



The Stone Coal Charity

Emily Morrell of the Oxford brewing family married William Stone, a wealthy London barrister who owned a great deal of property in Streatley and Moulsham including Streatley House, also Wick Farm in Headington. She died in 1891 leaving the whole of her estate to the value of £82,656 to her favourite niece Emily Alicia Morrell.

In her will dated 18 August 1881 Emily Stone 'bequeathed through her estates at Headington, Goring, Streatley to the tenant for the time being of Streatley Farm and the churchwardens of Streatley £1,000, free of duty upon trust, to invest in parliamentary stocks of Great Britain and to apply the annual income on the purchase of coal. To distribute amongst the deserving poor of the parish in such proportion as the trustees might select.' She desired that 'special regard be given to poor widows residing in Streatley proper.' The actual sum invested was £1055 in 2½% Consols producing an annual income of £26 7s 8d paid quarterly.



George Herbert & Emily Alicia Morrell [GSLHS collection]

Little information is contained in the few existing records regarding the administration of the charity in the years between 1891 and 1905. However in 1895 the sum of £29 4s 4d was paid to George Herbert Morrell, the husband of Emily Alicia, when he assumed responsibility for the charity's funds. In 1905 Emily and George Morrell initiated and thence signed an annual statement of account which was forwarded to the Charity Commission. This showed the amount of coal bought and the number of people to whom it was delivered, usually on the Feast of the Nativity just before Christmas. In 1906 George Herbert died but Emily Alicia continued to sign until her death in 1938.

Signatories to the Annual Coal Return were recorded as either trustees or administrators but after 1923 the number receiving coal was not given.

Over the 33 years from 1905 the churchwarden trustees who also signed the Coal Return, albeit on an irregular basis, were Major Arthur Hammans and Captain Athol Tatham, solicitors A.C. Fox and Edwin Hatt, builder James Smallbone, the headmaster of Streatley School Albert Buckmaster and the tenants of Streatley Farm John Snelson and Ralph Mawle.

It is clear from letters from Mrs Morrell to the other trustees that their appointment was very much in her hands. She was a prominent churchwoman who had strong views. She had declared that Christmas gifts were not to be given to unmarried women, especially those who had fathered children. She was, however, a major benefactor to St Mary's Church and the leading light in Streatley Women's Institute.

Between 1905 and 1923 an average of 71 families received the Christmas coal delivery

every year. The price per ton bought by the trustees was £1 and remained largely unaltered until 1914, but by 1920 it had doubled.

The advent of World War I caused disruption and cancellation of coal supplies. 1916 saw no coal deliveries, in 1917 only half the order was made and the 1918 order did not arrive until a year later.

Records for the years 1933 until 1938 when Mrs Morrell died do not seem to have survived and the returns from 1939 to 1953 are fragmented. World War II and the eight years after saw coal being rationed. From 1943 onwards coal was only available on the authority of the area Fuel Controller in Reading. The delivery for 1943 was not completed, nothing was received in 1944 and the coal eventually supplied in 1945 was that not delivered two years previously. 1947 saw the belated delivery for 1945/46 and no coal came in 1948/49. Finally coal in 1950 and 1953 arrived that was due for the previous two years, after which the Annual Coal Returns seem to have ceased.

Coal return [Berkshire Record Office]

During this very trying period to 1953 the signatories recorded were Professor J.B. Buxton, President of the Royal Veterinary College which had taken over Streatley House at the start of hostilities, Professor Burrows, also of the College, retired civil servant Louis Schrader, headmaster Albert Buckwell, builder James Smallbone and farmer Owen Bishop.

From 1954 to 1961 the only records of coal deliveries that can be traced are to be found in the Endowed Charities minutes and the Urquhart diaries.

These were:

1955	£32 13s 4d		
1956	£43 14s 2d		
1957	£41 11s 6d		
1958	£39 18s 3d		
1959	£41 8s 8d	and	1961 £58 0s 8d

It is to be supposed that a major part of these expenditures was paid for by the Stone Charity, it being the largest of the charities working in Streatley, but to date no supporting evidence has been found to confirm this assumption.

Between 1954 and 1961 the trustees were Owen Bishop, G.W. Judd, G.I. Stevenson, R.B. Steele, A. Rouse, R. Baker and G. Field. The first two continued to serve throughout the life of the charity with R. Baker leaving in 1991.

Fortunately the Notes of Trustees' Meetings from 1962 to 1994 provide a more accurate

When completed this Account should be sent to: No. 106.

THE SECRETARY,
Charity Commission,
St. James's,
London, S.W.1.

STATEMENT of the ACCOUNTS of the CHARITY called
Stone Charity

in the Parish of *Streatley*
in the County of *Berk*

of which the following persons are the Trustees or Administrators,
viz.:-

Mrs G. Hubert Morrell
Owen of Streatley House
Capt. Arthur Chamberlain
The Rect
Streatley
Mr. Buckwell Chamberlain
School House
Streatley
Mr. O. Bishop
Leard Streatley House

For the Year ended on the 30th day of June 1952.

Particulars relating to more than one year may be included in this Form.

record. Between 1962 and 1974 the number of homes receiving Christmas coal under the eligibility rules of the Charity averaged 18 each year. From 1975 a steady decline in numbers took place until by 1992 only one recipient remained, a reduction largely brought about through death, leaving the parish or moving into accommodation that had no facility to burn coal.

Merging the Stone Charity

In November 1971 G.L. Stevenson (Vicar's Warden) had discussions with the Streatley Consolidated Charities about avoiding the duplication of giving coal to each charity's beneficiaries. This idea was rejected by the Charity Commission which was at the time trying to complete a register of all charities in the country. The other Stone Charity trustees were also not in favour and suggestion was dropped.

In 1992 the Charity Commission issued a booklet setting out the changes in law under a new Charities Act. Trustees Baker and Bishop were asked to consider these and report on their effect on the future of the Stone Charity. They advised that the Charity Commission would no longer hold individual charity's assets, so small charities would have to consider handing over their assets to a larger charity with similar aims.

A meeting of the trustees on 23 August 1994, Bishop, Judd and Rouse present, discussed the future of the Stone Charity and how it could conform with the 1993 Charities Act. It was decided to seek agreement to merge with the Streatley Consolidated Charities. On 3 December they received confirmation of the Streatley Consolidated Charities acceptance of the transfer and on 5 December the appropriate transfer forms were submitted to the Charity Commission.

On 21 February 1995 the Charity Commission notified acceptance of the transfer of the Stone Charity and its incorporation in the Poores Land subsidiary No.1 of the Streatley Consolidated Charities. The assets of £318 38p were transferred on 27 April 1995 and confirmed by the Charity Commission on 3 May that year.

And so after nearly 114 years the Charity set up by Mrs Emily Stone to provide coal for the deserving poor in the parish of Streatley came to an end. The disuse of coal as a means of heating, the introduction of the Welfare State with the improvement of accommodation, especially for the elderly, and the absence of parishioners who met the charity's eligibility criteria all led to its demise.

Michael Brodie

Acknowledgements

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