

Stourbridge Glass Museum – how it came into being.

The remarkable tale of the period from the formation of BGF in 2010 to SGM official opening in 2013.

Now available direct from the museum. All proceeds to BGF.

Edn. 5 Dated 27.5.25
With *GlassCuts* 266

IN MEMORIAM

WE DEDICATE THIS EDITION OF *OffCuts* TO A MAN WITHOUT WHOSE TANGIBLE SUPPORT STOURBRIDGE GLASS MUSEUM SIMPLY WOULD NOT EXIST. THE JUSTIFICATION BEHIND THIS ASSERTION WILL BECOME APPARENT FROM THE MERE MENTION OF HIS FAMILY NAME, FOR WE ARE INDEED NOW HOUSED IN THE BUILDING THAT ONCE BORE IT. THE REASON FOR US CHOOSING THIS ICONIC LOCATION FOR OUR NEW MUSEUM IS THUS NO COINCIDENCE.

OUR TRIBUTE IS COMPILED ON BEHALF OF THE BRITISH GLASS FOUNDATION FROM INFORMATION SUPPLIED TO US BY RETIRED GLASS-MAN IAN DURY IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE FAMILY OF THE DECEASED AND WE WOULD LIKE TO PLACE ON RECORD OUR APPRECIATION FOR THEIR APPROBATION AND ASSISTANCE DURING THIS DIFFICULT TIME.

Throughout human history there have been those who come to epitomise a particular era; in Renaissance Italy it was the Medicis, in USA banking it was, *inter alia*, the Rothschilds and Rockefellers, whilst closer to home around the time of the industrial revolution we saw the rise of the Foleys, Cadburys and many others.

The world of Stourbridge Glass was not without its dynasties of which any student could list a veritable compendium of famous names, and, floating like cream towards the top of the mix, that of Stuart would be there or thereabouts.



The sign that once hung outside Stuart Crystal, Wordsley that has been restored and now hangs in the foyer of Stourbridge Glass Museum, former home of the factory.

Thus it is with heavy hearts that we mourn the passing of a hugely respected scion of the Stuart line, a sadness that is made the more pertinent by dint of our museum being located in the former Stuart factory that closed in 2001 before being given a new life by SGM's arrival.

His name is Christopher William Cook Stuart he was former Training Director of Stuart Crystal and on 9th May 2025 he departed this earth at Stanfield Nursing Home near Worcester.

Chris Stuart (*image, right, taken on his 70th birthday*) was born on 16th May 1938 to William Stuart OBE and Edith Stuart of West Hagley near Stourbridge. He was the eldest of four offspring that included Rachel, Andrew and Isobel.

As was company tradition, the elder son of a director was eligible to take a position in the company, which he did in 1959 following completion of National Service. His first position in the company was a warehouse clerk, followed by the post of quality controller in the Stuart Crystal Glasshouse.

In 1964 he became responsible for the training needs of the company then part of a management group which went on to become The Stourbridge Glass Trades Association, a four-way project between Stuart Crystal, Thomas Webb, Royal Brierley Crystal, and Webb Corbet.



The brief was to attract local future craftsmen into the trade, which at that time was suffering at the hands of car manufacturers which were offering better pay and opportunities.



Chris Stuart (right) raises a glass with Mr Geoff Griffiths to celebrate the re-opening of Stuart's Social Club (from a contemporary press-cutting formerly on display at Red House Glass Cone, with acknowledgements).

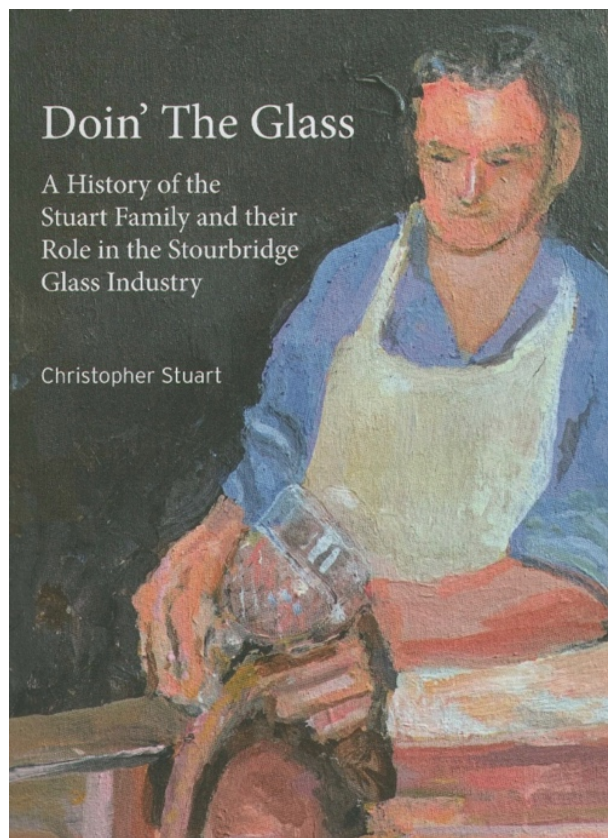
In 1966, Stuart Crystal's solution to solving recruitment needs was to open a factory in South Wales. Chris and his cousin John were given the responsibility for running the new facility.

From an early age Chris was a prolific artist and enjoyed painting. He received a placement at Stourbridge School of Art and was a student of Webb Corbett designer Irene Stevens.

He combined his love for art with learning the skills of glassmaking and would spend hours watching Master Glassmakers in the glasshouse. After they had completed their shift, Chris could be found in the Glasshouse practicing his glassmaking skills. In recent years, and despite failing health, he found the energy to share his art skills with fellow residents in the care home where he spent his final days.

In 1983, Chris turned to an alternative career in the Civil Service in Sheffield, Lancashire for 11 years followed by Preston, Lancashire before he and his wife decided to return to Fernhill Heath, Worcestershire in 2007.

In 2023 Chris with the aid of his daughter Katie fulfilled his ambition to write his memoirs about his life in the crystal industry.



The title and front cover of the book, *Doin' The Glass* was an illustration painted by Chris of a glass cutter decorating a wine goblet.

(Editor's note: It was during this period that I spoke with Chris on several occasions and found him to be a man of considerable warmth, discreet charm and unassuming erudition. A copy of his book is lodged in SGM's library.)

'Mr Chris', as he was affectionately known in the factory, was among the most respected of managers, a man who always had time to speak to the employees, all of whom will have fond memories of him.

In return, Chris recognised the achievements of the British Glass Foundation in revitalising 'the old place' and became one of our staunchest advocates with an enthusiasm that we found greatly encouraging.

Our commiserations go to all family, friends and colleagues, each one of whom will miss Chris greatly in their own way.

His two daughters, Katie and Lucy, who have been of particular support during this time, have kindly advised us that the funeral will be 1pm on Friday 30th May 2025 at The Vale Crematorium, Fladbury, Worcestershire, WR10 2QR.

The service can also be viewed online; details can be found [here](#); for log-in details please email 48shrubbery@gmail.com at least 24 hours before the service.

CHRISTOPHER WILLIAM COOK STUART (1938 – 2025)
R.I.P.

Sic transit Gloria Mundi
Thus passes the Glory of the World