



CLAREMONT VILLA, SIDMOUTH
Commanding a fine Marine View.

HISTORY OF CLAREMONT

(DCR - Devon County Record Office; WSL - West Country Studies Library)

Claremont is a large, Regency style, house of four floors, in Station Road, Sidmouth, currently (1995) divided into three flats. The three flats, individually occupy the upper three floors. The lower ground and basement floor is shared by flats 1 and 2 as garages and workshops. As the ground slopes steeply flat No: 1 has the main garden, to the south of the building.

We live in flat No: 1 and when we came here four months ago (June 1995) we understood that Claremont had been built by the Earl of Buckingham (sic) for his daughters, in 1815. This belief came from an advertisement put out by Bradleys for flat No: 2 and to be fair to them I must add their advertisement did say "originally believed to have been built in 1815 for the Earl of Buckingham's daughter". (Original belief now corrected or believed to have been built originally?).

The advertisement for Flat No: 1 from Fulfords said "believed to be the residence of the daughters of the sixth Earl of Buckinghamshire between the period 1886-1919" and gave no date for its construction.

So when was Claremont built? Who had it built and who has lived in it since?

It is a listed building but the listing statement is not very helpful - it merely says "Circa 1830, large stucco villa" and "possibly enlargement of earlier structure as rear wall is of stone rubble and brick." It is particularly unhelpful as we had also been told that somewhere about 1840 there had been a fire and some re-building had taken place, notably the

original thatched roof had been replaced by slate. Both Bradleys and Fulfords adverts had noted this - for example Bradleys said "originally had a thatched roof which was later replaced by slate." Moreover there is a print of circa 1835-40 in the Sidmouth museum of "Claremont Villa, Sidmouth commanding a fine marine view" which is quite clearly the present Claremont but with a thatched roof, and more robust pillars to the balcony. The most easily accessible modern work, "Sidmouth a History" says (on page 58) "erected in 1825 but burnt down and restored in 1845" but cites no evidence. Was it just the thatched roof that burnt or was it "burnt down" to the ground. And 'See Sidmouth - Three Town Walks' has "Claremont (1825) built by the Earl of Buckinghamshire for his daughters."

So further questions arise, was there a fire, and if so when, how severe was this fire and how intensive the re-building?

Of all these questions only the third one, who lived here, is at the moment (October 1995) anywhere near completely answered. By resorting to Directories and the Census Returns we now have a complete list of the principal occupants (but not, for example, all the servants) from 1839 to the present (see lists A,B,C, and D). These lists include Lady Charlotte and Lady Louisa Hobart Hampden who were the daughters of the sixth Earl of Buckinghamshire. They moved into the house in 1886, Lady Louisa died in 1919 and Lady Charlotte moved out in 1920.

So Fulfords' advert was accurate but there is nothing so far to show that Bradleys was inaccurate. The sixth Earl of Buckinghamshire married for the second time in 1826 and is said to have moved to Sidholme (then Richmond Lodge) with his new Countess - did he have Claremont built for his first family? The rapid succession of occupants suggests it was a house to be

taken or let for short periods and the names Dashwood (? Buckinghamshire Dashwoods), Burnell (a relative of Lord Gwydir?) suggest aristocratic friends of the Earl.

The Exeter Flying Post (WSL) for the 5th of August 1847 has an advertisement "To be sold by Mr Charles Farrant by Auction at the York Hotel, Sidmouth, on Friday 10th August an elegant Freehold Villa Residence, called Claremont, with its coach house, stable, garden and pleasure grounds, beautifully situated on an eminence, commanding a delightful view, with the ocean in the distance, and within a few minutes walk of the shore."

Even this does not rule out the Earl as builder and owner into the second half of the century. Charles Farrant was the local auctioneer, so "To be sold by Mr Charles Farrant" presumably does not mean that he was the owner but only acting as the vendor's agent. And in addition we only know from this advert that it was to be offered for sale; we do not know that it was sold. It might not have reached its reserve.

Against this, is the fact that on the 1839 Tithe Map 'DCRC) Claremont is shown and in the apportionment is given as owned and occupied by William Barrett (who, incidentally, also owned about six acres of the Elysian Fields).

This William Barrett is probably the Sidmouth Wine Merchant who had adverts in the Exeter Flying Post in 1821 for a sale of horses and reports of deaths in his family in 1826 (daughter Eliza aged 16) and 1836 (daughter Emma).

(However there was another W. Barrett - I assume but it could have been the same man, who was a schoolmaster and advertised his Sidmouth academy in 1810 and 1813).

I am not sure what to make of this because I could not find the Earl of Buckinghamshire listed as an owner in this apportionment and all the histories say he bought Sidholme/Richmond Lodge in 1826. In fact the earliest reference to the Earl as an owner of land in Sidmouth I have found is in the 1873 "Return of Onwers of Lands" (SL) where he is credited with owning eight acres. (He is in the 1851 Census Return so was in Sidmouth but not necessarily as an owner of house and land). I find all this somewhat confusing because I have also found references to Richmond Lodge being offered for sale in 1850 and 1861. Did the Earl of Buckinghamshire at first rent and later buy Richmond Lodge and later still try to sell it? Were there two Richmond Lodges?

The 1789 map of the Manor "The Property of Thomas Jenkins" has several areas blank, including Claremont, Sidmount and the Elysian Fields. I assume previous Lords of the Manor had created freeholds which were therefore outside the legal Manor in 1789.

Claremont does not seem to be on the Greenwood map published in 1827 (surveyed in 1825 and 26) but the scale and detail is such that one cannot be absolutely certain. Possibly the best date so far is 1827, put forward by Reg Lane, author of "Old Sidmouth", on the basis of a book published by Lethaby about 1860 called "Town and Church of Sidmouth." I have to doubt any reference to a date before 1830 as Claremont does not appear in Pigot's 1830 Directory.

The earliest definitive evidence I have found is 1835 - an ecclesiastical map of Sidmouth and Salcombe Regis in the D.R.O. (382 add/P13).

However what does seem plausible is that Claremont was built by William Barrett about 1826 or 1827, as a house for letting to the visiting gentry. In the Overseers Accounts for 1827-28, 1828-29, 1829-30 and 1830-31 (DRO 1855 A/P02) are annual lists of the uninhabited houses - in each year William Barrett is recorded as having an uninhabited "New House". An in the Poor Rate Assessment for 1833 (DRO 1855/P05) William Barrett is listed as owning and occupying Highbank, Claremont, Summerland, Richmond, The Shrubbery, Balsters, and other unnamed houses and gardens. Clearly he was a landlord with extensive interests - the first Sidmothian entrepreneur?

LISTS OF OCCUPIERS OF CLAREMONT

List A From Census Records in WSL

(Note these are only every 10 years but do list everyone resident, give their ages, occupations and relationship to the Head of the Household, and so provide a picture of how the house was used.)

Census 1841 - No entry for Claremont found.

(Query - defective search or was Claremont empty? Is this the time of the fire and re-building? Note that it was in existence and occupied in 1839 Tithe).

Census 1851

William Clarke	46	Head of Household
Eleanor Clarke	26	Wife
Sally Clarke	3	Daughter
Arthur Clarke	2	Son
Ellen Clarke	6 months	Daughter
Ann Clausey	22	Nurse
Mary Clack	39	Parlour Maid
Tryphina Venn	65	Cook
Elizabeth Harris	25	Needlewoman
Selena Newberry	14	Nursery Nurse

(Note that Directories give this family as the GRAY-CLARKES).

Census 1861 (note now written Clare Mont ie two words)

Gramina Julia Petrina Brine	63	Head
Frederick Brine	31	Son, Captain - Royal Engineers
Susan Brine	27	Daughter-in-law
Emma Bavin	44	Housemaid
Sarah Evans	40	Cook

(a photo alleged to be of this family showing three or four ladies and a man exists, shows house with slate roof and much as it is now).

Census 1871

Sir Simon H. Stuart	47	Baronet and Landowner, Head
Catherine H. Stuart	41	Wife
Simon H. Stuart	6	Son
Catherine H. Stuart	17	Daughter
Edith Wouall	24	Sister-in-law
Eliza Wathern	21	Ladies Maid
Matilda Goolden	26	Parlour Maid
Elizabeth Bolt	26	Cook

(no mention of this family found in the Directories but an H. Stuart at Cotmaton in 1826).

Census 1881 (still two words Clare Mont)

William M Cafe	55	Col. Indian army - Head
Isabella M Cafe	47	Sister
Jane Weller	56	Housemaid
Emily Hill	20	Housemaid

Census 1891 (Now called Hampden Lodge)

Charlotte Hobart-Hampden	67	Head of household
Louisa Hobart-Hampden	66	Sister
Elizabeth Minifie	61	Boarder
Rohesia Prideaux	56	Cook
Zeth Lethbridge	25	Housemaid
Ellen Uhgros (?)	15	Maid (illegible surname)

LIST B Compiled from Directories by Don Roberts with additions by Max Hooper

DIRECTORY	DATE	NAME
Harvey	1850	Mr and Mrs Gray Clarke
White	1850	No mention
Harvey	1851	Mr and Mrs Gray Clarke
Harvey	1852	Mrs Dashwood
Slater	1852	No mention
Harvey	1852	Mr and Mrs Codrington Parr
Harvey	1853	Major and Mrs Brine
Kellys	1856	Major and Mrs Brine
Billings	1857	Major and Mrs Brine
Billings	1866	Mrs Brine
Morris	1870	Mr Arthur Burnell
Harrods Whites	1878	Col Cafe V.C.
Sidmouth Directory	1883	Major General and Miss Cafe
Sidmouth Directory	1886	Charlotte and Louisa Hobart-Hampden
through to	1919	and then only Charlotte
Kellys	1920	Mrs Eccles
Kellys	1923	Mr Charles Hubbock Watson JP
Kellys	1926	Mr Charles Hubbock Watson JP
Kellys	1935	Mrs Watson
Kellys	1939	Mrs Watson
But see list D, Kellys Directory appears to be out of date by a couple of years		
	?1939-49	See List D
Sidmouth Directory	1949-50	The Misses O., I. and R. Sheppard
Sidmouth Guide	1961	In operation as a Guest House

LIST C

In 1964 Planning Permission was sought, first for four and later for three flats. In 1965 Conveyance all three flats are owned by a Mrs Murphy.

Conveyances from 1965 onward give the following (for Flat No 1)

1965 Conveyed from Mrs H.C. Murphy to Mrs F. Rickett

1974 Mr and Mrs H.D. Lea owned and occupied Flat 1 as evidenced by their purchase of further land from Mrs Murphy but no evidence of transfer between Rickett and Lea

1975 Mrs Lea (now a widow) sold to Mr and Mrs German

1979 Mr and Mrs German sold to Mr and Mrs Roberts

1995 Mr and Mrs Roberts sold to us

LIST D

Owners as appearing on a schedule of documents annexed to Deeds.

- 1937 Lewis Thomas and Seymour Pope sold to Charles Peter Berthon
- 1946 CP Berthon sold to James Henry Dunford
(March)
- 1946 JH Dunford sold to O., I. and E. Sheppard
(April)
- 1960 Sheppards sold to Queenie Ida Selby Stacy, Dora Beryl Stacy and
Estelle Kathleen Wood Stacy.
- 1964 Stacys sell to Mrs HC Murphy

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Harvey	1851	Mr and Mrs Gray Clarke
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1968 Ethel Sloan
1971 Mrs. ...

Flat No 2

- 1965 *Margaret Joan Owen*
- 1969 *Elise Baldwin*
- 1985 *Mrs & Mrs Condoe Thomas*
- 1987 *Mrs & Mrs Webb*
- 1993 *Mrs & Mrs Duffry*
- 1995 *Mrs & Mrs Chittenden*

Flat 3

- 1964 *Alma Gladys Pitches*
- 1965 *W.J. Beuchpitt*
- 1968 *Mrs & Mrs Kern*
- 1985 *Mrs M. E. Pardon*
- 1995 *Mrs Brian Jeans*

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