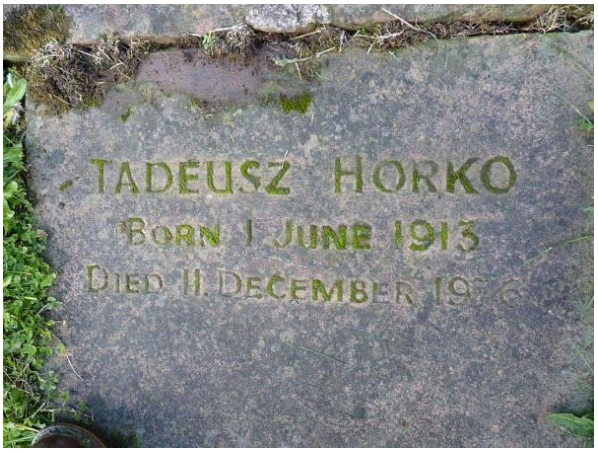
STONELEIGH HISTORY SOCIETY

Tadeusz Horko (1913–1976)



Tadeusz Horko's commemorative stone beside the Pridmore family sundial, St Mary the Virgin churchyard, Stoneleigh. Section B Row 5 Grave 1

He is commemorated here but is not buried in the churchyard.

Tadeusz Horko was born on 1 June 1913 in Sosnowiec, Poland. He studied journalism at the University of Warsaw, completing his studies in 1937. His career would take him from pre-war Poland to military service in Europe and, later, to a prominent role in the Polish-language press in Britain.

Tadeusz was the eldest of four children. His younger sister, Krystyna (1918–1991), became a literary translator. His two much younger brothers, Andrzej (1926–1944) and Maciej (1928–1944), served in the Polish underground resistance and lost their lives during the Warsaw Uprising of 1944. Andrzej was approximately 18 and Maciej just 16.

Following the invasion of Poland in 1939, Tadeusz made his way through Romania to France, where he joined the Independent Podhale Rifle Brigade. He took part in the Norwegian campaign at Narvik in 1940 and received a Polish decoration for bravery, identified in the Society's earlier research as the Cross of Valour. Following the fall of France, he reached Britain. Polish biographical research also records his work as a war correspondent with the Polish 1st Armoured Division.

In Britain, Tadeusz worked on Dziennik Żołnierza (Soldiers' Daily), a newspaper for Polish servicemen. A contemporary obituary credits him with founding and editing it in 1941, while a later Polish biographical account places his editorial leadership in 1942–1943; the precise founding chronology therefore remains uncertain. The newspaper was later combined with Dziennik Polski. From 1947 to 1959, Tadeusz edited the combined Dziennik Polski i Dziennik Żołnierza, a leading newspaper for Britain's Polish community. He subsequently edited Kurier Polski (1959–1960) and contributed to Polish-language journalism, including Radio Free Europe.

Tadeusz married Ingrid Irene R. Georke in Kensington in 1944; their daughter Krystyna was born in 1948. On 7 May 1955, he married Sheila Caffyn Pridmore, previously Patterson (born Sheila Caffyn), a social anthropologist and author whose work explored race relations and immigration in Britain. Sheila was the stepdaughter of Malcolm Kenneth Pridmore, a former Mayor of Coventry. It was through this family connection that Tadeusz came to be commemorated in Stoneleigh; there is no evidence that he lived in the village.

On 22 September 1960, Tadeusz became a naturalised British citizen. The London Gazette describes him as a journalist living at 8 Adelaide Crescent, Hove, Sussex. He died in Hove on 11 December 1976, aged 63. His death announcement named Sheila as his wife and Krystyna as his daughter, and recorded a private funeral. His name appears on the Horko family memorial at Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw, although his burial there has not yet been confirmed by a cemetery record. In Stoneleigh, he is separately commemorated on a flat stone surrounding the Pridmore family sundial in the churchyard of St Mary the Virgin. The two memorials reflect the Polish and British connections that shaped his life.



Horko family memorial, Powązki Cemetery, Warsaw.
Tadeusz is commemorated here; his burial has not been independently confirmed.

Sources and research notes: Stoneleigh History Society, Tales from the Churchyard, June 2026 meeting, pp. 10–12; Tadeusz Horko family-history timeline (Ancestry research); The London Gazette, 2 November 1960, p. 7976; The Daily Telegraph, December 1976 (death announcement and obituary); Polish biographical account citing W. Piątkowska-Stepaniak (2008); Society memorial photographs. The exact founding date of Soldiers' Daily remains disputed between sources. Further research: verify the place of burial against Powązki Cemetery records; a name on the family memorial alone does not establish interment.