

Harbertonford History Trail



June 2011

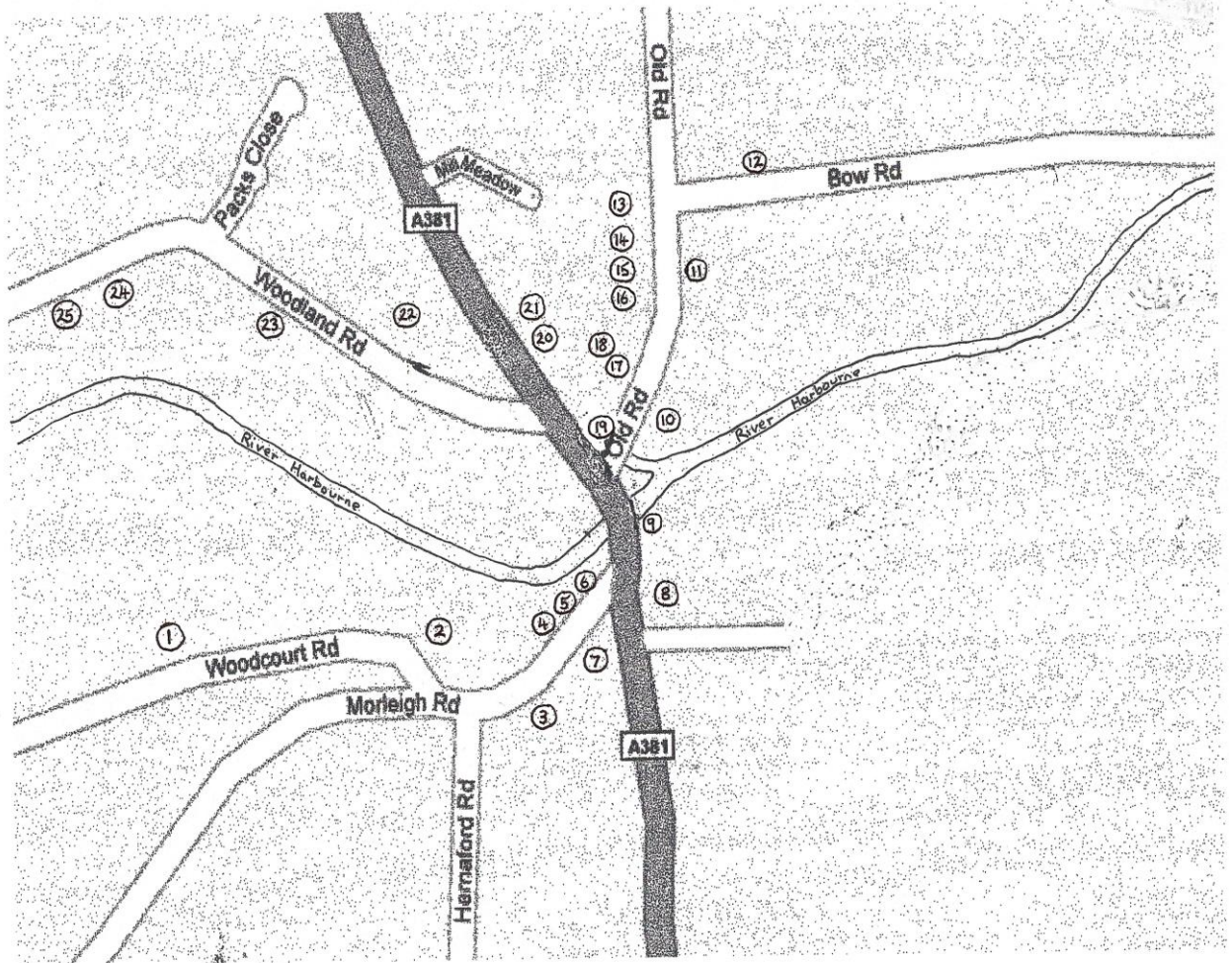
HHHS

Harbertonford History Village Trail

Harbertonford lies within the parish of Harberton. Until the eighteenth century, it was much the junior village within the parish. The development of the woollen industry and the establishment of the mill in around 1790 led to a growth in population in Harbertonford. By the middle of the nineteenth century, its size and importance was such as to lead to the splitting off of the village and surrounding area to form a separate ecclesiastical parish in 1860.

This trail is intended as an introduction to the village. It starts at the Village Hall continuing via Moreleigh Road to the bridge over the Harbourne and then through the first part of Old Road before returning to Woodland Road past the Church to the old woollen mill factory site and Fine Pine. The latter has a collection of photographs, articles and artefacts relating to the mill, the village and the surrounding area which visitors are welcome to view.

The information enclosed in boxes refers to further sites and buildings of interest away from the trail.



Leaving the **village hall (1)**, the remains of the mill can be seen across the river. From the river edge across the football field, the outlets from the two original water wheels can be seen, with the outlet from the smaller wheel entering the river at right angles on the left and the main wheel outlet on the right entering at an angle.

Turn left out of the village hall into Woodcourt Road. On the bend before the junction, the old **Congregational Chapel (2)** can be seen on the left hand side. The congregational church was established in the village in 1861, but has now been converted into a house.

At the end of the road to the right from the village hall, is Woodcourt Farm dating from the 17th century, one of the older farms around the village which once may have had a water wheel served by a leat on the south side of the river.

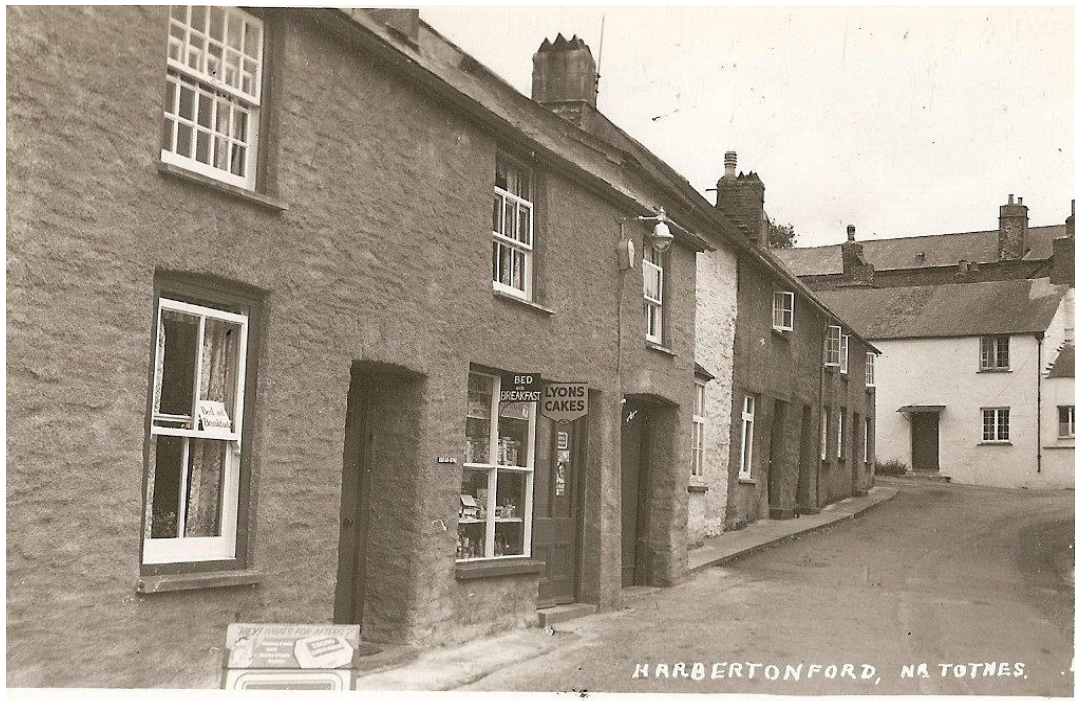
From Woodcourt Road, turn left into Moreleigh Road towards the centre of the village. The lane on the right leads to Hernaford Farmhouse built around 1835, probably replacing an older building.

The house in the end of the terrace on the right hand side was once a **grocery (3)** whose owner kept a parrot in the shop. Further on, the buildings on the left hand side beyond the stream were once an **antique shop (4)** and another **grocery (5)**. The Beehive Inn also occupied one of the terrace houses. **Harbourne Terrace (6)** at the end of the road consists of six cottages built in the late 18th Century or early 19th Century, with their ground floors at the original ground level before the road and bridge were built to their present height, and further stories added to the two end cottages.

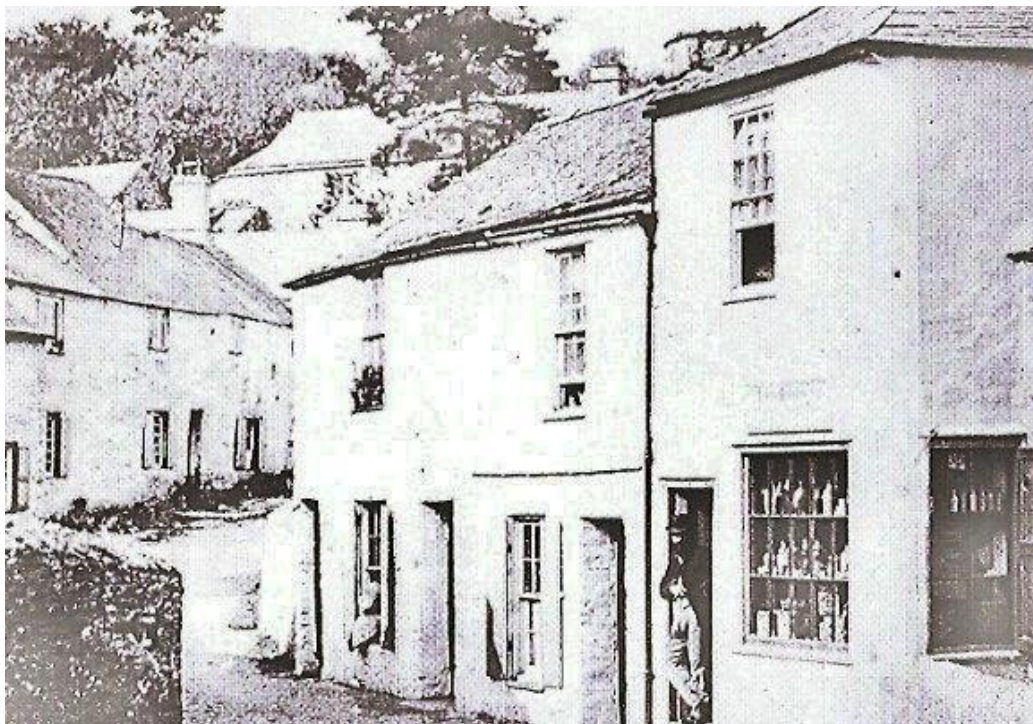
Opposite Harbourne Terrace, Brocade now occupies the old **Melbray Stores site(7)**. The latter acquired a new frontage built onto the original building in the 1960s, which accounts for the odd shape to the present building. The adjoining house was once the post office for the village. On the other side of the main road behind the stone wall is the **Vicarage (8)**. The building dates back to the first part of the nineteenth century, and was bought by the Church of England at the time of the building of St Peter's Church. The building proved to be in poor condition and required considerable repairs before the new vicar could move in.



2 Congregational Chapel, Woodcourt Road, in 1935 before conversion



3 Grocers shop, Moreleigh Road, c. 1950



4 & 5 Grocers shop, Moreleigh Road, 1890. The adjoining cottages were later amalgamated and used as an antiques shop after the war.



7 The opening of Melbray Stores in the 1960's. The right hand side of the shop is now Brocade

To the right of the vicarage is Kiln Lane at the end of which is the site of two lime kilns which were in use well into the twentieth century. Along the road towards Dartmouth, Youldens Farm behind the wall and wooden gates dates back to the sixteenth century although much of the building is seventeenth century. Further out, Zion Baptist chapel was established in 1822 by a group of local residents. The chapel was subsequently taken over by the Plymouth Brethren as a meeting place, before conversion to its current use as a house.

The trail now crosses the road bridge and the main road into Old Road. A road bridge has existed on its present site for several centuries, with the earliest reference occurring in 1664 when it was recorded as needing repair. In 1809, James Green, the first County Surveyor for Devon, recorded a stone bridge with two arches, which had then been recently widened. The present **bridge (9)** was built by Green in 1829, possibly at the same time as the building of the main road along its present line.

Beyond the green on the right hand side, **Pound Court (10)** was originally built as a set of five cottages and house around the end of the eighteenth century. By the 1950s, they had fallen into disrepair

and were no longer fit for human habitation. They were then used for storage before being bought and renovated to form a restaurant with some accommodation. The Hungry Horse enjoyed a good reputation for many years before being converted to a main residence and wine bar in 2003. Following the closure of the wine bar it now provides bed and breakfast accommodation.

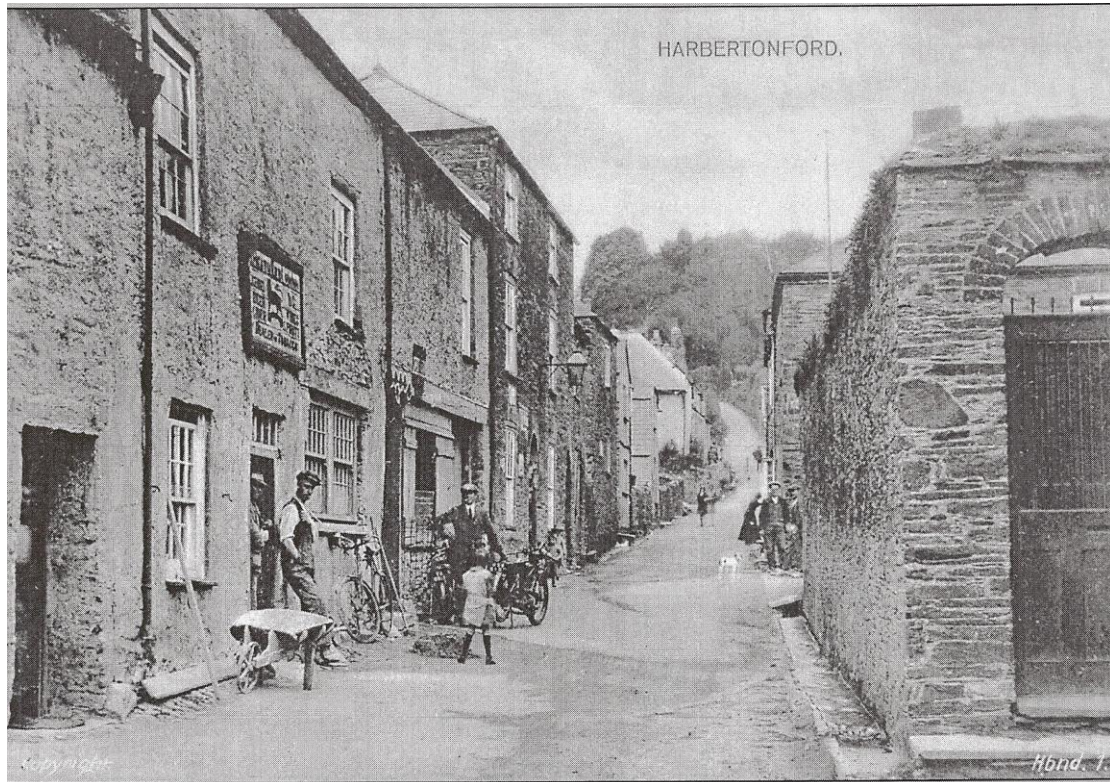
Pear Tree Court, a former home of the travel writer Eric Newby, is on the corner of Bow Road. In the wall is a **marker stone (11)** with the letter "C". These stones were put in place by Devon Magistrates in 1841, 100 yards from the bridge to indicate the limits of their responsibility for maintaining the roads leading to the bridge.

Just inside Bow Road, the **Chapel (12)** was built for the Primitive Methodist congregation in 1904, to replace their original meeting room in Chapel cottage.

Bow Road leads on to Luscombe hamlet and Bow Bridge. On the edge of the village on the left hand side is a house which in earlier times was known as the Rogue's Roost and associated with highwaymen and other undesirable characters, but later became the Smuggler's Inn. Further along on the right hand side is Crowdy Mill, a flour mill driven by a double water wheel fed by a leat running alongside the south side of the Harbourne River.



10 & 17 Pound Court cottages on the right and the New Inn (later Ford House) to the left in 1912



13, 14 & 15 The Red Lion, Forge and Old Bakery, Old Road, 1920.

Turning back to Old Road, some of the cottages date back to the 17th Century. The large building at the top of the road forming 1 and 2 Steps Cottages was originally built in the early 19th Century as four mill workers cottages.

The three storey **old bakery (13)** was built at around the same time in 1810. Alongside the bakery back towards the main road is the **old Forge (14)**. Horses were an essential part of the rural economy up to the middle of the twentieth century, both to provide power on the farm and for transport, and blacksmiths were important tradesmen in the community. The forge in Old Road was situated between the Red Lion and the Bakery. With the advent of the motor car, a petrol pump was installed, while two electricity generators were built behind the forge providing an early electricity supply for the village.

The **Red Lion (15)** was a long established public house rivalling the Maltsters. Beer was brewed at the rear of the house, while there was a separate serving hatch within the porch. The inn closed in the 1960's when the brewery transferred the licence to new premises in Paignton. Further along the terrace, the last house with the large window once housed a **butcher's shop (16)**.

Ford House (17), the imposing building opposite Pound Court dates from the 1830's and has enjoyed a chequered career, being at various times the New Inn, the Working Men's Institute and on the ground floor, a fish and chip shop. Tucked away behind Ford House is **Chapel Cottage (18)** which was used by the Methodist congregation before the building of the chapel in Old Road.

Harbourne House and Bridge House, formerly the brewer's house associated with the Maltsters Arms, are now occupied by the Post Office and village stores. The telephone kiosk outside the shop is a type K6 which was designed in 1935 by Sir Giles Gilbert Scott.

The **Maltsters Arms (19)** dates back to the early to mid 19th Century. The "1779 letter" displayed in the pub from the Captain of Dragoons indicating that the inn was being watched to capture a local highwayman using it to secrete his takings is unfortunately a fake! The pub was taken over by the Grills family towards the end of the nineteenth century. The brewery was established behind the Malster's Arms, reputedly using power from a small waterwheel driven by the Harberton stream. Apart from beer the Grills also made ginger beer which was sold in glass bottles with a marble stopper.

The brewery also made use of storage sheds across the main road from the pub on the site now occupied by housing. The same site also housed the Village Reading Room as well as one of the early garages and petrol stations on the main road, the petrol storage tanks recently coming to light when the Environment Agency undertook flood defence measures in 2002.

Continuing along the main road towards Totnes is the **old school (20)**. Harbertonford National School was built in 1848 by Chancellor Martin, the Rector of Harberton on land provided by Richard Browne of Great Englebourne. The latter also set up a charitable trust to provide funds towards the running cost of the school. It was later extended in 1881 to take in additional pupils from Washbourne. The school had a capacity of around 200 pupils and at the end of the nineteenth century was staffed by three full time teachers and two part time teachers. In the 1950s, it had two classes. Alongside the old school is the **schoolmaster's house (21)** again built with funds provided by Richard Browne in 1849 for the headmaster and his family as well as the additional teachers.

The land now occupied by Mill Meadow cul-de-sac was once a field used by the village for summer fetes, overlooked by the old Police House. Pack's Close on the opposite side of the road occupies the site of another older garage which subsequently moved into Totnes.

The trail now retraces its footsteps to cross the main road into Woodland Road past **St Peter's Church (22)**. Harbertonford was created as a separate parish splitting off from the long established parish of Harberton in 1859. The living of the new parish remained within the gift of the vicar of Harberton. St Peter's Church was built in 1859 to a design by architect J. Nottidge. It was largely funded by Mrs Thomascene Anthony of Great Englebourne and Longcause House, Dartington at a cost of £2,000. She also provided an endowment towards the stipend of the new vicar of Harbertonford, as well as providing support for the school. The parishioners later raised money to pay for the installation of an organ in 1886 on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Jubilee.

Mill cottages (23) form the terrace of houses on the other side of the road from the Church, built to provide housing for workers in the woollen mill just around the corner.

The wooded knoll on the right hand side of the road conceals the remains of a small quarry and two lime kilns.



A First Aid exercise taking place outside the Evans and Cutler garage on the bridge opposite the Malsters pub, now occupied by housing



24 & 25 The Woollen Mill around 1950. The building occupied by Fine Pine is on the left hand side of the site.

The woollen factory (24) was reputedly built in 1789. However, the woollen industry in Devon declined in the first half of the nineteenth century and the mill closed in 1842. The mill was then used intermittently for flour and grist milling and starch manufacture. In 1869, it was reopened as a woollen mill by John Churchwood & Sons and continued in operation until 1956. The main material produced was hard wearing serge for blankets and military uniforms. Power was originally provided by two water wheels, and later by steam. Mains electricity was brought to the village in 1942 with a major reason being to allow increased production at the factory. Since its closure as a woollen mill, part has been converted into town houses while the rest was used for storage before falling into its current disuse.

The factory also possessed a 100ft tall chimney which was demolished in 1959. Bricks recovered from the chimney were subsequently used to build the house on the west side of the factory site! Remains of the leat serving the woollen mill can be traced alongside Woodlands Road out beyond Rolster Bridge and Monkey Oake.

Alongside the derelict mill building is **Fine Pine (25)**. This building was probably the old fulling mill making use of the smaller water wheel and is now used as a pine furniture shop. Jo and Chris the proprietors have a strong interest in the history of the village and the mills in the Harbourne Valley and have built up a collection of pictures, articles

and artefacts which they are delighted to show to interested visitors during normal opening hours.

This leaflet is a work in progress and any additional information on the history of the village as a whole or of individual buildings would be warmly welcomed by Geoff Broom (01803 731097) or Jo Walker (07929083523 or 01803 732465). Additional material can be viewed at Fine Pine during normal opening hours (10 am to 6 pm, Mondays to Saturday).

Photographs courtesy of Totnes Image Bank, Fine Pine, Phillipa Durrans and Hazel Willis.