



Upton
Country Park

**DISCOVERY
PROJECT**



Upton Memories

A Collaborative Community Project with Bournemouth
University





At the start of our story, Upton House is a private house owned by a wealthy family, and this remained the case until 1957. Pictured above is Lady Mary Llewelin as a child and some of the staff who were employed by the Llewelins during their time as owners of Upton House.

The Upton Memories Project

Working with students from Bournemouth University, Upton Memories is a project curated by you, our community.

Over the past months, we have been collecting your pictures and stories of Upton Country Park, to chart how the Park has changed within living memory and to create new visitor experiences so that current and future generations can connect with each other through memories of our much-loved estate.

We have produced an audio archive and booklet to make sure that these wonderful experiences are recorded for the future. So share your memories with us and let us know how Upton Country Park has played a part in your story. We encourage you to make use of the audiobook as you walk through our beautiful park.

Introduction

This booklet aims to provide a historic overview of the House and Country Park, both through archival research and the memories that we have collected from members of the public who visit, remember and interact with Upton House and the wider estate.

We start our story by taking a largely historical approach, giving a voice to those who cannot tell their story. As we move through to more recent times, the voices and memories of those who have contributed to the project come to the foreground. This represents how the Park has transitioned in itself. It is no longer an estate that caters to a small minority of wealthy elites, it now belongs to and is used by the people.

We do not want any more memories lost, so please do consider sharing your stories and help us create and cement the legacy of Upton Country Park.

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Period/Tenant:

Timeline of Ownership

The Spurriers
1816 - 1825

The land passed to Christopher Spurrier on the death of his father. He built the house between 1816 - 1818.

The Tichborne-
Doughtys
1826 - 1901

An extension was added to the house during this time, including a chapel. Controversy surrounded the family in a case known as "The Tichborne Claimant."

The Llewellyns
1901 - 1957

The Llewellyns owned Upton House through both wars, at which time much of the woods was forested for timber production. The Llewellyn family gifted the house and grounds to Poole Corporation and the National Trust to be enjoyed by the people of Poole.

Poole Corporation
1957 - 1961

What to do with the house and grounds?

The Prince
1961 - 1969

Prince Carol rented the house in return for helping with the upkeep. His lease was terminated after non-payment of rent.

Poole Corporation
1969 - 1976

Several possibilities were considered during this time, before the Park was opened to the public as a Country Park.

Country Park
Open to the Public
1976

The only Country Park in the Bournemouth, Poole and Christchurch district opened to the public for the first time.

The Discovery
Project
2019

See Upton Country Park's website for current news about the project.

The Family History of Upton House

The Spurriers 1816–1825

The Upton Estate came into the hands of William Spurrier in the latter half of the eighteenth century. William was a Poole merchant who amassed his fortune on the back of trade with Newfoundland. However, it was his son, Christopher, who built Upton House between 1816 and 1818 in the Italian style. 'No expense was spared' when it came to building the house. In 1825, the west wing was added in what has been described as 'cottage style'.

Christopher Spurrier aspired to acquire a seat in Parliament, at a time when the Newfoundland trade was in decline. As he sought to finance an expensive campaign, he neglected his business and his family. His campaign was successful, and he became MP for Bridport in 1820, after having sold his Compton Abbas estate for £16,513 and mortgaging Upton House for £12,000. He held the seat for less than 6 months. He also had mounting gambling debts, and in 1825 he was forced to put the house up for auction.

Christopher Spurrier died penniless in 1876.

The Newfoundland Trade

Newfoundland was discovered in 1497 and was instantly recognised as one of the largest fishing grounds ever found. Abundant fish stocks tempted the more adventurous mariners in Poole, allowing some to amass significant wealth. The growth of the town and the Newfoundland trade are closely tied together. From the late 1600s until c.1815, Poole experienced unprecedented prosperity – evidence of this prosperity can be seen in the beautiful Georgian houses and public buildings – Upton House being one example.

Did you know?

The house has been noted as inspiration for Wyndaway House in Thomas Hardy's *The Hand of Ethelberta*

A primary student's artistic interpretation of Spurrier's beautiful architecture



Fun fact!

It has been said that Christopher Spurrier wagered and lost his last remaining silver teapot on a maggot race.

"Every room had huge windows and they were absolutely bathed in sunshine.. I think it's Georgian, the house. A really beautiful house."

Angela Dennett
visiting in the 1990s

"They told us a bit of history about the house and the people that lived there and we had a tour around.

It was an interesting hour."

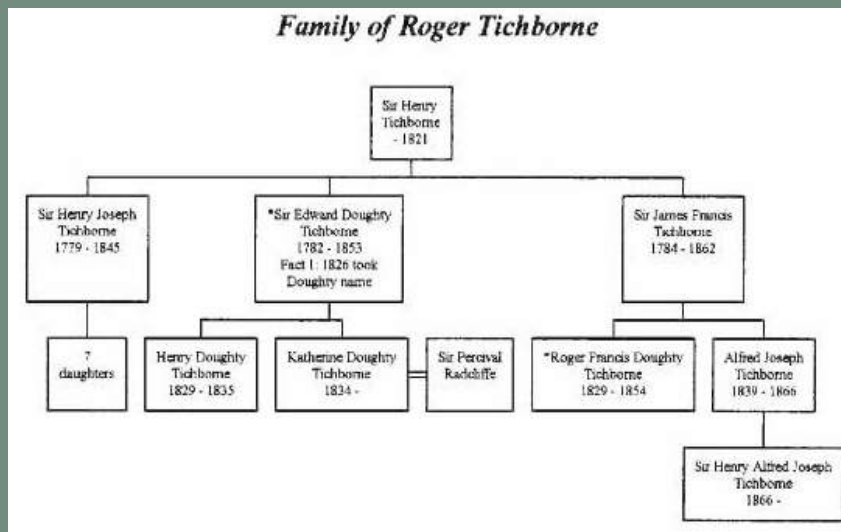
Megan Wright
recent visit

The Tichborne-Doughty Family

1826-1901

Edward Tichborne-Doughty bought the house and estate in 1826. Edward was the third son of Baron Tichborne of Tichborne Park (one of the oldest and richest families in Hampshire). With an allowance of £500 a year, Edward started out life working on the Duke of Buckingham's sugar plantation in Jamaica. His circumstances changed in 1826 when, to the astonishment of his family, he inherited the fortune of his fourth cousin, Elizabeth Doughty, on the condition that he adopted the name Doughty and continued the Doughty line. As befitting such wealth, this new "county family" needed an appropriate house and estate. Aged 46, Edward arrived at Upton, where he built extensions to the existing house, including the family chapel in the east wing.

At the time when Edward was due to succeed his brother as Baron of Tichborne, there was the issue of who would inherit Upton as Edward had no male heir. When Edward became Baron in 1845, it was agreed that his nephew, Roger Tichborne, would claim the estate when he came of age. Roger was no stranger to Upton, having spent many summers there, but after declaring love for his cousin, he was banned from the estate by his aunt and uncle in 1852.



The Tichborne Family Tree
Here we can see Edward's relation to Roger

Resigned to this, Roger set sail for South America and later disappeared and was presumed drowned. When Edward died in 1853, Roger's father James took his title. After James' death in 1862, Roger's brother Alfred took the title and became the 11th Baron of Tichborne. However, Alfred was made bankrupt in 1863. Roger's mother, Henrietta, had always refused to accept that her son had died. She proceeded to launch a campaign to find him, advertising for news of him. In 1866, a man appeared claiming to be Roger.

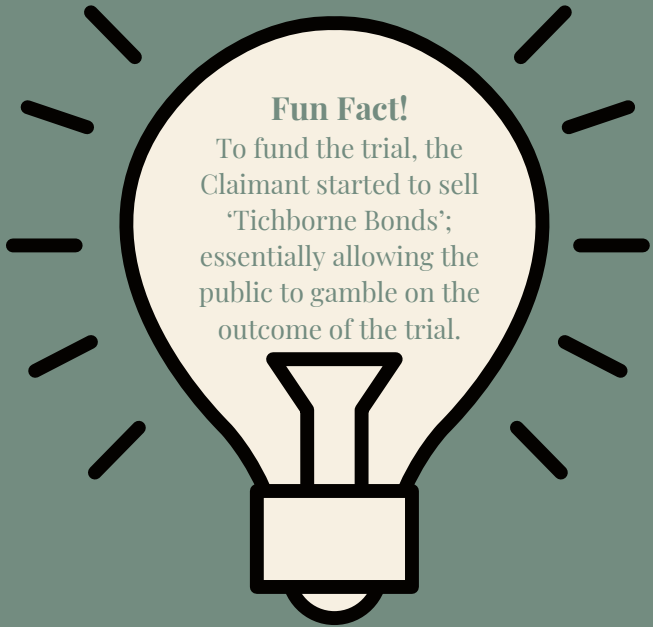
The 'Titchborne Claimant'

Lady Tichborne had never come to terms with the prospect that her son might be dead. She posted advertisements around the world pleading for her son to return. This call was answered when a butcher responded to the adverts, writing from Wagga Wagga in Australia. Despite the fact that he had been described as shorter and fatter than her son had been, and that he had lost his French accent entirely, and he no longer had a tattoo; his unlikely story was given credence as he suffered from the same genital malformation as Roger. Many family members rejected the idea that he could be Roger, and after Lady Tichborne's death, a trial ensued that lasted 102 days, came to cost £200,000 and completely bankrupted the Tichbornes.

This trial took place when forensic science was in its infancy, when most people had no need for a passport and had little, if any, legal documentation. As such, even for the courts, it was difficult to know for certain who this man was. This case split Victorian society. The Establishment rejected the idea that this man was Roger, arguing that he was Arthur Orton. However, among the working-classes the Claimant was something of a hero. They claimed that the Claimant was a victim of a conspiracy by the elite and the Catholic church. At one point there was even talk that the trial might start a ‘revolution’ or even a civil war.



This is an artist's interpretation used as evidence of the facial similarity between Sir Roger and the Claimant from: *The Trial at Bar of Sir Roger C.D. Tichborne by Dr Kenealy (1875)*



When the trial collapsed, the Claimant was declared Arthur Orton and not Roger Tichborne. He was immediately arrested for perjury. When the Claimant was released on bail, he went around the music halls, addressing huge crowds. He was a popular guest at dinners and parties even as the criminal trial proceeded (which lasted a further 188 days on top of the first trial). He even received fan mail from female admirers.



Public interest in this story was so great that souvenirs of the trial were created, including ceramics, pottery, handkerchiefs, medallions and toys. There were also pictorial souvenirs and many cartoons seen throughout newspapers and magazines of the period.

The Claimant was sentenced to 14 years hard labour, of which he served 10 years. Support for his cause actually increased while he was in prison. However, after his release, interest waned. He died in poverty with his wife, Lily Enever by his side, on April 1st 1898. He was buried in a pauper's grave, however the Tichborne family did allow for his coffin to bear the name ‘Sir Roger Charles Doughty Tichborne’ – showing an element of doubt continued to exist both after his trial and after his death.



Picture left: Five figures, c1875. Painted plaster. The figures represent participants in the Tichborne case. The young Sir Roger Tichborne stands with his mother, Lady Tichborne on the left hand side. The candle-snuffer, c1875 on the far right is modelled as Sir Henry Hawkins, prosecution counsel. All from the Willett Collection of Popular Pottery at Brighton Museum.

The Claimant brought over 100 witnesses who argued in his favour, including many of Roger's fellow army officers, and the former valet to Edward Tichborne-Doughty, Andrew Bogle.

Years prior, Edward had brought Bogle, who was formerly a slave on the Jamaican plantation Edward had worked on, with him to Upton. He went on to marry a woman from Poole, Elizabeth Young, who then became a nurse to Mrs Doughty at Upton House. His ties to the estate, Poole and the family are considerable.

After the death of Sir Edward, Bogle decided to leave Upton House. He retired, received a pension and then emigrated to Sydney, Australia, with his new wife. Bogle remained in contact with the Tichbornes and knew that Roger's mother still believed her son was alive. He promised to keep an eye out on the streets of Sydney for her son. When the Claimant made himself known, Bogle identified him as Roger. However, there lies a question as to whether Bogle and the Claimant worked together to conspire against the Tichbornes and defraud them of their wealth and estate. Bogle travelled back to England with the Claimant. He visited the Tichbornes in both France and England alongside the Claimant. However, the Tichbornes stopped his £50 a year pension after hearing of his support. Bogle became a key witness for the defence when the trial started. When the Claimant, and two other witnesses were found guilty of perjury, Bogle was not considered to have lied to the court or to have conspired against the family.

Bogle was seen to be blameless in the eyes of the court. The judge declared that he was an honest man, although he was mistaken in believing the Claimant was Roger and demanded that the Tichbornes reinstate his pension. The Tichbornes continued to pressure Bogle into a confession of conspiracy even after the trial, but Bogle never changed his story. He died in London in 1877.

Andrew Bogle



The Llewelin Family

1901-1957

In 1901, Thomas John Llewelin and John Alfred Wigan purchased Upton House, along with 930 acres of the park, including Upton Farm and several tenancies, for £18,110. It was bought for the occupation of William Llewelin and his wife Frances Mary, nee Wigan, and their three children: William (known as Bill) Wigan, Margaret Mary (known as Mary) and John Jestyn (known as Jay). The family made several alterations to the house. They converted the chapel into a dining room, a priority for them as they were a Church of England family and not Catholic. They also converted the former kitchen in the west wing into a squash court. Tragedy struck the family in 1907 when Mrs Llewelin died in a motor accident near Merley Gates. William went on to marry Ada Elizabeth Wigan, who was Frances Mary's second cousin, in October 1908 and Ada's five children from her first marriage; Henrietta, Frances, Georgiana, Helen and Clara, all came to live at Upton House. It is suggested that the reason for alterations and extension to the east wing of the house was so that the five girls could live there. Just after the war, in 1919, William Llewelin went on to serve as High Sheriff of Dorset, but sadly, he died by 1927.

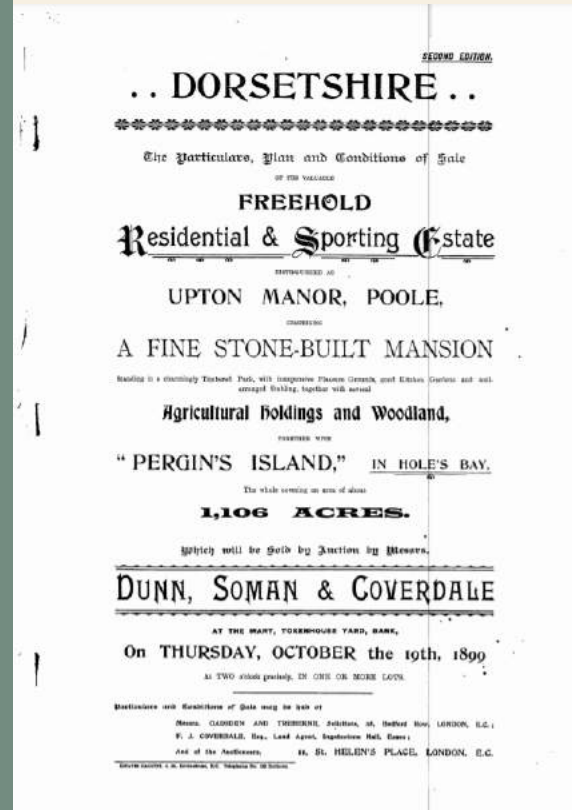
The Llewelins made many alterations to the park itself, most notably between the years 1901 and 1924. William Llewelin built upon what Christopher Spurrier had already initiated, and changed the shape of the park from what was a 'dome' shape to more or less what we can see today. They also added several garden buildings, some of which remain today, including the newly renovated dog kennels.

The Llewelins and Upton in World War I

William's sons, Bill and Jay, served in the Great War. Bill served as a captain in the 4th Battalion Regiment in India and the Middle East. To commemorate their safe return, William had the gates to the rose garden erected, and a celebratory plaque made (which remain at the park today).

"As a child, being taken there... a proper house with butlers and cooks. It was a grand world from what we were used to living in. I lived in a pub in Poole."

Sue Riggs talking about her visits to the house in the 1950s



An advert for the sale of Upton House and the surrounding grounds c.1899



The Pine Clump

The story of The Pine Clump came to our attention through one of our interviewees, when he first heard the story, he did not believe it until he investigated further:

"There's even a bizarre story which I never believed, that in the First World War, there were airships kept in the woods at Upton, which sounded ridiculous to me, because an airship is a great big thing that blows around in the wind and why would you possibly keep one in the middle of the woods, but a local chap who's involved with the Dorset Wildlife Trust, he researched that and one day when I was at Upton he showed me this amazing photo of the woodland just the other side of the bypass from Upton House and into a sort of channel cut through the trees you could see this airship peeping out and then when you looked a bit closer you could see, among the conifer plantation nearby you could see a big circular area cleared where they'd had some tents so obviously the people who were looking after the airship were based. So then I thought this story, which I'd always been a bit sceptical about, was true and there was the proof. When you looked again at the old maps you can see that the area where the tents were, they'd cleared a big area in the conifer plantation and then you looked at a map a few years later and you could see that the trees had started to re-grow and they were, as you'd expect, they were not just conifers, but broadleaf trees and scrub and so on, then you looked at a map about ten years on, in the late 1920s and the wood had become a conifer woodland again, so the estate or the family who owned the estate, had they not only had the first trees that were planted there but when the airship had gone, they've re-planted it as forestry. So you got the idea that they were actually practising proper timber production, not just planting nice trees around Upton House, although they did that as well."

Nick Woods warden from 1983 -2008



This is the image named in the above quote. It is from an aviation publication called *Cross and Cockade International Journal*, vol. 33, no. 1 (2002) pg.

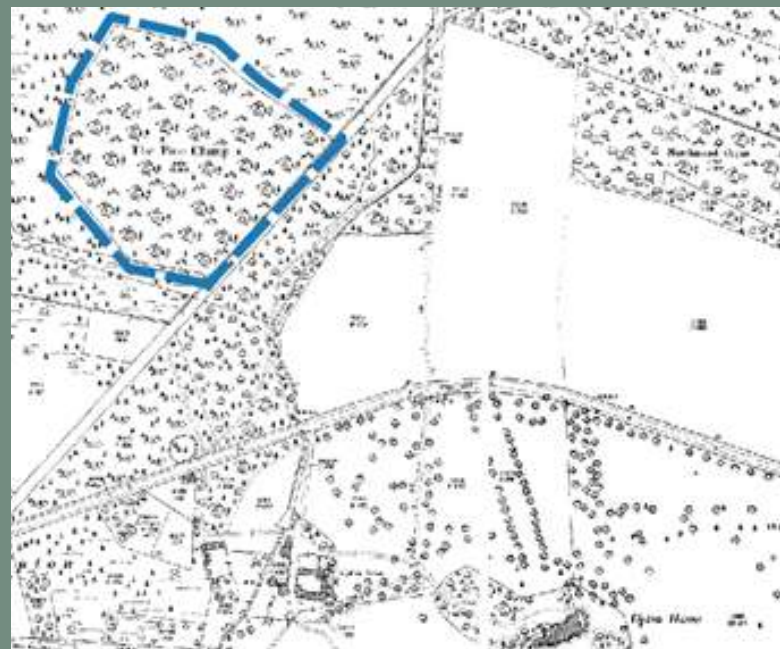
24.

There was also an airship, with a camp surrounding it, hidden in the trees of Upton in the First World War in an area known as the Pine Clump. Upton Country Park archives contain quotes from those who remembered the airship (anonymous quotes on the next page).

The Pine Clump

"I remember in the First World War in 1914-1918 that I was a lad living in Frampton Terrace. The Navy had an airship base in the Pine Copse at Upton and cut down trees and moored the airships to the ground so no-one could see them. When they flew off, they passed over Upton with their two engines running. They patrolled along the coast and the sea looking for German 'U' boat submarines. They carried small bombs ready to drop on them. When they flew back over Upton, they had ballast in the form of sand and metal balls. To land they released the ballast over the fields but some fell in the gardens in front of Frampton Terrace. We boys used to play marbles with them."

"The airship were in the trees at Upton, at the bottom of the hill on the left hand side, opposite the Llewellins. The trees were cut down a certain width through and those airships used to set down below, I do not know if anywhere else had airships but they could get them down below the trees and would not be seen for a long way. The barrage balloons were left up all the time. The airships belonged to the Navy, they were cigar shaped, but not as big as the Zeppelin, with 2 engines and used to go up and down the Channel looking for submarines, they were English."



Proof of this seemingly far fetched story can be seen in these Ordnance Surveys maps. The left map, from 1889, shows the area with conifer woodland, and the area is unnamed. On the right map, a subtle contrast shows that between 1924 - 1930 (after the war) the area consists of mixed woodland and/or scrub, implying it has been cut back and left to re-grow, is enclosed by a fence, and named as 'The Pine Clump'. This area is no longer part of the Country Park, which features at the bottom of the images, but was part of the estate when the Llewellins owned the land. It is now part of Upton Heath.

The Llewellyn Family

Bill Llewellyn went on to take up his father's position as High Sherriff of Dorset, while also maintaining a prominent career in the prison service, pioneering the first Open Borstal at Loudham Grange in Nottingham.

Jay had a Parliamentary career from 1929 to 1945 rising to Cabinet level and becoming the Minister for Food during WW2. He was made Baron Llewellyn of Upton and sent to Rhodesia and Nyasaland as first Governor General in 1953, a post he held until his death in 1957. Upon his death in Rhodesia, there was a very large procession for his funeral, as documented in the *Rhodesia Herald* pictured below:



Lord Llewellyn was such a prominent figure in the political landscape of Britain, that even the Queen sent a wreath to lay for his funeral.

Mary played a prominent role in the civic life of Poole. She was a member of the Girl Guides from 1917 to 1954, forming the first Upton Guide Company in 1917 and allowed the Guides to hold camps on the grounds of the estate. She then went on to become the first female Sheriff of Poole, and then the first female Mayor and Admiral of Poole in 1951, holding the post in 1953 as well. Alongside this, she was a magistrate for 35 years and a Councillor from 1937 to 1954.

On leaving the Council she assisted her brother Bill, until his death in 16th of November 1961. Prior to his death, Mr Llewellyn gifted Upton House, and 55 acres of the park, by Deed of Gift to the Borough of Poole. After this, he and Mary relocated to Bere Regis. When the grounds opened to the public in 1976, Mary became the first President of the Friends of Upton Country Park, an organisation that still runs to this day, Mary died on the 11th of March 1983.

"I remember having a campfire in the woods there with Hamworthy Brownies in the 60s"

- anon

The Llewelin Family

Ian David Hamilton submitted his story of being an evacuee in Dorset during the Second World War to the *People's War* website. He expresses fond memories of Upton Country Park, and of Mary Llewelin:

"I was the youngest in the group of some 20 boys plus organisers and helpers who set off for Upton near Poole on 19th August 1939. I imagine that the adults in the party made certain that we boys enjoyed the camp and were insulated from any talk of war. None of their doubts and uncertainties was ever transmitted to me or any of the other boys for that matter. We were due to return to London on 2nd September but were suddenly confronted with the news that we were to stay in Dorset for the foreseeable future. Rather than continue under canvas, which was not an option, we were taken under the wing of Miss Llewellyn who owned and lived in Upton House, a stately home nearby. She had strong connections with the Guiding movement and clearly had an affinity for our plight...

... Christmas 1939 was helped along by all of us being invited round the Christmas tree in the main house and each being given a present by Miss Llewellyn. Parlour games were also organised for us. Col. Llewellyn, her brother and an MP was also present, appearing as somewhat of a father-figure."

Ian David Hamilton

Jan Sheridan, who kindly offered to be interviewed for the ongoing Memories Project, shared stories of her grandfather, who was gamekeeper and woodman at the time the Llewelins were at Upton. She talks of their fond relationship with members of the family:

"My grandfather worked there...He was a gamekeeper and woodman. We used to go up there in the house and explore a little bit... and they had a dumbwaiter which is... where the food would be lifted up from the kitchen to the dining room. And I can always remember it had a chair in there... Grandad would put us in there then would pull the rope and leave us halfway there, halfway in the dark- frighten us to death! Miss Llewelin would even come to his house for an afternoon cup of tea and cakes... they were sort of like part of the family quite honestly."

Jan Sheridan



Jan's grandfather, Charles Dunford, pictured with Miss Llewelin's dog, Nell. Photo taken at White Lovington in 1975.

Prince Carol of Romania

Prince Carol and his family were the tenants of Upton House from 1961-1969. The Romanian royal family's refusal to accept him as a legitimate prince resulted in him moving to England. The controversial nature of his tenancy at Upton House is of great significance to the history of Upton Country Park.

The Prince's father was the Crown Prince Carol of Romania and heir to the throne. In 1918, he deserted the Romanian army to cross the border into Ukraine and marry the Prince's mother, Ionna "Zizi" Lambrino. The marriage was a severe violation of the Royal House's Statute, which prohibited the marriage of the heir prince to a commoner. Despite the risks, the pair were married in Odessa on 14th September 1918.

The marriage of the Prince's parents sparked outrage and conflict within the Romanian royal family. Prince Carol's grandfather, the then King Ferdinand, forced the annulment of the marriage in January 1919 through the Supreme Court of Romania. When pressed to rejoin his regiment after the annulment, the Crown Prince renounced his rights to the throne and served his notice on 1st August 1919.



Prince Carol in his later years



Crown Prince Carol and Ionna "Zizi" Lambrino, Prince Carol's parents c. 1918

Prince Carol was born on the 8th January 1920, outside of the 300-day period allowed to permit legitimacy after an annulment. His legitimacy as a member of the Romanian Royal Family and future heir to the throne was now in question.

However, the annulment was not published until 23rd April 1920, allowing one interpretation to place the birth of the Prince within the 300-day legitimacy period. Nevertheless, he was excluded from the Royal Family and harshly revoked of all royal duties.

In 1960, the year before the Prince moved to Upton, he married Jeanne Williams from Nashville, Tennessee. They had a son called Alexander, who was born in 1961 at Poole Hospital. Sadly, by 1970 the Prince and Jeanne were living apart. In 1975 there were legal battles over the custody of Alexander, and they divorced in 1977.

Prince Carol died in London on 27th January 2006 and was survived by his third wife, Antonia Ropner. His last wish was to be buried near his father, King Carol II, whose remains were returned to Bucharest in 2003.



Princess Jeanne and Prince Alexander on the lawn of Upton House

Poole Corporation and the Prince: 1957-1976

Poole Corporation acquired Upton House with 55 acres of land when William Wigan Llewellyn gifted the estate to them in 1957. Since the Corporation did not have a maintenance fund for the estate, a tenant was sought to maintain the house. Initially, efforts to secure a tenant were unsuccessful, and the house and grounds remained empty from 1957-1961. In 1958 Gerald Durrell had hopes to turn it into an animal sanctuary for 'rare wild animals' but plans for this fell through.

Without maintenance funding or a suitable tenant, the house and grounds began to fall into dilapidation. A condition report conducted by Donald W. Insall in June 1960 detailed the prevalence of dry-rot, the deterioration of slating and leadwork on the roof and blockages of the downpipes. It concluded that the house was in 'neglected condition.'

By 1961, there were several interested parties. These included the Wessex Regional Hospital Board, the Managing Director of the Isle of Wight Zoo and Mr W. France, who proposed to convert the house into a convalescence home. A Borough Architect was employed to lay out plans for holiday accommodation in the form of caravans and chalets in March 1961.

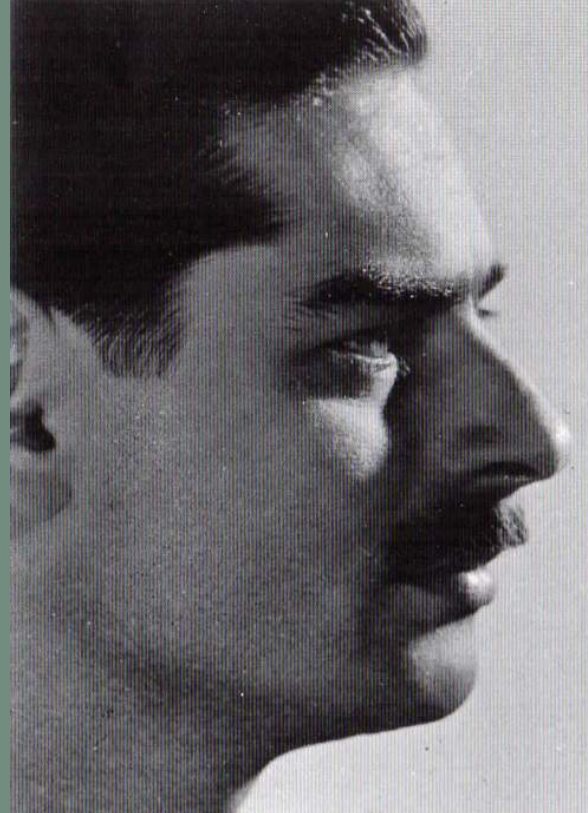
None of the proposed plans came to fruition, and Prince Carol signed a 22-year lease for Upton House in 1961 on the condition that he would maintain the property in exchange for reduced rates. The Prince moved to Upton with his second wife, Princess Jeanne, and their son was born in Poole hospital shortly after.

The Prince was employed as a carpet salesman and used Upton House to show off his products. He moved into the east wing of the house as living space.

During the early 1960s, Prince Carol and Princess Jeanne were invited to various functions and events in the town, including the Mayor's Reception. However, their glittering reputation began to fade amid rumours and gossip stories of sales promotions at Upton House and tradesmen taking the Prince to court.

"He was a pretty elusive character... he was only spotted on odd occasions coming and going."

Ian Orbell's memory of the Prince at Upton



Prince Carol, 1962.

Upton House as a home is new idea

THE future of Upton House—a fine Georgian mansion just off the Upton dual carriageway—is still not certain.

The house and some of the grounds were given to the borough last year by Mr. W. W. Llewellyn, brother of the late Lord Llewellyn.

It had been for 50 years the home of the Llewellyn family. But the Corporation couldn't decide what to do with the place. Suggestions were for:

- A youth centre — but Upton House is too far from Poole.
- A zoo — but this was too expensive.

Earlier this year Poole Council agreed in principle that an animal sanctuary should be set up in the grounds.

members agreed it could be used as a sanctuary. But most felt that the building and land could be better used as a convalescent home for Poole people. Council rate estimates show that the town spent an estimated £1,995 on the house last year. Maintenance of buildings cost £500, maintenance of grounds £750, fencing £375 and legal costs £370.

It is estimated that in the current 1958-9 financial year £690 will be spent on upkeep of buildings, and £1,000 on upkeep of grounds. Rents and garden produce will fetch about £145.

06/04/1958

09/04/58

DURRELL ZOO: NEW SCHEME

EXPLORER Gerald Durrell plans to bring an animal sanctuary to Poole.

Last year he had talks with Poole Corporation about a zoo at Upton House but the plans were killed by the credit squeeze.

But now he may bring a small zoo of rare animals to Poole. He wants a site of about 30-40 acres, and says Canford Heath or the land around Upton House would do very well.

The zoo would be open to the public. If all goes well, Mr. Durrell hopes to open it in the autumn of 1959 after he returns from Argentina.

Rarities

The animals he hopes to have in the sanctuary include the nearly extinct Pere David deer, the duckbilled platypus, and the koala bear.

The sanctuary would be run on the lines of the Severn Wildfowl Trust.

Mr. Durrell is optimistic. He told the Herald yesterday: "Poole Corporation have always been helpful, much more helpful than Bourne-mouth."

He lives at St. Alban's-avenue, Bourne-mouth.

Link With Escape Disturbs Prince

LONDON (UPI) — Exiled Prince Carol of Rumania urged the government Sunday to state publicly he has no connection with the escape of great train robber Ronald Biggs.

His demand followed two lightning swoops by police on estates with which the prince is connected—one he owns and the other he has bid for. In both cases police found no trace of the escaped bandit.

"He is distressed that his name should be involved," a business associate said.

12/07/1965

In July 1965, at the height of the couple's publicity, Dorset Police received a tip that shrouded the Prince in controversy. Ronald Biggs, one of the Great Train Robbers, had escaped prison in Wandsworth.

The authorities had conducted fruitless searches of one of the Prince's other properties, Winterfold House in Surrey, where they suspected Biggs to be hiding. A further tip claiming to have seen Biggs on the grounds of Upton House was too much for the police to ignore. They began a full-scale investigation into the Prince. On Saturday 10th July 1965, Dorset Police encircled Upton House with 100 police officers, some armed. The search was commanded by a Chief Constable and involved dog handlers, a naval helicopter and assault craft from the Royal Marines.

The police had found no trace of Biggs at either Winterfold or Upton but remained suspicious of the Prince. It was not until the Home Secretary announced in Parliament that he was no longer suspected of anything concerning the Great Train Robbery that the Prince's innocence was finally accepted.



Upton House for prince at £2 a week

UPTON HOUSE, the 176-year-old mansion on the edge of Poole (pictured here), will be leased to Prince Carol of Rumania at a starting rent of £2 a week—if Ministry approval is given.

The council decided that, following a wish expressed by Prince Carol and Princess Jeanne to take a lease on the house as soon as possible for a private residence, the Town Clerk should be authorised to complete the negotiation on terms offered by the Prince.

An option to purchase which the Prince desired will not, however, be granted.

In the four years the building has been empty a variety of uses have been discussed for it, most of them aimed at giving some community service and not reverting back to a residence for a private individual.

They included a golf course, hospital, even a zoo, but all these projects could have meant major alterations to the building and grounds which would have been permanent in their effect. As a private residence again the building and the grounds remain as they are.

BUILT IN 1785

The Prince—he will pay £2 a week for a year and then about £8 a week for Upton House—has already visited the place which was built in 1785 for the son of a local merchant who had made his money in the Newfoundland trade.

It was sold in 1824, Sir Edward Doughty Tichbourne being the next resident. The Tichbourne family sold out in 1900 to Mr. and Mrs. William Llewellyn and Miss Mary Llewellyn, a former mayor of the town, donated the property to the corporation.

Princess Jeanne is the 29-year-old daughter of a Wall-street banker. The Prince was born in 1919. The year before that his father, then Crown Prince of Rumania and later King Carol, had married Jeanne Lambrino, daughter of a senior army officer, but the marriage was later annulled.

In 1953 the Prince's mother died and he was then working as "Mr. Mircea Lambrino" in Paris as a bookbinder.

He claimed through the courts that he was the legitimate co-heir with ex-King Michael, and after a long legal fight, in 1957 a Lisbon court allowed the claim which a Paris court later upheld. In effect, this means he has a claim to a share of the fortune left by King Carol.



Prince Carol

05/07/61

"There was talk of it being the most expensive council house... in Poole."
Barbara Wathen's memory of the Prince in the 1960s

Although the Prince's name had now been cleared, his financial situation remained inconducive to the cost of renting a property with the grandeur of Upton House. In 1967, the Council issued a writ for the recovery of rent from the Prince. By February 1969, the relationship between the Prince and the Council had reached breaking point, and the Council's patience had worn thin.

A condition report conducted in June 1969 stated that covenants concerning both the interior and exterior of all buildings had not been complied with, and the outbuildings had been 'virtually ignored.' It also affirmed that few repairs had been completed regarding the squash court area and, overall, the grounds were in a state of 'extreme neglect.'

On 31st December 1969, the Prince formally surrendered the lease to Upton House by mutual agreement. The Council waived any outstanding rents, rates and insurance premiums. They would never receive what he owed them. Once again, the uses of the House were up for discussion. At the time, strongly expressed local opinion pushed for the park to be opened to the public.

Prince said to owe Council £10,000 on Upton House Prince gets a writ



A writ was served on Prince Carol on Tuesday by Poole's town clerk, following the failure to recover sums of money due to the council. The prince is a council tenant, a lessee of Upton House.

On August 8, the housing committee authorised the town clerk to take any action necessary for the recovery of the money unless payment was made within seven days. The council's maintenance surveyor was instructed to prepare a schedule of dilapidations at Upton House.

At that meeting it was reported that Prince Carol could not be contacted and so discussions between him and the sub-committee members as to the future of the property could not take place, although negotiations with Prince Carol's advisers had progressed.

Because of the Prince's

frequent absence from Upton House, the writ was being served by post after a special order made in court.

Declared Ald. Ron Hart in Poole council on Tuesday: "All the conditions and covenants have been blatantly ignored and we should go for a termination of the tenancy."

Ald. Leslie Miller, chairman of the standing and lettings sub-committee, said he thought that Ald. Hart could take it that the committee would be able to report on Upton House in a reasonable time, and he hoped that when the council met again they would have something to say that would be acceptable to him.

Grounds will be officially open to the public

22/08/1968

'Open grounds to public' call

The grounds of Upton House, Poole's No. 1 council home leased to Prince Carol of Rumania, should be thrown open for the recreation of the public, says Labour councillor Jim Purdie.

"I may be wrong, but when the Llewelin family gave Upton House to Poole Council, I think they did so for the use of the town.

"I consider that for too many years the grounds of this property have been denied to the public. The council is shirking its responsibility."

Much needed

Coun. Purdie, who is not so much against the Prince and Princess Jeanne remaining in Upton House, although he is critical of certain matters that have arisen during their tenancy, feels that the grounds of the house should provide a much needed open space for the borough.

"I was brought up in a city of open spaces, but when I returned there after 20 years those spaces were eaten up, and there was just a concrete jungle in their place. That is something I would never wish to see happen in Poole."

Coun. Purdie thought there was enough ground at Upton House to permit families to picnic and to enable them to go boating in Holes Bay. "It could be a great attraction, and after all it's not everyone who wants the beaches."

Provision of such an open space could cost only a relatively small amount, he believed.

Upton House — gift to the town

It was a pity the Mayor didn't approve of the Society of Poole Men's concern over Upton House, but to us it is irrelevant whether the tenant has 21 years, half this or any other period of his lease still to go.

We have written assurances from the Town Clerk that at the beginning of the lease, safeguards were included to ensure that the property GIVEN TO THE TOWN AS A GIFT would be properly maintained.

If statements are now made that the contents are private

28/02/1969

Upton park for public

Poole Council's finance and development committee, which now administers Upton House, will recommend to the council that about 25 acres—half the parkland—should be made available to the public as soon as possible.

A list of suggestions as to how Upton House itself might be used is being considered by the committee.

The committee considers offers should be publicly invited for an economic use of the house with or without the immediately adjacent garden. It is possible part of the garden may be used by the parks department for their new nurseries.

08/01/1970

Upton's house of mystery

UPTON HOUSE, THE CORPORATION-OWNED MANSION LEASED TO PRINCE CAROL OF RUMANIA, WAS THIS WEEK SHROUDED IN MYSTERY, ITS TALL GEORGIAN WINDOWS SHUTTERED AGAINST INQUISITIVE CALLERS

Repeated ringing of a door-bell got no response. This was Poole's grandest council house, whose alleged neglect was last week described as "a wicked thing."

Upton people spoke of not having seen the prince for many weeks. "He has become quite an unreal figure to us," said one resident. "I thought that maybe he and Princess Jeanne were living abroad."

Others believed he was living alone behind those blank windows. A light was said to have been seen there one night this week.

Then there are those who have reason to believe that the "royals" have found a new residence at Verdun, France.

But Mr. Ball, chairman of Bournemouth and Boscombe Light Opera Company, said: "Princess Jeanne may be away from Upton House temporarily, but last week she phoned and said she would be at the final performance of the Count of Luxembourg at the Pavilion on Saturday, February 15. They have been out of the country quite a lot. Once, three years ago, she flew from Portugal especially to attend one of our shows."

One council member, visiting adjacent property heard "foreign voices" coming from Upton House.

But less mistakable was the outcry at the council's housing committee meeting on Friday, when it was decided to instruct the borough architect to investigate the conditions of Upton House, as it was believed several items had fallen into "disrepair."

This was decided by the housing committee on Friday after Ald. Leslie Miller had declared that the Llewelin family, who presented the house to the council some years ago, were bitterly disappointed with the way things were handled.

13/02/69

"Prince Carol? I think he just sort of disappeared."

Barbara Wathen's memory of the Prince in the 1960s

A Lifetime of Change: Ian Orbell

Ian Orbell, born in 1938, has lived on Roper's Lane next to Upton Country Park since 1962. When Ian and his wife, June, decided to get married, his parents bought them the plot of land on which they have resided ever since. Ian has witnessed the evolution of Upton Country Park under its various historic ownerships including the Llewelin family, Prince Carol of Romania and BCP Council, and as such as had a fascinating view of Upton Country Park's great transformation during this time. Ian very kindly agreed to be interviewed to share his unique and wonderful memories of Upton Country Park over his lifetime. Ian was particularly fond of the peacocks which were popular inhabitants of the grounds some years ago.

Since retiring, Ian has found he has an impressive talent for artwork and has created some beautiful drawings of Upton House which he has shared with us (shown on the next page).

Ian has even participated in some art sale events in which stalls were set up in the house. The work he sold was mainly animal and pet portraits and all proceedings went to the local children's hospice, 'Julia's House'.



Evening walk with Ian's dog, Jake, in 2003



Ian and his wife June in 2009, on a morning walk around the park



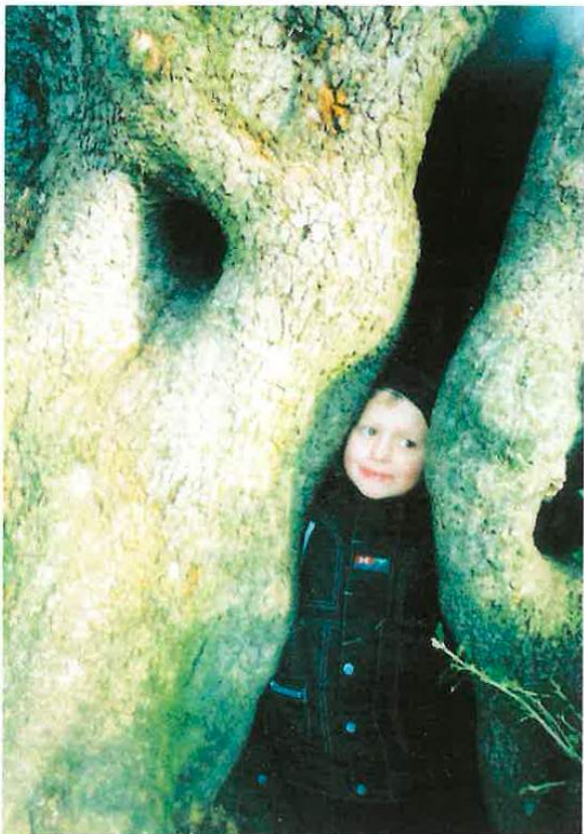
Ian's grandson, Jack, age 1 on the lawn at Upton House, 1996



1988



3 DRAWINGS I MADE DURING 2012/13



JACK @ 4 IN OLD TREE AT
BACK R/H CORNER OF HOUSE
1999.
TREE STILL THERE TODAY.



The picture above was taken in 1988 soon after Upton Country Park was opened to the public. Ian has been interested in classic cars for many years but had a change in 1988. The car in the image is a rare American-made Desoto of 1953. Ian was approached by a national magazine, 'Classic American', and they came to do a feature item. Ian suggested they do the feature at Upton House, which gave the Park publicity from a new audience.

Extracts from our interview with Ian Orbell

What's your earliest memory of Upton Country Park?

We had a dog...we used to walk it down the lane. And we knew obviously of the family existence, but we used to do a naughty and although there were private signs saying "keep out", we used to skip over the fence way down the lane into the lower woods of the estate and walk the dog with no bother whatsoever! And it was only if we did catch sight of family or staff members in the distance that we would turn in the opposite direction and go back over the fence.

What can you tell me about how things have changed on Roper's Lane over your lifetime?

The fence on the opposite side of the lane on the east side was the estate fence and all else that was on that side was a pair of very early cottages that belonged to the estate itself. These were occupied by Mr Dunford (Miss Llewelin's head groundsman) and in the adjoining cottage there were two elderly ladies, Kate and Violet- one being her cook and the other lady her housekeeper. But these three people were just lovely, lovely people and we had the pleasure of their company for some eight or ten years.

Do you get much opportunity to visit the grounds now? And have you had a chance during the lockdown?

Oh, yes. Living so close. I'm fortunate, and from opening my front gate I walk about twenty/thirty paces and I'm in the park entrance itself. And I walk it every day as near as I can without exception and to exercise. So, I've seen the progress on the park really from day one in 1962 when we moved here... during lockdown it's almost a case of everybody speaks to everybody... And an awful lot of people have almost got to know one another. So, it's become a really happier walking leisure space.

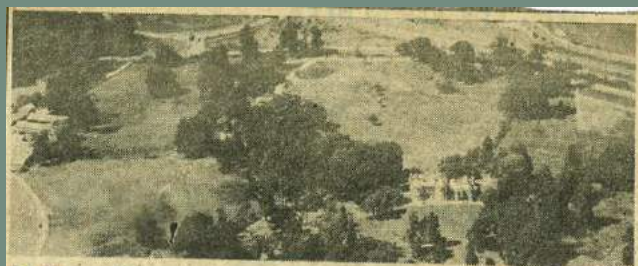
Leisure at Upton Country Park

When Prince Carol of Romania vacated Upton House (when his lease was terminated early), several ideas were put forward regarding its future. However, none of these private plans went ahead in the end, and the strong expression from the public to make it an accessible place of leisure was granted. Public access to the grounds was made available in 1975, and the introduction of the Upton Bypass later that year made it easier for local people to visit.

In 1976, public engagement with Upton House was fuelled further when the 'Friends of Upton Park' group was established. This increased means of engagement with the wider community was made even more significant with the official recognition and opening of the house as a 'Country Park'. The opening of the Friends' kiosk also marked the beginning of a new era at Upton Country Park and has been a vital source of revenue ever since. The public could now use the park as much as they liked - for free!

Since this establishment of Upton Country Park as a place of leisure, it has been regularly used by walkers, cyclists, families and more. The Park is popular amongst people of all ages and has hosted a huge variety of events all year round, including concerts, 'A Night At The Proms' with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, Santa's Grotto at Christmas time and an open air cinema.

1975 hope for Upton House



Upton opens up ...

UPTON HOUSE, one of Poole's architectural gems, is to open rooms to the public for the first time from tomorrow. (This aerial picture of the house was taken by Ken Hoskin of Kitchingham Ltd.)

Three rooms are to be opened on the ground floor as a result of nearly 25,000 being raised by the Friends of Upton Park for restoration of the house.

One will accommodate a national history exhibition, prepared by the recently-appointed warden, Dae Stephens, and a historical display and model of the park are also planned.

The opening of the new rooms coincides with the "Yokels Playtime" afternoon of rural revels including donkey derby, hand-milking competitions and sheep dog trials, arranged by Dorset Young Farmers' Club.

The three rooms will be open on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons and at weekends—and at other times depending on voluntary assistance.

Recent donations have helped boost the restoration fund to £9,000, but Friends chairman, Cliff, Bill Rigler, stressed funds, material and labour were still urgently needed.

A couple of 10 or 12-light chandeliers are being urgently sought by the Friends to complete restoration of the drawing room.

Disabled young people in Poole are to start work at the house under a new Manpower Services Commission scheme.

About half a dozen are to take part in the community project, reinstating old kennels, the poultry shed and iron railings in the park.

"It was the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra; it was a lovely atmosphere as we all sat down with our picnics and chairs. And, you know, the atmosphere was fantastic—open-air in June on a lovely summer's evening and you couldn't ask for anything better quite honestly."
Jan Sheridan

"We can walk it or cycle it... it's sort of all open air and there are several ways into it now. It's all brilliant."
Jan Sheridan

"I've been to the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra's Proms in the Park a few times. I went with work and it was a great social night out. picnic, great music and company away from work. It was on the big lawn area at the front."
Lisa Wansbrough

Many of the events held at Upton Country Park typically take place on the front lawn, which is recalled by many as simply 'the big field'.

"You've got some absolutely stunning views when you walk around...I'm a big believer that walking is good for one's mental health, you know, and I think Upton is one of the places to be for that."

Fraser Huskinson

"If we do a large family gathering, we normally do it on the main field because that's like a central location that we've always done, under one of the big trees. If we tell people we'll meet at the big tree they know what we're talking about."

Murray Knight

"We fly kites and we've launched rockets from there, and we used to meet up with friends there and have picnics as well."

Michelle Knight

"We would sometimes play games, like cricket, football and catch a ball. Things like that. Sometimes we'd take a tennis swing ball."

Lisa Wansbrough



Michelle and Murray Knight



Lisa Wansbrough

The images below show the contrasting uses of the grounds of Upton House over the last century:



A lifesize game of chess taking place on the front lawn of Upton House, believed to have been taken in the 1920s



A poster from one of the many successful concerts held at Upton Country Park

Upton Country Park has provided a beautiful setting for weddings over the last twenty years. Weddings run throughout the entire year and are hosted in the library and the estate rooms. Receptions are also held in the beautiful walled gardens area.



"My nephew used to do horse and carriage for weddings, he did one actually to Upton House and we went up and watched it come up through the drive and that was lovely."

Jan Sheridan

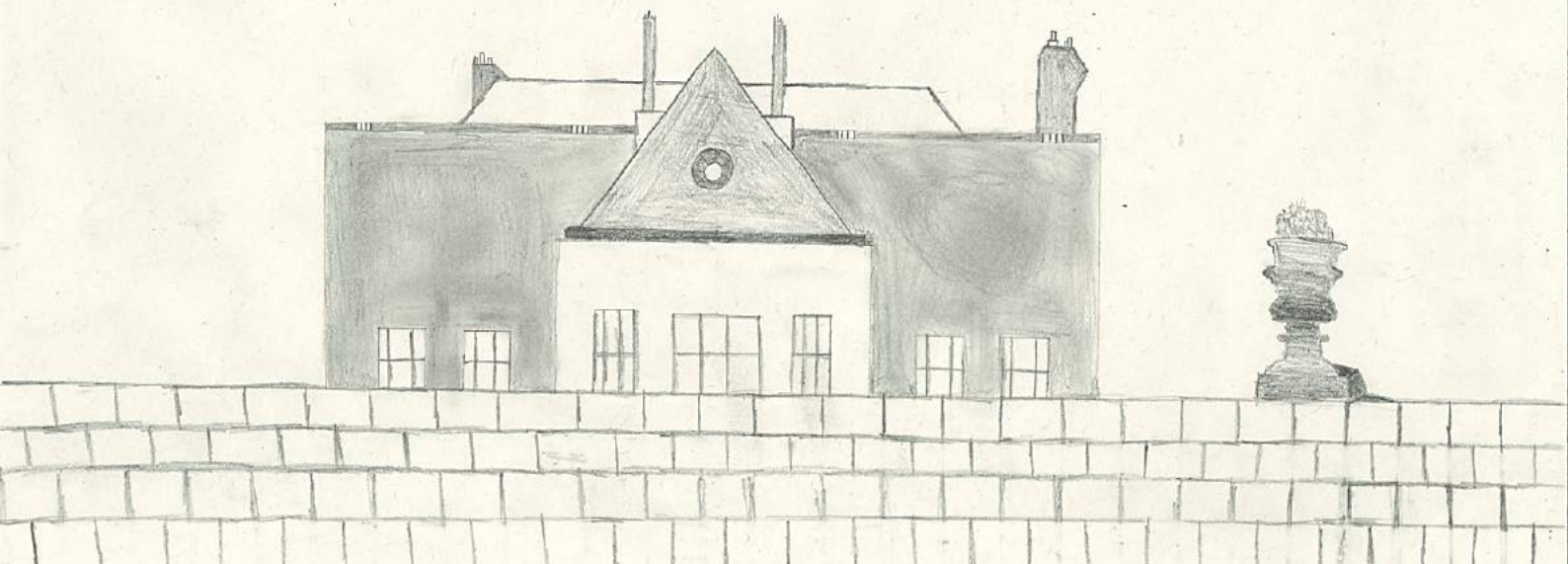
"It was a beautiful setting for a wedding, a lovely reception area with the big stairs going up to the top. After the main ceremony we all came out the front and we were stood along the driveway with our backs to the building, which made a really nice photoshoot."

Megan Wright



Megan Wright

Omar



A memory from a 50th Wedding Anniversary at Upton Country Park, 2002. From Pat Young.

"My wife and I moved to Poole in 1991, and we became frequent visitors to Upton Park. The 9th August 2002 was the 50th anniversary of our wedding and so we decided to have a big celebration and we needed a place that could accommodate quite a large number of guests.

We knew that the house at Upton was available for hire for events like anniversaries and so we decided that the house would be an ideal location for our anniversary...

The day itself went well and we were very happy to have most of our family and friends to celebrate with us. The house management and the caterers were excellent."



Photo of the family taken at Upton Country Park, 2017. (top)

Photos taken at the 50th Wedding Anniversary.

Running at Upton Country Park

Upton Country Park is frequented by runners of all abilities. From individuals to running groups to The Upton Summer Series which takes place over six weeks from June to August and is organised by Poole Runners. Although it had to be cancelled in 2020 due to the pandemic, it is planned to take place again this summer.

Carrie (pictured) told us about her experience:



“I took part in the Summer Series for the first time in 2019. It consists of 6 timed runs, each approximately 5 kms, which take place once a fortnight through the summer. The Series is open to all abilities of runners and includes individuals, small groups and formal running clubs. The runs start and end at the house, by the walled gardens and the beauty of running at Upton Country Park is that one minute you’re running through the trees, the next you’re out in the open, and then you’re back in the trees again. With the new pathways that have been opened recently it’s lovely to see them open up ahead of you as you’re running and I hope to be taking part in the Summer Series 2021.

I also run there socially, when I run from the Park and around Holes Bay. My two favourite places to run are at the beach and in the trees, so these runs incorporate both. As well as running, I enjoy taking my dog, Sunday, for long walks at Upton Country Park. It’s just beautiful, isn’t it.”



Wildlife and Nature

When the house and grounds were gifted to the Borough of Poole and the National Trust in 1957 it comprised over 55 acres of land. This land was described as lawns, gardens, pleasure ground and parklands. There are many species of plants and trees within the grounds, from old oak trees to the remains of the Lime Avenue which was planted by the Llewelin family in 1936. Each season guarantees a burst of colour and you may be lucky enough to meet some of the current residents.



"The thing that, to me, makes Upton such a good place is the variety you've got there."

Nick Woods, former warden
1983 - 2008

"We're really lucky that we've got places like Upton Park where you can really surround yourself with nature."

Fraser Huskinson

"We tend to go for quite long rambles around the park, especially with all the new paths they've opened up."

Murray Knight

"Playing hide and seek, jumping out on you as you go past, and they loved collecting leaves and looking for bugs."

Angela Dennett took her grandchildren
in the 1990s

There is such a vast variety of creatures resident at Upton Country Park, and as more of the grounds become accessible visitors have reported seeing birds, squirrels, rabbits and deer in the grounds. The woodlands are also home to many reptiles and insects including slow worms and grass snakes. Other inhabitants include sand lizards, common lizards, and adders. The developments both recently and in the past have affected the wildlife with some being less visible, but other new species have been seen.

Our new research volunteers are working hard to monitor the wildlife in the Country Park, undertaking reptile, moth and bird surveys and hope to expand their efforts to other species in the future.

The Birds of Upton Country Park

Holes Bay is an outstanding feature of Poole and some parts of it can only be accessed through Upton Country Park. The salt marshes and mudflats are vital for waders and wild fowl. Over 150 species of birds have been recorded at Upton Country Park in the last five years alone. Some are permanent residents and some are visitors just pausing on their longer journey. The Park provides trails and pathways which enable visitors to observe the birds, which vary according to the seasons, and the observation hut give good views over the mudflats and salt marsh. All three species of woodpecker have been recorded in the plantation woodlands and the bird feeders in the heritage centre courtyard encourage common birds such as the chaffinch.



Pippa

MAYSON



Manav

"The thing interests me is... the wildlife changes. The birds you see very commonly at Upton now, that I didn't see at all when I first got there."

"In the winter, spring and summer you get literally probably a thousand or a couple of thousand birds in Holes Bay."

Nick Woods



Amelia

The Peacocks and Peahens

In January 1978 one peacock and five peahens arrived from Brownsea Island and we're present at Upton until 2010. Although they are no longer resident at the Country Park, lots of visitors remember the peacocks and they feature in many photographs of the Park.



"I can remember the peacocks still being there and not being able to get into my car one day because a peacock was right by my door and wouldn't let me in."

Michelle Knight



Amelia

"(My granddaughters) used to like watching the squirrels and of course the peacocks were there then, that was always a great amusement."

**Angela Dennett
visited in the 90s**

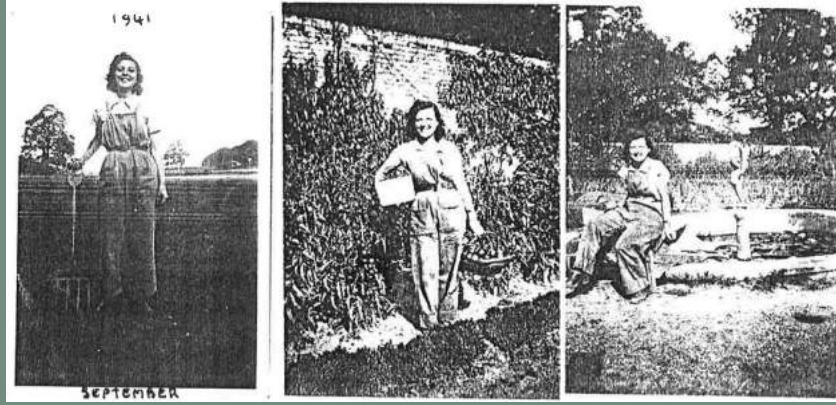


The Walled Gardens and Pet Cemetery

The walled gardens are believed to have been designed along with the house in 1816 and were originally the kitchen gardens.

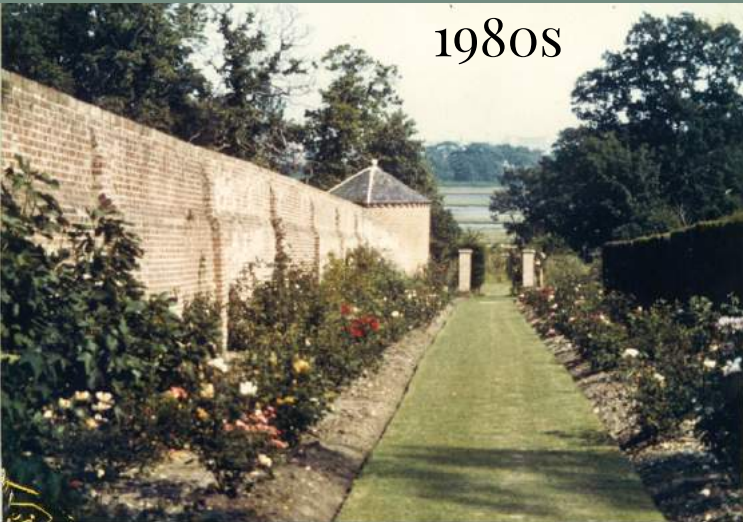
The borders of the walled gardens, which were once a rose garden, now provide a sheltered walkway with an abundance of shrubs, perennials and small trees. When the park opened to the public in 1976 the gardens had been restored to a high horticultural standard to imitate the original plans.

The Llewellyn family were very fond of their pets and buried them in their favourite places around the estate. At some point the headstones were gathered to create a private pet cemetery in a sheltered corner of the grounds. Several of the people interviewed remember seeing the cemetery.



The walled garden and estate being used to grow food in WW2, Poole Museum archives

Below: The current Pet Cemetery



1980s

"He had a springer spaniel called Nel and he had one done for his faithful friend."

Jan Sheridan talking about her grandfather who was the Llewellyns' gamekeeper

"I remember there being a cemetery for the pets that had died."

Michelle Knight,
memories from a 1980s childhood visit

"In the gardens the previous owners had a small pet cemetery which is a bit creepy, but nice."

Megan Wright,
a more recent visit



2003 WITH JAKE IN WALLED GARDEN

Ian Orbell's dog at the borders

The Changing Nature of Upton Country Park

The operations team (previously known as wardens) has worked extremely hard to conserve the original features of the woodlands and gardens whilst moving with the times where necessary. In 1983 members of the public could only access around one quarter of the area that is now open and even then there was very little in the way of paths and walkways. Their conservation work has enabled new species of birds and animals to visit the park, while ensuring established residents have been able to remain. The estate contains a Special Protection Area (SPA), a designated SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest, in the Holes Bay salt marsh, which also includes Pergin's Island, and now a Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) to mitigate public use of the local heathland.



"As the park has developed over the last couple of years we've explored further afield and gone on various walks around the park which has been lovely."

Michelle Knight

"It is through the commitment and enthusiasm of the wardens and volunteers that the diversity of the park has been able to be maintained. The changes that have taken place have reflected the wider changes in the town of Poole and the wider community."

Nick Woods, warden from 1983 until 2008.

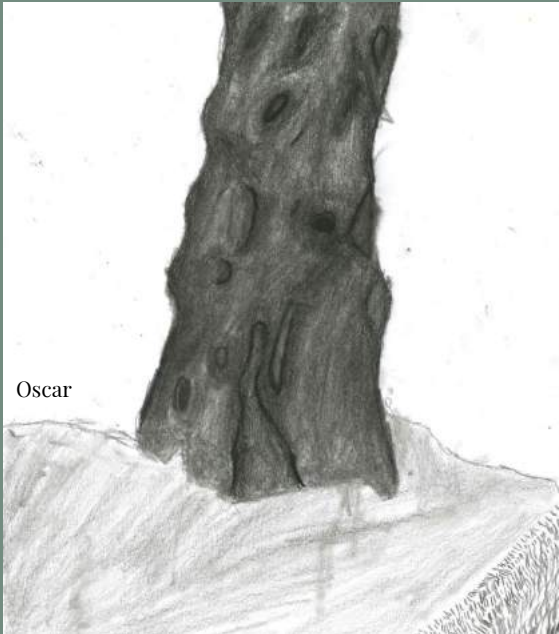


"I've been on some of the walks, and they've opened up more of the areas that you can walk on, which has been nice to see the different areas in the last five years."

Lisa Wansbrough

The Wider Community

Upton Country Park has played and continues to play an important role in the community. From creating a rustic shelter and running living history visits for schoolchildren, to hosting charitable events and fairs, the Park is appreciated and remembered by many for its contribution to the wider community. Others have been able to give back to the Park's community.



Oscar

"I remember going there with youth organisations where we'd have a picnic by the house, under one of the trees, on one of the more manicured grass areas."

Fraser Huskinson,

c.2010

"I support a charity called SPRING which helps bereaved parents that have lost babies. Upton gave us an area of the gardens where we can plant snowdrops each year so they can build up, and they've also let us have the house for refreshments."

Murray Knight

"(When the house went back to the Council) I know the Scouts cleared all the back lawns where there were absolute brambles and things right up to the house."

Barbara Wathen,

late 1970s

"When the tearooms first opened and it was run by people with learning disabilities I would meet a friend there for lunch. We were both learning disability nurses and we were wanting to support what they were doing."

Michelle Knight,

c.2000



Pippa



"(The art exhibition) was indoors, upstairs and it was the patients where I work displaying their artwork and some of the people, members of staff, did some as well, and it was a really good experience for them to be able to come with their families to see their work."

Lisa Wansbrough

In 1997 Nigel Bryant volunteered at Upton Country Park before embarking on a degree in Heritage Conservation. He shared his experience with us:

"Our task was to build a rustic shelter so that parties of school children visiting the adjacent 'Roman farm' would have somewhere to store their bags. As work on the shelter awaited some parts, Iain and I finished firing the clay lining of the pit. This would later be used to evaporate sea water from the harbour in clay trays to produce salt, a well-known local industry from Roman times.

I was very envious of one massive section of tree that had been discarded, especially as the growth rings were so clearly visible, and Iain offered it to me. The 200 odd growth rings date the tree to around 1800, probably 1816–1818 when Upton House was originally built by Christopher Spurrer

Just as work finished here, a magical 'fairy-ring' appeared overnight, just yards from where we had cleared the leaf-litter from the ground. By the next day, it had grown substantially, in its iconic shape, and it is not hard to understand how myths have sprung up to explain such events. Even us sceptical and science-based folk couldn't help but think that our new shelter had been 'blessed' by the woodland spirits, especially as we found (and rescued) a toad there, too!"

Nigel Bryant

"I went there with a school party one time—learning how to do Roman things like weaving, with the loom weights."

Barbara Wathen

1980s



The rustic shelter



Part of the 200 year old tree



The fairy ring

Picture Gallery

Pupils from Longfleet Primary School visited the Country Park in May 2021 to learn about the Upton Memories Project and the history of the Upton Estate and responded by creating the artwork featured here and throughout the booklet.



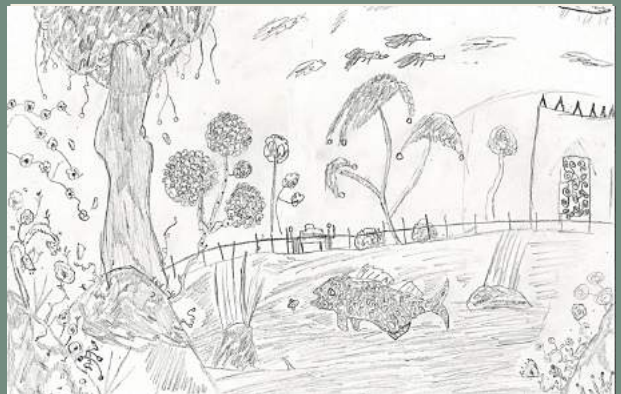
Amelia



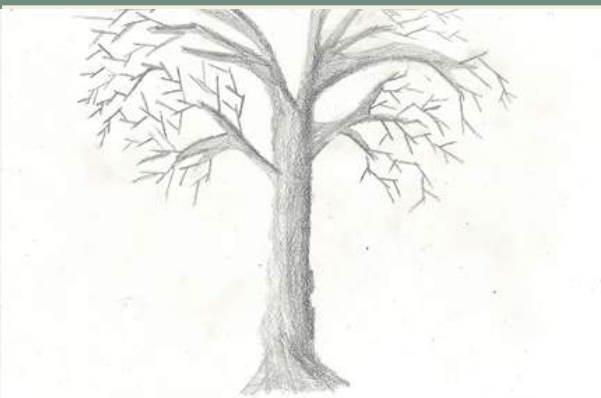
Tilly



Jed



Harry

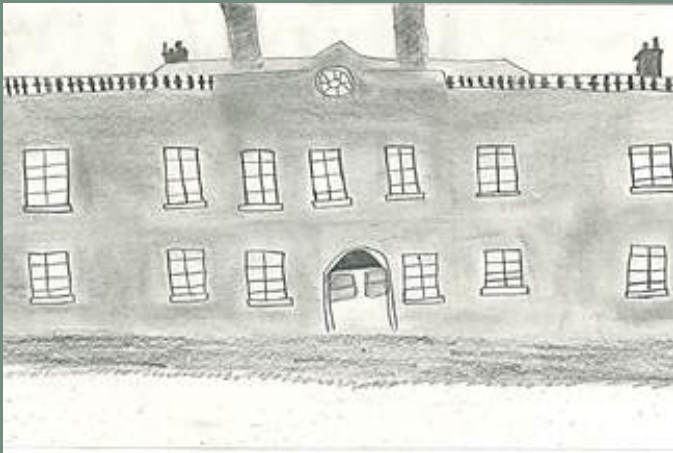


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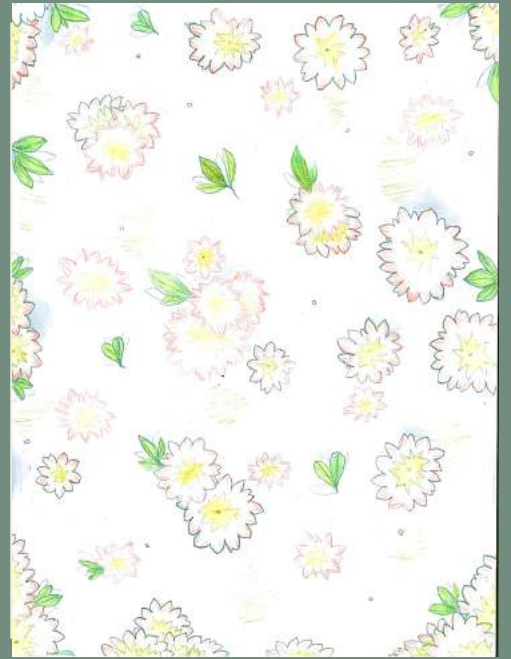


Ethan

Picture Gallery



Blessy



Betsy



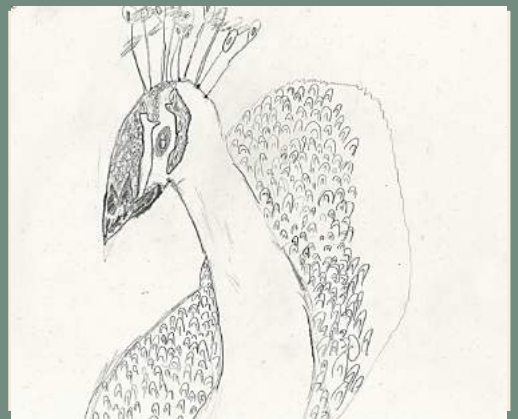
Amelia



Charlie



Emma



Harry

During the Pandemic

Upton Country Park has been able to remain open to visitors throughout the Coronavirus pandemic, providing a place for people to take their daily exercise in a safe, socially-distanced way. Once the cafe was able to re-open a one-way system enabled visitors to exit the cafe into the walled gardens.



"A large part of the park has actually opened up recently, which I've never had the joy of exploring before."

Fraser Huskinson

"We were able to just avoid people because there are so many paths that are open now you can go there and go for relatively long walks and not bump into anybody else, so that was ideal."

Michelle Knight

"Probably been about 6 or 8 times in the last year for walks, and just to get out in the open space and you can distance yourself well there."

Lisa Wansbrough



Here are some more of the memories shared by our contributors:

"I used to have my granddaughters at the weekend and it was just something we did,. It made them happy and it made me happy so why not."

Angela Dennett

"There were plenty of places to run and walks down through all the trees through the grounds, down to the lake."

Angela Dennett

"I remember going there with youth organisations as well, where we'd have a picnic by the house under one of the trees."

Fraser Huskinson

"It's a lovely place, lovely grounds, lovely old building, a beautiful place to go for a day out."

Megan Wright

"It's a really good place to take the children. They can just run around and they were relatively safe, so it was quite a good place to take them to wear them out."

Michelle Knight

"I think it's just that there's just so much diversity of scenery and things you can do... there's all kinds of things to climb on now for the kids... it is just such a lovely place to go."

Barbara Wathen

"We belong to a charity called SPRING which is supporting bereaved parents and we held an event there a few years ago, a snowdrop walk."

Michelle Knight

"I think it's just somewhere where you can go and relax completely."

Barbara Wathen

"I had a photographic studio and I would take people there to take photos...it was one of my favourite places for photographing weddings because there was so much there, it was lovely."

Barbara Wathen,

1980s

"There was farm animals and there was a horse, I think, and it was a really nice and peaceful walk and that just brings back memories."

Todd Brooks,

2000s

"There were all sorts of nooks and crannies... in the library possibly, there's a secret door that you can go through and it's actually one of the bookshelves that opens up."

Barbara Wathen

"Staff are always helpful and it's not far from home, and you feel like you've got away from everything because it's so peaceful."

Lisa Wansbrough



"Santa's grotto was by the Visitor's Centre, to the right, with some animals and Father Christmas in a grotto, and it was all done nice."

Lisa Wansbrough,

c2015

This is an ongoing project and Upton Country Park will continue to collect people's memories for the foreseeable future. If you would like to contribute your own memories please get in touch at ucpmemories@gmail.com



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"Upton is almost a microcosm of everything that has happened, not only in Poole but in the wider landscape as well."
Nick Woods



Maria