

MOORDOWN

A history of our village, from the Bronze Age to the present day

from Michael Stead

For those from outside the area, Moordown is just another of the many names given to the different parts of Bournemouth. But behind the modern suburb lies an ancient frontier village with a history of poverty, enterprise, ancient relics and even a possible saint.

Two hundred years ago, Moordown was a frontier settlement for rural Westover, where pastoral fields filled the Stour valley, and tracks ran south from Muscliff Lane and Broadway Lane towards the sea. Between these tracks, clinging to the top edge of the valley-side, Moordown was the last collection of houses before the great heath.

One hundred years ago the situation was different. The heath had been tamed with roads and houses as Bournemouth and its suburbs grew, and coming from central Bournemouth, Moordown was the last collection of houses before you came to the great agricultural valley.

Moordown is, with Wallisdown, Littledown and Pokesdown, part of the Bournemouth Downs, occupying the high land on the southern slope of the Stour Valley, and the neighbourhood commands fine views of the surrounding countryside, as noted in names such as Forest View Road. It is at the western end of a spur of land (between the Stour to the north and Winton Valley to the south) which culminates at Haddon Hill.

Long before Tregonwell visited the area and founded Bournemouth, the area was teeming with human life. Before Winton was built, the land was covered with innumerable burial mounds (tumuli). Thomas Hardy wrote of the area '... every irregularity of the soil was prehistoric, every channel an undisturbed British trackway; not a sod having been turned there since the days of the Caesars'.

Moordown may well be the longest continually settled area in Bournemouth, as the Edwardian antiquary Mr D. Chambers of Southbourne, proposed that the prehistoric residents used the hilltops for their settlements and stockades, and only farmed in the valley, where villages like Holdenhurst were built by the later Saxons. Evidence of Moordown's antiquity was unearthed in 1873, when Mr T. Cox dug up 97 black pots or urns containing fragments of burnt bones at Redbreast Hill. A further five were found in 1923. They came from a large Bronze Age cemetery, and would have been the final resting place for the earliest known residents of Moordown. Similar urns were found at Pokesdown and Iford.

As the centuries ticked by, Moordown got the odd mention in the charters of Christchurch Priory. In the early 14th century, Roger de Morden and Henry de Mourdene (spellings varied) each gave two measures of rye at Martinmas, as payment for churchscot (the equivalent of Council Tax).

Moordown residents even made it into the history books. In his 'History of Dorset', Bournemouth's Town Clerk, A. Lindsay Clegg, mentioned William Pike, a Moordown carpenter, who was executed under Elizabeth I, due to his religious beliefs. Pike is slowly on his way to becoming a Roman Catholic saint, having been first declared a martyr and then as recently as 1987 being Beatified by the Pope. Pike, or Pyk was a common name in Westover (the region including Moordown) since the 14th century, according to the Christchurch Cartulary (ISBN 1859757618). Pike is also said to have lived at West Moors in West Parley, where he worked as a carpenter. He was executed by being hung, drawn and quartered on 22 December 1591 for denying the Royal Supremacy. He is thought to have been converted to Catholicism by Thomas Pilchard.

As the valley farmland proved to be productive, new villages sprung up and played a greater part in Feudal England than Moordown, which ended up being a hamlet within the tything of Muscliff.

At this period, 'Moredown' would have been a settlement centred on Moordown Farm in what is now Homeside Road, where the last version of the 'home' or farmhouse still survives, but is much updated. Scattered around were workers' cottages and new little fields for growing crops creeping out into the heathland, generally keeping to small sheltered valleys. At the beginning of the 19th century William Hatchard farmed at Moordown and his workers included the Hicksons, Warehams, Whattons and Trokes.

Moordown Farm's recorded history goes back into the 18th century, when it was owned by Henry Hookey, a yeoman farmer, he and his wife had a family of at least seven children, and appear to have been related to the prosperous Dean family – an Elizabeth Hookey was married to William Dean and became the great great grandmother of William Clapcott Dean of Littledown House.

Henry Hookey died in 1749. His wife Mary inherited his estates and sold Moordown Farm to John Lane, of Holt Farm, Wimborne. The Hookey family appears to have rented Moordown Farm back from John Lane, as they continued to live there. John Lane, who died in 1757, was fairly wealthy, and his executors were: John Bankes (c. 1696-1772) of Kingston Hall in the parish of Wimborne Minster, esquire; Henry Fitch of High Hall in the parish of Wimborne Minster, clerk, and John James Mansfield of Ringwood in the county of Southampton, gentleman. He set up a trust for the five daughters of Mrs Ann Freeborn, who would appear to have been his daughter, and so her daughters were presumably

John Lane's granddaughters, who also benefited under the will of their father John Freeborn.

The Freeborn sisters were:

Mary, baptised in 1757, who married William Hatchard. Their two daughters are mentioned in John Freeborn's will proved 1806 and shared a fifth of his estate; Ann, who married carpenter Robert Joy, and had four daughters; Elizabeth, wife of Richard Oakley of Wimborne Minster, they had three children; Phillis, wife of Reverend George Stephenson, Dissenting Minister; Melior, wife of James Sweetapple of Marten, Wiltshire.

In 1787 Mary Hookey and John Corben were given notice to quit Moordown Farm, by A T Mansfield, Receiver. It seems that Mary Hookey needed to sell the farm after her husband's (father's?) death in 1749 but that even with the money from the sale, the family's fortunes did not recover and by 1787 they had to relinquish the farm entirely. John Corbin was presumably another tenant on the land, and there is no known family connection to the Hookeys.

This left the farm in the ownership and potential occupation of the Freeborn sisters. It was not unusual for sisters and their families to fall out over inheritances. A prominent local example is Thomas Arundell (1560-1639) who owned the Manor of Holdenhurst, which was left on his death to his six daughters and their husbands, leading to years of wrangling over who actually owned the manor, Cecil Calvert, the 2nd Lord Baltimore, who established the colony of Maryland in America in 1632 was married to Anne Arundell and claimed that the manor had been settled on him in October 1639 by his father-in-law Thomas Arundell, just before the gentleman had died; this claim was subject to much contention.

Likewise at Moordown the five Freeborn sisters fell into dispute and the property left to them under the will of John Lane was subject to 'proceedings in the Exchequer of His Majesty'. As a result when the Enclosure Award was drawn up in 1805, and the commissioners of the Award carefully names all the local landowners who were to benefit, instead of naming an owner at Moordown, they sensibly settled on the wording 'the Owners of Moordown Farm' allowing that the matter could be resolved when the courts decided who the owners actually were. Things got so bad between the sisters that when Phyllis Stephenson died in 1832, leaving her property to her nieces, her will specifically mentioned the ill treatment she claimed to have suffered from her sister Melior Sweetapple.

It appears that the eldest sister Mary Hatchard may have had a controlling interest in Moordown Farm, and that her daughter, Mrs Mary Brown may have been living there c1810. Mary Brown's daughter Jane seems to have been born at Moordown Farm in 1814, she became Mrs Hicks, and left a somewhat abbreviated diary describing a couple of years of her early married life at Hick's Farm, Muccleshell.

1805 saw a significant change for Moordown, with the Westover Enclosure Act. The wind-blasted heathland beyond Moordown was parcelled up into great fields, boundary ditches and banks were dug and fences put along the tops. The old tracks were replaced by new straight roads (Wimborne Road, Charminster Road), and some entirely new roads (Malvern Road) were formed.

Various parcels of heathland were auctioned off to pay for the costs of the enclosure work, and two of these were in Moordown – where Parley Road and The Avenue are today. These were considered to be particularly valuable as areas for farming and indeed the 'Owners of Moordown Farm' also became the new owners of much of the surrounding heathland, although it was the Earl of Malmesbury who bought one of the auctioned plots of land. The vicar of Canford, George Tito Brice also acquired land around Moordown through the Enclosure Award.

Some of the smaller plots were awarded to the local workers and William Troke gained nearly two acres which would later become Rose Gardens. One of the local farm workers, George Hickson from near Moordown Farm had an ancient cottage which entitled him to Turbary Rights in part of the heathland.

Local villagers feared they would be completely deprived of their rights by the enclosures, but with the help of the educated Quaker, Farmer West at Muscliff Farm, they successfully petitioned the Commissioners overseeing the process. As a result and for the benefit of Hickson and others a parcel of land was set aside where their rights of grazing animals and collecting dried roots for fuel could continue. This land is now Redhill Common. Hickson's cottage still survives as an unusual thatched home hidden away at the end of one of the little lanes of Moordown and is a listed building.

Moordown itself remained fairly insignificant and the new road (Wimborne Road) across the heath, being in Muscliff Tything was named Muscliff Road, rather than Moordown Road. It was planned that all the new allotments formed by the Enclosures would become farmland, but instead Lewis Tregonwell visited the area and bought land at Bourne Mouth and began building houses. He also bought land at Moordown and built a new farm there (which later became Burt's Farm) and because of his interest Moordown became one of the important satellite settlements of Bournemouth.

The 1841 census showed Morden (Moordown), spreading out around it were Stowden, Dominies, Charminster, Redhill, Masbury [later Winton], Nurses' Hill [now Richmond Hill] and Bourne [Bournemouth]. Moordown had a population of 102 people, whilst Bourne, beginning it's growth, had 215.

Moordown's residents were grouped into twenty three families and there was one uninhabited house. There were six Troke families, making up 30 people, with another three close relatives, accounting for just about a third of the population. The Trokes were siblings Richard, Henry and Lydia and their children, living in twisting lanes which would much later become Nursery Road, Forest View Road and Malvern Road.

Farming provided most of the employment, with 16 families relying on the wages of agricultural labourers, but there was also a farmer, plasterer, brick layer, cabinet maker and shoemaker, and no one was described as a pauper, even though we would find their standards of living very challenging to our prevailing notions of the domestic essentials.

Clark -
Oliver -
Hillyer -
Young (field 278 Castle Lane)
Osburn -
Rixon, Joseph -
Welshman (fields 201, 202, 204, Endfield Road
Troke, James (7 members) (field 199, Endfield Road; field 215, opp Endfield Road; 267, opp Nursery Road)
Best -
Spencer -
Troke Edward -
Troke, John (8 members)
Troke, Henry (field 265, Nursery Road, same place where Solomon later lived)
Troke, George -
Troke, Richard (fields 259, 260, Nursery Road)
Steel (10 members) (field 263)
Phillips -
uninhabited
Hayward (fields 255, 273)
Dory -
Lawford (field 244 Wimborne Road, the Hollies)
Lane -

In the 1840s there was a move to bring vast areas of England into the 19th century and to do away with old Feudal arrangements such as Tithes. The Tithe Maps, drawn up at the time, recorded existing land ownership and showed that the old Moordown Farm of Nicholas Hookey (on the site of Homeside Road) had been divided up, part of it was owned by James Kemp (whose family were doctors, bankers and merchants) from Poole, Kemp leased it to Matthew Aldridge (from a family of bankers, farmers and solicitors); branches of the two families (Kemp-Welch and Mooring Aldridge) later intermarried; whilst the Sweetapple family, who were descended from Melior Freeborn, owned another part of Moordown Farm, leasing it to farmer William Rose, and later to his son George. Matthew Aldridge of Muscliff House was the other large landowner at Moordown. There were several parcels of land owned by various branches of the Troke family, who were swiftly filling the warren of cottages and hovels in the tracks around Moordown.

For another thirty years, very little happened outside Bournemouth. Much of the surrounding land was consolidated into the hands of a select few owners, who did not have the resources to see it developed. The great Branksome Estate (which stretched from Canford Cliffs to the edges of Moordown) was typical, where a tangle of mortgages grew slowly worse, and the best the owners could manage was to plant pine trees in the hope of making money from timber and resin. As the new pine plantations grew, Moordown became even more isolated from Central Bournemouth.

1851 Census. Charminster, Claypits, Moredown, Ridhill, Richmond Terrace
136 people. 13 were Trokes, 13 were Osburn, 10 Steel, 11 Wareham, 11 Watton,
11 Young.

Hall

Brown

Young

Troke

Spencer

Osburn

Welshman

Collins

Collins

Fry

Wareham (11)

Withers

Osburn

Ivimy

Allen (9)

Osburn

Hanham

Young

Steel

Lane
Best
Steel
Troke
Troke (9)
Watton
Watton
Vine
Young
Phillips
Howard
Dorey
Watton
Lawford

The only significant development was the building of a mission church at Moordown, by the vicar of Saint Peter's. Given its isolated position the church was given the splendidly apt name of Saint John's in the Wilderness (the Wilderness referenced being the Jordan wilderness where John the Baptist preached) and was built in 1853. After the new Saint John's was built further south, the old building eventually became home to Willis builder's merchants; now converted to housing it still survives by the main road. Not wishing to risk any evil coming to the people of Moordown, the Congregationalists opened a chapel in Nursery Road in 1860, and Mrs Annie Crocker, sister of the Deacon William Marshall ran the Sunday school.

1861

Muscliff, Redhill, Moordown, charminster
45 families, 205 people (102 in 1841), 15 Troke, 28 Orbourn/Osburn, 13
Steel/Steele, 30 Wattons,
Bournemouth, 1901 people. (215 in 1841)
Mordown has doubled its population
Bournemouth has grown nearly ninefold in the same period.

During the 1860s Moordown was effectively off the edge of the maps; the Earl of Malmesbury had sold his parcel of land to buy a plot nearer to Bournemouth and his 1865 plan of possible development areas didn't even include Moordown. The road past the village began to be labelled as Wimborne Road. As Moordown had its own church, maps of Saint Peter's parish didn't extend as far as Moordown.

Because Winton and Boscombe did not yet exist as suburbs, Moordown was used as the generic term for the heathland beyond Bournemouth, so that Frederick Thick and his wife Love out at Boscombe Farm (in Richmond Park

Road) were counted by the 1861 census as residents of Moordown. In total Moordown in 1861 had 200 residents living in 24 households.

The residents included Richard Whittle and family at Kemp Farm, Francis Boyt, the brick-maker (Bournemouth's growth had introduced new jobs into the local economy), Henry Andrews, the wheelwright, and David Burt at Tregonwell's Farm. By 1901 the place was run by his son Henry George Burt, and was being called 'Burt's Farm'. Worthy of special mention is Solomon Troke, the local gamekeeper. Having spent much of his early life as a poacher, he left a colourful record through the local law courts, which provides an insight into the deprivations suffered by impoverished labouring families in the days before the Welfare State was established. Solomon was typical of the Moordown men who gave the area a hard reputation; folk from outside said they avoided the place for fear of getting a thick ear from one of the locals.

By the end of the 1860s, things were changing for Moordown. In about 1865 the Talbot sisters built a new settlement, Winton, named after a distant but well-loved cousin, between Bournemouth and Moordown. Springbourne and Boscombe were developed at the same time. By 1870, Winton had about 60 newly built houses, and Springbourne had nearly 80. Moordown meanwhile remained much the same, with one important exception. William Troke's plot of land had Garden Road (now Rose Gardens) laid out across it and half a dozen new cottages built. With the independent chapel and more importantly Saint John's Church nearby, the centre of gravity of Moordown had shifted away from Kemp's (Moordown) Farm to the new cottages.

The latter part of the 19th century saw the arrival of the railway and the rapid growth of Bournemouth and its satellite settlements, although Moordown remained largely a farming and labouring community. One significant development was the construction of a new Saint John's Church, prompted by the zealous vicar of Saint Peter's Alexander Morden Bennett.

Georgina Talbot, the younger but more forceful of the philanthropic sisters, was sufficiently suspicious of religion that she did not include plans for churches in either Talbot Village or Winton. The Congregationalists opened a chapel in Nursery Road, Moordown. The chapel provided a meeting place for abstemious and tee-total men, who went on to found successful building companies and contribute to the growth of Moordown, but the lack of an Established church bothered Morden Bennett, who saw to it that a new Saint John's was built on the north edge of Winton. He ensured that the parish did not take the name of the godless Talbot settlement; instead it was Saint John's Moordown, when it was formed in 1874, taking in the whole of Winton.. It was around this time that the Palaeolithic urnfield was found at Moordown.

The new church established a firm southern boundary for Moordown, and also provided it with its first burial ground. The centre of gravity began to move again,

with Moordown Farm still firmly a rural concern, housing began to appear along Wimborne Road, with a small estate springing up opposite Tregonwell's farm around Oswald Road. Further south, Winton was growing rapidly on both sides of the road. There was some house building in Moordown, but it was confined to Forest View Road, Valette Road and Nursery Road, still unnamed at that period, which were tracks that survived from before the enclosures of 1805.

Some new cottages appeared in Rose Gardens and along Malvern road opposite, but a significant development came when Victoria (now Parley) Road was formed around 1890 and houses spread rapidly along it. Moordown did not spread during the 1890s, but it underwent a transformation into a mainly residential area. The farm survived and there was, by 1903, still a smithy, but there were also about 120 new cottages, each modernly equipped with a well.

As the population of Moordown and Winton grew, so did the need for street lighting, drainage, refuse collections and utility supplies. As a result the Winton Urban district Council was formed in 1894, taking in Moordown. Decisions like this make it complicated to define a hard edge to Moordown, in terms of historical development Balfour Road neatly marks the boundary between Winton and Moordown, but in religious terms Winton fell within the parish of Moordown, whilst in administrative terms Moordown fell within the district of Winton. Such problems of identity continue today, as the Moordown Ward, whilst being generally in the Moordown area, has boundaries that are defined by population densities for electoral purposes, rather than by any strict historical markers.

The Council worked hard to increase local facilities, but as the twentieth century broke, the whole area was taken within the bounds of Bournemouth. This necessitated a number of changes of road names, as they were found to clash with roads already in Bournemouth or Boscombe, so Manor Road became Malvern Road.

Moordown was still a frontier settlement, the last outpost of civilised modern buildings, before the mud huts of Redhill and the farms of the Stour Valley. Manor (later Malvern) Road was the heart of this new community and at its junction with Wimborne Road there was a new Post Office. There was still a lot of poverty in the village, and many of the women were out at work in the great laundry at Winton, which serviced the villas of Bournemouth.

There was also a pub, 'The Hollies Inn' named after a house formerly on the site built by John Lawford, the village shoemaker, who had planted two holly trees by the front gate. He was a Congregationalist, who would have been horrified to think a public house stood on the site of his home. In a rough age, the Congregationalists had tough morals, and when the young Charles Marshall began courting John Lawford's daughter Love, she made him stop smoking, telling him 'The lips that touch tobacco shall never touch mine.'

Lawford would have been much happier to know that a fellow church-goer Harry Masters deliberately held onto land that he owned adjacent to the pub, to thwart any plans for expansion by the brewery. Masters built many of the houses around Redhill Crescent and The Avenue, whilst his fellow churchmen Harold and Tom Fry developed much of The Grove. As a young man, Harold Fry sold tall wooden scaffold poles and sheets of zinc, to a foreign man who dressed completely in dark clothing. This turned out to be Marconi who was carrying out experimental wireless transmissions from Bournemouth. These builders were responsible for putting together the money to build Moordown Baptist Church in The Avenue.

In the 1890s the Kemp family sold off a portion of Moordown Farm in Winton to create the Kemp Firs Estate, around Muscliff Road. In 1903 they sold more land, allowing Evelyn and Naseby Roads to be built. The heathland tracks leading to Moordown Farm became roadway, extending Malvern Road all the way to Charminster. This new estate linked Moordown and Winton and marked the beginning of the conurbation of the settlements.

Being a part of Bournemouth, offered the promise of greater facilities out at Moordown and one of the first to arrive was the tramway, which reached out past Malvern Road. A new Tramway Depot was built next to the Old Saint John's, which was then functioning as a school. To the West of Wimborne Road Mr Norton laid out new roads, including The Avenue, for his new 'Redhill Park' building estate. This led to some confusion with people beginning to call Redhill common 'Redhill Park'; as a rule of thumb 'Park' in built up areas generally denotes an area of housing where the word park has been used to create the impression of space, as at Ensbury Park, Strouden Park, Boscombe Park, etc.

As the Edwardian era drew to a close, Tregonwell Farm was sold off for development as the Mayfield Park Estate, through Abbott's estate agents, who operated from an office on the estate. The road names were all loyal and topical: King Edward made way for King George and Queen Mary, with the coronation taking place in 1911, and the sequence of events being recorded in the road names of Moordown. Bloomfield Avenue was named after the then Vicar of Saint John's.

Just as the pace of development was picking up, and a new school was built in Coronation Avenue, the vast edifice of 19th Century Imperial Europe annihilated itself in the carnage of the First World War. It took several years for building work to pick up speed in Moordown after the war, but when it did there was a different character to the design. Instead of the homely cottages built thirty years earlier around Malvern Road, Wimborne Road came to be lined with grand terraces of shops, typical of the streetscapes that men would have seen as they battled across Europe. The clean lines of the Art Deco period had come to Moordown and found their most scintillating expression in Mayfield Park Buildings, the white faïenced shops on the corner of Bloomfield Avenue.

The street directories of the time show that at 68 Malvern Road was Mr James, farrier and blacksmith, still shoeing horses, and further along at Moordown Farm, by then re-named 'Charminster' Farm (adding to the confusion over the boundaries of the area) William Hunt was running a dairy business. The Vicar of Saint John's had established a mission church out in darkest Moordown Orient, dedicated to Saint Birinus, the first Bishop of Dorchester, sent by Pope Honorius in AD634 as an apostle to the rude folk of Wessex.

In Wimborne Road at the end of the war were the Corporation Tramways Car Depot, Moordown Post Office and The Hollies Inn. But within a decade all manner of new shops were appearing, the most hi-tec would have been Mr Brookes' wireless shop, but there were also fishmongers, confectioners, butchers, drapers, grocers, auctioneers, a branch of the Co-op, newsagents, and solicitors, surgeons, tailors, chemists, tobacconists, and dress-makers, ham & beef dealers, costumiers, banks, fruiterers, and house furnishers, hair dressers, provision merchants, motor engineers, and boot makers, saddlers, furniture dealers, greengrocers, wardrobe dealers, bakers, fancy drapers, gents' outfitters, ironmongers, and a dairy.

Similar shops were appearing in Malvern Road; of note is the fried fish shop at 51, which is still there, over 80 years later. By the 1930s Malvern Road was even more up to date, with a Police Box appearing by the recreation ground at Endfield Road. There was another Police box at the other end of Moordown by Victoria Park Road, showing that the area was now either big enough or wicked enough to need two boxes. Malmesbury and Parsons Dairies had opened a branch on the corner of Ensbury Park Road.

By the mid 1930s all the new shops 'Grand Parade', 'The Strand', 'Tennyson Buildings' and 'Mayfield Park Buildings' had added to the variety of shopping choice in Moordown and had established a new heart of the community, as a thriving retail street in a new residential suburb. To the west the construction of The Grove had taken residential development right up to Redhill Common, to the east, the remaining acres of Moordown/Charminster Farm had been sold off and the vast West Way building estate was being constructed. The old Christchurch to Wimborne road, now named Castle Lane was beginning to see development and would soon become a secondary shopping centre for Moordown.

By 1939, as Europe headed for a second war, Moordown had expanded as far as it could. The West Way Estate had been completely developed and as a result of all the new road building, Moordown Farm had become just one more dwelling in Homeside Road; the Hunt family continued to live their until the mid 1970s, but it stopped being called a farm at the end of the 1950s. The only significant open area was a small field towards the bottom of The Grove. Castle Lane was lined with houses and shops and housing estates had begun their slow crawl towards

Muscliff Village. Moordown was no longer in Muscliff Tything, Muscliff was part of the Moordown North Ward.

Wartime rationing emptied the shops of food, many shelves were bare or at best if a line of biscuit jars survived, there would be pictures of biscuits, rather than biscuits themselves. Being thought safely far away from 'targets' like London or Southampton, Moordown was one of the areas that filled up with evacuees. One woman in Bloomfield Avenue took so many, fifteen at a time, that they had to eat their meals outside, and she marched them up to the recreation ground to use the loos, as she didn't want them using her own.

For children growing up in Moordown, one of the attractions was the Modern Cinema (now Gala Bingo) opposite Saint John's Church, where they could go to watch Cowboys and Indians films on a Saturday morning. The Modern also provided a venue for birthday parties and was renowned for being able to lay on jellies even during the height of the rationing. When the war was over and rationing eased, children who had been used to austerity felt guilty if they bought $\frac{1}{4}$ lb of chocolate biscuits.

Redhill Common (or Park) was an area for exploring, instead of the pleasant fields of today, it was a site of gravel pits, providing material for road repairs, with dirty ponds at the bottom. One such pit was slowly filled with household refuse from Moordown until the land was level again. For three or four years a funfair was held on the site, and then finally when the ground was sufficiently compact, the fire station was built over the top.

But the common could be a dangerous place, as there were frequent gorse fires each summer. At one end of the village was Mr Harold Fry's bungalow, behind the Horse and Jockey, in what is now Park Lane. Fry owned a bakery in Winton. West Way was considered to be another extremity of Moordown. There were various small building plots dotted about, but the one that most appealed to the local boys was 'The Green Field' at the bottom of the Avenue, because they could play football there. During the war it was used as a place to make camouflage material, with huge sheets of brown and green material laid out over the ground. Eventually part of it was taken to build the telephone exchange and the rest went to housing.

The Coronation Avenue school was the main seat of learning, joined later by a school in Oswald Road. Mr Kempster ran 'Oak Holm' a private school for boys at 92 The Grove.

One of the central points of Moordown was the bus depot near Malvern Road, which had great pits in the floor so that the engineers could get at the undersides of the busses. There was a turning point for trolley busses (which had replaced trams) in Redhill Crescent. As the trolley busses made their way up Wimborne Road on frosty mornings, the lines would flash and bang. When the busses had

to turn down Ensbury Park Road, the conductor would have to jump off, run to change the poles onto the new lines and then run again, hoping that he could get back on the bus as it picked up speed.

Other significant features of the village included Moordown Post Office, on the corner of Malvern Road, run by Mr Cave. And Malmesbury and Parsons dairy at Ensbury Park Road. On the opposite corner to the dairy was 'Gerald's Bakery' run by Aristide Tom Gerald Luminati, who was a skilful patisserie baker, his brother Dante was a chocolatier, with a good reputation for creating ornate Easter Eggs every year.

Nearly opposite this Brooks wireless dealers provided children with a place where they could get their radio batteries recharged for 6d, but they had to be careful when carrying the batteries home, not to spill the acid. Another useful location was the blacksmith's in Malvern Road, as he did all sorts of work, if you wanted to build a go-cart, he could fix two pram wheels onto an axle for you. For children who wanted still more entertainment, there was the Bournemouth Silver Band, which played in front of the bowling pavilion in Redhill Park, every Friday night. Children would be invited up to conduct the band, and afterwards would be 'paid' 3d by the conductor.

The Cumber brothers provided great contrast along Wimborne Road. At 821, opposite the Gas Company building, Dr Percival Cumber ran his surgery, whilst at 981, just past the bus depot, his brother Bill ran a tobacconist and, in the absence of a local bookmaker, took bets in.

On the other side of the road, at Moordown Fisheries (no 928) was Robert Ferguson, who was also the ARP warden. He was involved in one of the most dramatic war-time episodes. In the middle of a March night in 1944, RAF Halifax Bomber with engine difficulties came in low over Redhill Common and losing height knocked off chimneys in The Grove. In its final flying moments it smashed into a cottage in Malvern Road, killing the owner, before crashing into the ground by Meadow Court Flats. The plane came down so fast that there was no time for people in bed to get to their Morrison shelters, so they dived under beds for protection. Robert Ferguson however had to go and investigate the crash and learn first hand about the number of deaths.

One of the others on the scene was Bert Barnes, a printer from 1012 Wimborne Road. They were soon joined by fire engines from the Peter's Hill station and a convoy of American Army vehicles. As the plane burned ammunition began to explode, making a rescue attempt even more difficult. At least seven people, including the crew of the bomber, died and The Hollies was requisitioned to act as a temporary mortuary.

When the war finally ended, Moordown celebrated VE and VJ days like the rest of the country with enthusiastic street parties, and streets swathed in Union

Jacks. The residents of Bloomfield Avenue built a great bonfire in the middle of the street, and children were taken to a celebration in Meyrick Park which went on until late at night.

The Arnold family, who lived at the same address in Moordown, 822 Wimborne Road, for most of the 20th century had some bad news during the War. Jack, the eldest son, who had worked as a gardener for Bournemouth Council, was posted as missing, having been captured at Crete. One evening the family were woken by gravel being thrown up at the windows and found that Jack had returned. Jack's sister Elsie remained at the family home when everyone else had died or moved away; left in the lurch by a faithless lover, she had remained a spinster and found the house increasingly unmanageable, so that she eventually lived in just one room.

For others, the post war period brought new opportunities to Moordown. The old Gas company building was taken over by Bournemouth Council and became a 'Child and Family Guidance Clinic'. A new physician, Dr Cronin moved into Moordown, and a particularly good toyshop 'Deppers Ltd' opened, on the corner of Tennyson Road. Willis the builder's merchants had occupied 'Old Saint John's' for many years and the roof was a colourful patchwork of every kind of tile they had to sell.

Whilst Holdenhurst road's shopping area was blighted by Wessex Way, which cut it off from half its customers, Moordown has so far survived the competition from the supermarkets possibly because of its ability to reinvent itself. In the 1970s it acquired a record shop called 'Generation Gap', along with a variety of D.I.Y. suppliers; there were also television suppliers and vacuum cleaner servicers, but there was also the pleasingly old world Booths Outfitters for men, and Trixie's milliners near Saint John's, which had a display of elegant hats. Cull's was another gent's outfitters, F. Cull ran the shop at 922? Wimborne Road from before the war; his son Leslie later took it over.

There were also a handful of businesses which provided continuity to the area, surviving for several decades, such as Sargent and Jones hairdressers, Harts the florist, Kitchenham's photographers, Moordown Pets, the Silver Lounge Café, Aldridge and Brownlee Solicitors (where the partners were distant relatives of Matthew Aldridge of Muscliff House), and The Hollies public house has survived for over a century, with only minor name changes.

Going into the 21st century, Moordown is a lively community, with good housing stock and some picturesque cottages surviving in the vicinity of Malvern Road, several of which enjoy panoramic views of the Stour Valley. Redhill Common, with its annual fair is a valuable local amenity. The supermarket on the old Tram Depot site provides a useful 'anchor' for the smaller shops, and the sense of identity is maintained by Moordown being a ward where the boundaries neatly fit to the pattern of historical development. Colourful figures from the past, like

Solomon Troke, who intriguingly ended his life as Solomon Head, are buried in the churchyard, not far from members of the Arnold family. Whilst nearby the vibrant Moordown Saint John's school, enjoys a good reputation for training the new generation of Moordown Residents.

The Boundary of Moordown

At the time of the censuses, there was no specially defined boundary, but there was a sense of Moordown as being distinct from its neighbours at Redhill and Strouden. The first boundary was defined with the establishment of the Parish Council, when it was parcelled together with Winton – with there being no defined boundary between the two. Moordown's boundaries at that time would have been Winton to the south, the county boundary to the west, Castle Lane to the north and Charminster Road to the east. This was the extent of Moordown when it became part of Bournemouth in 1901. In 1914, when Queens Park was added to Bournemouth, the ward boundaries were changed, and Moordown was completely defined for the first time: Wimborne Road to the West, Castle Lane to the North, Charminster Road to the east, Hankinson Road and Wycliffe Road to the south. Much of the south section of the 1914 Moordown ward, would be more properly considered as part of Winton.

After Kinson and Holdenhurst were added to Bournemouth in 1931, the wards were redrawn again. There were now Moordown South and Moordown North. Moordown South was bounded by Hankinson Road and Wycliffe Road to the south, Wimborne Road to the West, Brassey Road and Gresham Road to the north, and Charminster Road to the east. Moordown North was bounded by Brassey Road and Gresham Road to the south, Wimborne Road to the West, The River Stour to the north, and Broadway Lane and Charminster Road to the east. Much of Moordown North is what would rightly be thought of as Muscliff and Muccleshell. These two north and south wards survived through further ward changes in 1961, 1967 and 1978. In May 2003, a new Moordown Ward was created. Much of the old Moordown South became Winton East, whilst much of Moordown north became Throop and Muscliff. Moordown was now bounded by Charminster Avenue, Gresham Road, Brassey Road, Wimborne Road and Elmes Road to the south, Redhill Avenue to the west, Castle Lane to the north, West Way, Haverstock Road, Claremont Road and Charminster Road to the east.