

Hillman & Bond Copy Letter Book June 1925 – April 1926

Summarised by Team member Derek Perrey (2009)

The work of this practice is predominantly conveyancing, probate and debt collecting. There seems to be no tort nor High Court actions. There seems to be less direct involvement in property management. Rather more of the letters are typewritten, but by no means the majority. The typewriter was a Remington. The form of concluding a letter to a civil servant with "Your Obedient Servant" previously in use by HJR, has been dropped for the most part and it is therefore even more extraordinary to find it used in a letter to the GPO's solicitor. (p352 30-9-1925). However, by 6-10-1925 commonsense has been restored and it is "Yours faithfully". (p370).

At one stage it looks as though HJR wanted to become more liquid as he offered to sell 8 Cobb Road to Mr. Lane for £800 and remain his tenant. (p176 12-8-1925).

A letter of 20-6-1925 (p7) is signed by H. W. Long and although it is to a Mr. Wren who does some agency work for H&B as it is written in the first person it may be presumed that Mr. Long is a qualified solicitor, if not a partner. A further confirmation is at p232 where there is a note of certain matters dealt with in the absence on holiday of HJR, and a letter (p233 27-8-1925) in which occurs the phrase .." we understand from Mr. Ramsbotham that he has written you.." That someone has been entrusted to continue the work of the practice becomes plain from a letter to HJR reporting on various matters and, in the concluding paragraph "We are certainly kept hard at work.." (p241 29-8-1925). That the person was qualified appears from his addressing clients in the first person and sending out letters as Magistrates Clerk, although doubt is cast on this by HJR referring to "his clerk" being on holiday. (321 24-9-1925). All the letters in this period 22nd August to 5th September were typewritten. None of the copies was signed. The note to HJR opens "Dear Sir" and concludes "yours ffly". HJR took part of his holiday at "Cranleigh" Guildford. That was his Mother's home which, in February 1926 was agreed to be sold to a buyer, a Mr. Warren. The price was the same as that at which it had been purchased some four years earlier, namely £2,400. Added to that was £70 for fittings although it was actually to compensate for expenditure on improving the house. HJR confirmed this in a letter. (p814 24-2-1926). He agreed that May 8th should be fixed for completion. (p819 26-2-1926).

The practice of Mr. Matthew Colbeck Preston, solicitor of Lyme Regis, was intended to be taken over by Mr. J. A. Atherton on the death of the former in February 1925, but the widow "had some sort of row" with Atherton and cancelled the sale. HJR considers her "almost lunatic" and "desperately cunning."

Compared with the conveyancing activity of 1915/16 there is patently a great deal more conveyancing work and HJR attended lectures on the 1925 Property Legislation. However, HJR writes : ..."as here prices have fallen over the last few years."

A letter of 22 June 1925 (p14) to Bridgman Co reveals details of some part of the Hillman family. Miss Madeline Hillman gave the following information: she was born 21-7-1875; her brother Stanley on 27-12-1871; her sister Muriel 10-5-1873. Her other sister Miss Annette Madeline is uncertain about. The father was Robert William Hillman and the mother, Annette. They were all born in Lyme Regis. There were three other children born, all boys and all died early one as a baby and the others around 7 years of age. Their names were Robert, Frank and Wyndham.

In the matter of changing the trustees of the will of Mrs Jessy England there is the chilling specter of the beneficiary, Miss Alice Searle being in the care of Hanwell Asylum. The trustees are resigning and new trustees appointed. It is worrying that the trustees have allowed cash to accumulate because they have not seen ways of benefiting Alice, who has a life interest. (H&B to Mr. R.J. Holmes p183 18-8-1925).

Messrs. Joseph Britten & Sons are presumably brewers and are written to by H&B to tell them of the death of the licensee of **the Nag's Head** Lyme Regis, a Mr. Robert Lane and the wish of his widow to step into his shoes. (p185 14-8-1925) . A protection order was granted to Mrs. Lane enabling her to carry on until the next transfer day the 23rd September.(p207 19-8-1925). On the 17th September HJR in his role as Clerk to the Borough Justices found it necessary to give a reminder to the Brewers Messrs Joseph Britton & Sons Ltd. (p289), but that was inadequate because Mrs. Lane failed to give the notices she needed to. Because it was considered a bona fide mistake she was granted a further period to apply on the 25th

November. (p316 23-9-1925). On 25-11-1925 HJR wrote to Customs to tell them that a transfer licence had been granted. (p540).

There is a sense of malicious enjoyment in a letter (p21 24-6-1925) imposing fines for failing to produce a driving license (sic) of 10/- and a further fine of £1 for 'leaving the car'. The letter is addressed to a gentleman in Whitehall in the Office of Parliamentary Counsel.

The procedure for A&F Wiscombe to purchase the workshops and premises occupied by them was put in hand on 25th June 1925 (p24). No address is given in the letter but presumably the workshops and premises referred to are those in Church Street. A banker's draft for £367 - 1 - 6 was sent to complete. The purchase was completed on the 27th July. (p55 1-7-1925).

There would have been some deposit and part payment made already and some apportionments, no doubt. It would be a guess to say that the purchase price was £400, but the fee charged was £8 including Stamp Duty of £2. (p34 26-6-1925). It was claimed by Wiscombe that the vendors had agreed to pay, but this was disputed and eventually settled at 50/50. HJR then dropped his charge from scale charge of £6 to 4 guineas. (p205 18-8-1925). In a letter to a Mr. Banister (p15 22-6-1925) HJR says he "has seen E. Gollop ..who hopes for her cheque this week." Miss E. Gollop was sent a cheque by Mr. Banister for her share of a legacy, but he deducted £4, because he considered she had been overpaid that sum as Board wages during March last. Miss Gollop did not sign the receipt and it was sent her again. (p40 27-6-1925). *It is questionable whether HJR should have asked for a receipt without advising that the set off was not legal and giving a receipt would waive that fact. The set-off was an entirely different account, subject matter and parties. Miss Gollop was also a client. Judging from another case, the receipt was almost certainly for the value of the cheque plus the £4.* Miss Gollop's receipt for £80 was eventually sent to Banister 2nd July 1925. (p62) from which we are told that Miss Gollop's first name is **EMILY**. Miss Gollop also figured as a client and H&B wrote to Mr. Case, the father of her child, to threaten appearance before the Justices if he did not keep up payments. (p856 12-3-1926).

Catherston Farm, owned by Co. Bullen was, less 19.5 acres which he retained, let at a rent of £350 being £150 less than paid by the previous tenant, a Mr. Meaden. (p28 25-6-1925). The fortunate new lessee being Mr. Wallbridge.

£1 - 7 - 0 was sent by post to the Axminster County Court being 9/- Judgement fee and 18/- for a warrant of execution. (p31 26-6-1925).

Mr. Clarke completed his purchase of 11 Broad Street on the 1st August 1924. (p23 26-6-1925).

It appears that Mr. Cottrell did not wish to continue with his purchase of a house in Washington Terrace from Mr. Washer. HJR points out that there is a contractual commitment but Mr. Washer is prepared to allow £250 of the price to remain on mortgage at 5.5%, or to convey to another person at Mr. Cottrell's direction. One imagines that this was an unsuccessful try-on by Mr. Cottrell to get the price reduced by £45. (p38 27-6-1925).

A significant period in the history of land ownership is revealed by a letter to the Ministry of Agriculture enclosing an application for the redemption of tithe rent charges. (p49 30-6-1925) *The series of land reform Acts came in in 1925, some aspects of which had been anticipated since 1922.*

Pecuniary legacies were dutiable at 10% and shares in companies at 5%. HJR to Mr. Banister. (p52 1-7-1925).

Miss Dewe sold 33 Silver Street, now called the Orchard, to Mrs. Hansford, (p59 2-7-1925), and the borrowed deeds belonging to Miss Stanger Leathes were returned to Lloyds bank, Lyme Regis.

Mr. S. Wellman was a tailor (p77 6-7-1925). Messrs. Radford & Radford were undertakers. Mr. C. Forward of Axminster was a solicitor. (p79 7-7-1915) and was written to by HJR as Clerk to The Assessment Committee in trying to get a downward rate adjustment on 8 Lyme Road Lyme Regis, which HJR owned and was occupied by Miss Annie Clarke. (p91 10-7-1925). Old Turnpike Cottage was owned by Col. Bullen and let to a labourer at 3/- per week. (p81 7-7-1925)

The winter of 1924 and the Spring of 1925 were very wet and resulted in there being a landslide at the West end of the town of Lyme Regis. Near neighbours of Miss Philpott thought that the ditch between Holm Close garden and a field No 206 on the Ordnance map was to blame and made suggestions as to how Miss Philpott could improve the situation for everyone. There was no suggestion of a contribution to the work of creating a collecting area. (p84 8-7-1925). The letter to solicitors is headed Col. H.C. Henley, deceased, Lyme Regis property. The

original proposal was not regarded as satisfactory and negotiations continued and involved Wiscombe. Eventually it was agreed, on the suggestion of Mr. Love of Chard, that the pipe should discharge direct into the reservoir. (p260 9-9-1925)

Letters of the 8th July 1925 send a postal order for 4/6 for fines payable to the police fund and a cheque for £3-10-0 for fines imposed under the Motor Car and Roads Acts. (p85).

H&B acknowledge the receipt of a PO for 6/6 being a day's wages for their client Mr. Tern in connection with the English Forestry Association. (p97 11-7-1925).

Number 7 Cobb Road was sold for £290, or perhaps a little more. The charge made by H&B was £2 – 10 – 0.

Iddesleigh, Ozone Terrace , Lyme Regis was owned by Mr W.R. Wallis who is proposing to lease the property to Miss G. Harlock for 7 years with break clauses. The terms are a rent of £50, payment of the rates and water rates, being responsible for internal repairs and paying the landlord's legal costs on the letting. (p192 15-8-1925).

Mr. E. Clarke apparently owned 8, 9and 10 Marine Parade Lyme Regis and other property. Mortgages on the three named properties being held by the Ancient Order of Foresters. (p197 17-8-1925).

The estate of Emma Stanger Leathes deceased was probated at £11,068 -12 – 11. (p238 31-8-1925)

Mr L. E. Owen of Norwood drove a car without being licensed and is fined £2 for the privilege. (p247 2-9-1925). Mr. F. A. Hake of Oxford was fined £5 "..for driving a motor car (cycle) at a speed dangerous to the public." (p254 5-9-1925).

The Watch House, the Cobb Lyme Regis was sold by the Admiralty to Messrs. John Cleeves Palmer and Robert Henry Palmer for around £600 (p285 8-9-1925).

The house named Olinka belonging to the estate of Stanger Leathes was sold by auction to a Mrs. Purvis for £1600. (p268 10-9-1925)

A reminder of the time at which these letters were written is attained by the requirement of the Prudential that a form they wish signed must be signed by two responsible householders, who must be men. (p285 16-9-1925).

Mr. W.M. Wallis emigrated to Australia. (p287 17-9-1925).

Unlikely as it may seem Mr. Stock (part of a rifle) made an agreement with A. Partridge for shooting rights at Hartgrove Farm. (p302 19-9-1925).

HJR advises Mr. Lane of Ravello Uplyme Road that Mr. Wiscombe had acquired the freehold of the Bay Hotel and wanted to borrow £2,000 for about 6 months and was willing to pay 6 or even 6½%. (p374 7-10-1925). He got it from Mr. Lane and applied to draw down the last £200 on the 17th November 1925. (p511).

Amongst the properties owned by Col. Bullen is Star Cottage Charmouth for which the quarterly rent is £1 - 19 - 0. The tenant is Mr. H. Elliott. (p375 7-10-1925).

Miss Cooper's maid injured her arm and a compensation claim was made for the loss of her services. H&B explained that the rate payable was 19/4 per week but no payment would be made in respect of the first 3 days, if the loss of services should be less than 4 weeks. (p378 7-10-1925). The maid returned to full work on Monday 16-11-1925. (p518).

Mr. Lane of Ravello Uplyme Road completed the purchase of 9 Sherborne Lane. (p450 27-10-1925). Mrs. Purvis completed the purchase of Olinka from Mr. T. D. Stanger Leathes for £1600. (p446 26-10-1925).

There was a fire at the Standard Inn (Probably in Lyme Regis, because the Justices are going to consider alteration at "the Standard" on 25-11-1925 p515) resulting in a small claim. (p504 14-10-1925). The value of which was assessed at £4 - 17 - 0. (p510 17-11-1925).

Mr. A. Wiscombe instructs HJR to deal with the GPO in connection with the sale of part of No. 36 Broad Street. A.W is concerned to see that he approves the GPO plans before contracting to sell, as what is done might affect his privacy. Considerable time passed before completion was finally settled on in the fourth week of February 1926. The purchase price being £1,050. (pp804/5/6/7 22-2-1926).

In a response to an enquiry by Mr. A. Symons HJR says that it is true that he is looking to sell his house in Broad Street known as Pyne House and tenanted by Mrs. Johnson, at £38pa, which HJR describes as an absurdly low figure. He declares that he will not sell for less than £1500. It has 5 bedrooms plus two attic bedrooms and three reception rooms. There is also a bath with hot and cold water. The entrance hall was used by the Late Mr. Johnson as a shop. The town gas is connected as is the sewer. There is a small garden and an entrance from Marine Parade. (p530 21-11-1925). When Mr. Staples sold Monmouth House to the GPO at a

price of £1,050 (p825 27-2-1926) HJR wrote to suggest that Mr. Staples should buy Pyne House at £1,600 explaining how the value would increase once Mrs. Johnson was no longer in occupation. *Why then should HJR wish to dispose of it, rather than of Mrs. Johnson?* Worse was to come, Because that attempt to win a purchaser apparently failed ,so HJR probably realised that people were suspicious of his sales pitch for the reasons italicised above. A new tack occurred to him which was to pitch the sales effort in the third person. Mr. A. Bennett was the target and was told that the Johnsons would like to purchase, but the Owner did not accept their price and the house he had mentioned was going to auction and the Johnsons might well be able to buy it. HJR suggests that he might like it at £1,500 and possibly let the tenants occupy two rooms for the time being. (p879 19-3-1926). Then HJR wrote to Mr. Allen saying that he had reason to believe that the tenants might shortly be leaving and he might also sell for £600 or lease 8 Cobb Road or a trifle less. His tone is positively nonchalant.(p929 31-3-1926). HJR must have been hopeful because he wrote to Father B. Palmer of The Rosary Pound Road Lyme Regis to enquire about his selling of his house, but HJR had understood that the Father would only sell to a person of the Roman Catholic faith, which excluded HJR. (p900 24-3-1926). Apparently the reply was encouraging and HJR made an offer of £875 and declared his intent to sell off part of the garden as a building plot. (p944 7-4-26). HJR's hopes concerning Pyne House were justified as he was able to send Mr. Allen a draft contract. (p993 20-4-1926)

Miss Irene Seward, a resident in Lyme Regis, expects a child in Midsummer and has agreed with Mr. William Vincent that he shall pay all expenses in connection with the birth; 10/- weekly until the child, if male is 16 and if female 14. Sign an agreement, or else. (p533 23-11-1925.)

By 4 -12 - 1925 Mr. Vincent had not signed or responded and Miss Seward wanted to be married to another before the birth of the child.(p577). That information was as manna to Mr. Vincent because no proceedings could be taken by Miss Seward once married and living with her husband. Some promises were made in a letter to H&B which their client expected to be honoured even though she had decided to marry "...on Saturday.." (p630 23-12-1925). The usual half yearly outgoings on Fairfield, Lyme Regis were paid by HJR as noted in his letter to Miss Monro of 31-12-1925. Rent of watercourse 10/-: Rates on Fairfield £21 - 10 - 2. The Cottages rates came to £4 - 2 - 2. (p573).

From a letter to Bridgman & Co Solicitors it seems that Miss Muriel Hillman was in a mental hospital and Annette Hillman was .."in very poor circumstances.." (p578 4-12-1925).

Burridge Charity made itself responsible for distributing blankets to a selected few nominated by the clergy. Letters from HJR to the Baptists and to the Congregationalists asked each for three nominations and that the nominees should present themselves at the Town Hall noon New Year's day. (p587 8-12-1925).

A letter (p634 23-12-1925), concerning 8 Cobb Road reveals that a very real danger of land slip had resulted in a reduction of rateable value. The property next door had been bought the previous year for £1,000 and had now been sold for £300.

Mr. Lewis was a thief and had a conviction when he broke into the house of Mrs. Pitcher. He was obviously not very competent as he was seen by a number of witnesses and admitted to the charge of breaking and entering. It was presumably daytime when this took place as he would otherwise have been charged with burglary. The magistrates sent him for trial, and HJR as their Clerk referred the matter to Mr. J. L. Terr the Clerk of the Peace at Dorchester and to Nantes Maunsell & Howard, solicitors, Bridport to prosecute the case. (pp638 & 639 29-12-1925).

Compared with 10 years earlier the Law Society subscription had increased 50% from 1 guinea to £1 - 11 - 6. (p651 1-1-1926).

Mr. A. C. Drake, schoolmaster, was re-appointed probation officer for the coming year. (p667 6-1-1926).

H & B Completed the sale of the last plot of land on the Woodmead estate on behalf of Mr. Chalker to Mr. Ridgewell. (p668 6-12-1926).

HJR wrote to Mr. Stevens in connection with the Henley Estate Lyme Regis in a vague letter concerning the possibility of his granting an option over three fields to some unspecified collection of people, but ultimately and possibly the Corporation, to be developed as a recreation ground. Also unofficially to tell him that the council was looking at two other fields for housing. (p694 14-1-1926). In a further letter HJR writes ... I understand the Council claims under a Charter of King Charles 1 to take stone or sand from anywhere within the

Borough for the purpose of repairing the sea walls etc..." (p699 16-1-1926).

In response to an enquiry about Magistrates' Court sittings HJR gave the following information although not all sessions had been fixed :- Indictable offences any day: Petty Sessions on Wednesday: annual licensing 10-2-1926 and transfer licenses on days to be fixed when the annual licensing hearing takes place. (p721 23-1-1926).

HJR wrote to Dr. Wyatt Wingrove at an unreadable address in Lyme Regis to tell him that he had been visited by Mrs. Bragg (mayoress) on the subject of a blue shark presented to her and caught last Summer by Mr. James Pascall Glanville (aged 78 years) and presented by him to Mrs. Bragg. HJR requested his addressee to draft a text for a plate to be affixed to the case in which the shark was then preserved, so that it could be presented by Mrs. Bragg to the Museum. (p745 2-2-1926).

Dr. WW should have seen it coming as HJR had already told him how to draft the text, so HJR amended it (in red) and passed it to Mrs. Bragg. Mr. Curtis, a fisherman, went to a lot of trouble with the shark and was thought worthy of substantial remuneration, according to Dr. WW. HJR in reporting this to Mrs. Bragg considered that observation to be worthy of an exclamation mark. (p755 5-2-1926). February 8th. Sees HJR conceding that he has no objection to the proposed wording. (p758). The Council for the Museum accepted the donation, but Mrs. Bragg felt that Dr. Wyatt Wingrove ought to have a mention and that it ought to be described as a "specimen of local natural history," but HJR did not think it strictly correct and wished these words omitted, which would then appear to be Dr. WW's decision. (p766 10-2-1926). Dr. WW says he is satisfied with the inscription now proposed, but feels a piece of paper stuck on the glass would suffice. A brass plate would cost 25/- to 30/- and HJR passes this information on to Mrs. Bragg. (p773 12-2-1926). On 15-2-1926 HJR had a letter from Mrs. Bragg on the subject (which he hoped was for the last time) and passed it on to Dr. WW with the request that her proposed inscription be put in hand with some suitable person and the bill sent to Mr. Bragg. Obviously she was not a shrinking violet, even if it was two years before women attained the right to vote. It emerged from this letter that Dr. Wyatt Wingrove lived at Marine Parade Lyme Regis. (p780).

HJR tells an enquirer that in 1913 the Council bought two acres of rough cliff land with building potential for £1250. (p757 5-2-1926).

Mr. J. W. Miller of Bingley Farm Hawkchurch wants to buy a field adjoining the farm from the Tellworth? Estate at £175 and would like a mortgage. HJR suggests to Mr. Clarke of the Ancient Order of Foresters that he might like to put up £100 to £120 at 5%. (p771 11-2-1926).

A notice was published to tell the public that the Licensing Committee would meet on 10-3-1926 to consider time changes to opening hours on Sundays Christmas Day and Good Friday and inviting comment. (p776). Having met, the decision was made that the hours should be 12 noon to 2pm and 7 to 10pm.

H&B charged half a guinea to check a title for Lloyds Bank Lyme Regis. (p832).

HJR's brother, the Rev. E.F.S. Ramsbotham, was a client for the purpose of selling his house to a Mrs. Jennings. (p871 17-3-1926). HJR agreed a completion date of 19-4-1926. (p935 3-4-1926).

A dozen copies of the Dorchester Law Society's conditions of sale cost 6/4. (p878 19-3-1926). Mr. P. Foxwell as tenant to Mrs. McMichael and Miss Clarke (50/50) of a house in Bridge Street pays £17 - 10 - 0 per quarter. (pp914/927 27/31 -3- 1926).

Mrs. Talbot enquired through HJR as to the possibility of purchasing her Mother's grave in perpetuity and whether it could be enclosed in curbing. The answer to both questions was affirmative and the latter would attract a fee of £9. (p931 31-3-1926).

H&B sent a letter to A&F Wiscombe to tell them that Mr. Lane would not make any further advance on the Bay Hotel, but would be prepared to advance a further £500 on mortgage on another property. (p936 3-4-1926). None too surprising when it is noted that the Wiscombes are paying 7% on Mr. Lane's loans. (p966 14-3-1926).