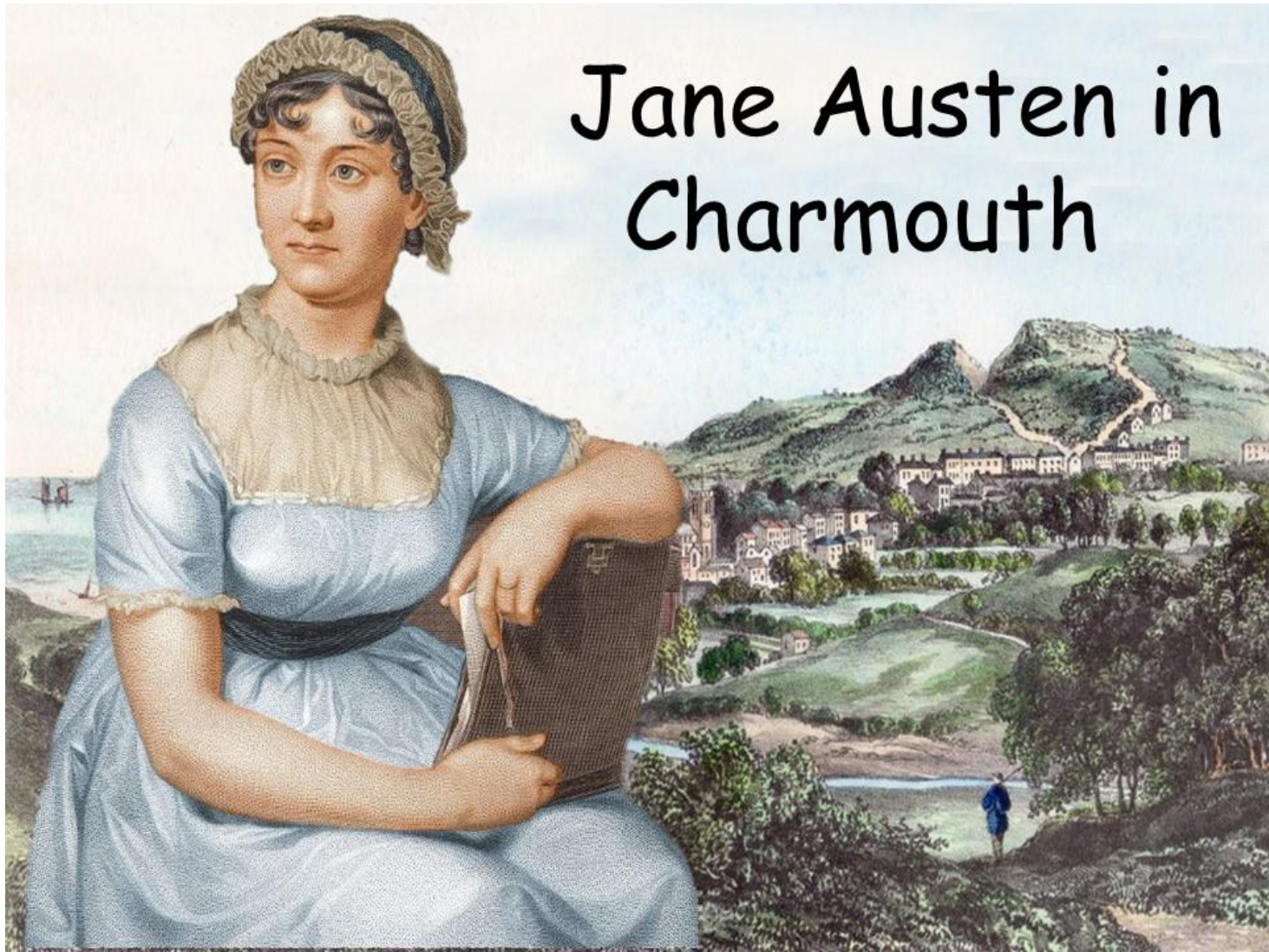


Jane Austen in Charmouth



The illustrated Talk we are to give will initially provide the background to Jane Austen's stay in Charmouth at the Coach and Horses in the summer of 1803, before she went on to Lyme Regis in the autumn of that year and another visit there during the subsequent year. We recently identified a Census for the village which is contemporary with her visit which lists the villagers and their occupations. We have also researched a number of records to find out what we could about them and where they lived. With this information it has been possible to use relevant illustrations and create an imaginary walk she could have taken through the village from the Mill to Old Lyme Hill and the Beach at the time of her visit here.

J.M.W. Turner Painting of Charmouth in 1811



We have Jane Austen to thank for one of the earliest references to the village in Chapter 11 of "Persuasion" when she writes:

“Charmouth, with its high grounds and extensive sweeps of country, and still more its sweet, retired bay, backed by dark cliffs, where fragments of low rock among the sands make it the happiest spot for watching the flow of the tide, for sitting in unwearied contemplation”.

She could almost be describing the same vista that Britain’s greatest artist, J.M.W. Turner saw when he painted this wonderful view towards Lyme Regis from the beach in 1811. We can see the fisherman with his massive shrimping net and a group of bathers.

Jane in Chapter 14 again refers to the this pleasure enjoyed by visitors as follows:

“Mary had been taken to Charmouth too, and she had bathed, and she had gone to church, and there were a great many more people to look at in the church at Lyme than at Uppercross; and all this, joined to the sense of being so very useful, had made really an agreeable fortnight”.

When she visited Lyme in 1804 she mentioned Charmouth in a letter to her sister, Cassandra.

“The bathing was so delightful this morning & Molly so pressing with me to enjoy myself that I believe I stayed in rather too long, as since the middle of the day I have felt unreasonably tired. I shall be more careful another time & shall not bathe to-morrow as I had before intended. Jenny & James are walking to Charmouth this afternoon”.

Charmouth Beach looking towards Golden Cap. c.1803



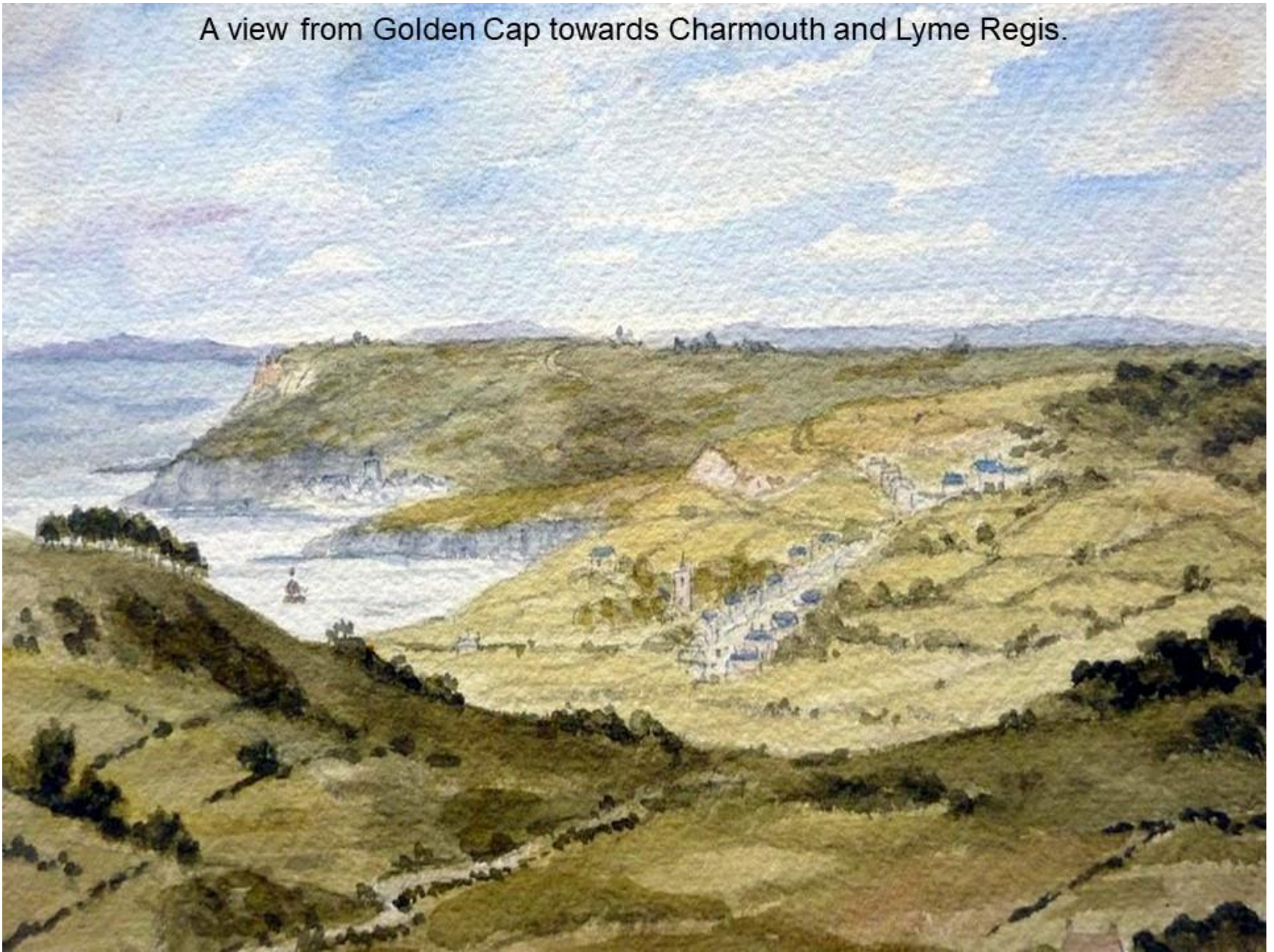
Claire Tomlin in her authoritative book, "Jane Austen: A Life" writes that her ***"short-sighted family destroyed the bulk of her letters; and if she kept any diaries, they did not survive her"***.

She has filled the gaps in the record, creating a remarkably fresh and convincing portrait of the woman and the writer. It is her researches that we have to thank for the likelihood that Jane was in Charmouth with her family in the summer of 1803 before going on to Lyme Regis in November of that year. She no doubt would have stayed at the famous "Coach and Horses Inn" that was very popular with its position on the Great Western Road linking London with the west country.



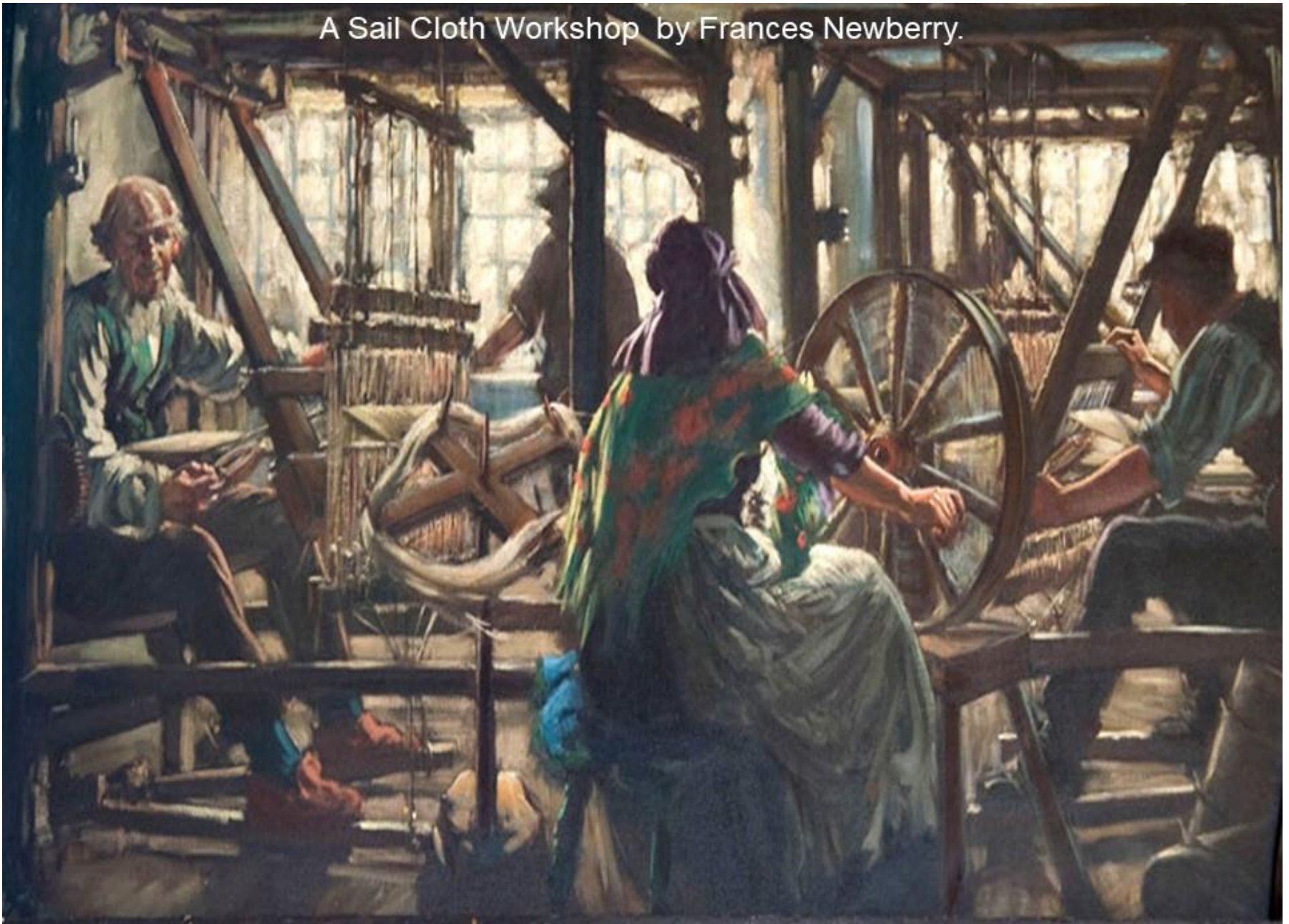
The year 1803 when she arrived was a time of prosperity for the village, for it was at the height of the Napoleonic Wars with France, although there had been a temporary peace the year before. Nelson had taken command of HMS Victory and was made commander of the Mediterranean fleet. Victory and the other ships in the British Navy created a huge demand for Sailcloth. As a result, Charmouth with its neighbouring villages surrounding Bridport which were the main producers of the canvas experienced a boom in sales

A view from Golden Cap towards Charmouth and Lyme Regis.



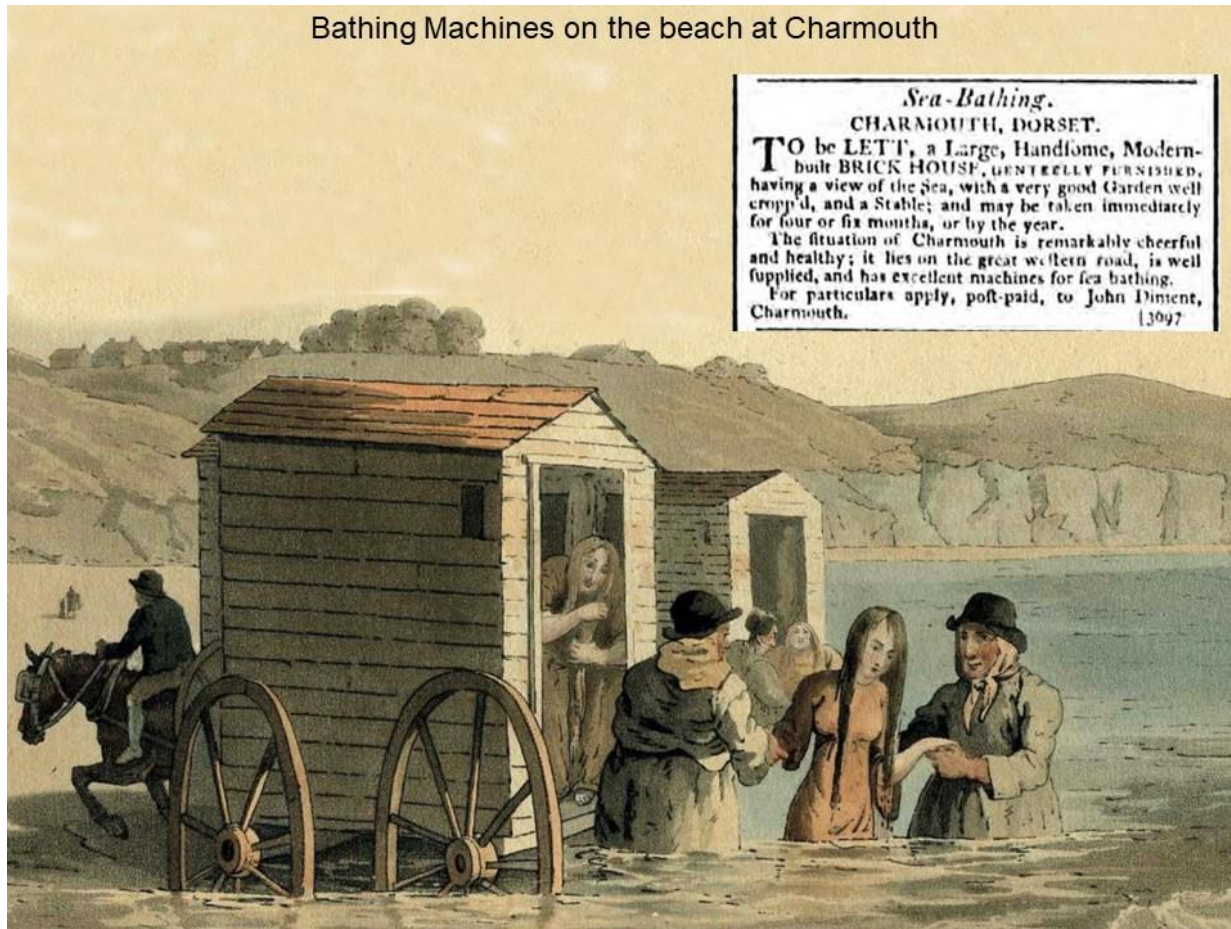
Jane would have seen many of the fields growing Flax around the village, which with Hemp was the staple that was used by the manufacturers.

A Sail Cloth Workshop by Frances Newberry.



She would have also passed three busy workshops along the Street. There was Burnards, by the Mill, Kitts in the centre at the corner of Barr's Lane and Webber's at the top of the village.

Bathing Machines on the beach at Charmouth

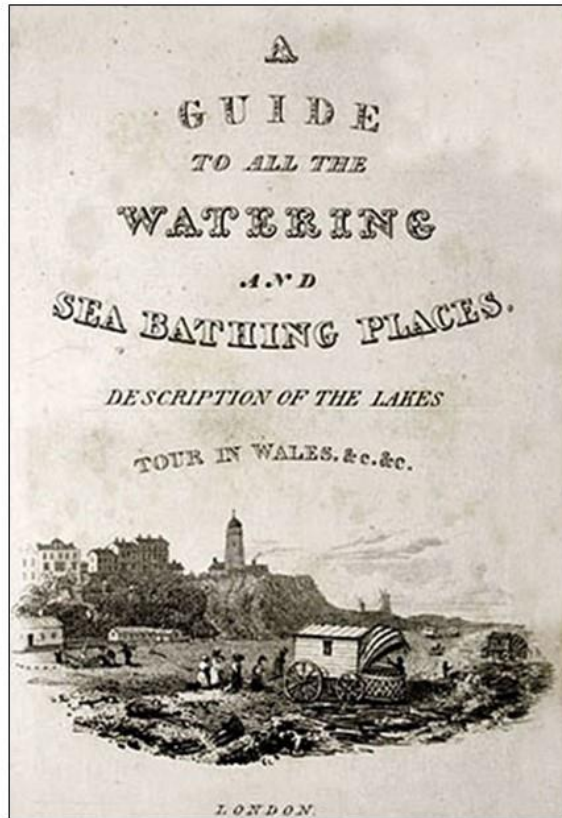


With its closeness to Lyme Regis it was also able to benefit from the boom in visitors taking the waters for their health and had its own bathing machines, which were very popular as a way of bathing in the sea without being seen. Wagons, called Bathing Machines, would be drawn out into the water by sturdy women, who might then assist the bathers down into the water where you could paddle about or swim in relative privacy, shielded from view of the shore. An advert in the Western Gazette from 1799 shown here records this advantage:

Sea Bathing, Charmouth, Dorset.

"To be let, a large, handsome, modern built brick house, genteelly furnished, having a view of the sea, with a very good garden well cropped and a stable, and may be taken immediately for four or six months, or by the year. The situation of Charmouth is remarkably cheerful and healthy, it lies on the Great Western Road, is well supplied, and has excellent machines for sea bathing. For particulars apply post-paid to John Diment, Charmouth"

John Feltham's Guide to all the Watering and Sea Bathing Places - 1803



CHARMOUTH

THIS delightful village lies between Bridport and Axminster, on one of the roads leading to Exeter, and is thirty-one miles from that city. It occupies an elevated situation, and consequently commands many vast and beautiful prospects both of the sea and land. It has likewise the advantage of being a considerable thoroughfare, and lying so near Lyme, it is much resorted to by bathers. The beach is pebbly, and in all its advantages and disadvantages partakes of the qualities of its neighbour and rival. It cannot be expected that fashionable amusements are to be found here: but the lover of nature will be sure to enjoy gratification in his rambles in the environs; and he who is in search of health, a still superior good, will be as likely to find it on the coast of Dorset as on that of Sussex.

The fisheries here and at Lyme present a constant scene of useful activity, no less advantageous to the individuals concerned than amusing to spectators.

The rides and walks are sufficiently varied and numerous. BRIDPORT, AXMINSTER, AXMOUTH, &c. will be included amongst the former.

Sailing too, which, whether it is regarded as a pleasant or a healthful exercise, cannot be excelled by any in the circle of the occupations of the idle, may here

John Feltham published his first authoritative book on the subject with his "Guide to all the Watering and Sea Bathing Places" in 1803. It was produced annually until 1825 and would have been used by Jane and her family before visiting here. He floridly writes about Charmouth as follows:

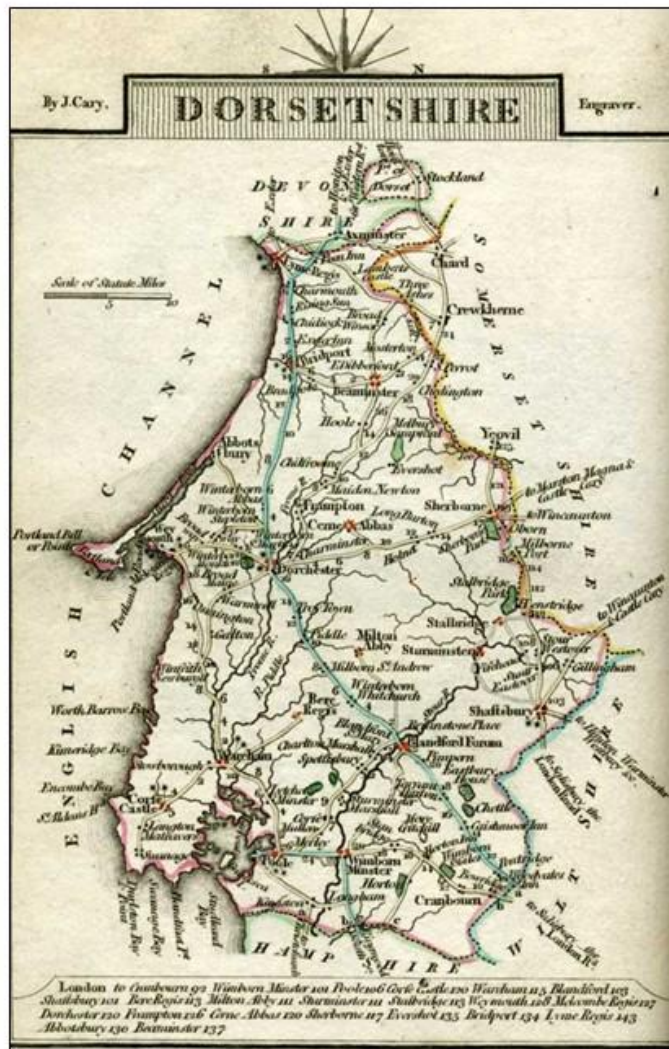
"This delightful village lies between Bridport and Axminster, on one of the roads leading to Exeter, and is thirty-one miles from that city. It occupies an elevated situation and consequently commands many vast and beautiful prospects both of the sea and land. It has likewise the advantage of being a considerable thoroughfare, and lying so near Lyme, it is much resorted to by bathers. The beach here is pebbly and in all its advantages and disadvantages partakes of the qualities of its neighbour and rival. It cannot be expected that fashionable amusements are to be found here: but the lower nature will be sure to find gratification in his rambles of the environs, and he who is in search of health, a still superior good, will be as likely to find it on the coast of Dorset as in that of Sussex.

The fisheries here and at Lyme present a constant scene of useful activity, no less advantageous to the individuals concerned than amusing to spectators.

The rides and walks are sufficiently varied and numerous. Bridport, Axminster, Axmouth, etc. will be included amongst the former.

Sailing too, whether it is regarded as a pleasant or a healthful exercise, cannot be excelled by any in the circle of the occupations of the idle, may here be enjoyed to the full, with facilities that render it still more inviting".

John Feltham's Guide to all the Watering and Sea Bathing Places - 1803



The map from the guidebook would have been the equivalent to google maps at the time providing the tourist with all the information he needed before his trip. It was a popular form of publication, listing over sixty places in England and Wales which had become fashionable either for their spas or sea bathing facilities (sometimes both). The route from London called at Andover, Salisbury, Woodyates Inn, Blandford, Dorchester, Bridport and finally Charmouth. To reach Exeter the coach would stop at Axminster and then Honiton before reaching that destination. The Tate Gallery has a copy of the guidebook that J.M.W. Turner used when he travelled to Charmouth and the surrounding area in 1811.



—Engraved by J. Walker from an Original Drawing by J. Nixon Esq.

Published March 1803 by J. Walker, No. 46, Newmarket Street, London.

The View of Lyme Regis that appears in Feltham's Guide to Watering Places in 1803.

This wonderful view of Lyme Regis by John Nixon was used in the 1803 edition of the Guide and could well have come from one of Jane's novels with its depiction of fashionable regency ladies admiring the town below them. The guide although flattering of Charmouth's virtues was quite damning of Lyme Regis as this extract clearly reveals:

"The Proximity of Lyme and Charmouth, for they are within two miles of each other, and the constant intercourse which is kept between those who visit either the one or the other, evinces the propriety of clashing them together. As Lyme is more frequented, it first claims attention. It is built on a declivity of a craggy hill, at the head of a little inlet of the sea, and contains many respectable looking houses, with pleasant gardens, particularly in the upper part of the town, but the streets are steep, rugged and unpleasant. In the lower part the houses are mean, and the streets so intricate, that a stranger, as has been wittily remarked, will sometimes find himself bewildered, as if he were entangled in a forest or the labyrinth of a fox den. Here the lower order of the inhabitants in general reside, having that position which nature and fortune assigned on them".



The Coach and Horses in Charmouth

Whereas Lyme had the Assembly Rooms for visitors, Charmouth would have had the “Coach and Horses”, which was then called “The Three Crowns” and later “The Mail Coach Inn”. Jane would have no doubt stayed at this popular staging post for those travelling by coach between London and the West Country. The “Great Western Road” linking these two centres passed directly through the village.



Although photography would not have existed in her time, Charmouth is fortunate that a number of early images were taken from 1860 until 1870 which are very detailed and supply a glimpse of how many of the buildings she would have seen would have looked. This is of one of the coaches, similar to that which she would have used outside the Coach and Horses on its way to Exeter.

A Tranquil scene in Chideock



The majority of houses at that time were then roofed in thatched and it would have resembled nearby Chideock which is seen here in a quieter time before the onslaught of traffic.



A contemporary of Jane Austen was Harriett Wilson who was to stay for a year in Charmouth in 1806. In her day she was very famous as a courtesan whose patrons included most of the distinguished men of the day, from the Duke of Wellington to Lord Byron. She held court in a box at the opera, attended by statesmen, poets, national heroes and aristocrats. She wrote her memoirs in middle age, when she had fallen out of favour. She advised her former lovers that for £200 she would edit them out. **'Publish and be damned!'** retorted the Duke of Wellington when hearing of this. In the world's first ever kiss and tell. Harriette grew rich, making ten thousand pounds out of her Memoirs, which were a best seller for years. There is a reference to her by Jane Austen. In January 1801, Austen reports to her sister, Cassandra, that Eliza Fowle **"found Lord Craven's manners very pleasing indeed.—The little flaw of having a Mistress now living with him at Ashdown Park, seems to be the only displeasing circumstance about him."** The Mistress was Harriett Wilson.

There is descriptive account in her scandalous book **"The Memoirs of Harriette Wilson: Written by Herself "** of both Lyme Regis and Charmouth, just 3 years after Jane Austen's visit. She described Lyme Regis:

"as a sort of Brighton in miniature, all bustle and confusion, assembly - rooms, donkey riding, raffling, etc. It was sixpence per night to attend the assemblies, and much cheaper if paid by the season. We went to a little inn and dined. From the window, I was much amused to see the number of smart old maids that were tripping down the streets, in turbans or artificial flowers twined around their wigs, on the light fantastic toe, to the sixpenny assembly-rooms at five in the evening! They were very pleasantly situated near the sea, and as we walked past their windows, we saw them all drinking tea and playing cards. There were amongst them persons of the highest rank; but the society was chiefly composed of people of very small independent fortunes, who for economy had settled at Lyme Regis; or of such as required sea-bathing; natives, either of Exeter or any neighbouring town"



R. H. Del.

LE COTERIE DEBOUCHE. — Intended as a Frontispiece to Harriette Wilson's Memoirs

Published Feb. 21. 1825. by S. W. Fores Piccadilly.



I am the widow of an officer in the navy, whose death, when abroad, I learned ten years ago from a brother-officer who had been present, and came here to convey his last requests to his family ; since that moment, having for ever renounced the world, I live only in my child, and have nothing to do on earth but to attend to and promote her happiness. She feels greatly disposed to benefit by your pleasant society, and has made it her anxious request that I will offer you an asylum in my house : therefore, if you like to inhabit a snug room which faces the country, it is at your service, and you may keep it entirely for your own use. I have also a servant's room for your maid, and, if you can accustom yourself to our family dinner, the thing is arranged at once.' I could scarcely conceal my surprise at finding such good, innocent, confiding people, ready thus to take a stranger in without making a single inquiry. However, as I determined to act with the strictest propriety, and conform to the established rules of the family, to be regular at church too for the sake of example, I conceived that it was certainly not incumbent on me to turn king's evidence against myself as to my former irregularities, or, as my friend Miss Higgins would say, little peccadillos. I pressed them to name terms for me and my maid at once, and the price they asked for being troubled with us both was so ridiculously moderate that I insisted on doubling it, and refused to hear another word on the subject. These good people would not even allow me to return to the little inn, but despatched a man, with my femme de chambre, to pay my bill and bring my trunks to me. "Everything, which the warmest affection or the oldest friendship could have dictated, was put in practice for our comfort and accommodation. I had a nice bedroom, adjoining the snug little sitting-room where I am now writing.

I remained a year at Charmouth, I really can remember no one incident that occurred to me during the whole of my sejour there, worthy the attention of my readers. Mrs. Edmond was invariably obliging, gentle and melancholy, her sister, " my aunt Martha," as Eliza Edmond used to call her, was a very merry, comical old maid. Eliza was, out any one exception but that of my beloved mother, the most truly virtuous being.

As a postscript, the 1813 Census for the village shows a Mrs. Edmonds living there with her daughter. The print was one of many produced at the time showing her many lovers queuing up to pay her not to reveal their names in her scandalous book.

Holdings Directory of the United Kingdom's and Wales for the year 1811

Charmouth,

A village on the Dorsetshire coast, 3 miles E. of Lyme, and 142 from London. The principal manufacture is sailcloth. Fair, July 10th.

BADWELL Thomas, Gent.
 Bradbeer Joseph, Mail-Coach & Post-Office
 Bullen John, Gent.
 Bullen Simeon, sen. Gent.
 Burnard William, sailcloth-manufacturer
 Channing Major, Gent.
 Combes Rev. Bryan
 Cook Rev. John, dissenting minister
 Drew Thomas Rose, Esq. Wooton-House
 Good Rev. Joseph
 Good Mrs.
 Hackmen Joseph, Gent.
 Harvey George, Fountain Inn
 Hawkins Richard, George Inn
 Hill Mrs.
 Juson William, Gent.
 Love James, shopkeeper
 Newton Mrs. Langmore-House
 Richards Mary, shopkeeper
 Ridges John, Gent.
 Ridley Jacob, sailcloth-manufacturer,
 Ridley Jacob, shopkeeper,
 Robins John, Gent.
 Russell George, Gent.
 Warmington William, Gent.
 Warren Mrs.
 Webber George, sailcloth-manufacturer
 Williams —, Esq. Rodehill-House

INNS. } George, R. Hawkins
 } Fountain, G. Harvey

POST-OFFICE.—J. Bradbeer

COACHES.

A Mail, and two Stage Coaches, to and from Exeter to London, daily, by Russell and Sweet

WAGGONS.—By Russell and Sweet, to and from Exeter to London, daily.

HOLDEN'S
 ANNUAL
 LONDON AND COUNTRY
DIRECTORY,
 OF THE
 United Kingdoms and Wales,
 IN THREE VOLUMES,
FOR THE YEAR 1811.

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SECOND VOLUME.

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London :

Printed by W. GLENDINING, Hatton Garden; J. BLACK, St. Martin's-le-Grand; and
 R. WILKS, Chancery Lane.

Published by W. HOLDEN, the Proprietor, 122, Newgate Street, for
 SUBSCRIBERS ONLY.

N. B.—The Proprietor begs Leave to observe, that he will be greatly concerned by as early Knowledge as possible, in each Year, of Subscribers.

We have recently discovered a Directory for Charmouth dating back to 1811, by far the earliest yet found. It is surprisingly accurate and gives us an insight into both the inhabitants and their occupations. It describes the principal manufacturer as Sailcloth with the three main producers - Burnard, Ridley Kitt and Webber, highlighted. It was already attracting the well-off members of society who are described as Gentlemen. The most exiting entry is that for Charmouth entrepreneur - Joseph Bradbeer who was at that time operating both the newly opened Post Office, which is Nisa is today and the Mail Coach Inn, where Jane Austen would have no doubt stayed. The Land Tax for that year also shows him renting a number of fields to grow Flax in. The Directory entry highlights the fact that Russell and Sweet were operating Waggon and Stage Coaches daily from Charmouth.

Census for Charmouth taken in the year 1813

Henry Smith	Miller	Males 2	Females 5
Digby George	Labourer	2	3
Robert Buff	do	3	2
Amos Cook	Carpenter	1	3
John W. Ed	Labourer	4	3
W ^m Palmer	Butcher	3	6
Jacob Butler	Shoemaker	6	1
W ^m Burnard	sail cloth maker	1	3
H. Good	widow		2
Peter Clapcott	Gent	2	2
Richard Hawkins	Smokespur	1	3
Charles Gale	Mason	1	3
W ^m Ruffell	Shoemaker	3	4
Mary Edwards	widow	1	2
Miss Richard	Servant	2	3
J ^o Lodgers			2
W ^m Gale	Baker	2	3
Rev ^d W. Combe	Curate	2	3
J. R. Kell	sail cloth maker	6	3
Thos. Brauning	boackman	1	1
Jos. Bradbur	post master	1	1
W ^m Redman	Butcher	3	3
John Glemes	Sm holder	4	5
F. Welch	Mantle maker	1	3
Sam ^l Cook	Carpenter	3	4
Simon Butler	Gent	3	3
Philip Wheaton	Carpenter	1	5
John Harris	Farmer	4	2
Thos. Shute	Gent	3	5
M ^{rs} Clarke	Widow	1	5
Jos. Hackman	Gent	1	3
W ^m Suson	Gent	1	2
Step ^r Harris	do	1	5
Major Channing		2	4
Mary Hill	Widow		2
M ^{rs} Manning			3
Miss Torer	House vacant		
Henry Haskins	Thatcher	3	7
James Griffins	Labourer	2	1
E. Gorge	widow	4	1
		81	121

W ^m Butcher	Taylor	Males 1	Females 1
Geo. Hunt	Gent		1
W ^m Brass	Surgeon	2	2
James Love	Butcher	1	3
Maria Channon			3
John Paul	House building		1
M ^{rs} Willox	widow		1
M ^{rs} Reid	do	1	8
W ^m Pattison	Gent	1	8
George Harvey	Sm holder	2	2
John Robbins	Gent	2	5
William Gosens	Labourer	2	5
Simon Symes	Gent	1	1
Lodgers			3
Hebby Goodling	Labourer	1	2
M ^{rs} Edmonds			3
M ^{rs} Webber			1
Henry Norman	Labourer	2	4
Rich ^d Dark	do	1	4
John Pottle	Shoemaker	5	3
John Hunter	Labourer	2	4
Benj. Siment	Blacksmith	4	2
Rev ^d Jos. Good		2	4
Mary Weston	Spinster	2	4
John Bull	Gent	2	1
Henry Diment	Baker	2	3
M ^{rs} Kelsout			3
James Powell	Butcher	3	3
W ^m Roper	Fisherman	2	4
Robt. Whore	Labourer	7	3
Rich ^d Stokes	Gent	1	1
M ^{rs} Hayes		3	1
M ^{rs} Hayercraft	Taylor	2	1
W ^m Way	Mason	4	3
Rich ^d West	Labourer	1	6
Jos. Pile	do	2	2
Arson Lowridge	Barryman	2	3
W ^m Oliver	Shoemaker	2	1
Bob House			5
J. Topping		1	1
Thi. Corzins	Shoemaker	4	5
W ^m Cook	Labourer	1	3
		101	120

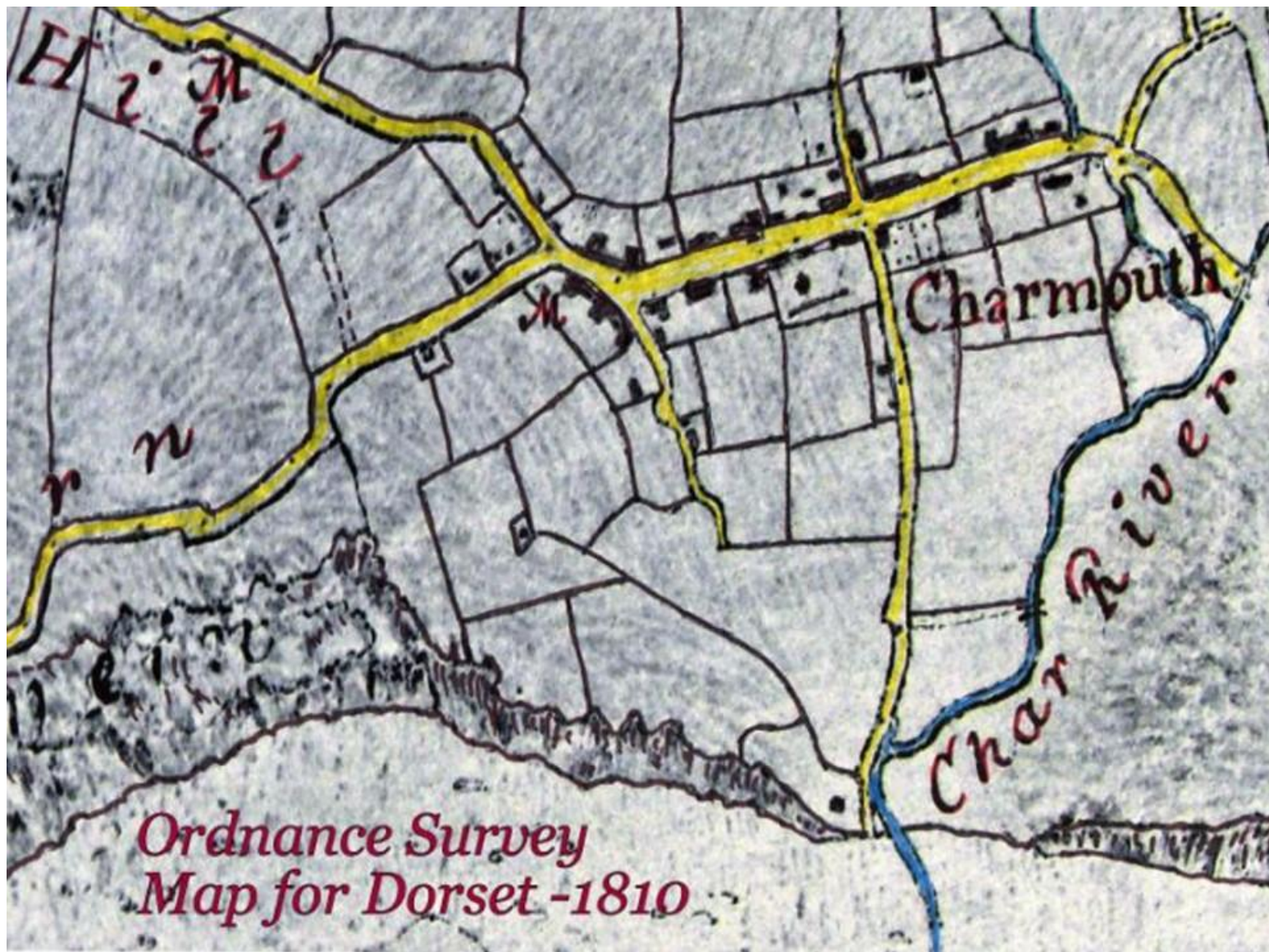
We will now attempt to create a visual tour of how the village would have appeared to Jane if she had started from the Bridge and walked up the Street to Old Lyme Hill. To assist us we are fortunate that a double page list has recently been found in Parish documents now held in the Dorset Record Office which is a detailed Census carried out in 1813 of the village in that year. Cross referencing this with Parish records, Land Tax, Poor Rates, Wills, Title Deeds and other records we have been able to identify the occupants of a number of the houses at that time. It has also revealed that whoever compiled it began at the Old Mill and worked up the Street, which is very useful for us in giving this Talk as we can follow the same route

Census for Charmouth taken in the year 1813

Smith	Henry	Miller	2	5	Charmouth Mill
Gordge	Digory	Laborer	2	3	
Bagg	Robert	Laborer	3	2	
Cook	Amos	Carpenter	1	3	Mill View
Wild	John	Laborer	4	3	
Palmer	William	Butcher	3	6	westleys
Baker	Jacob	Shoemaker	6	1	
Burnard	William	Sail Cloth Maker	1	3	Bow House
Good	Joseph	Rev.	2	4	Stow House
Clapcott	Peter	Gentleman	2	2	Grange House
Hawkins	Richard	Inn Keeper	1	3	George Inn
Gale	Charles	mason	1	3	House in Garden of George
Russell	William	Shoemaker	3	4	renting from Meeting House
Edwards	Mary	Widow	1	2	
Rickard	Miss	Spinster	2	3	Swiss Cottage
Rickard	Miss	Lodgers		2	Swiss Cottage
Cole	William	Baker	2	3	Devon Edge
Coombe	Brian	Curate	2	3	Arcade
Kitt	Jacob R.	Sail Cloth Maker	6	3	Little Lodge
Browning	Thomas	Coach Man	1	1	Star Inn
Bradbeer	Joseph	Post Master	1	1	Nisa
Edwards	William	Butcher	3	3	Beech House
Clemons	John	Inn Keeper	4	5	Coach and Horses
Welch	F.	Mantll Maker	1	3	
Lock	Sam	Carpenter	3	4	
Bullen	Simon	Gentleman	3	3	Old Manor House
Wheaton	Philip	Carpenter	1	5	farrs House from Edwards
Harris	John	farmer	4	2	Backlands Farm 1810
Shute	Thomas	Gentleman	3	5	Elms
Clarke	Mrs	Widow	1	5	
Hackman	Joseph	Gentleman	1	3	died 1817 aged 90
Juson	William	Gentleman	1	2	Albury House
Harris	Stephen	Gentleman	1	5	new built house 1809
Channing	Major	Gentleman	2	4	Lutrell House
Hill	Mary	Widow		2	
Warren	Mrs			3	Peria from channing
Tozer		House -vacant			owner of Newlands
Haskins	Henry	Thatcher	3	7	
Griffiths	James	Laborer	2	1	
Gordge		Widow	4	1	Old Lyme Hill

Butcher	William	Taylor	1	3	
Hart	George	Gentleman	1	1	
Bragg	William	Surgeon	2	3	The Court
Love	James	Butcher	4	3	Royal Oak
Channon	Maria			2	
Paul	John	House building			
Wilcox	Mrs	Widow		4	
Reed	Mrs	Widow	1	8	
Pattison	Mr	Gen.	1	8	renting from ridges
Harvey	George	Inn Keeper	2	2	
Robins	John	Gentleman	2	5	Sea Horse House
Cozens	William	Laborer	2	3	
Symes	Simon	Gentleman	1	1	
Symes	Simon	Lodgers		3	
Goodling	Henry	Laborer	1	2	
Edmunds	Mrs			3	Harriett Edmonds marries in 1818
Webber	Sarah			1	
Norman	Henry	Laborer	2	4	
Dark	Richard	Laborer	1	4	
Potter	John	Shoemaker	5	3	Granville House
Hunter	John	Laborer	2	4	Sail cloth weaver and fisherma
Diment	Henry	Baker	2	3	
Good					Claremont
Newton	Mary	Spinster	2	4	
Bull	John	Gentleman	2	1	Well Head
Diment	Benjamin	Blacksmith	4	2	Waterloo House
Ridout	Mrs			3	stone house from rickard
Powell	James	Butcher	3	3	little grange from Knight
Roper	William	Fisherman	2	4	tenant of Diment
Hoare	Robert	Laborer	7	3	new cottage
Stokes	Richard	Gentleman	1	1	Badgers (late bradfords)
Eyres	william		3	1	new cottage
Haycroft	John	Taylor	2	1	
Way	William	Mason	4	3	
West	Richard	Laborer	1	6	new cottage
Bile	Joseph	Laborer	2	2	
Loveridge	Aaron	Dairy man	2	3	
Oliver	William	Shoemaker	2	1	
Poor house				5	Old Lyme Hill
Tipping	George		1	1	
Cozens	Thomas	Shoemaker	4	5	new cottage
Lock	William	Laborer	1	3	

By 1813 there was already a number of fine houses, with more to be built soon after. The most impressive would be those designed by the famous architect, Sir Jeffry Wyattville and known as 1,2,3 Hillside in 1824. These would attract the wealthier members of society who would be described as "Gentlemen". Their needs would be serviced by then many tradesmen shown here in the Census list as Thatcher, Lace Maker, Shoe Maker, Carpenter, Mason,Blacksmith. There were also a number of shops including a Post Office, Baker, Butcher, Dairy and Grocer for them to patronise.



One of the earliest maps was that produced by Colonel Mudge for the first Ordnance Survey which is shown here. The main road which had been considerably improved in 1758 when it was turned into a Turnpike can be seen passing through the village towards Axminster and on to Exeter. The lower road was already in a bad state and was abandoned in 1824 and rebuilt as the Old Lyme Road above it to link up with Lyme Regis. Lower Sea Lane was the only route to the beach and was known as Mill Lane. Higher Sea Lane then known as Rocket Lane led to Sea Horse House, built in 1801 and the common fields below it.



Although the main occupation of villagers was in farming and sail cloth manufacturer there was also a side line in smuggling which was rampant along the coast, with all members of society involved. This painting depicts a group of smugglers offloading their contraband on to a wagon in a Dorset cove. There is still a sunken lane running inland from the eastern cliffs of Charmouth which retains its earlier name of the Smugglers' Path. The Western Flying Post reported in January 1825:

"On the night of Saturday week, three men of the Lyme Preventive Station were on the look-out near the mouth of the Charmouth River, where they captured 150 kegs and two men. They had not retained possession long before they were attacked by a party of smugglers 70 or 80 in number and as is usual in such adventures they appeared affected by liquor. They advanced with great violence. In defence, the officers were compelled to fire in the midst of them, in consequence of which, one man fell and was carried off by the party, who immediately retreated carrying with them all but 10 kegs and the two prisoners. One of the officers named Davis was mistaken for his brother, an extremely active man stationed near Bridport and nothing short of murder was intended towards him, as an attempt was made to cut his throat, which did not take effect, as the stock in his cravat prevented the weapon from making any serious incision. The smugglers continued to discharge large stones from the cliff upon the Revenue men who, though they were preserved by the darkness of the night from destruction, received some severe concussions, and are now confined in consequence."

In the struggle that followed, they made off again with most of the brandy, leaving behind three of their number who subsequently served three months in Dorchester gaol. The registers of Dorchester gaol recorded similar imprisonments of Charmouth smugglers, including 21 year old Elizabeth Powell in 1824, and a 49 year old seaman, Henry Tippen, in 1828.

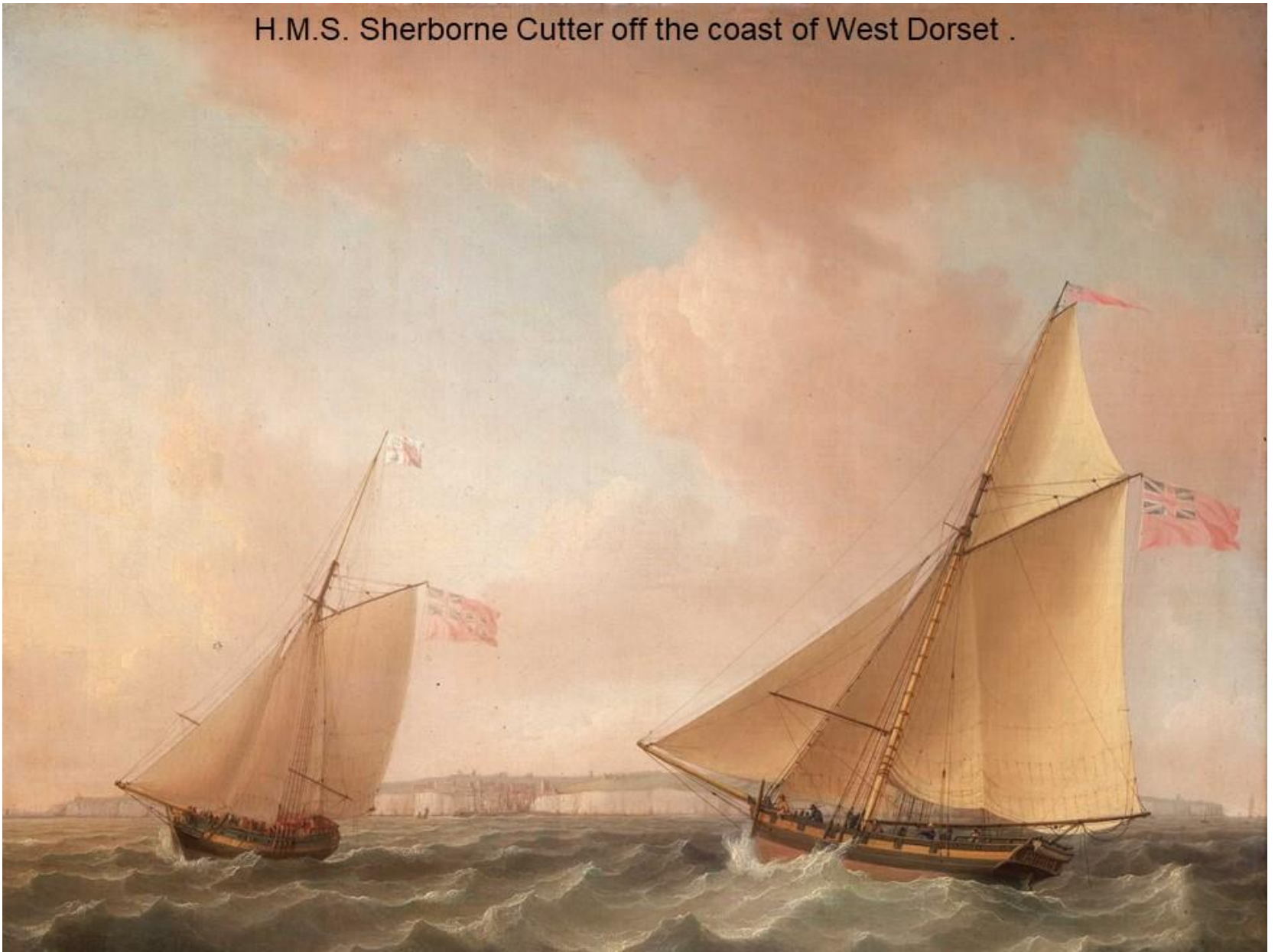
The Old Cement Works. Charmouth.



In 1801, John Oliver, Master R.N., wrote to Captain Boteler R.N., Coastguard Station, Lyme Regis, ***"During the last war with France, a Privateer chased a Brig past the Town to the Westward within half a gun-shot of the batteries, when there was not a gun serviceable to defend her, and the enemy captured her near Seaton. A small battery of three guns opposite the Cobb and another at Charmouth under the direction of the Coastguard service would be very desirable in the event of war."***

Perhaps this was the origin of the gun kept by the Charmouth Coastguards on the West cliff in a shed above the Look-out house which used a 6lb. Shot. A target was fixed in the sea at about 300-400 yards range; and the shot was retrieved at low water and used again. The Look Out shown here in this early photograph was built by the Customs & Excise Service in 1804, at a time when England took the threat of a Napoleonic invasion very seriously. The south-east coasts were the ones thought to be most at risk from a sally by the French from their great port at Boulogne. It was later used very effectively by the Excise & Coastguard Service in their endeavours to intercept the running of brandy from France, and to apprehend the smugglers.

H.M.S. Sherborne Cutter off the coast of West Dorset .



If the revenue officers on land were being frustrated in their attempts to put an end to the smuggling trade, The Revenue Cutters at sea met with rather more success. This painting is of H.M.S. Sherborne that patrolled along the Dorset Coast.

Fisherman on the beach at Charmouth c.1803



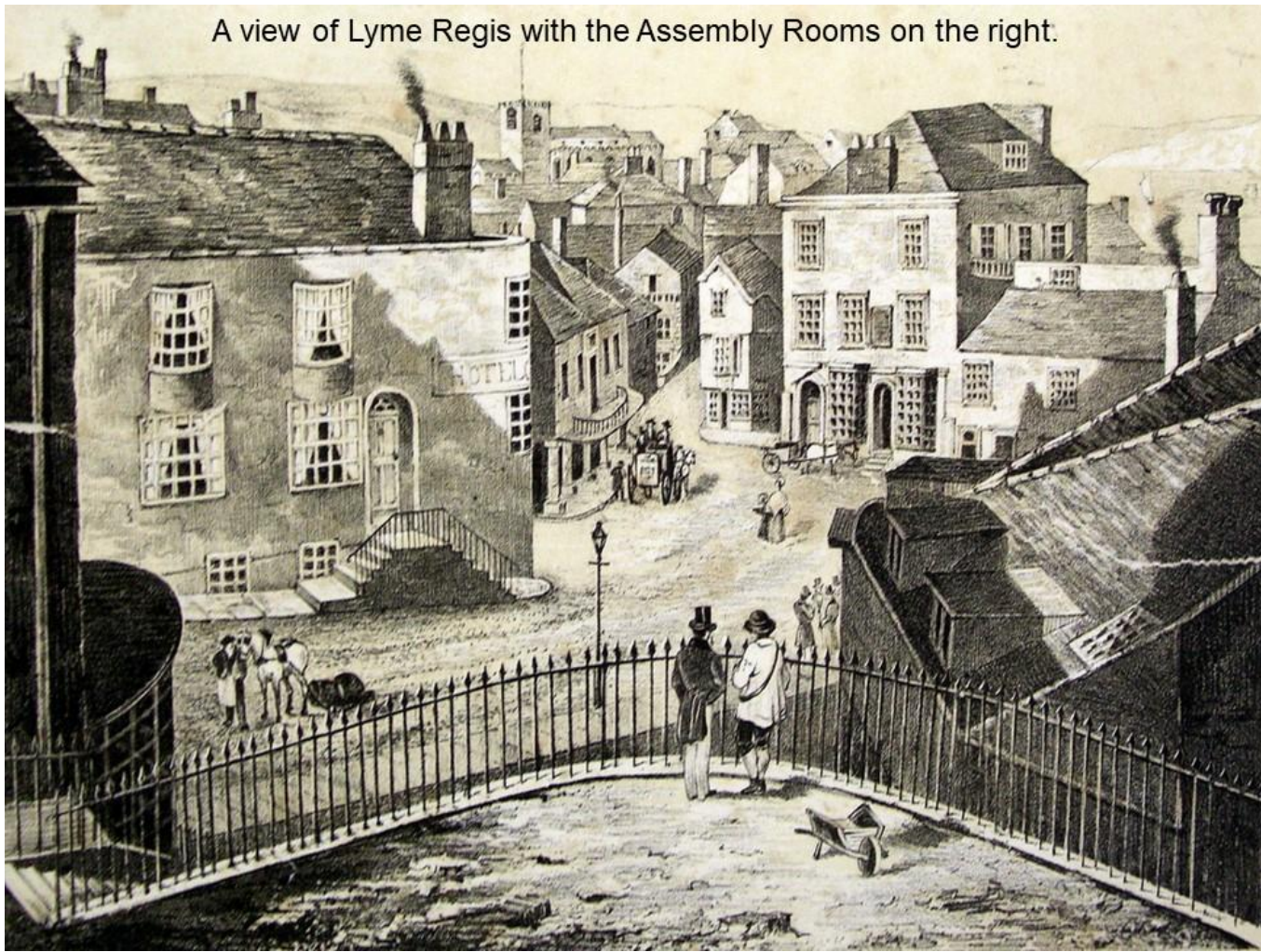
This watercolour of Charmouth is of one of the many fishermen whom Jane would have seen based near the beach. The most famous of these were the Hunters who lived in Sea View Cottage at the bottom of what is now Lower Sea Lane.

Marine Parade. Lyme Regis



Although Charmouth is referred to in Jane Austen's famous novel, *Persuasion*, it is Lyme Regis that occupies her attention more fully. It is the last fully completed novel by her and was published at the end of 1817, six months after her death aged just 41. We will briefly cover the buildings that are associated with her. This wonderful painting gives us an idea of how she would have seen Marine Parade during her stay.

A view of Lyme Regis with the Assembly Rooms on the right.



Another contemporary view shows the large roof of the Assembly Rooms on the right which she visited in 1804. She wrote to her sister, Cassandra on the 14th September of that year as follows:

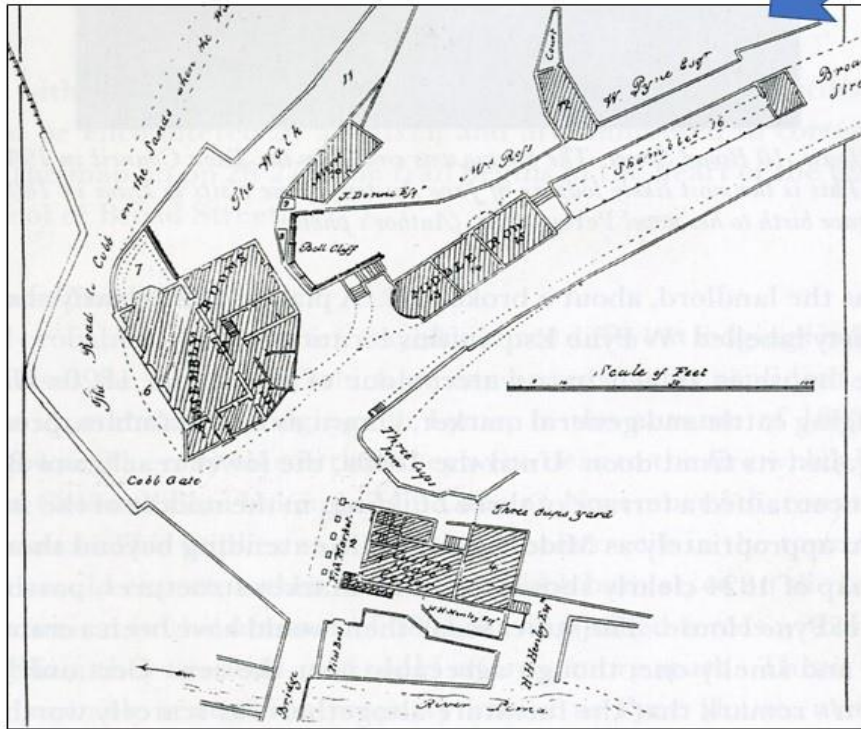
"The ball last night was pleasant, but not full for Thursday. My father staid contentedly till half-past nine (we went a little after eight), and then walked home with James and a lanthorn, though I believe the lanthorn was not lit, as the moon was up, but sometimes this lanthorn may be a great convenience to him. My mother and I staid about an hour later. Nobody asked me the two first dances; the next two I danced with Mr. Crawford, and had I chosen to stay longer might have danced with Mr. Granville, Mrs. Granville's son, whom my dear friend Miss A. offered to introduce to me, or with a new odd-looking man who had been eyeing me for some time, and at last, without any introduction, asked me if I meant to dance again. I think he must be Irish by his ease, and because I imagine him to belong to the honourable B.'s, who are son, and son's wife of an Irish viscount, bold queer-looking people, just fit to be quality at Lyme".

Sadly, the building was demolished in 1924, and the site is now a small car park.



The old Assembly Rooms that Jane would have visited are seen here on the left.

Mr. Pyne`s House in Lyme Regis where Jane Austen stayed in 1803.



This 1824 town plan showing the lower part of Broad Street. Clearly marked are the Assembly Rooms, the original Three Cups Inn and its stable yard, and the house belonging to William Pyne Esq. This is where the Austen family are thought to have lodged in 1804. The Shambles (open market) is right outside the front door. A blue plaque now hangs above the front door to the house. A letter to her sister refers to it as follows:

"I have written to Mr Pyne, on the subject of the broken lid; it was valued by Anning here we were told at five shillings, & as that appeared to us beyond the value of all the furniture in the room together, we have referred ourselves to the owner. The Ball last night was pleasant, but not full for Thursday. My father staid very contentedly till half-past nine (we went a little after eight), and then walked home with James and a lanthorn."

The Anning she mentions is the father, Richard, of the famous, Mary Anning.

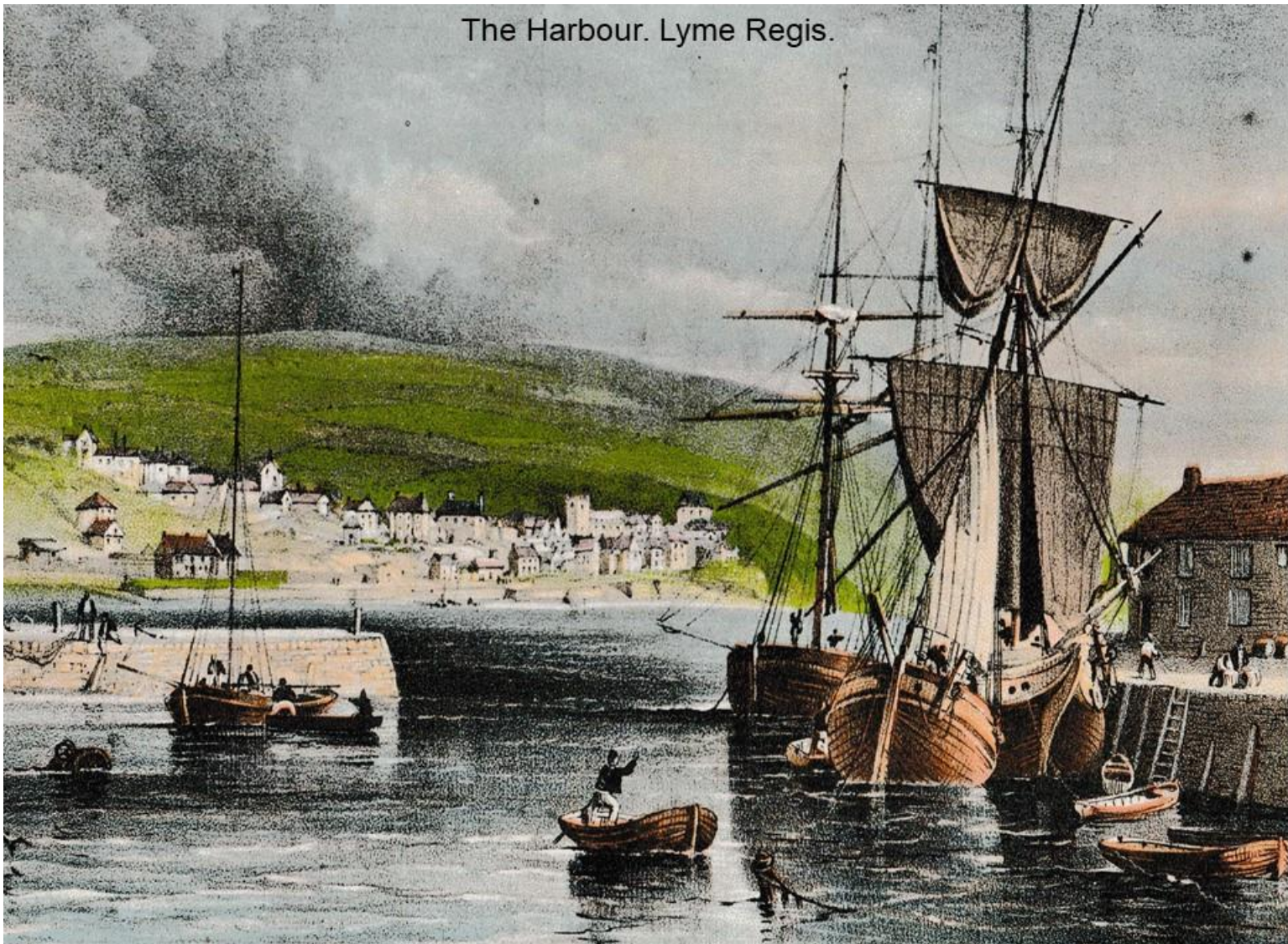
The Bathing Machines at Lyme Regis as depicted by Marryat and Cruikshank.



In *Persuasion*, she describes: "***the walk to the Cobb, skirting round the pleasant little bay, which, in the season, is animated with bathing machines and company; the Cobb itself, its old wonders and new improvements, with the very beautiful line of cliffs, stretching out to the east of the town, are what the stranger's eye will seek, and a very strange stranger it must be who does not see charms in the immediate environs of Lyme, to make him wish to know it better.***"

This engraving of Lyme Regis is based on a sketch by Captain Frederick Marryat, who has a number of links with Charmouth in that his sister owned "Fernhill" and a daughter, Caroline married the local G.P. - Dr. George Norris and lived at The Elms. He was very famous as the author of "The Children of the New Forest" and many other novels. It shows the sea front of the Assembly Rooms and the corner of Bell Cliff with a rather fanciful view of the bathing machines and the bathers.

The Harbour. Lyme Regis.



Jane writes in *Persuasion*:

"After securing accommodations, and ordering a dinner at one of the inns, the next thing to be done was unquestionably to walk directly down to the sea. They were come too late in the year for any amusement or variety which Lyme, as a public place, might offer. The rooms were shut up, the lodgers almost all gone, scarcely any family but of the residents left; and, as there is nothing to admire in the buildings themselves, the remarkable situation of the town, the principal street almost hurrying into the water."





Jane Austen, painted by her sister, Cassandra in 1804, whilst in Lyme Regis area.

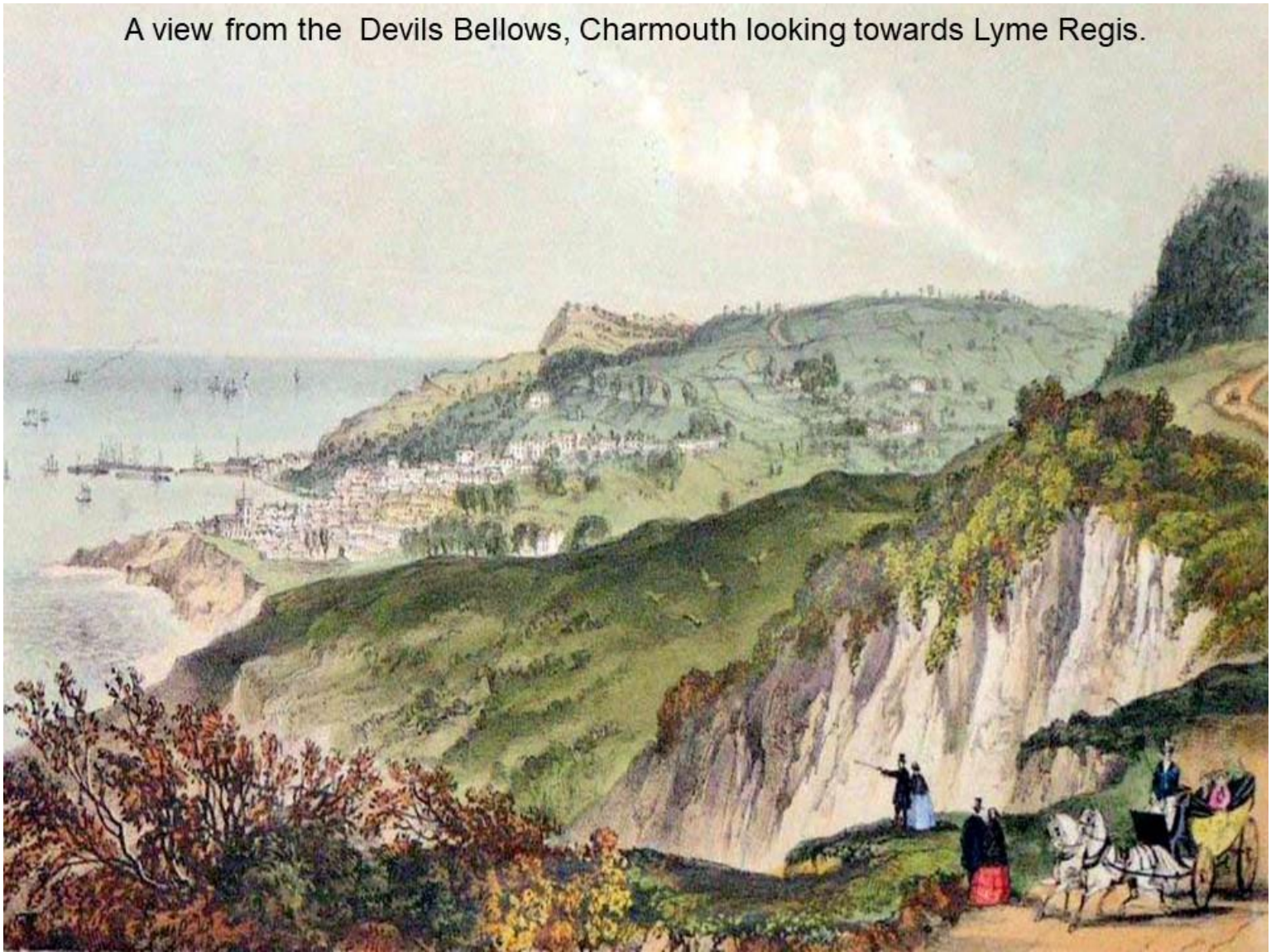
A Portrait of Jane Austen painted in the Lyme Regis countryside by her sister Cassandra in the year 1804, when she stayed in the area. It was only one of two images by her to have survived.

A view across the fields towards Lyme Regis



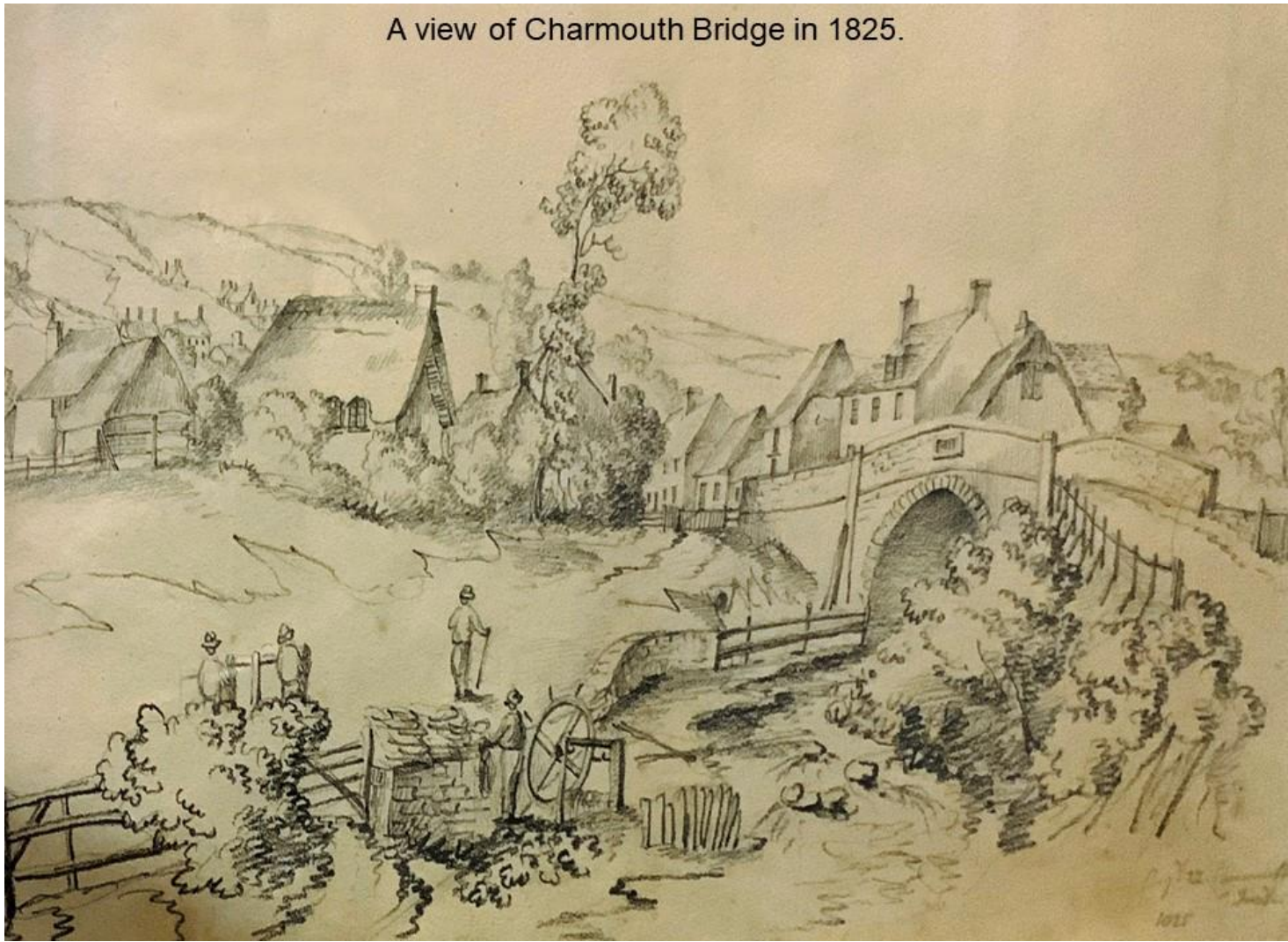
This painting shows the beautiful unspoilt countryside Jane would have encountered on leaving Lyme and taking a pleasant walk along the path to Charmouth. A view by the golf course that can still be enjoyed today.

A view from the Devils Bellows, Charmouth looking towards Lyme Regis.



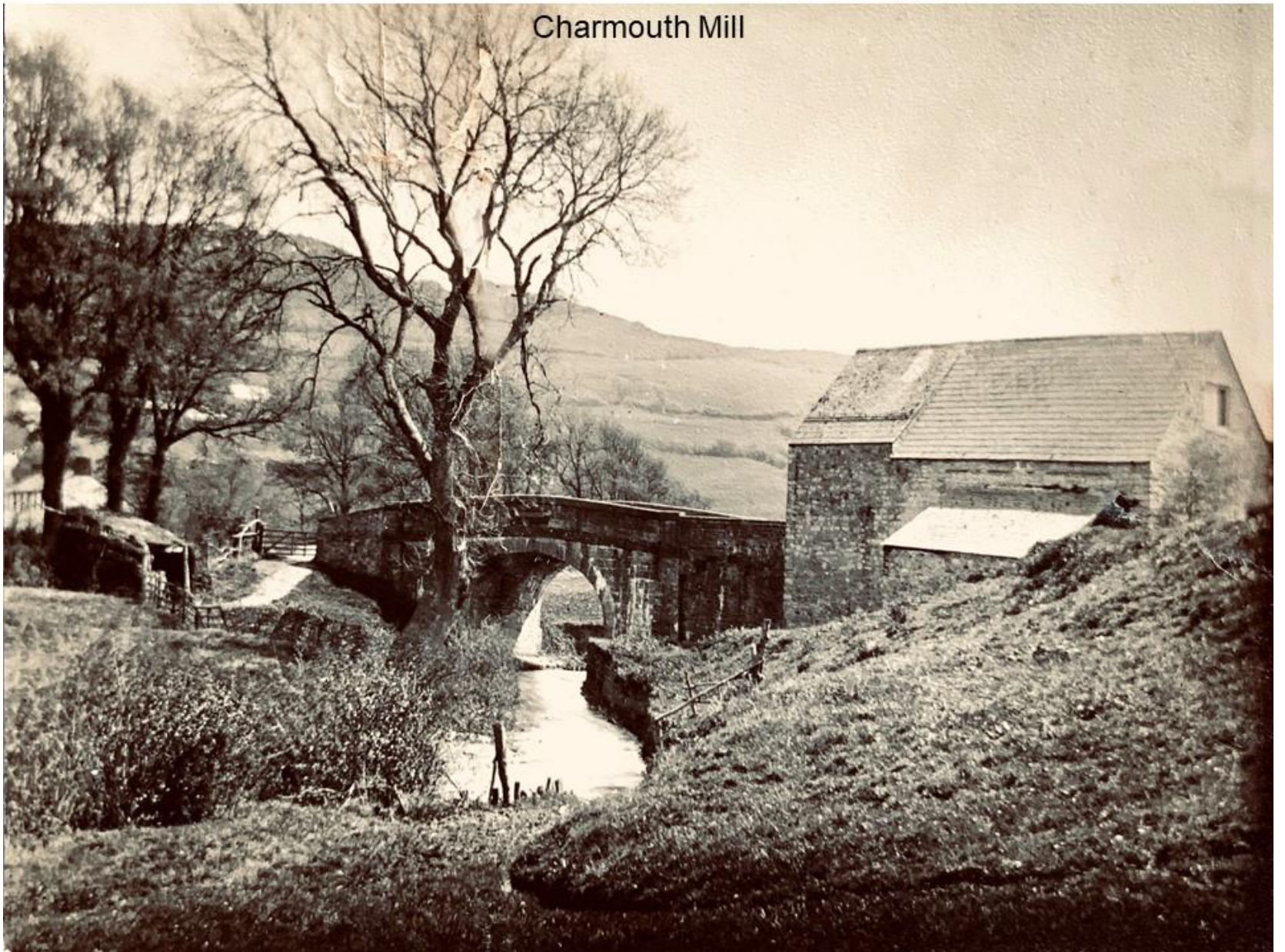
Fanny Burney in 1791 wrote ***"We set out, after dinner, for Lyme from Charmouth and the road through which we travelled is the very most beautiful to which wandering destinies have yet sent me. It is diversified with all that can compose luxuriant scenery and with just as much of the approach to sublime, as in the province of terrific beauty"***. This view although later than Jane`s stay reveals how precarious the Old Lyme Hill was. In 1824 a new route was carved out of the hill as a lower level and resulted in a gap known as the Devils Bellows on account of the strong winds that would be encountered there.

A view of Charmouth Bridge in 1825.



We will return now to Charmouth as it would have appeared to Jane in the year 1803 when she stayed here by taking an imaginary walk along The Street from the Mill to Old Lyme Hill. We can supply many of the names of those living there in that year by referring to the Poor Rates and Land Tax lists in that year as well as the Census taken shortly afterwards. This wonderful drawing has only recently come to light in the extensive collection of the Philpott Museum in Lyme Regis. It was drawn in 1825 and is surprisingly accurate. It shows some of the processes of Sail Cloth manufacture in the foreground that was carried on there by William Burnard. The two men are operating a "Skirder" for separating the yarns when twisting rope, and the gentleman this side of the wall is operating a twine making "Jack". Behind them is Rose Cottage and a number of other thatched cottages that lined the Street. The Bridge was rebuilt by the County in 1824 and was one of several bridges which contained the following shocking warning:- "**Dorset. Any person wilfully injuring any part of this county bridge will be guilty of felony and upon conviction liable to be transported for life by the Court. T.Fooks.**" Behind it are the Mill buildings and Mill House.

Charmouth Mill



Another early photo of this idyllic spot with the old bridge and Mill buildings at the side of the stream. The area now forms part of Manor Farm Holiday Centre and is difficult to recapture.

Charmouth Mill



The Old Mill seen in action with the Miller loading up his wagon with sacks of flour. In Jane Austen's day it was operated by Henry Smith who rented it from Dr. Robert Graves of Bridport. He would have lived in the nearby Mill House, both of which are still standing although drastically altered.

Rose Cottage. Bridge Road. Charmouth



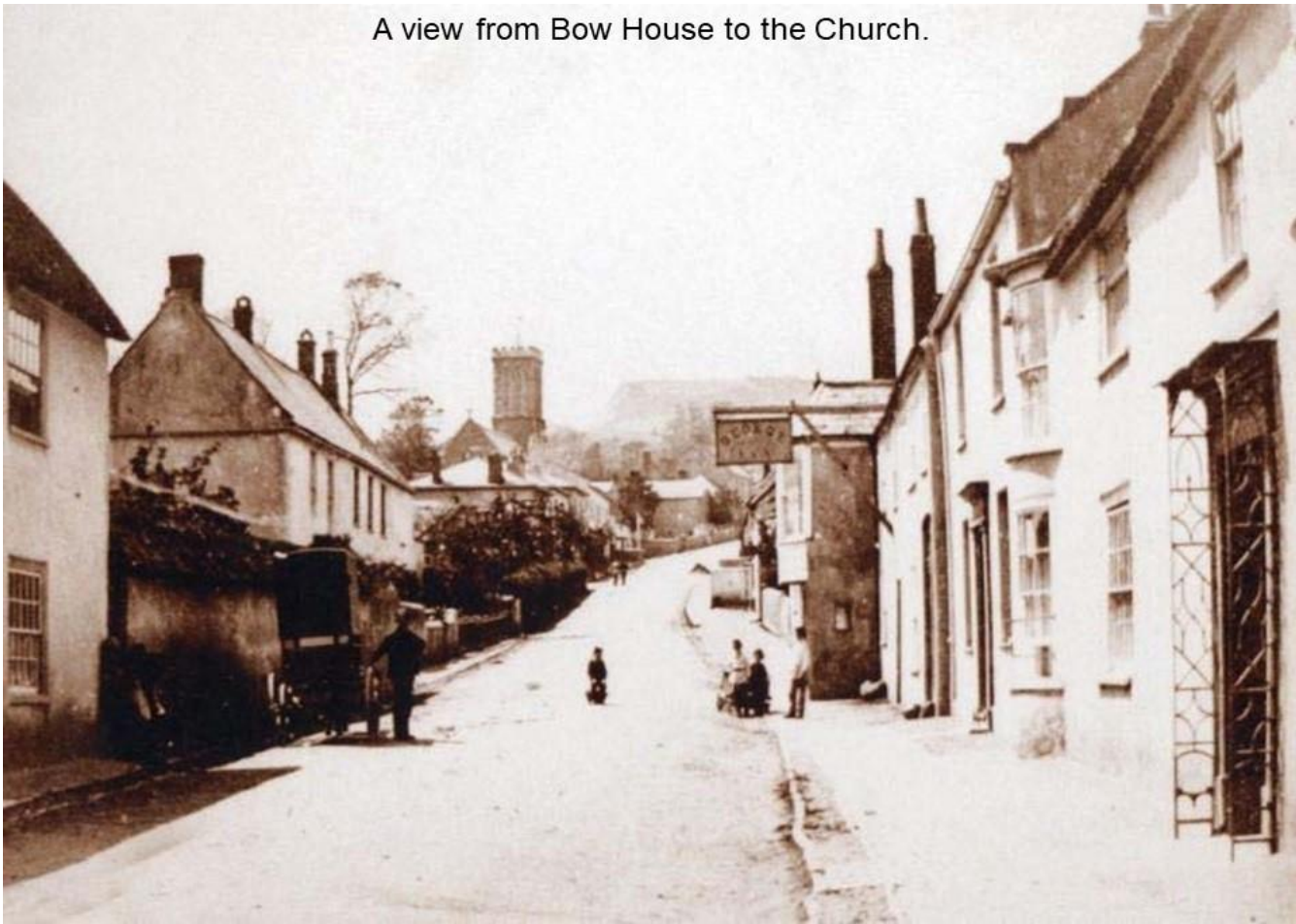
Rose Cottage in Bridge Road was occupied by the unusually named Digory Gordge in the early Census. He was one of a number of members of this family who prospered in the village.

The Grange. Charmouth



Peter and Leah Clapcott lived in The Grange, shown here in this early photograph, in the year Jane came to Charmouth. It was a fine Georgian House with an acre of land behind it and a further acre of Common in Lower Sea Lane. He died in 1813 and was buried in St. Andrews Church in a Chest Tomb alongside that of James Warden near the entrance.

A view from Bow House to the Church.



An early view looking up The Street towards the Church, almost as Jane would have observed in 1803. On the right is Bow House which actually had bow windows at that time. It was here that William Burnard lived. He was a Sail Cloth Manufacturer with his workshops behind the house and by the river. Adjoining it was Stow House where his wife's father, Peter Good lived. His will reads as follows:

"I Peter Good of Charmouth, Protestant Dissenting Minister, give my now erected dwelling house with back court and garden, deed of conveyance dates 1804 being of the north side of the street and bounded on the west by a dwelling in possession of Morgan and known by the name of the George Inn and on the east by a dwelling house and lands in tenure or possession of Mr. William Burnard, Canvas Manufacturer and which I purchased of said William Burnard unto my beloved wife Rebecca Good and her heirs".



The view today which is not too dissimilar to that seen by Jane in 1803.



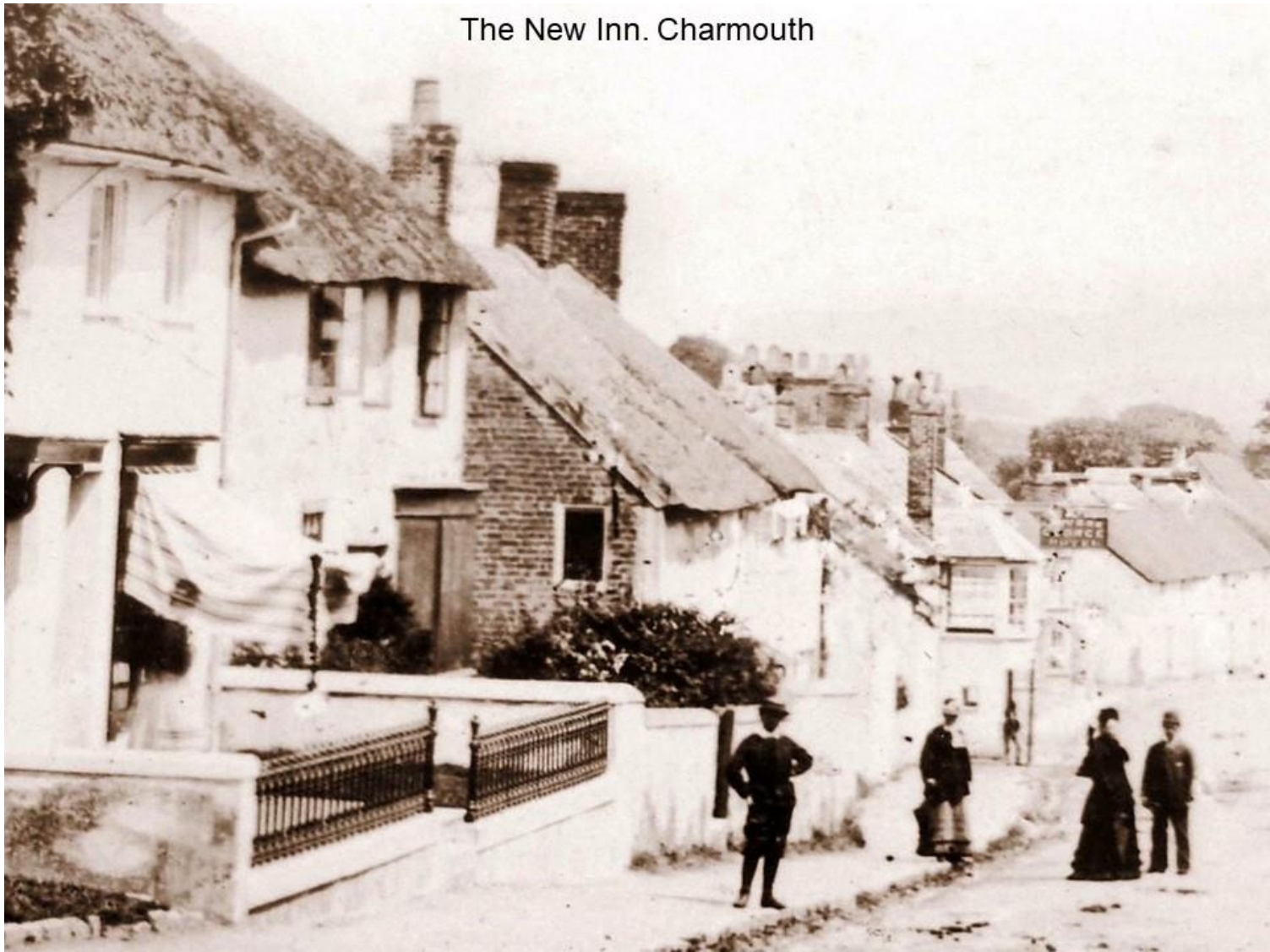
The George Inn. Charmouth.

A later view of The George with its sign projecting from above the entrance. The Inn was ancient even at that time with its origins dating back to when the Abbots of Forde owned the village and ran the Hostelry until the 16th century. In the year of Jane's visit it was operated by Thomas Morgan who died soon after in 1806 and left it to his son in law, Richard Hawkins.

The Abbot's House. Charmouth.



The New Inn. Charmouth



This early photograph looking down the Street towards The George reveals how the majority of the buildings were thatched. This resulted in a number of devastating fires. The buildings on the left all went up in smoke in 1895 and were later rebuilt as Devonedge and Lansdowne House. A little further on is the house where in 1803, Mary and Elizabeth Rickard lived and took in lodgers. They were the daughters of John Rickard who had been the Steward to Benedicta Durston, Lady of the Manor. The House with the fine iron railings was in that year was occupied by Brian Coombe, the Village Rector, who owned substantial property in the village including Backlands Farm at the rear of The Street and Stonebarrow Farm.

The Street. Charmouth



A view looking down The Street almost unchanged from the time when Jane visited here. On the left is a large building then known as "Streets" which was owned by Rev. Brian Coombes and rented to William Cole, a Baker. It is astonishing today to think that the rear of the same building where the arcade of shops now stands, they are still baking bread. On the right stretching from The Abbotts House to Lower Sea Lane is Pear Close, which was another field owned by Rev. Brian Coombes.



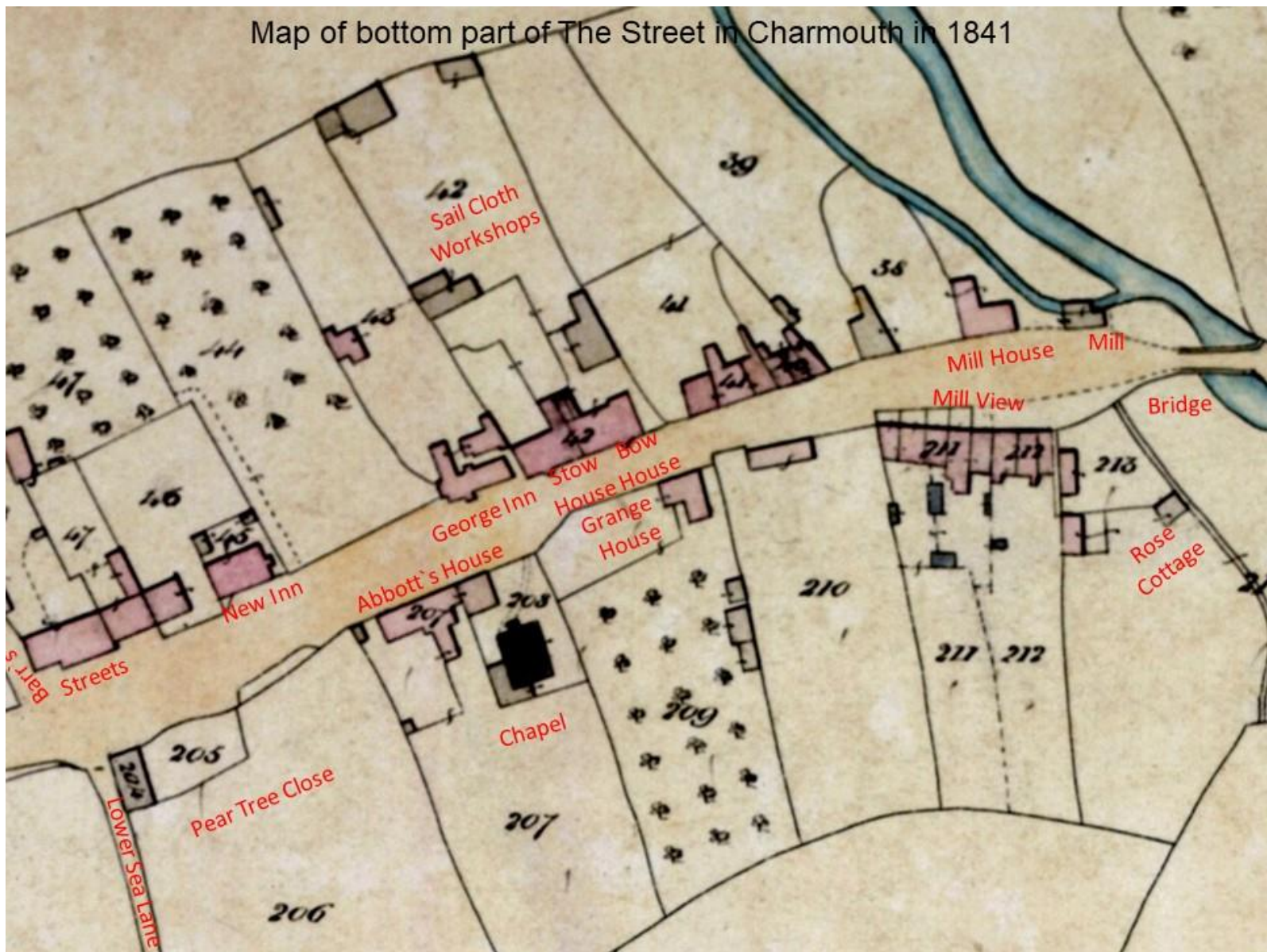
The beautiful line of thatched cottages were lost in a fire at the end of the 19th century and in due course replaced with brick buildings that we see today.

Pryer's Yard on the corner of The Street and Lower Sea Lane.



Although this early photograph is of Pryers Yard, it does show the building that is now The Pharmacy on the corner of Lower Sea Lane. Jane Austen would have seen it as a Carpenters Workshop in her day that was rented from the Miss Rickards and had previously been owned by their father, who was Steward to the Lady of the Manor .

Map of bottom part of The Street in Charmouth in 1841



We have broken the long length of The Street into three sections to show on this early map those buildings that would have existed in 1803 when Jane stayed in the village. Here is the area which we have just covered from the Mill to Lower Sea Lane. The houses stood on burgage plots which dated back to the 13th century when the village was owned by the monks of Forde Abbey. The original wall to the north still stands and a ditch marked those to the south. Each was originally half acre. Although many were amalgamated over the centuries to make them more viable.

Charmouth Lodge. Former Sail Cloth Workshops.

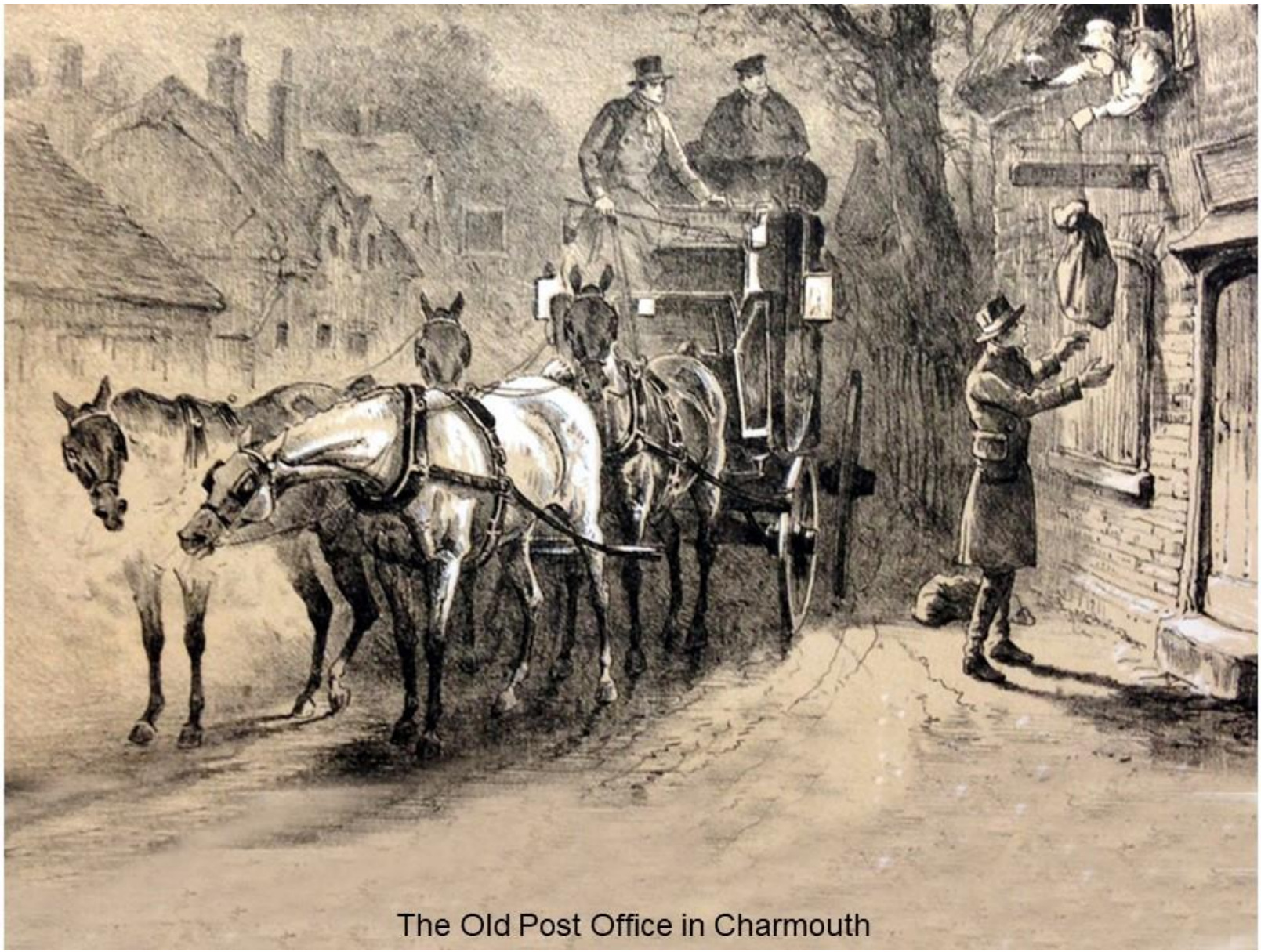


This old photograph is of the building now known as Charmouth Lodge on the corner of Barr's Lane. In 1803 it would have been one of the workshops of Jacob Ridley Kitt. It was later converted into the house seen here by Stephen Atkinson. On the right can be seen the thatched roof of "Streets" which was to be burnt to the ground in the fire of 1895.

Little Lodge. The Street. Charmouth



Little Lodge on the left had long been the centre for Sail Cloth Manufacture and in earlier times was called "Yandover". In 1803 it was Jacob Ridley Kitt who ran his business from there and his workshops occupied the area around it including the building that was later to be converted into a residence and now known as Charmouth Lodge. At the time of Janes visit this would have been booming providing much needed Cloth for Nelsons fleet. Many of the fields were owned or rented by Kitt to grow Flax, the staple for his cloth. At the end of the War with France in 1815, the demand for sail dropped off and sadly Kitt went bankrupt.

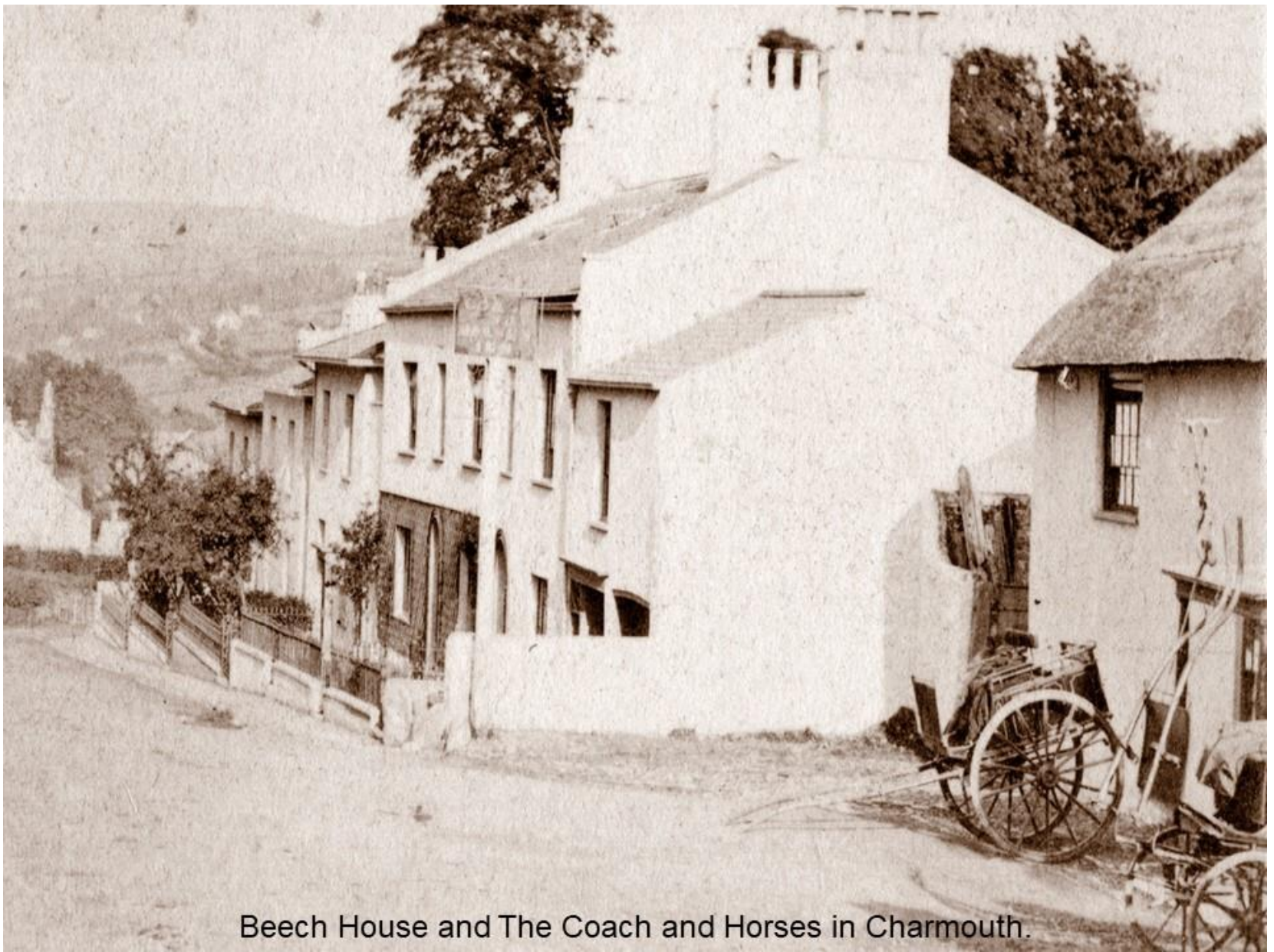


The Old Post Office in Charmouth

The building we know today as Nisa opened as Charmouth's first Post Office in 1806, just a couple of years after Jane's visit. Joseph Bradbeer who was the first Postmaster would have been known to Jane as the Landlord of the Inn, where she stayed on the other side of the Street.



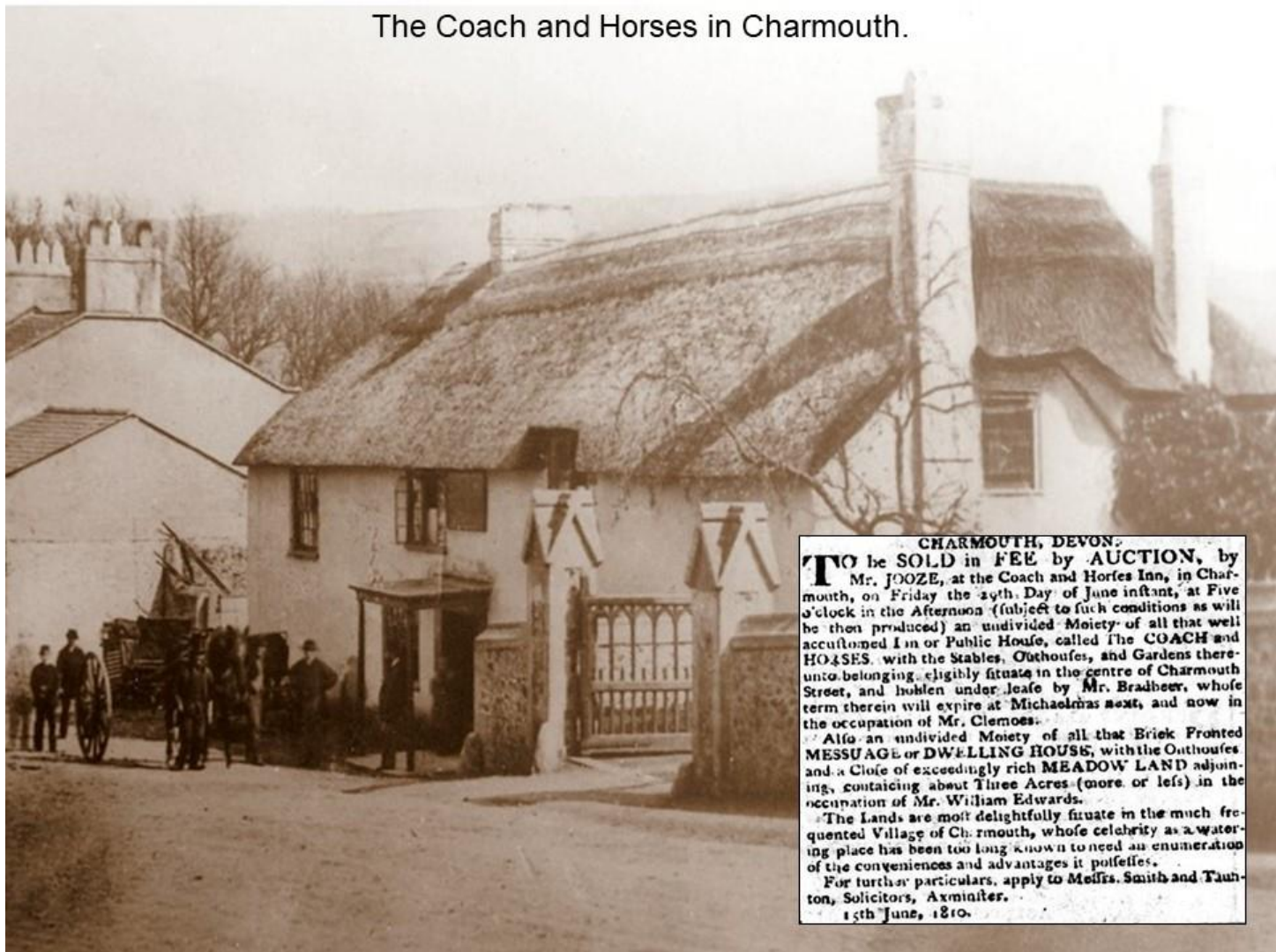
Here is an artist's depiction of how the Coach and Horses may have looked when Jane stayed there in 1803. It was an ancient Inn originally called "The Three Crowns" and then changed to "The Mail Coach Inn" as a result of its importance as a stop off for the coaches taking the Royal Mail across the country. The Daily Advertiser, of 9th April 1739 records that: ***"Our townsmen beheld by only going to Charmouth, the wonder of the day, better known as " The Exeter Flying Stage Coach" which reached Dorchester from London in two days and reached Exeter in three days. The lofty Stonebarrow Hill had to be ascended from Morcombelake and the descent - a perilous one - to be made by the main road, better called narrow lane, beyond the eastern brook by Charmouth, since abandoned for one further inland, and recently for one still further inland, by which the hill from Morcombelake is altogether avoided."***



Beech House and The Coach and Horses in Charmouth.

On the left of this early photograph of the Inn can be seen Beech House which in 1803 was a butchers owned by William Edwards who also owned the Inn which he had rented to Joseph Bradbeer from 1790.

The Coach and Horses in Charmouth.



This early photograph clearly shows the size of the Inn which supplied accommodation for guests which would have included Jane on her stay here in 1803. The advert from 1810 is when it was offered for sale with the neighbouring Butchers in Beech House by William Edwards. By this time Joseph Bradbeer was about to give up the lease as his Post Office was proving a great success and John Clomoes was to be the new landlord. The advert is very flattering about Charmouth which it describes as:

" The lands are most delightfully situate in the much frequented village of Charmouth, whose celebrity as a watering place has been too long known to need an enumeration of the conveniences and advantages it possesses".



As we see the former Coach and Horses Inn today.



Another delightful view of the former thatched building that was lost in a fire in 1882 and rebuilt in brick. There was extensive stabling through the arch to the yard behind.

Russell's Waggon that called in Charmouth.

LOST,

Out of RUSSELL's Fly Waggon, which fat out from Salisbury on Thursday morning the 1st inst. passed through Blandford the same evening; through Dorchester on Friday morning; Bridport and Charmouth on Friday evening; Axminster and Honiton on Saturday morning,

A TRUSS, directed Mr. JOHN BALL, Plymouth, containing 34½ Yards Blue Callimcer, marked I. G. EVERETT, No. 15,322;—31½ ditto Blue Milled ditto, No. 15,569.

Whoever has found the above Truss, and will carry the same to either of RUSSELL's Warehouses on the road, or at Exeter, shall receive a Reward of TWO GUINEAS; and if the said Goods are feloniously concealed or disposed of after this notice, any person giving information of the offender or offenders, shall, on his or their conviction, be entitled to the sum of TEN GUINEAS.—Dated Exeter, Aug. 21, 1799. [540]

T. RUSSELL's FLY WAGGONS,
Every Day, to and from 12, Friday-Street, Cheapside, London, Exeter, Plymouth, Falmouth, and all parts of the West of England.

1836		Cwt.	qrs.	lbs.	£.	s.	d.
	<i>Per Hales</i>						
	<i>Sept. 18 from London to Exeter</i>	2	15		5	1	
	<i>Per Hales</i>						
	<i>Sept. 18 from Exeter to London</i>						2
	<i>Per Hales</i>						
	<i>Sept. 18 from London to Exeter</i>				5	3	

Goods forwarded by the respective Carriers to all parts of the Kingdom.
N.B.—A very small Premium for Insurance.

This was found amongst the Church Records showing Rev. Hales, Vicar using the services of Russells Fly Waggon for delivering an item to London.



T. RUSSELL & CO.
BELL, 12, FRIDAY STREET, CHEAPSIDE, LONDON.

WAGGONS TO AND FROM
SALISBURY, SHERBORNE, EXETER, PLYMOUTH, AND FALMOUTH.

Leave Shaston.		UP.		Arrive in London.		DOWN.		Leave London.		Arrive at Shaston.	
MONDAY	EVENING	THURSDAY	MORNING	MONDAY	EVENING	THURSDAY	MORNING	MONDAY	EVENING	THURSDAY	EVENING
WEDNESDAY	..	SATURDAY	..	WEDNESDAY	..	SATURDAY	..	WEDNESDAY	..	SATURDAY	..
FRIDAY	..	MONDAY	..	FRIDAY	..	TUESDAY	MORNING	FRIDAY	..	TUESDAY	MORNING

1836

Mr. *Maggis* *Sept 18* *1836*

	£.	s.	d.
<i>Carriage</i>	3	2	0
<i>Base</i>	1	17	2
<i>Port charge</i>	0	0	4
<i>Paid out</i>	23	2	
<i>Received</i>	1	17	6
<i>Balance</i>	1	17	4

A small Premium for Insurance.

LONDON, EXETER, PLYMOUTH, AND FALMOUTH
FLY WAGGONS.

THE increased price of Horse Provender compels me to make a small ADVANCE in the present RATE OF CARRIAGE, from the 1st of November next, as follows:—From Exeter to Plymouth and Tavistock, fourpence per cwt. From Exeter to Falmouth, and all towns my Waggon passes through in Cornwall; also from London to Andover, Blandford, Dorchester, Bridport, Charmouth, Axminster, Honiton, and Exeter, one shilling per cwt. and the like, from those places to London. This advance will not repay one eighth of the increased price of Hay and Corn.

I will continue my endeavours for the Public favour, and am

[278]

Their most obedient servant,
Exeter, Oct. 21, 1799. **ROB. RUSSELL.**

As well as the many coaches that were stopping at the Inn, there were also the heavy Russell's Fly Waggon, which were pulled by a team of eight horses which would have been needed to cope with the hills in the neighbourhood. Russell's was the predominant operator of both Waggon and Coaches by 1803 at the time of Jane's visit. The Bill at the top was found in the Church Records when the Reverend John Dixon Hales was village Rector. This letterhead shows a bill head for T. Russell whose waggon travelled along "The Street" between Salisbury and Exeter.

Coaches passing on the Steep Charmouth Hill.



The Hill into Charmouth was notorious and passengers would have to get out and walk alongside. There is a famous incident when King George III was travelling from Weymouth to Sidmouth in 1789, which is reported as follows:

"Between Bridport and Chard are two very large steep hills, Chideock and Charmouth. It was impossible for his majesty's horses could here proceed in the swift manner in which he usually travels. The King, Lord Courton, Colonel Goldsworthy, &c. dismounted, and walked up the hill. The King said he had never travelled such a stage in his life. During all this part of the road the multitude walked with him, and at times conversed familiarly with such as were near him.

The people of the village of Charmouth had prepared a lofty triumphal Arch of oak bought, with a crown of Laurel and wreaths of flowers".

Adverts for Charmouth Coaches

Dated 12th June, 1816.




AN EVENING COACH,
FROM THE
HOTEL, EXETER,
DIRECT to the SARACEN'S-HEAD, SNOWHILL,
LONDON,
Through HONITON, AXMINSTER, CHARMOUTH,
BRIDPORT, DORCHESTER, SALISBURY, &c.
IN 27 HOURS.



THE PUBLIC ARE RESPECTFULLY INFORMED THAT
A COACH
TO HONITON and SIDMOUTH, leaves
the GOLDEN LION INN, HORSE-STREET,
BATH, every Monday, Wednesday, and Saturday morn-
ing, at Six o'clock, and arrives at Sidmouth early the
same evening.—Also,
The Original EXETER COACH,
Through AXMINSTER, which is five miles from Lyme-
Regis, six from Charmouth, and seven from Seaton,
and returns the following days.

FARE,	{ Inside	£1 1 0
	{ Outside	0 14 0

4764] *Performed by W. LANE.*



COACH OFFICES,
WHITE LION INN, and BRITISH COFFEE-ROOM,
BROAD-STREET, BRISTOL.

THE Public are most respectfully informed that the
following well-appointed Light Four-Inside COACHES
set off from the above Office.

SOUTHAMPTON, Monday, Wednesday, and Friday morn-
ings, precisely at Seven o'clock, through Bath, Warminster,
Salisbury, and Romsey.

READING, every morning, (Sundays excepted,) at Seven
o'clock, through Bath, Melksham, Devizes, Marlborough, and
Newbury.

OXFORD, Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday mornings,
precisely at Seven o'clock, through Bath, Tetbury, Cirencester,
Tibery, Burford, and Witney. At Oxford, it meets Coaches to
Northampton, Peterborough, and Cambridge.

Also a COACH to EXETER, every Monday, Wednesday,
and Saturday morning, at Seven o'clock, through Wells, Glaston-
bury, Somerton, Langport, Ilminster, Axminster, and Honiton.

Axminster to Lyme	5 miles.
ditto to Seaton	7 ditto.
ditto to Charmouth	6 ditto.
Honiton to Sidmouth	9 ditto.

There are other incidents relating to the Coaches reported in the newspapers of the time:

January 22nd 1791 as follows: "**Friday last a passenger from London, on the top of the Western Coach, being sick at Chideock, expired before he came to Charmouth through the excessive cold of the foregoing night**".

A more amusing record in the papers of the time is one in 1798 which reads as follows:

"**Sunday the 28th October, three mail coachmen attended divine service in Charmouth Church, and it is remarkable that they had patience to continue to the conclusion of it**".

The services would have been taken by the Curate at the time, Rev. Brian Coombe.

In June 1803, when Jane would have been staying she would no doubt have read in the Western Gazette the following:

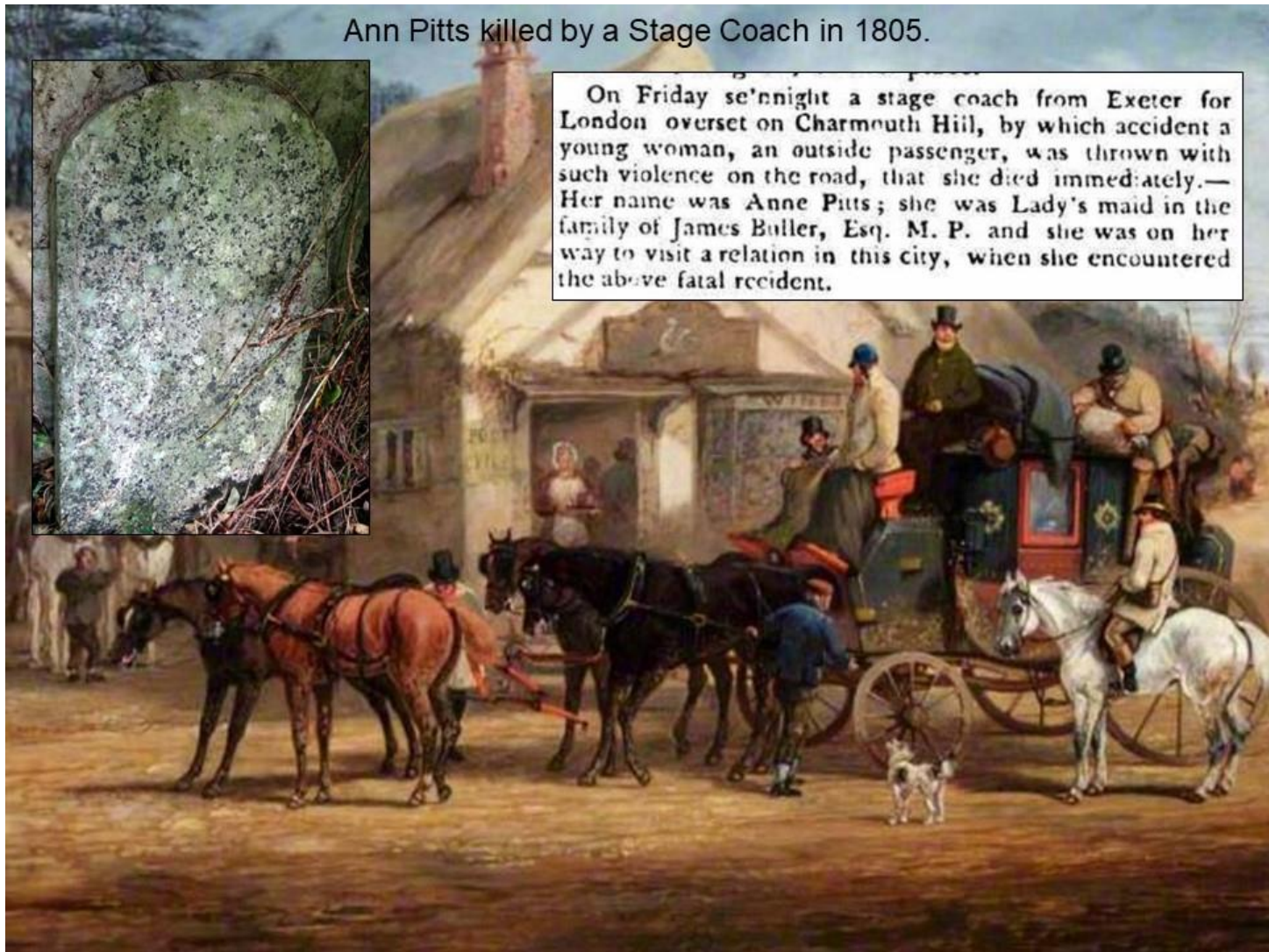
"**On Saturday the 11th inst. As Captain Harrison, paymaster of the Royal dragoons, was leading his horse down Charmouth Hill, the horse snapped at him, and caught hold of his left hand, by which he lifted him from the ground (a weight of between 17 and 18 stone shaking his head, and stamping with great rage; the whole of the fore finger came away, and with it the tendon which connects it to the elbow; the horse then galloped off. Captain Harrison went on to the village of Charmouth, where he obtained a chaise, and proceeded on his journey to Dorchester Barracks.**

Thus has a worthy, respectable, and gallant officer, after forty years service, three of them most actively employed during the war in Flanders, and in which he escaped receiving the slightest injury from the enemy, now been deprived of the use of his hand from the viciousness of his horse, in a manner which must inflict the most excruciating pain. These are circumstances that offer a wide field for reflection and regret!"

Ann Pitts killed by a Stage Coach in 1805.



On Friday se'nnight a stage coach from Exeter for London overset on Charmouth Hill, by which accident a young woman, an outside passenger, was thrown with such violence on the road, that she died immediately.— Her name was Anne Pitts; she was Lady's maid in the family of James Buller, Esq. M. P. and she was on her way to visit a relation in this city, when she encountered the above fatal recident.



An even sadder story of the dangers of coach travel in those times is given two years later when the Western Gazette reports:

"On Friday night a stage coach from Exeter for London overturned on Charmouth Hill, by which accident a young woman, an outside passenger, was thrown with such violence on the road, that she died immediately, her name was Anne Pitts, she was Lady's maid in the family of James Buller, esq. M.P. and she was on her way to visit a relation in this city, when she encountered the above fatal accident."

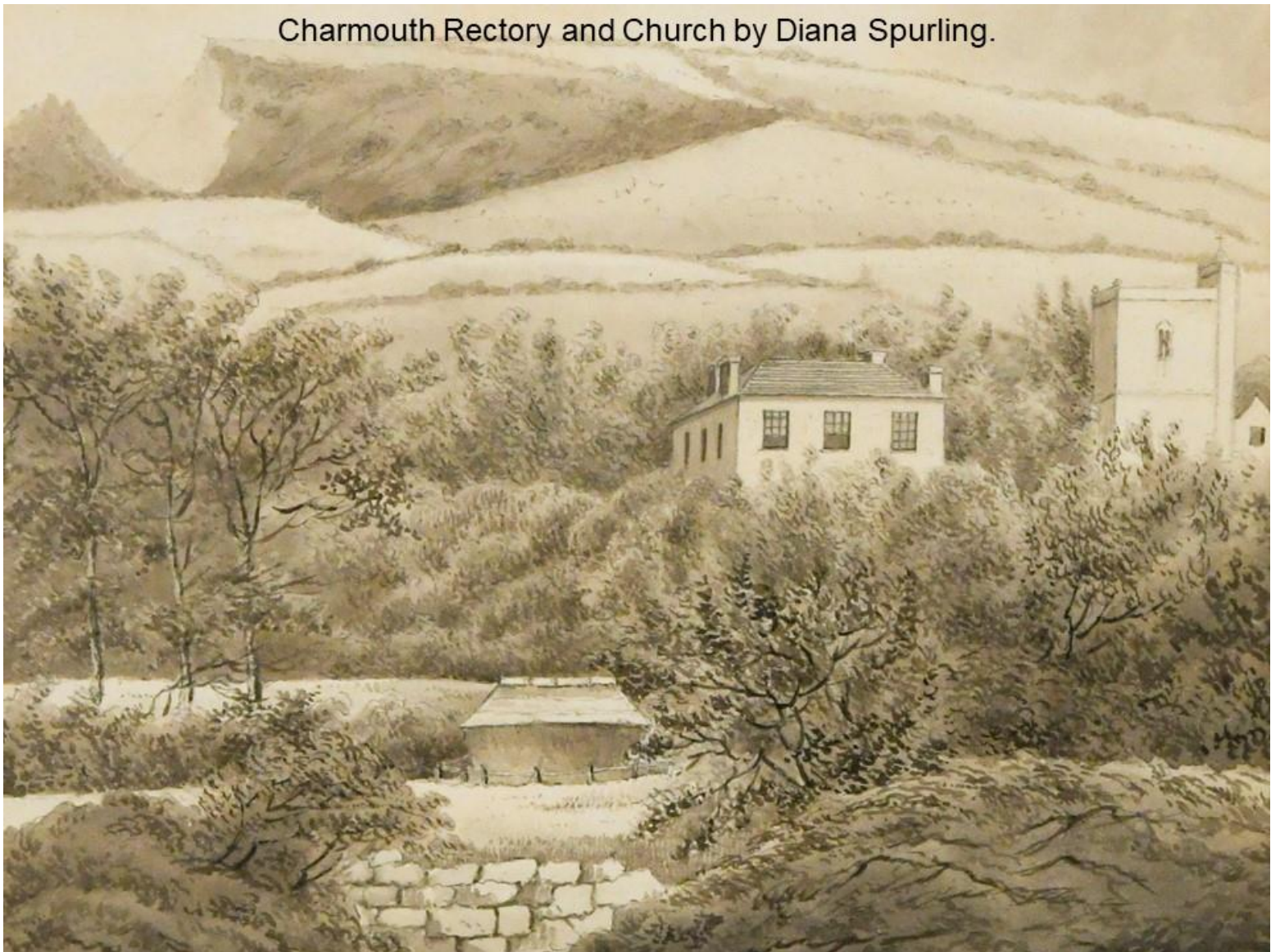
Her Grave Stone shown here is still to be seen in St. Andrews Church, which records that she was 58 years of age

The Old Charmouth Church and Rectory in 1832.

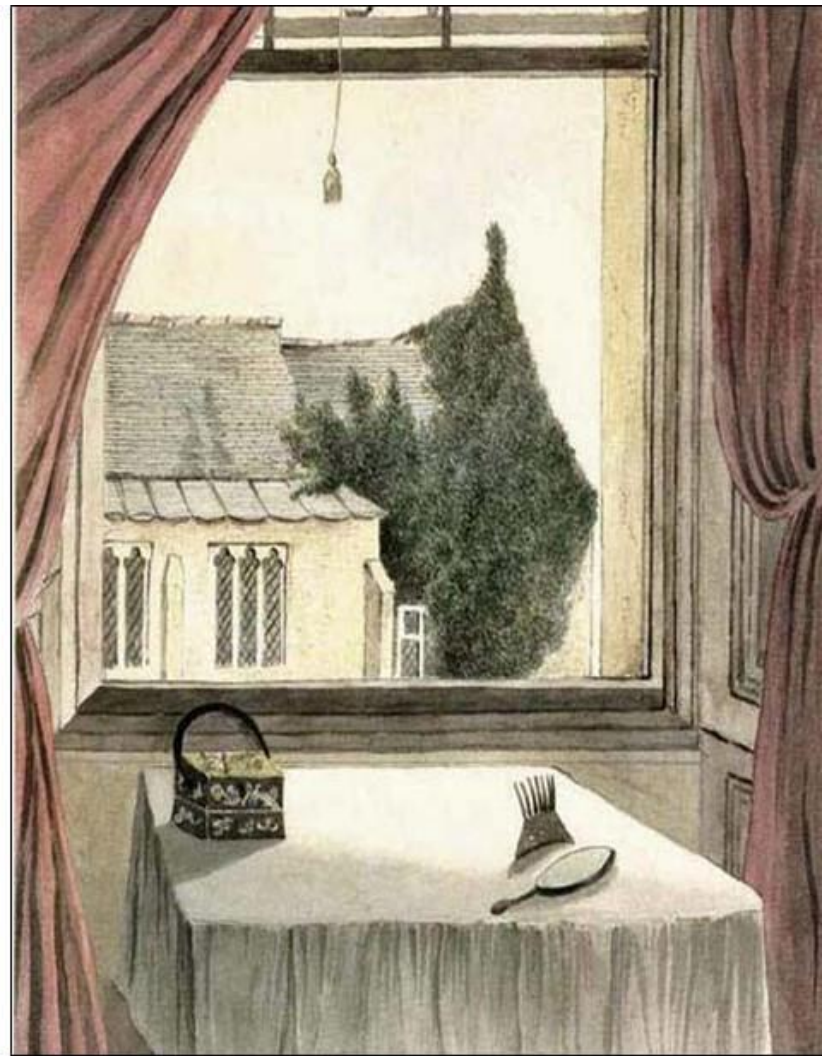


This is the only drawing of the former church that stood where St. Andrews is today, that has come down to us. It was found recently in the Philpott Museum collection at Lyme Regis. It reveals the thatched roof of the Coach and Horses on the left. On the extreme right is a building that was originally the Coach House to the Manor House opposite and was later a Butchers and finally demolished in 1861 when the church yard was extended. The Church itself would have been over 500 years old when Jane saw it and been called St. Matthews at that time. If she had entered the ancient edifice, she would have seen a number of memorials on the walls which were later transferred to the new building. She would also have seen many of the graves that are still standing. The most interesting is the large Table Tomb to James Warden by the entrance. This Gentleman was Lord of the Manor and had been shot in a duel in 1792 by a neighbour, Norman Bond over an argument over a dog. The inscriptions concerning this and his Naval adventures around the tomb would have been clear for her to see then. She was later in "Sense and Sensibility" to refer to a duel when Colonel Brandon and Mr. Willoughby meet in an attempt to defend the honour of Eliza Williams.

Charmouth Rectory and Church by Diana Spurling.



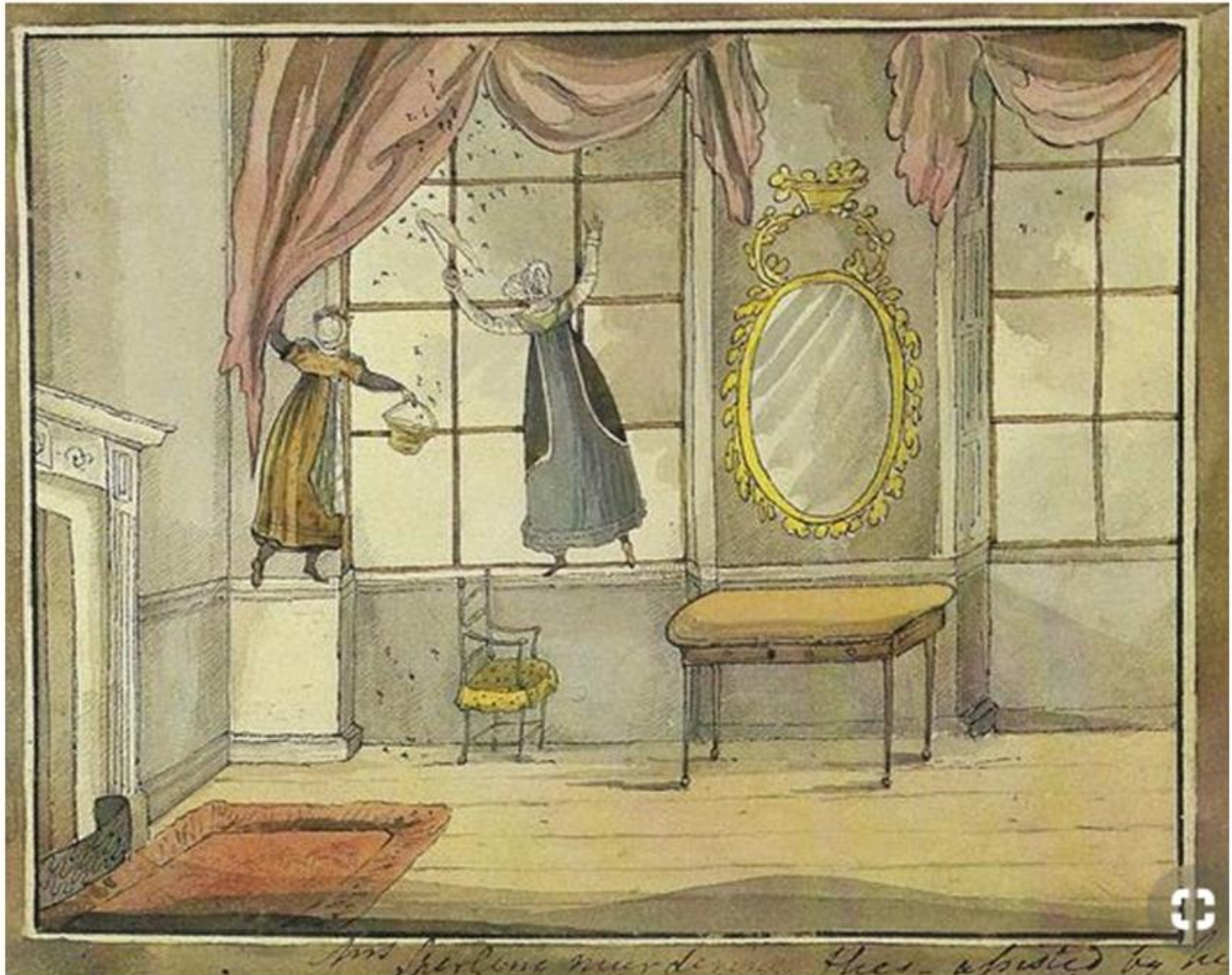
The Reverend Thomas Snow was Curate from 1827 until 1834 whilst Reverend William Glover was Rector. In 1828 his cousin, Diana Spurling visited him and painted a number of views of the village in that year. They occasionally come on to the market and provide a unique record of that time. A book 'Mrs Hurst Dancing & Other Scenes from Regency Life' has recently been published of some of her watercolours which are often used to illustrate that period. The illustration is of the Old Church and the Rectory where she was staying alongside it, surrounded by countryside.



Views from Charmouth Rectory by Diana Spurling.

The first of the views is from a rear bedroom window in the Rectory to the beach. The other is from a front bedroom window over the roof of the old church, which was in rather a dire state by then. At the apex of the chapel covered in ivy was a statue of an Abbot that was later found in the grounds and is now preserved in the church.

Charmouth Rectory by Diana Spurling.



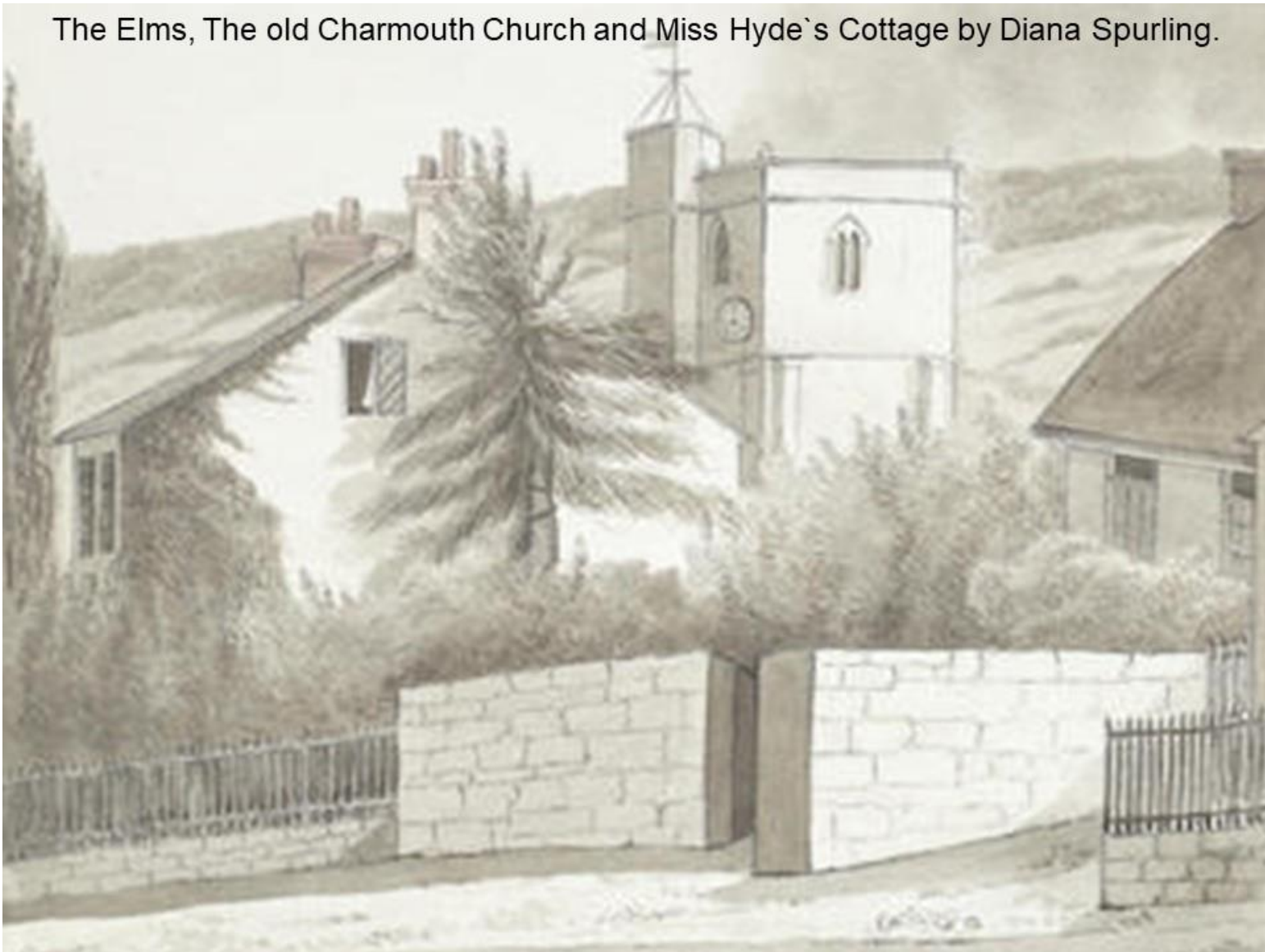
This fanciful painting of servants cleaning the windows of flies could have been of the ground floor which has similar windows to these.

Charmouth Rectory by Diana Spurling.



This painting could depict the entrance to the Rectory which has a similar decorative window above the front door.

The Elms, The old Charmouth Church and Miss Hyde`s Cottage by Diana Spurling.



This view is of the Elms on the left which in 1803 was owned by Thomas Shute, whose memorial still hangs on the wall of the Church. The former Church is seen in the background. The building on the right is on the site of the present day library and in 1803 was owned by John Ridges who rented it with other properties in the village. They would later go to his grand-daughter, Anne who lived there and it became known as Miss Hyde`s Cottage. She also owned the neighbouring house, Wistaria which she rented out.

The Sale of Charmouth Manor, opposite the Church in 1803.



CHARMOUTH, DORSET.
TO be SOLD, the FEE-SIMPLE and INHERITANCE of a large convenient DWELLING-HOUSE, GARDEN, and ORCHARD, late the property of Mr. ROBERT DAVIE, builder, deceased, situate in CHARMOUTH aforesaid; consisting of a hall, 2 parlours, kitchens, cellars, pantries, and other conveniencies, on the ground-floor; five principal, and sundry servants' bed-chambers, closets, &c. on the one-pair-stairs and attic story.—The Premises are situate near the centre of the Village, and command a view of the sea; length of front 77 feet by 330 deep; were formerly the Manor-house, and calculated for the permanent or temporary residence of a genteel Family; or may be so converted as to make one of the first Inns on the Western road, the house having been under improvements and repairs by the proprietor at his late decease.

Charmouth, from its Southern aspect and local situation, is one of the most delightful villages in England, about half a mile from sea-bathing; the mail and other coaches pass through it every day; distant about 2 miles from Lyme-Regis, 5 from Axminster, and 7 from Bridport.

For the above sale an Auction will be held by John Hutchings, at the Mail-Coach Inn in Charmouth, on Thursday June 30th inst. at 4 o'clock in the afternoon.

For viewing apply at the house; and further particulars to Mr. John Ridges, in Charmouth; or the Auctioneer, at the Golden-Lion, Lyme.—Letters must be post-paid.

N. B. Immediate possession of the premises may be had.

And on Thursday July 7th, and following days, will be SOLD by AUCTION, without Reserve.—All the general Assortment of good and useful HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE, together with all the STOCK in TRADE, of the late Mr. DAVIE; consisting of sundry Lots of Oak, Ash, and Deal; Carpenters' and Joiners' Tools, &c. &c.

Charmouth, June 9th, 1803. [5470

The Manor House is opposite the Church and is very historic, dating back to at least the 16th century when it was owned by the Abbott at Forde. It was bought by James Warden in 1788, who later built a fine new mansion at Langmoor and sold the manor house soon after to Robert Davie. In the year of Jane's visit, Robert died and the fine house was placed on the market. The advert for the Auction soon after describes it as a *"suitable residence for a Genteel family, or may be converted to form one of the first Inns on the Western Road. Charmouth from its Southern Aspect and Local situation, is one of the most delightful villages in England, about half a mile from sea bathing. The Mail and other coaches pass through it every day"*.

It was then bought by Simeon Bullen, whose family were descendants of Anne Boleyn and owned the Manor of Marshwood and other properties in the area.

The Elms. The Street. Charmouth



One of the finest houses in the village when Jane Austen visited it was "The Elms", now owned by the Parish Council. In 1803 John Shute and his wife, Frances lived there. She was the heiress of the lawyer Walter Oke of Axmouth who had bought a number of properties in the village. The Shutes rebuilt the former house, whose history went back to the 16th century when it was known as Mann's Tenement.

Garden of The Elms. The Street. Charmouth



This is an early photograph of part of the extensive grounds formerly at the rear of the Elms that stretched down to Lower Sea Lane.



Garden of The Elms. The Street. Charmouth

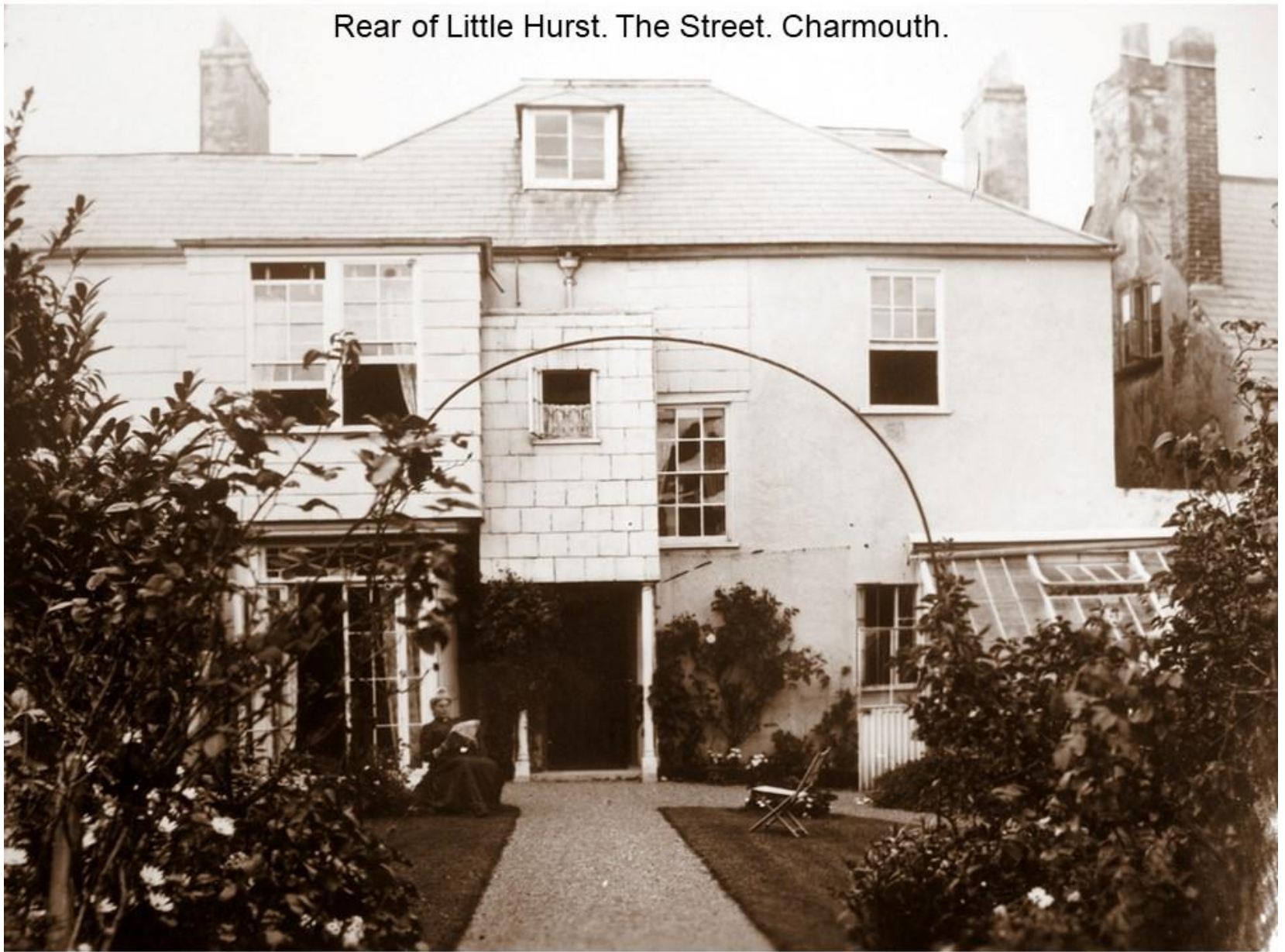
Another view of the massive gardens at the rear of the Elms, which have since been extensively built on.

Little Hurst. The Street. Charmouth.



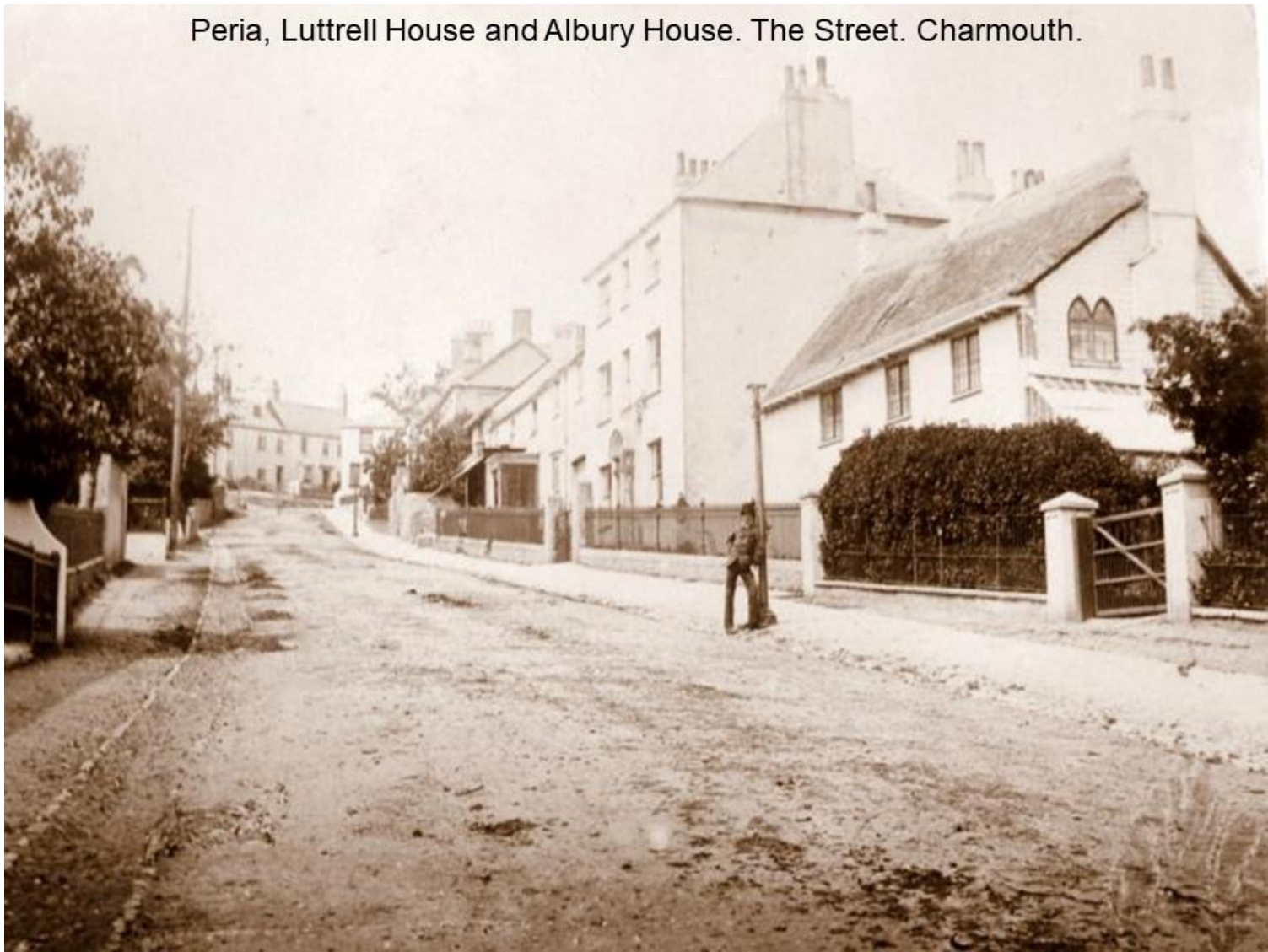
Robert Culverwell would have owned this house in 1803. He was very wealthy and it was one of a number that he rented. It was probably leased by Joseph Hackman who was described as a Gentleman and was buried in the Church in 1817 aged 90.

Rear of Little Hurst. The Street. Charmouth.



An early photograph of the rear of "Little Hurst" as it was later to be called by John Harrison as a contrast to his larger home in Regents Park, London.

Peria, Luttrell House and Albury House. The Street. Charmouth.



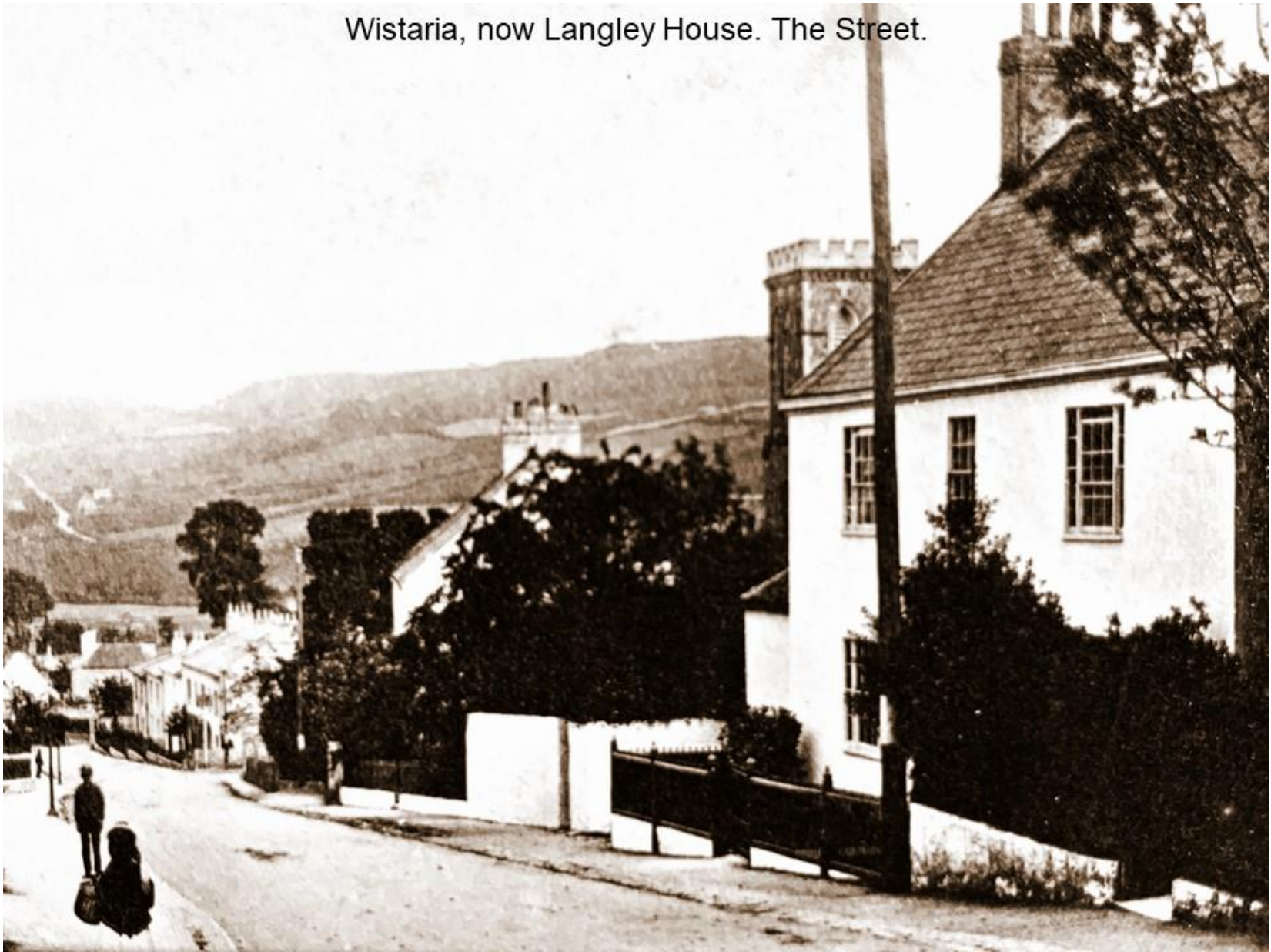
This view taken in 1870 shows the three houses on the right that were later to be known as Albury, Luttrell and Peria. All would have been standing in 1803 when Jane would have passed them. William Juson would have been living in Albury House, then known as The Cottage. Major Channing had recently bought Luttrell House and the adjoining, Peria which he was renting to a Mrs. Warren. When Major Channing died in 1817, the house and its neighbour were auctioned at the Coach and Horses, and abstract describes it as follows:

"A handsome Brick Dwelling House, and all requisite offices attached, with truly beautiful Garden enclosed with lofty walls and richly clothed with fruit trees of every description, situated in the centre of the much admired village of Charmouth, about five minutes walk of the sea, where there is good accommodation for bathing".



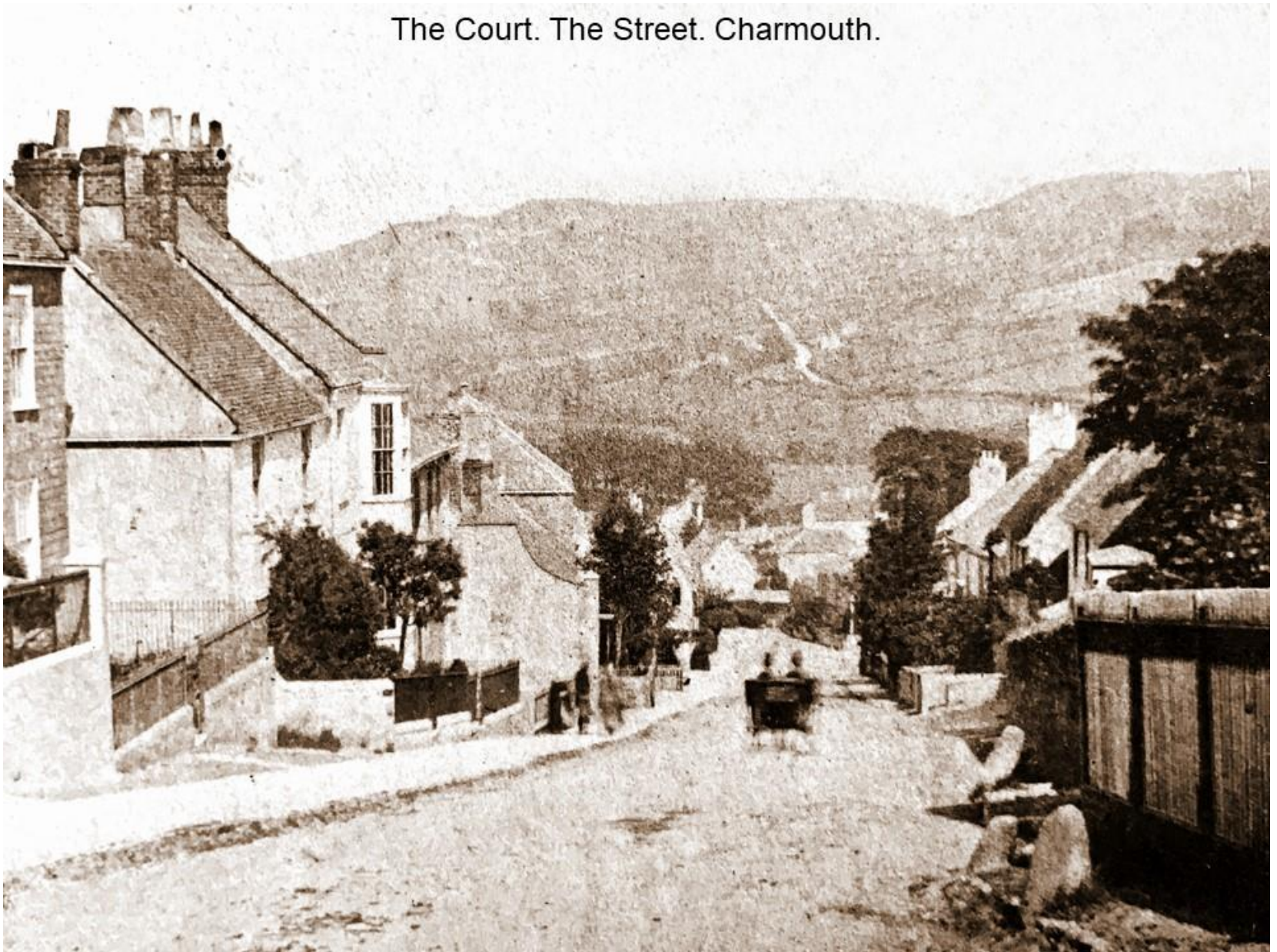
Although the buildings are the same as before you can see that both Luttrell House and its neighbour Peria had their Georgian fronts dramatically altered by the builders, Pryers with large bay windows at the end of the 19th century. Sadly this was to give a Victorian look to many earlier houses along the Street, including Bow House, Claremont, Melbourne House and Well Head.

Wistaria, now Langley House. The Street.



"Wistaria" is a seventeenth century house seen on the right. A pump with the date, 1611 used to stand in the kitchen, but was later sadly removed. In 1803 it would have been owned by John Stiles and rented out by him. It was later to be the site of the village Post Office run by the Holly family for many years.

The Court. The Street. Charmouth.



This early photograph looking down The Street, predates 1864, as this was the year that Mrs. Stuart rebuilt the Court and later demolished the Alms-houses below it, still to be seen in this image. In 1803 the building was owned by William Bragge who was a Surgeon.



Stone House.Charmouth.

The building now called The Stone House is seen here on the left

Omega. Grasmere and Dolphin House. The Street. Charmouth.



The group of houses set back from the road now known as Fountain Cottage, Grasmere and Dolphin Cottage would have been owned by John Ridges and in 1803 Pattison, described as a Gentleman was shown on the village Census as renting from him. John Ridges who originated from Kenilworth in Warwickshire came to Charmouth in 1785 by purchasing or inheriting a house and orchard here. He then prospered and the Poor Rates show him buying a number of other properties over the years that he rented out. His name appears regularly on Voters lists for Dorset and is described as a Gentleman. His first daughter, Dianna, was baptised in 1797 in the village. He died in 1823 and his lengthy Will leaving his estate to his daughter, Dianna Hyde, provides a mass of information concerning the many properties he owned, which included a number in Charmouth

The Street from Charmouth House.



A rare watercolour of the village in 1870 with the thatched roof of Charmouth House on the right and the Stone House on the left.

The Street from Charmouth House.

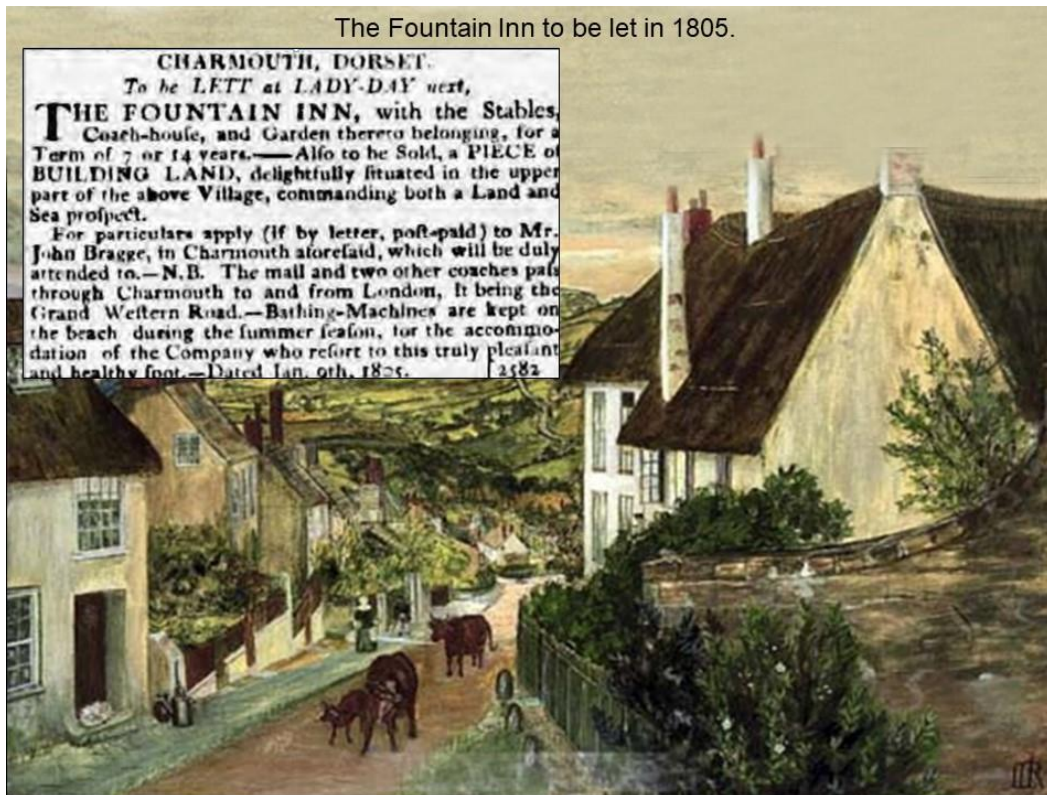


Another very early photograph looking down the Street with the former buildings of the Court and the alms-houses. Charmouth House on the right still had its iron railings which were to later be replaced with a stone wall.



This view as it appears today has changed very little since Jane`s visit.

The Fountain Inn to be let in 1805.



CHARMOUTH, DORSET.
To be LETT at LADY-DAY next,
THE FOUNTAIN INN, with the Stables,
Coach-house, and Garden thereto belonging, for a
Term of 7 or 14 years.—Also to be Sold, a PIECE of
BUILDING LAND, delightfully situated in the upper
part of the above Village, commanding both a Land and
Sea prospect.
For particulars apply (if by letter, post-paid) to Mr.
John Bragge, in Charmouth aforesaid, which will be duly
attended to.—N.B. The mail and two other coaches pass
through Charmouth to and from London, it being the
Grand Western Road.—Bathing-Machines are kept on
the beach during the summer season, for the accommoda-
tion of the Company who resort to this truly pleasant
and healthy spot.—Dated Jan. 9th, 1805. 12582

Charmouth House was formerly called The Fountain Inn for many centuries. Towards the end of the 18th century it went into decline and an attempt was made in 1805 to lease it. The advert states:

"Charmouth, Dorset

To be let at Lady Day next

The Fountain Inn, with the Stables, Coach House and Garden thereto belonging, for a term of 7 or 14 years. Also, to be sold a piece of building land, delightfully situated in the upper part of the above village, commanding both a land and Sea prospect.

For particulars apply (if by letter post-paid) to Mr. John Bragge, in Charmouth aforesaid, which will be duly attended to - N.B. The Mail and two other coaches pass through Charmouth to and from London, it being the Great Western Road - Bathing Machines are kept on the Beach during the summer season, for the accommodation of the company who resort to this truly pleasant and healthy spot - Dated January 9th, 1805".

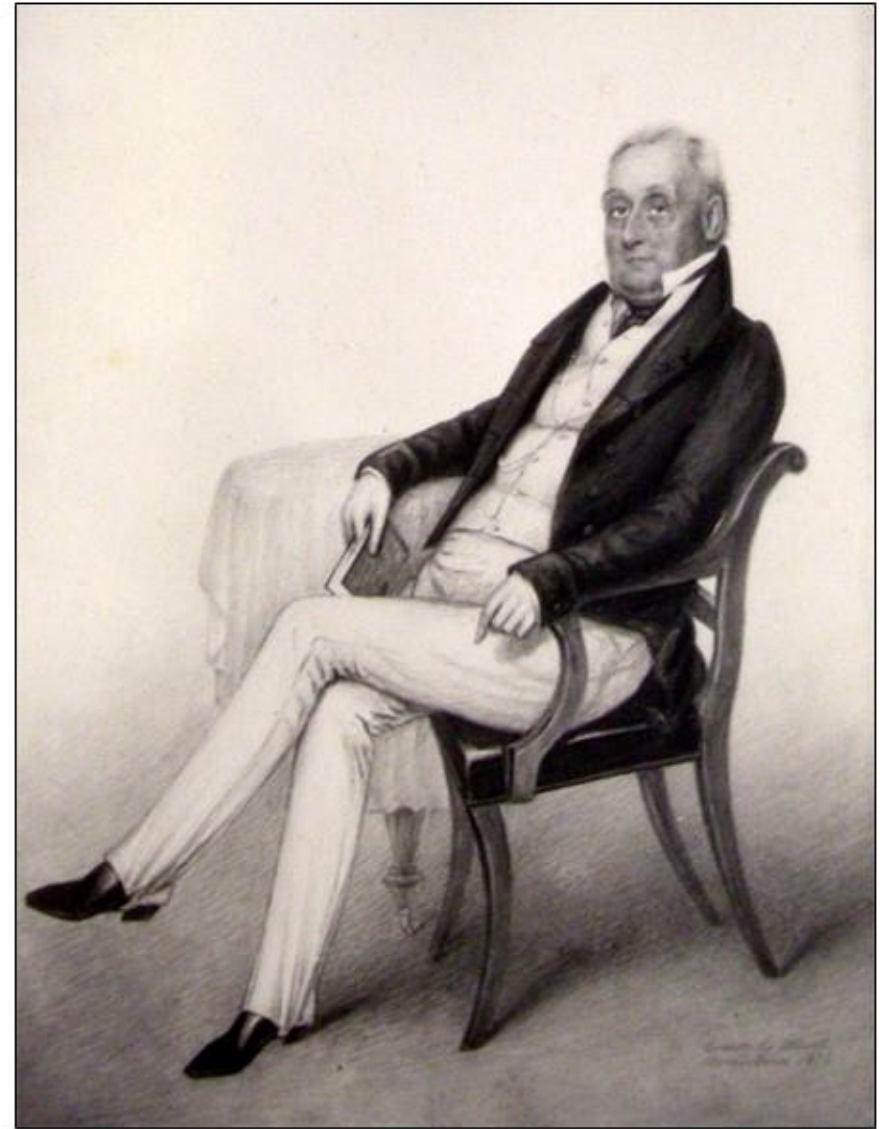
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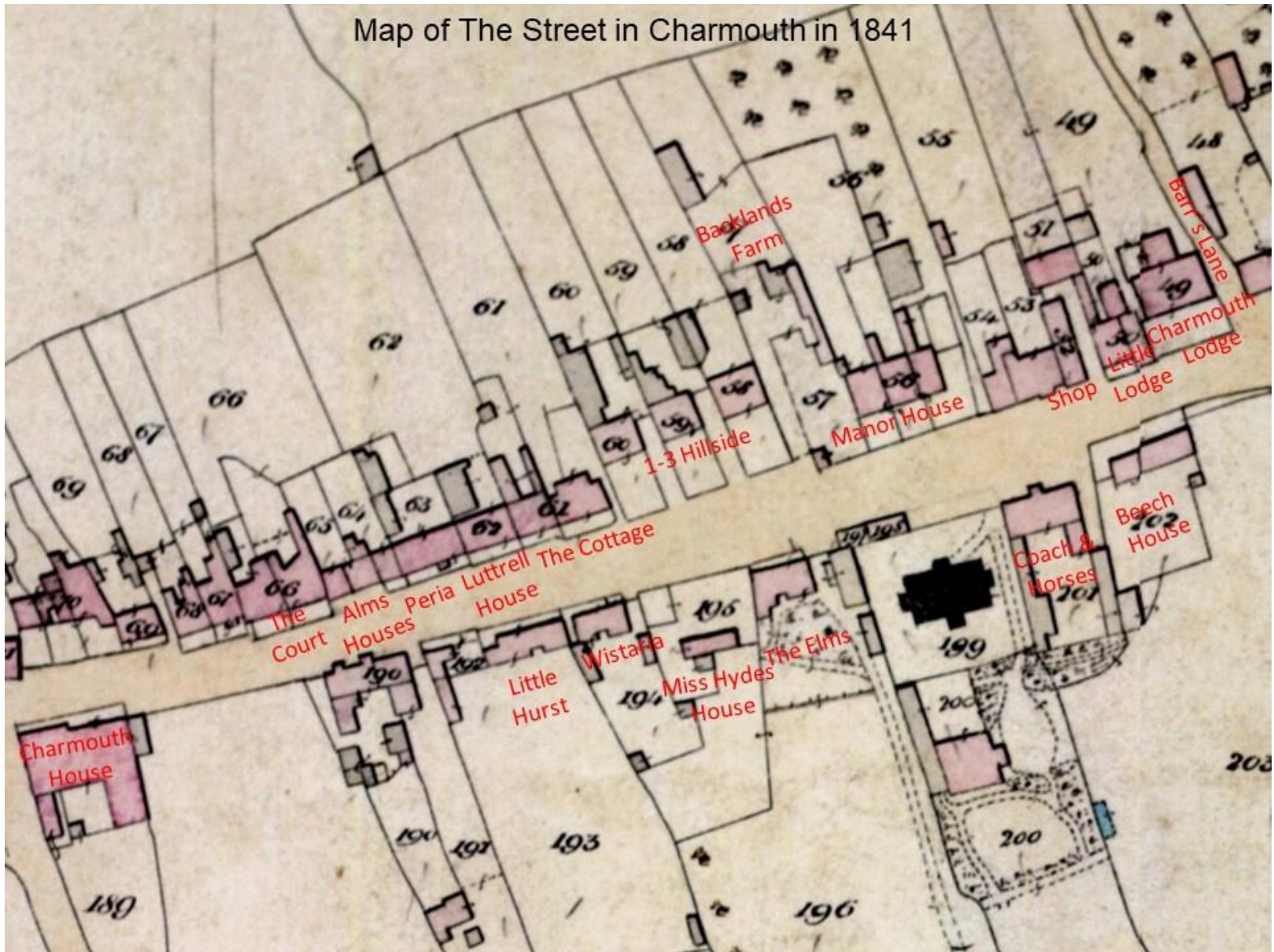
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Mr. and Mrs. Gordon of Charmouth House.



It remained empty until it was bought by Thomas Gordon in 1811 who decided to close it and live there with his wife in retirement. He was also the owner of Middleton Court at Huish Chamflower in Somerset. He died in 1855 aged 95 and left the property to his widow Jane Charlotte Gordon who was herself to die soon after.

Map of The Street in Charmouth in 1841



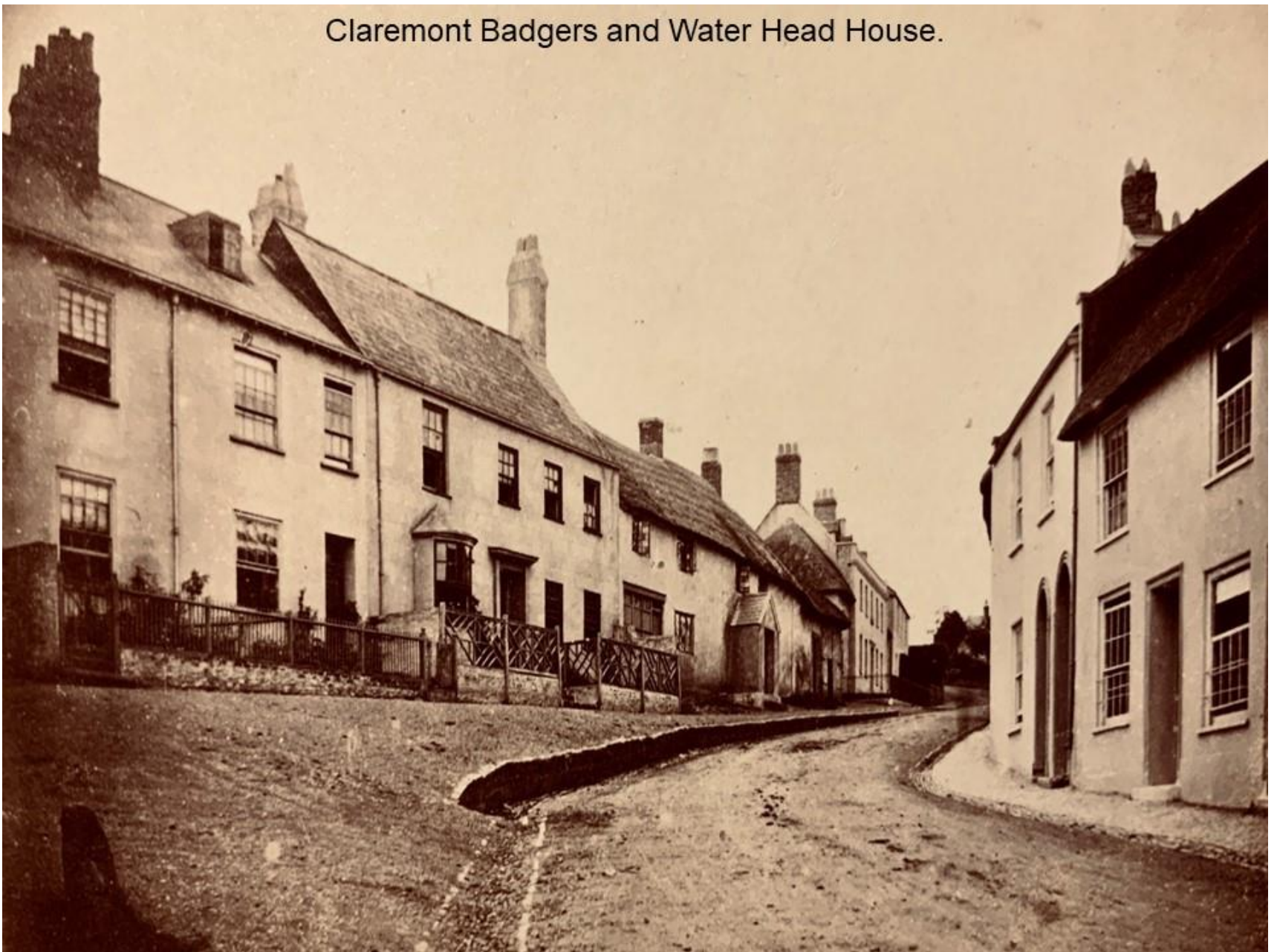
This early map of the middle section of The Street reveals a landscape almost as Jane Austen would have seen it in 1803. There are a few changes from that year in that 1,2,3, Hillside was built in 1822 replacing 2 cottages formerly standing there fronting the Street. The Rectory was built at the rear of the Church in 1828 in part of the Glebe. It is remarkable when we see this area of the map today how similar it is compared with two centuries ago.

Charmouth House and The Knap



This unusual view looking down Higher Sea Lane with the rear of Charmouth House on the left and the two cottages known as Knap, has changed little over the centuries.

Claremont Badgers and Water Head House.

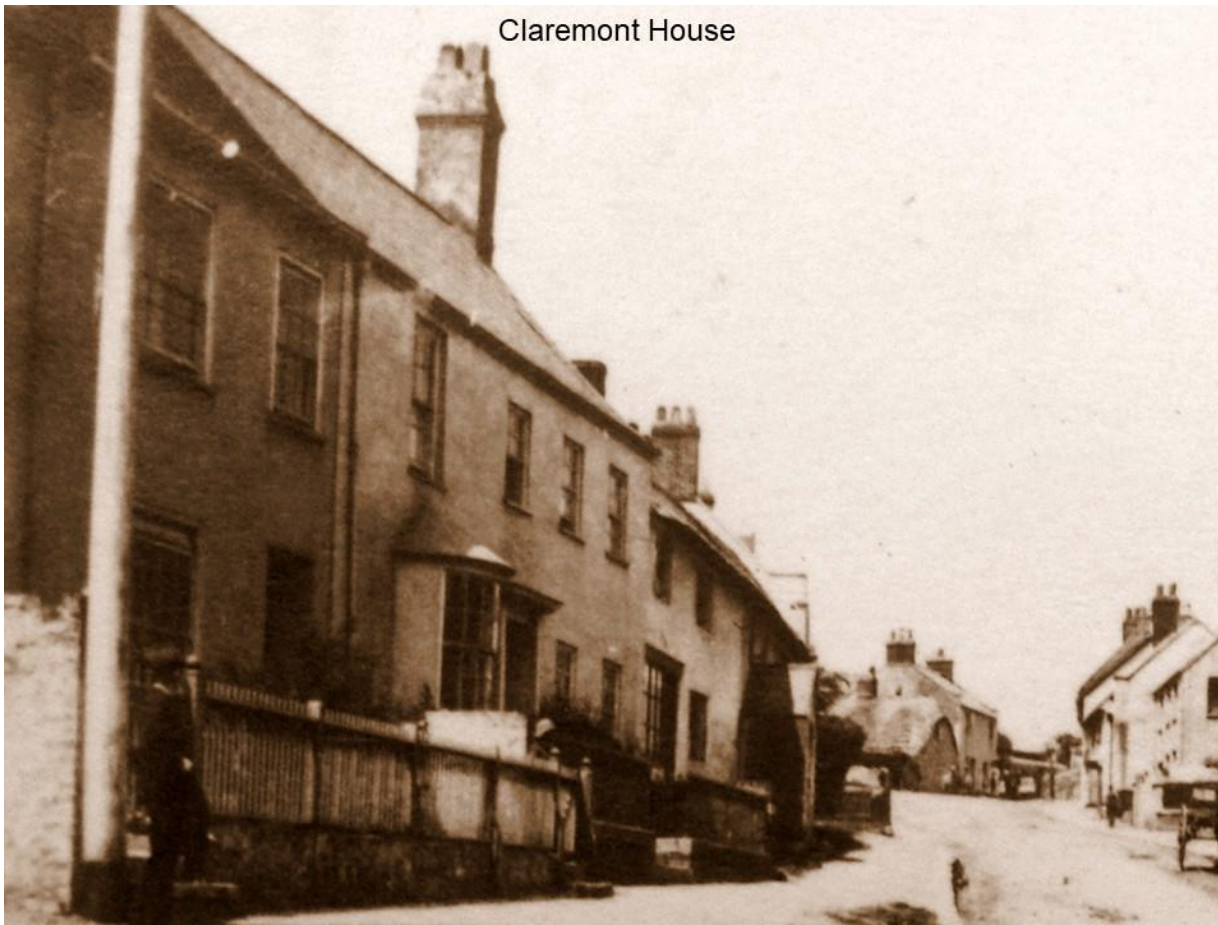


Another early photograph which appeared as a Carte de Visite by Bridport photographer William Barrett c.1870 of the top end of The Street with Claremont, then called Knapp House in the centre.



The view as we see it today with Claremont with one of the many bay window frontages added to Georgian houses in the village by the Pryers at the end of the 19th century which included Well Head and Melbourne House further along

Claremont House



Early photographs reveal how Claremont once appeared with a curious curved window jutting out into its garden. It's five bay frontage had been altered by this addition and a larger window had been inserted on the next level replacing two earlier windows. It had once been where a Toll keeper had sat waiting for the many coaches that were passing through Charmouth between Exeter and London. The stumps of the original wooden gate that would have straddled the Street were found in 1937 whilst laying sewage pipe.

In 1757, there is a description of the existing road as that

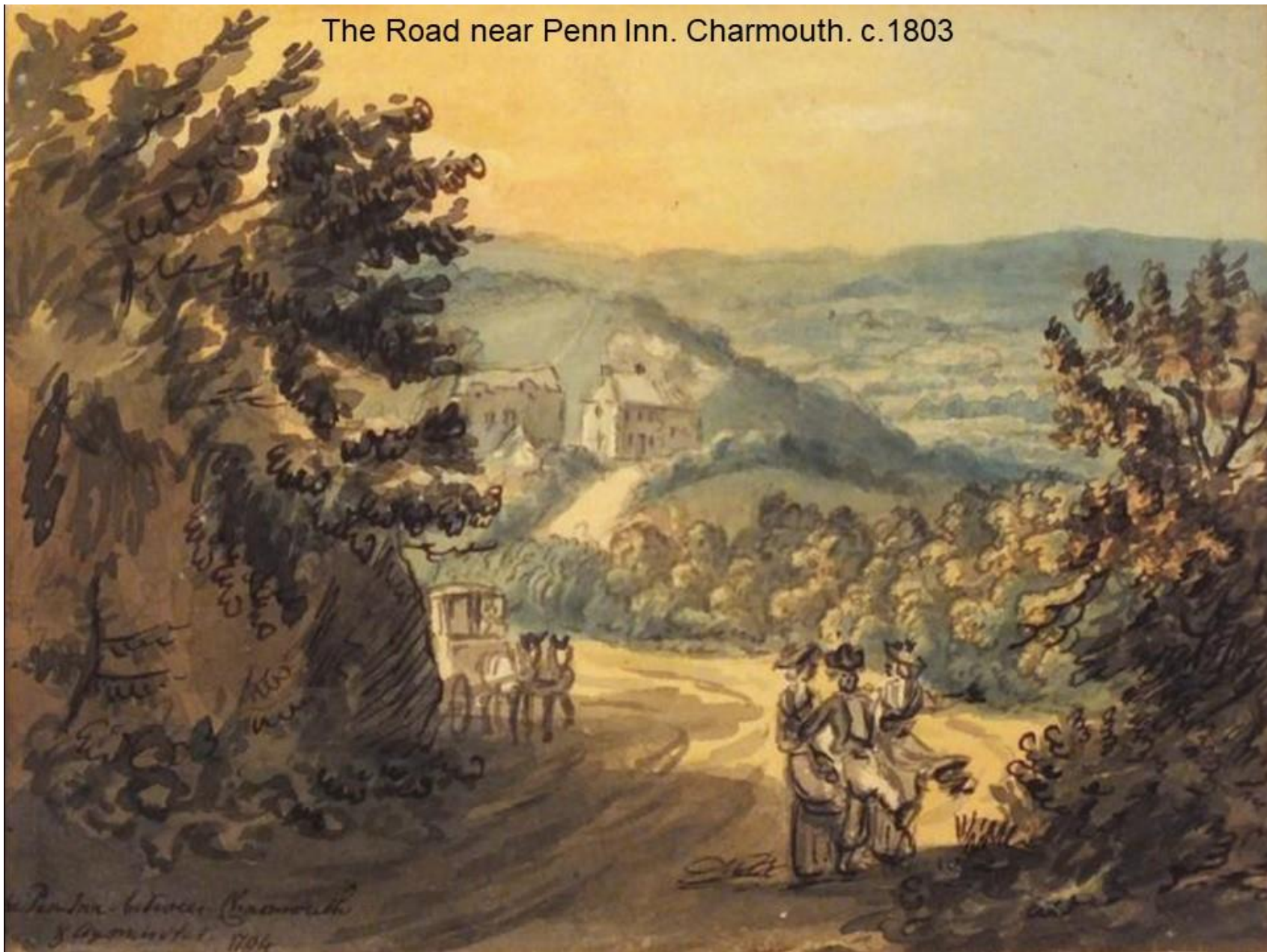
“High Road leading from the Almshouse at west end of Charmouth to and thru Lyme Regis which are in a ruinous condition, narrow in many places and very steep and uneven and by reason of the waters in the winter season unpassable at divers places and very dangerous to travellers cannot be repaired, widened by present methods”

As a result, the following year Charmouth had the first of its turnpike roads built. It was known as the Great Western Road and continued on as far as Aylesbeare, within a few miles of Exeter . It started from the top of the Street where there would have been a toll gate which were generally stout and substantial overseen by a keeper who would collect the tolls. He would be heralded by a coach horn, and would let the mail coach through free of toll. The bow windows faced in both directions so that the keeper could see the traffic approaching from either side. The original Turnpike Road that passed through Charmouth was built in 1756 and the toll office may well go back to the time it was opened. It was no doubt superseded in 1824 when a new Toll House was built in brick at the bottom of the street near the river, which still stands today.



This watercolour of a similar house to Claremont that was adapted as a cottage for the Toll Keeper and is still to be seen at the top of Chideock Hill. It shows the gentleman opening the gate for one of the regular Mail Coaches that passed along the Great Western Road that linked London with the west country.

The Road near Penn Inn. Charmouth. c.1803



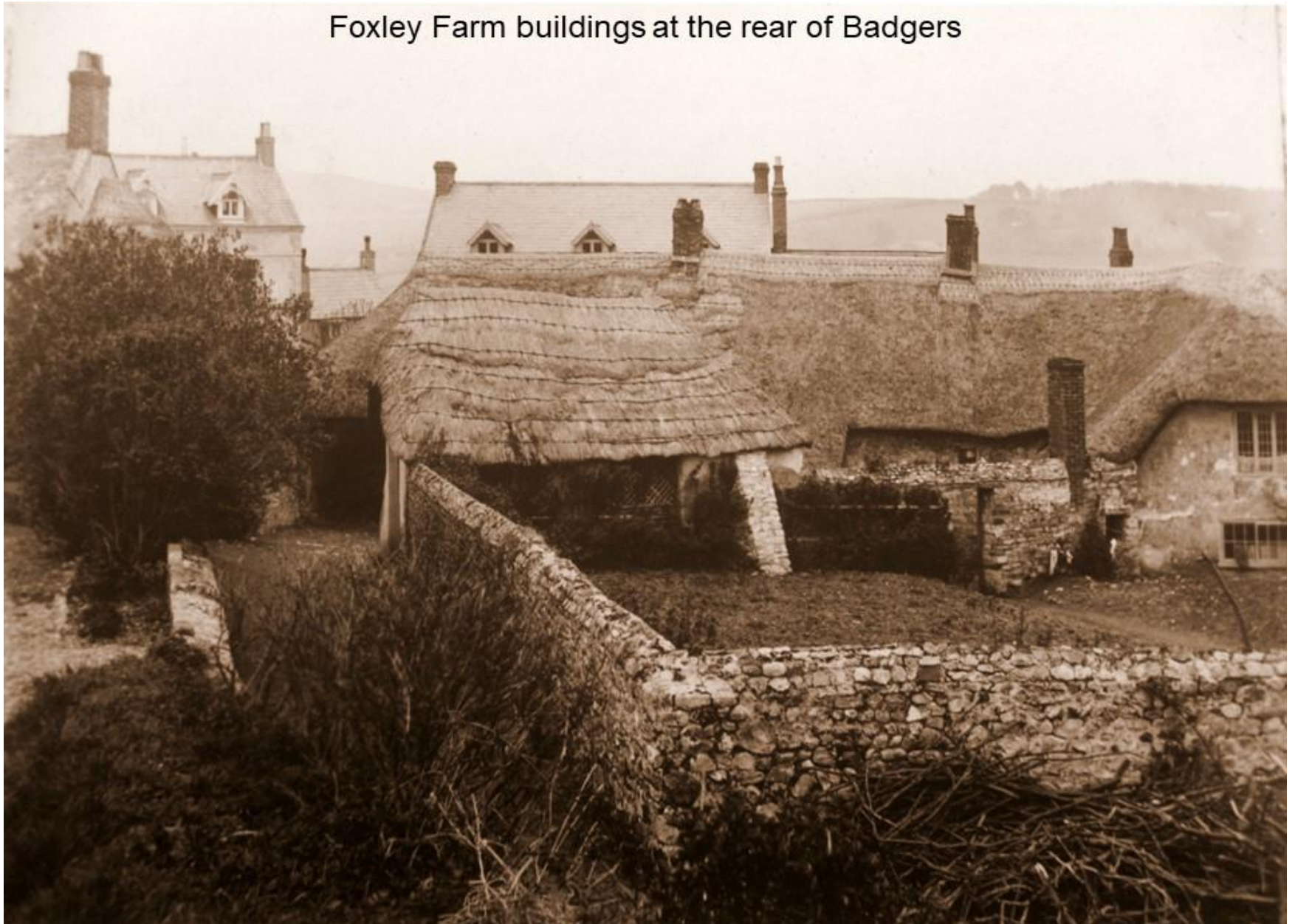
The watercolour shown here is dated 1794 of Penn Inn, just outside Charmouth gives us an idea of how the roads and countryside around Charmouth would have appeared to Jane Austen when she visited here.

Badgers and Water Head House.



The Farm House for Foxley Farm is seen here in 1870 on the left. At the time of Jane Austen's visit it was owned by Richard Stokes, who was described as a Gentleman in the Census. On the right can be seen the house now called Water Head, which had formerly been the Stone House, where Mrs Ridout was the occupier then. The two thatched barns on either side have since gone and its fine Georgian front refaced. Alongside is Melbourne House where Miss Jane Rickard, who had inherited a number of other properties lived

Foxley Farm buildings at the rear of Badgers



This astonishing early photograph clearly shows how rural Charmouth was in the past with the barn and walls of the Foxley Farm at the rear of the houses now known as Badgers and Foxley Cottage



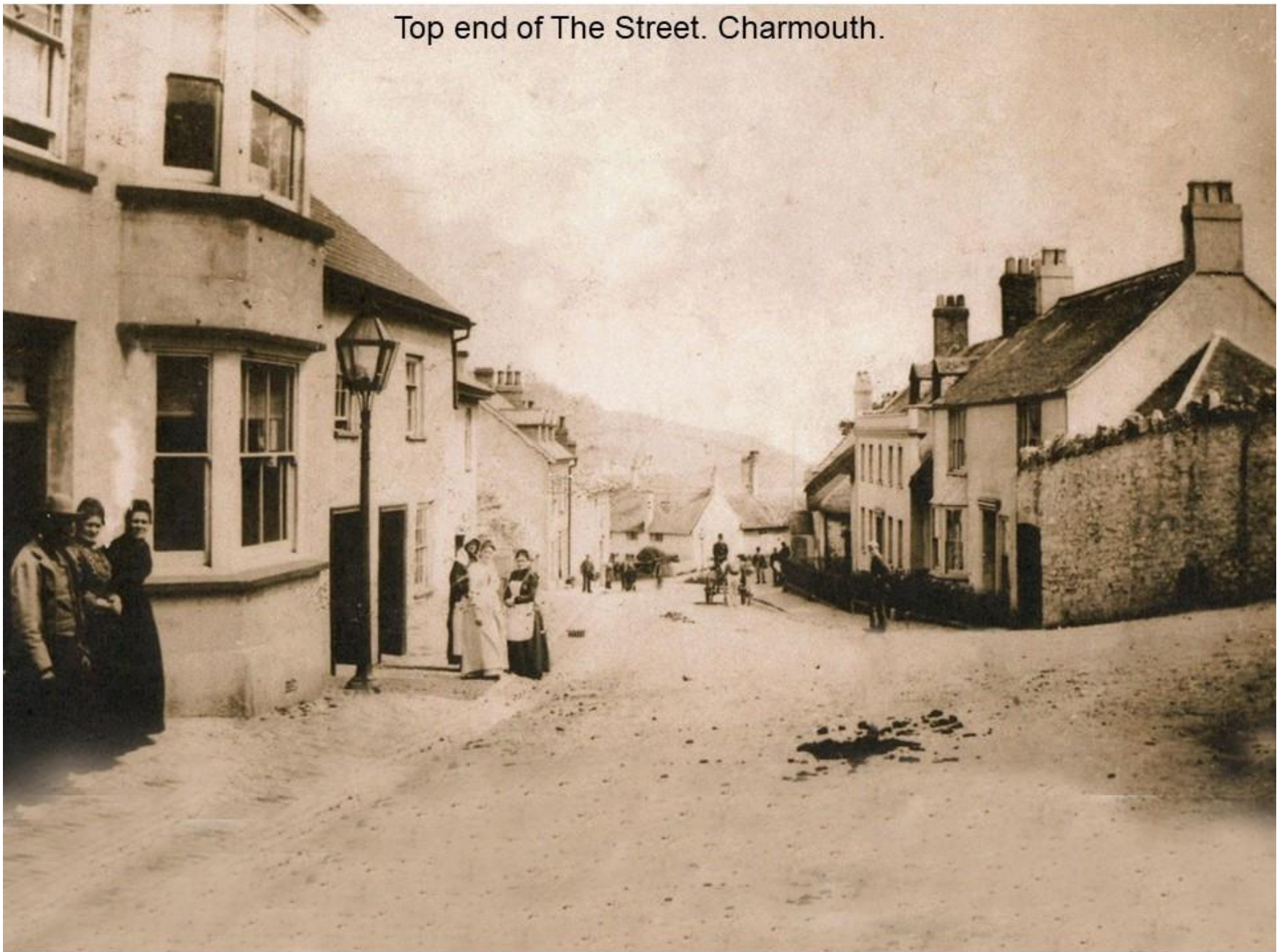
The same view today at the rear of Waverley Cottage that replaced the barn at the side of Foxley cottage.



The New Inn. Charmouth

One of the earliest photographs yet found of Charmouth dating back to 1860. It shows the New Inn on the right which was later burnt down in 1883 and replaced with the brick building we see today on the site. The line of old cottages of the Axminster Road are seen in the distance.

Top end of The Street. Charmouth.



An early view of top end of the Street with the rebuilt New Inn on the left and Melbourne House on the right.



The same view as we see it now with New Inn on the left long which has long since closed

Old Lyme Hill. Charmouth.



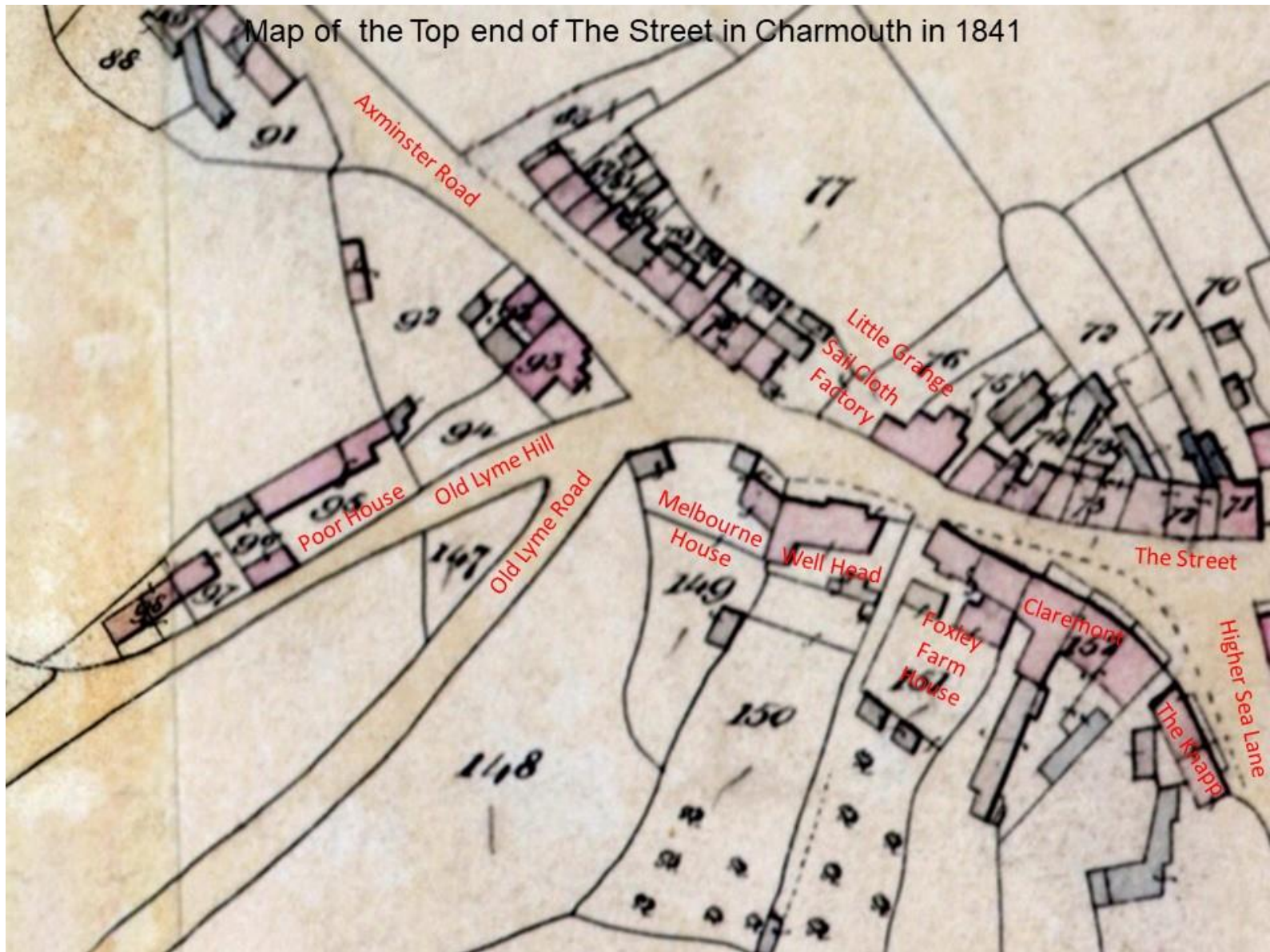
A group of villagers face us in 1880 at the bottom of Old Lyme Hill where the Bus stop is today.

Old Lyme Hill. Charmouth.



Old Lyme Hill with some of the many small cottages that once lined it.

Map of the Top end of The Street in Charmouth in 1841



An early Map of the top end of The Street. Jane Austen would not have seen Old Lyme Road at that time as it was constructed in 1826 to replace Old Lyme Hill, which was in a terrible state by then. It was only itself to last as a road way linking Charmouth directly with Lyme Regis and disappeared a century later due to cliff erosion.

Ann Liddon outside Langmoor Manor. Charmouth.



Ann Liddon was the granddaughter of James Warden, who was formerly the Lord of the Manor of Charmouth and died in a duel with a neighbour in 1792. He built Langmoor Manor on the outskirts of the village. This painting shows it in the background as it would have appeared in the year Jane Austen visited the village.

Langmoor Manor.Charmouth.



MORTGAGE.
WANTED SIX HUNDRED and FIFTY
POUNDS, on the Security of a very ample
Estate, in Charmouth, near Axminster, for which Five
per Cent. will be given.
Apply to Mr. FERRELL, Attorney, Exeter.

Trewman's Exeter Flying Post Thursday, October 6,
1803; Advert for Ann Liddon (nee Warden) to borrow
£600 against the Manor of Charmouth in Trewmans
Exeter Flying Post

In 1803 Ann Liddon, the daughter of James Warden had inherited the Manor of Charmouth and Langmoor. Her Husband died in the same year and left her with a large family to bring up, as a result she placed an advert in the newspaper at the time to raise £600 by means of a mortgage on her estate to finance the education of her children.



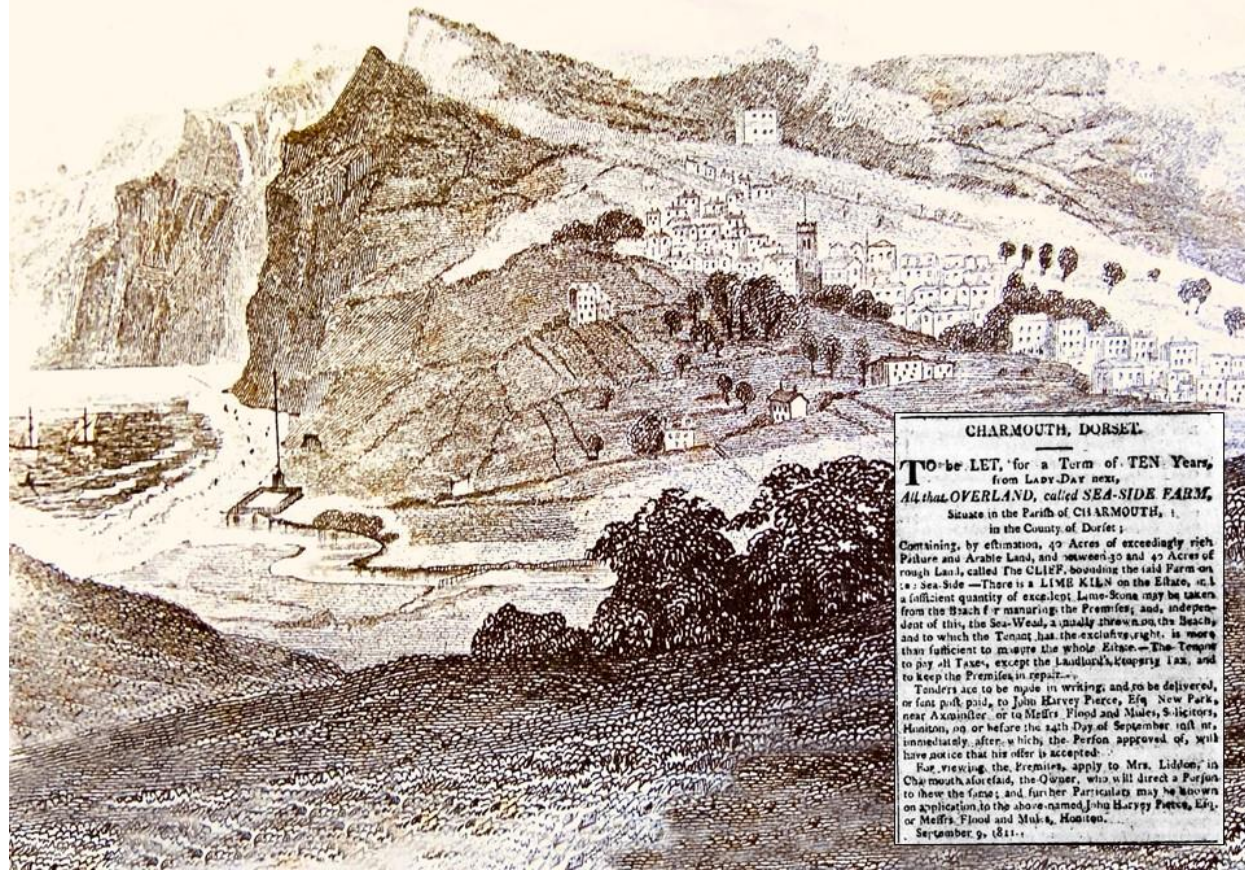
Lady Ann Spencer



Sir Richard Spencer

Her eldest daughter was to marry Richard Spencer, a Naval hero who was later knighted and they left these shores to emigrate to Australia where they were one of the founders of Albany. The paintings are of them painted shortly before they left Lyme Regis where they were living.

Sea Side Farm (80 acres) to be let by Ann Liddon in 1811.



This view of Charmouth clearly shows how the village was centred along the length of the Street. The area of common between there and the beach had just a few cottages on it. Although at the top of Higher Sea Lane was the towering Sea Horse House which had just been built in the year Jane Austen visited here. Ann Liddon as Lady of the Manor was the owner who in 1811 was advertising

“Charmouth, Dorset

To be Let, for a Term of Ten Years from Lady Day next.

All that Overland, called Sea - Side Farm, situate in the Parish of Charmouth, in the County of Dorset.

Containing by estimation, 40 Acres of exceedingly rich Pasture and Arable Land, and between 30 and 40 Acres of Rough Land, called the Cliff, bounding the said Farm on the Sea-Side - There is a Lime Kiln on the Estate, and a sufficient quantity of excellent Lime-Stone may be taken from the Beach for manuring the premises, and, independent of this, the Sea Weed, annually thrown on the Beach, and to which the tenant, has the exclusive right is more than sufficient to manure the whole Estate. - The Tenant to pay all the Taxes, except the Landlords Property Tax and to keep the Premises in repair.

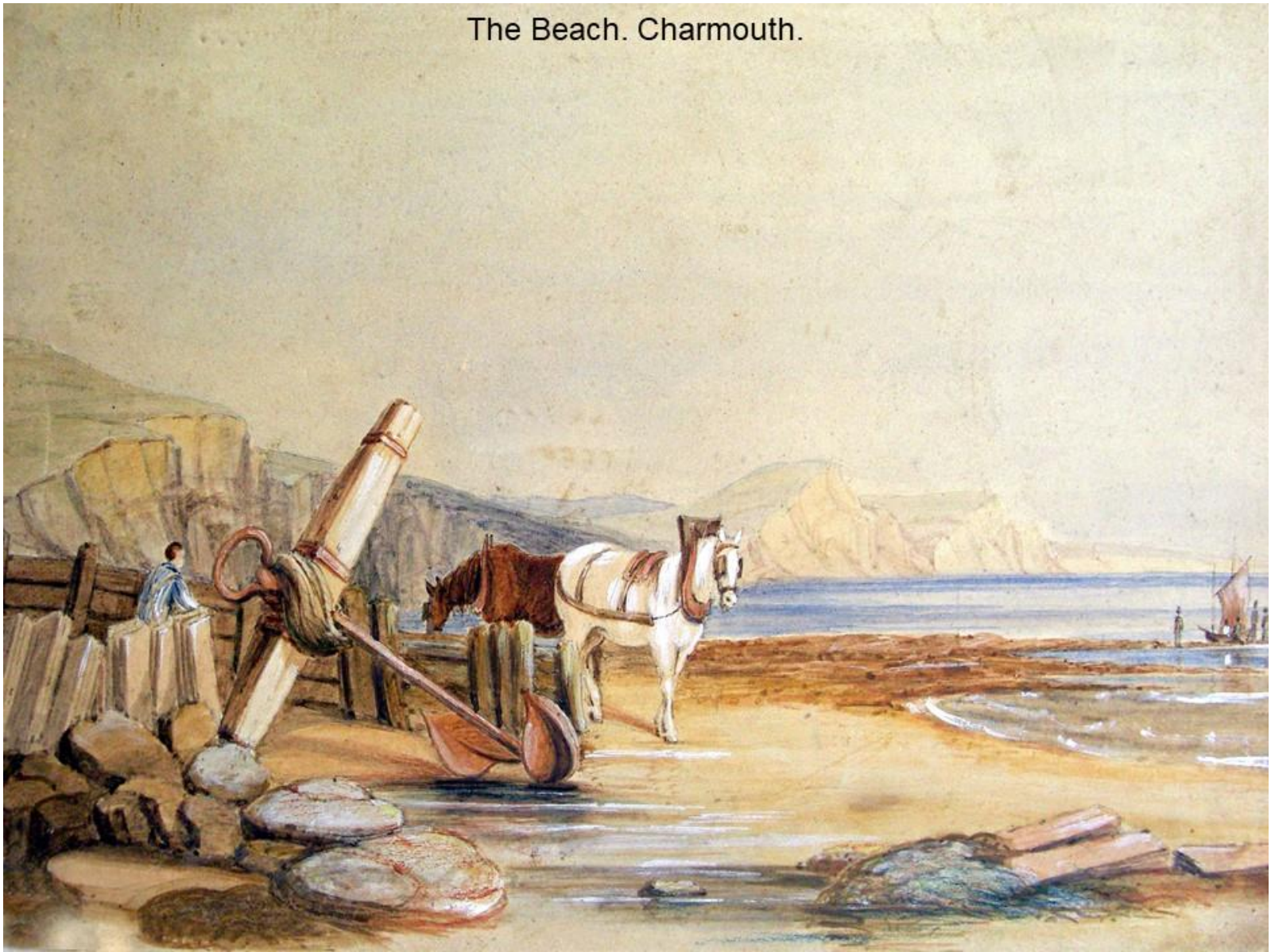
For viewing the Premises, Apply to Mrs. Liddon, in Charmouth aforesaid, the Owner, September 9, 1811.



Charmouth was definitely enjoying a prosperous year when Jane Austen paid her visit here in the summer of 1803 mainly as a result of the war with France and its position along the coast as a popular holiday destination. Although not as large as Lyme Regis or Weymouth it was proving an attraction both for visitors and those choosing to reside in pleasant surroundings. It could offer fast travel with its position on the main route from London to the West Country which by then had rapidly improved with the Turn Pike system. There was plenty of employment for villagers with the many farms in the village which included Wood, Foxley, Langmoor, Stonebarrow, Backlands, Sea Lands and Lilly Farm. Many of these were growing Flax which was being used by the three Sailcloth Makers to be found along the Street.

It was a fully functioning village offering a wide range of shops and services. Two centuries on it is remarkable that if Jane Austen once again walked along the Street, how many buildings dating back to her time that she would still be able to identify.

The Beach. Charmouth.



We hope after this talk that you agree with Jane`s observation that:

“Charmouth, with its high grounds and extensive sweeps of country, and still more its sweet, retired bay, backed by dark cliffs, where fragments of low rock among the sands make it the happiest spot for watching the flow of the tide, for sitting in unwearied contemplation”