

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.

Wyke, Trinity Hill and Great Trill

General comments on Wyke and Trinity Hill

Several of the census returns and directories on which I rely list farmers at unnamed properties in Wyke. I deal with these in this initial section. Some of these may or may not have referred to Highcroft and Tangletree Farms, which appear on more recent maps, but are never named in census or directory listings.

A map in Ref 3 (page 53) suggests that Wyke was one of the 'grange farms' associated with Newenham Abbey. This seems highly likely given its proximity, and the apparently ancient field patterns which are still clearly visible to the west of the hamlet of Wyke.

The Book of the Axe (Ref 1, page 588) tells us that much of the land at Wyke had been sold in relatively small parcels, which helps to explain the fluid nature of farm names and boundaries in this area. Some of these unspecified farms will have spread up Trinity Hill.

Some of the farmers listed below almost certainly farmed at the property now known as Higher Wyke Farm (see below) prior to 1900. In my considered opinion the most likely ones to have done so are John Norris and James Gill Loveridge.

1841C lists one farmer at Wyke in addition to those covered below under named farms: William **Willis**. He may well be the person of that name who, in 1838 (Ref 7), was farming 62 acres on an unnamed holding. Alternatively his surname may more properly be spelled Willey, which is how it is shown in 1842V. He was still at Wyke in 1851C, recorded as a dairyman. There were four other farmers listed at Wyke in 1851C: Robert **Gill**, a yeoman; John **Carter** (62 acres); William **Osmond** (80 acres); and John **Norris** (49 acres). John **Norris** was listed at Middle Wyke in 1857D, alongside John Carter at Wyke.

Of the farmers named above only John Norris was listed in 1861C, still with 37 acres at Middle Wyke, and he was named again in 1866D and 1870D, and was listed at Wyke House in 1871C. Robert **Lane** was also farming 7 acres at Wyke House Villa in 1871C. John Norris was again listed in 1873D.

Abraham **Gribble** was listed as a farmer at Wyke in 1866D, and as a cottager in 1870D, and again as a farmer in 1873D, 1878/79D and 1883D.

In 1878D James Gill **Loveridge** was listed as a farmer at Middle Wyke, and in 1878/79D at Wyke Farm (which I believe to be a different farm from the one listed and reported on below, and quite probably Higher Wyke Farm). He was shown in 1881C to be farming 46 acres, and was described at that time as a sanitary inspector and farmer¹. He was still there in 1883D, 1889D, 1890D and 1893D. He died at what was described as Wyke Farm in 1894.

Frank **Farmer** was running 45 acres at Wyke in 1881C, and was still at Wyke in 1891C. In 1889D, 1890D, 1893D and 1902D Mark **Sanger** was listed as a farmer at Wyke, followed in 1901C by George Sanger. In 1906D Thomas **Slade** was listed at Wyke. In 1919D Francis Charles **Travers** was at an unnamed farm at Wyke. 1935D lists Burgess E **Leonard** at an unnamed farm at Wyke, and 1939D lists Harry **Rosewell** at Grove Lea Farm, a property to which I have seen no other reference.

I have only seen one reference to a plot of land (presumably woodland) at Wyke called Welches Ground (Ref 10, TCWA 20 Sept 1899), and that was in connection with the sale of timber. The plot size was reported as 6 acres.

Unity and the various Jackleigh farms (other than Little Jackleigh)

The farmhouse and buildings of Unity House are shown on early maps of Axminster (e.g. in 1838: see Ref 7) on the opposite side of Wyke Lane to the entrance to Wyke Farm. After these buildings were demolished, the land became Jackleigh Farm, associated with Jackleigh House a short distance to the north.

¹ Before he arrived in Axminster he had farmed at Farway, but in 1871 he had got into financial difficulties and had come to an arrangement with his creditors, as can be seen from the on-line London Gazette of 1 Dec 1871.

In 1838 (Ref 7) Unity Farm was the second largest in Axminster parish (after Great Trill), with 202 acres. It was farmed by Francis **Harvey**. This is confirmed by 1841C, 1850D and 1851C, though by then the farm was slightly larger, at 210 acres. Francis Harvey is again listed at Unity in 1856D and 1857D.

1861C names James **Roberts** as the farmer at Unity. 1866D and 1870D both name Joseph Roberts. 1871C then names William Roberts as the farmer of 200 acres at Jackleigh House (while 1873D and 1878D both link him to Unity Farm, as does Ref 10, WT 24 Jan 1873). There is a press report (Ref 10, EPG 10 Oct 1878) of a ploughing match organised by Axminster Agricultural Society at Boughtons, a field forming part of Jackleigh Farm, by courtesy of William Roberts, and 1878/79D names him as farming at Jackleigh House. 1881C does the same, but shows that he was only farming 115 acres by then.

1883D reverts to referring to Unity Farm, and names Henry **Broom** as the farmer. A press report (Ref 10, TCWA 3 Mar 1886) records the death, at Jackleigh Farm, Axminster of Mrs **White** (by implication, though not explicitly, the farmer's wife). 1889D has no reference to either Unity or Jackleigh.

1890D lists Joseph **Brewer** as the farmer at Jackleigh House, but 1891C only lists him in connection with an unnamed farm in Wyke. However, a press report that same year (Ref 10, EPG 7 Mar 1891) connects him to Jackleigh, where there was a rick fire. 1893D lists Caleb **Osborne** as the farmer at Jackleigh, and 2 years later (Ref 10, EPG 26 Apr 1895) he was offering mares for sale from Jackleigh.

By 1899 John **Salter** was advertising (Ref 10, TCWA 2 Aug 1899) for a farm worker to assist with the milking at Jackleigh, and his presence is confirmed by 1901C and 1902D. In 1903 (Ref 10, WG 30 Jan 1903) timber from Jackleigh was being advertised for sale, the same year (Ref 10, WG 3 Apr 1903) John Salter of Jackleigh was offering to let 75 acres of grass at Annings Farm, Wyke Green (see below). Then, 2 years later (Ref 10, TCWA 23 Aug 1905), Messrs B&J Gage were advertising a sale of live and dead stock for John Salter, who was about to quit the farm. Less than 6 months later (Ref 10, WT 23 Jan 1906) he was buried at Axminster.

1906D and 1910D both list Walter William **Rendell** as the farmer at Jackleigh Farm, but 1911C shows two farmers at Jackleigh: Alfred Thomas **Ford** (born c.1879 at Sedghill, Wiltshire) and George Nathan **Saunders** (born c.1871 at Barton St David, Somerset). George Nathan Saunders had been living at an unidentified farm at Wyke (presumably Jackleigh) for at least 2 years by then (Ref 11, 1909).

A few months later Jackleigh was one of several farms throughout the county to be bought by Devon County Council as part of their estate of smallholdings (Ref 10, NDJ 28 Sept 1911). They evidently bought it at auction, and the sales particulars² produced by Messrs B&J Gage prior to the auction at the George, Axminster on 20 July 1911 confirm that Thomas Ford was farming Jackleigh Farm itself (described as 98 acres, and generating a rental value of £199-17s-6d) at that time, as well as two further fields totalling just over 11 acres (and generating a rent of £20-2s-6d a year). The main farm comprised land on both sides of Wyke Lane running right up to the farmstead of Higher Wyke Farm, but omitted one triangular 'orphan field' on the west of Wyke Lane which belonged to Higher Wyke. Jackleigh Farm also extended across to (and slightly beyond) Abbey Gate Lane. This in the lot which the County Council was reported to have bought, for £3,547. The two additional fields occupied by Thomas Ford were to the south of Abbey Gate Lane, opposite the point where the footpath now heads northwards from the lane.

The following year Devon County Council advertised for tenants for two smallholdings created from Jackleigh Farm (Ref 10, WT 13 Aug 1912): one of 46 acres at a rent of £105 and the second of 51 acres at £114 a year. Whereas George Nathan Saunders remained at Jackleigh until at least 1939D, by 1914D William Loder **Moore** had replaced Alfred Thomas Ford. He then became embroiled in a dispute with the County Council (Ref 10, WT 12 Jan 1917), and the arbitration and court judgement found in favour of the Council. By 1919D he had been replaced as tenant by Mark **Hine** (who was still there in 1923D), and then Samuel James **Webb** (1926D to at least 1939D).

Two years after the war (Ref 10, EPG 22 Aug 1947) Messrs TRG Lawrence & Son held a sale of live and dead stock on behalf of George Nathan Saunders. I understand that Samuel James Webb later moved to Dulcis Farm, Kilmington.

² DHC ref 547B/P/631.

This helps to explain how and why the modern OS map shows two distinct but immediately adjacent farms: Higher Jackleigh Farm and Great Jackleigh Farm. The current farm buildings occupy the site shown as Higher Jackleigh, and the farm is run by DG&GM **Symes & Son**.

Woodbury Dairy

The 1776/78 map shows a property called Woodberry located where Woodbury Farm now is. It apparently belonged to the Petre Estate, though the land to its south did not.

In 1831 John **Zealley** left Woodbury Farm, and an auction of live and dead stock was held on his behalf by Mr Chaffey (Ref 10, 26 Sept 1831). 1842V then names Samuel **Hoare** in connection with both Wyke Green and Woodbury (and we know that he was resident at Wyke Farm: see below). The next reference that I have found to a farm on Woodbury Lane is 1851C, which records Thomas **Larcombe**, a dairyman as resident there.

By 1861C Thomas **Tucker**, described as a 'dairy renter' had taken over³, and he is consistently recorded in 1871C and 1881C as a dairyman. However, all of the directories which list dairymen between 1866D and 1883D refer to William rather than Thomas Tucker. It is possible that William Tucker was the one who ran the business, but Thomas (possibly his son) actually lived on Woodbury Lane.

1889D, 1890D, 1891C and 1893D all list William **Smith**, a farmer rather than a dairyman, at Woodbury Farm. In 1900 Messrs B&J Gage offered Woodbury Farm for sale at auction at the George, Axminster (Ref 10, TCWA 8 Aug 1900). The announcement named T W **Loveridge** as the occupier of Woodbury Farm (described as 16 acres), as well as of two other parcels of land to be sold at the same time: Stone Hill Cross (9 acres of arable land, near Jackleigh) and Woodcock Close (2 acres near Shoals). He was Thomas William Loveridge, and he had been born at Farway.

In 1901C no farmer is named at Woodbury Farm, though Woodbury Farm cottage was occupied by a farm labourer. In 1902D and 1906D Henry (Harry) **Chapple** was the farmer.

By 1910 (and probably a few years before that: see below) Ref 11 shows that Ernest Henry **Trott** (born c.1886 at Shute) was the farmer at Woodbury Farm, and he was then recorded there by 1911C and in all subsequent directories up to and including 1939D. A press report on the death of his mother-in-law, Mrs Louisa Swain (Ref 10, EPG 29 Mar 1945), suggests that Ernest Henry Trott had actually been at Woodbury Farm for 40 years by then, and that Mrs Swain had lived with him and her daughter all that time. He died in late 1969 and is buried at Axminster, though I do not know how long he remained at Woodbury Farm.

In 1984 a planning application affecting Woodbury Farm was lodged by Philip J **Powell** as the owner of the farm, and he was still the owner when a further Application was lodged in 2002.

In 2008 Mike Corbin of MD&J **Corbin**, bought the farm and established a farm machinery business there, plus Woodbury Alpacas.

Chattan and Kings Farm

I understand that Chattan Farm and Kings Farm are one and the same entity, and I have seen evidence⁴ to show that the land that belongs to Kings Farm lies mainly to the north west of the by-pass, where it abuts the grounds of Chattan. Some even extends across Woodbury Lane and into the steeply sloping fields which lie to the east of Woodbury Way. Kings Farm would be one of the Axminster farms which was most severely affected by the construction of the by-pass.

In 1901C Paul **Draper** was recorded as a farmer living at Kings Cottage, but by 1910D Harry Seymour **Dare** was listed as the farmer at Chattan Farm, having apparently arrived several years earlier (see below). 1911C records him as living at Kings Farm, and born c.1866 at Bridport, Dorset. From 1914D until 1939D all directories prefer the designation Chattan Farm, and when Harry Seymour Dare died on 22 December 1941 aged 75 (Ref 10, EPG 2 Jan 1942), he was described as having farmed at Chattan Farm for almost 40 years, suggesting that he arrived in the very early years of the century.

However, he had retired about 2 years before he died, and in his later years had been helped by his son-in-law F W **Youngs** (Ref 10, WMN 26 Oct 1938). Very early in the war King's Farm was

³ In 1861C Samuel Harvey, described as a widowed 35-year-old farmer was a boarder in the house.

⁴ Source: Attachments to a 1997 planning application which can be found on the EDDC planning website.

offered to be let (Ref 10, EE 4 Nov 1939), described as a dairy farm of 69 acres, to be vacated by Lady Day 1940.

The new farmer was Sidney **Franks**, who had just married Mary Trott of Woodbury Farm (Ref 10, EPG 29 Mar 1940). He was still there in 1950, when he was reported (Ref 10, EPG 3 Nov 1950) to have received a good price from some heifers that he had sold. My understanding is that he remained at Kings Farm until 1963, when the National Archives website shows⁵ that the farm was again offered for sale on 17 September of that year.

King's Farm has for some years (and quite possibly since 1963) been owned and run by David J **Churchill**. In 1997 the EDDC planning website shows that an application was submitted which again describes the farm as 69 acres.

Higher and Lower Wyke Farms

Although Higher and Lower Wyke Farms are now indicated as having been separate entities, no records from census returns and directories refer to Lower Wyke Farm, and I believe that the distinction between the two may only have arisen during the second half of the 20th century (possibly after Higher Wyke ceased operation as a commercial farm, which probably coincided with the building of the by-pass).

Furthermore, because of the rather generalised way in which some of the farms at Wyke are referred to in census returns and directories, it is hard to be sure who was actually at Higher Wyke during the 19th century. Under the heading 'Unspecified farms at Wyke Green' below I deal with all those farmers whose farms I have been unable to identify clearly. I speculate there that John Norris and James Gill Loveridge may well have farmed at Higher Wyke, but I am far from sure on this point.

The first reasonably clear references that I have found to Higher Wyke Farm are in 1901C, at which time Henry **Chapple** and Luke **Hooper** were both listed, though Ref 11 shows that Luke Hooper was farming an unspecified farm at Wyke as early as 1896. A valuation report (Ref 9) in May 1901 confirms that Luke Hooper was the tenant of 93 acres at Wyke (yet another generalised reference) at what was adjudged to be the excessive rent of £85 a year. The report recommended reducing the rent to £75 and investing money in buildings, fences, gates etc to bring the farm back up to a decent standard.

In the case of Henry Chapple, I believe that he was very probably the same person who took over at Woodbury Dairy (see above) and Wyke Farm (see below) very soon thereafter, and we know that he had left Higher Wyke before 1910. The evidence for this comes from a press notice at the end of that year (Ref 10, WT 2 Dec 1910) announcing the forthcoming sale at auction (by Messrs R&C Snell, at the George on 5 January 1911) of the freehold farm of Higher Wyke, with Thomas **Rough** named as the sitting tenant. The sales particulars⁶ show that at that time the farm comprised 102 acres in three distinct parts: the farmstead itself and land running up the hillside from it; a single field on the west side of Wyke Lane with two cottages occupied by T Loud and Mr Sanders; and a group of fields on the upper slopes of Trinity Hill accessible from the western end of Trinity Hill Road itself. It was described as a dairy, sheep and rearing farm, and the annual rent was £110. Thomas Rough was confirmed as the farmer by 1911C, which shows that he had been born c.1874 at Winkleigh.

Thomas Rough is then shown consistently at Higher Wyke Farm in every directory from 1914D to 1939D. A photograph showing him can be found in Ref 5 (page 81), though this links him (incorrectly) to Wyke Farm (see below) rather than Higher Wyke. When his wife died (Ref 10, WT 1 Jan 1943) the report stated that she had lived at Wyke Farm (rather than Higher Wyke) for 35 years, suggesting that Thomas Rough had arrived there in about 1907.

By 1945 it appears that E **Taylor** was the farmer at Higher Wyke (Ref 10, EPG 30 Nov 1945 offers evidence of miscellaneous items being offered for sale over his name; while EPG 23 Dec 1948 offers geese for sale). I have not managed to establish how long he was there, but in 1971 Frank Henry **Chapple** of Higher Wyke Farm (the eldest son of Cecil Henry Chapple of Wyke Farm: see below) made an application to abstract water⁷ for use at Rose Farm, Wyke, suggesting that the two farms were being run as a single unit. The Chapple family was still at Higher Wyke when the

⁵ The sales details are held in the English Heritage archives, ref SB00592.

⁶ DHC ref 1037M/E/9/1.

⁷ Source: On-line London Gazette, 1971.

archaeological investigations were made in preparation for the construction of Axminster by-pass in 1993, and in 1995 a planning application was lodged by FH Chapple Ltd. After the by-pass was built, part of the farmstead was developed as industrial units, and this is the part which is now described as Lower Wyke Farm. The industrial tenants include Mobile Marine Engineering Ltd.

Wyke Farm

In 1838 (Ref 7) Wyke Farm was 104 acres, and being farmed by Samuel **Hoare**. He (described in 1841C as a yeoman) remained at Wyke Farm, albeit on a declining scale (95 acres in 1851C and 80 in 1861C). 1866D shows the farmer to have changed to John Hoare, and 1871C shows the size back up to 100 acres. A press report (Ref 10, WT 22 Aug 1877) tells us that John Hoare of Wyke Farm had to cut into a rick of hay which was "... on the point of ignition" in order to avoid a serious fire. By 1881C the size of Wyke Farm had risen further to 150 acres. John Hoare was still there in 1901C and 1902D, though he had evidently let some of the land to a tenant, because a valuation report (Ref 9) undertaken in January 1901 names what looks like T W **Loveridge** as the outgoing tenant, and Henry John **Chapple** as his successor. (This is the same combination of incoming / outgoing tenants as at Woodbury Dairy, at very much the same time.)

In 1904 Henry John Chapple lost 20 turkeys to foxes at Wyke Farm (Ref 10, WT 15 July 1904), and he is confirmed as farming at Wyke in 1910D and 1911C. The census return shows that he had been born c.1861 at Membury. He was again recorded there in 1914D, but he died in 1917, and in both 1919D and 1923D the farmer was his widow, Lydia Joanna Chapple. We know from a newspaper report (Ref 10, WT 26 Mar 1918) that shortly after her husband's death she had applied for her son, Cecil Henry Chapple, to be granted an exemption from serving in World War I, given that he was assisting her on the farm as a carter and cowman, while her other son Andrew George Cridge Chapple was serving in the Devon Regiment (Ref 10, EPG 13 Apr 1917).

In 1924 (Ref 11) and then from 1926D to 1939D the farmer at Wyke Farm was consistently listed as Cecil Henry Chapple. During World War II (Ref 10, EPG 6 Oct 1944) he and his staff were given an award in recognition of the fact that they had increased their winter milk output by 10% over the equivalent figure in 1943. I believe that the size of Wyke Farm increased over the years, and that it was subsequently divided into at least three smaller farms which were taken on by his sons. Cecil Henry Chapple died in 1978 and is buried at Axminster.

The farmhouse and buildings have now been separated from the farmland, with some of the buildings having been converted for residential use, and used as the base for a bed-and-breakfast business (as can be seen from the website wykefarmdevon.co.uk).

Oaklands and Hillcrest

There are no references in either the censuses or in pre-1940 trade directories or on the 1938 map to Oaklands or Hillcrest Farms. However, 1866D shows Walter **Clarke** farming at Trinity Hill, and 1871C shows Thomas **Gribble** living at Trinity Hill Cottage and farming 7 acres. By 1881C his holding had shrunk to 4½ acres. In 1911C J **Hooper** (born c.1863 at Axminster) was occupying an unnamed small farm on Trinity Hill.

Oaklands is a smallholding, and currently the home base of ABBA Cleansing Ltd.

I believe that Hill Crest Farm was created from land that had previously formed part of Wyke Farm (see above). It has been owned and run by JR **Chapple** & Son since at least 1987, Jack Ralph Chapple being one of the sons of Cecil Henry Chapple of Wyke Farm. A planning application in that year (accessible via the EDDC planning website) shows that it was at that time an 80-acre dairy farm occupying most of the farmland between the woods above Wyke and the A35.

Annings and Rose Farms

By the early 20th century we start to find references to two named farms at Wyke Green: Annings and Rose Farms. No doubt the land which created them had previously been farmed by some of the individuals identified in the previous block of text.

In 1903 (Ref 10, WG 3 Apr 1903) Messrs Roberts, Son & Tory advertised 75 acres of grass at Annings Farm for sale. Enquirers wishing to view the land were directed to contact John Salter of Jackleigh Farm, suggesting (but by no means proving) that he was also farming Annings at that time. Then in 1907 (Ref 10, EPG 23 Feb 1907) Messrs B&J Gage announced a sale of live and dead stock on behalf of James **Parfitt** of Annings Farm, who was quitting (see also Ref 11, 1906).

In 1911C Charles Paver **Carter** (born c.1854 at Plymouth) was farming Annings Farm. By 1919D he had given way to Thomas **Griffin**. Thomas Griffin was still at Annings Farm in 1930D, being assisted by his son Frederick Herbert Griffin. The report of Frederick Herbert Griffin's funeral (Ref 10, EPG 24 Dec 1943) tells us that Thomas Griffin retired in 1932, at which point his son moved to Abbey Gate Farm (see the Axe PDF).

A posting on a family history website states that in 1950, Walter Tedbury, a retired farmer, died at Anning's Farm, believed to be the home of his son Edward **Tedbury**. I am assuming that he was the farmer at that time, though this is not confirmed: he could have been living in a tied cottage.

In the 1970s and early 1980s Annings Farm was owned and run by Ivor Allan **Clist**. Submissions made in connection with a 1984 planning application (see the EDDC planning website for details) show that at that time the farm comprised about 50 acres, mainly to the south of Wyke, but including some fields on the northern side of the lane. By that time it had evidently become uneconomic as a dairy farm, and was split into at least two parcels. The Clist family retained the land to the north, with the farm buildings and main group of fields being sold.

The sales particulars produced when Jackleigh Farm was offered for sale in 1911 (see above for details) also covered a smallholding and cottage at Wyke which can be identified from the map as comprising Rose Farm. At that time it was just over 17 acres, and occupied by Thomas **Wheadon** at a yearly rent of £45. I suspect that he was the same person as was named in 1919D as John Thomas Wheadon (born c.1881 at Uplyme) at an unnamed Wyke farm, though insurance information that I have seen names the farm that he ran as Little Wyke, and shows that he left for a farm at Alston in 1913. He later moved to Undercleave Farm, Smallridge (see the Uphay-Smallridge PDF).

1923D shows Mrs Ruth **Beviss** (formerly of Coles's Farm: see the South of Sector PDF) at Wyke, and 1926D shows that she was running Rose Farm. She was still there until at least 1939D. In 1971 Frank Henry **Chapple** of Higher Wyke Farm applied for permission to abstract water⁸ for use at Rose Farm, suggesting that the two farms were being managed as a unit. In 1985 John Picton **Bostock** was granted planning permission to operate a waste management business (Axe Skip Hire Ltd) from Rose Farm: I do not know whether or not he had previously farmed the land, which is now primarily in equestrian use.

Great Trill

Great Trill has been in existence for a very long time. A photograph of Great Trill House can be found in Ref 5 (page 68), while a map in Ref 3 (page 53) suggests that Trill was one of the 'grange farms' associated with Newenham Abbey.

The manor belonged to the Drake family of Ashe House, Musbury until 1782 (Ref 1, page 587), when it was bought by Rev George Tucker, and then John Gregson of London, who also owned Little Trill (in Musbury parish). In 1792, while still owned by George Tucker, Trill House (which I take to refer to Great Trill) was apparently⁹ occupied by William **Elstone**.

An apprenticeship record¹⁰ shows that in 1817 David **Harris** was living and working there, though it is not stated whether he was farming the land or working on the estate as, for example, a blacksmith or thatcher.

In 1838 (Ref 7) it was occupied by Joseph **Gage**, who was farming 257 acres: comfortably the largest farm in the parish at that time, and comparable to its present size. He is described in 1841C as a yeoman. A memorial tablet in Axminster Church shows that Joseph Gage died on 30 June 1846, aged 58. In 1851C Joseph's widow Ann Gage was the farmer at Great Trill, with about 300 acres. She died on 31 January 1855, aged 65, and is memorialised by the same tablet as Joseph. 1856D and 1857D both name John Gage as the farmer at Great Trill.

In 1860 Great Trill was sold to Messrs W&J Sparkes of Crewkerne (Ref 1, page 587) (and Little Trill was sold separately). John Gage evidently remained as the tenant, because 1861C shows him there and farming 350 acres. 1866D confirms this. John Gage died on 19 October 1868 aged 46, and is buried in what was then the new cemetery, on Chard Road.

⁸ Source: On-line London Gazette, 1971.

⁹ Source: Sun Fire Office records, ref MS/11936/385/599752 referred to on the National Archives website.

¹⁰ DHC ref 406-A-2.

By 1869 John **Salter** was the farmer at Great Trill (Ref 11). This is confirmed by 1870D and 1871C, with the latter also showing John **Bussell** as a dairyman. This is the first time that the dairy is clearly identified as a separate venture: a position that persisted for many years. 1873D again shows John Salter as the farmer, and John Bussell as the dairyman. 1878D and 1878/79D both confirm John Salter's continued tenure, but neither names a dairyman.

1881C lists John **White** as the farm bailiff, responsible for 356 acres, and John **Rendell** as the dairyman. Both names are confirmed by 1883D, which also specifies that John White was working for Messrs Sparkes.

1889D lists Thomas **Loveridge** as Messrs Sparkes' bailiff, and John Rendell as the dairyman. 1890D shows that Thomas Loveridge's presence was short-lived: Frank **Sparkes** (presumably from the owning family) was at that time listed as the farmer. However, this too was evidently a short-term solution, because 1891C shows William **Welch** as the new farm bailiff, and Elizabeth **Rendell**, a widow, as running the dairy.

1893D shows that Francis John Sparkes was the resident of the main house, but that Thomas Welch was his bailiff. James **Snell** was at that time the dairyman (and may be the person of that name who was also farming at Weycroft).

By 1900, when a valuation report (Ref 9) on Great Trill and neighbouring properties in Musbury and adjacent parishes was produced for the Sparkes family in connection with the impacts of the Axminster-to-Lyme railway, Eli **Collier** was the farmer at Great Trill (as well as at Park and Newhills Farms, both of which were owned by the Sparkes family: he had been at Park since at least 1893D). In 1901C his presence at Great Trill is confirmed, while 1902D and 1906D both refer to him in connection with Park as well as Great Trill. An undated description of Great Trill made in connection with an insurance policy describes the farm as producing "... crops, fruit, wool, cheese, cider, manures and food for cattle".

In fact, there were two Eli Colliers (father and son). Eli Collier senior had been born c.1848 at Musbury, and his son had also been born there (according to 1911C) in c.1882. Eli Collier senior left Great Trill in 1909, and moved to Shapwick. The notice announcing the forthcoming sale of live and deadstock (Ref 10, WT 19 Feb 1909) refers to "... 75 well-bred Devon cattle comprising dairy cows, heifers, steers, barreners and yearlings, 86 Hampshire Down sheep, 12 cart and cross-bred horses and colts, pigs, poultry, potatoes, agricultural implements, dairy goods, household furniture and effects". The auction, to be run by Messrs R&C Snell, was to be held on 4 March 1909.

1910D shows that he was succeeded at both Great Trill and Park by Eli Collier junior, with his presence at Great Trill confirmed by 1911C and 1914D. 1911C also shows that by then Frederick **Bowditch** (born c.1882 at Winfrith, Dorset) was running the dairy.

A valuation report (Ref 9) produced in 1916 names Eli Collier as the outgoing tenant. The landlords were named as Edward Jarman Blake and Miss Frances Jane Sparkes. 1919D lists William John **Major** as the farmer at Great Trill, as do all subsequent directories up to and including 1939D. He had come to Great Trill from Drimpton, and he died the following year (1940), aged 77. A sale of live and dead stock was held at Great Trill by Messrs W Palmer & Co and R&C Snell Ltd (Ref 10, EPG 18 Oct 1940).

So far as I can see, his son-in-law, Gilbert Francis **Morris**, took over at Great Trill, and he was stated to be living there in 1943 (Ref 10, EPG 10 Sept 1943) when his own daughter was married. He died in 1968 and is buried at Axminster, but I do not know whether (or how long) he remained at Great Trill.

The EDDC planning website shows that during the 1970s and up until about 1990 the farm was run by Messrs **Rutter** Bros, who also farmed at Ashe Farm, Membury¹¹, giving them a significant acreage in total. The same source shows that by the early-mid 1990s Great Trill belonged to Mr & Mrs R E Thompson, but I do not believe that they ran the farm.

The trillfarm.co.uk website shows that the current owners, the **Fraser** family, bought the farm in 2008, and that it is now a 300-acre mixed organic farm (mainly geared to beef and sheep production), which seeks to attract visitors on a regular basis. There is a map of the farm on the website.

¹¹ Source: Lisle Burrough, personal communication, 2015.