

## A Walk Through Time 2 : 'Old Milford'

*Distance: 2 miles. Time: 2 hours*

Start: Milford Mill Road Bridge.

There are or were several Milfords: Meleford, the DMV on the east side of the bridge; Milford Pichard and Milford Richard somewhere on the rising ground above the Bourne, and probably related to the kilns and pottery industry on both sides of Queen Manor Road; and Milford Episcopi close to the junction of Milford Mill Road (MMR) with Manor Farm Road. Milford, in all its iterations, has never had its own parish church.

The two large buildings north of the bridge ('The Granary' and 'Mill house') are of the 18<sup>th</sup>C, but on the site of earlier buildings. They were together described as a 'tucking mill' - and thus more to do with the woollen trade than the milling of corn. Walking down Milford Mill Road, the field on the right is a water meadow dating from the 17<sup>th</sup> C. Looking over the field gate, the ridges, and furrows but not the sluice gates, can still be seen. Invisible now, but early maps show an 'aqueduct' running along the edge of this field from the Bourne, crossing the road here, running along the western edge of what is now Milford Park and re-joining the river. This channel may be evidence of a corn mill somewhere here.

Continue down MMR, the brick wall in front of 'Milforge' shows the outline of doors and windows of long-gone cottages (see picture).

The long stone wall to your left is mostly 300-years' old and part of Milford Manor boundary. The wall is made of Greensand and flint – note the weathering. A section of the wall was repaired in 2000.

The jauntily castellated Milford Manor at the junction of MMR and Manor Farm Road dates from 1900 and was known locally as 'Calico Castle.' This Tudor-style building was designed by Salisbury architect Fred Bath and built on the site of the original, and at that time recently demolished, late 17<sup>th</sup>C or early 18<sup>th</sup>C farmhouse.



*Milford Mill Road - early 20thC unknown artist*

It derives the name 'Calico' from its owner, Richard Gerrish, who ran a silk and cloth business in the city.

The house was used by Southern Command during WWII.

'Corner Cottage' on the opposite corner of MMR is of the 18<sup>th</sup> C, but at the end of the following century was used as a forge by Nathaniel Barber (see photos on pages 8/9). In 1904, Mr Barber moved his foundry business further down MMR, where it was continued by three generations of the family until its closure in 1990.

Standing at this junction, the building in front of you is 'Little Manor.' Now a nursing home, Little Manor is the oldest extant building in Milford. Dating from the late 17<sup>th</sup> C, it is in the domestic English baroque style, and has had several different uses: an inn called the 'Travellers' Rest;' the rectory for the incumbent of St Andrew's in Laverstock; and the centre of a farming enterprise that included Manor Farm cottages which stood near Westbourne Close and were demolished in 1972. Intriguingly, in the 1770s Little Manor *might* have been the Milford Asylum (the Finch family, who ran the Laverstock Asylum from the 1780s, had a similar institution in Milford a decade before.)

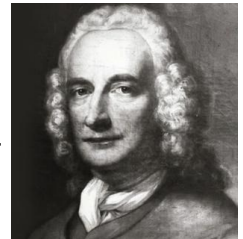


*'Little Manor'*



*Milford Manor Summer House*

Turning left into Shady Bower (SB), after a few metres take note of the remnant gate pillar of the old Milford Manor. In the grounds of a house in Milford Manor Gardens, on the left, is an intriguing survival of the 18<sup>th</sup>C Manor; a Grade II\* listed summerhouse where Henry Fielding (1707-1754) wrote 'Tom Jones.'



Beginning in the 16<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> C, SB was an alternative route to the increasingly impassable Milford Hollow. Walking up the road, note the surviving cob wall surrounding 'White Lodge' on your right. The block of flats comprising Shady Bower Close, was the site of the 'Punch Bowl' an inn licensed in 1710. The grounds of this large inn were used in 1784 for the launch of a pilotless Montgolfier air balloon.

Looking up to your left, the large red-brick building is 'Grove House,' a Victorian villa of the 1860s. Using great care, look over the left parapet of the nearby railway bridge - below and to the right is the site of Milford Station, which closed in 1967.

Past the school, turn down Fowler's Hill and note the two large 19<sup>th</sup>C houses on your right: 'Highmount' and 'Eastmount.' Walk a few steps down the shared drive and note the corner projections of the brick courses at Eastmount. These were to emulate the jettying of medieval timber-frame buildings.

A few metres further down Fowler's Hill is the 'Coach House'. This is all that remains of Dr Richard Fowler's extensive property. Dr Fowler (1765-1863) was a Fellow of the Royal Society and practised medicine in Salisbury for 60-years. He was also a friend of Florence Nightingale's father, and in the 1840s Florence proposed lodging with Dr Fowler while she trained as a nurse at Salisbury Infirmary – the proposal was supported by her parents but came to nothing.

Dr Fowler built his house in around 1822 on what was then open ground on the southern slopes of Milford Hill. In living memory, there was a footbridge near here that connected Dr Fowler's house to a garden in what became the grounds of the school (the construction of which in 1952 probably led to its removal). Large-scale housebuilding on Milford Hill began in the 1860s (Dr Fowler's grounds disappeared in the 1880s and his house was demolished in 1965).

After the Coach House, turn into Fowler's Road. 'Byways' on your right was built in 1883 using yellow and grey brick, there is a loggia to the side and sun-flower designs to the facade.



*'Byways' Fowler's Road Built 1883*

Continue up Fowler's Road and take the pedestrian path at the end of Methuen Drive to the top of Milford Hill. From this vantage point, the road running down into town is much lower than the Victorian

terraces on the left or the raised path on your right. This is because the road here runs along the bottom of an ancient 'holloway' (see below).

Cross the road to the Elm Grove estate. Until the 1850s this really was an elm grove, with fields and a muddy track where Millbrook is now. The houses here were built in the 1860s and represent the wealth of Salisbury businessmen who no longer wanted to live in the town.

Turn down Bellamy Lane and note three fine villas: 'Bellamy House,' 'Holly House,' and 'Inwood House.' This last house was once called 'Holmleigh.' It is built of local yellow brick clay, and was visited on many occasions by the young E.M. Forster. He referred to it as "a tall sun-drenched house balanced high above Salisbury." He would walk from the house through Milford to the River Bourne and up to Clarendon Palace.

Returning to The Avenue, walk along Elm Grove to join Kelsey Road. Immediately to your right is 'The Mount,' an imposing mid-Victorian villa with terracotta string banding.



On the opposite side of the road on the corner with Manor Road is a so-called 'Anonymous' pillar box. This is Victorian and dates to 1879-83, but notably lacks the usual 'VR.'

Walk down Manor Road to view 'Manor House' 100-metres on your right. As with 'Eastmount, this house also employs brick projections to mimic the medieval style. Note the original garden wall. A little further along is the glorious 'Hillcote,' the only Listed house in this area. 'Hillcote' was designed by architect Fred Bath in the 1890s and is an eclectic confection of styles: a Venetian window; Byzantine apse; carved brickwork; bulging gables and window aprons. 'Hillcote' was for many years St Probus School.

*'Anonymous' pillar box*

Return to Milford Hill and turn left into Milford Hollow. This is certainly part of the old Saxon route from Winchester to Wilton. Conceivably, it may be even older and have its origins as a minor Roman road to the New Forest; the route passes between two Roman villas (one very large) close to Milford. In the 13<sup>th</sup>C, the building of Clarendon Palace and the establishment of New Sarum



*'Hillcote' formerly St Probus School, Manor Road*

would have substantially increased cart and traveller traffic along this road – so much so that over the centuries Milford Hollow and Milford Hill became 'holloways,' routes worn away by heavy use into deeply sunken paths.

As you walk along the Hollow the depth of the path may not seem especially pronounced. This is because the deepest parts were filled in by the city council in the 1970s. An idea of just how deep Milford Hollow used to be is shown by the sections either side of the railway line (beyond the security fences), where the original depth can be seen.

The buildings of Godolphin School are on both sides of the Hollow. (Dorothy L. Sayers, author of the Lord Peter Wimsey novels, was a pupil at the school early in the last century). 'Rose Villa' on the right as you enter is of the 19<sup>th</sup>C but 'The Wilderness,' next to it, is of the 18<sup>th</sup>C. A hundred metres further on, through the wire fence to your left is Brome House – part of Godolphin School. The middle section of this building (with the porch) was the 'Blue Post,' an inn licensed in 1775. Continue down the Hollow to the railway footbridge.



*Edwin Young: Milford Hollow from the East  
late 19th C*

The cutting here dates from 1857 when the railway line to London was opened – prior to this, Milford Station was a terminus. Two years later, a new and more conveniently sited station for Salisbury was built in Fisherton, and Milford became a goods only station. Interestingly, the cutting below the footbridge may have made use of an existing gorge. An early headmistress of Godolphin remembered that in the time before the railway came, behind the school premises “there was a deep glen called Switzerland.”

Walk across the footbridge and back down MMR to the medieval bridge.

*I make grateful acknowledgement to the late Richard Durman's book 'Milford' in the compilation of these notes. I also offer my thanks to local historians Ruth Newman and Iverene Hopkins.*

**David Lovibond**

Guided Walk: Saturday July 9<sup>th</sup> at 10am

from Milford Mill Road Bridge

Contact to confirm attendance: [david@lovibondpr.com](mailto:david@lovibondpr.com)