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We were both born in Essex where the families had been established for generations. We do however have a Yorkshire connection as my mother came from Hanogate where the family had farmed certainly since 1800. My mother and father met when he was in camp at Kellinghall before going to France in the first world war.

Stonelands and the Blows Family

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We were both born in Essex where the families had been established for generations. We do however have a Yorkshie connection as my mother came from Harrogate where the family had farmed certainly since 1800. My father met my mother when he was camped at Killinghall before going to France during the first world war.

Before retiring in 1987 I was a Civil Engineer in charge of major road construction work in the north east of England. In Malaya I was in the Colonial Service where the work was much more varied including roads, water supplies, construction of schools and hospitals etc. Joyce, between having our children, worked in the education service and in the District Offices, in fact she was secretary to the present King of Malaysia, who was then, in 1955-56 District Officer.

Between 1984 -91 I was Chairman of the Litton Parish Meeting and have been a church warden at Arncliffe church since 1984.

Now about our house. Stoneland was built in 1829 by one William Lister from Bradford, I suspect as a country retreat. The earliest reference I can find to an occupant is Stephen Storey who was a farming tenant in 1841. The house may have taken its name from the field at the back which is shown as Stoniland Pasture on the Tithe Map. Our barn is called Smearbeck barn which may reflect the name of an earlier building on the site. Perhaps William Lister did not like the name, not realising that "smear" is a corruption of the Scandinavian word for butter.

Stonelands is late Georgian style ut the building stone is not local, probably originating from the Bingley area and being transported by horse and cart. The property was badly damaged by fire in the 1920s but was subsequently rebuilt in the original form, it is difficult to distinguish between the 19c and 20c work. Interesting features are the large barrel vaulted cellar, two massive 18c cheese press weights and part of an old stone quern.

We were told that in the old days one of the farmers used to ride his horse up the front steps into the hall and chips off the front steps were pointed out as evidence of this. A good story and perhaps true. At one time the whole of Stonelands Farm was with the house but since the 1940s only 10 acres are attached. We are both interested in gardening and looking after our wood and fields. We have planted a great number of trees and protected the herb rich pasture.

Previous owners with approximate dates of occupation are:

Mr & Mrs P Watkins	1968-1977
Mr Altham (Althams Travel)	1948 -1968
Norman Lee	1908 -1948
Mr & Mrs J Robinson	period before 1908

Other occupants were the Clayton and Preston families.

An interesting visitor to the house was Professor Joseph Wright of Oxford University at the turn of the 19c. Oswald Shuffrey knew him, an interesting link with the present day. I quote from a book written by the Professor's wife:

"Stonelands was a well-built house, with large rooms facing south, and a porch setback into the hall, where Joseph Wright and I used to sit in the evening to enjoy absolute silence. When he recounted to his friends the charms of Stonelands he would say it was so quiet there that when we sat outside we could hear the goods (steam) trains going up the incline from Settle to Ribbleshead on the other side of Penyghent"

Joyce and I, with our children and grandchildren still sit out in the porch, we did so only last week. Perhaps it is not as quiet as 100 years ago but it is still very peaceful.

JWB May 2000