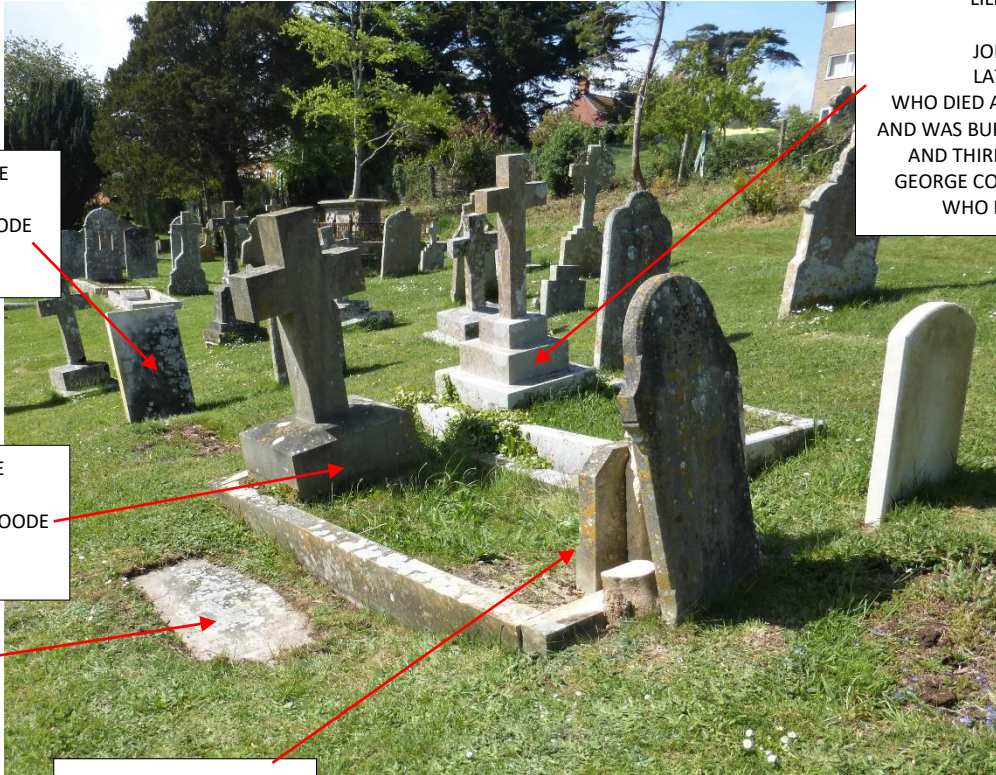


# The Coode Family

## Charmouth Road Cemetery, Lyme Regis

Graham Davies, July 2021



WORSTER BENSON COODE  
YOUNGEST SON OF  
GEORGE & HELEN MARY COODE  
DIED NOV<sup>R</sup> 17<sup>TH</sup> 1920  
AGED 72 YEARS

HELEN HOPPNER COODE  
ELDER DAUGHTER OF  
GEORGE AND HELEN MARY COODE  
AGED 83  
DIED NOV 30<sup>TH</sup> 1915

ROSA JEANETTE LASSIME  
WIFE OF  
LEON LASSIME  
JUGE DE PAIX  
DIED MAY 20<sup>TH</sup> 1921  
SECOND DAUGHTER OF  
GEORGE  
AND HELEN MARY COODE  
VIOLET COODE  
SISTER OF THE ABOVE  
DIED DECEMBER 9<sup>TH</sup> 1941  
AGED 90 YEARS

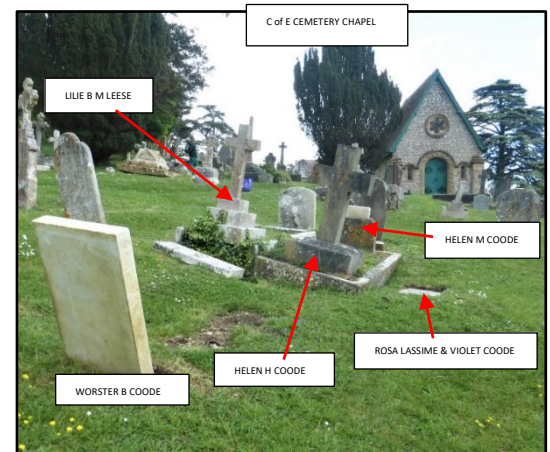
HELEN MARY COODE  
WIDOW OF THE LATE  
GEORGE COODE  
FORMERLY OF WALMER  
DIED JAN 8<sup>TH</sup> 1900  
AGED 87

SACRED  
TO THE MEMORY  
OF  
LILIE BEATRICE MARIA  
WIDOW OF  
JOHN WILLIAM LEESE  
LATE OF VALPARAISO  
WHO DIED AT GUILDFORD 20 SEPT 1880  
AND WAS BURIED IN THE CEMETERY THERE  
AND THIRD DAUGHTER OF THE LATE  
GEORGE COODE OF THE INNER TEMPLE  
WHO DIED 6<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 1893

This is one of a series of articles inspired by headstones in Lyme Regis cemetery and the stories behind them.



In this instance, part of the story was already known before the graves were identified.



Section C, Lyme Regis Cemetery

In 2013, the Museum received an email from Germany, which included a copy of the *Little Mother* painting by Helen Hoppner Coode of Lyme Regis, with an enquiry about the artist. The author's reply at that time, and his subsequent research, forms the basis of this article.

In 2021, the author looked again at his notes on Helen Hoppner Coode. With the information gained from the team's cemetery research project (2012-2016), he was able to identify her grave and those of other members of her family. The horizontal memorial slab for Rosa Lassime and Violet Coode was partly overgrown, and the headstone for Lillie Leese was particularly difficult to read. With judicious clearing and cleaning of the memorials, a full transcript of the inscriptions was achieved (see page one).

The Cood family were wealthy merchants with substantial interests in Chile and Latin America. George Benson Cood (1807-1869) was a distinguished barrister of the Inner Temple and a Parliamentary draughtsman with particular reference to the 1834 Poor Laws.

He married Mary Helen Meyer in 1827. They had three sons and four daughters, five of whom, and the mother, are buried in Lyme Regis cemetery. Early family homes were at Newark, Surrey and St Pancras, Middlesex. Later, they lived at Walmer in Kent. The variant 'Coode' was adopted as the family name. A disciplinarian at home, George Coode did not allow his daughters to marry whilst he was alive.<sup>1</sup>

Neither of the elder sons were part of this Lyme Regis story. George Manners Churchill Coode (1827-1903) had fallen out with his father when he married a policeman's daughter, became a policeman himself in London and changed his name to George Manners. Thomson Hoppner Coode (1831-1869), sometime of the Poor Law Board, emigrated to Chile where he owned a quicksilver mine in partnership with John Leese, an Englishman born in Chile. He died in Valparaiso, a victim of violence, on 10th July 1869.<sup>1</sup>

When George B Coode died on the 27th September, 1869 at his residence, Roselands, Walmer, the tight reins on this Victorian family were released.

On the 20th September 1870, at St Mary's, Walmer, Kent, Lillie Beatrice Coode (1840-93), third daughter of the late George Coode Esq, barrister-at law, of Roselands, Walmer, married John William Leese, only surviving son of William Mackenzie Leese Esq of Valparaiso, Chile. This was followed on the 27th June 1871 by the marriage at St Mary's, Walmer of Rosa Janet Coode (1838-1921), second daughter of the late George Coode Esq, to Leon, third son of the late Antoine Lassimo (Lassime), Capitaine de Cavalerie, of Tarbes, Hautes Pyrenees.

The unmarried daughters, Helen Hoppner Coode (1832-1915) and Violet Jane Coode (1851-1941), together with their brother, Worster Benson Coode (1847-1920), remained at Roselands with their mother, Helen Mary Coode (1813-1900). The 1871 census described the widow as a landowner &c., who had 3 servants, 'two upper housemaids and an under gardener'.

After her marriage, Rosa Lassime lived in Avesnes, France where her husband was a Justice of the Peace.

John and Lillie Beatrice Leese lived at 10 Heathcote Street, Bloomsbury, London Their daughter Mariana was born in 1876. John died 20th September 1880, aged 39 years. The family were then living at Sussex Villa, Austen Road, Guildford. Their second daughter Mercedes was born in January 1881.

Helen Hoppner Coode was an artist, illustrator and writer. She was the first known female contributor to *Punch*.<sup>2</sup> She contributed 19 drawings between November 1859 and January 1861. She was a member of the Society of Female Artists and often contributed to their exhibitions. She also exhibited work at the British Institution and the Royal Academy between 1859 and 1882. She continued as an artist and writer into her old age.

In 1881 (census) both widows, mother and daughter are living in the Stoke parish of Guildford about 2 miles from each other. They are both dependent on English and/or Foreign securities. Lillie Beatrice Leese (39) still lived at Austen Road with her two daughters ,Mariana (5) and Mercedes (3 months), a cook and a nurse. Her mother, Helen Mary Coode (69) lived at Mellow Road, Guildford. Living with her, at the time of the census, were her daughters Helen (45) and Violet (27), her son Worster (32) and his two children, Mabel (4) and Hilda (3). A cook and housemaid completed the household. Worster Coode had married in 1875 and lived in Lyne Chertsey, Surrey.

## The Coode Family at Lyme Regis



Aveline House, Broad Street

2021

Helen Mary Coode and her daughters, Helen and Violet, came to Lyme Regis in 1889 and lived at Cobb Hamlet.

In 1891 (census), they occupied *Aveline House*, 53 Broad Street: Helen M Coode (78), widow, living on her own means; Violet Coode (40), daughter, single; Amy Hoskins (18), servant (cook), single. Helen H Coode was visiting at Kensington.

Lilie Beatrice Leese died at *Chatham House*, 45/46 Broad Street, whilst visiting Lyme in 1893. It was decided to bury her at Lyme Regis: the first of the Coode family, followed by the graves of Helen Mary (1900), Helen Hoppner (1915), Worster (1920), Rosa Lassime (1921) and Violet (1941).

Helen and Violet moved from *Aveline House* to *Woodmead*, 39 Silver Street, circa 1902/1903. They were joined soon after by their widowed sister, Rosa Lassime.

Auction details from 1900 described *Woodhouse* as having 2 reception rooms, 4 bedrooms, wc, box room and attic, kitchen, scullery, pantry, and convenient offices. The garden was large.

Like so many who retired to Lyme Regis, with 'private means', the Coode sisters became part of the 'ladies of the town' who offered their support to a variety of causes, particularly the cottage hospital in their case.

The 1911 census records the three sisters living at *Woodmead*: Helen (77), still occupied as a writer and painter, Rosa (74) and Violet (60). Their two Lyme-born servants were Laura Abbot (33), cook, and her sister Ellen Abbot (19), housemaid. Worster Coode came to live at *Woodmead* in 1919.

Rosa returned annually to her house in Avesnes. She was caught there in 1914 when the German army swept into France and was forced to stay there throughout WWI. (see appendix)

Violet Coode remained at *Woodmead* until at least 1928. From the electoral registers, Violet is recorded as living at the following properties.



Woodmead, Silver Street

2021



2005

Argyle House, 11 Marine Parade, 1930-32



2021

9 & 10 Windsor Terrace, 1935



2021

Stonehaven, 33 Silver Street, 1938-41

## Appendix

An interview with Madame Lassime reported in the Taunton Courier and Western Advertiser, 23 April 1919.

*Madame Lassime of 'Woodmead', Silver-Street, and her housekeeper, Miss L Abbott, have arrived back at Lyme Regis. On June 14th, 1914, they went to France to spend a holiday of four weeks' duration at Madame Lassime's residence in Avesnes, but the German occupation of that part of France necessitated the prolongation of their stay into more than 4½ years. During the whole of that time they were in constant touch with the enemy hordes, witnessing their inhuman methods and living in daily fear of molestation and indignities. For some inexplicable reason – Madame Lassime ascribes it to her display of spirit and dignity – the Germans treated them, in spite of their nationality, with a greater degree of respect than they showed to the French, and they were never ill-treated or molested. They were called upon to submit, however, to considerable privations and to the irksome and often unnecessary inconveniences which were thrust upon those who were unfortunate enough to be of different nationality than their oppressors.*

*Madame Lassime, a lady of advanced years, is the widow of a French Judge, and although she had a serious illness in the first year of her residence in France, as a result of her experience, she is now, happily, recovered .....*

*It was on August 26<sup>th</sup>, 1914, she said, that the German armies rushed into Avesnes, and billets were found for them, with the unfortunate inhabitants, most of whom were in a nervous and terror-stricken condition as a result of the bombardment. Madame Lassime and her housekeeper had been without food all day, but the Germans insisted on having their dinner at once, and ignored a request that in common courtesy, and respect the two ladies should be first served. 'Germans first and ladies afterwards. That was always their style,' said Madame Lassime. The German officers who were billeted in the place where the ladies were staying stated that they had the greatest respect for England, and never thought she would desert them. 'We shall be in Paris in three weeks,' was their confident boast, 'No power on earth can resist us.' For a short time the two English ladies had as their guests four German officers from Wurttemberg, who conducted themselves tolerably well while in the house. The next visitor was a Berlin doctor, whom Madame Lassime characterised 'as the greatest brute on earth.' He arrived about eight o'clock in the evening, and, finding the house not so spacious as he probably anticipated, he stamped through the rooms speaking in angry tones, expressing his hatred of the English, and forbidding English language to be spoken in the house. He insisted on the drawing-room being converted into a bedroom for him the night he arrived, and he so insulted Madame Lassime that she refused to see him during the whole of the ten weeks he was a guest. He afterwards, however, thanked her for the way he had been waited upon during his stay. German officers were billeted in the house afterwards, but they were doctors each time, and never maintained the reputation of the first.*

*"We were very near to starvation at one time," continued Madame Lassime, "and we lived for some days on swedes. The Germans were all very great cowards, but they never missed a chance of inflicting any little annoyance or inconvenience upon the inhabitants. One thing after another was forbidden, and they spared nothing. We were very fortunate, and, considering that we were English, they treated us with some amount of respect. That was, I think, because we never gave in to them. Most of the inhabitants were fined or imprisoned, or sent to Germany. At one period they demanded all the feather beds, and took away the mattresses. They also took possession of all brass and copper articles, even down to the candlesticks on the piano and the brass on the coal scuttle. We lost less than anyone else, but they stole pounds worth of metal and other articles. There is nothing I have read in the newspapers that I have not experienced there. Their impudence was amazing. They searched every place in the house, even the beds, but, by the ingenuity of Miss Abbott and a neighbour, we managed to save several valuable things."*

*On one occasion, Madame Lassime proceeded, an officer came to the house, and, in a hesitating manner, asked her as to the state of her finances. "I know nothing more about it than you yourself. I am completely ruined," replied Madame, and the officer, finding there was nothing more to be obtained, promptly retreated. Another time an officer in German uniform made some enquiries at the house – the Germans seemed always to regard the English ladies with suspicion – and, from the remarks which he dropped, and his speech, Madame Lassime is convinced that he was an English spy in the pay of the*

Germans. He promised to take tea with them but never returned. When the Kaiser and the Crown Prince and Ludendorff and Hindenburg came to Avesnes extreme precautions were taken, and the inhabitants were forbidden to look out of the windows or from the door. Madame Lassime did, however, see Hindenburg in the street on one occasion, "but," she remarked, "I never wished to see the Kaiser." They never stayed at the same place for any length of time, so afraid were they of their safety. The Germans were thorough cowards, and the soldiers never had any heart in the war at all. One governor took it into his head to compel every man of about fifty years of age and over to learn German in classed every morning.

The saddest sight of all, though, went on Madame Lassime, was when the Germans sent away all the young girls from fourteen to eighteen years of age. One girl died on the road, and another died shortly after arriving. Some of them, however, afterwards came back. I was afraid lest they should take Miss Abbott, but they never did so.

Another incidence which showed their arrogance and boastful confidence was at the time of the metal collection. Madame Lassime had a splendid globe map on a stand. This was smashed by the Huns in their endeavours to get at the metal part. Miss Abbott, who never showed fear of the enemy, remonstrated with the marauder, whereupon he remarked, "Madame will have no need of that after the war. France will be reduced to that (measuring an inch or so on his fingers)."

The contents of Madame Lassime's wine cellar were stolen, and so suspicious were they that some might be hidden, that the Germans even dug in the garden, but without result. It is amusing to relate that they first dug up the garden belonging to a lady friend of madame Lassime in mistake, and on finding no liquid refreshment they consoled themselves with the choicest of the strawberries growing there.

In the early days of their trial, the two English ladies sheltered an English soldier for five days, and he escaped the enemy and returned to England. In another house a mother and two daughters kept in hiding another Englishman for 18 months, but when a warning was issued that all such refugees would be shot if they did not surrender, he gave himself up and has not since been heard of.

As previously stated, Madame Lassime and her companion were regarded with some suspicion because they did not seek to leave the country by the limited means available. Their disinclination was explained by the elder of the two ladies as due partly to the indignities which such persons were called upon to undergo, and the probability of all papers and valuables being taken from them. During the four years or more of the German occupation Madame Lassime had kept concealed upon her person certain important documents and valuable jewels, which, in the very careful search to which persons leaving the country were subjected, would almost certainly have been confiscated. Their house and contents would also probably have been lost to them.

Through the kind thought of Major Wynch, a resident of Lyme Regis, who sent a motor car to Avesnes from Boulogne, the two ladies were enabled to leave on the 2nd April. The English and French soldiers reached Avesnes on November 6<sup>th</sup>, and they made quite a fuss of Madame Lassime who had endured the trials so bravely.

"Compared with a great many of our friends," Madame Lassime concluded, "It is really wonderful that we escaped as we did."

During her enforced stay abroad Miss Abbott has had the misfortune to lose both the father and her mother. She only heard of the death of her father twelve months after it took place, and Madame Lassime had a similar experience with regard to the death of her sister. They were unable at any time to communicate with their friends in England.

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<sup>1</sup> George Benson Coode and the Victorian Poor Laws, Joe Flood (online)

<sup>2</sup> Female Punch Contributors, 1859-1918, Katy Birch PhD in English literature (online)

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