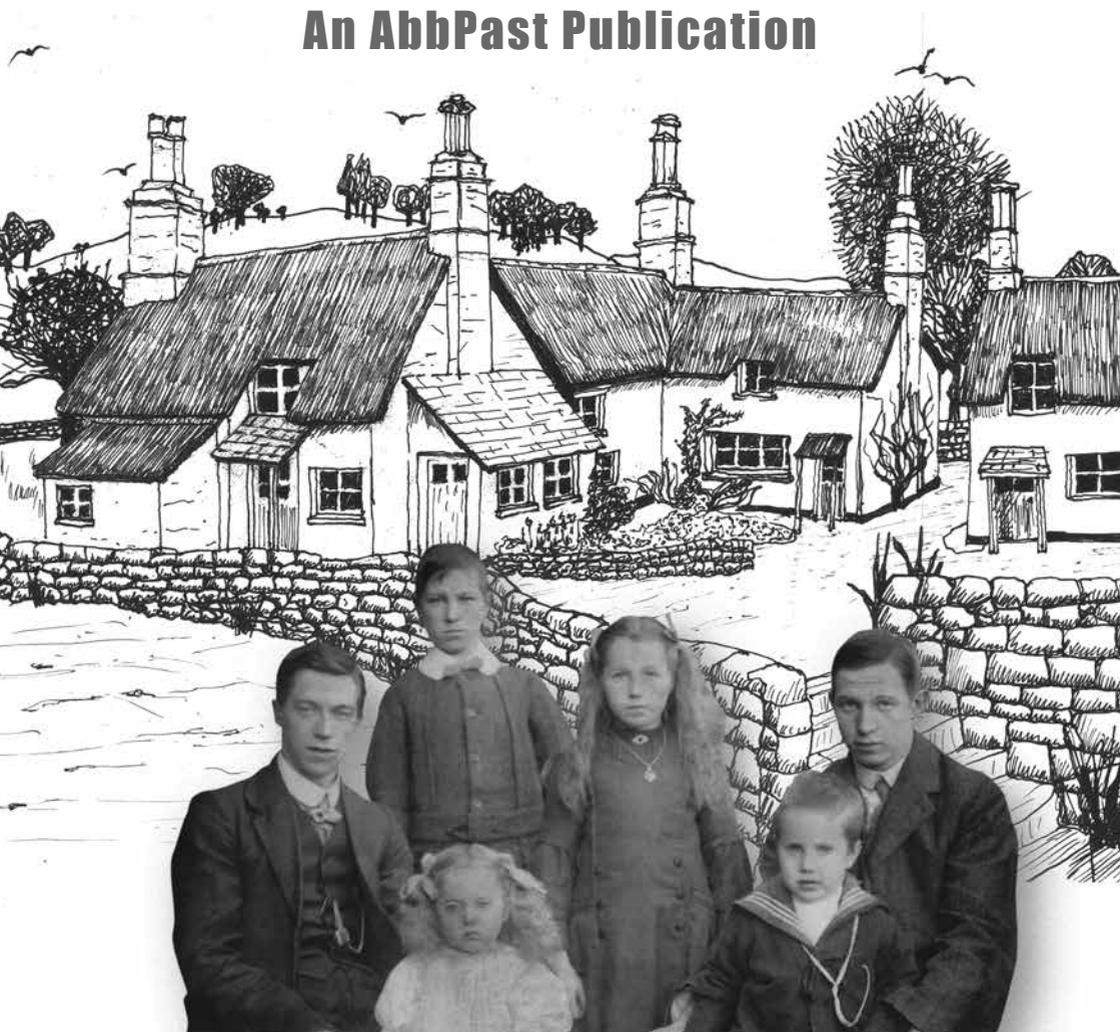


**THE ABBOTSKERSWELL VILLAGE HISTORY SERIES, 2**

# **HOUSES and FAMILIES**

**An AbbPast Publication**



## Introduction

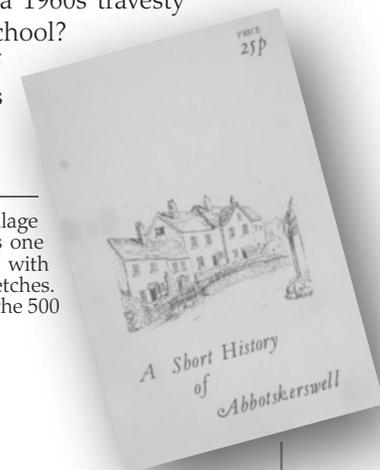
Welcome to our second volume in the *Abbotskerswell Village History Series*, we hope you have read the first one and are eagerly awaiting this one on village housing. It tells a long story of continuity and change related to industry and the village's inhabitants, both the important ones and the hardworking ones.

A number of issues confronted us in telling this story, one being road names; do you use the official ones or the colloquial ones, the historic ones or the modern ones. As before the answer has to be to use all of them to give the flavour of the story, so Buckpitt's Hill is the road that leads to Stoneman's Hill, Priory Road was Nunnery Lane until quite recently, Slade Lane possibly went all the way through the village at one time but now Odle Hill (and is that one word or two) is the top part, unless you use Mallands Lane at the very top. Our older residents will tell you Slade Lane actually passes in front of the Butchers Arms, passes Ladywell and becomes the bridle path alongside the *Court Grange* Copse. This leaves Oak Hill going up past Brooklands, and have you ever noticed the signpost at the top of that hill, called Great Oak?

2. *Houses & Families* tells the story of a village's homes and some of the more significant villagers. We were particularly keen to tell the story from long ago right up to today and then place it in its historical context because that is vital. It is important not to make judgements but to comment to help the reader understand events, so is Wilton Way a 1960s travesty or a major reason Abbotskerswell still has a school? With space being an issue there are a number of abbreviations used, if in doubt the explanation is in the Bibliography section.

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In 1. *Industry & Commerce* we paid tribute to previous village histories, well our recent research has produced another; this one was produced in 1979 by Abbotskerswell Women's Institute, with Eve Vickers the writer and featuring Molly Cheesewright's sketches. The 12 page A5 production was printed by the Denbury Press; the 500 booklet print run was soon sold out.



# Chapter 1

## The Village and its Housing

The centre page map, once again by Pete Cobbold, focuses on the village this time to show the main buildings described in this publication to help you locate them. The front cover is a stunning reconstruction of Prospect Place by Ced Bell; he brings to life the group of cottages which were on the site of today's Monk's Orchard, but were demolished in 1938. Thanks Ced. The family group shows the Stonemans who lived in Prospect Place in the early 1900s.

We are again indebted to the Heritage Lottery Fund for their grant to fund this publication and to Chris at Central @ Model Stores for agreeing to help with our distribution by stocking the series. I continue to owe a great debt to my fellow AbbPast Research Team members of Felicity, Nick and Trish, for their untiring efforts and support in the research and production of this publication. Kim at Kingfisher Print has produced another splendid publication that we hope you enjoy.

Peter Wade

[www.abbpast.co.uk](http://www.abbpast.co.uk)

IN the first publication of the 'Abbotskerswell Village History Series' it was shown that the village exists because of its site, which provided early settlers with the basics they required; these were water, wood and land. The housing would have evolved as skills and materials developed; from wood to wattle and daub and eventually to stone and brick. Once a successful and permanent site had been established the improvements to farming and housing would have followed. The Saxons rarely built in stone so the houses of early village of Carsewill, or Carsuella as the Normans called it, would have been simple wood framed structures, with wattle fencing panels infilling the gaps which were covered in a mixture of mud, straw and manure known as daub or cob, with a thatched roof.

Since the village name means "the spring where carse or watercress grows"<sup>1</sup> it is likely that the village would have centred around where the church is today with the cress beds near the stream. It would have mattered little to the villagers whether the land was owned by the King before 950, the Abbots of Horton or Sherborne until the Reformation, or landowners after that, since their job was to farm the land and survive. Housing would have continued to be simple until a better understanding of using stone evolved in the medieval period. However, as the village can still testify, cob structures continued to be built and lasted.



We can only guess at what Abbotskerswell in the Tudor times would have been like, but it would have centred on the Church and the main two streets of 'Slade Lane' and Stoneman's Hill. It is likely that for centuries the cob and thatch cottages would have been typical, with little change until the later 17<sup>th</sup> century when the creation of rooms in the open hall style of building began. The fact that there are over 20

*This lovely example of a stone base with a cob upper storey was revealed in 2015 when 1 Well Cottage was being re-rendered<sup>2</sup>*

listed dwellings in the village gives a clue to the age and construction of many of them. *Table 1* shows those listed which reflect the splendid examples of vernacular architecture in Abbotskerswell.

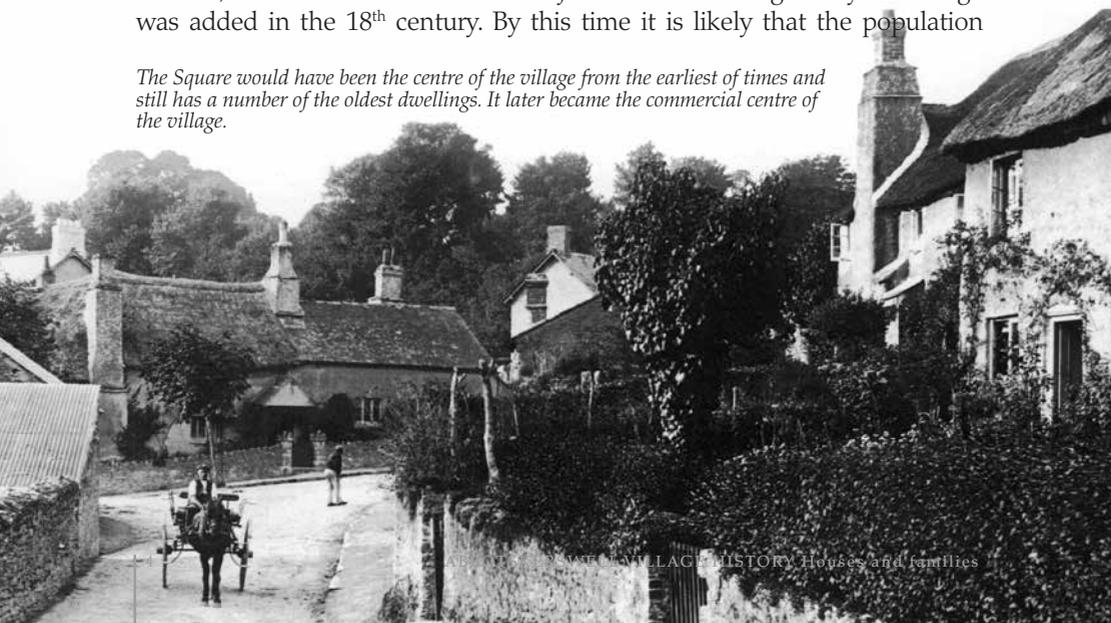
<b>16<sup>th</sup> Century</b>	Willow Dene and Willow Grove	Rock Cottage
No1 Town Farm	Court Farm	Mote Cottage
No 3 Rose Cottage	Monks Thatch	Town Farm
Mote House	Prospect Cottages	
<b>17<sup>th</sup> Century</b>	Two Mile Oak	Abbotsford
Elm Cottage	Corner Cottage with Cross View	Odle Hill Cottage
Yeoman's Cottage	Thatches and Park View	All's Well
<b>18<sup>th</sup> Century</b>	Church Cottages	1 & 2 Model Cottage

*Table 1*

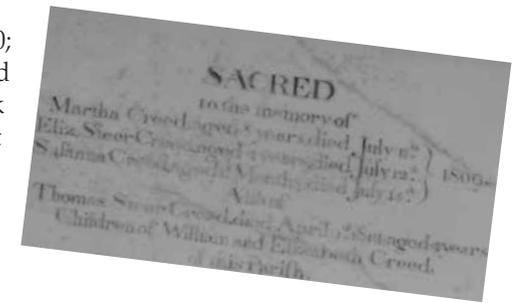
John Somers Cocks extensive research into pre-1700 Abbotskerswell is an invaluable source when looking into village life at that time and it is the main source for this aspect within this publication. If you want to read more about this time we suggest you obtain a copy of his village history, *Abbotskerswell Devon*, the proceeds of which go to the Church Fabric Fund. Copies are available in the church.

As the influence of the Abbots of Sherborne declined the village developed with the building of small farms, and the farmstead style of building such as Town Farm became typical. On the wealthier farms the houses would have been improved to include modern features and to reflect the wealth of the farmers; this seems evident at *Abbotsford* where a Georgian style frontage was added in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. By this time it is likely that the population

*The Square would have been the centre of the village from the earliest of times and still has a number of the oldest dwellings. It later became the commercial centre of the village.*



of Abbotskerswell was around 300; this was a world of high birth and death rates, where disease and lack of good quality food meant that child mortality in particular was very high. A walk around the churchyard reveals the number of young people buried there.



The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a time of great change with the agricultural and industrial revolutions influencing rapid development in those areas. More houses, including bigger ones for the new, wealthier farmers, were built; *The Manor House, Manor Farm, Laburnum Farm and Court Grange* show this. Following the introduction of the national census in 1801 the steady rise in population can be seen, as shown in *Table 2*.

*Child mortality is graphically shown on a Church memorial where three of the Creed Family, and these were wealthy people, died within 4 days of each other. We must assume this to have been a contagious disease such as measles or diphtheria.*

Year	Population	Year	Population	Year	Population
1801	389	1871	453	1951	*3
1811	379	1881	435	1961	*3
1821	437	1891	431	1971	*3
1831	442	1901	457	1981	*3
1841	433	1911	474	1991	*3
1851	460	1921	433	2001	1473
1861	437	1931	642	2011	1560

*Table 2 (\*3 see references on page 70)*

By the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the quality of housing was beginning to improve for all classes of people, with stone/brick replacing cob in construction, piped water, street lighting, electricity and sewers arriving and flush toilets being added to houses. The 1930s saw the arrival of bungalows and by the 1960s private housing developments such as *Odle Hill Grove* and *Wilton Way*, followed by the infill estates of *Mallands Meadow, The Paddocks* and *Lakeland*. Abbotskerswell has become a 'dormitory village', where people live but work in the towns, brought about by the widespread ownership of cars and the availability of mortgages for working people. By the 21<sup>st</sup> century we have seen re-development occur with the *Court Grange, The Priory* and *Manor Farm* sites changing their use and two large estates in the offing near The Old Cyder Works and at Wolborough.

# Chapter 2

## The Building Eras

A walk round Abbotskerswell quickly shows that there are examples of houses from a great many time periods, therefore this chapter will chart the eras in which those houses were built, looking at their social context as well as the design and construction materials.

### 1450 - 1600

In his village history John Somers Cocks states: "of the houses surviving today though usually in altered form, amongst the earliest, dating actually from the previous century [15<sup>th</sup> century], are *Rock Cottage* shown below, described as 'late-medieval', and *No. 1 Town Farm Cottage* of roughly the same date ..."<sup>1</sup>, therefore making these houses, together with the Church and Church House, the oldest buildings in the village.



These houses would have followed a traditional building style, with a limestone foundation base with walls of cob, solid roof timbers and a roof thatched with rye straw. They would have had a main room with an open roof space and a central fire-hearth with the smoke escaping through a hole in the roof, which was useful for smoking meat, and animal enclosures at one end; *Rock Cottage* still has its bread ovens. By the early 1500s the building of farmsteads began, those of *Mote Cottage*, *No 3 Rose Cottage* and *Monk Thatch* remain.



This view of *Mote Cottages* c1900 clearly shows how a barn was attached to a house. Originally there would have been a partition between the living and the animal section, which was later removed.

However, times were changing as farmers became more prosperous, so these houses would have had chimneys

and fireplaces added and the open roof would have seen a first floor added to provide bedrooms. 1. *Industry & Commerce* revealed that employment was almost exclusively self-sufficient farming. They had a diet of bread, beans, meat occasionally, vegetables from their garden with cider and ale to drink.

Towards the end of this period village additions were *Town Farm*, *Mote House*, *Prospect Cottage* (actually there were around ten cottages in this part of the village), *Willow Dene* and *Willow Grove* as a single farmstead and the *Abbot's Court Farm*.

### 1600 - 1800

Since the land had been owned by the Church there was no manor house in the village with *Court Farm* acting as the main farm; this was often known as a Barton or Home Farm. The 1857 Billings directory refers to the sale of the Court Barton estate by the Tuckett family. The Donn Map of 1765 shows *Whiddon House* as the only substantial house in the parish, although the house from that period has been replaced. This period saw a number of buildings constructed, being a mix of new farmsteads and workers' cottages. The *Two Mile Oak* public house was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century as a 3 roomed farmhouse, and inside it can clearly be seen that the end part was a barn to the house. It was probably linked to the Singmore Farm with its barns at what is now *Ruby Farm*. *Abbotsford* was built in a similar way and would develop into a substantial farm with barns. There would have been numerous workers' cottages at that time. A number have survived including *Thatches* with *Park View*, *Yeomans* (Formerly *Emmett's Cottage*, *All's Well* and *Elm Cottages* with *Corner Cottage*.

An interesting group of houses built during the latter part of the 18<sup>th</sup> century were the *Model Cottages*. Numbers 1 & 2 were built to an estate-type of style and were a 'model' for better workers' homes, hence the name; it is a



A great view of a number of these houses c1905. L to R are the ramshackle *Well Cottages* (now demolished), *Elm Cottages*, *Town Cottages* and *Town Farm*. Again a scene that would have been little different in the 17<sup>th</sup> century.

shame that their builders are unknown so we do not know who was the enlightened landlord who tried to improve living conditions. What is also interesting is that the move towards stone and slate and away from the traditional cob and thatch had begun.

### 1800 – 1900

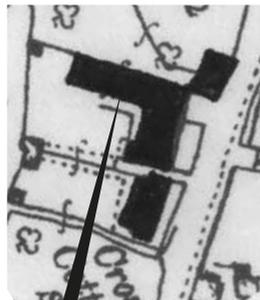
The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw a very different style of house building in Abbotskerswell, when the wealthier classes decided to build larger houses in a village setting. Some of these will be covered, together with their owners in later chapters. The industrial changes in Britain created a new group of merchant businessmen who, together with the landed classes, had the wealth to build new houses away from the rapidly growing towns. One of these families, the Creeds, were responsible for building some of the grander farm houses in this century; these were *Manor Farm* and *Whiddon Farm*. Both were built in the 1840s, when the Creeds were buying a great deal of the land in the parish and new farming techniques required better buildings. The Creeds were not farmers, but wanted good tenants, hence the farm buildings as the photograph of *Manor Farm* when it was still working reveals. For over a hundred years it was in the hands of the Buckpitt family as tenants and then owners.



Manor Farm



Nos 1 & 2  
Western Farm



Nos 3 & 4

The three big houses built were *The Manor House* by William Creed, *Mallands Villa* by William Henley and *Court Grange* by the widow of the first Marcus Hare in the village. Also during this century came *Odle Hill House*, *Westbury* and *Heathcot*, all built for the merchant classes. *The Vicarage*, now *Glebe House* is a splendid 19<sup>th</sup> century example of its kind.

*Model Cottages* Nos 1 & 2 were followed later by Nos 3 & 4; the 1839 Tithe Map far left shows 1 & 2 but where 3 & 4 will be built, is a barn and to its right is

the long lost *Western Farm*. Whereas the 1886 OS map, below right, now shows just the barn remaining with a whole new block replacing the barns. This means Nos 3 & 4 were built between 1840 and 1880, hence their rather different and larger Georgian style.

The majority of housing needs were for working people, therefore the building of stone and slate roofed cottages to replace the older cob/thatch ones would have occurred. These would probably have been *Well Cottages*, *Sunny Bank*, *Peartree Cottage*, *Grange View* and *South View* (originally known as *Burrige Cottages*). The old cottages would have seen some improvement with extensions added, but they would still have been very basic accommodation, with no running water or toilets.

### 1900 - 2016

There have been a number of distinct phases of building in this period which cover a rapidly changing period and the evolution of the village housing stock continues.

### Council Houses

At the end of World War 1 there was a realisation that life could and should not return to the way it had been pre-1914. Worker's rights, both in employment and housing, became a major concern of government; the expression of the time was 'homes fit for heroes'. The 1924 Housing Act offered local councils government subsidies to provide decent homes for families on low incomes, this was known as the Wheatley Scheme; the consequence of this was the building of large council house estates in towns, such as Broadlands in Newton Abbot. However, it was also realised that better houses were needed in rural communities, where rented properties were often very old and in poor condition, both of which were true in Abbotskerswell. In 1914 one of the cottages at *Prospect Place* was given a 'Closing Down Order' so that the tenant could be removed and the cottage demolished.

In 1913 the Parochial Committee (PCom) didn't believe any new houses were needed in the village for workers, but the members were farmers not workers. However, a story in the MDA in 1925 revealed the extent of the problem. It relates to *Odle Hill Cottage*, which was two cottages then, but one was derelict with a collapsed roof, the other housed Mrs Rowe, a widow with 6 children. Its owner, village carpenter John Partridge, was trying to evict her on the grounds that the house was unsafe and he needed to make repairs. Mrs Rowe refused to leave, despite the conditions which were described as "exceedingly dangerous" by the Medical Officer of Health, because she wanted to stay in

the village but there was nowhere else to go. The case did seem to create a realisation that there was an urgent need for more housing and the RDC asked for names and suggestions for possible housing sites. The PCom's suggestion was Barnfield, the Townsend Meadow field that contained the old smithy barn, however the RDC rejected this site in 1926 and it wasn't until June 1927 that the Ministry of Health finally sanctioned the purchase of Barnfield for four houses. Tendering was quickly organised and was accepted from Messrs Carpenter & Mayne, who bid £1800 to build four 'council houses'; the land had cost £125 and each house cost £470.



*Barnfield: the first council houses whose design provided a new experience for working people. The ground floor had a sitting room and a scullery, off which was an indoor toilet, coal house and larder, there was also a coal fired copper to boil water. Upstairs were three bedrooms and a bathroom.*



*This 1930s postcard shows these four groups of houses. 1. Laburnum Terrace 1-4 • 2. Orchard Terrace 9-16 3. Orchard Terrace 5-8 • 4. Orchard Terrace 1-4*

The initial building was obviously a success, as in March 1928 additional land at Barnfield was bought for £150. The first four of 44 council houses that would be sited in the north of the village were constructed next; Borthay Orchard had been purchased from the Henleys and these four houses were at right angles to Ford Road, and were known as 1-4 Orchard Terrace. In early 1929 the PCom applied for permission to build eight more houses; by April the Parish Council (PC) were recommending to Rural District Council (RDC) that they bought the rest of Henley's orchard to build 10 non-parlour houses like those at Barnfield. There would be four on Ford Lane (Road), constructed by JW Cox and Son at a cost of £1537.12s. There would also



*Ruby Cottages, in Prospect Place, were described as "... in a deplorable condition ... walls were old and worn out and the thatched roof leaked."<sup>2</sup> This picture seems to confirm that.*



*Above is one of the cottages of Prospect Place, the others were on the bank where today's Monks Orchard is. The walled gardens that were in front of them can still be seen. Below is another view of Ruby Cottages.*



*Well Cottages were named in the nine houses to be cleared. Despite an attempt to have this revoked, they too were demolished.*

be six on 'Manor Road', once again constructed by Messrs Carpenter & Mayne at a cost of £2334; these ten houses were to be known as 5-8 and then 9-14 Orchard Terrace.

In March 1935 a plan for yet more new council houses was lodged with the RDC. By January 1937 four had been built, shown in the photograph, with twelve more completed in the late 1930s; it was agreed to call these 1-16 Laburnum Terrace. The urgency in building appears to be linked to the RDC's house 'clearance areas' in the village; 14 houses and outbuildings had been condemned, with 30 persons to be displaced. The PC set the rents at 9 shillings per week, although the smaller houses on Orchard Terrace were only 6s 8d.

As mentioned, a major reason for the building of these council houses was the poor quality of the existing properties for working people. Some, like *Odle Hill Cottages*, had been improved, but most had not and would soon disappear. In May 1937 the MDA carried a major article on the RDC's decision to demolish houses in its area, nine of which were in Abbotskerswell.

By April 1938 *Prospect Cottages* were in the process of being demolished, when they caught fire, causing their thatch to burn so aggressively that the sparks flew 100 feet in the air and endangered other thatched cottages. In a comment that is certainly true today, the MDA wrote: "It was a very great pity these cottages could not have been made

tenable, as it spoils the village.”<sup>3</sup> Ced Bell’s reconstruction on the front cover uses extensive source material to show the cottages as they were, since no photograph exists. Also lost from the village was the thatched wing on the end of the then Post Office, in The Square.

The building of council houses continued after World War II, with six more added in 1953 at Barnfield, on the land purchased in 1928, which had been used as allotments for the first four houses. In 1953 four more were added on Laburnum Terrace and in the early 1970s two more, plus eight houses and bungalows filled the gaps on Ford Road and Orchard Terrace. In 1980 Mrs Thatcher’s Government introduced the Housing Act which included the ‘Right to Buy’ for council house tenants, which has led to the vast majority of them being bought and they are now private housing.

## Bungalows

Some other new houses had been built in the early years of the century. In 1906 village baker, Tom Cann, bought six fields on the main road for £1690, including Kiskey Meadow on which he constructed seven cottages in 1907. They were known as Cann’s or Kiskey Cottages at the time, now as *Hillside Cottages*. By the standards of the day they were splendid stone houses with Bovey brick detail and a slate roof; they were built with a living room, parlour, scullery and indoor toilet downstairs and three bedrooms and a bathroom upstairs. Also impressive were two houses built in the 1910s on Nunnery Lane (Priory Road) on a piece of land bought from the church called Beacon Hill. *The Beacon* and *Rockstone* were built overlooking the village, *School House* was provided by the Board School, whilst Henleys used red brick for *Oakleigh* (now *Henley Lodge*).

One of the reasons for the determined stance to demolish old properties was the style of new houses being built. In 1906 Henleys introduced a style that is now very familiar in Abbotskerswell, the bungalow. The lodge to



*Salem Bungalow*<sup>4</sup>

the new Cyder Works entrance was so unusual, that for many years it was simply known as ‘*The Bungalow*’, but now as *Gable Cottage*. Next came one of those lovely village novelties, *Salem Bungalow*, which stood next to the Church lych-gate and is today the site of *The Gatehouse*; it was of wooden construction. Built in the early 1910s by Mrs Hare of *Court Grange* for George

Stoneman, who was a gardener there; his daughter Phyllis continued to live in the house until the 1970s. By the 1980s it had fallen into disrepair and sadly was eventually demolished.

By 1929 Beechcroft had been added at the entrance to the village, but the 1930s vogue for bungalows is best illustrated at Two Mile Oak where a string of them were constructed both on the main road and down Whiddon Road, known as Windyridge then; in 1937 *The Cherries*, *Baroda*, *The Nook*, *The Glen* and *Benoch* had all been built. In July 1939 seven on the main road across the road from The Two Mile Oak Inn had been approved by the RDC and had been built by 1941; although many of them have been altered *Glen Garth*, *Mizpah*, *Riber* and *Selbourne* still carry their original names and give a really good impression of the style of the bungalows of the time. Of course bungalows and new houses had also been built within the village in this phase of development with *Rosebank*, *Crystalwood*, *Orchard Cottage*, and *Ashley Priors* all being added. Building also began on Nunnery Lane with *Pencrigg*, *Ashfield* and *Hillborough* constructed by the 1930s.

The style continued into the 1960s, particularly on Slade Lane, with *Berrington* (*Kinepeo*) which was thatcher Gordon Warne’s second bungalow of that name, and below *Monks Thatch* are *Priors*, *Little Orchard* and *Nirvana*. At that time Mr Davis built *Nutbush* (*Fir Trees*) on Grange Lane, where later his son Brian ran a smallholding, keeping chickens and milking the cows at the local markets; his pay for this was to keep the milk, which was used to make cream and feed pigs. A new trend around this time was the evolution of caravans into static/mobile homes, which now tend to be called Park Homes. George Hutchings used some of his farm land on the main road to create a caravan site in the early 1960s and this has developed into Abbotshill Park which now has over 40 homes; Grange Park has also developed in a similar way with six park homes in the old *Court Grange Quarry*.

## The Estates

Perhaps the first ‘estate’ was not in the village, but at Stoneyhill, which was built by the Stoneycombe Lime and Stone Company for its workers. They had constructed four houses at Maddacombe Terrace in 1924 and in 1932 WH Osborne & Son of Ipplepen built the first four houses at Stoneyhill; by 1937 22 had been constructed having electricity and it had a post box!

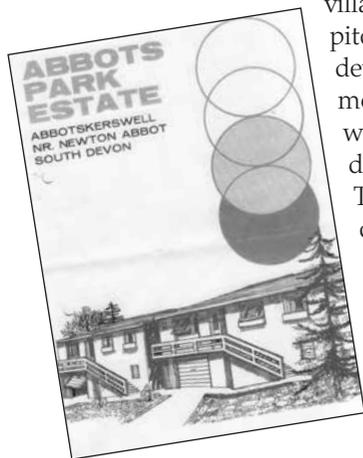
However, it was the 1960s which saw Britain’s economy growing and the post-war years of austerity ending, and a new idea saw the creation of private housing developments in villages. This was made possible by better

wages for workers and improved transport, especially with the ownership of cars. This period saw huge changes in the housing stock of the village and in reality created a new Abbotskerswell. The demise of the Cider Works meant that land that had previously been orchards now became available and was readily sold for development. Some villagers feel that it was this phase that 'spoil' the village, with modern urban designs being used that were out of keeping with traditional design. Equally it can be argued that without these houses the village school would have closed and possibly the shop and church; Torbryan perhaps proves this point.

The 1960s saw a rapid rise of these developments with *Odle Hill Grove* being the first, when M & H Developers completed the design work and then South West Builders (Torquay) Ltd built 35 houses, which were a mix of houses and bungalows constructed between 1961 and 1964. At the same time AGB New Homes Plus, run by Alec Bearne, acquired an orchard near Henleys and in 1962 began marketing 'Manorforde Orchards', which would begin with 24 bungalows at *Manor Close*. Mr & Mrs Anthony bought their bungalow in the Close in 1962 for £3350 and even persuaded the builder to turn it at an angle. Across the orchard *Forde Close* was built, this was also bungalows, and over 20 of various designs were built in 1963.

These three estates were relatively small but the MDA revealed a plan in 1962 that would change the village forever when it described what would be known as 'Abbots Park'. Exeter Architects Lucas, Roberts and Brown submitted the plans for an anonymous developer, this was actually Gerald Burley who lived at Laburnum House, and his brother George. The plan was for the construction of 200 dwellings with a mix of maisonettes, bungalows, semi and detached houses; in addition there would be a shopping centre,

village green, tennis courts, football and cricket pitches and a village hall, all of which the developer would contribute a large sum of money towards. The style of the dwellings was described as "a contemporary style but designed to fit into this type of development".<sup>5</sup> Talking to the MDA the developer commented: "It is hoped this scheme would be in keeping with the environments of the village .... Bad development can ruin an area and alter people's lives for the worse. It is my intention that this development will be something in which all can take pride".<sup>6</sup>



It is difficult not to laugh when reading this, as what was created was nothing like the vision. The houses were certainly 'contemporary', but the design was agreed by an Architects Panel\* rather than local planners; the one expression used by the developer that rang true was that they would be "high density". There was much local opposition to the plan but eventually Burleys were successful and work began in 1966 with a new road driven from Slade Lane, near Bottom Bridge, up to Court Grange Lane. This was named *Wilton Way*, after George Wilton who had lived at Laburnum Farm. All the roads on Abbots Park would have names related to Abbotskerswell's history.

Burleys began building with numbers 1-31 *Wilton Way*, *Wilton Close*, *Berry Close* (after the meadow that had been there) and the top part of *Grange Road*, in the shadow of *Court Grange*, with its split level houses and bungalows. It is interesting that these houses do have some architectural merit, with various modern styles used with unusual roof lines; they were the work of local architect Mervyn Seal. His 'butterfly' houses have become famous, as has his Oaklands development in Dawlish. These were ultra-modern houses, "excitingly designed to provide a real adventure in living. The rooms are light and airy, and there are luxuriously fitted kitchens and bathrooms"<sup>7</sup>. They came complete with SWEB's new 'Electricaire' warm air central heating. It was also claimed that they offered "modern living in an old world atmosphere ... the special landscape design of this estate ensures that it blends with its enchanting setting"<sup>8</sup>; however, there are many who would disagree.

These had been constructed by 1969, which allowed the second phase of the development to take place, which was of a different style altogether; this was the bottom of *Grange Road* (odd nos. 15-39) and *Wilton Way*



The Burley Homes advertising literature offered three types of house, which can all be seen if you look closely at the bottom part of the estate.

(odd nos. 33 to 43). This part of the plan should have also involved the construction of three shops, but none emerged. It has been suggested that by this stage Burleys had become so disenchanted by the aggravation that they were getting, that they gave up on the interesting house designs and opted for the "high density", rather box-shaped designs. It is hard to imagine that these were the work of Mr Seal.



The third phase, completed in 1972, saw the construction of *Wilton Way* (even nos. 44 to 64), *Court Road*, *Corn Park Road* and *St Marys Close*; once again using village history as the inspiration for the road names. The promotional material of the house styles available was very different from the

earlier phases, the existing modern styling was gone for type BH11. The photograph below shows this phase of *Abbots Park* partly finished with the bungalows on *Court Road* and *Corn Park Road* completed. Three of the five bungalows on *St Marys Close* have been built with the



July 1972 view of *Abbots Park*<sup>9</sup>

footings of the 14 houses just going in, held up by one of the many builders' strikes of that time. The last element was the bungalows on *Wilton Way*, which was just beginning on the photo. In total Burleys built 132 dwellings on *Abbots Park*, but they seemed to run out of energy as four parcels of land on the estate were never built on and would be used by later developers.

As *Abbots Park* was nearing completion the activity moved back to the newly established *Manor Road*, and in 1971 Chown Developments received planning permission for nine detached dormer bungalows and 1971 built the first four before the company failed and the rest were completed by another builder.

## The 'In fill' Years

By the mid-1970s the four large estates had been constructed, with the *Abbots Park* development in particular changing the nature of the village, helping to create a 'dormitory' community. The rest of what has followed has been filling in the spare areas of land within the village, with the 1980s being a busy time for builders.

The largest of these projects was the two site development of Whitehouse Construction on *Wilton Way* and *Grange Road*. In 1985 14 'luxury' bungalows were built on *Wilton Way*, across the road from the Burley *Abbots Park* houses on land not used by them, despite having received planning approval on the site in 1980; these were followed by ten more, plus two houses, on *Grange Lane* in 1987. The first of a number of small scale projects was the four house



This photograph<sup>10</sup> of No 9 *Corn Park Road* in the snows of 1984 shows the beginning of the project with the rather unusual method of the two ends being built first, with the three middle ones built over the next few years.

redevelopment of the Sinclair's Garage site on *Slade Lane* in 1983, when Concord Ltd built *Emmetts Place*. This was soon followed by the beginning of five houses on *Corn Park Road* in 1984 by Gilbert Eales Builders. The site was originally to be part of the *Abbots Park* estate with seven houses in the style of those on *St Marys Close*, however, they were never built.

In 1985 Ilsham Valley Contractors tackled the rather wet area next to the Village Hall, constructing six houses by 1988; it was named *Lakeland*, not because the site was so wet but because the land had been owned by Charles Lake. Next was Fondement Ltd., of Exeter, who constructed seven detached houses in 1986 in what had been the grounds of The Manor House, this was called *The Paddocks*. As seemed usual at that time, it appears that the builders were promptly declared bankrupt when they had finished. John Somers Cocks view of this site was that: "planners and builders have contrived to create an enclave in a kind of state-of-the-art Home Counties Stockbroker Tudor style wholly incongruous in a Devon village."<sup>11</sup> Also in 1986 Midas Construction, under the name of Midwell Homes, built three detached houses on the site of the long demolished Prospect Place.

This was a busy period of building with many village plots being developed. In 1985 more Burley land was developed when the last of the Laburnum Farm site was finally sold to a developer who employed Gilbert Eales to



*Manor Gardens* takes shape

create *Laburnum Court* by building five houses and a flat. In 1988 the site at the top of the village was finally built on after a ten year planning debate, this was to be *Mallands Meadow*. Knapp & Son Ltd built four detached houses in a modern brick style, but failed in 1992 to extend the development on the land behind the site, having to

be content with just building the one more house. A former orchard at the end of Corn Park Road was being developed by Gilbert Eales from 1990, when he built seven detached brick houses at *The Orchard*; two more were added on land from *Monks Thatch*.

There are also three large scale redevelopments of former sites in the village. The first was Clennon Developments Ltd's cleverly crafted 40 apartment site at *The Priory*; opened in 1987 it is a splendid example of what can be done with redundant old buildings rather than knocking them down. The story will be told in detail in 3. *Religion & Education*. A totally new style of housing was introduced with the redevelopment of the former *Manor Farm* site to create *Manor Gardens* in 1995-6. Landmark Developments Ltd thoughtfully used the old stone farm barns to create six barn conversions and added 12 new dwellings on the site; but why is there a Tollhouse amongst them? The last major construction project was that of the conversion of *Court Grange* in 2003, which protected the village's grandest house, the detail of which is described in Chapter 5. On a smaller scale was the redevelopment of the *Court Farm* farmyard in c.1988, when T Brook & Co. converted the barns into five dwellings and added three new ones on a site to be known as *Court Farm Barns*.

There have been numerous individual houses built on garden and orchard sites such as *Brookside*, *Chimneys*, *Pippins*, and *Pine Tree Lodge*. This seems set to continue as the desire for large gardens diminishes and the price of land increases. Perhaps the architectural low point in this infill housing came in the 1970s with the construction of *Southpointe Cottage*, *Abbotsford Orchard* and *Wellin*; sadly houses with remarkably little character for a village setting.

## Conversions

No description of a modern Devon village would be complete without a mention of its individual barn conversions. However, some are not as obvious as it seems; certainly *Willow Cottage* is an obvious 1990 conversion of an old farm barn, as is *Abbots Barn* at *Monks Thatch*. *Mote House* was a house with an attached barn into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century before the barn was absorbed into the house. This, together with *Willow Cottage*, is shown in a photograph earlier in this chapter. However, less obvious are *Abbotskerswell Cottages* on Ford Road which were the cider and apple storage barns for *Abbotsford* until converted in the 1920s; and then there is *Carse Mill*. This could lead to an argument but there is no evidence or real explanation for it being a mill and since it was called *Carsevilla* in the late 1800s, it is likely that it too had previously been a barn.



This view of the farmyard of Court Farm shows the sites of two of the conversions.

On the *Mallands* site there are *Coach House* and *Horse-shoe Cottage*, whose names give away their uses to the house. Then just down the road are *Jasmine Cottage* and *The Old Forge* which were the barns of the Partridge family, who were carpenters. *Odle Hill House*, *Monks*

*Thatch*, *The Manor House* and *Abbotsford* all have converted old barns, with the one at *Odle Hill* being a particularly fine three bay linhay. *The Barn* on *Vicarage Lane* was once the outbuildings of the *Vicarage* until the 1970s.

Other conversions include *Court Cottage* which was a former Baptist Chapel, the *Old Post Office*, *Court Grange* which used some of the old outbuildings, *The Tradesman's Arms* is once again a house on *South View*, whilst *Court Farm* became the *Court Farm Inn*. In *The Square Staging Post* was once a smithy and then a shop, and of course the old Co-op has had several uses before becoming *Babbinis*. It also seems likely that in the near future *The Butchers Arms* will become a house once again.

## The Future

The present PC's policy on new building is that it should only be allowed within the existing village, called the 'Planning Envelope', so building in a garden will be fine but *Linden's Homes* plan to build on the land on *Manor Road* is classified as outside the existing envelope despite being inside *Manor Road*. Obviously the impact of *Teignbridge's Local Plan* with its proposed massive housing development at *Wolborough*, with its 1500 houses, would have huge implications for the village, both positive and negative. Whilst most people want to keep *Abbotskerswell* as a village there is little doubt that the planners intend to bring *Newton Abbot* within very close proximity, but leaving a small gap to "prevent coalescence with *Abbotskerswell*"<sup>12</sup>. The plan is a 20 year one so it maybe some time before things become clear.

# Chapter 3

## Village Services

In a rural community such as Abbotskerswell modern services to improve life would have been slow to arrive, and possibly even opposed, seen as changing the old ways. Thankfully the 'important' villagers, such as Mrs Hare and Rev. Dence, were influential in seeing the need for improvement and often paying for it. A good example of this was reported in 1897 with the issue of the right of villagers to wash the entrails from pigs' bellies in the stream at Court Shute (next to the modern Parish Rooms); it had been stopped by the RDC but many felt they had no right to interfere and there was no harm in it, even though people took drinking water from the stream. Inevitably by the end of the Victorian era public health issues, long discussed and improved in towns, began to become debated locally with improvements eventually occurring. It is worth looking at these services and how they developed in the village.

### Water

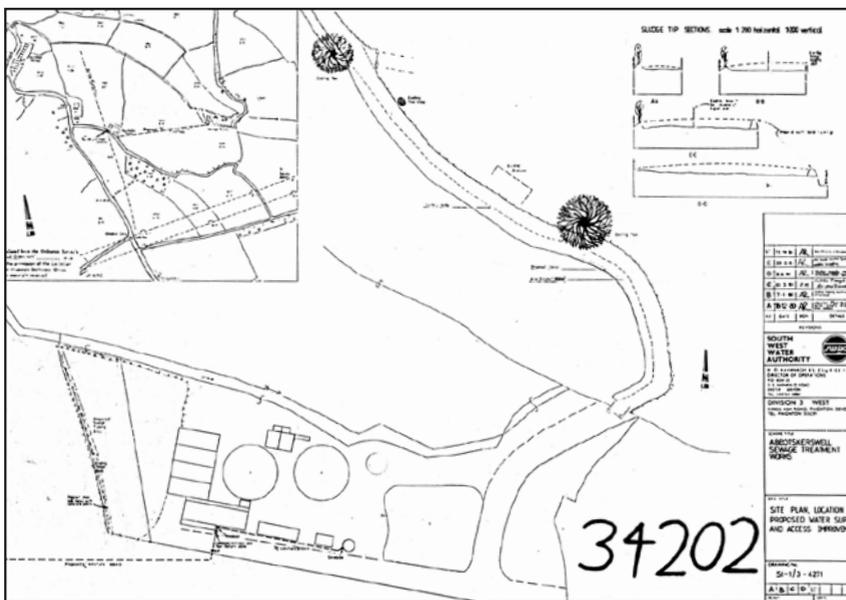
Abbotskerswell had a good natural supply of water from its various springs, streams and wells; in 1900 these were still the only supply of water in the village. In 1904 the PC noted that most water came from two springs and three wells and this was unsatisfactory; only Ladywell was of good quality, but that was little used because of its position. The main source was at Court Shute (where the pig entrails were washed) but that was easily polluted from surface water. This source rises in the fields above the old cider works, passes through *Abbotsford*, would have wandered along the road before passing *Court Farm* and meeting the water from Ladywell at the Bottom Bridge. The fact that Henleys put their waste in the stream, making it smell terribly, and it also passed through a number of farmyards, meant the water was rarely clean. Many houses had their own wells, the fact that two groups of cottages were called *Well Cottages* speaks for itself, although "...there is a failure of supply in most ... wells every summer, resulting in great inconvenience to many parishioners."<sup>1</sup>

However, the dangers of dirty water were clearly understood by 1900, so the demands for a clean supply to houses was growing. In 1902 a village committee on water supply was formed and commented: "that this meeting recommends the PC to negotiate with Torquay Council and Paignton Council, as to the terms each would be willing to supply the parish with a new water supply"<sup>2</sup>. The hope was to link the village to the Aller Reservoir. At last in June 1904 a plan was approved with a loan provided by the RDC; P Wilton & Co of Purton, Wilts successfully tendered for the contract at a cost of £727 16s 8d. By March 1906 it was reported that Wolborough Hill and Aller Reservoirs were open and providing a water supply to the village; Torquay Corporation was the provider. The next 20 years were a constant battle by the house owners to get their property linked to the supply, hopefully at the RDC's expense; although as late as 1937 the connection of the new Council Houses had still been in doubt.

### Sewage

Once the supply of clean water was established the next need was for effective sewage treatment, rather than using cesspits in gardens or the actual water courses, which were the usual methods. The new Parochial Committee, whose responsibility it was, began to make improvements to the polluted streams and in 1906 some sewer pipes were being laid. It was noted in 1913 that the village stream that ran into a gutter adjoining the public road on Slade Lane, which was partly a covered stone drain and partly an open concrete gutter, was very offensive; this was because of Henleys' cider and the Palks' abattoir waste, as well as household sewage. A new sewer pipe from Odle Hill Cross to the School was planned to resolve this. There had been plans for a few years to create a proper sewerage system with treatment tanks, and in 1913 the land was finally bought from Mrs Hare by the RDC, for a sewage outfall at a cost of £140; this was at the end of Vicarage Lane, on Rydon Lane. In 1914 the new sewer was constructed by Messrs Best Bros. at a cost of £179 3s 3d.

Over the next ten years a good number of properties were linked to the system, in 1923 it was the turn of *Rockstone*, *The Beacon* and *Hillside Cottages*. However, very soon it was clear that the system needed improving as the water in the stream below the outfall was not fit for cattle to drink; consequently in 1925 £438 was spent in outfall works improvement. In 1927 the RDC proposed a major new scheme to cost £2250, with a new outfall works and with 110 of the village's 127 houses to be on the new scheme.



The works, still at Rydon Lane, had two trickling filters that purified the waste water and settling beds for the solids as the diagram shows.

The system remained like this until the major house building of the 1970s required improvement; in 1984 a pump well and filter tower were added. However, the continued growth of the village meant that the sewage treatment works were closed in 1994, with the land being sold to Michael Buckpitt of *Manor Farm*, who cleared the site for the barns for his new farm.

## The Public Baths

An interesting by-product of the new water and sewage system was the village baths; this building is now the Parish Rooms. The story of how Rev. Dence of *Court Grange* created a public toilet and baths for the village will be told in *4. Pubs, Clubs and Governance*; they were in existence from 1929 until 1940.

## Electricity & Gas

The arrival in the village of these two services was slow by town standards. Mains electricity appeared in the mid-1920s with pylons coming from the Kingskerswell side. By October 1926 both the Church and Church House had been provided with electric lighting. The major houses, such

as *Court Grange*, were the first to benefit, with the new council houses having electricity from the outset. Abbotskerswell was never linked to the 'coal gas' supply produced in Newton Abbot and had to wait until 1991 for the new 'North Sea Natural Gas' to be brought in via Ogwell Cross and Firestone Lane.

## Street Lights

Interestingly the street lights pre-date the arrival of electricity in the village as they were paraffin/oil powered at first. In 1896 John Phillips chaired a meeting which expressed a desire for street lights in the winter, with payment being on a voluntary basis rather than from the rates. By October 1896 a Village Lighting Committee had been formed and it was agreed to order 12 lamps, with blacksmith Fred Prowse paid to light them each evening. Although there were house collections and fundraising events there was still a £14 deficit by the winter of 1897, which, in her usual way, Mrs Hare paid.

These two photographs below date c1907 and c1930 show the lights in The Square in different places, with the oil light in the first one shown very well, they also show the tree that was part of The Square. In 1911 Mrs Hare paid for the light shown in the second picture, as part of celebrations for the coronation of King George V this replaced the old lamp, with the old ones being stored until 1929. There was discussion over whether to adopt the existing lights under the Lighting & Watching Act and in 1929 whether to have electric street lights, but nothing came of either at the time.

The tree in The Square (or trees really) shown in the pictures below, had chequered careers. There was an elm tree there in 1896, but it was uprooted in high winds and unfortunately fell on Fred Prowse's smithy. It was replaced with a chestnut tree in 1902 as a commemoration of the coronation of King Edward VII, provided by an anonymous donor, believed to be Mrs Palk from *Odle Hill House*. 1932 was a significant year for The Square as the memorial lamp post was knocked down by a Heavitree Brewery's lorry and



the tree was declared rotten and cut down. However Mr Palk replaced it with a flowering pink hawthorn tree which survived until it too was demolished by a lorry in c.1952; it was the last tree there, as traffic took over.

## Roads

For centuries the roads in the village would have been little better than cart tracks, generally only wide enough for one cart as there was so little traffic that only passing places were necessary. The main routes into the village would have been from what we now call The Coach Road, down Firestone Lane and Stoneman's Hill from Newton Abbot, along Nunnery Lane to Kingskerswell and up Slade Lane toward Whiddon. Many of the tracks such as Vicarage Lane and Slade Lane in front of the Butchers Arms would really have been for farmers to access their land; there was dispute between the Rev. Fisher and the village in 1852 as to whether Vicarage Lane should have been maintained as a through road to Langford Bridge rather than just being a cart track. In the 1760s a turnpike road was built linking Newton Abbot with Kingskerswell at the bottom of Nunnery Lane and in the early 1800s the old Totnes route past Henley's Cyder Works was replaced with a new road from Ogwell Cross joining the old route at Abbotskerswell Cross.

As industry developed the roads were slowly improved with a 'Macadamised' surface of large stones covered with smaller ones which were better able to deal with wheeled vehicles. The c1905 picture below of Well Cottages shows the basic nature of the road.



It is believed that Mrs Hare was the first to own a car in Abbotskerswell in the 1910s, with William Henley from Mallands certainly owning one by 1913, as it was reported to have turned over at Ogwell Cross in a newspaper article of that year. By 1924 the loose chipping surface of the roads was being sprayed with tar by the RDC which was better suited to the new pneumatic rubber tyres on motor vehicles. It showed that things were changing when signposts were erected at Mallands Cross, Langford Bridge and Hazel Bank in 1922. There was also a need to widen the road outside Mallands Drive, for which the Henleys gave the land.

By 1924 Devon General had begun bus services in Devon, which were running along the main road, and in 1931 the PC were asking for a bus service from Abbotskerswell village to Newton Abbot on Wednesdays and Saturdays. After much debate as to who should pay, in 1935 a bus shelter was finally built at Abbotskerswell Cross paid for by village subscription.

## Communications

In *1. Industry and Commerce* the arrival of the post in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the telegraph and telephone was described, all of which helped to reduce the isolation of a small village. One of the first phones in the village was at the Post Office in 1924, although it was discussed as a possibility as early as 1913: Henley's Cyder Works, whose number was Newton Abbot 32, suggested that they were very early users.

## Refuse Collection

Until WW1 waste was disposed of locally, as there was little packaging and houses had compost heaps for their gardens. However, there were complaints of large piles of rubbish against house walls and in 1916 a new tip was arranged at the top of Oak Hill on the Stoneycombe Road. In 1917 William Chudleigh was paid £1 to remove the village refuse once a quarter, meaning every three months. This was improved in 1928 when the RDC agreed to collect domestic refuse, including ashes once a month.

The reference to ash reminds us of how all houses had open fires, and that a large majority of the waste was the ash from the fires. With the arrival of electricity and gas and the subsequent advent of central heating, the quantity of waste greatly diminished and today well over 50% of our waste is recycled by Teignbridge District Council.

## Chapter 4

### The Creed Family at Whiddon House & The Manor House

In Chapters 1 & 2 it was explained that since the Church owned most of the land in Abbotskerswell there never was a true manor house or large and influential family in the mediaeval period, it was only once church land was sold off that this began to happen. The 19<sup>th</sup> century saw the rise of large land owners who built themselves grand houses and it was two of these families and their houses that would dominate the village scene. The first of these were The Creeds who would be the most influential family of the village throughout the whole of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The Creed story begins in Kingskerswell with Abraham, a landowner, who lived there in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> century. His son, William, was born there in 1762 and in 1799 he married Elizabeth Steer in Bovey Tracey. It seems likely it was at this time that he acquired a property in the village, since their first child, Martha, was born in the parish in 1800; this may have been the farmhouse on the site of the old Manor Farm. Martha, as with all the early Creeds, was baptised at the Salem Chapel on Wolborough Street in Newton Abbot.

Martha was followed in the next 14 years by William, Elizabeth, Mary, Susannah, Thomas, John and Elizabeth; all born in Abbotskerswell. The reason that there are two Elizabeths is owing to a family tragedy referred to in Chapter 1 and recorded in the village church on a memorial, when in 1809 within a 5 day period Martha, Elizabeth and Susanna all died; it is likely that one of the childhood illnesses such as scarlet fever or measles, which were common killers in those days, was the cause.

William was probably responsible for building a new house on his land, now called *Heathcot*, but it was in 1831 that a significant event occurred in the Creed story. This was that Whiddon estate owned by the Codners came up for sale: "the dwelling house is well supplied with water, & although at present occupied as a Farm House, may be converted into a comfortable residence"<sup>1</sup>. The Whiddon estate allowed William to become a landowner

of substance since *Whiddon House* was the major house of the village and the only one mentioned on the Donn Map of Devon houses in 1765. The house, barns and gardens opened onto orchards, pasture land and woodland; there was even a working lime kiln and quarry. The photograph of *Whiddon House* today shows a Regency style house which is in a different position to the house in 1839, suggesting that William rebuilt it. When the Tithe map was drawn in 1839 William and his sons, William and John, had become substantial land owners in the parish, with William living at Whiddon.

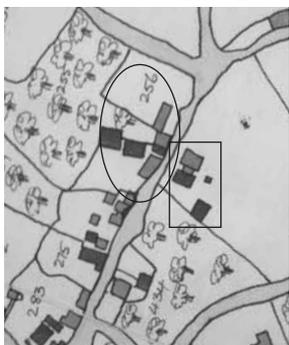


*The house, with its 1890s addition, had 3 reception rooms, 4 main bedrooms, 2 with dressing rooms, and 2 bathrooms. It also had 'excellent domestic offices'.*

Following William's death in 1846, John (1812-1878) continued to live at Whiddon with his mother and sister Mary, whose brief marriage to George Wills only lasted 3 years. George's death in 1841 was followed shortly afterwards by that of their only son, George.

John was a 'Gentleman land holder' who spent his life working within the village; he was a churchwarden for 39 years, the Enumerator of the 1851 Census and Chairman of the School Board created following the 1870 Education Act, and which led to the building of the village school. It is interesting to note that the Creeds' religious views seemed to have switched from Dissenters to Church of England, since John was a churchwarden, family members are buried in the churchyard, and there are several memorials to the Creeds on the walls of the Church. However, it was his brother William (1803-1862) who probably had the greater impact on Abbotskerswell. By 1846 he owned '*Heathcot*' and was planning a major building programme in the village. By 1839 he had acquired over 110 acres in the parish, which was more than his father owned, and he needed a house that reflected his importance. He would also want to maximise his land holding by having a farm that could best utilise the land he owned; the consequence of these issues was the building of *The Manor House* and *Manor Farm*. The names themselves tell us something of William's aspirations to be of significance in Abbotskerswell; there was no manor as such, so he created one. He may have felt the names were justified as he held the title of 'Lord of the Manor', which he inherited from his father, who had purchased it from the Codner family.

The **Manor House** and farm were built in the late 1840s and first appear on the census of 1851. *Maps 1 & 2* show the impact of the constructions, with fields 254-6 in 1839 becoming 'Burrow Park', a name taken from the fields across the road, with the house and stables being built close to the road. What is then noticeable by 1886 is that the houses and barns in the oval highlight and numbered 257-8 have disappeared as the grounds were presumably cleared to create the park.



Map 1 1839



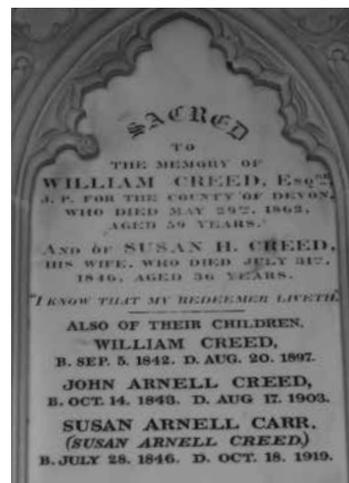
Map 2 1886

Map 2 reveals a new **Manor Farm** made from clearing the site in the rectangle, probably an older cob built structure, which was replaced by the fine farmhouse we see today. William had married Susan Arnell from Widecombe-in-the-Moor in 1838 and they had three children, William, John and Susan.

*The Manor House* was huge by Abbotskerswell standards, with a carriage drive sweeping into its three acres of grounds. An entrance hall led to a drawing room, a dining room, a breakfast room, a kitchen, scullery and larders. Going up the grand staircase there were four bedrooms (two with dressing rooms), a bathroom, two servants' bedrooms and WC. The basement,



with wine and coal cellars, led to a courtyard with store rooms, stables, harness room, coach-house, with lofts and the servants' WC. Add the fowl houses and cart linhay and William Creed had created an impressive social statement about his position in Abbotskerswell.



*Sadly the birth of Susan in 1846 brought the house both joy and sadness as it seems to have caused the death of her mother; the memorial in the church reveals that Susan died three days later aged 36.*

Like his brother John, William was a landowner and described in the 1861 Census as a 'Magistrate Gentleman'; other than being a Justice of the Peace and Chairman of the Newton Abbot Board of Guardians of the Workhouse, he was also involved in village affairs being a churchwarden, village surveyor of roads and a Sunday School teacher. Although William was very involved with St Mary's Church he did not forget his family's dissenting past as he gave the land for the construction of the Wesleyan Chapel in the village. He also left an earnest request in his Will that each year his descendants provided a sum equal to the yearly interest from £200 for "Protestant Education in the parish of Abbotskerswell". William's involvement in church affairs led to an

unfortunate incident in 1853 which was reported in The Western Times on 26 February, under the heading of 'Violent Assault by a Clergyman'.



In July William sued Rev. Fisher for damages and the case received widespread publicity. The two had been at loggerheads over a number of issues; the Creeds' teaching in the Sunday School, the style of services, the appointing of churchwardens and the final straw was the issue of Glebe land and rights. In an attempt to prove his Glebe rights Rev. Fisher had tried to wrestle the Tithe Map from the custody of the Creeds through the courts, but with no success; he had suggested that the landowners of the village agreed with him. William wrote to Rev. Fisher to ask for an explanation and when they met in the village this letter was discussed and Rev. Fisher asked if he was going to call him a liar, the response was "undoubtedly I shall, unless you are prepared to give

some explanation"<sup>2</sup>. As William walked away the Vicar took his walking stick in two hands and hit him with the end that contained an ivory knob. His violent blows landed on William's face and head, breaking the stick; he then used his fists to continue the attack which caused bleeding. It was commented that after the assault William was "under severe medical treatment, was kept on low diet, and to be kept very quiet"<sup>3</sup>. Unsurprisingly the court found in favour of William Creed and he was awarded £300 in damages.

It was suggested during the court case that the Creeds were the 'kings' of the village and by the time of William's death they were certainly important. However, William's three children would add even more to the Creed story in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. William died in 1862 and his death certainly seems to have been mourned within the village: "The county side has lost one of its most active, upright and useful public men"<sup>4</sup>. In his Will he left his Abbotskerswell and Widecombe-in-the-Moor land and property to William, in trust for his children. John received land and property at Bovey Tracey, with the same caveat, and Susan received various monetary sums but with the note that she would be "well provided for by the Will of her late Grand Mother". This was Susan Hamlyn Arnell whose land in Widecombe-in-the-Moor passed to Susan as her own children had all died.

William's three children were to be the only Creeds in this line, since his brother John did not marry. William (1842-1897) went into law, serving his clerkship with Messrs Francis & Baker in Newton Bushell, and then Messers Church & Sons in London, before returning to *The Manor House* to practice in Newton Abbot. His brother John Arnell Creed took a different route into law by entering Oxford University to study law, and by 1871 he was a 'Barrister in Practice' lodging at St James, Clerkenwell in London. Susan was educated at 11 Victoria Terrace, St Leonards, Exeter (now Exeter School), where she was a boarder in 1861. The school had 14 scholars aged 8 to 17, with two schoolmistresses, an assistant teacher, a foreign governess and four servants; very much a school for young ladies.

William's brother John and sister Mary continued to live at *Whiddon House*; neither owned the house as it had been left to William as the oldest son, but both John and Mary were wealthy landowners in their own right. John died in 1878 and in his Will he left annuities to his faithful servants Jane Davis and John Endicott, with sister Mary receiving *Whiddon House* for her lifetime, before it passed to his nephews and then their children, who would also receive his other land and properties. John Arnell Creed (1843-1903) mainly lived in London, with his Practice address being 11 New Square,

at Lincoln's Inn, in Westminster. When Mary died in 1887 she left money for the renovation of *Whiddon House*, despite the fact she didn't own it and it would pass on to her nephews. This appears to have happened, as the earlier photograph of the house, shows an addition on the right side of the house which has a date of 1897 carved into a roof beam.

By the 1890s John seemed to spend more time in Abbotskerswell and became involved in village affairs. In 1894 the Local Government Act created Parish Councils to take over local civic duties in rural communities and in the first elections in November 1894 he topped the poll, he also became Chairman in 1900. Until his death he very rarely missed a meeting, travelling down from London. When John died in August 1903 his village funeral was attended by many important local people, including Mrs Hare and her daughter Lady Perrott and Mr Dawson of Barton Hall; John had never married so his relatives were restricted to his sister and nephews Isaac and Cecil.

His Will showed what a wealthy man he was, as his estate was valued at £5365. He rewarded a number of faithful servants generously, particularly those from *Whiddon House*. Jane Davis, a cook and housekeeper at *Whiddon House* for over 30 years received Foxworthy Farm in Widecombe-in-the-Moor, William Bennett of *Whiddon Cottages*, his game keeper, was left his gun and some land, and Minnie Finner, a maid at *Whiddon House* for over 20 years, received all his belongings from *Whiddon House*, including cattle and carriages, 3 Sunny Bank and land in the village plus three cottages in Widecombe-in-the-Moor. The rest of his estate was left to Mrs Mary Allen of 'Eversley' in Beckenham. Her husband Charles, an insurance broker, and Mary appear to have been friends, and it was at 'Eversley' that John died. He left his niece, Gwendoline Carr, six properties and meadows at Widecome-in-the-Moor, left to him by his mother and grandmother; this was the only

bequest to a family member. This may have been because they were already wealthy, or because he and Susan, shown left, had fallen out over their brother's Will which John unsuccessfully challenged.



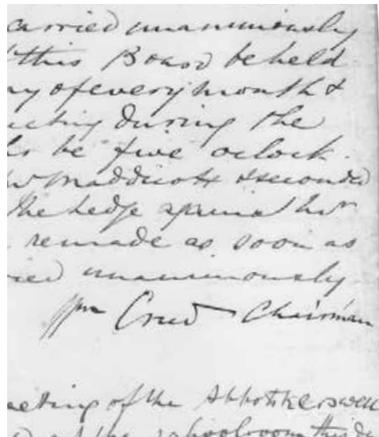
At *The Manor House* William had taken over after his father's death in 1862 and whereas William senior had been content to be a landowner, his son began working as a solicitor in 1865. By 1871 William was referred to as 'Solicitor Landowner', with Susan living at home having completed her education, with a housemaid and a cook to look after them.

However, things changed in October 1874 when Susan married Thomas Carr, a wealthy partner in Isaac Carr & Co, who owned mills at Twerton in Bath. At this time she was described as:

of a cheerful, genial, and amicable disposition, Miss Creed had endeared herself to all with whom she was brought into contact, and especially so amongst the poorer inhabitants of the parish, to whom she performed many charitable acts, and laboured lovingly and assiduously in the parish schools.<sup>5</sup>

By 1881 they were living at Poole Mead House in Twerton with their four children; Isaac, Gwendoline, Cecil and Elspeth.

William's Newton Abbot Practice grew quickly, and he became known as an advocate who was a "pleader of great brilliancy and eloquence, and there were few solicitors of his time who could surpass him"<sup>6</sup>; he worked in both the county and magisterial courts of Devon. He also dealt with conveyance business, was a commissioner of taxes, Lord of the Manor of Abbotskerswell, County Councillor, Chairman of The Newton Abbot Board of Guardians that oversaw the workhouse, Chairman of the Abbotskerswell Parish Council and Chairman of the Village School Board.



Like his father before him, he did seem to have an ability to fall out with people, and fought a good many civil court actions, suing a number of his farm tenants for trivial matters. He once tried to sue Thomas Cook and Sons, who were Tourist Agents then, for the six guineas he spent on coach seats from London to Ascot races, but the coach was late so he could not get in; he lost! His obituary described him as having a "kindly nature that underlay a somewhat rugged exterior"<sup>7</sup>. There was a dark side to his character however,

that eventually led to him being committed to a lunatic asylum by John and Susan, from August 1894 until March 1895. It seems that the pressure created by his role as Chairman of the Board of Guardians forced him to have a nervous breakdown which manifested itself as delusions that he was being followed and that people were trying to kill him with poison. At one point he climbed out of a window at *Whiddon House* during, the

night, wearing his slippers, walked 2¾ miles to his doctor's house, to tell him that he was being followed and in pain. His speech was rambling, he complained that a Dr Ley had poisoned a ham and a bottle of wine, and that the poison was coming out through his feet. His brother John reluctantly agreed to have him committed to Wonford House Hospital, where he was judged to be suffering from 'delusional insanity'. His casebook entry described him as very restless, claiming that everybody there were Newton folk out to kill him; Mrs Hare was there, dressed as a man! By October he was more civil, but then attacked a feeble patient whom he believed to be one of his Newton enemies. In November he was "still excited, will not stop to talk, when spoken to rushes away shaking his head"<sup>8</sup>. However, by January he was "much improved. Recognises that his delusions were such"<sup>9</sup>; by 7 March he was recovered enough to go out on leave and was discharged from Wonford on 14 March.

In April 1896 the dark side of his character was revealed for all to see in a court case that must have been desperately embarrassing for the Creeds. He was sued by Miss Annie Sealley for 'breach of promise'; she claimed that he had promised to marry her and provide her with an annuity and property. The problem for William's reputation was that Annie was a prostitute, who was 16 years old when he first 'met' her at the house of Miss Squires in Spiller Street, Exeter. Annie openly admitted that it was "a house of bad repute"<sup>10</sup> and that "it was at that house that she saw the defendant on the several occasions"<sup>11</sup>. A number of things were clear in the report covering a whole page in the local paper; that William had become a regular visitor to the house and that he became infatuated with Annie. She moved to London not long afterwards, but he soon began seeing her there; he provided rooms for her to live in, and gave her £100 to furnish them. Annie's description of their relationship revealed champagne fuelled evenings in which she described his "fits of excitement ... he was excitable, but not violent"<sup>12</sup> and claimed that they discussed marriage over the next few years. There were references to John Creed's notion that he did not want William to marry, so that he would inherit the estates, and also to John's troubles with women!

Issues came to a head in 1894 when he gave her £200, and she claimed that he wrote saying that they would marry. In July and August William was very agitated, telling servants and landlords of the plots against him; it was at this time Annie visited him in Devon and he introduced her to his household as his future wife. Following several excitable days with Annie at the Duchy Hotel in Princetown, when there was much drinking and arguing; Annie left to visit a Mr Capel in Cornwall before "she came back to London and

resumed her old profession"<sup>13</sup>. What followed was William's mental collapse, and it was agreed that he was in no fit state to be responsible for his actions. Whilst being cross examined William had to admit to the embarrassing affair:

"At the time you were first introduced to her she was a child? She had been in three houses before .... Do you remember falling out of a Hansom? I did not fall out of a Hansom. I fell in getting out. I had had too much to drink upon that occasion. You were one of the people who had enjoyed her society. Did you think it disgraceful? – I decline to answer."<sup>14</sup>

The verdict of the jury, in a case of a mentally ill gentleman versus a working class prostitute, was probably predictable; in fact it took them only five minutes to find for the defendant, William Creed, and they didn't even bother to leave the court room. However, what the whole affair did for William's reputation is unknown, we do know he retired as a solicitor afterwards. Whether it had any impact on his already fragile health can only be guessed at, but he only lived for just over a year. On the afternoon of the 19 August 1897 he had a business meeting in Newton Abbot and appeared in good health, however, the next morning he did not respond when a servant knocked on his bedroom door. She called the gardener, who forced the door, and they found William partially

clothed, unconscious on the floor; he never recovered consciousness and died that evening. It was reported that he had "taken with a seizure"<sup>15</sup>, later described as his "death was due to paralyse"<sup>16</sup>, by which we can assume he had suffered a stroke. He was buried in the village churchyard with his family.

Although William never did marry, like his brother John, the Creed story in the village continued; at first with his Will and then with the Creed lands. His Will was a simple one page document with a shaky signature at the bottom. He left his whole estate, which meant the *Manor House*, *Whiddon House* and a large amount of farm land in Abbotskerswell and Widecombe-in-the-Moor, to his sister Susan Carr; it was valued at over £7000. He left nothing to his brother John whose response was to challenge the Will, although by the time the case was heard in the High Court he and Susan had reached agreement. However, Lily Hewer, a servant at *The Manor House* who had witnessed the Will did declare that "Mr Creed was of unsound mind when the Will was signed"<sup>17</sup>, in August 1896.

Although by 1903 the last Creed had left the village the Carr family remained major land owners for another half a century, with the title of Lord of the Manor being held by Susan's two sons Isaac and Cecil; since neither of them had any children sadly the title seems to have been lost.

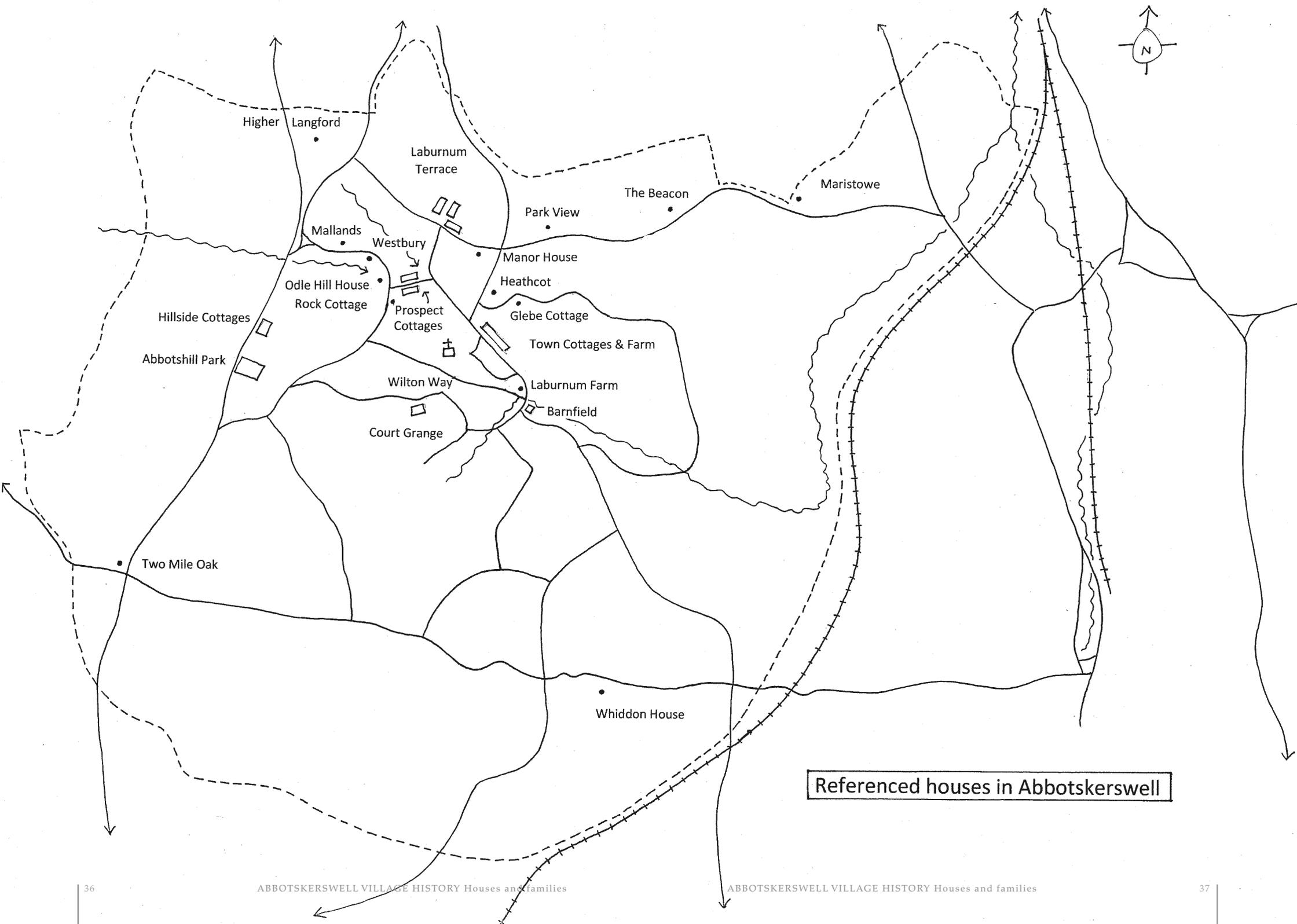
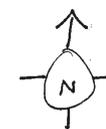
### Whiddon House 1903-2015

The house and estate continued in Carr ownership until 1949, with a succession of prosperous tenants. In 1903 the Jukes-Hughes family took over the house and remained there until 1935; firstly with Commander Robert Jukes-Hughes RN (retired) and then his son Edward. Robert had joined the Royal Navy as a boy midshipman and rose to become a Commander; he and his wife Ellen lived at Whiddon until their deaths in the late 1920s. By this time Edward had retired from the Royal Navy, as a Captain, and moved to Whiddon with his family. Both Robert and Edward were involved in village life, with Robert being a key member of the War Memorial Committee after WW1. In 1935 Edward moved to Dorset and was followed at Whiddon by Major Frank Brown (retired), then by Thomas Vaughan in 1941, Mrs Elena MacKay from 1943 to c1945 and Sir Beauchamp and Lady St John, c1945 to c1948, who were probably the last tenants.

In 1949 the Whiddon Estate was put up for sale by Sir Cecil Carr; the sale was in three lots: i. *Whiddon House* and 35 acres, ii. *Whiddon Farm*, two cottages and 152 acres, most of which had a tenant farmer, iii. *Town Farm* with 9 acres. All three lots went to Mr Nickels of Maidencombe, who was renowned locally as a property buyer. He sold the house and some land on the Whiddon side



The Creed grave enclosure in the village churchyard

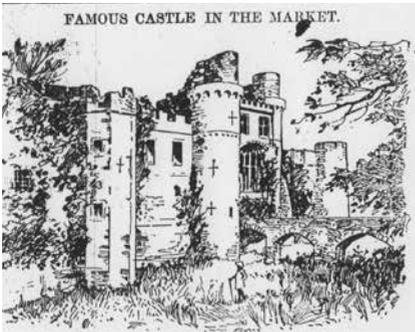


Referenced houses in Abbotskerswell



## Chapter 5

# The Hares and Court Grange



The story of *Court Grange* begins with Captain Marcus Hare moving to Abbotskerswell in 1842. The Hare family have a long lineage that traces them to Herstmonceux Castle in Sussex, which eventually became the Royal Greenwich Observatory in 1957. It was bought by the Naylor in 1708, who were linked by marriage to the Hares, and Marcus' grandfather,

Robert Hare-Naylor, who was persuaded to create a fashionable ruin from the castle in 1777.

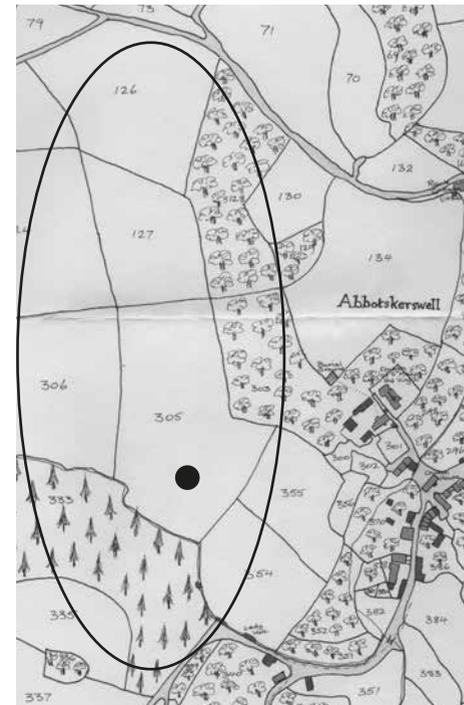
Marcus was born in 1796 and joined the Royal Navy, becoming a captain. In 1833 he married the Honourable Lucy Stanley, the second daughter of Baron Stanley of Alderley. By 1841 they lived at Park Hill in Torquay, with their three children, Marcus, Theodore and Lucebella. In 1842 Captain Hare, by then a retired RN officer, bought *Court Farm*. In a letter from Lucy to her sister-in-law she described their acquisition:

The farm is a very old house, like a manor-house, four or five hundred years old. It is close to the church, and there is a little door which opens into the chancel for the possessors of the farm to use ..... The churchyard is entirely surrounded by orchards, which are thriving ..... Altogether the most exquisite country parish scene I ever saw – so quiet and retired, and full of small white labourers cottages.<sup>1</sup>

Marcus and Lucy had begun to consider building a new and grander residence than *Court Farm* in the village. Sadly Marcus Snr died in 1845, aged 49, before any building had begun, however his Will did state that "... he has purchased a piece of land, and directs that his wife may if she thinks proper build thereon"<sup>2</sup>. It also added this rather odd request on his funeral:

I wish my body to be carried to the church of the parish in which I die, and to the grave, by poor men .... I desire neither hearse, nor coach, nor pomp, or display of any kind; I would rather not be encased in lead, that my body may mix earth with earth, as soon as corruption shall have accomplished its work. Each of the men so employed are to have twelve shillings, besides a good dinner of roast beef and plum pudding, provided at my expense on the day of the burial; and each one to a pint of strong ale or beer.<sup>3</sup>

Lucy did stay on at *Court Farm* with the three children, together with a butler and a housekeeper, Thomas and Georgina Elliott, although no building work seems to have begun. By 1861 Lucy, Theodore and Lucebella were living in Sunninghill in Surrey; Thomas and Georgina were still looking after them, but now with a lady's maid, a cook, a dairymaid, a pantry boy and a housemaid to help. However, in 1865 Lucy wrote: "we hope to get into our new house next year"<sup>4</sup>. The site of the newly constructed *Court Grange* appears to be the one Lucy described, as the Tithe Map of 1839 shows.



Lucy had noted in a letter: "There is a one spot which seems to call for a cottage to be built, close to a wild coppice blue with bluebells, sloping down to the wood."<sup>5</sup> The plot Marcus had acquired, shown on the 1839 Tithe Map, had stream running along the border of the wood. In the bottom of plot 305 she constructed her house.



The house was built in 1865, with two lodges and 16 acres of grounds, and was designed by the Newton Abbot Architect and Surveyor J W Rowell. This is an existing original feature marking the date of the house's construction.

Marcus' grandson, Admiral B M Chambers CB, left an interesting description of the original house in his book 'Salt Junk' in 1927:

It certainly had many delightful features. In after years my Aunt Hilda, wife of my uncle, Captain Marcus Hare, tried to turn what was a comfortable grey stone, slated villa into a country mansion, and in doing so she spoilt it. She put on an extra story and a red roof and vulgarised a house which had before a certain quiet dignity. The grounds were most capably laid out. There were sun-flecked slopes running down to a valley, along the bottom of which meandered a little trout stream. It was dammed up at intervals to form ponds, whose margins were thickets of the beautiful *Osmunda Regalia* fern brought from the Dart Valley. These slopes seemed to me to be the haunt of every rare butterfly, and the soft atmosphere of South Devon permitted the growth of many sub-tropical plants.<sup>6</sup>

Having completed a task that had long been planned, Lucy died not long afterwards in 1869, aged 70. It would be the oldest son, Marcus, who would take over *Court Grange* although in 1871 the house and lodges were only occupied by servants. The loyal Elliots, Thomas was the steward, were at the house with a housemaid, and the Higher and Lower Lodges were manned by gardeners.

Marcus was born on 15 June 1836 at Corsley in Wiltshire and had followed his father into the Royal Navy by 1851. In 1855 he became a Mate on board *HMS Valorous* and in January 1857 he was appointed as a Lieutenant, joining *HMS Chesapeake*. This was followed on 1 January 1867 by promotion to the rank of Commander and later that year he joined *HMS Royal Oak*. A further

SHIP	SHIP DETAILS	RANK	DATES
<i>HMS Valorous</i>	16 gun steam paddle frigate	Mate	Jun 1855-Aug 1856
<i>HMS Inflexible</i>	Wooden screw sloop	Mate	Sept 1856-Oct 1856
<i>HMS James Watt</i>	91 gun sail ship of the line	Mate	Oct 1856-Jan 1857
<i>HMS Chesapeake</i>	51 gun steam screw frigate	Lieutenant	Feb 1858-Oct 1861
<i>HMS Chanticleer</i>	17 gun wooden screw sloop	Lieutenant	Oct 1861 -Nov 1862
<i>HMS Trafalgar</i>	120 gun sail/screw ship of the line	Lieutenant	Nov 1862-Feb 1864
<i>HMS St George</i>	120 gun sail/screw ship of the line	Lieutenant	Mar 1864-Jan 1867
<i>HMS Royal Oak</i>	28 gun ironclad frigate	Commander	Dec 1867- Jan 1872
<i>HMS Boscawen</i>	70 gun sail ship of the line	Commander	Mar 1872-Feb 1873
<i>HMS Eurydice</i>	26 gun wooden corvette	Captain	Feb 1877-24 Mar 1878

Table 3: Marcus Hare's Royal Navy Career

promotion occurred on 13 February 1875 when he was created Captain, and immediately took charge of *HMS Eurydice*.

Marcus married Matilda Tollemache on 29 May 1873 at St George's Church, Hanover Square in London. Matilda was the granddaughter of Edward Seymour, 11th Duke of Somerset. As the owners of *Court Grange*, they made some improvements to the house, with bay windows added with dated coats of arms above them. The total cost of *Court Grange's* construction and additions was put at £4500. Following the alterations, in a rating appeal, Capt. Hare noted that *Court Grange* was originally rated at £125 but increased to £150 following the alterations; on appeal in 1876 this was reduced to £120 (with the two lodges included at £5 each) based on comparative property prices and that the rooms were described as small sized, with poor quality land and an approach that was not very good. William Creed of *The Manor House* was appalled at the decision and described "... the proceedings as a burlesque and an absurdity"<sup>7</sup>; having worked in the assessment field for 45 years he believed that a house which cost £5000 to build was worth a value of £130.



Hilda

In May 1875 their first daughter Ethel was born at *Court Grange* with a second daughter following in May 1877, when Hilda was born there.



Ethel

However, the family's peace in Devon was changed dramatically around that time when Marcus became captain of the corvette *HMS Eurydice*, which was a Royal Navy training

ship. Captain Hare was specially selected for his knowledge of seamanship, his reputation for his skill in handling sailing vessels, and his experience in dealing with young seamen; he had previously commanded *HMS Boscawen*, a training-ship at Portland.

*HMS Eurydice* sailed from Portsmouth on a three-month tour of the West Indies in November 1877, she was carrying 319 crew and trainees. On 6 March 1878, she began her return voyage from Bermuda to Portsmouth. After a very fast passage across the Atlantic, on 24 March 1878, *Eurydice* was



Built in 1843 she was a 910 ton wooden sailing vessel that carried a complement of 190 men; she had seen service all around the world by the time she was refitted as a training ship in 1877 and became Marcus' first ship as a captain.

caught in a heavy snow storm off the Isle of Wight, and quickly capsized and sank. The Times described the disaster:

she was seen by the coastguard at Bonchurch at 3.30 on Sunday afternoon, bearing for Spithead under all plain sail and with her port stunsails set on the foretopmast and main topmast, the object being clearly to arrive at the anchorage at Spithead before nightfall..... At ten minutes to four the wind suddenly veered round from the west to the eastward and a gale, accompanied by a blinding fall of snow, came rushing from the high lands down Luccombe Chine, striking the *Eurydice* just a little before the beam, driving her out of her course, which was heading to the north-east, and turning her bows to the east. This is what seems probable, though from the manner in which the sea was concealed by the snow, nothing was seen of her at the supreme moment when she capsized to Starboard.<sup>8</sup>

It seems likely that having been struck by the heavy squall, she heeled over, and water rushed through the open gun ports causing her to turn over with little warning for the majority of the crew, who were below deck. Only two men survived the sudden capsizing of the ship and the freezing water of the Solent. At an inquiry it was found that the vessel had sunk through stress of weather, and that her officers and crew were blameless for her loss, although there was some adverse comment on the suitability of *Eurydice* as a training ship because of her known lack of stability.



*The sinking of HMS Eurydice created national interest and distress, with many newspaper articles and poems written and monuments built. A fund was raised for the relief of the relatives of those who perished in the ship, it raised over £4,000. For a nation used to shipping loses the fate of the Eurydice seems to have been significant at the time, perhaps it was because so many young lives were lost.*

To this day people claim to have seen the phantom *Eurydice*, with frequent sighting by sailors over the years since her sinking. Prince Edward reportedly saw her off the Isle of Wight, and the commander of a Royal Navy submarine took evasive action to avoid the ship, only for it to disappear.



St Ann's Church in Portsmouth



Naval Cemetery in Haslar, Gosport



St Mary's Church in Abbotskerswell

There are a number of memorials to the disaster in the Portsmouth and Isle of Wight area, which are shown on the previous page.

The tributes to Captain Hare continued for a long time, with poems being a popular method; Punch magazine carried one and the one on the right appeared in *The Western Times*; Exeter on 2 April 1878.

### MARCUS HARE AN ACROSTIC.

"Captain Hare might have saved himself . . . but he stuck to his vessel to the last, and went down with her."

**M** any will miss thee, thou brave heart and true,  
**A** nd Devon will mourn thee in grief deep and sore;  
**R** esting from labour, and hidden from view,  
**C** alled home by Heaven, thou'lt journey no more.  
**U** nder the billows they body will rest,  
**S** afely thou'lt anchor on Jesu's dear breast.  
**H** earts of old England will e'er hold thee dear,  
**A** nd through all the world they'll make known thy fame;  
**R** ight well thy brave deed in gold will appear,  
**E** ngland, thine own home, will treasure thy name.  
Stoke Canon, March 27<sup>th</sup>, 1878. T.E.T.

Probably the most famous, and best poem, was penned by one of the leading Victorian poets, Gerard Manley Hopkins; his '*The Loss of the Eurydice*' begins:

The *Eurydice* – it concerned thee, O Lord:  
Three hundred souls, O alas! On board,  
Some asleep unawakened, all un-  
Warned, eleven fathoms fallen

He includes this reference to Marcus Hare:

Marcus Hare, high her captain,  
Kept to her – care-drowned and wrapped in  
Cheer's death, would follow  
His charge through the champ-white water-in-a-wallow,

In 1927 George Gupper, a local sailor who had served with Captain Hare, described him as "one of the finest seamen we had in the British Navy at that time"<sup>9</sup>. Marcus was a Justice of the Peace in Newton Abbot, and The Bench of Magistrates recorded their deep sense of loss of a brother Magistrate; their Chairman remembered him as "an efficient Magistrate and a firm friend"<sup>10</sup>. Despite an erroneous report on 8 August, Captain Hare's body was never recovered, even when the *Eurydice* was refloated later in the year. She was brought back to a Portsmouth dry dock slung between two barges, but broken up soon after. Her ship's bell is preserved in St. Paul's Church, Gatten, Shanklin.

For Mrs Hare and her two young daughters, the idyllic life in Abbotskerswell was changed forever. In 1881 they were living in London at 110 Ebury Street in Belgravia, which gave her social opportunities. In 1885 she attended a 'Drawing Room' held by Queen Victoria, where many of Europe's Royalty and Government figures were present; Mrs Hare was one of those who were in the 'presentations' to the Queen, made by her Aunt Maria, Marchioness of Allesbury. It is likely that *Court Grange* was being used as summer residence for the family, with a London house being the main dwelling. In his Will Marcus left *Court Grange* to Matilda for her life time and all his goods for the maintenance of his wife and children.

However, neither the village nor her husband were to be forgotten, because she decided on a major project in memory of Marcus, the total restoration of the village church. The descriptions of the scale of the work vary: "Restored uneventfully by *Butterfield*, 1881-3"<sup>11</sup> or "architect William Butterfield was asked to undertake ... a rebuilding and part-alteration".<sup>12</sup> Mrs Hare spent £1,609 on the restoration by Butterfield, who was an eminent Victorian Gothic revival architect. The restoration carried out by Messrs E L Luscombe of Exeter involved work on the walls, the entrance porch, new wagon-roofs, windows, the dismantling of the west gallery to open up the tower and internal fittings. It was during this work that the statue of the 'Blessed Virgin Mary' was discovered in the chancel window. To mark the completion of the work a plaque to Marcus Hare was erected in the Lady Chapel.

The 1891 Census revealed that 2 Cromwell Place in Kensington was where Mrs Hare and her daughters, then aged 15 & 13, were living with an entourage of seven attendants. These included a Spanish governess for the girls as well as a cook, three maids and two footmen. Once again *Court Grange* appeared to be underused, with only a caretaker and his wife at the house, but gardeners at both lodges. However, during the 1890s *Court Grange* appeared to become Mrs Hare's main home, when she began a major rebuilding of the house. Of course she was a wealthy woman and a widow with two daughters to bring up; she usually spent time in London during the 'summer season' and enjoyed entertaining at *Court Grange*, both of which were regularly reported in the local press. In April 1898 we learn that Mrs Hare and family had returned from London, in June 1906 a peal of bells was rung to welcome Mrs Hare and Hilda home after a few weeks away, and in May 1907 we are informed that Mrs Hare had gone to 38 Lowndes Square, Belgravia, London SW1 for the season.

It was in 1895 that she altered and enlarged the original house, or 'vulgarised' it as Admiral Chambers put it, when the tower, a second floor and the red

tile roof were added; but now Abbotskerswell truly had a major house on a grand scale. It is fortunate that a 1923 sale catalogue for *Court Grange* is in the DHC and this gives a splendid description of the whole estate.



*The Estate consisted of 120 acres, a very fine mansion house with six cottages (Church, Bridge and Mote Cottages) and Court Farm, with growing crops worth £200. Court Grange grounds consisted of 28 acres, which were tastefully laid out with a wood, fish pond, lawns, fruit, flower and vegetable gardens. The house was built of snail creep limestone, with Bath-stone window and door facings. The main drive, with an entrance lodge, led to a stone pillared porch; there was also a rear drive with a lodge. There was a coach-house, stabling for 3 horses, loose boxes, lofts, double garage and poultry houses.*



The new house was on three floors; the ground floor contained an outer lounge hall, Billiard Room, an inner hall which led to the Drawing Room with a bay window. Next to this was a Morning Room and a Dining Room, also with a bay window. The first floor featured five principal bedrooms, two of which had dressing rooms, a bathroom and WC and a maid's room with a closet. From a secondary landing the servants' staircase gave access to eight bedrooms, footman's room, man's room, WC and storerooms. On the second floor were six more bedrooms, a maid's room, WC and box room. The 'Domestic Offices' included a butler's pantry, lamp cupboard and china pantry, together with a housekeeper's room, servants' hall, kitchen, scullery, dairy, pantry and various outhouses.

Mrs Hare now had a house suited to her status, and her entertainments varied from numerous tea parties for village groups, to elaborate musical tableaux vivants, involving members of the nobility acting out stories such as 'Anne of Geierstein' set in Switzerland! The actors included Lords and Ladies as well as her family and friends. She also loved to play the piano and

often played at village and school concerts, as did her daughters; she gave "two exquisite pianoforte solos from Beethoven"<sup>13</sup> at one concert.



Mrs Hare, a formidable lady

Mrs Hare had two eligible daughters who ideally needed to be found husbands of the right breeding. Therefore, there was great local excitement in January 1902 when Ethel was married to Sir Herbert Perrott, 5<sup>th</sup> & 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet of Plumstead, in London. However, it shows the affection that the Hare ladies had for the village, that a few weeks later they held wedding festivities in Abbotskerswell Board Schoolroom. Mrs Hare and the bride and groom invited tenants of their estate, and members of Ethel's Bible Class to a dinner. Later more guests

were added from the Men's Bible Class, mothers' meeting and members of the Village Club. An animated picture show of scenes such as Royalty, the bridal party's arrival at *Court Grange*, and of the village were greeted with applause and everybody was treated to light refreshments including wedding cake. Although Ethel left to live in London, she continued to visit the village even after *Court Grange* had been sold. Hilda on the other hand never married, but like her sister often returned to the village.

After 1895 Mrs Hare spent more time in Abbotskerswell and threw herself into a range of activities, her generosity to all manner of village needs and organisations in the next 20 years was amazing. This was well summed up in the local press:

Mrs Marcus Hare, without exception, identifies herself with every movement in the parish which has for its purpose the improvement and furtherance of the parishioners' interest and wellbeing generally. Frequently are the services of this beneficent lady chronicled in our columns and it is impossible to speak too highly of them.<sup>14</sup>

Listing them does not really do her justice, but is necessary to understand the impact that Mrs Hare had on village life.

**Education** – this appeared to be her deepest interest and she was involved at all levels. In 1896 she became involved in the village school: "It was proposed by Mr Palk and seconded by Mr Widdicombe that Mrs Hare be Chairman of the Abbotskerswell School Board"<sup>15</sup>, a task she continued with until 1918. In the years that followed she was a regular visitor to the school where she inspected the work of the children; this ranged from their garments to the quality of their drill in the playground.

The drill was made possible by her gift of caps, belts and rifles to the school. She was elected onto the Technical Education Committee for the parish in 1901, and following the 1902 Education Act she was greatly involved with Devon's County Council Education Committee. She also encouraged and organised village adult education programmes, with courses on nursing, first aid, hygiene, bee keeping and dressmaking.

**St John Ambulance** – Mrs Hare was a great supporter of the Ambulance Society, opening the John Phillips Memorial Case for the society in 1897 and later the St John Ambulance Association. Her daughter Ethel's husband was the Chief Secretary of the St. John Ambulance Association from its formation in 1877; Lady Perrott went on to devote her life to the cause and was awarded its highest decoration of Dame Grand Cross of the Order. Mrs Hare was herself the Lady-in-Chief of the St John Ambulance Brigade Nursing Association. In 1913 she presented the Marcus Hare Cup for the local Divisions' competition.

**Church Organisations** – she chaired the Church Army fundraising group in Abbotskerswell and was a great Scripture Union and YWCA supporter. Her daughters were Sunday School teachers, and Mrs Hare provided their annual prizes, with a tea, as well as largely funding the annual outing and providing the grounds of *Court Grange* for sports. She ran and funded a Clothing Club, men and women's Bible Classes and Mother's Meetings. An interesting example of her work was in March 1911, when she and Hilda held a 'Church Missions in Persia' concert when four local women dressed up as Persian women and 13 shillings were collected.

**Royal Life Boat Institution** - President of the local branch.

**Politics** - When Abbotskerswell Parish Council was created in 1894 Mrs Hare was elected as a councillor and made Chairman for the first two years of its existence; she was a councillor for 13 years. She was Chair of the village branch of the Mid-Devon Women's Unionist and Tariff Reform Association.

By 1911 she was very much part of Abbotskerswell life. The Census of that year showed her and Hilda living at *Court Grange* with eight servants; there was a cook, five maids, a coachman and a footman; whilst at the two lodges were a butler and a gardener. She provided much needed local employment and also arranged for village girls to enter service with households in London. During her life Mrs Hare became a great benefactress to the village providing the finance to enhance life for all the villagers, and throughout the *Abbotskerswell Village History Series* her name will appear, supporting all kinds of activities. She was held in great esteem by the villagers, often being

known as 'Lady Hare', which was incorrect but a reference to her ancestry. As a mark of respect all village children were expected to bow or curtsy when she went by, however, one village girl of the time refused to curtsy; the next day her mother received a visit from Mrs Hare and the girl received a severe scolding from her mother! One reason for the respect was that whenever money was needed for the village she stepped into the breach; here are some examples.

- In 1897 to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria, she purchased a set of 12 handbells which were given to the Village Handbell Trust and are still in use.
- In 1905 she provided the land for an extension to the churchyard, and paid for the handsome walling at a cost of £120.
- In 1906 she paid £100 to rehang the three church bells and provide a new floor for the ringing chamber.
- In 1908 she also provided a new church clock with a face, since the previous one had only chimed, which cost £120.
- In 1911 Mrs Hare marked the coronation of King George V by paying for the installation of paraffin street lights, and the lighting of them each day by Fred Prowse, a village blacksmith.
- The story of her purchase and renovation of Church House will feature in 3. *Religion & Education*, as will the renovation of the church.
- Again it was the local press who noted "her usual desire to foster a spirit of patriotism and encourage healthy recreation"<sup>16</sup>, by providing a rifle range on her estate and guns for a rifle club, where the young men could practice their skills, the drill equipment for the school, and sending the Devonshire Regiment six flannel shirts, five flannel vests, six pairs of socks and eleven comforters in 1901!
- During The Great War she also provided 4 beds at *Court Grange* for wounded servicemen.

This was one very remarkable lady! Yes she was wealthy, (she left £18000 in her Will, which did not include *Court Grange*), but her desire to help the village and its people cannot be doubted. When she finally resigned as Chair of the School Managers in February 1918 she was not at all well and the village was dismayed to learn that on 14 March 1918 Mrs Hare had died in Knightsbridge, London at the age of 77. She was described as having: "taken the leading part in everything connected with the welfare of the parish and its inhabitants, being particularly interested in the local governing bodies, the children and the church".<sup>17</sup> Her funeral on 18th March was a huge one by Abbotskerswell

standards, which many eminent mourners attended. Her body was brought to the church from London on the Sunday where it was met at the church by St John Ambulance Brigade members. Rev. F Gordon Campbell conducted a short service and the ambulance men then provided an all-night watch.

On the day of the funeral villagers had adorned the church with white flowers and Captain Hare's memorial had a laurel wreath hung on it. The church was packed and overflowing as the mourners entered the church to Beethoven's "March Funebre"; following the committal rites came the hymn "Let Saints on Earth in Concert sing". The polished oak coffin was carried to the grave by men of the Abbotskerswell Division of the St John Ambulance Brigade. The MDA listed many of the mourners, with eight family members including her daughters Ethel and Hilda and granddaughters Marie and Helena; over 50 members of the general public were named with representatives from the organisations she belonged to, as well as local dignitaries of all kinds. There were 19 floral tributes: "Surmounting the coffin were exquisite floral emblems ... 'Our beloved mother, Ethel and Herbert; In loving memory,' from Hilda ..."<sup>18</sup>

The village hoped that Miss Hare would continue to live at *Court Grange* and when it was announced in the MDA that Sir Herbert, Lady Perrott and Hilda had arrived for the summer of 1918, this seemed possible. However, hopes were dashed when in February 1920 came the news that the *Court Grange* Estate had been sold. This did not end the family's connection with the village, as in 1922 Ethel's husband Sir Herbert was buried in the Hare grave plot. With only two daughters as children his baronetages became extinct. In April 1923 Lady Perrott and Hon. Orlando St Maur Forester, a relative of Mrs Hare from Stover House, unveiled a plaque in memory of Mrs Hare in the church, although this was later replaced by the one shown below, when Hilda provided and installed three new bells in the church tower in memory of her mother. Hilda also continued her mother's tradition of providing for the village poor and aged, by supplying 3 tons of coal in 1923.



The Hare family have a grave enclosure on the church path, showing their significance.



In May 1924 Lady Perrott, accompanied by her two daughters, returned to the village, and was 'at home' to all parishioners, when she provided a tea and a dance in Church House. She spoke of "the pleasure it gave her to be amongst old friends, and of the regret she felt at no longer living amongst them".<sup>19</sup> Perhaps she was thinking of the days when she taught the village girls maypole dancing and her two girls were also part of the classes.



Lady Perrott,  
Marie (L) and  
Helena

The next day she gave tea to all the village children under 16.

The last two major gatherings of the Hare family in Abbotskerswell were probably the funerals of Ethel, Lady Perrott and Hilda. Ethel died in July 1939, worn out by her efforts to prepare the Nursing Corps and Divisions of the St John Ambulance Brigade for the likelihood of war. She was buried in the family enclosure, and it was noted that she "never lost her love for the parish, and the villagers still hold her in sincere affection".<sup>20</sup> It was similar for Hilda's funeral in November 1952; she was still helping the village when she died; this time with the tower restoration.



It was in February 1920 that the MDA reported that house and grounds had been "bought by Mr L A Johnson of Park Hill House, Ipplepen."<sup>21</sup> Leslie Johnson was born in Dublin in 1875 but from wealthy Cotswold farming stock; he was brought up at Upper Slaughter in Gloucestershire.



The family had connections in Ireland, and were probably 'absentee landlords', as in 1901 Leslie was back there as a 'Gentleman Farmer', in Laragh near Bandon in Southern Ireland, on land owned by his uncle Sir John Arnott. In 1910 he married Hilda Eckstein, the daughter of a wealthy South African merchant, and they settled in Ireland, having bought a farm there from his mother, Rosina.

In the next seven years they had six children, all born in Ireland; Daphne, Viola, Pamela, Leslie, Valerie and Mervyn. However, they sold the farm in Ireland in 1919, (was this because of the worsening political situation there for English farmers?), probably renting Park Hill, before acquiring an estate of their own. There seems to be a connection with the Hare family, as both the Johnsons and the Perrotts were married at St George Church in Hanover Square, London; therefore it is possible that Leslie purchased the estate because he knew the Perrotts. By April 1920 things were happening at the Grange when it was announced that:

Rendell and Sawdye have received instructions from the Exors. of the late Mr M. J. Hare (owing to the property having been sold) to SELL, by Auction, on the premises, on Monday and Tuesday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, a portion of the Superior HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE and OUTDOOR EFFECTS ...<sup>22</sup>

This was a major sale of Hare furniture, beds, wardrobes, carpets, cupboards, tables, and even a piano. There were also carts, saddles, plants, hay and a span roof vinery. The Johnsons meanwhile were preparing their move; a daughter wrote:

Easter 1920. Went to visit Daddy and Mummy at Park Hill. We all went back to Foley while Mummy and Daddy got *Court Grange* ready for us. Came to live at *Court Grange*. I like it very much. It has lovely gardens and woods. A special part is called Fairy Wood. I am sure I shall see a fairy there one day. I like going to see Mrs Thomas at our farm house [Court Farm] when I want a chat.<sup>23</sup>

Mr & Mrs Johnson immediately joined in with village life, with Mrs Johnson agreeing to conduct the mothers' meetings held on Friday afternoons, and both of them attending the unveiling of the School Roll of Honour. At a meeting in 1921 Mrs Johnson showed the mothers' meeting around the grounds of *Court Grange* and "she gave each a bunch of lilies of the valley, which they enjoyed picking themselves".<sup>24</sup>



A photograph of the Grange gardens taken by the Johnsons

Mr Johnson was quick to allow the boys' football team to use Berry field at the bottom of the village, which was also used by the Cricket Club. By 1923 he was a Vice President of the Village Club, to which he gave a set of pool balls for their ex-servicemen's section, he was also a Justice of the Peace. Following flooding at the bottom of village in

1921, he met with councillors from Ogwell and Ipplepen, and later agreed that the stream should be 'filled up' to widen the road, and he would provide the stone for the work. However, an event in March 1923 proved to be significant, he had a sale at *Court Farm* with sheep, cattle, pigs and horses sold, together with equipment such flat waggons, heavy iron and spring tine drags, a winnowing machine, also hay and oats. This was soon followed by notification in June that *Court Grange* had been put up for sale, with Messrs

Gilley Ltd of Torquay. It was reported that it had not sold, but there was an expectation that it would sell by private treaty; this proved to be accurate as by December the Johnsons had left, moving to his mother's house at Oddington in Gloucestershire, where Leslie died in 1929.

On 2 October 1923 it was reported that the Rev. Arthur Dence of Torquay had bought *Court Grange*, and would take up residence in November. The Rev. Arthur Thomas Dence was an interesting character; he made a fortune as a preserved food manufacturer in Surrey, before retiring and becoming a vicar. He was born in 1871 in Finsbury Park, London and married Ethel in 1897, together they had 9 children.

Arthur T. Dence	Male	40	Single	5	5
Edith M. Dence	Wife	36	Married	5	5
Doris M. Dence	Daughter	12	Single		
Phyllis Dence	Daughter	10	Single		
John Dence	Daughter	8	Single		
Arthur S. Dence	Son	7	Single		
William S. Dence	Daughter	5	Single		
Thomas Dence	Daughter	4	Single		
George Dence	Daughter	1	Single		
James Johnson	Daughter	40	Married		
Miss Smith	Servant	22	Single		
Edith Spencer	Servant	20	Single		

NB Also Alexander b.1898 Pearl b.1915

Their 1911 Census form, shown left, revealed that they lived at Winfrith House, Winfrith in Dorset. The fourteen roomed house had space for their three servants, and suggested Arthur had not been well, as he is listed as retired/convalescent. In the next few years Arthur was ordained

in the Church of England, and was the Vicar at Swindon, near Cheltenham. By 1923 he had been appointed as the Bishop of Exeter's 'Messenger of Healing', with the family living at Bronshill Road in Torquay. In October the MDA reported he was to preach at the service in Abbotskerswell on 14 October, and was shortly to reside at *Court Grange*. Like the residents before him, he and his wife were immediately involved in village life, he became a Vice President of the Cricket Club, continuing to allow them to play at Berry Meadow, which proved handy, because the players once saw a fire at The Grange and rushed to put it out.



Rev. Arthur Dence



They modernised the house by adding electric lighting throughout the house, central heating and added a stone balustrade to the terrace as shown below left.

In 1924 a village Scout troop was re-launched with the Dences heavily involved; Rev. Dence was President, Doris was a Vice President, Arthur the Scoutmaster and Phyllis was an honorary instructor. The grounds of *Court Grange* were used for the formal enrolling and presentation of colours to the Abbotskerswell troop. Rev. Dence became the first President of the Cottage Garden Society for its inaugural Flower Show in 1925, and was involved with the Village Club, presenting them with a billiard table for use in the clubroom. In 1927 he tried to create a recreation area in an orchard near the churchyard, where he proposed to build a children's playground, village hall and bowling green; this was rejected by the PC, one wonders why?

Not surprisingly the Dence family were very involved with religious work, although Rev. Dence does not seem to have practiced as a vicar again, probably because of his poor health. His son Arthur was licensed by the Bishop of Exeter and preached his first sermon in the village in 1927, and following his marriage, initially lived at *Court Farm*. He left for church work in Yorkshire in 1928, and later moved to a ministry in Australia. His sister Joan was married to Rev. John Key who became the Bishop of Truro. Mrs Dence presented two dozen hymn and prayer books to the village church, and was later appointed lay representative to Diocesan Conference. Phyllis and Doris worked in Jerusalem for the English Mission Hospital, whilst Ruth hosted a Young Women's and a Young Men's Bible Class at *Court Grange*. One wonders what the locals made of the Dence's 1924 Palestinian Exhibition to promote 'Christianity amongst Jews', complete with scenes depicting eastern customs, with family members in costume!



It must not be forgotten that Rev. Dence was a wealthy man, and he and his wife liked to winter in Cannes. When his daughters married, the weddings were large affairs, such as when Doris was married in Abbotskerswell, and all parishioners were invited to the reception in the grounds of *Court Grange*. One of Rev. Dence's great passions was helping working families improve their lives by improving their water, and as described in Chapter 3 he provided the public baths.

Phyllis Dence with her brother Arthur directly behind her, together with the Bishop of Exeter at the opening of the baths.

His earlier attempts at practical help had been rebuffed in 1924, when he was keen to build houses in the village but regretted the lack of help getting mains water to a planned site by *Rock Cottage*:

The cost of building at the present time is enormous, without the assistance to water etc that can be given and it seems rather unreasonable that obstacles are put in the way of private enterprise when cottages are so badly needed everywhere and many of the cottages in Abbotskerswell are not fit for human habitation.<sup>25</sup>

However, his greatest gift was to be *Court Grange* itself. On 30 September 1928 the 'Sunshine Home' for blind children at Chorley Wood in Hertfordshire, belonging to the National Institute for the Blind, was destroyed in a fire. The Chairman of the NIB's Executive Council put out a plea for a suitable replacement house; a number of properties were offered but the Dences' offer was the one accepted. *Court Grange* was offered immediately as freehold property to the Institute with four acres of grounds, to be held in perpetuity; initially it was as a 'Home for Blind Babies' but could later be used for any blind cause. It was accepted on 18 October and within seven days the first blind children had arrived, coming by train. The MDA's article was a moving description of their arrival with scorched cots, little wicker chairs, teddy bears, and dolls; it reported that they were three to five year olds and "to one who had never seen blind children, the scene was pathetic enough. The children seemed to have no unhappiness. They were the picture of health, and intent on investigation of the precincts of their new home".<sup>26</sup> One child came across the leg of a visitor and wanted to know his name and whether he had driven their train.



*Court Grange Sunshine Home* was formally opened on 16 May 1929, although Rev. Dence was too ill to attend; he was represented by his children Arthur, Phyllis, Joan and Audrey. This was the third such home for children from birth to seven years old, where they were taught

cleanliness, religion, and orderliness of habit and mind; a tablet was unveiled with the inscription:

"This tablet is placed here by the National Institute for the Blind in gratitude to the Reverend Arthur T Dence, who, when his family had gone into the world, gave this house to blind members of the British family that they might find in it happiness and peace".

Rev. Dence provided an illuminated text, created by Claude Howard, of St Luke ix. v. 48: "Jesus said unto them whosoever shall receive this little child in My name receiveth Me". I wonder what happened to those tablets?

Following the donation of *Court Grange*, the Dences returned to live at Winfrith; as a farewell tribute the Cottage Garden Society gave them a photograph of the society committee featuring Rev. Dence. As with the Hare family, the Dences never forgot Abbotskerswell. In February 1931 Rev. Dence died after a long illness, and was buried in the village churchyard, with many villagers attending despite a snowstorm. His wife Ethel and youngest daughter Pearl often stayed in the Lower Lodge which Mrs Dence had kept; she was still described as a major landowner into the 1940s. Joan Dence had started the Chestnut School in Newton Abbot, which she had tried to build in the *Court Grange* quarry. Eventually in 1932 she bought Stover House and moved her school there, creating what is now Stover School with a vision 'to establish a school for future generations who would find a full and happy life and above all receive a Christian Education that would equip them to live their lives to the full'.<sup>27</sup> In 1935 when she married Rev. Key she passed the school's headship to her sister Phyllis who remained in post until 1967; Stover School still has a Phyllis Dence Day, which is an Arts event.

The Dences are not forgotten in the village as their children presented a new reredos to the church in 1932, and the gates to the churchyard extension in 1957; both are described in *3. Religion & Education*.

### Court Grange 1928 - 2016

The school opened with 30 children and 16 babies, and developed under the Headship of Charles Spurgeon, although the attitude towards the children was not always positive, being described as a "school helping retarded blind babies".<sup>28</sup> This referred to a number of older children who arrived who had not made good progress educationally because of their blindness, but they soon thrived at *Court Grange*. The village did embrace the school as Rev. Dence had wanted, supporting their activities, particularly its music; the children soon began passing music exams and in 1936 their choir entered the Exeter Musical Festival. They won a competition for class singing but had to give up the Thompson Trophy to the 2<sup>nd</sup> placed school as judges felt that their memorised

learning was easier than sight reading. The following year they won the Chester Trophy for memory test singing and the Baker Trophy for choirs. They put on the operetta 'Abou Hassan' for the village, funded by the village Cottage Garden Society; their children joined in village choirs as shown in this 1940s photograph. They even had a blind Scout troop at the school.



In 1935 an assembly hall and gym were added and their Annual Sports Day was a great success. In 1937 Mrs Dence presented cups for the 31 events, including the Blind Derby and the Coronation Race,

which had two teams, 'Kings' and 'Archbishops' and a head book balancing relay race. In 1940 the school report noted:

progress has been made in adapting the school to its special function of building up character, initiative and self-confidence. The principal aim of the school is to restore to these little people their self-respect and happiness. A new feature which has contributed much to this object is the pets' house, where children can be taught that lovable little creatures - guinea pigs, rabbits, tame rats and white mice are used.<sup>29</sup>



*Playing on the front lawn*

In February 1949 it was announced that *Court Grange* had 're-opened' as the 'Sunshine Home Nursery School for Blind Children', having previously been used for children aged 7-16 years old. With Mrs Joan Toomer as the Headmistress; it now focused on 2 to 7 year olds and had 24 children.

This was how the School was when a 16 year old girl left home to live and work there in 1955, as a 'domestic'; she remembers a happy atmosphere, with children from babies in cots to youngsters in the dormitories. As she escorted the children on walks around the village they learned a great deal, such as not touching the motor bike of a young man they use to meet; they soon remembered that it was 'hot'. By this time a Principal's house and swimming pool had been added to the facilities, so it came as a shock

when in January 1962 the RNIB announced that *Court Grange* was to close. The reason was simply that there were not enough blind babies to make the school viable; at that time there were 13 children in a centre that could take 24 and increasingly children were being cared for at home rather than being placed in institutions. The school closed at the end of the Summer Term 1962.

In June 1962 rumours of what *Court Grange* would be used for began to emerge. In an inflammatory article in the Daily Express, it was claimed that the Royal Institute of the Deaf was to take it over as a training centre for deaf and dumb youths, and that many would have criminal records, come from Borstal, and still be on probation; the article described them as "twenty six Teddy boys".<sup>30</sup> The RNID paid £13,000 for *Court Grange* and by November the refurbishment as a "residential training establishment for young deaf men who, for one reason or another, will not find it easy to settle down to a normal life"<sup>31</sup> had begun. Unfortunately the RNID had not consulted with the local councils, so the centre got off to a bad start.

The centre opened in April 1963 with Dennis and Joan Vincent the Warden and Matron of the home, and Mr and Mrs Ridley as their assistants. The main house was re-organised to provide dining facilities, a pleasant lounge, television room, class rooms and a games room; an altar from Exminster Church had even been acquired to create a chapel. The sleeping arrangements included five, four and two person dormitories, as well as some single rooms. The young men were aged from 16 to 23 years old, and studied courses in gardening, carpentry, catering, painting and decorating, and electrical work. At a meeting of the Newton Abbot Welfare Committee Dennis described the boys as "misfits of the deaf world ... who are maladjusted and retarded solely because they are deaf"<sup>32</sup>, adding that *Court Grange* was an experiment. This was probably not what the locals wanted to hear and the following weeks MDA contained rapid backtracking on his part!



*George Shrubsole helps to the students*



*Stephen and Barbara Peebles*

Most of the domestic staff were local and they also remembered the happy atmosphere and enthusiasm for the centre. By 1976 *Court Grange's* Wardens were Stephen and Barbara Peebles, and an article in the *Herald Express* revealed that after 13 years the centre was working well, and that places were in great demand. They were trying to create a family atmosphere to prepare the lads for a world ruled by sound, but one problem was that in trying to become accepted as normal, the boys removed their hearing aids, especially as local people tended to shout when speaking to them! Mr Peebles commented that "wearing hearing aids makes them feel labelled outside". Many villagers will remember the lads walking around the village, and the gardening students were especially active in planting bushes around Abbotskerswell.

There was no doubt that over time, and allowing for the odd unfortunate incident, the boys were accepted in the village, and the yearly fete at *Court Grange* was well supported by villagers. In 1985 the Principal, Bob Clowes, wrote an interesting piece on the now '*Court Grange Training Centre*' in *AbbTalk*, describing their work as being "a rehabilitation service for severely disadvantaged deaf young men". The emphasis had certainly changed by that time, with the focus being on a wide range of educational, social and vocational training to equip them for life, with a 68% success rate at finding employment for their leavers. Many did have disturbed backgrounds, as a consequence of the major problem of communications, often within their own families.

However, approaches to disability were changing, and institutions of this kind were no longer popular, consequently in April 1999 it was announced that the centre would close in July, with the loss of 35 jobs.

As was the case in 1962, the rumours for its new use soon began; a young offenders' institution, a ballet school or a centre for autistic people. The first task was to find a way round the covenant included in the gift of the site to the NIB by Rev. Dence; this only allowed the site to be used for education or training. The 4.39 acre site was sold to The Hobart Group, a London development company, in 2000. They managed to find a way round the covenant and obtain planning permission to convert the house and outbuildings into ten apartments, and add five additional detached dwellings. It was put on the market for £1.25 million and bought by the Totnes based firm Westward Investment Management Services (UK) Ltd. By 2003 Carl Throgmorton's firm had successfully renovated the site and today the main house stands resplendently overlooking the village, thankfully largely untouched, so that we can still see Mrs Hare's domain.

## Chapter 6

### Interesting Village Houses

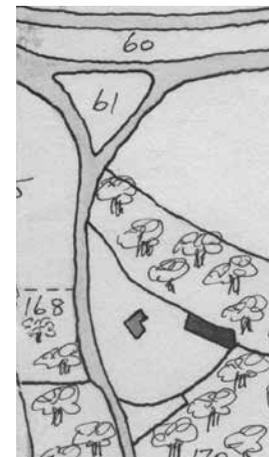
During the 19<sup>th</sup> century a number of important houses were built in Abbotskerswell to house the new middle class families that had been created by the industrial changes of the time. These houses and their families are the focus of this chapter, which will feature families of significance in the village, whose presence is still to be found today.



#### Mallands

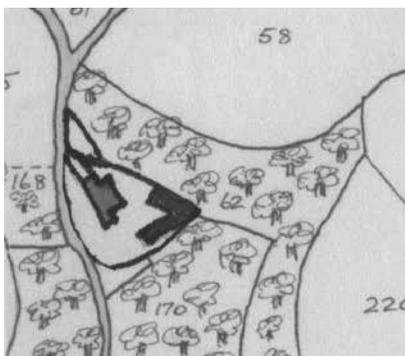
Much of the story of *Mallands*, variously called The Mallands, Mallands Lodge, Villa or House over the years, was told in *1. Industry & Commerce* when describing Henley's Cyder Works, however, a family of such importance requires exploration.

The Henleys had been in Abbotskerswell since the 17<sup>th</sup> century before starting their cider business in 1791, this was probably started by Richard Henley (1755–1846). He married Mary Codner, who was from another long



standing village family, and whose family name would produce the middle name of generations of Henleys; in fact all three of their sons had Codner as a middle name.

The Tithe Map of 1839 shows a house on the site of the modern *Mallands House*, although the style of the house is unknown; the L shaped building is described as being a house and cellar and was named after the orchard in which it stood. It was the youngest son, William (1790-1856), who was living at *Mallands Lodge* with his wife and children in 1841, and having a memorial in the Church suggests he was the Henley who took over the cyder works from his father.



As with the Creed family, the Henleys were dissenting protestants and William's eight children were baptised at the Independent Congregational Chapel on Barns Hill in Paignton. William and his wife Grace, after a spell living in France and Torbay, were probably responsible for extending the Lodge into *Mallands Villa* in the 1840s, becoming a larger square construction. In 1851 William and

three of his daughters were living there with a servant; Grace had died in 1848. However, after William died the Villa does not appear to have been the permanent home of a Henley; William (1819-1884) seems to have run the business from his home in Croydon and the other children either married or lived elsewhere.

The census returns for 1861 to 1881 only record labourers living at the Villa as caretakers, and it is not until William (1864-1922) moved to Devon following his father's death, presumably to run the cider company, that the house became a home once again. William married Ada in 1888 and their first child was born in Abbotskerswell in 1889. William would oversee a massive transformation of both the company and *Mallands* with a large building programme in the early 1900s.

Once again the evidence of maps, this time in 1905, reveals the development of *The Mallands*. As well adding to the actual house there were new stables and a lodge at the new entrance to the works. William, Ada, their four children and two servants lived there until c1907. Penny Humphries, William's great granddaughter, described the house she lived in as a girl like this:

The House had three large reception rooms; a hall, sitting room and dining room all to the right of front door. A kitchen plus servants' hall, scullery and a larder down two steps to the left. The stairs were central, opposite the front door, split at the top with a large landing and five bedrooms to the right (two of which at slightly higher level) and



to the left were two more bedrooms, a bathroom and separate lavatory. A conservatory in an L shape ran behind the dining room and down to the 'Flat', which was originally a billiards room and later converted into two bed accommodation with garaging underneath. There were numerous stables and outbuildings in the yard behind the flat.

William took a keen interest in the village, being a Parish Councillor for 13 years, and Chairman for 12 of those, and a Vice President of the Village Club in Church House. Eventually William moved the family to *The Priory* in Ipplepen, its 16 rooms made it grander than *Mallands* which only had ten, perhaps more fitting to the Henley's status. In 1922 when William died he left a staggering £86,000 in his Will. *Mallands* was left in the hands of a caretaker until William (1889-1960), known as Guy because he was born on 5<sup>th</sup> November, and his wife Elaine set up home there in the 1920s, even though Elaine was always exasperated by the noise of the works. Guy was a lieutenant in the Army Service Corps' Mechanical Transport when they married in 1918. Guy's great aunt, Grace Coulson lived at the lodge, known as *The Bungalow*, until her death in 1950.

When Henley's merged with Whiteways in 1932 Guy retired from the business, leaving his brother Ronald to maintain the Henley link. Like his father, Guy was involved in village life, being Parish Councillor, President of the Cottage Garden Society for 12 years, on the Playing Field Committee and a member of the Buffalo Lodge that met at the Butchers Arms. He and Elaine were always keen to support village events such as the Silver Jubilee celebration; Elaine agreed to make up any shortfall in its funds to ensure that the children got a summer outing. In 1935 Elaine opened the annual Garden Show and together they led 100 villagers in a 'Furry' Dance, the prevailing dance passion of the time, from Abbotskerswell Cross to The Square. Guy was to be the last William Codner Henley as he had two daughters, Jane and Wendy. He died at *Mallands* in 1960, but Elaine lived there until her death in 1974. Jane returned to the village with her husband, John Pierson, a Major in the Royal Regiment of Artillery, and lived at *The Bungalow* after Mrs Coulson; after Elaine's death they lived at *Mallands* until 1978, the last of the Abbotskerswell Henleys.

By 1978 *Mallands* was sold and Mr Read had applied for planning permission to turn it into a care home. By 1984 Max Horton had established the first home, although it would be Ken & Kate Leadbetter who created 'Mallands Care'. In 1988 they bought a 16 roomed residential care home, added a two storey extension in 2005 to create the 36 roomed home we are familiar with today.

## Odle Hill House

This was the centre for the Palk family for over 50 years; their story as village butchers was told in *1. Industry and Commerce*. The site had barns in 1839, but the house appears to have been built in the 1850s by George Yeo, who ran a carpentry business in Torquay, although he was born in Abbotskerswell. In 1861 his son William was a butcher and was probably the first to use *Odle Hill House* for this purpose. At this time Edward Palk (1826-1890) was at *Laburnum House*, but by 1869 he had acquired *Odle Hill House* and was described as a butcher and farmer, with his two oldest sons being farmers; they would all go on to become butchers.

*Odle Hill House* was a substantial residence for Abbotskerswell at the time with a hall, dining room, two sitting rooms, kitchen, scullery, four bedrooms, a bathroom and WC. Importantly in its yard were slated piggeries, a poultry house and a three bay brick/stone lincay with loft; this was perfect for the Palks trade as a farming butchers.

Edward's oldest son, Edward (1849-1910), moved to the house from *Odle Hill Cottage* to continue the business, and as with many important villagers was involved in village life, being a Parish Councillor for 13 years. His wife Alice was active within the Church, being a Sunday School teacher and hosting Young Women's Christian Association classes at the house; she is remembered in St Mary's with a lectern which was presented in her memory in 1908. It was the second son, John Westbury Palk, pictured in 1926, who continued the butchers' business and lived at *Odle Hill House* after 1910; his widowed sister, Ellen Buckpitt, and her two children returned from South Africa to join him there.



In 1932 John sold the Palk business to Cecil Ford, who leased *Odle Hill House* and lived there until 1948 when Thomas Campbell acquired the house. By 1957 Jack Parris was the owner and he steadily sold off the land around the house; *Pippins* and *Chimneys* were built on the land that originally joined *Odle Hill House* to *Westbury* and in 1960 he sold the fields behind the house for *Odle Hill Grove*. In 1963 the Painters bought the house.

In 1930 John had acquired land from John Foale Buckpitt near to Abbotskerswell Cross, and when he retired in 1932 he built *Ashley Priors* c.1936; it is a fine example of a 1930s chalet bungalow with gables and dormer windows. He lived there with his housekeeper, Gytha Swayne, until his death in 1946. He suffered from depression and sadly took his own

life by taking cyanide poison, which worked before he needed to use the shotgun that was found next to his body by Miss Swayne. The house was placed in the hands of Trustees with the understanding that Gytha, a rather eccentric lady, was allowed to live in the house until her death. When she died in 1978 *Ashley Priors* was sold to Arthur Shorland.



A late 19<sup>th</sup> century view of Heathcot

## Heathcot

The history of *Heathcot* is rather difficult to follow as it appears to change name several times during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, however, this is probably its story. The 1809 OS map shows a building on this site on the corner of Buckpitt's Hill and Vicarage Lane, which was probably a farmhouse

since the attached barn is made of cob and was once thatched. The existing house is a splendid Regency style house which has the date 1811 in nails hammered into a roof beam; it then had four rooms downstairs with four bedrooms. As described in Chapter 4 it seems likely that William Creed built this house before moving onto *Whiddon House*. In 1839 he still owned the house, although it was his son William who lived there with Susanna Crout, who was probably his housekeeper. By 1851 the younger William had built *The Manor House*, and it was now his sister Elizabeth who lived in the house with her husband, John Barratt, and their daughter Elizabeth. From 1861 to 1883 it was Peter Hannaford and family who then lived in what had become known as *Mount Pleasant*, he was a Torquay librarian; after his death in 1877 his wife Sarah and son Paul continued to live in the house. By 1883 the house name changed again, to *Claremont Villa*, as shown on the 1886 OS map in Chapter 4. By 1891 it had been occupied by Mrs Melland, James Corbin and then Catherine Maule.

The last name change to *Heathcot* came by 1901, was it by Mrs Maule or was it Mrs Susan Carr, nee Creed, who had bought the house in 1895 and left it to her daughter Elspeth in her Will? It is clear from studying the house that around this time it was substantially rebuilt with, servants' quarters added to one end with their own staircase; the bell call system was still in the house in the 1990s. The roof also seemed to have been raised at that time to create a much grander house, which would then have had an entrance hall with sweeping staircase, sitting and drawing rooms leading on to the iron verandah, and a dining room, with the kitchen linked to the servants' staircase. The first floor had three bedrooms and a bathroom.

This would have been a house fit for the wealthy new tenants, Anna and George Templer Hine. These were the widow and son of Rev. Vesey Hine who had been Vicar in Abbotskerswell until his death in 1898. If the name Templer rings a bell (builder of the Haytor Granite Tramway) then it is worth noting that Anna was his daughter, hence George's middle name. Vesey was a wealthy man so George spent his time on music, being the church organist; he also wrote a lot of rather odd letters to the local newspapers. Following his death in 1909 a number of tenants followed including Major Downward Percival Lea Birch who joined the army as a 'Gentleman Cadet' and rose to be a major in the artillery.

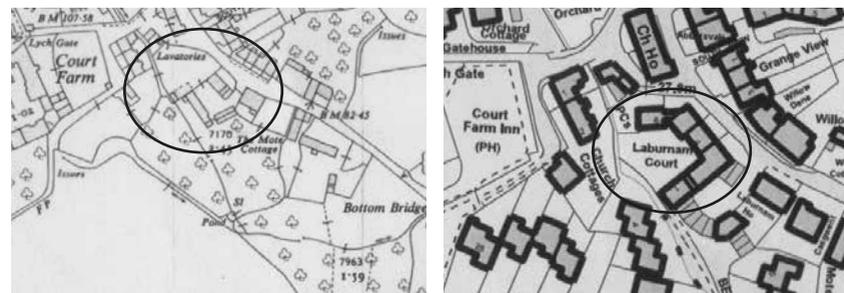
Mrs Carr died in 1919 and there is no evidence to suggest that Elspeth ever lived in Abbotskerswell, so it is likely that the house continued to be let; it is not clear at what point it was sold, although Peter Unwin had bought it by the 1950s. Today, lovingly restored by Melvyn Adderley it is once again a fine house.

## Laburnum House

This was originally *Laburnum Farm*, which is shown on the 1839 Tithe Map, belonging to Joseph Amery and his mother Margaret at that time. It was a small farm, they only had eight acres and when Joseph died in 1853 it was used by a butcher until the Maddicotts of *Town Farm* acquired it. Thomas Jnr farmed from there until his death in 1902, when his sister-in-law Elizabeth took over for a short while. When Elizabeth left in 1903 it was to be a significant name in Abbotskerswell who moved there, George Wilton, pictured below. Wilton Way is named after him.



George's older brother, Edward, was already farming *Ruby Farm* when George moved from Stoke Gabriel, where he was a farmhand. They were raised at Harford near Ivybridge, the sons of a farmer, and both went into agriculture for a living. George married Mary Tope in 1900, and their only child, Frances, was born in Abbotskerswell in 1903. *Laburnum Farm* was one of those small village farms, and George only had around 10 acres of land, mostly on Slade Lane, where he kept his three cows. The part of the road where it crossed the stream was known as 'cow shit alley' by the village children for obvious reasons. George, whose pointed beard accounted for his nickname of 'General Smuts', could be seen walking down the lane carrying slices of hay cut from his rick.



The farm was entered by today's existing entrance, with a 1910 built stone barn on the right, with stone cowsheds ahead. The house had a lean-to building on the front, and to its side was a vegetable plot. As with many of the small farmers, George also had another source of income, he was a tax collector. He was also actively involved in village life, being a Parish Councillor from 1904 to 1940 and for 16 years he was Chairman. He was also a school manager for many years, and one of his last village duties was to be a member of the Welcome Home Committee for returning WW2 servicemen. When he died his obituary noted that "it was often said of him that he knew every blade of grass in the parish, and his knowledge was of the greatest value in keeping alive the rights of way."<sup>1</sup> The church was filled to capacity for his funeral because he was universally liked and respected.

Frances maintained the family farming tradition by marrying William Mills of *Aller Manor Farm*. When George died in 1945 the farm ceased to be a farm as it was purchased by Bernard Mills, who stabled his horses there. When he moved to *Whiddon House* in 1951, he installed his estate manager, Robert Browning in the property. In the early 1960s it was bought by Gerald Burley of Burley Homes Ltd. Some of the barns were knocked down to allow the construction of *Berry Close*, and a bungalow called *Nod's Fold*, later rebuilt as the house *Casgwent*, was built on the vegetable plot. By the early 1970s Gerald's interest in house building seemed to wane and he went into farming, with the now Laburnum House being sold to Mrs Sillett, although he kept most of the remaining land for building, which eventually became *Laburnum Close*.

## Houses of Note

*Westbury* was built in the late 1890s by the Palk family as part of the family butchery business; the house name was from Alice Palk's side of the family. The rather unusual large doors at its side led to the barns which were used as

an abattoir. The first Palk to live there was Edward (1876-1947), but by 1912 he had left his wife and three children for a new life in Canada with his new 'wife', Irene. *Westbury* was soon leased to William Chudleigh, who ran a road haulage firm and a smallholding from there until 1946, when the property passed to George Sandford in John Palk's Will.

*Manor Farm*, whose story was told in 1. *Industry & Commerce*, is a solidly built farmhouse from 1840s built by the Creeds. It was constructed as an L-shaped farm house, built of stone with a rendered finish and a slate roof, with extensive stone barns. The house contained two reception rooms, a kitchen, scullery, 5 bedrooms and servants' quarters. Today, renamed

*Hedgeland*s and extended, it still towers above Buckpitt's Hill. After John's death in 1930, his grandson Percy took over at *Manor Farm* and he was followed in 1944 by his son Michael who would be the last Buckpitt in the Manor Farmhouse.



*Leaholm*, an attractive symmetrical detached house on Manor Road, which shows up really well on the postcard below

when newly built by William Foale Buckpitt on his return to the village in the 1930s.

*Glebe House*, once *The Vicarage*, is a lovely substantial 1830s house whose story will follow in 3. *Religion & Education*

*Higher Langford* is now a fine looking house following its recent major renovation. It was built in the late 1920s for Fred Croydon who was a smallholder; it was sold in 2014 for the first time in its 86 year history.

*School House* was built during 1902 to house the headteacher of the village Board School, with its first occupier being Headmaster Mr F J Hennion; it continued in use by the school until sold as a private house in 1995.

*Fairfield* is a lovely 19<sup>th</sup> century house which was once a small dairy farm.

*The Beacon* and *Rockstone* are fine, sturdy stone built houses from the 1910s. Mrs Martin, the mother of the only Abbotskerswell officer to die in WW1, lived at *The Beacon* from new until the mid-1930s. *Rockstone* was the home of Austin Phillips, a surveyor for the Newton Abbot Council, for many years.

*Maristowe* (strangely spelt *Marystowe* today) is a lovely late 19<sup>th</sup> century five bedroomed house where Mrs Martin's father lived for quite a few years.

There are also houses that are good examples of their type, not necessarily spectacular but still interesting all the same. *Rosebank* is a good example of a 1930s modern detached house, as is *Braeside* built by villager William Beavis. The 1970s are represented by *Courtlands*, *Alveston*, *Pippins* and *Chimneys*, whilst the 1980s & 90s can boast 2 *Manor Road*, in its ranch style, *Abbotsmeade*, *Blue Jays* and *Little Saddleborough* with its brooding presence over *Odle Hill Grove*. The late 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a change with the retro-styled *Hazellbrook*, *Church Thatch* and *The Gatehouse* bringing back thatch. Everybody will have their favourites and the ones they loathe, that is the beauty of architecture; what has yet to appear is the ultra-modern 'Grand Designs' house, but there is time yet.

In his history of Abbotskerswell John Somers Cocks wrote:

It is possible to regret the passing of the old order and certainly it seems a pity that with the architecture of some of the more expensive dwellings no attempt was made to give a passing nod of recognition to the vernacular style of a Devon parish.<sup>3</sup>

This may seem a harsh view, because to summarise the housing of Abbotskerswell is to try to explain house development over the last 600 years. No doubt when the Manor House or Model Cottages were built they were probably considered as non-traditional, and not fitting for a village of cob and thatch. Therefore to criticise the post-WW2 housing as not fitting into its environment may be inappropriate, because houses evolve as materials change, and demands change. Moving from one of the old thatched cottages with no running water or bathroom, to one of the new council houses must have been blissful; the consequence of this was the condemning and pulling down of Prospect Place and Well Cottages. Of course if these houses had survived, they would have been renovated to modern standards, as was Yeoman's Cottage and would now be treasured and protected. Housing has to fit the needs of the people, which is its purpose; John also wrote that if new houses had not been built:

Abbotskerswell would now be a moribund place with little social or recreational activity, have no school, post office or, probably, a shop and even maybe a pub, such are the economies of the modern age.<sup>4</sup>

Society changes, we lost the Post Office anyway, because it ceased to be a service and had to pay its way, but the rest thrive as does the village. Despite the unfulfilled promises of *Burley Homes*, 4. *Pubs, Clubs and Governance* will show the village created playgrounds, a Village Hall, and sports facilities. Today Abbotskerswell is a pleasant, vibrant and lively place to live.

## References

### Chapter 1

- <sup>1</sup> *Abbotskerswell Devon* John Somers Cocks
- <sup>2</sup> Courtesy of Dave Bush
- <sup>3</sup> Figures gathered jointly with Kingskerswell

### Chapter 2

- <sup>1</sup> *Abbotskerswell Devon* John Somers Cocks
- <sup>2</sup> *Mid Devon Advertiser* 1.05.1937
- <sup>3</sup> *ibid* 16.04.1938
- <sup>4</sup> From a painting by Claude Howard courtesy of Mrs B Wells
- <sup>5-6</sup> *Mid Devon Advertiser* 21.07.1962
- <sup>7-8</sup> *Abbots Park Brochure* by Burley Homes
- <sup>9-10</sup> Courtesy of Alan Reddish
- <sup>11</sup> *AbbTalk* No 67
- <sup>12</sup> Teignbridge District Council Local Plan

### Chapter 3

- <sup>1</sup> *East & South Devon Advertiser* Letter from George Templer Hine to the Editor 21.10.1905
- <sup>2</sup> *ibid* 7.06.1902

### Chapter 4

- <sup>1</sup> *Woolmer's Exeter & Plymouth Gazette* June 1831
  - <sup>2</sup> *The Western Times: Exeter* 30.07.1853
  - <sup>3</sup> *The Berkshire Chronicle* 30.07.1853
  - <sup>4</sup> *The Western Times: Exeter* 7.06.1862
  - <sup>5</sup> *The Exeter and Plymouth Gazette* 1610.1874
  - <sup>6-7</sup> *Mid Devon Times* 28.08.1898
  - <sup>8-9</sup> *Wonford House Hospital Casebook entry*, patient 3992F H32/5
  - <sup>10-14</sup> *East and South Devon Advertiser* 25.04.1896
  - <sup>15</sup> *East and South Devon Advertiser* 21.08.1897
  - <sup>16</sup> *East and South Devon Advertiser* 28.08.1897
  - <sup>17</sup> *East and South Devon Advertiser* 22.01.1898
  - <sup>18</sup> His story is told in *Abbotskerswell During WW1*
- \* Thanks to Nick Coates for this vital piece of information

### Chapter 5

- <sup>1</sup> Quoted in *AbbTalk* February 1989 in an article by John Somers Cocks
- <sup>2-3</sup> *The Morning Post* 5.12.1845
- <sup>4-5</sup> *AbbTalk* February 1989
- <sup>6</sup> Quoted in *The Devon & Exeter Gazette* 14.12.1927
- <sup>7</sup> *The Exeter & Plymouth Gazette* 3.11.1876
- <sup>8</sup> *The Times* 26.03.1878
- <sup>9</sup> *The Evening News (Portsmouth)* 25.04.1927
- <sup>10</sup> *Exeter & Plymouth Gazette* 29.03.1878
- <sup>11</sup> *The Buildings of Britain: Devon* by Nikolaus Pevsner
- <sup>12</sup> *Abbotskerswell Devon* by John Somers Cocks
- <sup>13</sup> *East and South Devon Advertiser* 18.01.1913
- <sup>14</sup> *ibid* 30.03.1901
- <sup>15</sup> *Abbotskerswell Primary School Board Minutes*
- <sup>16</sup> *East and South Devon Advertiser* 20.10.1906
- <sup>17</sup> *Mid Devon Advertiser* 16.03.1918
- <sup>18</sup> *ibid* 23.03.1918
- <sup>19</sup> *ibid* 17.05.1924
- <sup>20</sup> *ibid* 8.07.1939
- <sup>21</sup> *ibid* 14.02.1920
- <sup>22</sup> *The Western Times* 23.04.1920
- <sup>23</sup> Letter courtesy of Celia Clarkson
- <sup>24</sup> *Mid Devon Advertiser* 28.05.1921
- <sup>25</sup> *ibid* 30.08.1924
- <sup>26</sup> *ibid* 3.11.1928
- <sup>27</sup> [www.stover.co.uk](http://www.stover.co.uk)
- <sup>28</sup> *Kelly Directory* 1935
- <sup>29</sup> *The British Journal of Nursing* October 1940
- <sup>30</sup> *Mid Devon Advertiser* 30.06.1962
- <sup>31</sup> *ibid* 3.11.1962
- <sup>32</sup> *ibid* 20.04.1963

### Chapter 6

- <sup>1</sup> *Mid Devon Advertiser* 27.10.1945
- <sup>2</sup> *The Western Times: Exeter* 28.02.1846
- <sup>3-4</sup> *Abbotskerswell Devon* J Somers Cocks

# Glossary of Terms Used

OS	Ordnance Survey
DHC	Devon Heritage Centre
MDA	Mid Devon Advertiser
ESDA	East & South Devon Advertiser
PC	Parish Council
PCom	Parochial Committee
RDC	Rural District Council
SWEB	South West Electricity Board

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- Trade Directories: Kellys, Billings, Morris, Whites
- Devon Heritage Centre: documents, books, maps etc
- Abbotskerswell School Log Book

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