



Stratton Village in years gone by

## Community Keeps Its Village Atmosphere

BARBER Glen Gwinnet has seen many changes in Lower Stratton since he took over the salon in 1972. The barbers shop in Ermin Street dates back to the Second World War when Lower Stratton was much more rural than it is now. But Glen, 64, still believes the area feels like a village. "This has been a barbers shop for a long time," he said. "You get all walks of life now in Stratton, it used to be a very working class part of town with a lot of people employed at the Thatcher's but that has changed and now it is a lot more middle class. "Stratton has definitely kept the village feel, I know we are on the edge of the town now but I still see myself as a village barber. "Like a lot of villages I used to know everyone but there has been a big turnover of people with people moving out and in. "When the big supermarkets came in it was the end of the local shops, which is a big shame, I don't know why it is that I've stayed here, but I love my job and enjoy being involved in the community." The Roman road of Ermin Street used to be the shopping heart of the village with butchers, greengrocers and a bank lining the road. Now all that remains from the old village days is Glen's barbers. A facility which is used by a lot of people in the community and from further afield is the Stratton Community Leisure Centre in Grange Drive. The centre, which is run by Stratton St Margaret Parish Council, acts as both a leisure and social hub of the area. Ian Green, senior operations manager, said: "The role we play in the community is very important, in particular leisure and sporting. "It's a very close knit community, we get a lot of people using this facility and we are committed to serving the community. "We like to think that we could be used as a hub for the area and we are the largest building of the parish council. "We do a lot for everyone in the community from young to old." Being a leisure centre they have taken an active role in improving people's health. Ian added: "We have a lot of senior people who are trying to improve the health of the area. "We are the leading centre in Swindon for the GP referral scheme and have a lot of elderly people use the centre." Grange Drive, which runs through the heart of Lower Stratton, was developed in the 1960s. One couple who have lived there since their house was built in 1963 are David and Sally Packer. "We have lived here for so long, so there must be something about Stratton that we like," they said. "It is a very friendly place and not much has changed since we've been here. "It is a good place to live. The only issue we have is the speed of traffic on the road which is a concern especially with the school so close." Noff's fish and chip shop has also been on the road for around 30 years and used to have queues going round the corner in it's hey day.

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