

The Dower House

To the south of Ensbury Manor across the main road, then a gravel track, stood another smaller 18th-century house of similar design and materials as the corresponding parts of the Manor. It is now called The Dower House but started out as Ensbury Cottage. It was probably always the dower house to the Manor, but only received that name within the last 60 years. The house has typical six-panel doors with L-shaped hinges rivetted to them, some hand-made latches and plaster-and-reed partitions and ceilings. At the back was a bakehouse and washhouse with an open brick fire, which had a bread oven on one side and a lead copper on the other. Outside are three of the ubiquitous brick-lined cavities under stone slabs, these were probably drainage sumps but credited to smugglers in the past.

A one-time occupant added local colour by riding about inebriated on a pony, shotgun at the ready and in good voice. He had been known to man the dormer windows - his home his castle. During the last war the old house played its part, containing equipment for sending and receiving messages to and from the Continent. Its five 70 feet and 90 feet radio masts were local landmarks. This house still stands.

Next door the pretty three-gabled cottage of the same period took over the name of Ensbury Cottage when its neighbour was elevated. There were a few more cottages for the estate and farm workers which remained until the area was developed after the war. Watts Nursery Garden occupied the land between Ensbury Cottage and Thresher's Farm where we now have parades of shops. The first and only shop for a long while at Ensbury was that belonging to Davies Tarrant, farmer, baker and grocer. Mr. Tarrant was burgled in 1840, the thieves carrying off a griskin of pork, a shoulder and three sides of pork, three bladders of lard a piece of beef and a barrel of mead. This took place on December 24th! There was a shop at Ensbury from Tarrant's time onwards in a cob cottage opposite Ensbury Farm.