

Introduction: The Farms and Farmers of Axminster Parish

This document in context

This PDF document, dated March 2016, forms part of 'An Account of the Farms and Farmers of the Parish of Axminster since the Agricultural Revolution; Including Smallridge, Westwater, Weycroft & Wyke'. A full introduction and additional contextual background to the research can be found on the Axminsterheritage.org website. This PDF document is one of seven, each of which deals with the farms in a different part of the parish.

The full and abbreviated titles (as used in cross-references) of all seven PDF documents are as follows:

Full titles	Abbreviated titles (for cross-referencing)
Up the Yarty from Hunthay Lane	Yarty PDF
Between Membury Road and Smallridge, North of Cloakham	Uphay-Smallridge PDF
Millbrook, Weycroft and Lodge Lane	Weycroft PDF
North of Sector Lane to the Hawkchurch boundary, including Cuthays Lane	North of Sector PDF
Between Sector Lane and Cook's / Woodbury Lanes	South of Sector PDF
Wyke, Trinity Hill and Great Trill	Wyke PDF
Down the Axe Valley and along the Membury Road	Axe PDF

The underlying research was carried out by, and the various documents have been written by, David Knapman. They are now being made available for unrestricted personal (non-commercial) use via the Axminsterheritage.org website. Any first-person references (i.e. to 'I' or 'me') in this document are therefore to David.

If you make use of any part of this research, you are asked to credit Axminsterheritage.org as the source, and David Knapman as the author.

The whole 'Account' should be treated as a work in progress. There are bound to be errors and omissions, and responsibility for them rests entirely with the author. Readers who find any mistakes are asked to draw them to his attention via the Axminsterheritage.org website (a contact Email address for all 'history-related' matters is provided on the main website), and they will be corrected in later versions. Likewise, if you have additional information which you would be happy to share, the author will do his best to accommodate it.

Acknowledgement of the help and information which has been received from several current Axminster farmers and other interested parties is given on the main webpage to which this PDF file is linked.

Key sources and references

The main source document, which are referred to as Ref 1, Ref 2 etc are outlined below. Fuller details on these references and where to find them can be found on the main webpage. Other sources which are used once only are given in footnotes.

Books and surveys

Ref 1 is 'The Book of the Axe' by George P R Pulman, and in particular the 4th edition, which was published in 1875.

Ref 2 is 'The History of Newenham Abbey in the County of Devon' by James Davidson, published in 1843. See also Ref 12.

Ref 3 is 'The Book of Axminster: The making of a town within its landscape' by Angela M W Dudley (Barracuda Books, 1988).

Ref 4 is 'The Book of Axminster with Kilmington' by Les Berry and Gerald Gosling (Halsgrove, 2003).

Ref 5 is 'Around Axminster – in old photographs' by Les Berry and Gerald Gosling (Alan Sutton Publishing, 1993).

Ref 6 is a survey of the land holdings of the Petre Estate which was carried out in preparation for their sale, in 1824.

Ref 7 is the collective term used for the tithe apportionment process undertaken in the mid-19th century to modernise the system under which tithes were paid by many property owners to the parish church. Some other properties were exempt from tithes because they were associated with former monasteries. This was of particular relevance to Axminster, where Newenham Abbey had been a major landowner. The tithe apportionment work in Axminster parish was undertaken in 1838.

Ref 8 is the sales catalogue which was produced in 1916 when the Cloakham Estate was offered for sale at auction.

Ref 9 comprises three ledger books which were kept by Robert Snell and then (from about 1900) by Messrs R&C Snell of Axminster. The majority of the entries comprise valuations carried out in connection with the determination of farm rents, likely sales values and the process surrounding the grant of probate.

Ref 10 is the collective term for old newspaper reports, all of which can be accessed via the britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk website. In all cases the newspaper concerned is identified, together with the date of publication. The newspapers are identified by their initials (DCC = Dorset County Chronicle, EE= Express & Echo, EFP = Exeter Flying Post, EPG = Exeter & Plymouth Gazette, NDJ = North Devon Journal, SM = Sherborne Mercury, TCWA = Taunton Courier & Western Advertiser, WDP = Western Daily Press, WT = Western Times, WG = Western Gazette, WMN = Western Morning News).

Ref 11 is the collective term, for the Axminster parish registers.

Ref 12 is a list entitled 'Occupiers of land that are titheable to the vicar, 1828. Number of cows kept', together with an equivalent list of cows kept on farms which were exempt from tithes. The source is James Davidson's unpublished 'Collections for a History of the Town and Parish of Axminster'.

Census returns, voters lists and directories

The census returns made every 10 years from 1841 to 1911 provide invaluable information about people, but are not always reliable or detailed as far as place names are concerned. References to census data are generally made simply by citing the year (e.g. '1851C shows Mr ABC at XYZ farm').

The voters list for 1842, included in James Davidson's 'Collections for a History of the Town and Parish of Axminster' (see Ref 12), is referred to as 1842V, because information which it contains complements the information from the 1841 census return.

Axminster library has a collection of extracts from historic directories covering the period from 1850 to 1939 (plus a few earlier ones). Such directories generally list at least the more prominent local farmers. The directories are referred to in the text by citing the year (e.g. '1878D shows that Mr ABC had taken over XYZ farm by then').

Old maps

Use has also been made of a sequence of old maps. These are simply referred to in the text as 'the 1765 map', 'the 1891 map' etc. There is a detailed section of text on the Axminsterheritage.org website explaining how most of these old maps can be found (and viewed) on-line.

Between Sector Lane and Cook's / Woodbury Lanes

Sector Lane Farm and Sector Farm

The farm on Sector Lane which was closest to the town was the one linked to the surviving Sector Lane Farmhouse, which I believe was a dairy. Although I have included it here, I do not know on which side of Sector Lane its land was, and it might more properly belong in the North of Sector PDF.

In fact the 1776/78 map shows that an earlier Sector Farm had been located where Sector Lane crosses the stream. There are still houses there, and the farmstead itself may well have been moved as part of the process of re-developing Sector (or Secktor) House as a gentleman's residence, by James Davidson. This may well tie in with the fact that in 1831 an auction of live and dead stock was announced at Sector Farm by Mr Chaffey, an auctioneer, (Ref 10, SM 26 Sept 1831), on behalf of John **Zealley**, who was quitting the farm (and also quitting Woodbury Farm).

The first recorded occupant of Sector Lane Farm that I have found was Samuel **Stilling** in 1881C, a dairyman with 11 acres of land on Sector Lane. In 1891C I believe that this was where John **Salway**, dairyman and milk salesman had established himself, though I have also seen a reference to him living at Punch Cottage, Sector Lane several years later, and the 1891 map names the building now named Sector Lane Farmhouse as Punch Cottage. 1901C names a farmer and dairyman on Sector Lane as Walter Salway. In 1906D and 1910D the dairyman was named as Walter John Salway, and in 1914D as John Walter Salway. After no listing in 1919D, by 1923D Walter John Salway is shown living on Sector Road and working as a haulier rather than a dairyman, and so 1914D provides the last definite evidence that I have seen in any directory of Sector Lane Farm as an entity.

However, in 1919 Walter J Salway, described as a farmer, was the complainant in a case reported by the press (Ref 10, WT 16 Jan 1919) in which pigs belonging to George Pinn (who later farmed at Prestaller: see the Weycroft PDF) had repeatedly strayed into his potato field, causing damage; and in 1928, when a child was killed, having become caught up in machinery, at Sector Farm (Ref 10, WMN 22 Nov 1928) the farmer was named as Walter John Salway. A decade later there was another report of a fatality at Sector Farm (Ref 10, WMN 31 Aug 1938) when a farm worker was killed in an accident involving a tractor. The man's employer on that occasion was named as Ernest James Hayball, but I believe he was a farm contractor (from near Chard) rather than the farmer.

I have also seen some information about insurance which links William Henry **Henley** to Sector Farm, but without specifying a date or precisely what his role was. I believe it probably refers to the 1940s or 1950s.

The various Beavor farms

Land known as Bever, Bevor, Beavor and other variants has been recorded in Axminster since mediaeval times, originally in association with Newenham Abbey (Ref 2, pages 170 to 174). Whereas some of the land was enclosed and farmed, much was evidently unenclosed rough grazing and woodland on Stammery and Raymond's Hills. The name Beavor Grange appears at this early stage.

Whilst most of the land and farms to which the name Beavor (or its variants) attaches can be found between Sector Lane and Lyme Road, some caution must be observed because of the existence further north (off Evil Lane) of a separate property called Bever (see the Weycroft PDF).

The 1776/78 map shows a farm called Bever (where Beavor Grange now is) and Lower Bever (where it still is). Most of the land associated with Beavor Grange lay, and still lies, up-hill from the farmstead, while the fields between the two farms mostly belong to Lower Beavor.

In 1810, an early apprenticeship record¹ links Richard **Denning** to 'Bevers'. In 1824 (Ref 6) 39 acres described as 'Part of Beavor' were rented to Henry **Shiles** and a further 32 acres ('Part of Beavor') to what appears to be Mary Stocker as the Executor of someone called **Dight**. A further 19 acres were let to John **Seward** described as Honibarns (which the 1776/78 maps shows, with the spelling Honiborns, sitting between Higher and Lower Beavor). He also had 7 acres described as 'Blatchford's'.

¹ DHC ref 406-A-2.

In 1838 (Ref 7) the tithe apportionment map shows Beaver as 'tithe free', and so the named properties do not include any of the Beaver farms. However, Ambrose **Bussell** (who in 1841C was farming Lower Beaver) was in 1838 linked to 56 acres. In 1841C there were two distinct farms: Higher Beaver, occupied by Henry **Bond**, and Lower Beaver, occupied by Ambrose Bussell. In between them was a property called Honeybans (or Honibarns) Farm (see above), though it was occupied by a farm labourer rather than a farmer, and its land had no doubt been absorbed into one of the other two farms. 1842V names Henry Bond in connection with Higher Beaver, and both Ambrose Bussell and John Baker (of whom I know nothing further) in connection with both Honeybans and Beaver.

By 1851C the only named farms were Higher and Lower Beaver. Ambrose Bussell was listed as the farmer at Higher Beaver, with 260 acres, while Lower Beaver was occupied by William Bussell (possibly unrelated), who was described as a dairyman and agricultural labourer. My assumption is that the two farms were being run as a single unit at that time. Both 1856D and 1857D list Ambrose Bussell as the farmer of Higher Beaver; neither mentions Lower Beaver.

From this point on I deal separately with Higher and Lower Beaver, in that order.

George **Glyde** was briefly the farmer of Higher Beaver, and 1861C shows him as farming 200 acres. The report of his death (Ref 10, SM 11 June 1861) says that he had arrived at Higher Beaver in March 1860, and that he was aged between 70 and 80. Unfortunately things had gone very badly for him, and having suffered losses of stock and money, he sunk into depression and took his own life.

1870D lists '**Brooks & Catanche**' as the farmers of Beaver, and 1871C then names William **Brooke** and his partner William **Coutanche** of Jersey, and gives the farm's size as 270 acres. 1873D lists Robert Coutanche at Higher Beaver. By 1878D Edwin **Tucker** had taken over at Higher Beaver. This is consistent with 1878/79D, 1881C (which gives the size as 266 acres) and 1883D.

1889D, 18980D and 1891C all list Francis Charles B **Denning** as the farmer at Higher Beaver. By 1893D he had given way to Frank **Hooper**, who was again the farmer in 1902D. The name in 1901C is hard to read, and looks more like Ivan **Dampier** than Frank Hooper. Ivan Dampier's name also appears in 1902D linked to Beaver rather than Higher Beaver. In 1906D no farmer is listed at Higher Beaver.

By 1910D James **Loveridge** was the farmer at Higher Beaver. 1911C shows that he had been born c.1846 at Horton, Somerset, and he and his wife Emma had farmed several nearby farms previously (including Smallridge, Sisterhood, Cuthays and Payne's Place). 1914D lists James Loveridge again, followed in 1919D by Charles George Loveridge who, despite the coincidence of surname, was not James Loveridge's son. He came originally from (and later returned to) Colyton.

In 1921 Beaver Grange was offered for sale at auction by Messrs R&C Snell Ltd (Ref 10, WG 18 Nov 1921), together with neighbouring farms. 1923D provides the first use for many years in a directory entry of the name Beaver Grange (rather than Higher Beaver): Charles George Loveridge was still the farmer at that time.

By 1926D the farm's name had reverted to Higher Beaver, and the farmer was James **Churchill**. He had recently been widowed, following the death of his wife Aminda (nee Bowditch, buried at Axminster in 1924). He was again the farmer in 1930D, but 1935D names Samuel Churchill (whose name I have seen on other insurance-related documents for Higher Beaver at around the same time, and who I believe was James' brother). James Churchill was again listed in 1939D, but Samuel Churchill's name is also in evidence. Following James Churchill's death in 1950 the majority of the farm, including the farmstead, subsequently passed from the Churchills to yet another branch of the **Loveridge** family (the present owner being the grandson of James Churchill² via James' daughter Frances Churchill, who married Cecil James Loveridge in 1938). Beaver Grange is now run by Cecil Loveridge's son Roger, under the name R C Loveridge & Son.

Smaller parts of the farm passed to other members of the Churchill family, helping to create the holdings of Hillcrest and Newlands Farm (see below).

Turning back to Lower Beaver, by 1861C Ambrose Bussell (who had previously farmed at Higher Beaver, and who later moved back there) was simply listed as farming on Sector Road, with what looks like 140 acres. My assumption is that while George Glyde was at Higher Beaver (see above),

² Source: Roger Loveridge, personal communication, 2015.

Amrose Bussell was living at and farming Lower Beavor by then, and certainly he was described as 'of Lower Beavor' when he suffered the loss of nine lambs as a consequence of a dog attack (Ref 10, SM 28 June 1864).

1870D then names James Bussell at Beavor, which ties in with 1871C, which links him to Lower Beavor, which it describes as 300 acres. This is confirmed by 1873D and 1878D. Although 1878/79D does not list Lower Beavor, 1881C shows that James Bussell was still there, but that the farm had contracted to 160 acres. He was again listed there in 1883D, and that autumn he hosted the annual ploughing match of the Axminster & Kilmington Agricultural Association (Ref 10, EPG 12 Oct 1883).

By 1889D John **Trenchard** was listed at Lower Beavor, described as bailiff for A J Knight. His name was given in 1891C as George Trenchard but John Trenchard in 1893D. A press report (Ref 10, EPG 20 Mar 1891) shows that A J Knight Esq had instructed Robert Snell to sell on his behalf a selection of live and dead stock at Lower Beavor. Two years later (Ref 10, WT 30 Mar 1893) George Trenchard, bailiff to W Knight (see also under Uphay Farm, in the Uphay-Smallridge PDF), prosecuted two local men for stealing turnip greens from Lower Beavor. A further 2 years later (Ref 10, EPG 8 Feb 1895) Lower Beavor was being offered for rent from Lady Day, described as 145 acres. Interested parties were directed to contact George Trenchard on behalf of W H B Knight Esq.

By 1896 George **Rowe** was the farmer at Lower Beavor (we know this because his wife Mary Ann died in March that year, with her address recorded as Lower Beavor), as he was in 1901C and 1902D. He had moved to Axminster from Chagford, via Upottery, with at least three of his sons (Walter Henry, Daniel Scott and Felix, all of whom settled and farmed in Axminster). A valuation report (Ref 9) dated October 1903 also names a Mr Row (a mis-recording of Rowe) as the tenant of part of the land known as Beavor, alongside a Mr **Bowditch** (with 222 acres between them). George Rowe died in early 1905, still resident at Lower Beavor (Ref 10, WT 25 Apr 1905), and in 1906D the farmer was listed as the Trustees of George Rowe. By 1909 (Ref 11) the farmer was his son, Daniel Scott Rowe. 1911C shows that he had been born c.1876 at Chagford. 1923D and 1926D both confirm his presence at Lower Beavor (before he moved to Fawnsmoor: see above). During his tenure the farm, described as 103 acres, was sold by private treaty (Ref 10, WG 18 Nov 1921) by Messrs R&C Snell, ahead of a proposed auction.

William **Connelly** was the farmer at Lower Beavor from 1923D to 1930D, and it was evidently him who purchased the farm (see below for the evidence). However, in later years he let the farm to tenants, and in 1935D the farmer was Walter William **Franks**, formerly of Lower Abbey Farm (see the Axe PDF). A press notice (Ref 10, EPG 8 Oct 1937) stated that Lower Beavor, still described as 103 acres, was to be let from Lady Day, and a second (Ref 10, EPG 4 Mar 1938) announced a forthcoming sale of cattle and other stock by W Palmer & Co and Messrs R&C Snell Ltd on behalf of Messrs SC and WW Franks, who were quitting Lower Beavor.

In 1939D no entry for Lower Beavor is included. Two press notices (Ref 10, TCWA 2 Nov 1940 and WG 2 June 1944) both relate to dogs being offered for sale from Lower Beavor by Mr S **Diment**. Then (Ref 10, WG 8 Feb 1946) a sale was announced of cattle, a horse and poultry by S Diment, who was reported to be going to a smaller holding with very little building space (that farm was, I understand, Beulah Farm). Finally, another notice (Ref 10, WG 15 Feb 1946) announced the forthcoming sale of Lower Beavor (still 103 acres) on behalf of the late Mr William **Connelly**.

The next farmer was apparently Commander A G **Rodger** (RN, retd), who was advertising for a farm worker (Ref 10, EPG 30 July 1948), and was still there in 1950. At some point during the 1950s he sold some land which was then incorporated into Red House Farm (see the North of Sector PDF), and the main farm was sold at around the same time to Gerald Henry **Watts**³. In 1960 he moved to Hoopers Farm, Chardstock⁴.

The farm is presently run as a dairy enterprise by Garth **Vowles** and his family, under the name G C Vowles & Daughters.

The only other instance of a Beavor property being named in the census record arose in 1891C, when Beavor Batch (the wooded area close to the top of Raymond's Hill) was occupied by a timber haulier.

³ Source: Ken Voysey, personal communication, 2015.

⁴ Source: The chardstockwebmuseum.org website.

Coles's Farm

The 1776/78 map shows a farm called Coles's Fursley where Coles's Farm is now. It evidently belonged to the Petre Estate at that time.

In 1838 (Ref 7) Henry **Fry** farmed 27 acres at Coles's Farm. By 1841C he had given way to Mary **Stephens**. The farm is not listed in 1851C. 1861C names Aaron **Hayball** as the farmer, with 30 acres. This is confirmed by 1866D, but 1870D and 1871C suggest that he had died, and that his widow Mary Ann Hayball had taken over. She died at Coles's Farm the following year (Ref 10, WT 19 July 1972).

No farmer is listed in most of the directories at around this time, but 1878D and 1881C list Samuel **Darke** as the farmer.

1891C lists Ben **Beviss** at Coles's, describing him as a railway labourer and dairy keeper. Then 1901C lists him simply as a railway plate layer, and identifies his wife Ruth as the farmer. By 1911C he was again the farmer, and shown as born c.1861 at Musbury. In 1921 Coles's Farm formed part of a package of land offered for sale at auction by Messrs R&C Snell (Ref 10, WG 18 Nov 1921).

I have seen passing reference to a T Bridle at Coles's Farm over the period 1922-26, but the next directory listings for Coles's Farm are in 1930D and 1935D, when Isaac **Bridel** is the named farmer. In fact, I think his correct name was probably Thomas Isaac Bridel, who had previously farmed in West Dorset. Then in 1939D the listed farmer is Frederick **Spiller**.

The last person to farm at Coles's Farm was Bert **Trevett**⁵(whose full name was probably John Albert Trevett, who died at Coles's Farm in 2013, having moved out of the main house in 1984 into one of the converted barns, according to the sales particulars provided when the farm was offered for sale in 2014). When he retired, he sold most of the land, on the southern side of Coles's Lane, to Furzeleigh Down Farm. The 2014 sales particulars confirm that the original farmstead had contained a cow stall and a cider shed, with an apple crusher and cider press.

Coles's Farm is no longer an active farm. As well as farm buildings having been converted for holiday lets, a building business (AJ Proctor Builders Ltd) is based there.

Stammer Hill, Hillcrest and Newlands

In 1841C there was a farmer called John **White** living at Stammer Cottage, which was located up the hill from Higher Beavor (and has subsequently been demolished). He may have been farming some of the higher land which now forms Hillcrest and/or Newlands Farm, though this is pure speculation. As mentioned just above, there was one reference (in 1891C) to Beavor Batch, which is closer to Raymond's Hill.

There is a smallholding at Hillcrest, at Blackpool Corner, which I believe to have been created from land that previously formed part of Beavor Grange (see above). It appears to have belonged since its creation to the **Stuckey** family (Thomas Stuckey having married Phyllis Evelyn Churchill of Beavor Grange in 1935), and has sometimes been referred to as Higher Beavor. Writing in 'Marshwood Vale' magazine in May 2006, Tom Stuckey, then a student, identified himself as the son of the current owners, Eric John and Joan Stuckey. "Both families have lived around here for generations ... My family home is a smallholding, in the hamlet of Blackpool Corner, between Raymond's Hill and Lambert's Castle. For many years my parents grew wheat for thatching reed; Dad also worked as a self-employed structural engineer, designing and constructing farm buildings. We grew field beans and a variety of vegetables. Mum had a free range egg business, and sold to local shops and supermarkets; now the supermarket is more centrally organised and local supplies are no longer required. These days we let our fields out for grass keep ..."

Newlands Farm itself is only mentioned in one of the census returns and pre-1940 directories: in 1870D Walter **Clarke** was shown as the farmer (having been at Trinity Hill in 1866D). However, both 1873D and 1878/79D name him as the farmer of an otherwise unrecorded property called Park, which could possibly be an alternative name for Newlands (being not so far from New Park). In 1889D John **Miller** is the farmer listed at Park.

⁵ Source: Ken Voysey, personal communication, 2015.

The farm which is now called Newlands was created, at least in part, from land which belonged to the Churchill family of Beavor Grange (see above), when that farm was larger than it now is, and known as Higher Beavor. Based on some insurance records that I have seen I believe that Newlands Farm had come into existence by about 1943, even if it was still known as Higher Beavor, and has been known as Newlands since at least 1946. After being run by Denis Amos John **Churchill** until at least the late 1960s it passed to his son Gilbert, and in 2013 he had solar panels installed on about half of his 45-acre farm. The rest of the farm will continue to support sheep, which have for many years constituted the main enterprise at Newlands.

The various Furzeleigh farms

Land known as Fursley, Furzeleigh, Furzleigh, Furzeley and other variants has been recorded in Axminster since mediaeval times, originally in association with Newenham Abbey (Ref 2, pages 174 to 178). As with Beavor (see above), whereas some of the land was enclosed and farmed, much was evidently unenclosed rough grazing and woodland on Raymond's Hill, including furze (gorse) from which the farms takes their names.

The 1776/78 map shows Nether Fursley (where Furzeleigh House now is), Higher Fursley (where Furzeleigh Farm now is), Fursley Down (furthest up the hill, where Higher Furzeleigh now is) and Coles's Fursley (which before much longer became known as Coles's Farm: see above).

Ref 2 (pages 174 to 178) also tells us that the Petre Estate sold Middle Furzeleigh (74 acres) in 1809 to Amos Liddon, an Axminster surgeon (who no doubt let it on to a farmer), and Lower Furzeleigh in about 1810 to "... the father of Samuel **Stevens**".

In 1824 (Ref 6) 131 acres described as Fursley Down was let to A M **Raymond**. Despite the coincidence of naming, if Raymonds Hill got its name from his family, it was from an earlier generation, because the 1776/78 map shows that the place name had been in use for at least 45 years by 1824.

In 1838 (Ref 7) the only farm carrying the Furzeleigh name to be specifically identified was Lower Furzeleigh, which was just under 13 acres, and was being farmed at that time by Samuel Stevens. The Tithe Apportionment map shows that Lower Furzeleigh was located where the present Furzeleigh House is to be found. Samuel Stevens was not identified in connection with farming in 1841C. We also know (from Ref 2, pages 174 to 178) that prior to 1838 Lower Furzeleigh had been sold to John Bull of Charmouth, whose brother Robert Bull of Kilmington then inherited it. When he died (on 3 August 1830) he left it to his sister, whose surname was Shiles. By 1838 it was jointly owned by Samuel and Francis Stevens (who also jointly leased some other land in Axminster) as well as occupied by him. In 1861C Francis Stevens, a yeoman, was farming 60 acres on an unnamed property on Lyme Road, which is probably a reference to Lower Furzeleigh.

Lower Furzeleigh is then not specifically named in any further census returns or directory listings, and was probably let out for grazing to a series of farmers without the benefit of any associated buildings. The land was then the subject of a valuation report (Ref 9) in March 1903, which indicates that it was at that time in a poor state of repair, with some overgrown fields, and attention needed to fences, gates and drains to bring it into an acceptable state. The farmer is not identified in that report. Furzeleigh House was again on the market in the autumn of 2015, together with just over 30 acres of pasture and woodland in a nearly square plot fronting onto Lyme Road, with the house and its extensive gardens located in the centre of the plot.

In 1841C Furzeleigh Farm (which was also at times apparently known as Middle Fuzzeleigh) was occupied by James **Fowler**. Ref 7 shows that 3 years earlier, in 1838, he had been farming 49 acres on an unnamed holding, and 1842V links him to land at both Furzeleigh and Beavor. In 1851C he was still at Furzeleigh Farm, which had by then greatly expanded to 158 acres. Deeds for the farm, which I have not seen, are evidently lodged at the Dorset History Centre⁶. 1856D also places James Fowler at Furzeleigh, whereas 1857D lists him at Middle Furzeleigh (with Joseph and Richard **Denning** both listed at Furzeleigh).

In 1861C James Fowler was listed as farming what looks like 168 acres on an unnamed holding on Lyme Road. In 1866D and 1870D William H Fowler was the only farmer listed at Furzeleigh (though John **Denham** was listed in both at Furzebrook, which may well have been based on two

⁶ Ref D/LRM/A4/1.

separate typographical errors⁷, one where **Denning** was intended, and the other where Furzeleigh was). 1871C then lists William H Fowler at Middle Furzeleigh, with 167 acres. 1873D simply names his farm as Furzeleigh. This marks the end of the Fowler family's association with Furzeleigh.

Over the same period (1841 to 1873) the only other Furzeleigh farms to be listed by name were Higher Furzeleigh and Furzeleigh Down: probably the same basic property. In 1841C Higher Furzeleigh was occupied by John **Vickery**, and 1842V names both him and John **Hoare** in specific connection with Higher Furzeleigh. Neither of them, nor the farm, were listed in 1851C, and it is possible that the land had been absorbed into either Furzeleigh Farm or Higher Beavor at that point. Then in 1861C Furzeleigh Down was occupied by John **Bussell**, and shown as 250 acres. In 1871C Furzeleigh Down was occupied by a farm labourer, strongly suggesting that the land had been rolled into another local farm at that stage.

In 1878D James **Boon**⁸ was listed as the farmer at Middle Furzeleigh (now known as Furzeleigh Farm), but in 1881C the only Furzeleigh farm occupied by a farmer was Furzeleigh Farm, with 100 acres, which was being run by John H **Long**. He was still there in 1883D and 1889D. By 1891C he was listed under Higher Furzeleigh (possibly an error), and in 1893D the farm was again simply listed as Furzeleigh. In 1891C Little Furzeleigh (close to, but distinct from, Furzeleigh Down) was occupied by a farm labourer. According to a press notice (Ref 10, EPG 8 Feb 1895) Little Furzeleigh, comprising 83 acres of grass and arable land, was available for rent in 1895.

In 1901C the only Furzeleigh farm listed was Furzeleigh Farm, which was being run by John **Gillingham**. 1902D and 1906D both list him, though there is a document which I have not seen⁹ which suggests that in 1905 he was served with a Notice to Quit (and by 1911C he was listed as the innkeeper of the Lamb Inn in Axminster, and a farmer, born c.1857 at Whitchurch, Dorset).

1910D and 1911C both simply list a farm called Furzeleigh, with Charles **Nicholas** shown as the farmer (born c.1857 at Edgington, Somerset). 1911C also lists Enos **Trenchard** at the separate Furzeleigh Farm (born c.1878 at Axminster). 1914D has no listings at all for any of the Furzeleigh farms, but a press report (Ref 10, 29 Oct 1915) shows that Enos Trenchard was farming one of those farms.

By 1918, however, James **Loveridge** had moved from Higher Beavor (see above) to Furzeleigh Farm, and Enos Trenchard was by then at Furzeleigh Down. We know this, because of a press report (Ref 10, WT 19 June 1918) of a lawsuit involving the two of them. Enos Trenchard was sued for slander over his alleged statement to James Loveridge that "... I have got as much money as thee hast; you have got it dishonest by cheating the rent when you lived at Sisterhood Farm, and by taking away the things at night." In court his defence was to deny ever making that statement, but then he went on to allege that James Loveridge "... had stolen my sedge grass by the wagon load". Although the jury found in favour of James Loveridge, they only awarded him damages of one farthing, and the judge declined to award costs in his favour. In fact Enos Trenchard appeared in court as a witness or defendant on other occasions (Ref 10, WT 29 Oct 1915 and EPG 10 Jan 1936), on the latter occasion at the instigation of his own brother (Reuben), over an accusation of killing game without a licence. By 1936 he was farming in Membury, as was his father George Trenchard (see under Uphay Farm in the Uphay-Smallridge PDF for more about him).

James Loveridge's tenure of Furzeleigh Farm is confirmed by 1919D, 1923D and 1926D. He died in 1931, and the report on the grant of probate on his estate (Ref 10, WT 5 June 1931) shows that prior to his death he had moved to Leigh Villa, Cook's Lane. So far as I can tell he only had one son (Lisle) who married into the Rowe family of Fawnsmoor, and farmed at Stockland.

From 1930D to at least 1939D the farmer named in connection with Furzeleigh Farm was Percy James **Dare**. He was the son of George Frederick Dare of Yeatlands Farm (see the Yarty PDF; this is confirmed by Ref 10, EPG 13 Dec 1935). Although the DHC on-line catalogue shows evidence that Furzeleigh Farm was offered for sale in the 1940s (Ref 547B/P/3659ii), the details were not actually deposited, and the sale may not have gone ahead. Percy James Dare was still farming at Furzeleigh Farm in the late 1950s. Evidence from the EDDC planning website suggests that the Dare family retained a presence at Furzeleigh until at least 1981, at which time some of the farm buildings were being converted to residential use.

⁷ There was at one time a large house called Furzebrook on Musbury Road, near the junction with Woodbury Lane, but I do not believe that it had a farm.

⁸ He may well have been the same person as was farming Long Lea: see the Uphay-Smallridge PDF.

⁹ Dorset History Centre ref D/LRM/A4/1/1. The summary of what it covers comes from the National Archives website.

In 1921 Furzeleigh Down was offered for sale at auction (Ref 10, WG 18 Nov 1921) by Messrs R&C Snell Ltd, as part of a much larger package of land originally totalling 607 acres, and mainly made up of Beavor farms (see above). From 1923D until at least 1939D Albert John **Baker** was the farmer of Higher Furzeleigh. He died in 1942 and is buried at Axminster. The reference to Higher Furzeleigh almost certainly means Furzeleigh Down, because his daughter Kathleen married Samuel Edward **Voysey** in 1940, and his son Kenneth Norman Voysey farms Furzeleigh Down with his three sons under the name S E Voysey & Son. The farm now incorporates land which was formerly connected to other neighbouring properties, and is one of the larger surviving farms, with a dairy herd. The farm's website, which promotes their ice cream venture, states that the current generation now at Furzeleigh Down is the fourth, which is consistent with the information above (starting with Albert John Baker). The Axminster Excavators business is also based at the farm.

Symonds Down Farm

Although I have seen no physical or map evidence of a farm directly associated with the main Symondsdown House, there are some fragments of information which suggests that there was one at one time.

The 1776/78 map shows 'Symmonds Down' where the 'big house' now is: one of the very few properties belonging to the Petre Estate located to the east of Woodbury Lane. Any farmland which was associated with the house at that time was probably on the other side of the lane (unless the tenant of the house had bought or rented land from another source by then).

Appendix 3 suggests that William **Newberry** was keeping cows at Symondsdown in 1828 (though the handwriting is far from clear as far as the name of the farm is concerned).

1856D and 1857D both list Samuel **Harvey** as a farmer at Symonds Down, and 1861C lists Joseph **Lovegrove** of Symondsdown House as farming 150 acres.

The first definite reference that I have seen to Symonds Down Farm comes in a press announcement (Ref 10, WT 18 Sept 1868) advertising a forthcoming sale of live and dead stock (with the emphasis strongly on a flock of sheep) to be conducted by Messrs Gage & Halse for John S C **Stevens** Esq, who had presumably been farming the estate prior to that. The notice stated that as well as selling his flock, he intended to let the estate, comprising five lots totalling 54 acres.

1873D lists N W **Parker** as the farmer at Symonds Down Farm, while 1881C lists Robert **Templeman** with 160 acres at Symonds Down.

In 1898 both Symondsdown House and its associated farm were offered separately to let (Ref 10, WT 6 May 1898), via Messrs B&J Gage. The house had with it 16 acres of parkland, while the farm was described as 116 acres of meadow, pasture, arable (15 acres) and coppice. The house was re-sold in 1929 by Messrs Connole, Rickeard & Green of Exeter (Ref 10, EPG 12 July 1929), together with 20 acres of land, and it would appear that the incoming resident, who set up a poultry unit, was Sidney Charles **Walker** (Ref 11, 1931 and 1936).

From this point, all references to Symonds Down Farm are to its present location, on Cook's Lane, and not to the 'big house'.

In 1901C James **Strawbridge** was listed as a farmer at Cooks Lane Cottages. This is probably a reference to the cottages which now sit adjacent to Symonds Down Farm on Cooks Lane. Ref 11 (1922) and 1923D both name John **Churchill** as the farmer at Symonds Down Farm, a listing which is repeatedly confirmed until at least 1939D. Late in the war (Ref 10, WT 5 May 1944) there was a serious fire at Symonds Down Farm, damaging several buildings and destroying three ricks of straw. John Churchill was named as the farmer, together with his sons John and Edward. I believe that the farm was then taken over by John James Churchill and his wife Peggy (who died in 2012 and 2011 respectively), and their son Brian J Churchill. In the autumn of 2015 the farm buildings were being offered for sale, with planning permission for residential conversion, together with a small field on the other side of Cooks Lane.

Fawnsmoor

The farm at Fawnsmoor is beyond and separate from the house of the same name. The house itself is shown on the 1776/78 map, which strongly suggests that it belonged at that time to the Petre Estate. At some point thereafter it was sold to James Davidson, and formed part of the Sector (or Secktor) Estate, as can be seen from an 1848 offer to let the farm (see below).

In 1838 (Ref 7) George Davey **Ewens** was farming 190 acres at Fawnsmoor, but no farmer was recorded there in 1841C (he having moved to Prestaller: see the Weycroft PDF). He was also a butter and cheese merchant, and Appendix 3 shows that in 1828 he had been responsible for the largest herd of cattle in the parish, though we do not know where he kept them at that time. Unfortunately his business did not continue to prosper, because in 1847 he was declared bankrupt (Ref 10, WT 18 Dec 1847). In 1848 Fawnsmoor was offered for let, described as 130 acres of arable, meadow, pasture, orchard and woodland, formerly occupied by George Davey Ewens (Ref 10, 11 Mar 1848). All enquirers were directed to James Davidson himself, not via an agent or bailiff.

In 1851C John **Bentley** was farming 125 acres at Fawnsmoor. There are no entries for Fawnsmoor in 1856D, 1857D or 1861C (though James Davidson himself was described as farming what looks on the census return like 108 acres: see the North of Sector PDF). Later that year the farm was again offered for let, described as 127 acres (Ref 10, EPG 6 Dec 1861). On this occasion applicants were directed to John **Tett**, a bailiff, whose address was given as Fawnsmoor Farm, and who had probably been running it for James Davidson in the absence of a tenant.

Henry **Loud** was the farmer at Fawnsmoor in 1866D and 1870D, and in 1871C Samuel **Fowler** was there, farming 150 acres. He was also listed there in 1873D, and in both 1873 and 1876 there were press reports of local youths being prosecuted for stealing apples from his land (Ref 10, WT 4 Sept 1873 and WT 3 Mar 1876). There was no entry for the farm in 1878D, or in 1878/79D (but in 1877 a Mr John **Copp** died at Fawnsmoor aged 52 (Ref 10, WT 30 Oct 1877). He may or may not have been the farmer: I do not know).

In both 1881C and 1883D John **Johnson**, a dairyman, was at Fawnsmoor. Three years later the farm (described as a 72-acre dairy farm, part of the Secktor Estate) was offered for sale at auction (Ref 10, EPG 24 Sept 1886) by Benjamin Gage at the George, Axminster, with John Johnson confirmed as the tenant. Messrs B&J Gage sold timber from Fawnsmoor the following year at the Red Lion in Axminster (Ref 10, EPG 24 Dec 1887), and although there was no listing for Fawnsmoor in 1889D, later that year John **Gage** (Benjamin Gage's son) gave his address as Fawnsmoor when a child was born (Ref 10, WT 26 Oct 1889), though I do not know whether he was the owner, the tenant or acting as manager for the owner.

Both 1890D and 1891C show John Gage, described as a farmer and auctioneer, at Fawnsmoor. He was also there in 1893D, and 3 years later (Ref 11, 1896). By 1911C he was living in Bank Chambers, Axminster described as a farmer and auctioneer, born c.1867 at Kilmington. He pre-deceased his father (John dying in 1914 aged 47, apparently at his own hand¹⁰, and Benjamin a year later).

1901C shows John **Long**, a retired farmer living at Fawnsmoor. Samuel **Warren**, a dairyman, was also there. 1902D also lists both of them. John Long is again listed in 1906D, but by then the dairy was being run by Walter Henry **Rowe**, a son of George Rowe of Lower Beavor (as it was in 1910D and 1914D). In 1906 (Ref 10, EPG 7 Dec 1906) Walter Henry Rowe won the fat pig class at the Annual Fatstock Show and Christmas Market at Axminster. We also know that in 1886, when the Secktor Estate was offered for sale (Ref 10, EPG 24 Sept 1886) Mr Rowe had bought four fields adjacent to the Lyme Road which did not form part of Fawnsmoor itself, so the family had evidently been building up a stake in that part of Axminster for some time. In 1915 Walter Henry Rowe was advertising for a housekeeper for Fawnsmoor who could also make butter (Ref 10, WG 30 Apr 1915).

In 1917 there was a preliminary announcement of the sale of a 'desirable freehold estate' including Fawnsmoor (described as 23 acres) and two fields near Hunter's Lodge (15 acres) (Ref 10, WT 8 June 1917), to be auctioned by Messrs Hussey & Sons at the George, Axminster. Although the sales details appear on the DHC catalogue (DHC ref 69/9/2/Box1/30) they are now classified as 'unfit for production' (i.e. too delicate to handle). Exactly what happened next is unclear, because one post-sale press report (Ref 10, EPG 21 July 1917) states that Fawnsmoor (described as 72 acres) had been bought by Mr Rowe, without identifying which one. The Hunter's Lodge land was bought by Mr E Trott. However, in apparent contradiction of that 1917 report, 2 years later it was reported (Ref 10, EPG 18 July 1919) that Fawnsmoor had been sold for £3,000 to Mr F Rowe¹¹,

¹⁰ See Ref 10, WT 11 Feb 1914. John Gage was shot dead, and the evidence pointed strongly to it being a case of suicide while the balance of his mind was temporarily upset.

¹¹ This reference to Mr F Rowe is a mystery. In 1919 Felix Rowe moved to Uphay Farm, and it appears probable that the reporter simply named the wrong Rowe in connection with the purchase of Fawnsmoor,

again described as 72 acres, by Messrs R&C Snell. The same article covered the purchase by Mr D Rowe of Shiles Ground (see above).

In 1919D John **Dommett** was listed as the farmer at Fawnsmoor¹², and by 1923D Daniel Scott Rowe was running the dairy there, as he was until 1935D with his daughter (Miss M R Rowe)¹³.

In 1939D Charles Herbert **Mear** was the farmer at Fawnsmoor, having moved from Higher Uphay Farm to marry Vera Rowe of Fawnsmoor, and N&H Rowe were listed as running the dairy. At one stage I believe they had a shop on Chard Street to seel dairy products, and the family farmed Fawnsmoor until the 1960s¹⁴.

I do not know what happened next, but currently Fawnsmoor Farm provides the base for a business called Axminster Animal Osteopaths, specialising in horses.

Old Park Farm

Old Park Farm is quite often simply referred to as Park Farm, particularly prior to the 1850s. The 1776/78 map shows Park Farm without any accompanying 'big house', confirming that at that time it formed part of the Petre Estate, and there is a map in Ref 3 (page 53) which suggests that Park Farm was one of the old 'grange farms' associated with Newenham Abbey. As late as 1891 the OS map labels the 'big house' as Old Park, but calls the farm Park Farm. I have used the name Old Park in this document to distinguish it from New Park (see the North of Sector PDF).

In 1824 (Ref 6) the tenant was John **Stevens**, with 120 acres. By 1838 (Ref 7) he had been succeeded by Robert **Gear**, with 127 acres. In both 1841C and 1851C Robert Gear was still there, but the farm had apparently grown to 200 acres. There are no entries for Old Park in 1856D or 1857D.

1861C lists Charles **Trivett** as the farmer of Old Park, with the farm size back to 125 acres. He is also named in 1866D.

By 1869 a Mr Baughen of Park Farm was reported to have had some items stolen (Ref 10, WT 19 Oct 1869), and 1870D names Thomas **Baugham** as the farmer, while 1871C names Frederick Baugham, with the size shown as 128 acres. 1873D names Frederick William Baugham (though there are spelling variations around Baugham / Baughen, and I may have settled on the wrong variant).

We know that Old Park was owned at this time by Emma Louisa, Lady Tulloch, because there is a report (Ref 10, EPG 8 May 1874) that she applied to the Land Improvement Co for a loan of £500 to fund improvements at Old Park. She lived at the main house. At around this time the tenant of the farm changed to William **Hooper**, who in 1876 was summonsed in connection with the use for haulage of an unfit horse (Ref 10, WT 7 Jan 1876). There is no entry in 1878D for Old Park, but 1878/79 names William Hooper.

1881C shows Edward **Henley**, road contractor and farmer, as the resident of the farm, which is at that time shown as 114 acres¹⁵. William Hooper was listed in 1881C as landlord of the Lamb Inn (Lyme Road), and farmer of 79 acres. Then 1883D, 1889D and 1890D all list William Hooper as the farmer at Old Park, as do 1891C and 1893D. A press report in 1892 (Ref 10, 20 Nov 1892) tells how he lost a horse when an engine and thresher which it was pulling turned over, crushing it. William Hooper evidently died soon thereafter, because 1901C shows Ann Hooper as the farmer, and 1902D lists her as Mrs William Hooper. This is consistent with a press notice regarding timber for sale at Old Park placed by Messrs B&J Gage (Ref 10, TCWA 20 Sept 1899) which referred enquirers to John Chaffey of Garden Cottage rather than to William Hooper. Lady Tulloch died in 1903, leaving a life interest in the estate to her sister.

1906D names James **Hill** as the farmer of Old Park, whereas Ref 11 shows that Thomas **Dyer** had taken over as the farmer by 1909. His presence is further confirmed by both 1910D and 1911C, which shows that he had been born c.1884 in Somerset at an illegible place. In 1911 Lady Tullock's

¹² Though see the reference to John Dommett under Lower Westwater (in the Yarty PDF): he had died in c.1917.

¹³ Ref 10, EPG 17 Oct 1924 refers to Gilbert George Rowe, older brother of Daniel Scott Rowe, as 'formerly of Fawnsmoor' when he was declared bankrupt, having left the district by then.

¹⁴ Source: An article in 'Marshwood Vale' magazine which can be found on-line, dated September 2005.

¹⁵ It was at this time that a William Hooper was the licensee of the 'Lamb Inn', and the farmer of 79 acres.

sister sold the estate to Malcolm Couper **Gibb** Esq (and later JP) who took a direct and personal interest in the running of the farm.

Ref 11 shows George **Fowler** as farming at Old Park in 1913 and 1915, and 1914D lists him more specifically as the farm manager. By 1919D John **Hooper** (possibly a relative of William Hooper) was Mr Gibb's bailiff at Old Park, a position confirmed by 1923D and 1926D. By 1930D the bailiff was George **Gigg**, and he was still there in 1934 when he advertised for a cowman for Old Park Farm (Ref 10, TCWA 21 Feb 1934).

No farmer was listed at Old Park in 1935D, and in 1938 a sale of live and dead stock at Old Park Farm, including a herd of milking Devon cattle was advertised (Ref 10, WG 18 Feb 1938). It was stated that Malcolm Couper Gibb had let the farm. He died a month later, aged 77 (Ref 10, EPG 18 Mar 1838).

My understanding is that when the farm was let in 1938 the incoming tenant was Edwin George **Powell**, who then bought the farm (as confirmed by 1939D and by Ref 11, from 1939 onwards). He was there until at least the late 1950s, and by about 1961 I believe that the farm had been taken over by his sons Robert William Edwin and Stanley John Powell, and that they and/or their descendants remain at Old Park Farm, trading as R&S Powell.