

The Grove, Pound Street , Lyme Regis

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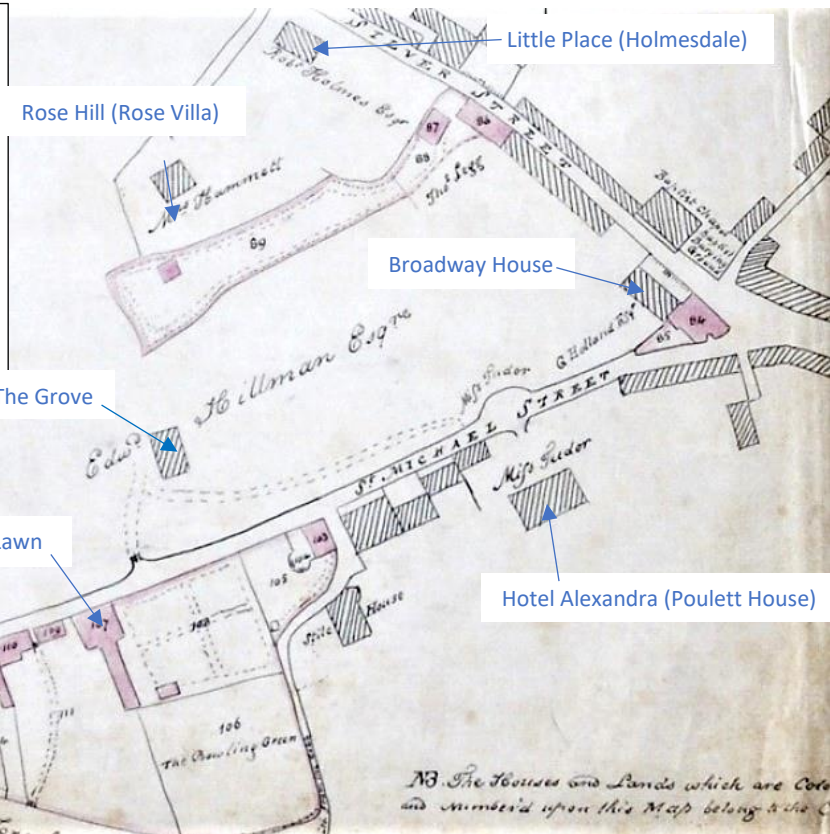
Graham Davies and Fred Humphrey, July 2020

The Georgian villa, *The Grove* (c1800-1952) no longer exists; it was destroyed by fire on January 30, 1952. The site in Pound Street, Lyme Regis of the former house and circa 4 acres of land is today occupied by ten residences; the coach-house still exists as a garage and the tack room is now a shed, but still has the saddle-hangers.

Extract from John Drayton Survey maps 1824

Property owned by Corporation marked in red.
Annotated text in blue using today's names for identification (older names in brackets).

John Drayton, merchant, was commissioned to survey all the property owned by the Lyme Regis Borough Council to estimate what mortgage could be raised to repair the damage caused by storm damage to the town and Cobb in 1824. He produced 16 maps with accompanying schedules.



Pound Street was named
St Michael Street circa 1790 to 1850

Timeline of Residents⁽⁷⁾

1802-15	Abraham Spooner Lillingston
1822	Henry De La Beche ⁽⁶⁾
1823-38	Edward Hillman
1842-71	Robert Hillman
1881-98	George Fergus Newall
1898-1905	Mrs Alice M Gill
1908-10	John Mitchell Hole
1911	Uninhabited
1913-18	Thomas Mortimer Budgett
1919-21	Frederick George Philpot
1922-28	Miss Dora L Carver
1930-49	Thomas Edgar Gooch
1950-52	Mrs Beryl Louise Gooch

The above timeline refers to known dates that persons occupy a property. Unless stated, no distinction is made between owner or tenant. Occupations may well extend beyond the known timeline.

Abraham Spooner (1770-1834) of Elmdon House, Warwickshire, married Miss Elizabeth Agnes Lillingston⁽¹⁾, only daughter and heiress of Luke Lillingston, Ferriby Grange, Yorkshire in October 1797, changing his name to Abraham Spooner Lillingston⁽²⁾.

His interest in geology brought them to Lyme Regis⁽³⁾ where he lived in a large house and grounds⁽⁴⁾, and there are local memories⁽⁵⁾ that Lillingston built and lived in *The Grove*. In 1802 he bought adjoining parcels of land formerly in the occupation of Edward Lock and invested in land at Carswell Farm, Uplyme. He had a family pew at Lyme's parish church of St Michael the Archangel, where three of his children were baptised.

Lillingston lived in Lyme until the death of his father, Isaac Spooner, in 1816 when he returned to Elmdon.



In 1823, Edward Hillman, a 75 year-old wealthy solicitor, bought *The Grove* from Abraham Spooner Lillingston. In addition, he purchased those parcels of land that Lillingston had acquired in 1802, part of which he quickly sold as building plots leading to the construction of Rose Villa and Holmesdale.

Edward Hillman (1748-1838) originated from 'Winkton in the County of Southampton.'⁽⁸⁾ His son, Robert Hillman (1804-71), and grandson, Robert William Hillman (1829-1900), were also solicitors, both becoming well known in the town through marriage and professional and political roles.

The family name continued from 1900 in a local solicitor's practice of *Hillman and Bond* until 1946 after which it faded from local memory.

Edward Hillman bequeathed *The Grove* to his son Robert Hillman who married Mary Drayton⁽⁹⁾ of Lyme Regis in March 1828. They baptised four sons in 1835, including Robert William. It is not known if they were already living at *The Grove* at that time, but the 1841 census records Robert living at the house with his wife, four sons, two daughters and four servants.

Entries in various directories help to map out his legal career. An early partnership with Henry Waring, followed by working on his own before forming a partnership with his son, Robert William Hillman. *The Grove* is frequently quoted as his business address, but he also had an office in the town. Robert Hillman was mayor of Lyme Regis on four occasions between 1842 and 1862.

When Robert Hillman died in 1871 *The Grove* was put up for sale.

The House, approached by a carriage drive, stands in four acres of pleasure grounds, including an orchard. A paddock & cottage adjoins which are to be sold with the property. The Residence contains drawing and dining rooms and a library on the ground floor, with 10 bedrooms, good cellarage, general offices and outbuildings. Abundant supply of water on the premises. (The Times, July 25, 1871)

The house was again put for sale by auction in August 1875.

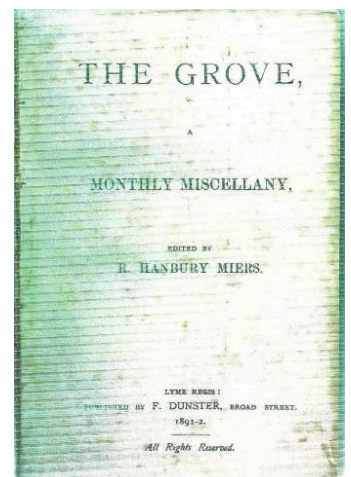
The Grove, standing in its own secluded grounds of 3.5 acres, is a stone built residence, and contains four reception rooms & conservatory, eight best and three servants' bedrooms with good domestic offices. (The Times, July 17, 1875)

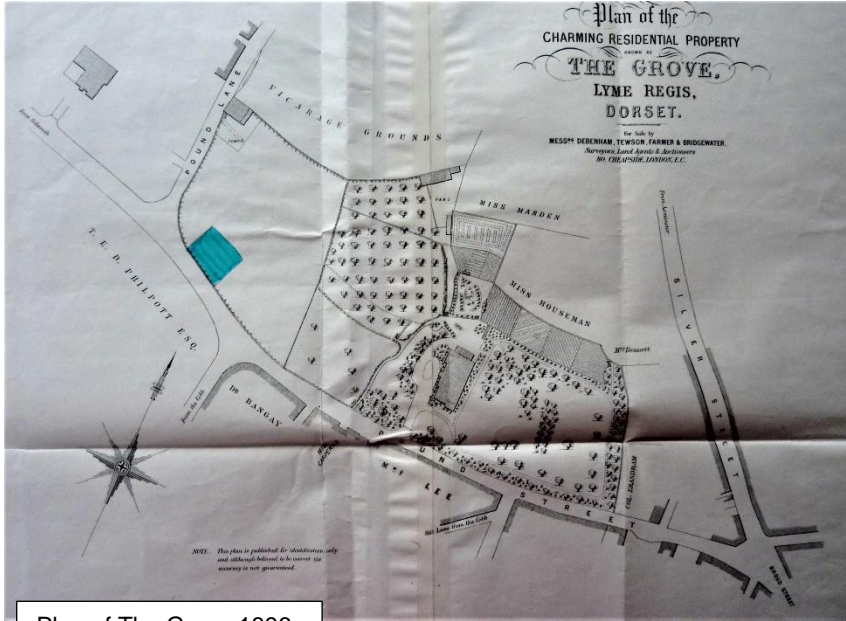
In 1881, George Fergus Newall, a 38 year old solicitor, is living with his wife Catherine at *The Grove*, with a cook, parlour maid and house maid. He owns the house and probably purchased it around the time of their marriage in 1876.

The Grove is rare in having lent its name to a monthly miscellany published 1891-92. 'The magazine is indeed a miscellany, with articles ranging from the local (Why Lyme should have a railway or electric light) to the rather less fascinating (A quarter of a century in the Punjab).'

⁽¹⁰⁾

Newall became a J.P., his nephew Fraser, a future captain in H.M. Army, was living with them in 1891, and a newspaper cutting notes a visit to *The Grove* by Colonel & Mrs Bonham Carter and family in 1893. For the Queen's Jubilee celebrations on June 20, 1897, 'lanterns, candles and lights of every shade illuminated the trees and hedges at *The Grove* and Presbytery and a large bonfire blazed in the field above; there were a few fireworks and pistol shots. About midnight the town settled down to its usual quietude'





Plan of The Grove 1896

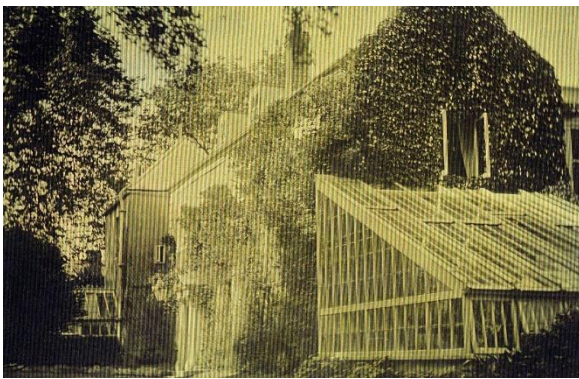
In June 1896, *The Grove* is put up for sale.

The Grove, Lyme Regis. House overgrown with roses, ivy and other creepers. Approached by a carriage drive. It has eight bedrooms, bathroom, dressing room, drawing room opening into conservatory, dining room, library, and excellent suite of offices. The reception rooms open by French casements to the pleasure grounds, which slope away from the house. They include a tennis lawn & terrace walk. Also, a kitchen garden, two-stall stable, coach-house, fowl-house, piggeries &c, grass paddock, orchard, small rookery & gardener's cottage. The whole lying within a ring fence enclosing an area of 4-3-20. [almost 5 acres] (The Times, June 13, 1896)

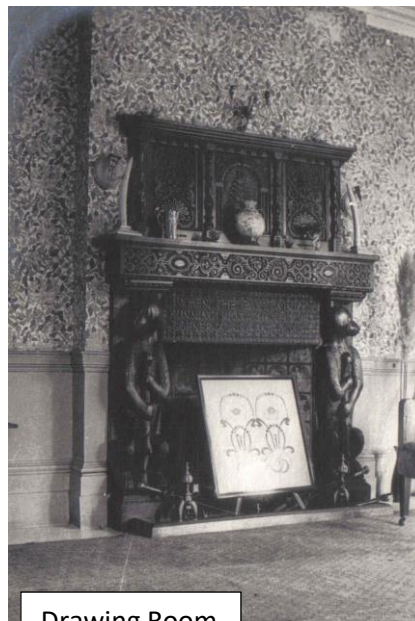
Lyme Regis Museum has benefited from donations given by Mrs Alice Mary Gill and Nancy Budgett, who both lived at *The Grove*.

In 1864, Alice Mary Morris, of Woodford, Essex, married Reginald B E Gill, of Bickam, West Devon. Reginald was a banker. They lived in the district of Buckland Manachorum, finally living at Bickam. After her husband died in 1897, Alice lived at *The Grove* (1898-1905) before a move to Tunbridge Wells. In 1937 she donated two 19th century paintings of Lyme Regis to the Museum.

Nancy Budgett was a child when she lived at *The Grove* (1913-18). In later life, she donated the only photos that the Museum has of the Grove, and a plan of the property as she remembered it.



Jo Draper (1949-2017), former consultant Archivist at Lyme Regis Museum believed that the strange mid-Victorian fireplaces were made up from earlier carvings, probably Continental.



Drawing Room



Morning Room

Following the death of her husband, Mrs Beryl Gooch put the Grove up for sale in 1951.

The Georgian residence, situated in Pound Street, with its walls lined with Virginia Creeper and Wisteria, has its principal accommodation arranged on two floors only. Constructed of brick and stone with slated roof, it comprises – Ground Floor - Entrance porch leading to entrance hall. Drawing room with casement to conservatory and garden; carved oak mantle-piece and tiled fireplace. Conservatory with tiled floor. Dining room with casement to garden. Morning room with casement to garden; carved mantle-piece and fitted bookshelves. Cloakroom and wc. Domestic Offices - Kitchen with new Beeston boiler with tiled surround and cupboards. Scullery with sink. Cool larder with slate shelf. Storeroom; maids' wc; coal cellar etc. First Floor - 5 bedrooms, all with basins and fireplaces. Bathroom. Hot linen cupboard and housemaid's sink. Separate wc. Four attic bedrooms on second floor. Electric light, power and gas. Main water and drainage. Radiators to hall and landing. The garden and grounds include large orchard, kitchen, fruit and flower gardens, lawns, terrace, herbaceous borders, and some old trees. Large span greenhouse, frames and potting shed. Two stall stable and harness room with loft. Garage. Freehold price - £18,000

*'One of the biggest fires in Lyme Regis for many years completely gutted the centre part of The Grove, Pound Street on Wednesday evening' [January 30]. Mrs Gooch was away from her home; the alarm was raised by a passer-by. 'Within two or three days a contract was due to have been signed for the purchase of the premises by St Gilda's School'⁽¹¹⁾ (Bridport News, February 8, 1952). The Borough Council showed interest in building a municipal car park on *The Grove* site but that came to nothing. In 1954, Mrs Gooch sold the property to one Andrew Beattie, a retired colonial, who between 1958 and 1964 developed and sold portions of the land, dividing it into 10 separate properties.*

Appendix

Timeline of Residents⁽⁷⁾ (page one) - From the time that Abraham S Lillingston returned to the family home at Elmdon Hall in 1816 to when he sold *The Grove* to Edward Hillman in 1823 the property would have been occupied by tenants or used by the Lillingstons as a second home in Lyme. Apart from De La Beche's residence in 1822, the authors have been unable, to date, to discover such information. They believe that the residents between 1823 and 1905 are also the owners of *The Grove* to which may be added the Gooch family (1930-1951). The short term occupancy between 1908 and 1921 suggests tenancy to which may be added the authors' finding that a Ralph Homan of Tunbridge Wells has a freehold interest in *the Grove* (1912-15). Mrs Alice Gill lived in Tunbridge Wells but the electoral registers also record her living at *The Grove* with Miss Carver (1922-26), perhaps indicating a continued financial interest in the property at that time.

(1) Marriages in Walker's Hibernian Magazine, 1771-1812

(2) Settlement on the Marriage of Abraham Spooner Esq with Mary Agnes Lillingston of her Real Estates, August 14 & 15, 1797. Document in private collection

(3) Lyme Regis census 1801, Dorset History Centre

(4) Lyme Regis Land Tax records 1802.

A rental value of £20 per annum defines Lillingston's property as one of the largest in the town.

(5) Memories of Selina Hallett, *Lyme Voices 1*, Lyme Regis Museum

(6) De La Beche was a geologist, palaeontologist, illustrator, Fellow of the Royal Society and friend of Mary Anning

(7) The timeline of residents has been compiled from several documents including electoral registers, census records and trade directories.

(8) A white stone memorial plaque in Lyme's Parish Church, St Michael the Archangel

(9) Mary Drayton was the daughter of John Drayton, a prominent Regency and early Victorian merchant of Lyme.

(10) *The Grove, Pound Street* by Jo Draper, All Over the Town magazine, Sept 2006

(11) St Gilda's Convent School was situated in Stile Lane on the other side of Pound Street to *The Grove*. It closed in 1967, became known as Farnham House and was converted into flats.

General References

Ancestry.co.uk - Dorset (Western), England Electoral Registers 1888-1922

Lyme Regis Census Records

Lyme Regis Land Tax Records 1802 and 1822

Dorset History Centre - Lyme Regis Electoral Registers 1922-1980

Lyme Regis Census 1801