2000.

After his release Dickie went back to S. A. after the war, but eventually got a job back in England nursing mental patients. At one stage he was working at the Sea Bathing Hospital where he met his wife Mary. They had 3 boys and later moved to Malvern. One of his sons has become a solicitor. Dickie is now 84 and lives with his wife Mary in Malvern.

Norman is now 86 years old and living in 'Highfield' Residential Home, 51 Alpha Road. He recalled that the Newman's, who at one time ran a greengrocery business in Station Road in the 1960-70s, had originally run a grocery shop. He also recalled that Mr Hodges, joint headmaster of Woodford House School married one of Mr Erlebach's daughters. Unfortunately they were unable to have children, so adopted a boy who had a driving accident shortly after WW 2.

When Dickie was contacted by phone during the writing of this account, he recalled that there used to be a pond in the garden of Upper Gore End Farm. It had a brick wall around it and his father seemed to think the wall had once been part of a church or chapel. It is just possible that it was a private one for the house, but highly unlikely. The wall was possibly needed because the position of the pond meant that all the surrounding water would drain into it, so it was probably prone to overflowing, especially in the wetter, winter months. The pond is clearly marked on several of the old maps. It would appear that each farm in the village had its own pond for the use of the animals.