

The Diaries of Charlotte Grove / Diary Notes / Places

BAVERSTOCK - The village of Baverstock is situated in the Cawdon & Cadworth Hundred of Wiltshire and lies in the Nadder Valley, some seven miles west of Salisbury. Travelling towards Dinton the visitor must turn right off the B3089, leaving behind both the railway and the river. Soon, the small church of St Editha appears on the right with the vicarage less conspicuous on the opposite side of the road. The lane carries on towards the fifteenth-century Baverstock Manor Farmhouse and through the farm itself before continuing to wind its way further northwards, until eventually it reaches the foot of the downs with Grovely Wood beyond.

With changes in agriculture, very few of the inhabitants now work on the land; and with no through traffic, the village is probably as quiet today as it has ever been. Ida Gandy, in her delightful book, *Staying with the Aunts*, writes "...it was, and remains, very small, very obscure." Her grandfather, the Reverend William Hony, vicar of Baverstock and Archdeacon of Sarum, writing a brief review of his life in 1872, ends with the words, "*It is all so beautiful. When I reflect how soon my loved ones may be expelled from this Paradise I regret I have made no effort to secure it for them.*"

St Edith of Wilton, who died AD 984, is patron saint of Baverstock Church. In 1827 the building was described as being in "a wretched state" and underwent its first restoration, completed in 1834, with a second restoration in 1883. The inscriptions on the gravestones and memorials, some now difficult to read, commemorate the families that once lived and worked here, included among them Powell, Nowlson, Smith - and of course, Hony. However, upon entering the churchyard gate, the visitor cannot fail to notice the long line of white military gravestones. Nearby Hurdcott House, lying south of the River Nadder, was taken over by the Australian army during the Great War, becoming more of a hospital than a training camp as the war progressed. The thirty two British and Australian war graves are testament to those who did not survive their injuries - or the influenza epidemic of 1918.

(above notes taken from Wilts OPC site / Baverstock / Introduction)

BERWICK ST JOHN - Within the Chalke Hundred of Wiltshire, about thirteen miles west of Salisbury and some six miles east of Shaftesbury, the parish of Berwick St John settles between the chalk downs at the head of the Ebbles Valley. To the north White Sheet Hill marks the steep descent down from the pre-turnpike route running westwards along the downs from Salisbury, while to the south the village of Tollard Royal sits on the border with neighbouring Dorset at the northern margins of Cranborne Chase. In earlier times the shape of the parish of Berwick St John resembled an inverted 'U', where once a wide tongue of land - actually a detached part of Donhead St Andrew, known as Easton Bassett - reached into the very centre of the village from the south. Less than a mile immediately south east of Berwick St John is the early Iron Age hill fort of Winkelbury Hill, or Vespasian's Camp. About a mile due west from the village is Ferne, once the seat of the Grove family. On the downs, immediately south from Ferne, there is the fantastic viewpoint of Win Green. There was a church at Berwick St John in or before the early thirteenth century. The Earls of Pembroke held patronage soon after the Reformation, with it passing to New

College, Oxford, in the mid-eighteenth century. In line with general mid-Victorian enthusiasm for church building and restoration, by 1861 the church had been enlarged and, in the process, almost completely rebuilt and refurnished. Among the most interesting artefacts in the church are the two effigies of knights in the north and south transepts.

(above notes taken from Wilts OPC site / Berwick St John / Introduction)

DONHEAD ST ANDREW - In the Dunworth Hundred of Wiltshire, a few miles east of Shaftesbury, the sister villages of Donhead St Andrew and Donhead St Mary merge and nestle between a maze of small winding roads and steep hills. The River Nadder arises between the two villages and flows north before joining the River Sem on its eastward journey towards Salisbury. Beyond the old turnpike road, now the A30, and to the south of the parish, lies Ferne, once seat of the Grove family. After centuries of occupation on the site, the house built by Thomas Grove in 1811 and later re-modelled by his grandson, Thomas Fraser Grove, was finally demolished by 1966. Today, a new house, Ferne Park, stands on the site, built in 2001 in the Palladian style for 4th Viscount Rothermere, to the design of architect Quinlan Terry. The much earlier ancestral home of the Grove family was Berrycourt, now Lower Berrycourt Farm. Apart from the two churches, this beautiful house is thought to be the oldest building in "Donhead". Once it was the demesne farm house and the boundary between the two parishes was deliberately detoured to run through the middle of the house, enabling the official business of both parishes to be held in one room. To the north and east lies another famous ancestral seat, Wardour, for many centuries home to the Arundell family.

The church of St Andrew lies almost hidden from sight in the valley bottom near a small bridge. The chantry was founded in 1327. In the east window are the arms of Shaftesbury Abbey, whilst other windows are dedicated to members of the family of the rector Willam Dansey, who died 1856. Among the memorials is that of Captain John Cooke RN, who was killed commanding HMS Bellerophon at the Battle of Trafalgar. His widow Louisa and their only daughter Louisa Charlotte continued to live at Donhead Lodge for some years before moving to Cheltenham. There is another memorial commemorating the 'consummate skill and bravery' of John Cooke in St Paul's cathedral.

(above notes taken from Wilts OPC site / Donhead St Andrew / Introduction)

FERNE / FERN – The Manor of Ferne or Fern, near Shaftesbury, was first recorded in 1236. It came into the possession of Charlotte's 5xG grandfather, William Grove, in 1563. There have been a number of houses on the site throughout its history. In 1811, Charlotte recorded in her diary the period when the family finally moved back into a new, completely rebuilt house, the earlier structure having been discovered to be unsafe. This new house, the house Charlotte knew for most of her life, was later substantially altered by her great nephew, Sir Thomas Fraser Grove, when he inherited the estate in 1858. Upon his death in 1897 the house was put up for sale to repay mounting debts and was finally sold in 1902.

The new owner, Major Albany Charlesworth, died in 1914. The house was then sold to the Duke of Hamilton. The Duchess of Hamilton, who died 1951, converted Ferne into an animal sanctuary, initially to enable well-off Londoners to move their pets away from the dangers of the Luftwaffe. As was the fate of so many “great houses” during the post WWII era, Ferne was demolished – in 1965-1966.

The estate was bought in 1991 by Francis Dineley, who later sold it to multimillionaire press baron, Viscount Rothermere. Today, a new house stands on the site, built for Lord Rothermere and designed by the award-winning architect, Quinlan Terry. Built of Portland and local Chilmark stone, Ferne Park “is a modest sized country house constructed in the English Palladian tradition”.