

THE HISTORY OF BUTCHERS COPPICE

the Canford Estate from the Norman Conquest...

The history of the land now known as Butchers Coppice can be traced back over 800 years. The site was originally part of the Canford Estate, held in trust for the Realm and controlled by the Lord of the Manor at Canford Manor, now known as Canford School. The Canford Estate is steeped in history, having been occupied by the Walter de Eureux family (the Earls of Salisbury), the De Lacys (the Earls of Lincoln), the Montacutes (the Earls of Salisbury), Cardinal Henry Beaufort (the Bishop of Winchester), Henry Fitz-Roy (son of Henry VIII and Duke of Richmond), Henry Countenay (Marquis of Exeter), the Earls of Huntingdon and Baronet John Webb of Salisbury. In 1840 the copse area of the site was owned by the trustees of the will of Sir John Webb and occupied by William Homer – this area of the site was then known as How Croft Wood. There is no firm evidence of the land's original use, however, the word 'coppice' means a wood of small trees for periodical cutting. The wood, once cut, was used for local craft work as well as fuel for heating and cooking. Surrounding the site were Durdells, Cudnell and West Howe Farms, with much of the surrounding land used for growing crops and grazing animals. "Early each October one would find the swine foraging in How Croft Wood, fattening themselves on acorns – this area having an abundance of mature Oak trees". Most tenants on the Canford Estate would have kept an Estate Pig.

The altered tithe documents of Kinson from 1920 indicate that the rest of the land leased by William Homer in 1840 now belonged to the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, but Butcher's Coppice (as it was then referred to) appeared in a list of properties where ownership was simply marked as 'various', although someone had pencilled beside it 'C. Estate', so it's fairly safe to assume it still belonged to the Canford Estate. From 1846 the Canford Estate was owned by the Guest family, former South Wales Iron Masters.

Scouting begins in Bournemouth...

Scouting started early in Bournemouth, from its roots at nearby Brownsea Island in the summer of 1907. The formal start of 1908 saw small gatherings in the Bournemouth area. In June 1909 these were brought together into the Bournemouth Association. Almost immediately there were problems finding suitable locations for meetings and activities. Local headquarters were initially provided at Westover Chambers, courtesy of Mr G A Mooring Aldridge, and in 1926, a room in Canford Hall on St Peter's Road was rented from the YMCA as a temporary District Headquarters.

With some degree of optimism, the Bournemouth Association embarked on their first venture into the property market, purchasing a large private residence, 'The Grange' at 61 Wimborne Road, for £3,500 (with a £2,000 mortgage to supplement funds). The property was adapted to provide a lecture room, Scouters and Rovers room, an office and workshop along with a scullery and kitchen. The other two floors were converted into living accommodation and let to the then District Commissioner, Brigadier-General R F Sorsbie, at a rental covering the mortgage interest.