

Littlecote House, The Street, Charmouth.



Littlecote stands at the corner of Lower Sea Lane and the Street in Charmouth. It would amaze most people that alongside it until its demolition in 1958 stood Sandford House which was equally as large. Its original boundary would have been past the white line in the centre of the road leaving an extremely narrow access, similar to that experienced today in Higher Sea Lane. With Carrum House further along, they formed a group of three Villas built between 1843-5. We are fortunate today that there are still standing a number of fine houses



Littlecote House, The Street, Charmouth.



Bragges Store, Sandford and Littlecote in 1958

built at the beginning of the 19th century as a result of its attraction with Lyme Regis as a Watering Place. Jane Austen was to sum it up in her famous novel, *Persuasion* as *“Charmouth with its high grounds and extensive sweeps of country, and still more its sweet, retired bay, backed by dark cliffs, with fragments of low rock among the sands make it the happiest spot for watching the flow of the tide, for sitting in unmarried contemplation”*.



Same View today with gap where Sandford House used to stand.

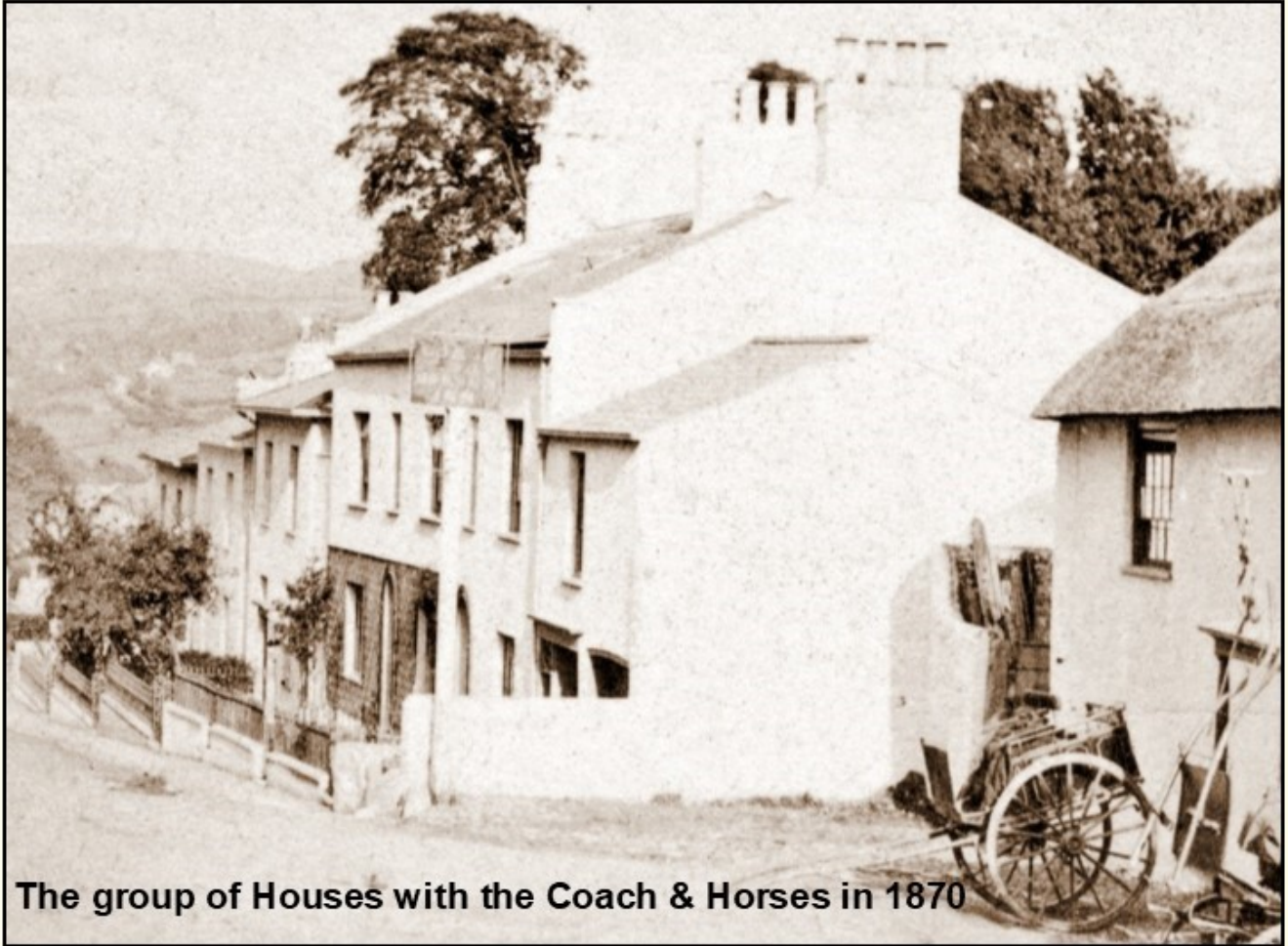
Littlecote House, The Street, Charmouth.



View of Littlecote, Carrum, Beech House in 1870

Usually when I am researching the history of houses in Charmouth I have to spend a tremendous amount of time looking through every available reference to them in Wills, Poor Rates, Censuses, Directories, Parish Records, etc. This was to be the case with Littlecote and I had enough to produce this article but knew there were many gaps and questions unanswered. I was fortunate to make acquaintance with the present owner, Tom Tidy and mentioned it to him. He and his wife welcomed me to their wonderful home soon after and handed over a hessian bag with all their deeds squeezed in it. I could not believe my luck as on the outside was written Samuel Dunn, the builder and original owner which went back to when he built it in 1843. Altogether they formed an important record of both Littlecote and the plot of land that it was built on. For within them was an "Abstract of Title" which was a revelation to me as it took the history of the larger area back to 1715 when William Comings owned the building we know today as "The Coach and Horses", but then "The Ship" and the 3 acre field on which the Tennis Courts, Community Hall, Beech House, Littlecote, Carrum, Winton House stand today. It provided the missing link to me and I was able to take the history of these buildings further back with a degree of confidence and added this information to my website: freshford.com. If we went back in time to when Charles II made his ill-fated visit to the village in 1651, he would have seen the earlier church, with its parsonage, on the site of Beech House and an Inn owned by George Comings as its neighbour. They

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The group of Houses with the Coach & Horses in 1870

stood at the edge of a large 3 acre Glebe field which George rented from the Diocese on a 500 year lease. On his death in 1699 it was inherited by his son William, who in 1715 left it to his wife, Elizabeth who remarried Clement Joynes. The Ship Inn first appeared on the "Alehouse List" for Dorset in 1718, when William Kidnor is shown as its landlord. The Joynes took out a number

8 - Joseph Goreing de ...	10
9 - Elizabeth Hodder wife de ...	10
10 - William Kidnor de Charmouth	10

Alehouse return for Charmouth in 1718

of mortgages on the Inn until they eventually sold it with its adjoining field to Hannah Newberry from Hawkchurch in 1744. She was there for over 40 years living to a fine old age for those times. She ran the Inn initially herself and her son in law, Thomas Edwards, a Butcher, lived nearby in the former Parsonage

54 Hannah Newberry at the Ship Inn Charmouth	10
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on which was later built the property we now know as Beech House. On her death in 1787, she leaves all her properties to her two grandchildren, Hannah

Littlecote House, The Street, Charmouth.

certains Messuages or Tenement called Woods - Mr Thomas Edwards in respect of a Dwelling House and Orchard in his possession - Mrs Hannah Newberry and Occupier in respect of a Dwelling House called the Three Crowns and a Field thereto belonging in possession of her and her Under Tenants Mr Benjamin

Dare and William Newberry Edwards. William inherits his sister's half on her early death. He continues to live in his father's former house where he runs a Butchers and leases the Inn which is then known as "The Three Crowns" to Joseph Bradbeer. An Insurance Policy for 1790 has survived and is very detailed showing William paying £300 for his **"Household Goods, Dwelling House, Stables, Slaughterhouse, which were all thatched"** and the Three

565378 William Edwards of Charmouth near Bridport
 15th in Dorset Butcher — On his Household Goods in his house
 as 1790 Dwelling House only not exceeding one hundred pounds 100
 Margie House only in Tenure of Josth Bradbeer, not exceeding
 One hundred £. 100
 Stables & Slaughterhouse adjoining, not exceeding fifty
 pounds 50
 All Thatched as situate at Charmouth aforesaid £ 300

CHARMOUTH, DEVON.
TO be SOLD in FEE by AUCTION, by
 Mr. JOOZE, at the Coach and Horses Inn, in Char-
 mouth, on Friday the 29th Day of June instant, at Five
 o'clock in the Afternoon (subject to such conditions as will
 be then produced) an undivided Moiety of all that well
 accustomed Inn or Public House, called The COACH and
 HORSES, with the Stables, Outhouses, and Gardens there-
 unto belonging, eligibly situate in the centre of Charmouth
 Street, and holden under lease by Mr. Bradbeer, whose
 term therein will expire at Michaelmas next, and now in
 the occupation of Mr. Clemoes.
 Also an undivided Moiety of all that Brick Fronted
 MESSUAGE or DWELLING HOUSE, with the Outhouses
 and a Close of exceedingly rich MEADOW LAND adjoining,
 containing about Three Acres (more or less) in the
 occupation of Mr. William Edwards.
 The Lands are most delightfully situate in the much fre-
 quented Village of Charmouth, whose celebrity as a water-
 ing place has been too long known to need an enumeration
 of the conveniences and advantages it possesses.
 For further particulars, apply to Messrs. Smith and Taun-
 ton, Solicitors, Axminster.
 15th June, 1810.

Crowns leased by Joseph Bradbeer, Victualler, on **"his Household Goods, Utensils, Stock and Inn which was also thatched"**.

Joseph Bradbeer as well as running the Inn sets up Charmouth's first Post Office in 1806 in what is now Nisa Store and in 1811 gives up the lease. An advert appears in the Western Times for an Auction in that year for both the Butchers and Inn which are described as:

"That well accustomed Inn or Public House, called the Coach and Horses, with the Stables, Outhouses, and Gardens thereunto belonging eligibly situate in the centre of Charmouth Street, and holden under lease by Mr. Brad-

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beer, whose term the run will expire at Michaelmas next, and now in the occupation of Mr. Clemoes. Also, a Brick Fronted Messuage or Dwelling House, with the Outhouses and a close of exceedingly rich Meadow Land adjoining, containing about three acres more or less in the occupation of Mr. William Edwards”.

The auction could not have been successful as William Edwards continues to live in the village until 1830 when after the death of his wife, he remarries Sophia, widow of Thomas Morgan, the former landlord of The George Inn and sells his properties and moves from the village. The Coach and Horses was bought by Bowden, Gundry, of Bridport whose original Brewery stood in Gundry Lane in Bridport. The former Butchers and its 3 acre field were purchased by Isaac Cooke. He was a successful Lawyer living in Clifton, who had been Mayor of Bristol and was also Patron of Charmouth Church from 1826 until 1839 during the occupancy of William Glover and John Dixon Hales as Rectors. He bought Beech House and the field from William Newberry Edwards on the residue of a 500 year lease for £1100 and may well have rebuilt it at the same time as the Rectory as they are very similar as shown by the



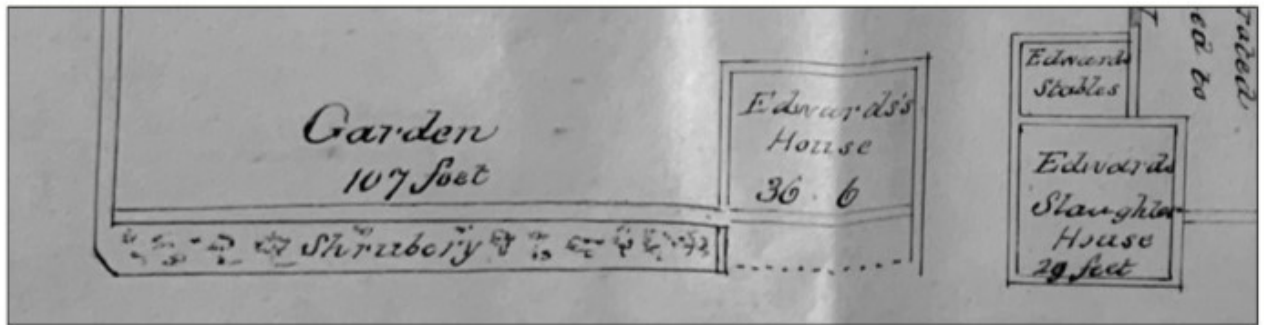
doorways illustrated here. The 1831 Poor rates show Isaac Cooke owning Beech House, with the Curate, Thomas Snow living in the new Rectory and renting a field from him, which was the piece of ground Sandford House, Littlecote and Carrum House were later to be built on. The Indenture for the sale describes it as:

"All that brick fronted messuage, tenement or dwelling house, wash house, slaughter house, offices and oth-

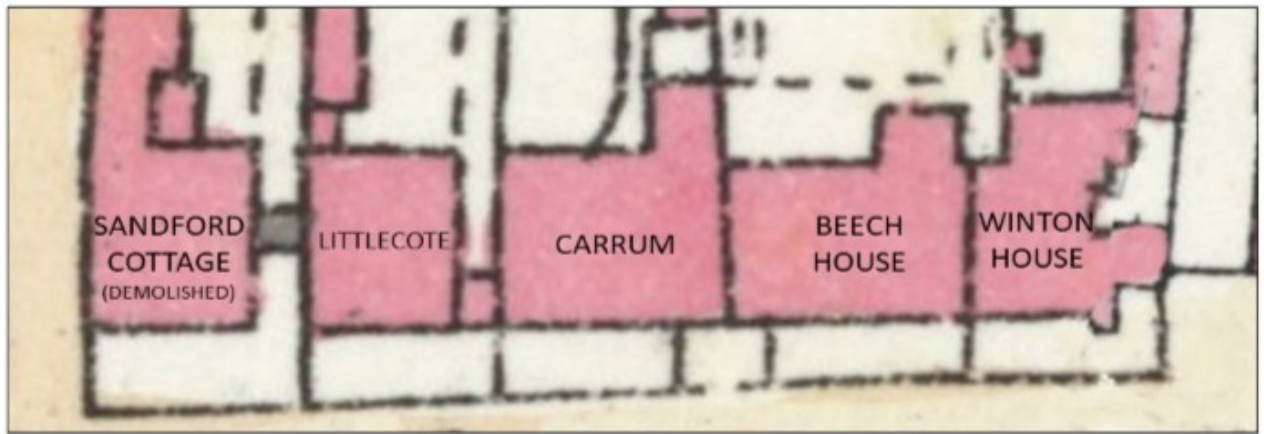
er outbuildings thereto belonging with the Shrubbery and ground in front of the Street of Charmouth and also that Garden and piece or close of meadow or pasture land adjoining the same said messuage, tenement or dwelling house, buildings and garden formerly called the Church Yard Close, containing by estimation three acres (be the same more or less)".

A Plan shown here is bound into the document and clearly shows William Newberry Edwards former House with the Slaughter House close by and a Shrubbery along the frontage to The Street where the 3 Villas were to be later built.

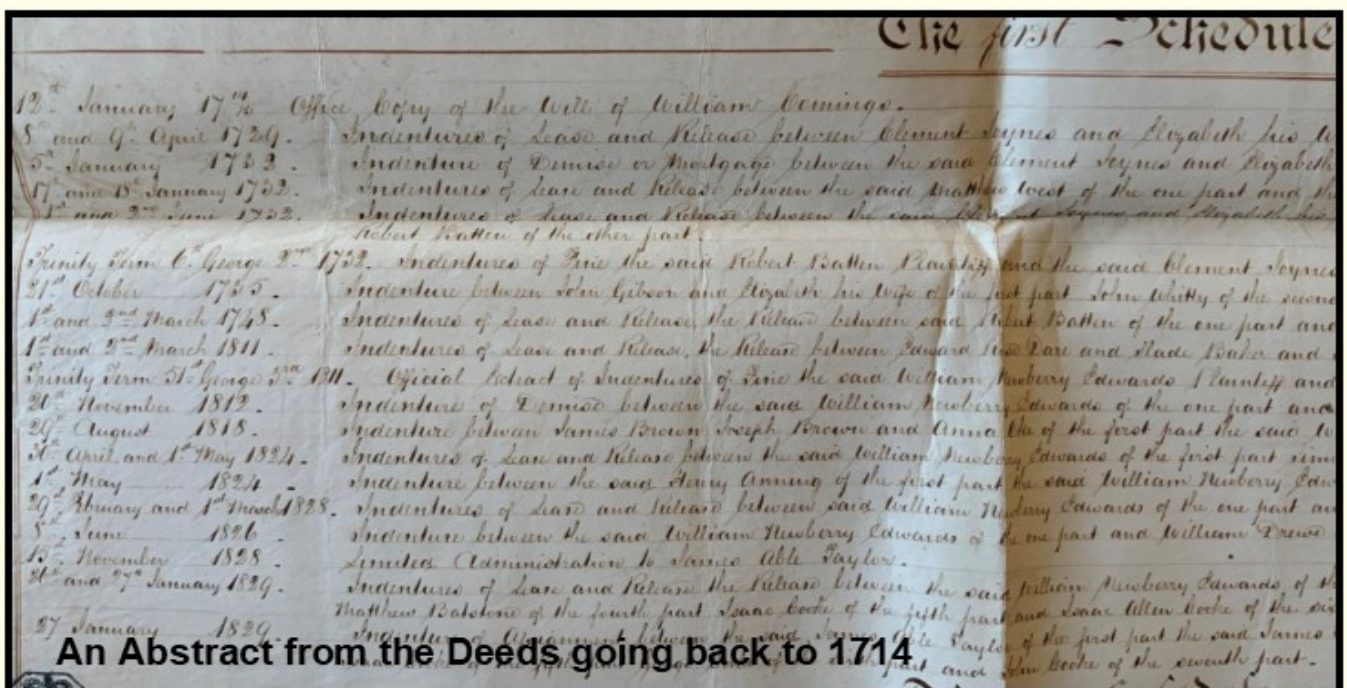
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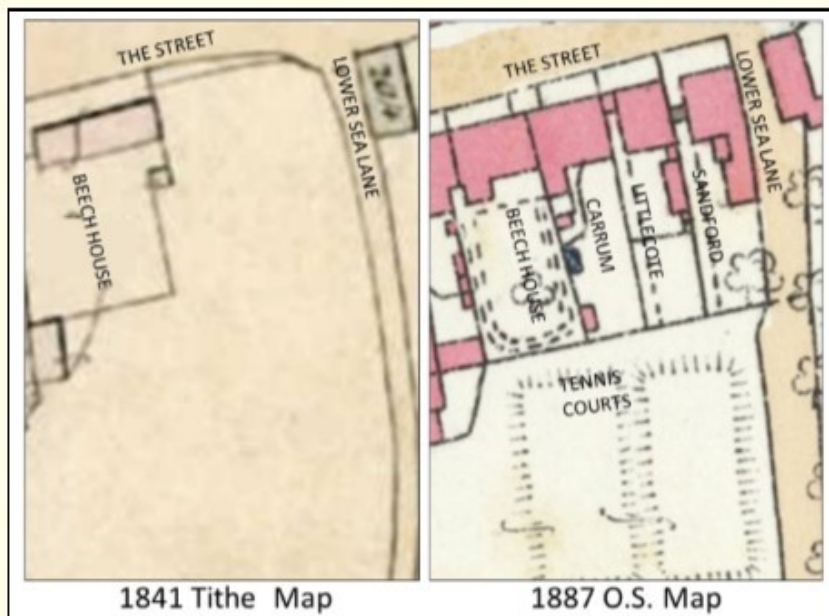
A Detailed Plan of Beech House in 1839 and its garden when it was owned by William Edwards as a Butchers with its adjoining Garden and Shrubbery where Sandford, Littlecote and Carrum were built in 1844. Winton House was later built by John Hodges incorporating the butchers shop on the site of the former Slaughter House and Stables.



It is Littlecote's extensive deeds that now provide the next chapter in its history, for they show that on the death of Issac Cooke, his two sons inherited his estate in 1843 and sold William Edwards former House (now Beech House) to a Miss Frances Kennaway, daughter of Sir John Kennaway for £500 and a strip of land facing the Street to William Hoare for £210, where Sandford, Littlecote and Carrum were later to be built. William Hoare would have been 33



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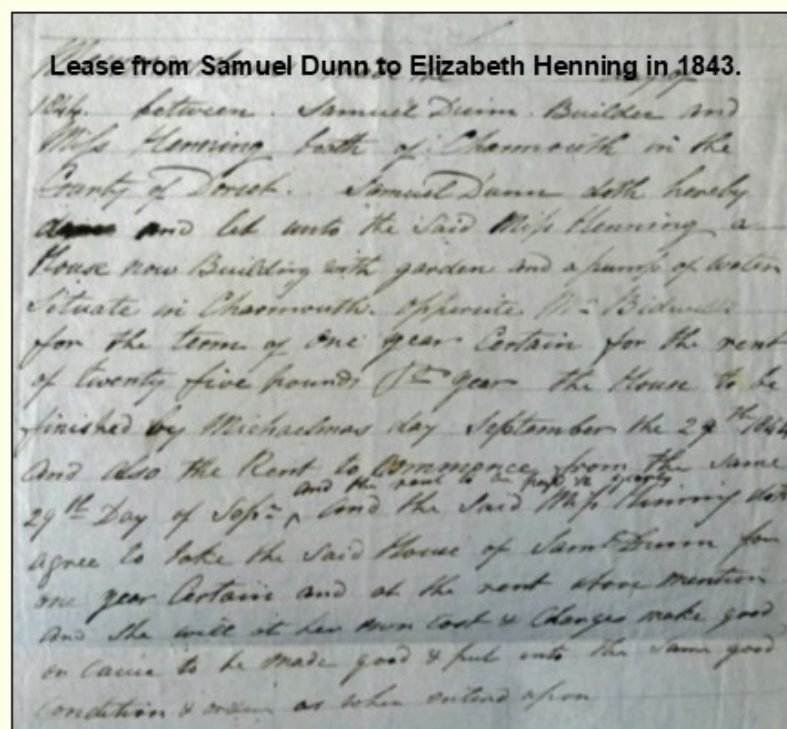
1841 Tithe Map

1887 O.S. Map

years of age at that time, married to Eliza, daughter of Samuel Dunn, who he worked for as a Carpenter. He was to divide the strip into three and keep the end plot for Sandford Cottage and sell the middle plot to Samuel Dunn, his father in law soon after for £95. The third plot was bought by John Hodges, a Butcher, who was to later buy Beech House from Frances Kennaway. John Hodges had formerly rented a number of

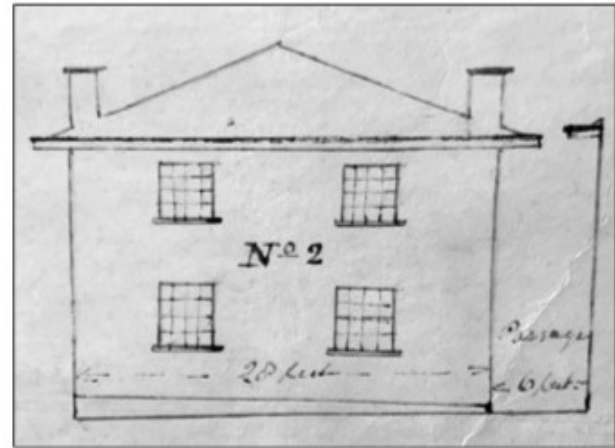
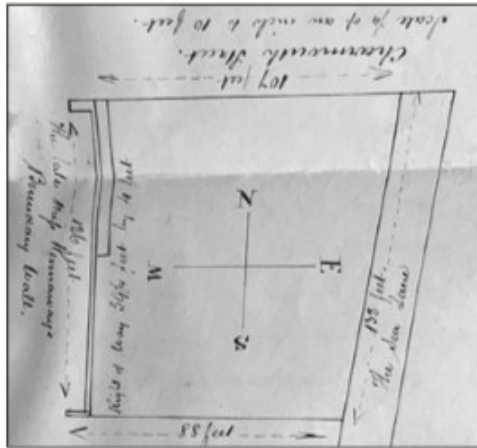
Glebe fields on either side of Lower Sea Lane and lived in a farmhouse where the old School stands today. But his life was to change in 1843 when he bought the plot of ground from William Hoare and had Samuel Dunn build a house on it which he called "Clarence House (now Carrum House). He went on to buy Beech House from Miss Kennaway and built "Winton House" soon after adjoining it where the former Slaughterhouse stood. At the time of his death in 1874, John Hodges owned Sandford House, Beech House and Winton House which he left to his children.

The deeds contain an Indenture of the house that was to be built with plans of the site and a sketch of how it would look which are shown here. William Hoare, as a Carpenter no doubt assisted his father in law, Samuel Dunn in the

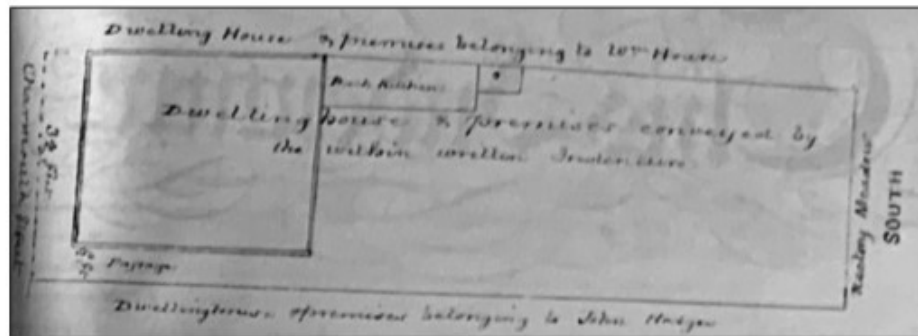


construction of his house and the other two. The Dorset Archives in Dorchester have the Day Books for 1834 -1837 in which Samuel recorded the various jobs that he did for villagers. At the back of it is the original lease shown here to Miss Elizabeth Henning where she agrees to pay him £25 a year for the house, he had just built in 1844. Samuel then took a mortgage out for £150 on the property in the same year, which he later increased to £300, which he borrowed at 5% interest from John Attwood of Hylands Park in Essex.

Littlecote House, The Street, Charmouth.



Drawings in original Indenture by Samuel Dunn In 1844.



Miss Elizabeth Hennings must have enjoyed her new house as she was to later buy the freehold from Samuel Dunn. Samuel was born in Sherborne and when he moved to Charmouth lived and had workshops where Peria is now, which he rented from Robert Knight. His workmen were many, amongst them were Andrew, Phillip, his brothers and his father, also William Hoare and

Wheaton. Dunn afterwards went to live in the Axminster Road and his workshop was owned by John Attwood. He is remembered today as being "Clerk of the Works" when the church was being built in 1836. Sadly, he appears to have overextended his resources and went bankrupt in 1848 and he died not long after in 1852 aged 60 in Dorchester. There is a beautifully carved memorial to William Hoare at the front of the grave yard at St. Andrews that reads:

In memoriam ELIZA loving wife of WILLIAM HOARE, and only child of SAMUEL and CHARLOTTE DUNN, late of this Parish, who died November 28 h 1883, aged 69 years. "Not lost but gone before" And in/ loving remembrance of WILLIAM HOARE who departed this life April 30 th 1881 aged 78 years.



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The next owner of Littlecote. Elizabeth Hennings was from a distinguished family; whose lineage appears in Burkes Peerage. Her parents, Robert and Jane Hennings had six sons and six daughters and lived at Woodsford Castle,



Woodsford Castle

near Dorchester, She first appears in the 1841 Census as living at Stow House near the George Inn. The next Census in 1851, provides more infor-

Eliza Hennings	Head	W	64	Grand Mother	Stow House
Elizabeth Dimond	Servant	W	30	House Servant	Stow House

mation about her. By then she was aged 64 residing at "Littlecote" with her servant, Elizabeth Dimond, aged 30. She was to die in 1854 and be buried at St. Andrews, where her fine Tomb and Gravestone can still be seen today. In her Will she appoints her brother, John Henning and Brother in Law, Charles Castleman, Esq. and gives to her niece, Sophia Nares Henning, daughter of her late brother, Charles Masterman Henning Esq. her house. Her servant, Elizabeth Dimond is well rewarded with £200 and a further £200 to be shared with her sister, Ann and brother John as well as all the articles in her servants' room in the house.

Eliza Hennings
 33.
 This is the last Will and Testament made by me Eliza Hennings Spinster of Charmouth in the County of Dorset October the thirteenth and eighteenth and fifty two and I do hereby appoint my brother John Henning of Charmouth and Charles Castleman Esq of St. Andrews (Scotland) of this my last Will and Test of effect in my last will to be paid as soon as convenient after my death I give my executors in full and I now reside at Charmouth with all its appurtenances unto my wife Elizabeth Nares daughter of my late brother Charles Masterman Esq. or her heirs under the trust of the above my Executors John Henning and Charles Castleman Esq. for and during her natural life the keeping the same in repair and as to the same premises and premises from and immediately after her decease in trust for all her children or their wife shall attain to

Littlecote House, The Street, Charmouth.



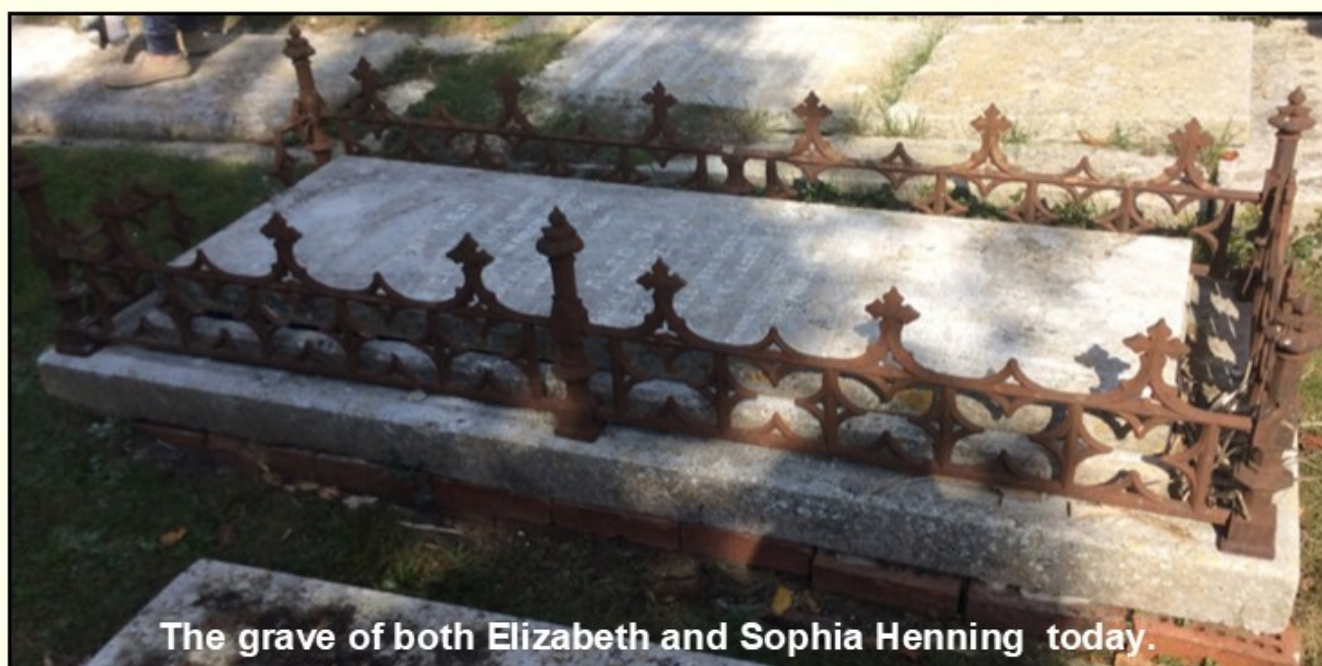
The next occupant of Littlecote was to be Sophia, niece of Elizabeth, whose parents were Charles and Susannah Henning, who was bought up at Alton House in Hampshire with her brother, Edward. There is a magnificent marble memorial to her mother in Wells Cathedral that reads: “

“Sacred to the memory of Suzannah Lucretia, wife of Charles Masterman Henning, of this parish, esq. second daughter of the late Hon. Sir George Nares, one of his majesty’s Judges of the Court of Common Pleas. She departed this life December 25th 1818, aged 55, leaving one son and one daughter”.

With the early death of her mother, she was to look after her father, living with him in a fine house at 22 Queens Square in Bath, until his death in 1852, aged 83.

1881 Census	1881 Census	1881 Census	1881 Census	1881 Census	1881 Census	1881 Census	1881 Census
59	Whitcomb Street	Martha P Henning	Head	Woman	78	Lady	Whitcomb Street
60		Harriet H Henning	Wife	Woman	69	—	do do
		James Henning	Servant	Man	60	Servant	do do
		Virginia Henning	Servant	Woman	76	do	do do

Sophia was to live over 30 years at Littlecote with her servants, but there is little to find on her life there apart from a report in the Bridport News of 1880 regarding her companion which reads as follows:

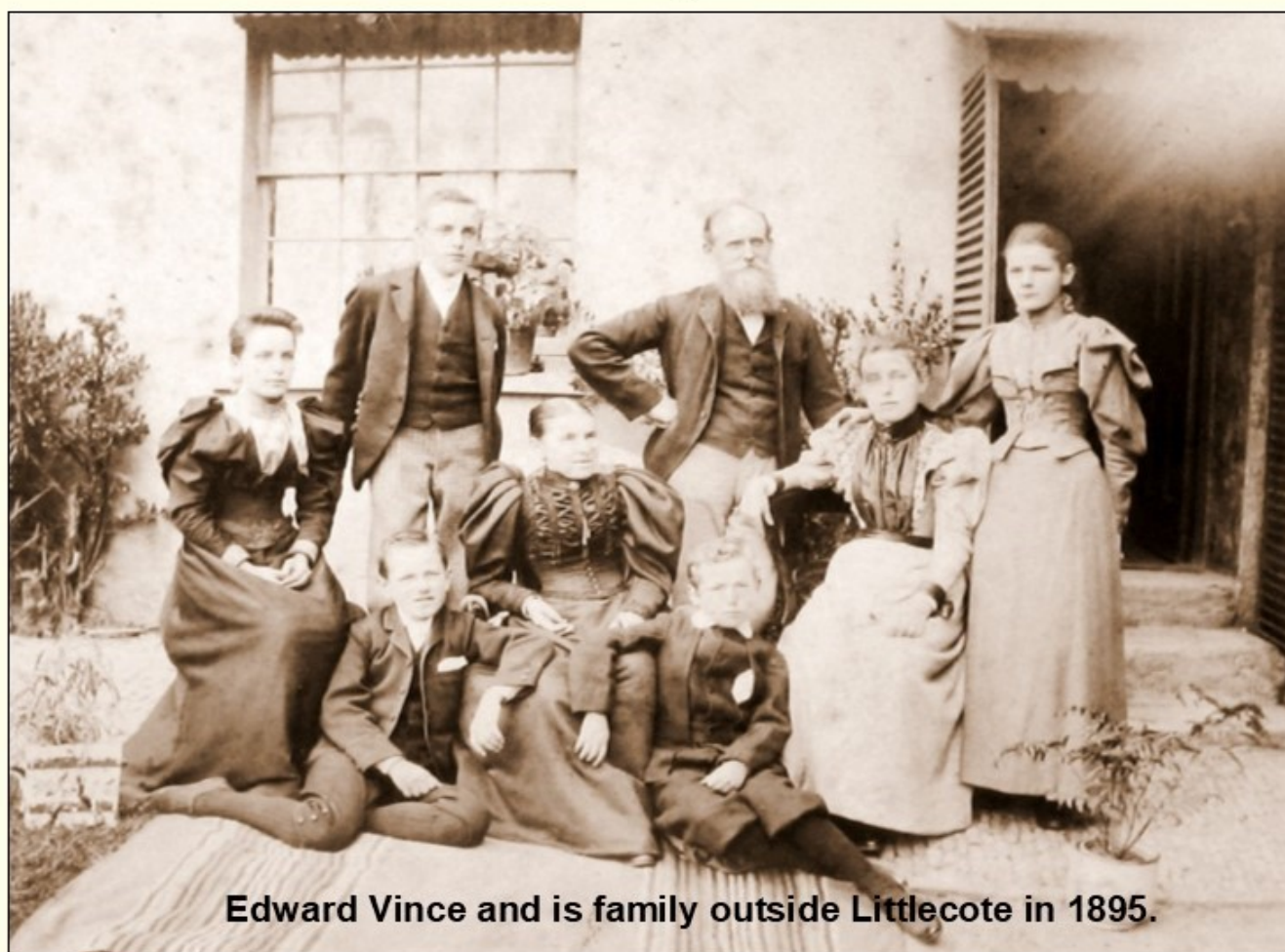


The grave of both Elizabeth and Sophia Henning today.

Littlecote House, The Street, Charmouth.

CHARMOUTH. Death of Miss Chard—*We regret to record the death Miss Chard, which took place after few days illness at the residence of Miss Henning on Sunday morning last. The deceased lady resided with Miss Henning for a great many years and was very much respected both by rich and poor.*

Sophia died on 8 January 1886 in Charmouth, having lived a long life of 83 years and was buried in her Aunts Grave at St. Andrews, where her grave-stone can still be seen today. In her Will she left her Estate to her relations: George Caleb Hedgeland and his wife Annie Shrapnel Sloman and also Thomas Martin Sloman and Amelia Sloman his wife. All of whom were living in Sydney, Australia at the time. They were to sell Littlecote soon after to Francis George Edwards of Colyton, who paid £405 for it. He had previously rented Littlecote and was successful in the Auction of the 2nd June 1886 in buying the freehold. There are no entries for Francis Edwards as living in Charmouth and would assume that he rented out the property for the 14 years of ownership. An 1895 Poor Rates List for the village has him as the owner of Littlecote and Edward Vince as his tenant. Edward ran the Grocers opposite, which we know today as Nisa, from 1888 until 1896. A marvellous photograph shown here has come down to us of him with his family in front of the house in 1895. The Title Deeds reveal that in 1900, Frances Edwards sold the house to



Edward Vince and is family outside Littlecote in 1895.

Littlecote House, The Street, Charmouth.

A view of the group of houses in 1910



Miss Lilian Gilchrist Thompson, wife of Rev. Henry Percy Thompson of Kippington Vicarage, Sevenoaks, Kent for £405. Again, there are no records of her living in the village and no doubt had it as an investment and continued to reside in Sevenoaks. Finally, in October 1914 we have an owner residing in Charmouth when Percy Roger Middlecott Davies pays £400 for it. He appears regularly in the Jury List for the village and in 1913, his address is given as "Sabina", which may have been the houses former name. In June 1922 he moves from the village and sells the house to Rosalind Roberta and Edith Blanche Pargiter who pay £850, over twice the previous price. They were the daughters of The Reverend Robert Pargiter, who had until his death in 1915, aged 98, lived at Beech House, nearby. Sadly, Rosalind was to die in 1927 and her sister, Edith continued to live in Littlecote until her death in 1938, aged 72. The house was put up for Auction and The Western Gazette for July 1st report it as:

A CHARMOUTH RESIDENCE.

Acting for trustees of the late Miss E. B. Pargiter. Messrs W. Palmer & Co. and R. & C. Snell, of Axminster, sold by auction, at the premises on Wednesday, the small freehold residence and ground, known as

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Subsequently the auctioneers dispersed the contents of the residence, comprising some 300 lots, in good time at satisfactory prices.
Messrs. Wm. Forward & Sons, of Axminster, were the solicitors.

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Aerial View in 1926

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George Hellier Parkins, who lived in Lower Sea Lane, must have been the agent as the Title deeds show it being sold to Mrs Olive Agnes Farrant, wife of Samuel Robert Farrant whom she had married in the same year. She was the daughter of Tom Havis, who had been Game Keeper for the Pass family, living at Champerhay in Wootton Fitzpaine. We are fortunate that soon after they bought the house, a register for the village the following year provides us with a snapshot of families living there. In the case of Littlecote, I was able to talk

Address	No.	Name	Sex	Date	Occupation
Littlecote	35	1 Farrant Samuel	M	2 Feb 09	Mr Peter Bruce Peckham
		2 Farrant Olive A.	F	29 July 09	Mr Unpaid Domestic Help
		3 Havis Agnes S.	F	30 Aug 09	Mr Unpaid Domestic Help
		4 Havis Harry E.	M	07 Sept 09	Mr Unpaid Domestic Help
		5 Havis Cecil F.	M	08 Feb 10	Mr Unpaid Domestic Help
		6 Havis Ada L.	F	20 Mar 12	Mr Unpaid Domestic Help
		7 Havis Leslie K.	M	14 Dec 35	Mr Unpaid Domestic Help
		8 Havis Fred P.	M	05 Nov 15	Mr Unpaid Domestic Help

direct to one of those listed in the house at that time. For Leslie Keith Wiscombe, now 86 living in Lyme Regis is shown aged just 4 at the address. His mother was Ada Webster, whose father was Tom Havis and had divorced and remarried. Her brothers Harry and Cecil Havis were also living there with their mother, Agnes, who had separated from her husband, Tom by then. He was able to tell me that his mother Ada, Samuel Farrant and Cecil Havis all worked



Cecil Havis in the Home Guard



Cecil Havis in the Charmouth Fire Brigade

for Billy Gear in his garage. The house must have been very crowded, and I was surprised when he added that they also took in some of the American service men who were based in Charmouth during the war. Going through the Electoral Register for the village showed that Samuel Farrant was in the services during the war but seems to not have returned afterwards. Olive was to reside there with her brothers until 1993. With the death of Cecil in that year, she moved from the village and lived to be over 94 when she died in 2002. Keith Lander who resided in the village bought the house in 2003 and restored

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Littlecote in 2006.



Littlecote today at the side of Lower Sea Lane.

and extended it. He in turn sold it to Tom and Vikki Tidy in 2015, who have continued improvements which is now one of the finest properties in the village, containing many of its original period features.

I wish to thank Keith Wiscombe, Tom Tidy and his wife for their invaluable assistance with this article.

Please visit my website freshford.com if you wish you wish to find out more about Littlecote and its neighbours.

Neil Mattingly.



A view of the garden and Tennis Courts which formed part of original Church Glebe.