

## Stoneywell

Stoneywell, Polly Botts Lane, Ulverscroft, Leicestershire

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### Introduction

Set in the rocky landscape of the Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire, Stoneywell is a rare surviving example of an Arts and Crafts home, and opened to the public for the first time in February 2015. The cottage was built initially as a country residence by Ernest Gimson for his brother Sydney and his wife Jeannie. Ernest Gimson was a leading light of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Set in the rocky landscape of the Charnwood Forest in Leicestershire, Stoneywell is the realisation of one man's Arts and Crafts vision within a family home. Ernest Gimson, a leading light of the Arts and Crafts Movement, designed the cottage at the turn of the twentieth century for his brother Sydney.

The eleven rooms of the cottage sit on seven different levels. Outside, the semi-formal garden can be explored along grass paths, or the tarmacked drive that leads to the cottage, and there are some steep slopes in places. There is also eleven acres of ancient woodland, with a circular track running around it.

Mobile phone reception can be poor in places, but there are several volunteers located around the property carrying two-way radios and with quick access to land-line telephones. In an emergency, please make contact on the phone number above as soon as you are able, or dial 999.

Assistance dogs are welcome in all areas of the property.

### Arrival & Parking Facilities

The car park is accessible from Whitcroft's Lane (LE67 9QE), with brown signs in place nearby (oakleaf symbol). In the car park there are 40 hard-standing spaces on a flat, loose gravel surface, along with 20 spaces on the grass 'overflow' car park. Of the 40 hard-standing spaces, 5 spaces are allocated as wider spaces. These are signposted, and can be found on the right-hand side of the car park upon arrival.

All visitors are required to take the shuttle bus from the car park to Stoneywell – this is a short journey of 0.3 miles, and takes approximately three minutes. There is a small kick step at the side of the vehicle for getting on and off, with yellow poles on both sides. There is also an electric lift at the back of the bus for visitors unable to access via the sidestep.

Visitors using wheelchairs or personal mobility vehicles are advised to arrange drop-off at the property by a travelling companion, who can then park in the visitor car park and take the shuttle bus to rejoin the group. This must be arranged in advance by contacting the property team on the email address or telephone number listed above.



*Photo 1: The shuttlebus is accessed from the side door, with a small step.*

## WCs

There are three unisex toilets located at the Stables, which is where the shuttle bus drops off all visitors. There is level access.

The middle toilet is an accessible toilet, and includes a baby changing table on the right-hand wall. The door is 930mm wide. Inside, there is 900mm at the side of the toilet, and 1,270mm in front. The toilet seat is 465mm high and the direction of transfer onto the toilet is to the right. There are handrails on both sides of the toilet: the one on the right is fixed and the one on the left is moveable. Both handrails, as well as the two on either side of the washbasin, are white. There is a pull cord alarm which activates sound only.

There is a further handrail on the inside of the door. The door is locked with a thumb turn key.

The sink has a mixer tap and is approximately 723mm off the floor.

There are no hand-dryers in any of the toilets, but paper towels are provided. In each toilet, there is a waste bin for hand towels and a sanitary bin. All the bins can be moved if needed.



There is minimal natural lighting in the toilet facilities, but each cubicle has an electric light above the sink.

There is an additional toilet in the volunteer area of the cottage. Volunteers can provide access upon request.

## Stables

On disembarking from the shuttlebus, visitors will be greeted by a member of the welcome team, who can provide additional information or assistance for a visit.

There is level access around the Stables, but with a slight slope up to the toilets. The ground surface is of loose gravel. There is a wooden bench with arms on both sides in front of the Stables. Additional deck chairs are put out on sunnier days.



*Photo 2: The front of the Stables. The toilets are in the alcove to the left of the building*

## Cottage



There are three walking routes from the Stables to the Cottage: through the gardens with a steep, descending slope, along the gravel, undulating 'sheep track', or along the level, tarmacked drive. There is no vehicular access throughout the site. The walk from the Stables to the Cottage via the sheep track is approximately 130m. Via the drive, it is 250m.

The paths around the Cottage are grassed, with some paving near two wooden benches in front of the cottage. The sheep track is a mix of grass and loose stone, and there are some exposed tree roots in places.

The front door is 960mm wide and opens inwards, to the left. The door is often propped open in finer weather, and is otherwise opened by a volunteer.



*Photo 3: The front of the cottage as approached via the sheep track, with stone steps leading to a small seating area.*

There is one step leading from the front door into the dining room, which is the only cottage room on the 'ground floor'. To access the sitting room from the dining room, there are four stone steps with a wooden handrail on the right, followed by a wooden staircase comprising of four steps with a wooden handrail on the left. Access from the sitting room up to the master bedroom is via a narrow, spiral staircase of ten stone steps, with a rope handle on the left. This is the main visitor route around the cottage, but volunteers can provide access via the wider, main staircase on request.



*Photo 4: Looking down the stone staircase from the master bedroom, towards the sitting room.*

Upstairs, there is level access between the master bedroom and the nursery, and then four steps down onto the landing, with a wooden handrail on the left. Leading from the landing are the guest bedroom and display bathroom, with level access to both. A subsequent bedroom, the 'Well Room' can be accessed via five wooden steps, with a handrail on the right. The final bedroom, 'Olympus', is on the top floor of the cottage, and can be reached via a spiral, wooden staircase of 12 steps, with a fixed handrail on the right.

The main staircase runs from the landing back down to the dining room. It is made up of 15 stone steps. On the descent, it is a spiral staircase in an anti-clockwise direction, with a hanging rope handrail on the left.

Wheelchairs may be used in the dining room, but are not suitable for the other rooms in the cottage. Electric mobility scooters are not permitted inside the cottage.



*Photo 5: looking through the front door into the dining room, with the foot of the main staircase beyond.*

There is good natural light in most of the rooms, with electric ceiling light in use when required. There is seating available in most rooms of the cottage, including window seats, wooden chairs and on the beds. Suitable seating is distinguished from fragile chairs within the collection, which have hats, books and other items on them.

There are two ways to explore the Cottage: by guided tour or on a self-led visit. For the latter, volunteers are on hand both upstairs and downstairs, and are able to provide additional support or answer any questions in any room as required.

A portable induction loop is available on request, and should be arranged by contacting the property team prior to a visit.



## Tearoom

The tearoom is located at the back of the Stables building. There is a gradual slope from the front of the Stables into the tearoom, and there are three stone steps leading to a small, outdoor seating area. In this seating area there are two long, wooden tables with wooden stools.

The door into the tearoom opens inwards and to the left. It is 765mm wide, and has a metal latch 548mm from the ground. Inside the tearoom, there are four wooden tables with stools, and higher stools around a counter space, which is 956mm high. The lower tables and stools can be moved where necessary.

Refreshments are available from a serving point to the left of the tearoom, and will bring all orders to the table. There is an induction loop at the till point. Menus are available on chalkboards, but volunteers can provide additional advice including allergen information. Large-handled cutlery, double-handled mugs and straws are available on request.

There is also a small, second-hand bookshop inside the tearoom.

Picnics are welcome at any of the outdoor seating areas and throughout the garden. BBQs are not permitted anywhere on site.



*Photo 6: Part of the sheep track route from the Stables to the Cottage.*

## Garden and Woodland

Except for the main drive, all routes around the garden are grassed. There are a number of steep slopes around the garden, particularly leading from the walled garden to the west side of the cottage. There are ten stone steps leading from the end of the drive to the east side of the cottage, and four steps from the sheep track path down to the seating area in front of the cottage.

There are two gates around the garden: the first is at the entrance from the Stables, but this is typically open throughout the day. The other is at the entrance to the walled garden, and is a small wooden gate that opens inwards.

There is an earthen path around Stoneywell Woods with some tree route and bridges at intervals. There is also a small earthen path leading up to the Fort, with some exposed tree roots.

There are a number of wooden benches throughout the garden, including near the fort, inside the walled garden, orchard and tennis court, and near the garden sheds located by the entrance to the woodland.



*Photo 7: One of the wooden benches in the garden, this one located near the Fort.*

A volunteer host is available on select days to provide a guided tour of the garden.

In the north-east corner of the garden, halfway along the main drive, is the conical Well House, with a plunge pool in front of it. There is a grass slope leading to the plunge pool, which is approx. 2m deep and has no fencing around the water's edge.



## Contact details for more information

T: 01530 248040 (option 3)

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## Map

