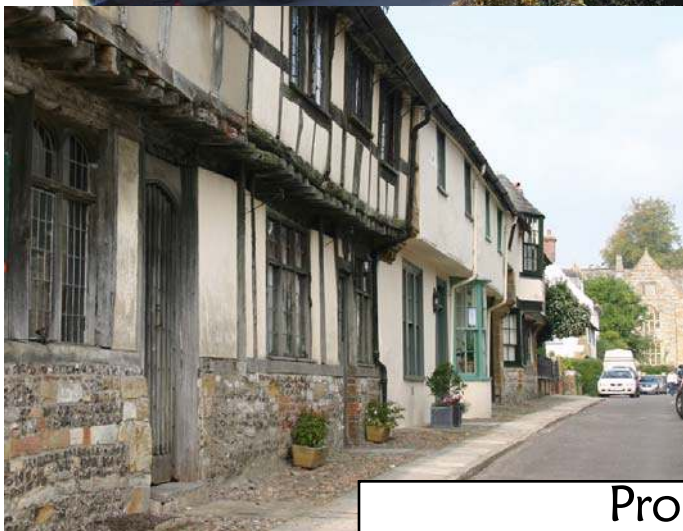
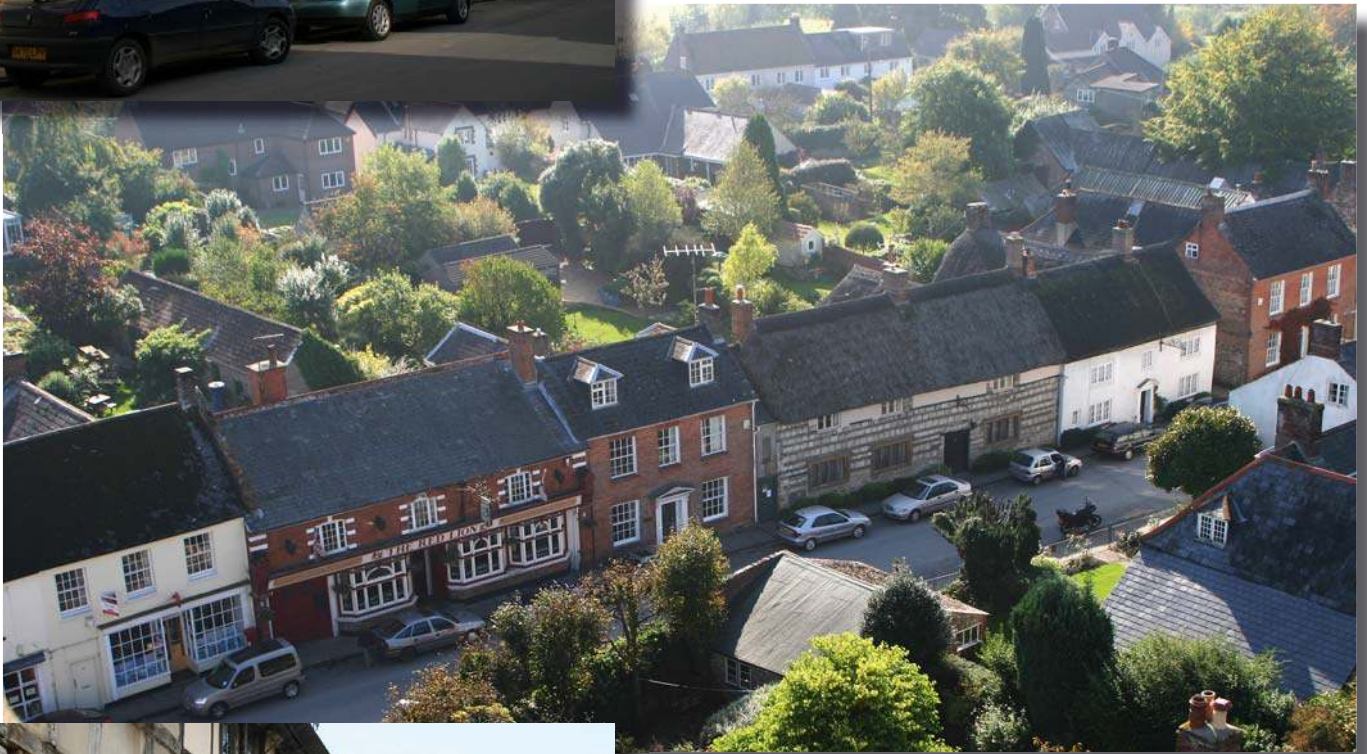


A Short Anecdotal History of Cerne Abbas



Produced by
Cerne Historical Society

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Special thanks go to David Kirkpatrick, whose brain child this project was.

The house histories contained in this document are a 'snapshot in time' They are dated and references to ownership relate to that date and not necessarily to the present day occupiers.

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ABBEY STREET – A HISTORY

There is sufficient evidence from architectural surveys that most of, and very probably all of, Abbey Street was planned and built as a monastic range by Cerne Abbey to a definite constructional pattern. The evidence also indicates that the range was conceived as a whole and erected in a short period of time. As regards dating Abbey Street, examination of building techniques used appears to suggest that its construction took place sometime after the early 1400s. However, it is possible that it was started at an earlier date. The chancel of St Mary's



Parish Church was built about 1317 and Cerne Abbas was granted the right to hold a market in 1214. The church and the old Market Place site are both at the southern end of Abbey Street; Cerne Abbey was to the north.

The construction of this street, with the Abbey at one end and St Mary's Parish Church and the Market Place at the other, set the town pattern for Cerne Abbas that has lasted to this day. Traffic to and from the Abbey would have travelled via Abbey Street and

the South Gate House to the Abbey. Visitors to the Abbey would then have been received at the Abbot's Porch and accommodated in the Abbey Guest House. The Abbey itself has disappeared, but these original Abbey buildings survive.

Following its dissolution in 1539, Cerne Abbas and Abbey Street lost its *raison d'être*. The Abbey was demolished within a generation and Abbey Street went into a decline that was to last until the late 20th

century. Many houses in the street decayed and were demolished, or were rebuilt to the prevailing fashion. Only a terrace of the original monastic range, with their distinctive mediaeval front-jettied first floors, survives.

Other buildings, such as the Congregational Chapel, were built where gaps appeared, or were re-faced with brick in the late 18th century to take on a Georgian appearance. It was only after the sale of the village by the Pitt-



Rivers family in 1919 and the spread of private ownership that Abbey Street gradually became central once more to the historical charm of the village.

ABBEY COTTAGE 5 ABBEY STREET



HISTORY N° 5 remains one of the most recognisably medieval in the terrace of similar houses. One unusual feature is an original integral corridor on the first floor which appears to have crossed over next door into N° 3, The Pitchmarket. A large room off the corridor, presently referred to as 'the dormitory', may have been exactly that, as one suggested use for the houses was as additional accommodation for lower-ranking visitors to the Abbey. There are three substantial fireplaces which seem too 'grand' to have been installed for their original purpose as houses for artisans working for the Abbey. More likely, they were 'recycled' from the Abbey after the Dissolution. A small piece of vellum with manuscript on both sides was discovered tucked into a gap in an internal wall. It has been identified as part of a religious tract, probably dating from the 13th or 14th centuries. Could it be that a visitor, fed up with a draught, found another use for it? Oyster shells accompanied the vellum, possibly providing extra draught exclusion. Or was it all the remains of a clandestine medieval snack?

There was a general decline in Cerne Abbas throughout the 19th century and by its end Abbey Street was in a very poor state of repair, as shown in photographs from that time. At the auction in 1919 the whole medieval terrace, including N° 5, was bought by Henry Tite, a local builder, for £340. He set about repairing the dilapidated properties and probably added the kitchen extension. The present owners arrived in February 1985.

Eric Fox, an original villager, recalls capping a well/pump at the back of the house when the flagstone floor was moved to the back garden as part of the re-modelling to a design by Edwin Lutyens. George Squibb, a renowned lawyer, herald and antiquary, who lived at N° 3, remembered the garden party to celebrate its inauguration in June 1939. It was about this time that the garden of N° 7 was acquired.

ABBEY COTTAGE TODAY Adjacent to the west door of St Mary's Church, Abbey Cottage plays host to the musicians of the Gaudier Ensemble in the annual Cerne Abbas Music Festival. The garden is also one of the highlights of the annual Open Gardens in June.

7 AND 7a ABBEY STREET



HISTORY These houses are part of the terrace of surviving mediaeval front-jettied first floor end bay houses built by the Abbey which originally stretched the length of Abbey Street on both sides. Nos 7 and 7a were one large house until the 1990s, when two smaller homes were created. Originally there was a narrow passageway between Nos 7 and 9 Abbey Street, running from the street front to the back of the house, perhaps giving access to the well in the garden. The well has some fine mediaeval brickwork below ground level.

The houses in the terrace have been the subject of many alterations over the centuries, of which the 1990s conversion to form Nos 7 and 7a is the latest; they nevertheless retain their essential mediaeval charm. A Georgian bow window was added to the ground floor of the present N^o 7, possibly in the 18th century. In the 1920s more radical alterations were made, including the creation of a garage in what is now the front room of N^o 7a. The mediaeval terrace was a single Lot in the 1919 sale of the village and realised the princely sum of £340 for the Pitt-Rivers estate. Photographs from the time show the houses in a poor state of repair. Today, they sell individually at considerably greater sums, reflecting their restored glory and rare Grade I status.

A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE ON A HOUSE If you live in a house as old as mine you have to accept the other residents – mainly spiders and woodlice! You also have to accept creaking floors, draughts of cold air finding their way around the beams and under the doors and other inconveniences which might be unacceptable to some people, but luckily don't bother me at all because I love living this house. Every time I come home it wraps itself around me like a big hug. It's just the right size for me alone and never feels too big, but when I have friends or family to stay somehow it is able to accommodate them all without feeling cramped. For centuries it has provided shelter and refuge; I feel so lucky that now it's my haven, my place of safety.

BARNWELLS 9 ABBEY STREET



HISTORY Barnwells is at the north end of the surviving 15th century medieval range of houses in Abbey Street, with their distinctive medieval front-jettied first floors. Inside Barnwells there survive the original four-centred head fireplaces and some plank-partitions. The bay window, staircase and entry are 18th century alterations.

Reputedly, it was in this house in about 1595 that Sir Walter Raleigh was tried for apostasy arising from charges that he had embraced atheism. The charges were dismissed. By the 18th century it was 'The Nag's Head' inn, leased to the Symonds family, but in the 1798 Admeasurement Survey a John Barnwell was leasing the house as a 'Stable, malt floor and shop'. One of the original stables survives in the garden and the extensive flint cobbling, now hidden under lawns, obviously formed a busy back yard to the inn. The Barnwell family continued to run The Nag's Head into the 19th century and in 1861 a village policeman was summarily posted elsewhere after he was caught dancing there whilst on duty! Soon after 1871 it ceased to be an inn, but the house is still called 'Barnwells'.

The medieval range of houses, including Barnwells, was part of the 1919 sale of the village by the Pitt-Rivers Estate and was sold to a Mr Tite for £340. In 1923 Barnwells came into the ownership of Joseph Benwell Clark. The Clark family had lived in Cerne from the mid-18th century, as linen drapers and clock makers. Joseph Benwell Clark was born in 1857 in Cerne Abbas, but moved to London where he became a celebrated artist. His distinctive 'Benwell' name was inherited from his mother. He lived in Barnwells until his death in 1938 and designed the present garden and the front door. The present owners have been in Barnwells since 1983.

OPEN GARDENS Cerne Abbas opened its gardens to the public in 1974 and this event has continued almost without a break since then. The money raised is divided equally between a village and an outside cause, the selection of each being made by the gardeners. The present owners of Barnwells now run this event and their garden is deservedly one of the most visited.

THE OLD CHAPEL ABBAY STREET



HISTORY It is believed that the Congregational movement was established in Cerne Abbas in 1711. The first recorded meeting on the site of the present Old Chapel was on 17th July 1728. This site for the original Congregational Chapel was leased from Lord Pitt-Rivers in 1729 and renewed in 1782 and 1825. On this last occasion the chapel was described as 'now increasingly dilapidated' despite having been enlarged in 1820. Very much in the contemporary vogue for spreading the education of children, a schoolroom was added adjacent to the chapel on its north side in November 1863.

As normal for the time, the schoolroom and chapel were thatched and disaster struck in 1887 when fire destroyed both. Subsequently, the freehold was acquired from Lord Pitt-Rivers and a new Congregational Chapel built to plans prepared by a Mr Jackson of Weymouth. The work was carried out by Rendells of Dorchester, the Foundation Stone being laid on 14 July 1888. The final total cost was £826. This chapel is the building that survives to this day. A new schoolroom was added at the rear of the chapel in 1889 and in 1893 a new organ and a choir platform were installed in the chapel.

In 1929 the distinctive house at what is now 19 Long Street was purchased as the 'Manse' for the Minister, the previous building in Abbey Street adjacent to the chapel having been demolished as 'unsightly'. 19 Long Street was sold into private ownership in 1958, but retains its link with the chapel in still being referred to as 'The Old Manse' (see page 45).

The Congregational Chapel took in the congregation of St Mary's Church during the latter's closure for major renovation in 1960 and 1961. This was but a temporary increase in its congregation as by 1972 declining membership caused the Congregationalists to merge with other non-conformist movements to form the United Reform Church. The chapel finally closed in 1981 and was sold into private ownership in 1982. Now called the 'Old Chapel' the building was converted into a charming private house, but it continues to retain the distinctive features that easily identify its chapel provenance.

THE BARN ABBAY STREET



HISTORY The building was originally part of a terrace of front-jettied first floor houses built by the Abbey which stretched the length of Abbey Street on both sides. The adjacent house to the south has not survived and is now the garden to The Barn. A passageway existed between this house and The Barn and evidence of this can be discerned as an infill in the garden wall facing onto Abbey Street.

The earliest construction of The Barn is of oak half-cruck aligned along Abbey Street, but the house was later extended to the east using the same half-cruck construction technique, probably using materials 'rescued' from the Abbey after its Dissolution in 1539. The 1798 Admeasurement Survey describes the building as a 'House and Garden', but as the structure deteriorated during the 1800s the eastern end became open and instead used for the storage of farming equipment. It was with this change in use that it became known locally as 'The Barn'. It was included in the 1919 sale of the village with Abbey Farm and, when this was sold again in 1937, The Barn passed into the ownership of the Digby family of Minterne. The Barn and the land round it then became known locally as Cerne Abbey Gardens. The modern house just to the east of The Barn retains this name.

In the 1980s, The Barn and lands were bought by a local man, Bill Shaw, for development. The first phase was the restoration of The Barn and involved the rebuilding of the east end and the replacement of the north-facing gable. The east end roof was raised by about two feet. However, the main roof timbers were left undisturbed and the half cruck timber frame is still in place, jointed by an original cross beam. Inside, the property is 'split level' due to the original cottage floors being lower than the ground behind. Early photographs show that the roof was thatched and then, at some point, replaced with corrugated iron.

FEATURE The garages behind the house stand where the Digby family once had greenhouses and heating coke and shards of glass still come to the surface whenever the garden is disturbed.

CERNE ABBEY FARMHOUSE ABBAY STREET



HISTORY At the Dissolution in 1539, 'Cerne Abbey' was the southern gatehouse to the abbey and inside the house the hinges for one of the gates can still be seen. Otherwise, only the original 15th century Guest House and 16th century Gate House to the abbey survive. The evolution of the southern gatehouse to the present building is speculative, but John Hutchin (the Dorset Historian) wrote in 1778 that the 'Mansion House seems to have been mostly built out of the ruins of the Abbey, but much repaired and enlarged by Denzil, Lord Hollis who resided there many years'. Lord Hollis owned the house and surrounding lands during the 17th century and is said to have cut the Giant as a lampoon of Oliver Cromwell.

In 1705 the village and much of the surrounding lands came into the ownership of the Rivers family. The 1798 Admeasurement Survey describes the house as the 'Abbey', in the leasehold of Samuel Crane. Samuel's lease also included a 'Dairy House, Barton, Barns, etc' (now the site of the modern 'Pottery'), 'Sillis Court, Barn and Paddock' (now 'North Barn') and Beaver and Simsay fields. Samuel was described as a 'Maltster', obviously engaged in the profitable local brewing industry. He also leased Barton Farm and was therefore a man of some substance. He died in 1815, his estate worth £35,000, a huge sum for those times.

At the 1919 sale of the village by the Pitt-Rivers estate, the 'The Abbey House' and all the outlying farm buildings and fields were sold for £7,500. These were sold on again in 1937, when they came into the ownership of Lord Digby of Minterne Magna. The Digby family lived in Cerne Abbey during the Second World War when Minterne House became a military convalescent home. In the early 1980s the farm buildings were sold to become 'The Pottery'. The North Barn was sold in 1987 and converted into a veterinary practice. Cerne Abbey and its gardens were bought from the Digby family by the present owners in the 1980s.

CERNE ABBEY TODAY The imposing house and extensive gardens are the focus of village celebrations to mark national events, for example the Jubilee of the Queen in 2012, hosted by the present owners.

ABBOTS WALK

To the south of the village lay the pasture lands belonging to Chescombe Farm, now 31 Long Street. The farm was owned by Fred Thorne, a well-established Cerne inhabitant and one-time local 'carrier'. In 1963 the farmhouse and lands was sold at auction to Roger Burrage, a local property developer. Mr Burrage was responsible for building a number of small developments in Cerne Abbas, providing affordable housing for young families and retirees.

It could be said that he re-vitalized the village, which had become rather run down, by

bringing young families with children into the village ensuring that the school and other local amenities remained sustainable.

Mr Burrage began the Abbots Walk development in 1969 with a terrace of four three-bedroomed houses. The rest of the development followed gradually with the completion of forty four dwellings and garages by 1973. Amongst the last to be built were seven two-bedroomed bungalows, built on what was essentially a 'fill in plot' and situated off the main

road of Abbots Walk. There was local scepticism at the time they were built on the grounds that 'they weren't in keeping with the rest of the development'. However, this small in-filling has developed into a pretty little 'mews' and is a popular short cut for pedestrians walking to and from the nearby new development of Abbots Meadow and for the dog walkers of Cerne Abbas on their way to and from Black Hill.

ABBOTS MEADOW

Abbots Meadow was the final extension to the original Abbots Walk development, completed in 2010. It is made up of eleven houses and overlooks Black Hill to the south.



ACREMAN CLOSE - A HISTORY

This was originally pasture land behind Acreman Street. The first local authority houses on the land were built during the Second World War by the Dorchester Building Guild. More houses were added later, as part own/part rent, to complete the present Acreman Close.

ACREMAN STREET - A HISTORY

The name 'acreman' is of pre-7th century Old English origin. On many medieval manors there were separate tenements held by 'acremen' in return for ploughing services for the manor. It is therefore possible that there existed a tenement on Acreman Street, lived in by an 'acreman', ploughing fields for the Abbey who owned the surrounding lands. If a

tenement for an 'acreman' existed in Acreman Street, there is one possible candidate: the building that was described as a 'House and Garden' in the 1798 Admeasurement Survey (carried out by the Pitt-Rivers family) and was later to become the 'Union Arms'. A detailed survey of this house, carried out for the Cerne Historical Society in 2004, suggested a much older building than the 18th century cottages in Acreman Street. Despite many changes over the centuries, it may

originally have been a smallholding. We will never be sure of its origins, but the street name is indicative. In 1798 'Acreman Street' did not continue up to the northern limit of the village as it does today. It stretched only as far as this house and then continued as Rouncibal Lane. The house at the northern end of the present road, the A352, is still called Rouncibal Cottage.

Until 1964 the main road through Cerne Abbas was via The Folly and Duck Street; Acreman Street was a relatively quiet side road. In 1964, however, the road was altered to bypass the centre of

the village, with Acreman Street becoming incorporated into the main road along the Cerne Valley between Dorchester and Sherborne as the A352. A number of the 18th century cottages were demolished at the same time. The 19th century Census Returns show that Acreman Street consisted of many small cottages, mostly occupied by the poor labouring classes. With new small housing developments and the modernisation of the surviving cottages, Acreman Street is now a very different place.



FRANCOMBE FARM ACREMAN STREET



HISTORY Francombe Farm existed as a working farm as early as the late 18th century. The farm, with four cottages, farm buildings and 152 acres, was sold in 1919 for £2,600 to a Mr Young. The farmhouse at that time was thatched, but in the 1940s the thatch was covered by metal sheeting, known as a 'Canadian Roof', when re-thatching was difficult to arrange. By the time the present owners, Bob and Mary Stenhouse, bought the farm in 1952, the cottages had been sold off and the farm reduced to 34 acres. Bob and Mary milked 20 cows and started a milk round serving Cerne Abbas, Godmanstone and Lyons Gate. They also sold vegetables and eggs. Dairy Crest acquired the round in the 1980s. At the rear of the farmhouse a bungalow and annexe were built, followed by a four-bedroomed house, for family members.

The four cottages (now three) adjoining Francombe Farm were sold off before the Second World War, 11a (now N° 13) being formed from two properties. N° 15, 'Cobblers', may once have been an ale house, as a photograph of 1905 shows a bracket on the wall which once could have carried a swinging sign. The construction of all three cottages is brick and flint and clearly part of the 18th Century development of Acreman Street.

NUMBERS 1, 3, 5, and 7 ACREMAN STREET

HISTORY These cottages on the west side of Acreman Street were probably built at the same time in the early 18th century. There is a date stone of 1727 on N° 7.

N° 1 was occupied in the 1930s and 1940s by 'Chunky' Miller, who drove a horse drawn delivery van for Waygoods, the general store which is now Cerne Abbas Stores. He was later provided with a motor van. In the evenings and weekends he was the village barber, cutting hair with one style only, short back and sides, for sixpence (2.5p) and offered a shave with a cut throat razor for the same price. Until the 1990s the house was known as 'Chunkies'. N° 3 was at one time the village laundry. The roof line is lower than its neighbours because it was rebuilt after being damaged by a fire. Nos 5 and 7 were once a single house. N° 7 was the home for many years of the Miss Vines, sisters who were seamstresses and made dresses for the ladies of the village.



UNION ARMS 9 ACREMAN STREET



HISTORY The house has been much altered over the years, but the original part at the east end of the present building probably dates from the late 15th or early 16th centuries. Its early date and form suggests relatively prosperous origins. Its location, close to medieval open fields which can still be identified, also suggests that it had started out as a farmhouse. If its original occupant was an 'acreman', ploughing the fields for the local landowner, this may have provided the name for the present Acreman Street.

An Indenture dated 1835 between Lord Pitt-Rivers and one James Thomas Hellyar talks of the erection of 'the Malthouse and substantially repairing the cottage near thereto....in Acreman Street'. This Indenture appears to refer to the site of the modern houses called 'The Maltings' where the 'Malthouse' once stood. The 'cottage' referred to was almost certainly what became 'The 'Union Arms'', intended as the retailing outlet for the beer produced next door. This may, therefore, point to the date for the opening of 'The Union Arms', with Thomas Bragg the first innkeeper, as shown in the 1841 census. It probably took its name from the Cerne Union Workhouse which was established to the north of the village in 1838.

The 'Union Arms' continued as a 'beer retailer', as it was described in trade directories, until about 1928. It survived the straightening of the A352 in 1964, which left it relatively isolated from the new road and the traffic between Dorchester and Sherborne. The house has been altered and expanded over the centuries to accommodate its changing uses and is now a lovely period family home.

NUMBERS 2 and 4 ACREMAN STREET

HISTORY Compared with other houses in Acreman Street, N° 2 is substantial, double fronted and, like N° 4, rendered over the original brick and flint. Both have both been extended and modernised and have tiled roofs replacing the original thatch. N° 4 had a former bakehouse at the rear which later became the workshop of Bill Trowbridge, the village undertaker and coffin maker.



NUMBERS 6, 8, 10 and 12 ACREMAN STREET



HISTORY N° 6, another relatively substantial house was not included in the 1919 sale. Nor included were the three adjoining cottages, Nos 8, 10 and 12. These were the only properties in Acreman Street not included in the sale and therefore already freehold. In the 1798 Admeasurement Survey these four properties were described as a single house, garden and barn, but in the 1881 Census there were four dwellings on the site. Could Nos 8, 10 and 12 be conversions of the barn? An exterior examination suggests this possibility, as they have a lower roof line than their neighbours and the construction is all brick, rather than traditional brick and flint. In the mid 20th century N° 6 was occupied by a cobbler and the adjoining building, now a garage, was once the workshop of George Whitemoor, a wheelwright.

NUMBERS 14, 16 and 18 ACREMAN STREET

HISTORY Nos 14 and 16 are thatched and the latter is rendered. These two houses have been extended and modernised and, with N° 18, enjoy rear views over open land to the church and the Cerne Giant.

N° 18 is known as 'The Ovens'. The relatively modern oven, used for the baking of cakes until the end of the 20th century, concealed a much earlier chalk brick hearth and tile floor thought to date from the 16th century. The present cottage may therefore have been built in the 18th century over an earlier cottage. There was a pork butcher here during the 19th century. It then became a sweet and tobacconist shop, before finally becoming a bakery again.



WHAT IS LEFT OF THE ORIGINAL EAST SIDE OF ACREMAN ST?

In the 1798 survey there were 21 cottages between N° 18 and the end of Acreman Street to the north. With the widening of the A352 in 1964, most of the cottages on the east side of Acreman Street that had not already fallen down were replaced by small bungalows.

CERNE PARK FARM ACREMAN STREET



HISTORY In the Pitt Rivers sale of 1919 Cerne Park Farm consisted of the farmhouse 'Mount Pleasant' built in the 18th Century at the junction of Acreman Street and The Folly, plus 192 acres to the west of Acreman Street. Later, the new owner built a bungalow on land off the Sydling Road and sold the original farmhouse, now known as 'Old Mount Pleasant'. The 'Old Mount Pleasant' plot extended to the corner of Wills Lane and along to the boundary with Barton Lodge, the latter area becoming an orchard. Later owners of 'Old Mount Pleasant', Bill and Joan Fraser, built a bungalow on the corner of Wills Lane for their retirement, subsequently selling the house and remaining land.

In 1937 the owner at the time, Mr R N K Colville, gave part of the land to the village for a new village hall, built the following year. The land on which this village hall was built was to prove a boon in 2004 when it was sold for the Barton Lodge housing development. The proceeds from its sale provided most of the finances needed to build the splendid new village hall on Mill Mead

THE VICARAGE 4 BACK LANE



HISTORY The present Victorian façade of the vicarage conceals a much earlier building. An Act of Parliament dated 12 Jan 1705 called the Pile's Estate Act included a provision for 'augmenting the vicarage of Cerne Abbas, in the county of Dorset '. In 1705 Cerne Abbas, plus much other land in Dorset, came into the ownership of the Pitt family, which was to last until the sale of the village at auction in 1919. The use of the word 'augmenting' in the Act is instructive, as it suggests an increase in what then constituted the local arrangements for the incumbent. The west gable end of the Vicarage has bricks set into it with the date 1711, a possible pointer to it having been built by the Pitt family in accordance with the provisions of the 1705 Act. Where the incumbent lived before this is unknown, but may have been in the adjacent house in Back Lane (now known as 'Norman's House'). The Victorian appearance of the present vicarage is the result of a major reconstruction undertaken by the Revd James Hay Waugh (ancestor of the literary Waugh family) in about 1843 at his own expense.

However, it could have been a very different story, as a railway line was proposed in 1837 to run from Bath to Weymouth, passing through Cerne Abbas. The projected route of the railway would have passed over Back Lane by a bridge very close to the vicarage. Happily for the vicarage, the railway never arrived, but the loss of this modern transport link contributed to the general decline of the village in the 19th century. The house remains as a vicarage to this day and its large garden and the field beyond is the venue for many community events, including the annual Church Fete.

UNIQUE AND FASCINATING STORY The Revd James Waugh made his fortune from 'Waugh's Family Antibilious Pills'. Made from soluble cayenne pepper in crystals, this 'wonder drug' was reportedly single-handedly responsible for curing Queen Victoria's wind! A letter from Her Majesty's Purveyor at Windsor on 8 October 1849 congratulated 'Messrs Waugh' for 'so valuable a discovery' and ordered a further 'one dozen bottles for Her Majesty's Use'. From curing Her Majesty's flatus, amongst others so fortunate, he 'built himself a magnificent rectory at Cerne Abbas and, when he left a few years later, he generously donated it with all its land to the parish'.

NORMANS HOUSE 8 BACK LANE



HISTORY The house was already there in the early 18th century and its prominent position, together with the fact that Back Lane diverts round the house, suggests it was always a residence of substance. The 1798 Admeasurement Survey confirms that a Thomas Cockeram lived in the house. He was a maltster and very comfortably off. A surviving deed suggests that the Cockeram family had lived in the house from 1741. It is also possible that the house had been the parsonage before the adjacent 1711 vicarage was built. The Cockeram family were prominent in Cerne during the 18th and 19th centuries and there are lead plaques on the church roof when various members of the Cockeram family were churchwardens.

The origin of the name 'Norman's House' for the house is not known. The 1919 sale of the village by the Pitt-Rivers family refers to a 'Capital Small Holding of about 4 acres' called 'Norman's Plot and Paddock'. A Henry Norman was the last master tanner in Cerne and died in 1899, but he lived in 'Blackwater Cottage' in The Folly, as did his family before him. There is no evidence that this family had anything to do with the house. The original 'plot and paddock' to the south of the house was built on in the period immediately after the Second War for local authority housing. This development is called 'Chescombe' after the name given to the field in the 18th century maps.

THE RAILWAY THAT NEVER CAME In the 1840s it was proposed that a railway line should be built down the Cerne Valley from Yeovil to Dorchester. It never happened because of the resistance of the land owners concerned and was instead built through Maiden Newton. This may have accelerated the decline of Cerne Abbas in the late 19th century, but was the salvation for Norman's House as it would have been demolished to make way for the railway.



18 and 20 BACK LANE

HISTORY This pair of semi-detached cob cottages was probably built around 1800 as homes for farm labourers on Chescombe Farm. It is thought that they originally comprised two rooms up and one down with thatched roofs and a single-storey lean-to at each end. Evidence of fire and thatch was found during recent alterations. A photograph from 1905 shows that the lean-tos had been built up to the full height of the cottages and the roofs slated. Another lean-to with a corrugated iron roof had also been added, possibly in the mid 1850s, along the backs of both cottages. This housed a sink, a copper to heat water and a coal store. Before mains water arrived, there was a pump on the opposite side of the lane, the stone trough of which still stands in front of the two cottages. There were privies with earth closets in both gardens, with scented lilac trees planted alongside! Small the cottages may have been, but the Census of 1881 records a family with five children in N° 18.

In 1919 these and six adjacent cottages were sold at auction for about £290. In 1936 Olive and Wilfred Dunn moved into N° 20 and had two sons. Olive was an excellent seamstress and Wilfred a keen gardener. His flower beds were surrounded by walls covered with broken domestic china mostly supplied by friends in the village and the garden appeared on a television programme.

FAVOURITE FEATURES During recent alterations to the cob walls, the remains of a pair of small leather shoes were discovered. These were possibly inserted during construction as a 'peculiar' to ward off evil spirits or perhaps they were just discarded into the mud mix. They have been re-inserted! Some of the original roof timbers, which are basically tree branches, are still in place in both cottages.

UNIQUE STORY One night during WWII, a ship exploded in Portland Harbour. That same night, the small window of the tiny cubby-hole bedroom in N° 18 where a five year old girl was sleeping fell out, presumably blown out by the force of the explosion twenty plus miles away.

DUCK STREET - A HISTORY

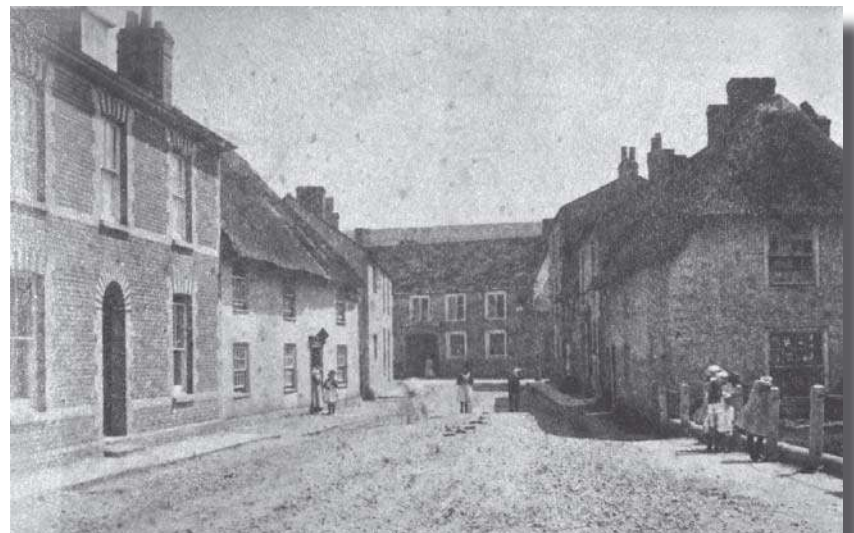
Until the re-routing of the A352 Dorchester to Sherborne road through Acreman Street in 1964, traffic flow through the village was via the Folly and Duck Street. The earliest map (1768) of Cerne Abbas shows houses up both sides of Duck Street and this configuration was not to change materially until after the sale of the village by the Pitt-Rivers Estate in 1919. The original houses would almost certainly have been of cob and thatched roof construction, but during the 18th and 19th centuries many were re-built to what were then the latest

standards. Therefore, with one notable exception, the houses in Duck Street now appear to be of later construction, but the exception, N° 6 Duck Street, indicates what the street would have looked like 200 years ago.

Why 'Duck Street'? The 1768 and 1798 maps appear to show that Duck Street was also the natural course for the River Cerne. The full effect of the river flow down Duck Street would have been diminished somewhat by its partial re-routing to supply energy for the

mill, but all the water met again at the bottom end of Duck Street before continuing south via the Tannery in Back Lane. Hence, flooding in Duck Street would have been a regular hazard until the Flood Relief Scheme was built in 1987. It was perhaps this watery existence that gave the street its name. At some point in the 19th century, culverts were dug down Duck Street to channel the water underground and a bridge built to carry it under Duck Street. This may have caused it to be occasionally called 'Bridge Street', for example in the 1881 Census, but the street's original name has survived to the present day.

Duck Street today is the postal address for the entire length of the street from Long Street to where it joins the A352 at the northern end of the village. However, on the early maps Duck Street went only as far as Springfield, the street to the north beyond this point being called 'Dussel's Lane'. The origin of this name is now lost to antiquity, as is that for 'Wills's Lane', a narrow lane that connects Duck Street and Acreman Street.



THE OLD SADDLER DUCK STREET



HISTORY The house was already on this site by the mid-1700s. At the auction of the village in 1919, the house was bought by Henry Paulley who had previously been the tenant running a business as Saddler and Harness Maker. He also bought 5 Long Street and 3 Duck Street, together with a derelict cottage between the Old Saddler and 3 Duck Street, since demolished; all for £250. The junction of Long Street and Duck Street was known as Paulley's Corner. The sale prospectus described the property as being 'a large Shop and Room adjoining with two large Windows, Sitting Room, Kitchen, Wash and old Fuel House and 5 bedrooms.

After Henry's death in 1937, the house was left to a relative, Percy Burge, who was then a tenant. He continued running the business until it closed in the early 1950s. When mains electricity came to the village in the late 1930s each house was fitted with two lights and a five-amp socket. Additional sockets had to be paid for. Not wanting to pay the extra cost, Percy Burge used to trail a lamp with him around the house on a long lead.

Percy Burge lived in the house until his death in the late 1960s. It was then bought by Mr Heington who ran it as an antique and furniture restoration shop. A door opening which gave access to an additional house in Long Street was bricked in and the house absorbed into the Old Saddler.

The next owner was Olga Pigeon, who ran it as a gift shop and it was she who named it 'The Old Saddler'. It was bought by the present owners in October 1980. It continues to be run as a gift shop and as an outlet for women's clothes made on the premises.

FAVOURITE FEATURES Situated on three floors, the house offers good views of the village streets from the upstairs windows. There is plenty of wall space for the present owner to display her extensive collection of pottery and plates. Being an old house the main rooms are of a good size and provide plenty of accommodation for a three-generation family.

2 DUCK STREET



HISTORY The house appears on the 1768 map of Cerne Abbas and is Grade II listed. However, there may have been a house on the site from medieval times, given its proximity to the New Inn whose history dates back to the 13th century. The house was probably rebuilt to its present design in the late 18th century. It is not known when the downstairs became a shop, but a photograph of 1921 shows the house looking much as it does today, in use by then as a drapers. In 1985 the downstairs was flooded when the River Cerne burst its banks after a heavy storm and water swept across the school playing field and down Duck Street. It was therefore an enormous relief to the owners when the River Cerne Flood Prevention Scheme was completed in 1986.

The house changed hands just after the 1985 flood and extensive work was needed to make the downstairs inhabitable. The new owners had been working in the antiques business from a shop in Dorchester and, seeking a change, it was the potential of the shop on the corner of Duck Street and Long Street which brought them to the village. After being widowed it was the owner's love of antiques, combined with the opportunity it gave to meet people, which kept the shop open until her 90th birthday in 2008. A regular customer was a notable local artist who bought snuffboxes on which he painted his miniatures. Following her recent retirement, the house was sold and has been converted back to the home it probably always was originally.

FAVOURITE FEATURES Owners of the house say the downstairs room is the best one in the village as you can see everything that is going on, strategically placed as it is on the corner of the two main village streets.

3 DUCK STREET



HISTORY The 1768 and 1798 maps show that there were three houses together: the first we now call 'The Saddlers', a second which also survives, and a third which abutted directly onto the river. The 1798 map which forms part of the 1798 Admeasurement Survey identifies this second house as N° 67 and that it was a house and garden in the 'Lifehold' of a George Sherry. According to the 'Universal British Directory 1793-98' held in the Dorset History Centre, George Sherry was a 'Currier' (Leather Dresser). A Tannery was situated on the River Cerne to the south of The Folly and appears to have been a significant business in the village until the late 19th century. The third house was still there in 1892, as seen in a photograph dating from that time, but the 1902 OS map shows it as an empty plot implying that it came down between these years.

Lot 26 in the 1919 sales brochure for the sale of the village by the Pitt Rivers estate included the houses that are now 'The Saddlers', N° 5 Long Street and N° 3 Duck Street and went for £250 to a Mr Cole. The brochure describes what had been the third house as 'an Old Cottage, derelict. The Site and Materials are included in the Sale'. The plot became incorporated into what is now N° 3 Duck Street and part of its garden that now attractively ends on the river bank.

N° 3 may have appeared on the earliest maps, but the present house has a design that looks early 19th century and the bow window suggests that it may have been at some time a small business. It recently gained a new owner and the subsequent modernisation has produced a charming home and garden.

5 DUCK STREET



HISTORY The house dates back to the 18th century and was then three cottages. By the time of the 1919 sale of the village, it had become two cottages and both were sold, with Barton Lodge, to Katherine Digby. The tenant of one of the cottages was Sidney Dunford, probably her gardener. Following her death it was sold in 1933 to Frank Thorne, village carrier, for £320 as a single dwelling house. In 1945 Edward Burt bought the house for £1,750 and in 1946 Cyril Miles, his brother-in-law, ran it as the Bridge Street Garage, with TV and bike repairs and a petrol station. In 1973 the present owner bought the house and the business at auction at the Antelope Hotel, Dorchester for £19,000.

THE HOUSE IN 1973 The premises included a lean-to extension at each end. The east end contained the TV repair shop, the west end a four-post car lift. The building was sadly neglected and, having no foundations, was very damp. A kitchen extension had been built at the rear. In the front driveway were two underground 500-gallon petrol tanks. The rear garden had been planted with strawberries, used by villagers on a free 'pick your own' basis. Inside the house were four rooms on the ground floor, one room full of junk mail dating back to 1960. Loose coal was stored under the stairs. The first floor consisted of four bedrooms, a box room and bathroom.

ALTERATIONS A new 5,000 gallon petrol underground tank was installed. The east end workshop was demolished and replaced by a new lean-to shop. The west end workshop was changed to a domestic garage and the four-post lift moved to a new purpose built workshop built in the rear garden. However, by the mid 1980s the business and petrol sales had ceased, the pumps removed and tanks filled in. In the early 1990s an extension was built into the rear garden and the house once again became two separate dwellings.

FAVOURED FEATURES The present owner could not identify any specific features of note for the house, just its general location in the village and his pleasure from living in Cerne Abbas.

6 DUCK STREET



HISTORY The front of the house was probably built in the early 1600s and the thickness of the cob walls can be appreciated today. From 1790 John Abbot ran a school here, described as two cottages with gardens. Today there are two large back-to-back fireplaces in the centre of the house which would have served each cottage. Some years later a brew house and yard was added, faced in flint, and a plaque in Mill Lane dated 1793 probably records this addition.

John Abbot died in 1802, but by 1825 the house was once more a school, run by William Beach. William lived in the village until his death in 1880 as both schoolmaster and Clerk to the Board of Guardians at the Union Workhouse and for much of that time also as registrar of marriages. In the house today, an upper floor has been removed leaving an isolated door high up on an inside wall. This door leads to an attic which may have been used as a dormitory for boarders. In 1858 he moved his academy, described as 'boarding with some day boys' to 'The Lodge' in Long Street (see page 56).

By 1861 the house was lived in by Charles Curtis, a Blacksmith, who ran a forge next door in Mill Lane. His son, Thomas, continued to run the business until his death in 1939 at the age of 91. Thomas' youngest son, George, was killed in 1918 and is commemorated on the Roll Of Honour kept in St Mary's Church, Cerne Abbas. For a couple of years in the 1990s it was run as a bed and breakfast until bought by the current owners in 1996. They had been renting a property in Cerne while looking for a house in the area, but quickly settled into the village and decided to stay. For several years they also owned the forge until it closed in 2000, when it was sold for demolition and re-building as a house. The current owners have retained what used to be the forge showroom as additional storage space.

FAVOURITE FEATURES The large fireplace, which provides a focal point in winter, and the location of the cottage in the centre of the village only a few yards from the main street and shop.

TEAL COTTAGE 7 DUCK STREET



HISTORY This house appears on the earliest map (1798) of Cerne Abbas and was one of a line of terraced cottages on the western side of Duck Street. At the 1919 sale of the village by the Pitt-Rivers Estate, George Green, the butcher, purchased the property and the two neighbouring properties, now merged as N° 9 Duck Street, for £220. In the sale particulars the house was described as being used as a store. Nevertheless, it consisted of a living room, pantry, two bedrooms and a good garden.

In 1948 George Green sold the house to Maud Davis for £425. In July 1967 it was purchased by a Mr J Girdwood who applied to turn the ground floor into an antiques shop, known as The Old Thatch. The house continued in this role until permission was sought in 1979 to turn it back into a dwelling and it was sold again.

On 3rd May 1984, the latest owner of N° 7 was fumigating his thatch roof, when it caught alight. The fire quickly spread to N° 9 whose thatch had just been renewed. Villagers quickly arrived on the scene and much of the furniture and belongings were saved before the top storey of both houses was destroyed. At one point seven fire appliances from various stations around Dorset attended the fire and one appliance remained on site until the following morning until they were satisfied that an exposed chimney stack was not in danger of collapse. Both houses were eventually re-built, but this time under a slate roof.

In 1988 the house was sold to the present owners who lived there for four years. They added a new extension at the rear consisting of a kitchen with bedroom above, before selling the house as they were working abroad. In July 2006 they bought it back again and some further internal modifications were made.

FAVOURITE FEATURES Cerne Abbas was initially chosen as a place to live because it had three pubs, the reasoning being that if they were banned from one, there were still two more!

The view of the house from the street belies its large interior with spacious lounge and wood-burning stove. The elevated rear garden has good views of the Cerne Giant and surrounding countryside.

NUMBERS 8 AND 10 DUCK STREET



HISTORY The earliest (1768) map of Cerne shows one large house on the site of what are now Nos 8 and 10 Duck Street. However, in the mid 19th century the original house appears to have been rebuilt, to be named Providence House. It does not feature in the village sale of 1919, although there is a reference to a 'large and excellent room with large loft over and as now held by Messrs H Waygood on the site abutting onto Mill Lane and known as the Salvation Army barracks'. Mr Waygood ran the Cerne Abbas Stores. The Salvation Army barracks have since been demolished.

A fire in the mid 1960s destroyed the roof of the house and it was subsequently bought by a builder. He converted it into two houses with N° 8 retaining the original main entrance and a new side entrance being built for N° 10.

NUMBER 8 The current owners arrived in 2004. They were looking for a property which could be converted into bed and breakfast accommodation. Doing much of the work themselves, the first floor was converted into two letting bedrooms of excellent quality. They created their own living space in the large loft space.

FAVOURITE FEATURES These include the new bathroom and, cleverly disguised as a wall panel, a storage area for the extension to the dining room table.

NUMBER 10 After the 1960s conversion the house bought by Brigadier and Mrs Crawford. Mrs Crawford produced a tapestry of the fronts of the houses in each of the village streets, a copy of which hangs in the village hall. The original is kept in the Dorset County Museum. The current owner bought the house in July 1991. Her parents lived on Abbey Street for many years, so Cerne was a village she knew well and was a logical place to which to retire.

FAVOURITE FEATURES These are the three bedrooms, the large windows, which make the house very light, and an enclosed small and manageable garden.

9 DUCK STREET



HISTORY No 9 Duck Street, originally one of a terrace of three cottages, was built prior to 1768. It was sold in 1919 by the Pitt-Rivers Estate to Mr Green the butcher for £220 and two of the cottages in the terrace were combined to become No 9 Duck Street. In 1982, No 9 was sold to a Mr and Mrs Worthington. The roofs of No 7 and No 9 had just been re-thatched when, on 3rd May 1984, the thatch on No 7 caught fire and the fire quickly spread to No 9. Villagers and the fire brigade managed to rescue much of the furniture before the fire almost completely destroyed both houses. Carol-Ann, the daughter of the Worthington's, had just converted part of No 9 to selling bread and cakes. Amongst the debris and jumble of furniture in the street was a small table with a bottle of sherry and glasses, used to celebrate the shop opening that very morning.

Although not grade-listed, Mr Worthington had a tussle with the planners who wanted the houses to be re-thatched. Eventually the planners relented and the terrace was re-built under a tiled roof. In the interim, Carol-Ann ran the business from the conservatory of a neighbour's house. After the business closed, the premises became a holiday let until the Worthington's retired to New Zealand in 1987. The present owners have been there ever since and have carried out major changes, including creating a beautiful rear garden.

FAVOURITE FEATURES The present owners had never heard of Cerne Abbas and No 9 was the last property viewed on a visit to the area. The estate agent was sure they wouldn't like it, but straight away they could see the potential and it turned out to be the right move for them. A favoured part of the house is the upstairs sitting room which affords views to their rear garden.

14 DUCK STREET



HISTORY The origins of this house and the adjacent house N° 16, of which it is a part, are unknown, but they were there in 1768. In 1798 N° 14 and N° 16 Duck Street were shown as one property and occupied by a 'Maltster' called John Dominy. It may have been this beer making provenance, with the River Cerne flowing by the property, which created the public house called the 'Elephant and Castle' at N° 16. At some time in the 19th century N° 14 became a separate house to the Elephant and Castle and may have been used by the manager as a private house. By 1897 the property was owned by the Pope family, having been bought from the Pitt-Rivers Estate sometime in the 19th century, and was then sold to Eldridge Pope Co. In August 1976, a couple of years before the pub closed down, the house was sold to Lt Col Barlow for £14,250. It was sold again in February 1981 to Jack de Carteret for £33,500 (an interesting indication of house price inflation in those five years!). In June 1995 the current owners bought it.

The house is a Grade II listed building. The attraction to the current owner at the time was its location next to the river, and the fact that the house could be lived in without major work needing to be done, or money spent, thus enabling the owners to concentrate their efforts on running their business in Dorchester. It also had the potential to develop the third floor as additional living space. The house has been named Leda Cottage from the Greek Myths. Zeus seduced Leda in the guise of a swan, with the future Helen of Troy resulting from their union.

FAVOURITE FEATURE The garden, with the adjacent river, has been extensively re-modelled to provide a cottage garden effect. It is regularly opened for the annual village charity event 'Open Gardens'.

16 DUCK STREET



HISTORY The 1798 Admeasurement Survey of Cerne Abbas states that the site of this house and the adjoining N^o 14 Duck Street were all one house in the 'lifecycle' of a 'Maltster' called John Dominy. In September 1851 George Pitt-Rivers granted to James Bragg a 99 year lease for the site, on which he erected three dwelling houses and a coach house. These were then put up for sale by auction in three lots.

By May 1860, the site had become the Elephant and Castle Inn, of which the landlord was Thomas Beer, and an adjoining house. In 1874 the lease for the Elephant and Castle passed to the Dorset brewers, Eldridge and Pope and in 1894 they acquired the freehold. On the evening of September 24th 1860, fifty men of The Ancient Order of Foresters Friendly Society met in the Inn to form the 'Cerne Abbas Court' whose motto woven on their banner was 'Unity is Strength, United we Stand.'

The Inn closed in 1978 and its name changed to the 'Sound o' Water,' when it became a guest house in the ownership of Doug and Jean Simmonds. They chose the name because of the sound of the waterfall at the top of the garden where an off-shoot of the River Cerne falls over the former mill race. In addition, Doug's favourite poet, William Barnes, had written a poem in the Dorset dialect called Sound o' Water.

The large house, together with its outbuildings, allowed for a major refurbishment, and plenty of space for Doug to store his large collection of books and bric-a-brac bought at weekly auctions in Dorchester. The 'Sound o' Water' ran as a guest house for nearly 25 years. In its early years, Doug and Jean provided evening meals where visitors were often entertained by Doug reciting William Barnes poetry in the Dorset dialect, often from memory.

RECENT HISTORY On the retirement of Doug and Jean, the house was bought as a large family house and has undergone a complete refurbishment and modernisation. The current owners bought the house for its potential as a large family home. They were seeking a home with convenient access to Sherborne and Dorchester. The house still incorporates features which are a legacy of its days as a public house.

20 DUCK STREET



HISTORY At the 1919 sale of the village by the Pitt-Rivers Estate, N° 20 Duck Street was part of a Lot described as 'The Duck Street Gardens and Buildings'. In July 1920, the site of N° 20 was bought by George Green for £40. In 1964, Tommy Dunn, a descendent of George Green, sold the plot to a builder, W J Hayward, for £400. The stable still stood on the site and Tommy Dunn, who was born in the house opposite, remembers it as a bicycle repair workshop. A two-bedroom bungalow was built and sold to its first owners in July 1966 for £3,500. The next owners bought a strip of land on the north side of the bungalow for a flat roof extension, built in the early 1970s and also a piece of land at the rear to extend the garden.

The present owners bought the bungalow in 1984. They wanted a property with a reasonably sized garden, choosing to ignore its many shortcomings as they reasoned that, over time, these could be addressed. A kitchen extension was built to the rear in 1985. The old, cheaply built flat roof extension was demolished in 2007 and a new extension was added with other modifications.

The rest of the land in the Lot from 1919 was occupied by various tenants as allotment gardens. The garden land changed hands several times after 1919 as various people bought and sold allotment plots, but by the 1960s most were no longer worked and had reverted to scrub. Five houses were subsequently built between 1996 and 2000 on this land. These are now N° 22 Duck Street and Riverside Close.

FAVOURITE FEATURES The bungalow is unusual in Duck Street by having a front garden and off-road parking. The story goes that the builder, who was also a local councillor, did not apply for planning permission, as the bungalow was not built on the building line. This at least assured that it was not affected by the flooding of Duck Street in 1985. The building also has large front windows, giving plenty of light, which would also probably have not been allowed by the planners.

BEAUVOIR COURT OFF DUCK STREET



HISTORY This Saxon building, originally called North Barn, reputedly dates from the 8th century and was therefore in existence well before the building of the Benedictine Cerne Abbey, established in AD987. Its original purpose is unknown. The abbey was built in an adjacent field, now called Beauvoir Field, and North Barn was incorporated into the abbey complex. The main road through Cerne Abbey was via Abbey Street to the south and over Kettle Bridge to the north. North Barn is situated close to Kettle Bridge and there is archaeological evidence that an archway was linked to North Barn, which would have made a dramatic approach to the abbey. The barn was constructed of very large blocks, roughly faced, but obviously completed to considerable masonry standards. The stone used is the local greensand stone and the largest blocks are on average 40 inches wide by 24 high and 36 inches deep; their weight each being at least 2 tons; certainly a challenge for the builders of the time. By comparison, the Abbey used smaller, finely-dressed, imported hamstone blocks.

With the Dissolution in 1539, North Barn was spared the demolition of the abbey which followed. The barn then became part of the Abbey Farm Estate and passed through the hands of many tenant farmers. In 1937 the estate was bought by Lord Digby of Minterne Magna who converted the Abbey House and adjacent buildings to a private dwelling for his personal use. The barn was described in the sale as 'The Fine Old Stone Tithe Barn' (it may have been used as a tithe barn by the abbey) and was being used as a store.

In 1987 the barn was sold for conversion to an equine and mixed animal veterinary practice. The subsequent extensive rebuilding work exposed, under the battered corrugated-iron roof, the original thatch and beautiful oak trusses. These were preserved in the rebuilding, but supplemented by a modern weight-bearing structure to support the new plain clay tile roof. In 1989 the work was completed and North Barn was re-named Beauvoir Court Veterinary Surgery, named after the adjacent field on which the abbey once stood. It closed as a veterinary surgery in 1998, but has remained as Beauvoir Court ever since. It is now a private residence.

CERNE ABBAS VILLAGE HALL OFF DUCK STREET



HISTORY The present imposing modern village hall situated in Kettle Bridge Lane off the northern end of Duck Street was completed only on 2006. There was an earlier village hall in Wills Lane, demolished in 2004 to build houses as part of the Barton Lodge development. This earlier hall was built in 1938 on land donated by a Major Colville for the princely sum of £35. This hall, built of timber and very much in the one main room design of many village and community halls of that time, served the village well until time inevitably took its toll. The search for its replacement started in the 1990s.

After intensive consultation with the community a patch of relative wasteland called Mill Mead to the north of the village was bought as the site for the new hall. Mill Mead had been in the flood plain of the River Cerne until the flood relief scheme was completed in 1986 and had been a water meadow in living memory, where cattle were kept before going to slaughter at the butchers in Duck Street. The funds needed to build the new hall received a significant boost when the old village hall site was sold to the Barton Lodge development for £400,000; a magnificent return on the original investment. This contributed to over half the eventual building and infrastructure costs of the new hall, the remainder being made up from fund raising activities and generous contributions from individuals in the village and Dorset County, West Dorset District and Cerne Valley Parish Councils.

However, none of this would have been possible except with the determination of successive village hall committees and others from the community, despite the many obstacles put in their way, to ensure the project succeeded. Present and future generations in the village will remain ever grateful to them for their foresight and fortitude.

DUCK STREET - LATE 20TH CENTURY DEVELOPMENTS

SPRINGFIELD At the 1919 sale, this area, known as 'Swan Hills' was described as 'a very productive enclosure of grazing land plus two cottages' (now gone) backing on to Acreman Street. The whole was sold for £260 to a Mr Nobbs. At some later stage this land came into the ownership of the Dunn/Green family. Tommy Dunn formed his own company with his brother-in-law, known as Dunnmore Developments, an amalgam of their surnames, and built 12 bungalows between 1970 and 1972.



OPPOSITE SCHOOL PLAYING FIELD

Described in the 1919 sale as 'a capital small holding with four cottages', it also included gardens, a barn, cart shed and paddock. As Lot 52, it was bought by Mr Nobbs, for £340. As with Springfield, this ultimately came into the ownership of the Dunn family. Contemporary photographs

show a large barn which was partly used as a slaughterhouse. Cattle would be fattened on the Mill Mead water meadow opposite, just below the new village hall, and then taken across the road to be slaughtered. Part of the Dunn family land was sold to Mr W O Knell who constructed a terrace of 6 stone built houses in 1976. Prior to this construction, there was correspondence in the local press urging that the barn should be preserved, despite its dilapidated state.

BADGER'S HOLT

This house was also built in the 1970s by a Mr Tierney on land previously owned by Tommy Dunn.

NUMBER 22 Occupies part of the allotment gardens plot sold off in 1919. The plot was eventually sold for £1,500 in 1969 and a modern house built here in 1971.



RIVERSIDE CLOSE

Five houses were built on former allotment ground between 1996 and 2000. The allotments had not been worked for a number of years since being bought by Janis Grantovskis, whose son subsequently built the houses.

THE OLD ORCHARD In May 1980, John and Clare Killinger bought a plot of land from Roger Burridge the builder. Subsequently, John's sister and brother-in-law build a modern style house here, originally called Nodons, but now named 'The Old Orchard.'

BROOK COTTAGE 1 LONG STREET



HISTORY The house has travelled through 400 years. Originally it was a traditional Dorset farmhouse with 2 rooms up stairs and down, built around 1650. As farming remained the main activity in the village, so the house reflected a gentle increase in prosperity. It was enlarged in two phases during the first half of the 18th century, expanding back as far as the river. Probably at the same time, farm buildings were built along the river bank. Cerne itself was becoming more important as it moved into the 19th century with a population well over 1000 - much larger than today.

Sometime in the 1790s the house was acquired by Sarah Eveleigh. It is hypothesised that Sarah, who was a woman of some substance, added the final upgrade by building the Georgian front on the south side. We believe this to be so from a lead well head found in 2000 in the garden with the initials SE 1791. Checking the records we find she died in 1796 and lived in the house. This ties in with the poor quality of the roof timbers – during the Napoleonic wars all the good timbers were used in naval ship building.

After this the house reflected the declining fortunes of Cerne in the late 19th/early 20th centuries. Finally, the early 21st century saw a major internal refurbishment and the added garage to the footprint. A well was discovered in the current study during these renovations, which suggests the kitchen (or the scullery area) was located there for centuries. The flagstones were possibly laid over an earth floor in the last half of the 17th century.

The name, Brook Cottage, can be traced to recorded papers in 1949. Water is really closer than one thinks; the water table is about 18" below the floor.

FAVOURITE FEATURES Living in the house is a bit like living in a time machine. It is a delight to move through the centuries as one goes from room to room. The low ceilings of the 17th century for the vertically challenged in the old part contrast with the high ceilings and large windows with a sense of space and light as one moves into Georgian times. And then all the gizmos of the 21st century to make life relaxed today.

PREVIOUS OWNERS The house was part of the Pitt-Rivers estate until they were forced to sell, to cover death duties and running costs, in 1919. It was sold for £285 to a motor engineer. From then on it changed hands quite often to owners ranging from a vicar to retired service officers and the headmaster of the Windsor choir school reflecting the village's changing population over the last 100 years.

THIMBLE COTTAGE 3 LONG STREET



HISTORY The cottage was built in the early 1700s and made of cob and brick. The building served two purposes on the ground floor. The residence on the right side had a finished interior with fine hardware features on the doors and windows, ceiling beam, enclosed window mouldings and open cupboards to display china. On the left was a saddler's shop with a commercial interior of lap board walls and exposed beams. This room was filled with leather saddles, harnesses and other tack items of the day. An inglenook fireplace was well used in the shop. Further evidence of this dual purpose property can be seen in the variety of windows once facing the street. A larger ground floor window on the left was surely used as a shop display and also to provide more light to the room.

The centre hallway with a blue lime stone floor divides the house. It is 4" lower than the surrounding rooms. This was a functional feature, as demonstrated during the frequent floods along Long Street. Water would enter the front door, flow down the hall and pass the open back door into the garden.

The years have not been kind to this cottage. Any building is always trying to adapt to its environment and Thimble Cottage needed some help. When the present owners purchased the property, West Dorset District Council declared it an 'unsound structure'. A funding grant was approved to restore the cottage. It had so much that was required that their three year old son raised an excellent question, 'why is our house broken?' It has been a labour of great determination that this cottage continues a journey of restoration.

UNIQUE FEATURES The cast iron seal of the Sun Fire Policy dates to 1773. Such seals were proof that the owner had paid his house insurance and a sign to the fire brigades to battle any blaze on the property. Through research of the seal, it is known that the cottage was then owned by a John Hodden who listed his occupation as 'cordwainer' (a shoemaker)

ABOUT THE COTTAGE NAME 'With patience, the cottage will name itself.' The owner was quite right. In 1992, they moved into a cottage with no name. During the renovation, they found stuck between the wide plank floors a common Victorian thimble. Thus the name: 'Thimble Cottage'.

HOLLY LODGE 4 LONG STREET



HISTORY Holly Lodge was built in 1724 and has always been used as accommodation. It is built of stone and brick with exterior walls two feet thick.

The cottage next door, 2 Long Street has much in common, as they were built in the same year in a mirror floor plan design. Over the years improvements have added to the charm of the cottage.

Originally, a flag stone floor was laid over the dirt foundation. To improve warmth during the winter months, wooden floors were laid instead. A proper kitchen was expanded over looking the garden. An upstairs bedroom was added in the dormer area.

Current owners have happily lived at Holly Lodge since 1982. During the winter months the fireplace in the front lounge is the centre of family activity. In the warmer summer time the three-tiered garden reaches to Back Lane and offers a pleasant retreat.

FAVOURITE FEATURES When purchasing this cottage, the garden was the main attraction. However, at that time the garden was best described as a 'wilderness' comments the current owner. The optimistic estate agent stated that to put the garden right it might take a few months. Taming the garden actually took years of hard work to accomplish. Today, the garden is one of the favourite stops during the annual 'Open Gardens' village event.

ABOUT THE COTTAGE NAME In the back garden, there is a wonderful holly tree that owners and guests have enjoyed for decades. Thus the name, Holly Lodge, was born.

5 LONG STREET



HISTORY The house is older than it looks, was at one time thatched, and may be 16th century in origin. There are timbers in the wall that have been built over during later alterations. A doorway and window, now blocked in, faced on to The Old Saddler next door and a 1768 map shows that this side of the house looked out onto an open yard between it and The Old Saddler. There was a major up-grade during the Georgian period and panelling in the downstairs rooms dates from this period. Most of the rooms have their original ceiling timbers.

The 1919 auction of the village by the Pitt-Rivers Estate was attended by the current owner's grandfather, in which the house was described as having a 'Parlour, Living Room, Back House, Wood House and 3 Bedrooms'. It was bought by Henry Paulley who also bought The Old Saddler and 3 Duck Street; all for £250. The current owner's father initially rented the house from Mr Paulley and subsequently bought the house in 1958 for £300. The present owner has lived in the house all his life.

The owners can recall several occasions, prior to the 1986 building of the Flood Relief Scheme, when their part of the village flooded. The highest flood level in their house was to the second stair riser. One year there was a flood at Christmas and they can recall the Christmas Crackers floating in the water and eels writhing in the flood water outside the New Inn opposite. In the 1940s clinker from a bake house across the road was put down to raise the floor level above the River Cerne that runs in drains under the house to the a culvert in Long Street. The current wood block floor was laid by the present owner who amongst other jobs has worked as a carpenter.

AN INTERESTING FEATURE On one occasion when the walls were being stripped prior to decorating, two hidden cupboards were found in the wall space. Alas, no treasure was found; in fact, nothing at all except dust!

RALEIGH'S 6 LONG STREET



HISTORY In the late 1500s, Cerne Abbas supported two bakeries, one located in the Market House on Abbey Street and the other at 6 Long Street. Built for an English family, this property was their home and ground floor place of business. To keep the store warm, the baked goods were passed through the front window to customer waiting outside.

The cottage has eventually converted to accommodation and in the 1970s the street front got a new Tudor style rendering.

In 1981, the current owners learned of this property for sale in the London Times. The ad stated, 'Lovely old house, good shape accepting offers straight away.' After visiting Cerne Abbas, there was a quick offer. The cottage was located in a most peaceful setting that really appealed to the new owners. This couple were married during WWII and honeymooned in London during the Blitz. One can understand the attraction of the peacefulness of Cerne Abbas as a motivator to move to this village.

FAVOURITE FEATURES The current owners consider the massive flint stone inglenook fireplace as the centrepiece of the home. Many happy evenings are spent there with family and friends around the fireplace. Having a fire 'brings life to the home' said the owners. They can also imagine the original baker working long hours producing breads and cakes to sell.

MOST INTERESTING VISITOR The cottage name of Raleigh's Rest highlights a most interesting part of this property's history. In the early 1600s, Sir Walter Raleigh was summoned to Saint Mary's parish church on a minor ecclesiastical offence. It has been told that before the meeting, the family invited Sir Raleigh to rest in their home from his journey to Cerne Abbas. Thus the name remains to celebrate their famous visitor.

'Cerne Abbas is the friendliest of villages. For over a decade, they have lived here keeping up the tradition of making visitors feel welcome, just as Sir Walter Raleigh was all those years ago'.

SERGEANTS QUARTERS 8 LONG STREET



HISTORY Sergeants Quarters, formerly known as Flint House, were originally part of the village police station and attached courtroom. Built under the auspices of the Constabulary Act of 1858, the building was officially known as Cerne Abbas Police Station N° 1, Headquarters of the Cerne Division of the Dorset Police.

The front elevation of the property is constructed in chequerboard flint and Portland limestone, with Ham stone mullioned windows. This shows an unexpected officially sanctioned subtlety, attempting to blend in with adjacent properties, notably the C16th New Inn. The unseen rear elevations are constructed in red brick.

Internally, the floorboards, staircase, doors and other wooden elements are pitch pine, a cheap and plentiful type of timber, exported from Canada and the USA in large quantities in the C19th. The yard at the rear of the house has two brick built sheds, which may predate the rest of the property, appearing on a survey of the plot of land purchased from the Pitt-Rivers estate for the purpose of building the police station. Above the yard is a walled garden with a path connecting the station with the police stables and coach house on Back Lane.

FAVOURITE FEATURES One interesting feature is the presence of a bell-pull in the downstairs sitting room, which surviving wiring suggests was connected to an indicator board above the larder door. Evidently a Victorian police sergeant was expected to employ servants or, at the very least, a maid.

UNIQUE STORY Village tradition has it that local lads would climb up on packing cases, at the side of the bakery, next door to catch a glimpse of the birching which was carried out in the station yard. The prisoner's walk still remains behind the police station and connects to the yard a few feet away. Easy access to carryout the entertaining punishment.

CERNE ABBAS STORES 9 LONG STREET



HISTORY The building has taken on many configurations and varied purposes over the past centuries: stable, barn, chemist who provided a variety of health healing potions, and its present garden was once the site of a large store which also housed the Salvation Army. With 13 pubs in the village, the Army must have been quite busy helping with the alcoholism issues of the day.

The store front dates from the mid 1700s and may have been divided into two stores before being enlarged to its current size after extensive rebuilding following a major fire in the late 1830s at Pitt House next door.

Currently, there is a general store with six-bedroom family accommodation above. There is a contrast in the pace of life just a few steps away. The store is quite busy; however, the home above is a place of peace, just like N° 10 Downing Street according to the owner. For years there has been a bell system that would ring upstairs as customers entered the store so to keep in touch with activities downstairs.

The shop is open seven days a week, now has the village post office and is certainly the hub of village life.

FAVOURITE FEATURES 'I only meant to come here for a short time – and I ended up staying for 25 years.' The main attraction for the current owner was the opportunity to improve both the business and provide a comfortable home for his family. It was the quality of village life that attracted him to Cerne Abbas. He thought it would be 'good fun' to take on such a life journey which started in 1984.

UNIQUE STORY This amazing story was published by Rhodri Marsden in the Independent....

'You quickly find that community is what you value in life – to live in a place where people look out for each other, and where your children are safe.' Farrow has felt the benefit of that support more than most; when his wife died shortly after they moved to Cerne Abbas in 1984, the village paid for him to take a much-needed holiday, and when Cerne Stores was nearly facing bankruptcy in 1992, £12,000 was raised by local residents in two days to help him out. 'I paid everyone back in two years,' he recalls, 'and these days – although the hours are long – things are much better.'

OLD GAOL COTTAGE 10 LONG STREET



HISTORY In 1859, this Grade II, Victorian building, made of knapped flint and chalk-block with 14" thick walls was built for use as the village Police Station. To the left at 10 Long Street was the Courthouse and at 8, the Sergeant's quarters. The Court, previously held at the New Inn, remained active with Petty Sessions being held once a week until the Police Station closed in 1954. It was then sold to a Mr E Curtis for £1,200 to be converted to accommodation.

The ground floor was the constables' office where the current lounge is today. Over the fireplace, the famous cattails and birch limbs were displayed that were used to punish the prisoners. The three cells were located where the kitchen and dining room are now. The individual cells had a wooden stool, bed and pillow and a chamber pot. The cell door was a solid wooden door with a small sliding window to allow the meals to pass through. Each cell had a high window with bars that are still visible today. The only fresh air was from a small air passage located beneath the cell window. The cells were quite dark. Oil lighting was used until 1936 when electricity was first brought to the village. The courtyard behind the station was the prisoner's walk and birching area. The first floor was used for constables' living quarters. The front room was the lounge with two bedrooms in the back of the building.

FAVOURITE FEATURES The current owners like the two lovely mullioned windows facing Long Street framing everyday village life. 'We feel a sense of deep contentment as we lookout to see villagers on their way to the shop, mums walking children to school and horses coming down the street.'

MOST INTERESTING VISITOR John England tells the story about, as a child, he played in the Police House often when visiting his grandfather who was the Sergeant. One day during WWII, a German pilot crashed his plane over Sydling hill. John's father, a member of the Home Guard, rushed with John to the site and found the pilot alive. Not knowing what to do with a prisoner of war, they brought the pilot, at gun point, to the cells for safe keeping until transferring him to Dorchester the next day. The most interesting part of the story is that during all the excitement, they forgot to put a bullet into the rifle.

PITT HOUSE 11 LONG STREET



HISTORY On 20th November 1828, unforgettable history was made when a fire broke out at 4am. This 18th century home, then owned by Mr Palmer, a surgeon, was quickly ablaze after the out-buildings behind Pitt House and the village store that faced Mill Lane started this disaster. The Dorset County Chronicle reported: 'the flames almost immediately obtained a force which defied the efforts made to quell them and raged with great rapidity in two different directions....flames towered to an almost incredible height, and exhibited a mass of burning buildings covering and enclosing upwards of a acre of land.' The report also mentions how the villagers worked to combat the flames as 'females were seen running through the streets, almost in a state of nudity, shrieking and supplicating aid.' Two engines belonging to the parish of Cerne were on the spot with additional help coming from Sydling. By the time it was finished, the fire had gutted all the houses from the present village stores along as far as the Old Manse. As reported: 'nothing being left but the bare walls containing a mass of ruins and ashes.' This home came back to life in 1835 when James Crane spent £800 rebuilding the house.

The name, Pitt House, came from the Pitt-Rivers family, who then owned the village.

FAVOURITE FEATURES What attracted the previous owners, Patrick Mann and his sister Margaret, to Pitt House was the beautiful South facing front onto Long Street and the large garden behind. For years, they enquired about purchasing the house. Their patience finally paid off in 1979, when they moved to Cerne from Dorchester to enjoy the peaceful village life. They continued to live in the house for the next 25 years.

COURT HOUSE 12 LONG STREET



HISTORY The County Police Act of 1839 enabled the Justice of the Peace in Quarter Sessions to appoint constables for an area such as Cerne Abbas. It was found necessary to have local law enforcement where towns had grown in size and population. It was on Wednesday May 30th 1860 that the Petty Sessions Court was first held in the new Justice Room, in connection with the County Police Station at N° 10 Long Street and The Sergeants Quarters at N° 8 Long Street. Having the Court, Police Station and Sergeants Quarters located together made administering justice much easier. The magistrates J. J. Farquharson Esq., and the Revd C. W. Bingham knew this was a change for the better, from the small low room at the New Inn where Sessions had been previously held for many years. Petty Sessions were held on the first Tuesday in the month at 11 am.

The main crimes were horse and sheep stealing, game and rabbit poaching, public house brawls, wayfarers causing trouble, and boys breaking windows and stealing apples. The most serious crimes were sent on to Dorchester Quarter Sessions for trial and sentencing.

In those days, sentences handed out by the magistrates could be quite harsh. In June 1887, Harry Rendall was given 14 days hard labour for stealing two tame rabbits and Henry Bartlett received 7 days hard labour for not sending his children to Cerne School. Two Dorchester lads, Frank Hutchings and John Tooley, were charged with stealing a missionary box containing about one pound. They were found guilty and each sentenced to receive eight strokes of the birch. The birch was retained as an instrument of punishment until fairly recent times. Stories have been told that local boys climbed the Old Gaol wall to see the birching taking place on the prisoner's walk behind the Police Station. Maybe that was a good learning experience to keep the boys in good behaviour, too. The Cerne Abbas Petty Sessions Court ceased on November 24th 1938

FEATURE OF INTEREST The tall mullion windows today give us an idea as to the size of the Justice Room. This provided light for those gathered to attend Sessions. Remember that indoor electric lighting did not arrive in the village until 1936.

BILLEY'S HOUSE 16 LONG STREET



HISTORY This flint and stone home is believed to date from the 17th century. In 1822, the front was 'georgianised' to provide this new look over Long Street. A stone in the rear garden wall records the date of the renovation.

Mr Billey, a master baker, purchased the home in 1919 when it was sold by the Pitt-Rivers estate. It is believed that this property had always been used as a private home. A more recent owner was the then Bishop of London, Gerald Ellison, who bought the house in the 1970s, first as a rural retreat and later for his retirement. The Bishop died here in 1992.

The home was purchased in 1993 by the current owners who were born in Dorchester. After a working lifetime in other parts of the country, they decided to retire to the area.

FAVOURITE FEATURES The current owners decided on Cerne Abbas, partly because they knew it from their youth and partly because they had close relatives farming in the village. They were attracted to Billey's House by the clean lines of the Georgian facade.

STORY OF INTEREST A family who lived in the village had a nine-year-old daughter. Her father offered to build a doll house for her and wanted to know the type of house she liked. She quickly requested the doll house to look just like Billey's house. The fine architecture of the Georgian period had a new admirer.

THE OLD MANSE 19 LONG STREET



HISTORY A manse is defined as a house provided for the minister in the Presbyterian and Congregational churches. This brick and flint house, built in the Queen Anne style, provided a convenient home for the minister of the Congregational church on Abbey Street. A path through the garden from what is now called the Old Manse, provided a direct route to the chapel.

Parts of the house date back to the early 1700s, about the time when the first chapel was believed to have been erected (the present chapel, now a private house, was built in 1878).

Sunday school for 20 – 30 children was held in the Old Manse as well as social gatherings. At some time the Manse Cottage was built onto the east side of the Old Manse, perhaps for the use of servants to the minister. The house was owned by the Dorset Congregational Association from 1929 until 1958 when it became a private residence again. Until 1959, the home was a single room in depth with large windows providing a lot of light to the interior.

Sir Arthur and Lady Jane Gossling enlarged the home, adding a number of rooms in the back over-looking the garden. When the back-facing windows were installed, they were much higher than was the custom for those days. Sir Arthur was quite tall so it must have seemed fine to him.

FAVOURITE FEATURES The house has a large front garden, which is most unusual in Cerne. It is assumed that the cottages that once lined Long Street were pulled down when the house was built. Sir Arthur was an enthusiastic gardener and especially liked raising roses. The present owners say that gardening really takes a long time with so many friends and tourist wanting to talk over the front fence. When they first moved into the Old Manse in 1983, they were welcomed to the village with an invitation to supper that very evening. For them, this is what makes living in Cerne Abbas so special. They moved away in 1987, only to return in 2001.

UNIQUE STORY Crinkly Fox, known for her striking hairstyle, worked in the home for Sir Arthur. Some time after his death, she revealed that she saw him again wandering through the house. He must have missed his old home and the garden where he grew his favourite roses.

THE OLD BELL 20 LONG STREET



HISTORY This large thatched stone cottage, now a residence, was once one of fourteen pubs serving the village in the 18th century. Built in the early 1500s or possibly earlier, some of the large fireplace stones probably came from Cerne Abbey after its dissolution in 1539. Over the years, The Old Bell has also been a Tea Room.

The property now makes a lovely home. The large sitting room with two huge fireplaces and timber beams continue to remind us of its rich history. Two staircases to the upper floors remain; one would have been used for the pub's customers and the other for the landlord's family. Even the old beer storage room now plays a new purpose as a morning room, with a wall of windows over-looking the rear garden. A further reminder of the pub's history is shown by the, now empty, iron sign frame on the front of the house. The wide and very heavy front door was to allow horses to be lead through the main hall in the centre of the property to access the stables in the rear garden. This main hall with a flagstone floor is a step lower than adjacent areas in the house. Floodwaters, which occasionally ran down Long Street, would generally remain in the lower hall, whilst the raised rooms either side remained dry.

Many pubs in England have been called 'The Bell' and it remains, in one form or another, very popular. It may be relevant that pubs called The Bell appear to be more prevalent in towns and cities and Cerne Abbas was certainly described as a 'town' in maps on the 18th century. In country districts, however, pubs near churches were sometimes called the 'Ring o' Bells' and could this have inspired the name of this particular pub?

WHAT ATTRACTED THE OWNERS TO BUY? When they began looking for a home, their brief was to find a detached house, surrounded by land, no thatched roof and not in a village. So what happen to change their minds? They visited Cerne Abbas and their expectations completely changed. What impressed most were the people of Cerne and the activities of the village life. Truly, a place to call home.

MIDDLE HOUSE 22 LONG STREET

HISTORY When the black plague came to Dorset in 1348, fearful residents believed the disease came from the south coast through Weymouth.

To limit exposure, homes were built with solid south facing walls. Almost 300 years later, that practice continued and Middle House was thus constructed without windows on the south wall. Parts of the property likely dates from before 1617, when it was then two cob cottages. In the 1700s, it was combined to create the elegant Georgian front to the house we see today.

Mr Frank Thorne, a village carrier, once owned the cottage. Running the local transportation service, he would buy goods in Dorchester for the villagers. The purchases were distributed through the side door of the cottage. This beneficial delivery service was essential for those who did not have access to transportation.

The current owners had enjoyed a holiday home in The Court House at 12 Long Street when they decided to live permanently in Cerne Abbas. In 1974, they moved their family to larger accommodation in Middle House.

FAVOURITE FEATURES What initially attracted the current owners to Middle House was the welcoming front door. However, on their first visit to consider the purchase, they were introduced to a stark reality. The condition of the property did not live up to the dream. The lounge had a rotten wooden wall, a leaky roof, poor wiring, questionable foundations and water running in the middle of the floor with a fine growth of mushrooms by the fireplace. Even with the hard work that lay ahead, they visualised that this could be a special home with their favourite black piano by the front window. In the end, 'It was the ideal home for them' they say.

THE COTTAGE NAME The Middle House name has to do with its location on Long Street. The house was exactly in the centre of Long Street with numbers starting at 2 and ended 44. Therefore, 22 is in the centre or middle of the Long Street properties.



THE MARKET HOUSE LONG STREET

HISTORY The Market House is built on the site of the medieval guildhall in the Market Place. Market rights had been granted by King John in 1214. A survey in 1617 by John Norden records that the guildhall was an 'ancient and spacious townhouse wherein the Courts of the Manor were usually kept, but had fallen into such a ruinous state as none dare to sit in it'. Another survey of 1798 records that the Market Place was 'Freehold' and owned by a Philip White, a Yeoman and candle maker, who had rebuilt the property sometime in the 18th century. It was rented in 1764 to a William Willmott and used for spinning silk. By 1820 the Market House was being rented to a Mr Thomas Johns, a clock maker. In 1838 William Henry Clark purchased the Market House. He had taken over the woollen and drapery business from his father who continued elsewhere in Cerne as a clock maker. William Clark carried out major renovations to the house and shop, to give the early 19th century features one sees today. It stayed in Clark hands as linen drapers until 1901.

In 1921 the Market House was bought by Mr Everett, a jeweller, and he remained there until his death in 1938. There followed a succession of owners, a prominent one being Walter Lake from 1951 to 1962. Walter Lake was an enthusiastic amateur photographer and left a legacy of photographs of the village and the countryside around. By now the Market House had become tearooms and so it has remained, but is currently closed under the present owner.

AN ARTISTIC CONNECTION A son of William Henry Clark was Joseph Benwell Clark. He was born in 1857 in Cerne Abbas and went on to be a noted artist, specialising in animal paintings and rural subjects. He helped found the School for Animal Painting and taught at the Royal Academy School of Art. Many of his paintings record local scenes and people and some may be seen in the Dorset County Museum. He retired to 'Barnwells' in Abbey Street in 1921 and died there in 1938. The distinctive front door of 'Barnwells' was made to his own design.



OAKWOOD 29 LONG STREET



HISTORY Across the road from the Royal Oak and with the chancel window of St. Mary's Church overlooking the garden wall, Oakwood is in that part of Long Street known at different times as 'East Street', 'Silver Street', or even 'Blood and Guts Lane' because of its closeness to the site of the 'Shambles' where animals were brought to market. An 'L' shaped patchwork quilt of a house, Oakwood is actually made up of three buildings, the earliest dating back to the time of Columbus. At the rear there are almost as many window shapes as there are windows and, inside, uneven floors and eccentric angles. Oakwood is constructed, at least in part, of stone liberated from the Abbey after 1539, most visibly in the inglenook fireplace. It is, however, substantially Georgian, having undergone a major update in the late 18th century following a marriage uniting the Farr and Coombs families, maltsters of Cerne Abbas. In 1828 it was sold to the Thorne family who were milliners. Unlike most houses in Cerne it was therefore not included in the 1919 sale of the village by the Pitt-Rivers estate. In 1978 a Dutch naval family bought Oakwood, selling it onto their friends, George and Jenny Mortimer in 1994. In their time as 'custodians' George and Jenny incorporated the front 'garage' into the house and lovingly created what Jenny described as a 'romantic' garden.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS One of the attractions of the house was the potential to open up useable space. The first project was to convert the early 18th century 'stable' attached to the rear of the house, latterly used as a log and garden store. Surveyors had described this space as 'structurally unsound', but architect Tim MacBean drew up plans for a two storey conversion including an upstairs room with lovely views of the church tower and garden. During the preparatory work a medieval well with a path leading towards the church was discovered, also the jawbone of a horse.

The second project boarded and insulated the loft space and plastered the walls and ceiling, whilst retaining all the old beams and purlins. Being split level it now looks a bit like a micro theatre doubling as a gym.

ROBERT'S HOUSE 30 LONG STREET



HISTORY This cottage dates from the 18th century, but the original flint and cob exterior overlooking Long Street was faced with brick during the 19th century, giving it a more modern appearance. From the street, it seems to be a very small cosy cottage, but one would be amazed at its size as you step through the front door. Successive owners have altered the original cottage to suit changing needs and expanded it by converting a small barn at the rear of the property into a sitting room. The cottage today is on several levels and each step between rooms shows how the property has grown like the rings on a tree. A well was located in the back garden as a village water source, but has since been covered over. However, you can still hear the water flowing below it.

FAVOURITE FEATURES The ground floor work shop has for years been the centre of activity in this cottage. It was once used by a cobbler, Jackie Roberts, for shoe repairs; hence the current name of the house. Another owner, a carpenter, built wooden cabinets and coffins. The present owner is a teacher of patchwork, quilting and allied crafts.

UNIQUE STORIES During the war, if you really wanted to be safe, this cottage was the place to be, with an air raid shelter built behind the cottage. The shelter had a metal roof, one-foot thick walls, a four-foot thick earth support on the south side and one door. The shelter could accommodate several grateful families.

CHESCOMBE HOUSE 31 LONG STREET



HISTORY Overlooking the site of what would have been the open market in medieval times, the house is almost certainly as old as the others on this side of Long Street. The thick internal beams confirm this, as does the massive open fire in the main room on the ground floor. This fire would have originally been on the outside wall adjacent to 29 Long Street, with a passage between the two houses. At some time prior to the 19th century this passage was built over and incorporated into N° 31, very obvious when viewed from the front.

At the time of the 1798 Admeasurement Survey, Nos 29, 31 and 33 Long Street were all in the 'Lifehold' of Thomas Coombs. Thomas Coombs was a well-to-do local Maltster, Brewer and Linen Draper who also owned the Royal Oak and other properties and fields in Cerne Abbas. By the time of the Census of 1881, N° 31 was the home of James Northover, the last operating 'Maltster and Brewer' in Cerne Abbas. However, by the 1901 Census this business had closed and he was now an 'Inspector of Nuisances', whatever that entailed!

N° 31 was included in the 1919 sale of the village as Lot 42 and described as 'A Comfortable and Roomy Residence with large Yard and Outbuildings and a Small Paddock'. The house in the 1798 Survey where N° 33 Long Street now stands had disappeared in the meantime and become a 'Cow Stall for 4 cows, Cart House in 3 bays', indicating that N° 31 was a small holding. In all, it comprised about an acre. Lot 42 went to a Mr Frank Thorne for £300. By 1963 Frank Thorne had acquired other land in the village and N° 31 had become 'Chescombe Farm House' with about 21 acres. The house and lands were sold at auction in 1963 to a Mr Burrage, a land developer, with planning permission to build houses on what have become Abbey Court and Abbots Walk.

TODAY The house is still called 'Chescombe House' and is now a comfortable house and garden. It has been much modified over the years, but its medieval origins can still be discovered internally.

MALTSTERS 32 LONG STREET



HISTORY The present house is believed to date from the 16th century and would have overlooked the medieval Market Square. In the 1768 plan of the village, there were two cottages on the present site. The 1798 Admeasurement Survey recorded that one of the cottages was lived in by Joseph Barnwell who may have been related to the owner of the Nags Head public house in Abbey Street. A later note in the survey, dated 1810, records that the eastern-most cottage was largely burnt down. It was never rebuilt but what remained was subsumed into the present house and the land it had occupied became its side garden. The cottages would have been thatch-roofed, as is the present house.

By the time of the 1919 Pitt-Rivers auction of the village the remaining house had been subdivided into two agricultural cottages and both were sold as part of Lot 6 (Black Hills Farm). The cottages each went through several ownerships until 1951 when they were combined once more into the one house. In 1984 fire struck again, destroying much of the upper floor and interior, and the house had to be substantially rebuilt. A fine, early oak-panelled wall fortunately survived.

A historical survey prior to the 1984 fire describes jointed crucks which is positive evidence for a 16th century construction date. The western portion of the house frontage is of cob construction, while the distinctive and smaller remaining eastern portion is of masonry rubble, comprising flint, chalk blocks and the local greensand, the Shaftsbury Sandstone. The marked difference in the frontage is evidence of the original two cottages. It is also likely that some of the construction materials came from the Abbey.

A BREWING HISTORY There is a substantial barn to the rear. In the 1919 auction the barn was referred to as the 'Old Malthouse'. A note in the 20th century diary of the noted Cerne Abbas artist, Joseph Benwell Clark, refers to 'the brew house situated in the lower garden at the end of the passage in Long Street opposite the Royal Oak'. Brewing was a major industry in Cerne Abbas in the 18th and 19th centuries.

33 LONG STREET



HISTORY A house is shown on the site of N° 33 Long Street on the earliest map (1768) of Cerne Abbas. It would have overlooked the open market in medieval times and was therefore probably as old as the others on this side of Long Street, then known as East Street. At the time of the 1798 Admeasurement Survey, N° 33 was in the 'Lifehold' of Thomas Coombs. Thomas Coombs was a well-to-do local Maltster, Brewer and Linen Draper who also owned Nos 29 and 31 Long Street as well as the Royal Oak public house and a number of other properties and fields in Cerne Abbas.

By the time of the 1919 sale of the village it was part of Lot 42 with N° 31 Long Street and described as a 'Cow Stall for 4 cows, Cart House in 3 bays'. At some point in the 19th century, therefore, N° 33 had been partially demolished and had become part of a small holding run from N° 31 Long Street. Lot 42 went to Mr Frank Thorne and was to remain in his ownership until 1963 when it was auctioned off with other land in Cerne that he had later accrued.

Following the 1963 auction, N° 33 was rebuilt by the new owner of N° 31. This same man, a Mr Burrage, also built houses on the other land he had bought from Frank Thorne to create Abbey Court, which is adjacent to N° 33 and Abbots Walk.

AN ANECDOTE The story goes that Mr Burrage returned one day to find two elderly ladies in N° 33, sitting in deck chairs in what was then an unfurnished house for sale. The ladies had resolved to buy the house, but insisted on two overhead beams and an inglenook fireplace being concealed before the sale went through. This was duly done, at a cost of about £500, and the beams and fireplace remain there, perhaps to be revealed in all their glory at some time in the future.

36 LONG STREET



HISTORY The best description of this mid 18th century, property is a 'simple gentleman's cottage'. A small space, where every room is used and where the simplicity provides a lasting impression for visitors and guests. This house does not have many architecture features of later periods. However, it is the simplicity that gives this home a special charm and is deserving of the attachment of its owners, over the years.

During a 124 year period, only two families are known to have lived here. From 1880 to 1929 the Pidden family called this home followed by the Fox family from 1930 to 2004. The devotion to this special cottage has continued with the present owners. When they first saw the cottage, it was in a derelict state. They were successful in the purchase, before it went to auction, with the belief that it was their mission to bring it back to life. Over a two year period, this cottage was reduced to nothing but bare walls and original timbers before using a combination of new and recycled materials, it was rejuvenated. It took great dedication for the owners to live through this restoration journey, supported by villagers offering encouragement and support as they monitored each step of this building's restoration.

UNIQUE FEATURES During the 1850s, the cottage was expanded to include some of the out buildings which now formed a scullery. This extension was built by a carpenter who lived and worked in the cottage. The ground floor had a living area on the left with a flat stone floor and a work area on the right with quarry tiles laid on bare earth. It is these different floor designs and materials that suggest how these rooms were possibly used. The ground floor rooms share a rather over sized timber beam that is believed to have been salvaged from the abbey. The inglenook fireplace that today dominates the lounge was a great discovery. During the renovations of 2004 - 2006, a rather small fireplace was opened to reveal a larger one behind. A series of 5 fireplaces were exposed and each one increased in size. It is believed that over the centuries, the fireplace was made smaller to retain the cottage warmth.

COTTAGE NAME It is quite fitting that this simple Dorset cottage has never been given a name. So, without a name, how can this property be identified? This 19th Century Shaker song certainly describe this home as no name really could.

'Tis the gift to be simple, 'tis the gift to be free, 'Tis the gift to come down where we ought to be, And when we find ourselves in the place just right, 'Twill be in the valley of love and delight.



39-49 LONG STREET

HISTORY Originally Nos 1 to 6 Simsay, these houses were built in the late 1960s on land previously part of Alton Lane Farm. This farm, sold in the 1919 auction of the village, also included the farm house opposite (Nº 44 Long Street), the adjacent cottages (40 and 42 Long Street), various farm buildings and the pasture between Long Street and the Burial Ground. A plot on this pasture later became the site of the modern Surgery. The only signs of the original farm buildings are old walls along the road and forming the row of garages.

STORY OF INTEREST The owner of Nº 1 Simsay until her death in 2004 at the age of 97 was Lady Ines Erna Elkins. The wife of a prominent businessman, she had lived in a large house in India and entertained, amongst others, Ghandi, Nehru, and Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy. In more modest surroundings in Cerne Abbas, Lady Elkins became a popular and respected character in the village. The need for a wall in her beloved garden led to her taking a bricklayers' course in her late 70s. She also attended a computer course in her 90s! Her lasting legacy is the garden bordering Long Street, formerly a neglected piece of wasteland which she lovingly created and now maintained by villagers. Her achievements are marked with a stone tablet in the garden.

CERNE ABBAS SURGERY

HISTORY Doctors in the area decided to form a partnership in 1970, where they had previously been practising in their respective villages. In 1979 the Digby Estate sold the front part of the current site to the partnership as a surgery 'for the purposes of the general medical practice'. It soon became apparent that, to offer better services, more space was required and the surgery was expanded to include the present dispensary and administration area. In 1995 more land was purchased from the Digby Estate for a new wing to be added to the north to include an office and a car park. This was expanded further in 2002 to deliver an ever increasing range of primary care services.

Cerne Abbas and the rural communities in the area between Dorchester, Sherborne and Sturminster Newton can count itself extremely fortunate to have this modern surgery, offering a wide range of consulting, dispensing and healthcare services.

SIMSAY FIELD

HISTORY This development of six affordable housing was completed in 2001 and officially opened by HRH Prince Charles on 3rd October 2002, as depicted in the tablet on the end gable of Nº 4 Simsay. The houses are managed by the Hastoe Housing Association, either as rental properties or in shared ownership.

THE LODGE 50 LONG STREET



HISTORY The Lodge is believed to be so named because it was originally a hunting lodge for the Pitt-Rivers estate. The present house dates from 1842 when it was rebuilt following a fire. In 1858 it became an academy, comprising both boarding and day boys, run by a local schoolmaster, William Beach. However, in 1865 he was declared bankrupt and the premises were reportedly by then in a wretched state.

By the time of the 1881 Census, the house had become the local surgery and home for the village general practitioner. The longest serving GP was Dr Dalton who took over the practice in 1893. He continued as GP for the next 48 years, but continued to live in the house until his death in 1949. Dr Dalton is still remembered with affection by many of the older villagers who, having brought them into the world, saw to their medical needs thereafter. He was also active in the local community, forming the cricket club, rifle club and billiards team.

On his death, Dr Dalton's widow sold the house and it became a nursing home called White Knights. In 1963 The Lodge was bought by John Gumbrell, a psychiatrist. He later built a new house next door (now Rum Cottage) for the occupation of himself and his wife. The Lodge was bought by Michael and Arabella Williamson in 1998.

FAVOURITE FEATURES Michael and Arabella are particularly attracted by the large, well-proportioned rooms and the fine views to the front and rear. Coming from London, they are also attracted by the village, the lovely walks, the church and the pubs. To enhance the rear view they have replaced a substantial hedge with parkland style iron railings. In 2008 the vast copper beech tree in front of the house, a local landmark, had to be felled. It was said to be some 400 years old, but the trunk had hollowed out and the tree had become a danger.

MILL HOUSE MILL LANE



HISTORY The Mill House, or a building on that site, appears to have existed from soon after the Dissolution of the Abbey in 1539. The mill race, diverted from the Cerne River which otherwise flows down Duck Street, skirts the original Abbey grounds and there is evidence that pools from these grounds, for example fish ponds, overflowed into the race. It was probably also the sewer outflow for the Abbey! The mill race once passed around the front and rear of the Mill House, but only the front race now survives. The one to the rear can still be traced and must have driven a mill wheel for centuries. Water for the race was controlled by a sluice, the remains of which can still be seen from the path up to Kettle Bridge. The race then rejoins the Cerne River in Duck Street.

The Mill is mentioned in the 1798 Admeasurement Survey, but was not included in the 1919 sale of the village and must have been freehold at that time. When it became freehold is not known, but existing records in the Dorset History Centre suggest a connection to the 'church of Salisbury' and its freehold status may go back to the period following the Dissolution.

The Census Returns and Trade Directories for the 19th and 20th centuries describe a succession of millers running the Mill and a charming photograph taken in the late 19th century shows the 18th century Mill House with a lady standing in front of it. She may have been Jane Derriman, wife of Harry Derriman, who was the miller at the time. His brother, Joseph, ran the Cerne Village stores. The directory for 1920 shows that the Mill was trading under the name of William Robert Holland, a miller and corn merchant, and he was to be the last miller of Cerne Abbas. He died in 1930 and his wife reportedly closed the mill in 1933. The Mill then ceased to trade after surviving for hundreds of years. At some point after closure, the rear race to the Mill was filled in and the race redirected to where it flows today.

Today it is a family home again and is being lovingly restored to its former Georgian charm.



5 THE FOLLY

HISTORY The date the house was built is uncertain, but it appears on the 1798 Admeasurement Survey (when The Folly was known as Black Water Lane) and so the building is thought to have its origins in the mid 18th century. Until the early 1960s the site comprised two small agricultural cottages (5 and 7 The Folly) and may have been built originally to house workers for the adjacent Barton and Mount Pleasant Farms. They were then combined by Mr Head whose son now farms at Mount Pleasant Farm and whose mother Norah lived in the house until her 99th year in 2006, when it was sold to the current owners.

The original cottage structure is built of cob and lime-mortared flint and brick on the external elevations. Many of the original features disappeared when the cottages were combined. However, two of the three bedrooms retain their original elm floors and the attic space still boasts the original oak and field beams that supported a thatch roof until the 1930s.

FAVOURITE FEATURES A fireplace that almost no longer exists! When the current owners bought the property there was an enormous floor to ceiling ham stone fireplace that dwarfed the sitting room. It originated from the late 1950s when Toller Porcorum School was being demolished and the then tenant could realise his dream of creating a 'grand' look. Ham stone blocks from the school were transported one at a time in the boot of a Morris Minor car until the project was completed. Some of the stones remain in the form of a fireplace base, but most were removed, to reveal an 18th century brick fireplace, the rest used to form steps and small walls in the garden.

Impressions of tracked vehicles are still just visible on the road outside where tanks were parked in the sunshine days prior to D-Day in June 1944.

CERNE RIVER COTTAGE & THE FOLLY



HISTORY River Cottage was part of the tannery complex in the 18th century. Sited strategically on the river there was water to work the hides. Earlier references refer to Tannery Cottage with the Tanyard slightly to the south east. Workshops covered the present back garden but were demolished in about 1910.

The house itself shows clear evidence of its use as a tannery. Well into the 20th century there was a trap door from the first floor down which hides were dropped for further finishing. The hall from the current front door was used by horses carrying material through the house. The floor in the hall was deeply worn where they walked, but the flagstones have since been replaced. The exit was on the side of the house. Sometime in the late 19th century, when it became a private dwelling, the house was renamed Belle Vue. It was here that a Miss Catherine Granville lodged with Mrs Maud North in 1908 when she came to Cerne as an assistant teacher at the village school. Catherine wrote a diary during her two year stay in Cerne in which she recorded in much detail what village and school life was like in Edwardian England and about her excursions to Dorchester and Weymouth. The house was described in the 1919 sale of the village as a 'Picturesque and Attractive Small Residence' and sold for £155 to a Mr Cheesman.

The house was owned from 1947 by Mr and Mrs Congram. Their daughter, Jean, who lived with them, also taught for many years in the village school. In their time the house was called 'Corners'. Today it is called 'Cerne River Cottage' and its garden, through which the River Cerne continues to flow, is one of the highlights of the annual village Open Gardens held in the second weekend in June.

BARTON FARM THE FOLLY



HISTORY At the time of the 1798 Admeasurement Survey, Barton Farm was already a flourishing farm and was leased from village owners the Pitt-Rivers family by a Samuel Crane who also leased Abbey Farm. Adjacent to the 14th century Tithe Barn and an abandoned medieval settlement to the south of the farm, Barton Farm had almost certainly been in existence for centuries before 1798. At some point in the 18th century the southern end of the Tithe Barn had been converted to a residence, to be called Barton Farmhouse. At the time of the 1919 sale of the village by the Pitt-Rivers, Barton Farm was sold as one Lot and included the Barton Farmhouse and Tithe Barn, the 17th century Dairy House and cottages on the Dorchester Road and in The Folly, various farm buildings, a fertile water meadow and pasture; in all 822 acres. It sold to the existing tenant farmer, Mr J Sprake, for £12,500.

The Tithe Barn (now listed as Grade I) and residence was later sold off as one property. The Dairy House (listed as Grade II) in turn became the new Barton Farmhouse. The farm continued to run until the early 1990s, when it was sold up to become the site for a private housing estate for the Beechcroft Trust. Barton Farmhouse and the outlying cottages were sold off separately into private ownership, but the old farm buildings were converted into nine homes and a further fifteen were built on the remaining farm courtyard site. The six-acre water meadow was also retained by the Trust for the benefit of the residents of the new Barton Farm.

Very recently, the English Countryside Association and the Beechcroft Trust combined to form Cognatum. This combination now owns a number of private estates in prime locations in England, providing homes on managed estates for the over-55s.

BARTON LODGE THE FOLLY



HISTORY Barton Lodge was built in 1810 for the Pitt-Rivers family. Standing in an elevated position with a southerly aspect, the house has a central location in the village with excellent views down the Cerne Valley. This position and aspect were perhaps important as the family at that time owned much of the village and lands around. It remained in the family until the sale of the village in 1919 when the Lodge was bought by the sitting tenant, Miss Katherine Diana Digby, a relative of the Digby family of Minterne Magna. She also bought the Coachman's and Gardener's cottages in Wills Lane, two further Cottages in Duck Street and all the land between. She lived at Barton Lodge until her death in 1932 then the estate passed to her brother, Henry Montague Digby. He subsequently sold the two cottages in Duck Street to Frank Thorne, a local 'carrier' and farmer.

The Lodge and remaining land changed ownership a number of times thereafter until 1959, when it bought by a Mrs Tee, the wife of Dr George Tee. In 1979 Dr Tee submitted plans to build three detached houses on the land to the east of the Lodge. A local developer, Roger Burrage, purchased the land and built the houses that are now Nos 19, 21 and 23 The Folly. The Lodge continued as a family home until 1984, when it was purchased by Mr and Mrs J Stainer who turned it into a residential care home. In 2005 the house and grounds were sold to 'Strongvox' developers who converted the Lodge into 6 apartments. The old coach house and garages complex was demolished and four new apartments built on the site. Strongvox also built 9 cottages (8 thatched) in the grounds and on the adjacent land bought from the old village hall. Despite redevelopment the house, still Grade II listed, has retained many of its original features and character.

UNIQUE USAGE During WWII the Home Guard paraded and trained for invasion on the lawns of the Lodge.

THE NEW RESIDENTS OF BARTON LODGE The new residents in the original Barton Lodge agree that it has retained its 'homely' feel and has blended the old with the new sympathetically.

THE INNS OF CERNE ABBAS

The brewing of beer became a major industry in the village in the 18th century and made some families very wealthy. The ground water from the underlying greensand lent itself to the quality of the beer and it was exported to London and abroad. However, by the early 19th century the major producers were increasingly located in London and the Midlands and Cerne beer went out of fashion.

The brewing industry spawned a large number of inns and taverns making and/or selling beer in the village and it is believed that there up to 17 of these at one time, for a population that never exceeded about 1200. Most went out of business during the 19th century and today just three survive. The known disposition of the inns and taverns are:



THE TOP ROAD
The Giants Head
ABBEY STREET
Nag's Head (left)
The Inn (right)



LONG STREET
The Antelope (left)
The Crown (right),
Northovers'
Brewery



The Old Bell,
The Red Lion- now
The Giant Inn (both left)
The Royal Oak
(right)



New Inn -took over
from The Inn when it closed
circa 1700 (left)
The Bull (right)



ACREMAN ST
The Greyhound (left)
The Union Arms
(right)
The Glove (below left)
Coopers Arms



DUCK STREET
The Elephant and
Castle (right)
The Prince of
Wales (once called the
Calcroft Arms after a public
hangman)

