

## 11. Puncknowle – Discovering the Ridgeway

24.05.18



MANSION AT PUNCKNOWLE, DORSETHIRE.

### Key Features

Puncknowle is a village with its nucleus around the Parish Church and the Manor House. It has an association with the Napier and Napper family – endowers of the Napper's Mite almshouse in Dorchester following their arrival from Scotland in the 1500's until the 1700's.

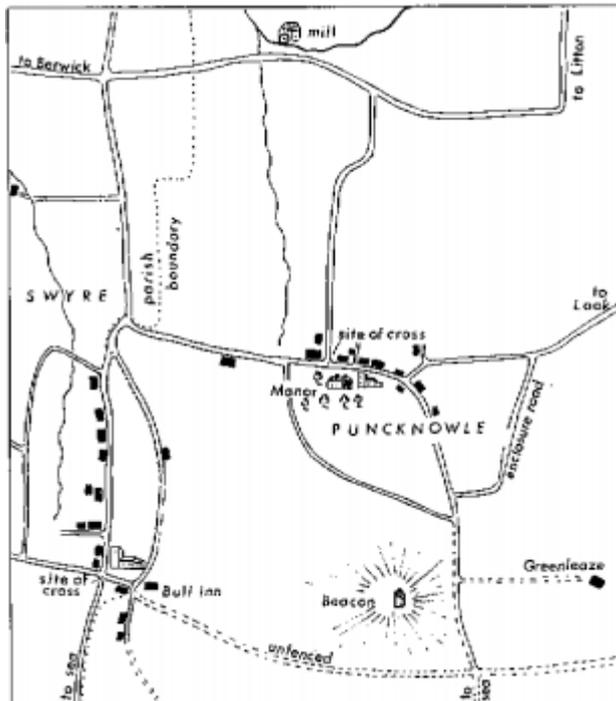
The settlement falls to the river valley and a contrasting escarpment edge of the Ridgeway beyond. Puncknowle Mill served by a tributary of the Bride River is situated outside the parish to the north on the Berwick to Litton road was operational until the C20 and is now a private dwelling.

The remnants of the village green to the west and public open space to the east, together with mature trees and tree groups within the village enhance the setting of historic buildings and add to the quality of views into and out of the village. Several stone stiles are set into the public footpaths which surround the village and boundaries are lined with dry stone walls of Forest Marble.

### Origins and Settlement Pattern

At the time of the Domesday Book, Puncknowle or 'Pomecanole' was held by William of the wife of Hugh Fitzgrip. Its succession of holders is quite long, reverting to the Crown and being passed down through marriage to several different family names.

The manor was granted to George, Duke of Clarence during the reign of King Edward IV, but when the Duke died it passed to the Cheney family of Litton Cheney and also to the Holman and Stevens families, followed by the Napier (Napper) family. The Napiers held land at Bexington, which had become part of the parish of Puncknowle when it ceased to be a parish in its own right.



Puncknowle and Swyre in the 1700's and the water mill at Puncknowle on Litton Lane as recorded by English Heritage.

The Napier family continued to hold both the manor of Puncknowle and that of West Bexington until at least the mid seventeenth century at which time Sir Charles Napier, a former high Sheriff of Dorset, sold both to William Clutterbuck, a sea officer from Devon. A complicated line descended from William Clutterbuck in the passing of the manor estate until it was inherited by his nephew George Clutterbuck Frome who was rector for 40 years until 1844. Through marriage to Mary he acquired the living of Winterbourne Clenston which he held with Puncknowle. According to the Tithe apportionment his sister Miss Mary Arundel resided at the Manor while George occupied the Rectory. One of his daughters Elizabeth married her cousin Morton-Groves Mansel of Smedmore who became sole owners by 1859.

A fire occurred at Puncknowle on 29th September 1802 and consumed twelve houses of poor families.

The Tithe map of 1841 shows that Looke Farm, outbuildings and Granary and Green Leaze, were in Abbotsbury Parish.

## Listed Buildings

21 Listed buildings including the Grade I Parish Church of St Mary and Grade II\* early C17 Puncknowle Manor House and Looke Farmhouse, several other gentry houses and larger farmhouses and C18-C19 cottages all Grade II.

The Lookout on the Knoll (also known as Puncknowle Beacon) dates from the C18 (Napoleonic Wars).



St Mary's Church dates from C12 including the west tower.

The south chapel was added for use by the Bexington community, according to Hutchins in 1660, and the tower was partially rebuilt in 1678 with the initials RNM for Robert and Mary Napier. The north aisle was added in 1891. The entrance door has the initials RN in nail heads.



Puncknowle Manor stands on a knoll close to the church and is a large building of two distinct periods, the original mediaeval house and the later part erected by the Napier family about 1650. The west wing is modern. The two parts were occupied separately in 1835 by the farmer of the second Manor Farm and by Miss Mary Arundel the sister of George Clutterbuck Frome – the rector who was given the living by his uncle. In the wall between the garden and the churchyard is a stone four centres door head with the shield bearing the initials R and AN (Napper).



Boundary walls with reset gate piers.

The boundary wall around the Manor is a continuation of the churchyard wall which extends some 57 meters to the south east and 95m to the NW of Puncknowle Manor House along Church Street. The Gate Piers 30m east of Puncknowle Manor House are listed in their own right.



Burwell Cottage & No 2 Church Street and Chestnuts.



The Crown Inn formerly 4 cottages, The Bakery beyond with blocked window to SW.



Greystones is a two and a half storey house dating from the C18.

The Barn 5m south of Greystones, an early C19 building is now converted as are the Bakehouse/ detached kitchen, trap-house and stable range immediately west of Greystones.



Greystones (formerly Manor Farm) and Manor Cottage, previously 4 separate cottages dating from the C18.



Home Farmhouse mid C19 and The Old Rectory and Dovecote 30m NW of the Old Rectory with datestone of 1702



Lych Gate with steps and attached churchyard wall on 4 sides.

Looke Farm two storey house with cellars and attics. Built in 1700 and the central doorway has the initials R and MH on the lintel (Ralph Henville). The house and range of buildings including Green Leaze are all contemporary but much altered. The Dairy House 30m east of Looke Farmhouse and Granary 100m SSW of Looke Farmhouse are also listed Grade II.



Grade II\* C15 Village Cross in Churchyard 4m NE of the Church, moved from the junction with Rectory Lane and Church Street.

The Napier family memorials, one circa 1700 to Sir Robert Napier, who was High Sheriff of Dorset, which in an almost flamboyantly modest way proclaims: 'Reader, when as thou hast done all thou canst, thou art but an unprofitable servant. Therefore this marble affords no roome for fulsome flattery or vaine praise, Sr R.N.'

The unlisted Napier Monument in the Parish Church, sited on the west end of the North Aisle, was erected by Sir Robert Napier Baronet in 1691 in memory of his father Robert Napier, his mother Ann and step mother Katherine.

There are also two Grade II listed monuments in the churchyard – one the Napper table tomb of late C17 date with roll and strap moulded cornice and top block to Sir Robert Napper, Knight, the other the 1834 table tomb to William Davis with a sarcophagus on top.



Wychwood and Valley View.

### Other Quality Buildings

The contribution made by important local buildings can be summarised as follows: Jubilee Cottage 1887 and Forge Cottage early C19 and thatch.



Manor Farm and barns.



Dairy House.



C19 Old School House and Village Hall previously a school, was also a library, post- dates an earlier school in 1668.



1 & 2 Rectory Lane – a third cottage was demolished in 1962.



Bride Valley House render and slate with a painted brick porch and The Corner House, late C19 rubble and slate, porch.



The C20 bus shelter which has been excluded from the listing of the Manor House boundary wall, even though it is well detailed and makes a positive contribution.

Durban and Thornleigh Cottages, Church Street are a pair of late C19 rubble and brick quoins with canted oriels at first floor with ceramic tiles.



1867 Methodist Chapel now converted into a house.

## Key Views

Views of the Knoll to the north, to farmland and across the valley to Litton Cheney. Tulks Hill.

## Palette of Materials

Distinctive local building materials, notably Forest Marble and Cornbrash, stone tiles, slate, clay pantiles and thatch give a strong sense of place.

Cornbrash is rarely used for building since it tends to be rubbly, but the lowest bed is massive and strong enough for use. It is generally cream coloured but in different locations it is faintly blue or pink.