

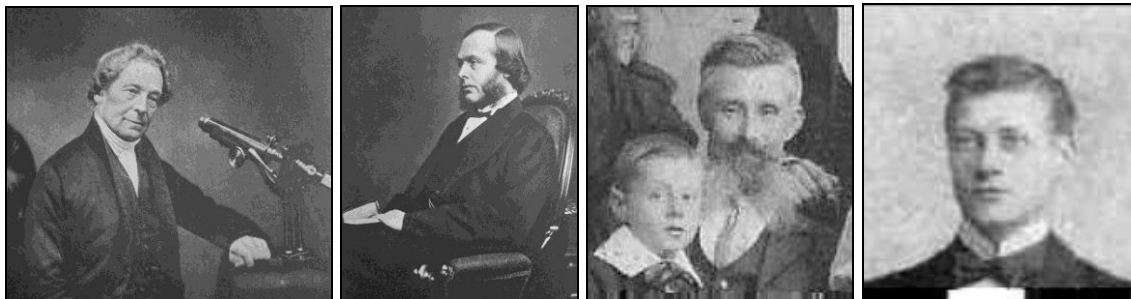
Lyme Regis Museum

People of Lyme 2. The Listers at High Cliff by Richard Bull

Much is written about the Listers in other places: this paper is about their holiday home, High Cliff¹, their life and achievements in Lyme Regis, the inspiration it gave them and how their lives linked Lyme Regis with their homes and aspirations elsewhere.



High Cliff House a few years ago – photo by Martin Diplock



Four Fellows of the Royal Society – Father, Sons and Grandson
(l-r) **Joseph Jackson Lister** senior, **Joseph, Lord Lister** of Lyme Regis, **Arthur Lister**² (with son William) and **Joseph Jackson Lister** junior. Instead, William gained a KCMG and KCVO!

¹ High Cliff is the Ordnance Survey spelling, but Gulielma Lister always used Highcliff

² There is some doubt about this photo of Arthur Lister and that of J J Lister jnr – see later note

Contents

Part One: Introduction to the Lister Family	2
Part Two: High Cliff – The House and its History	
George Holland and the origin of the High Cliff Estate	4
What High Cliff sale advertisements tell us about the house and its later residents	7
High Cliff – Conservation Status	12
The Elevations Described	14
The Floors Described	16
Maps and Air Photos of High Cliff house and grounds	18
The Grounds Described	
Part Three: The Listers, Lyme and High Cliff	
Introduction	20
Why did the Listers' buy High Cliff?	20
The Lister family background and influences	22
Joseph Lister, Lord Lister of Lyme Regis	23
Agnes, Lady Lister nee Syme	27
Arthur Lister's Family – Introduction	29
Arthur Lister	30
Mrs Susanna Lister nee Tindall	35
The Children of Arthur and Susanna Lister	35
Isabella Sophia Lister	35
Joseph Jackson Lister (junior)	36
Mrs Dorothea Lister nee Marryat	36
Edith Mary Lister	37
Gulielma Lister ("Miss Gulie")	37
Lt Col Arthur Hugh Lister	42
Ellen Frances Lister	43
Col Sir William Tindall Lister	43
Some of the children of Arthur Hugh Lister and Sybil Palgrave	
Mary Sybil Octavia Lister ("Miss Lovely")	44
Rev Major Hugh Evelyn Jackson Lister	45
Acknowledgements	46
Appendices	
Appendix 1: Lister Family Tree	47
Appendix 1: Ownership History of the High Cliff Estate	48
Appendix 3: Domestic and Outdoor Staff Employed by Arthur Lister's family	49

Part One: Introduction to the Lister Family

In the 19th century the Lister family (see family tree at Appendix 1) became famous in medicine, microscopy and natural history and included four fellows of the Royal Society amongst their members. Today the family is principally remembered for **Joseph Lister** FRCS, FRCSE, FRS, OM, PC (1827-1912), the pioneer of antiseptic surgery, later **Lord Lister of Lyme Regis**.

His brother, **Arthur Hugh Lister** FRS (1830-1908) was partner in Lister & Beck, London wine merchants, but more famous as a prominent amateur natural historian with a particular interest in ascidians (sea squirts) and mycetozoa (slime moulds).



Their father, **Joseph Jackson Lister** FRS (1786-1869), of Upton House³, Plaistow (three miles east of London, but then in the Essex countryside), was also a wine merchant and a pioneer of microscopy. He designed the achromatic compound lenses later necessary for the researches of both Joseph and Arthur. The wine company was Lister & Beck, but another company was founded in 1843 by nephews of J.J. Lister, Richard and Joseph Beck, to produce a wide range of optical products. J.J. Lister used his invention to study blood cells, the structure of zoophytes and sea-squirts, illustrating his classic paper in the *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society* using *camera lucida* drawings – and setting the pace for his sons to benefit from his microscopy.

As Quakers they met influential members of the Society of Friends at the Plaistow Meeting House, such as Elizabeth Fry (prison reformer), Dr John Fothergill (medical doctor and founder of Ackworth Quaker School in Pontefract) and members of the Gurney and Barclay banking families.

Joseph Lister made successive moves around the Britain as his career as a surgeon progressed, eventually settling with his wife **Agnes Lister nee Syme** (1834-1893) at Regents Park, London. They had no children.

Arthur lived with his wife **Susanna Lister** (1836-1915) and their four daughters and three sons, at Sycamore House⁴ in Leytonstone, Essex.

In 1870 career success and settlements from their father's will enabled Arthur and Joseph to purchase a holiday home at Lyme Regis. Their brother-in-law, Smith Harrison, a London Tea Merchant who lived near the Lister family house at Upton, shared the purchase. He had married their sister Jane and was from another West Ham Quaker family. Their Lyme holidays started the long running social and scientific association of the family with the town and the countryside around Lyme. The house, **High Cliff**, a large villa in grounds overlooking the town and the bay, became the summer home of Arthur Lister and his family and their staff. Arthur eventually bought out the other shares in the house, but it remained a regular retreat for the whole family, particularly at Christmas. Through it Joseph Lister built a close association with Lyme, choosing the title **Lord Lister of Lyme Regis** when he received his barony. After 1888 High Cliff became Arthur and Susanna Lister's main home, although they retained their Leytonstone house throughout.

High Cliff remained in the family after the death of Arthur Lister and his widow. It continued to be well used by the family until sold in 1929 after the death of **Isabella Lister** (1856-1928) by the remaining spinster sisters, **Edith Lister** (1859-1950) and **Gulielma Lister** (1860-1949). They had kept the family house in Leytonstone and went back to live there, despite its engulfment in suburbia.

In their various ways these three spinster sisters were as closely associated with Lyme as they were with Essex. The death of their brother **Lt Col Arthur Lister** RAMC (1865-1916), following an illness contracted on war service in Egypt, is recorded on the Lyme Regis War Memorial. His



Upton House by Mary Lister

Upton House was a three-story Queen Anne brick house with two-storey wings on Upton Lane in West Ham, Essex. Set in extensive grounds, it overlooked Ham Park of the Gurneys, the Quaker banking family. The area was encroached by housing after Forest Gate station opened in 1840 and Plaistow station opened in 1858. It became a vicarage to a church built in its grounds after the Listers sold the house in 1870, and was demolished in the 1960s. The site lies SE of the junction of Upton Lane with Lancaster Road.

⁴ Sycamore House 871 High Road Leytonstone was a large house in grounds on the edge of Epping Forest, but was encroached by suburbia after Leytonstone station was opened in 1856. It and was demolished about 1976 and replaced by a Welsh Presbyterian Church, now the Church of the Nazarene.

daughter **Mary Sybil Lister** (1910-1989) gave Slopes Farm to the Woodland Trust in 1989 for the enjoyment of the people of Lyme.

Part Two: High Cliff– The House and its History

George Holland and the origin of the High Cliff Estate

The High Cliff⁵ estate (location of the house NGR SY335920 postcode DT7 3EQ) was acquired by George Holland by amalgamating five strips of land which he purchased with George Smith and George Follett of Lyme, Thomas Jarman of Bristol and Thomas Enchmarch⁶ of Tiverton on 18th November 1811. The land was purchased from local landowners including Henry Hoste Henley, Lord of the Manor of Colway and Sir John Wyldbore of Chideock. See Appendix 2 for a tabular summary of acquisition and ownership.

This 21.6 acre (8.68ha) estate on the favoured western slope overlooking Lyme stretched east from Morgan's Grave on the turnpike road to Sidmouth, about ½ mile (0.85km) west of the town centre. To the north it approached Clappentail Lane and to the south it bordered the Sidmouth Road. A single small close lay to the south of that road. To the east the estate was bordered by a sharp drop, which may have been the inspiration for the name *High Cliff*, setting it back from Pound Road.

On the crest of this slope just above the turnpike, on ground formerly called Long Close, he built a fashionable maritime villa in bow-fronted Regency style. It was more a mansion house along a short drive, surrounded by lawns and gardens, with fields and paddocks beyond. It had a substantial coach house with stabling, harness room and a hay loft. There was a walled kitchen garden and an orchard.

George Holland and his wife Sarah moved into the new house in mid-March 1815. He called it High Cliff and was very proud of it. His interests included geological tours and sailing with Henry de la Beche. Like de la Beche he had a yacht in Lyme and took part in the regattas. He collected rainfall data, some of which is published in George Robert's 1834 History of Lyme Regis. He was interested in phrenology and is mocked as *Von/Van Cranio* in the satirical poem *The Lymiad*. Throughout his life he styled himself as "of High Cliff", even after he moved away from Lyme. Soon his fortune wavered and he was forced to try and sell the house as early as 1817, moving to a much smaller house at the bottom of Silver Street just 26 months after moving in. In building the house Holland had raised the money from George Johns, his architect; John Gardiner, clothier and Thomas Jarman, money scrivener and wine merchant, all of Bristol, who took shares in the house. It may have been Jarman's bankruptcy that precipitated the need to sell.

Sometime between the making of a map of Lyme Regis Parish dated 1825⁷ and 1829⁸ another smaller villa with outbuildings was built on the close on the opposite side of the Sidmouth Road. It was named High Cliff Lodge, later Little Cliff and is now Upper Cobb House. It had its own lodge on the roadside, which became the famous Umbrella Cottage. Exactly when and who built High Cliff Lodge is uncertain, but it was only a small villa at the outset and has since been much extended in the Regency tradition.

Notwithstanding High Cliff Lodge or Umbrella Cottage, High Cliff does not appear to have had its

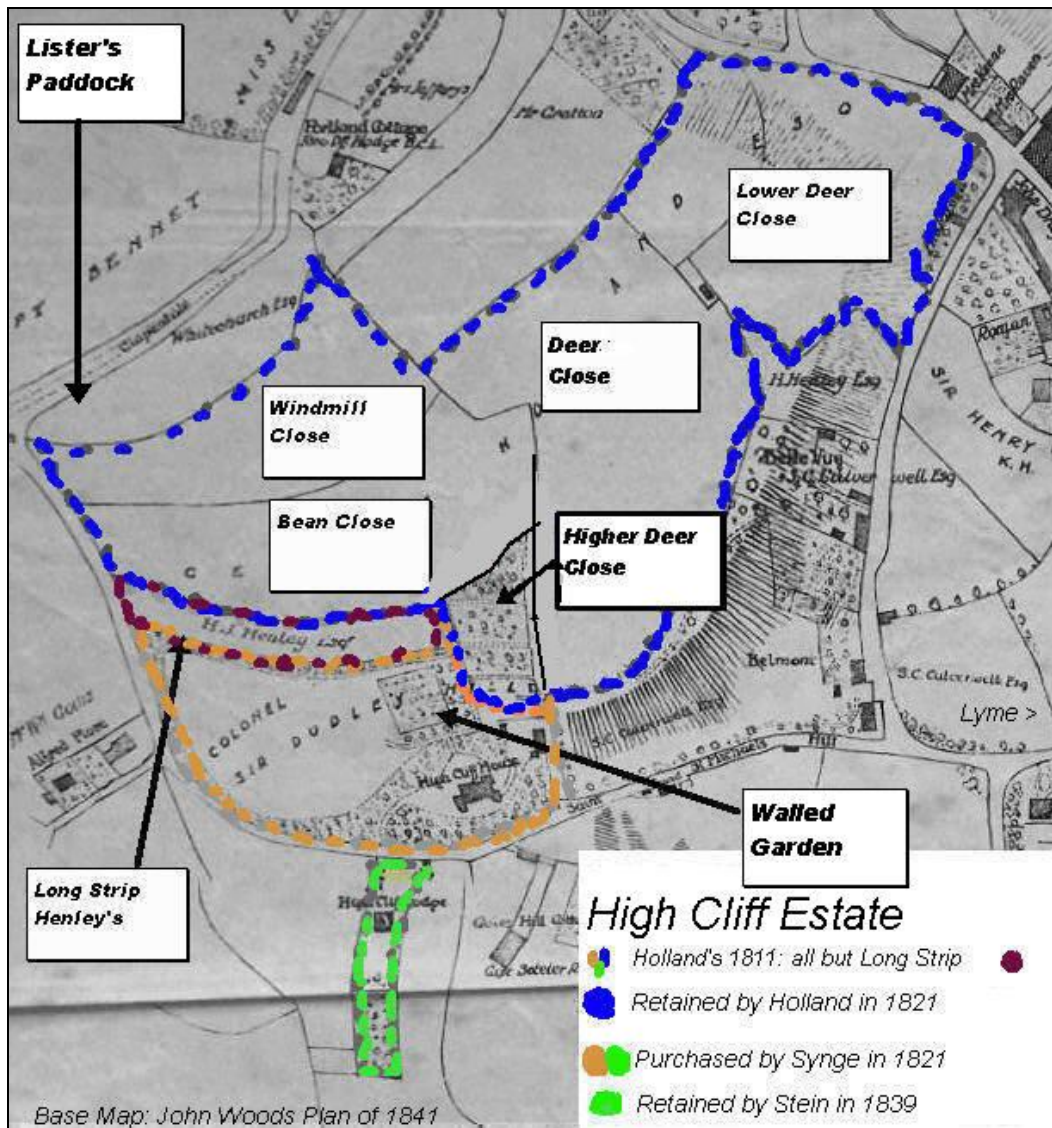
⁵ Information mostly drawn from Christopher Powell's *George Holland (1787-1858) of High Cliff, Lyme Regis* Sheffield 2012 and Gulielma Lister's scrapbook which she gave to the Lyme Regis Museum and has become known as the *Lister Thesaurus*. Additional information is from the suite of maps in the Museum dated from 1819 onwards, trade directories and from contemporary newspaper advertisements and articles.

⁶ Thomas Enchmarch was from a prominent family in Tiverton, and a Thomas Enchmarch died in Tiverton in 1813. Two of his aunts married Coade brothers, one of them became Eleanor Coade's mother, making a connection with Lyme (Diane Shaw from Coade family tree in Lyme Regis Museum pers.com 2013.).

⁷ Possibly by John Drayton – copy in Lyme Regis Museum

⁸ 1829 is the date given against unquoted evidence in John Wood's *Upper Cobb House* in "All about the Town", the Newsletter of Lyme Regis Society March 2003

own gate lodge from the outset. Cox & Master's Chart⁹ of 1854 is the first to depict a lodge in that position. Some time between acquiring the property in 1870 and the making of the 1888 25" OS map Arthur Lister¹⁰ had replaced a thatched cottage in this position with a Gothic lodge cottage, built from cherts dug out when he had the drive reprofiled. The new lodge could now be given the old name, High Cliff Lodge. It was the gardener's cottage during the time of the Listers and is still occupied and extended.



High Cliff Estate – Summary of Ownership

See Appendix 2 for tabular summary of acquisition and ownership

The estate appears to have been mainly pasture land before High Cliff was built, although Gulielma Lister's summary of the land acquisition deeds refers to part having been open or common known as Peas Acres and one inclosure field was called Beans Close. There are no known detailed maps of the estate before construction which might prove this point. Whilst the 1809 First Edition Ordnance Survey map predates construction it is too small in scale to tell anything, except that High Cliff had not yet been built.

High Cliff is a complicated house with four different facades and a raised roof over an extra storey

⁹ Rolled chart of 1854, in Lyme Regis Museum

¹⁰ Information from, and depicted in, Gulielma Lister's Thesaurus in Lyme Regis Museum

added in the 1936. An intriguing quote by Ella Tindall¹¹ from *The Beauties of Sidmouth* by Rev E Butcher (1820) about Holland's "large and tasteful...elegantly furnished...marine villa" is interlined in an unknown hand to imply that the original house was just the present four front rooms on two stories behind the south facing bow windows. Although the cellar lies under this part of the house, it has no connection to the basement or to the rest of the house which is "attached" to the back of it on different levels. Elsewhere Gulielma Lister states that the house was not completed until 1821, so it might appear that the villa built by Holland was a compact, fashionable Regency villa more in accordance with the size of original floor plans of other Lyme marine villas as first built, such as Belmont (1797-84) - and that the rest of the present house consists of later extensions.

That the front of the house is so different from the rest and so apparently free-standing makes such an argument seem convincing but for two facts:

1. The sale advertisement placed by Holland in 1818 shows that it was complete by then, with twelve bedrooms which can be identified on the plans prepared by architect Frederick Kett¹² for the 1936 conversion into a hotel.
2. Overlaying Kett's plans floor-by-floor makes it clear that the front of the house and its principal rooms require the rest of the house for support and could never have been freestanding.

The 1825 map mentioned above is the first to show the house in any detail, other than an 1819 sketch map¹³ of the Henley Estate, which merely shows a naive representation of a house in this position, labelled Mr Holland's. Apparent differences in the eastern and northern façades between the 1825, 1841 and 1851 maps and later Ordnance Survey maps are due only to the yard in the east façade being covered with a lean-to from the time of the 1888 OS map, and the fenced "areas" (basement light wells) on the north façade being mapped as the main house wall by the Ordnance Survey. Google air photos confirm the footprint of the house on the 1854 Chart and all later maps as being the same as current shape – the NW wing being added some between 1841 and 1854.

The footprint endures unchanged through the maps from 1854 and makes High Cliff the least externally altered of all the Lyme marine villas, apart from the addition of an extra floor under the raised roof of 1936. Internally, however, it could be amongst the most altered, with rooms split for conversion to a hotel - and later whole floors subdivided for conversion to flats.

Residents of High Cliff 1815-2013

George Holland 1811 (land acquisition) 1815 (moved in) -1821
 Sir Edward Syngé 1821-1829
 John Stein 1829-1839
 Maj Gen Sir Dudley St Leger Hill 1839-1851
 Denis O'Kelly Templer and his wife Caroline nee Hill ?1841-1851
 Maj Dudley Clarges Hill 1851-1864, let, possibly amongst others unknown to:
 Mrs Travers 1851
 John Montague 1855
 The Countess of Lucan c.1859-1861
 John Wright Treeby MP 1864-1870
 Arthur & Joseph Lister and Smith Harrison 1870-1878
 Arthur & Joseph Lister 1878-c.1902
 Arthur Lister c. 1902-1908
 Susanna Lister 1908-1915
 Isabella, Edith & Gulielma Lister 1915-1928
 Edith & Gulielma Lister 1928-1929
 Unknown property developer 1929-1933
 Mr & Mrs George Snell 1933-1998, as High Cliff Hotel c.1936-1998
 Stowford Homes 1998-, divided into flats, all flats sold except no 1, which is retained as office.

¹¹ Note copied by Ella Tindall in 1910 for Gulielma Lister, attached to her Thesaurus, *ibid*

¹² A copy of Kett's plans is in the High Cliff file in Lyme Regis Museum

¹³ Somerset Record Office DD/TOR 312, copy in Lyme Regis Museum

What High Cliff sale advertisements tell us about the house and its later residents

Unfortunately, as already explained, Holland's impecunious circumstances forced him to try to sell the house freehold with or without his furniture, the grounds and the rest of the estate as soon as 1817. It failed to sell, so Holland tried again in 1818:

On 18th and 25th May 1818 an advertisement¹⁴ appeared in the *Morning Chronicle* for by auction on 29th May by Mr Hoggart of 62, Old Broad Street, London, or private treaty sale before, of an *elegant freehold residence with Gardens, Plantation, and Rich Meadow Land, altogether 22 acres, with or without the appropriate Furniture...presenting a handsome elevation, with a stone portico entrance, approached by a carriage drive, and commanding a grand uninterrupted view of the ocean...the residence and property of George Holland, Esq. The House contains 12 bedchambers including servants rooms and WC, and elegant bow drawing room 29ft by 20, and 15ft 6in height, an eating room of the same dimensions, morning room, library, noble hall, principal and secondary staircases, with attached and detached offices, supplied with fine water, coach house and four-stall stable, large walled and kitchen gardens, lawn, plantation; encompassed by a substantial wall and four enclosures of rich meadow land, lying compact, and containing altogether upwards of twenty-two acres.*

Again the house did not sell and the Hollands remained resident. It was not until 1821 that they moved to Silver Street, so as to lease the house and 5½ acres of grounds to Sir Edward Syngé in March that year, retaining the fields in hand. Syngé subsequently tried to sell the lease in 1825¹⁵:

Beautiful marine villa to be sold by auction at the Cups Hotel on 18th August 1825
Lot 1 A spacious...mansion house with...attached and detached offices, coach-house and four-stall stable, plantations, pleasure-ground, walled garden, and close of pasture ground...four acres...the residence of **Sir Edward Syngé, Bart., the proprietor**...the house contains on the basement storey...kitchen, scullery, housekeeper's room, butler's room, brewing and wash house well supplied with spring and soft water, cellars, laundry and larders; on the principal storey a noble hall with vaulted ceiling, an excellent dining-room 29 x 20 x 15ft 6in high and a morning room; on the first floor an elegant drawing-room 29 x 20 x 13ft 6in, and a library. There are eight good bedchambers and a water closet, and four servants' rooms. The furniture may be taken a valuation and early possession may be had.
Lot 2 A small...messuage lying opposite the Mansion House, with useful outhouses, and a walled garden (*NB: this is assumed to be Umbrella Cottage, or its fore-runner, as High Cliff Lodge was not yet built*).

In 1829 Syngé sold the lease to John Stein, shipbuilder, High Sheriff of Dorset in 1839. Stein appears to have built High Cliff Lodge, and may have gained the freehold of High Cliff itself.

It is not certain when Holland finally sold all of the remainder of his interest in the land that he retained in 1821, except that in 1839 he advertised Broadway House, in the angle between Broad Street and Silver Street, for sale or let. Christopher Powell speculated that 1839 may have been the year when George Holland finally left Lyme for good, eventually dying at Bridlington Quay, Yorkshire in 1858¹⁶.

Stein sold the house and grounds in 1839 to Major Gen Sir Dudley St Leger Hill GCB. In the same year 1839 Hill also bought Higher Deer Close from Holland and planted it with trees to shelter the house from north-east winds (the bitterest wind in Lyme).

¹⁴ Quoted in Christopher Powell *ibid*

¹⁵ Dorset County Chronicle July 1825

¹⁶ Powell, *ibid*

Stein retained High Cliff Lodge for his mother-in-law, Monique Bellingham, who went on to endow the new Lyme RC Church. From then the Lodge was quite separate from the High Cliff Estate. Exactly when it was renamed Little Cliff is uncertain: the first record of that name is the 1888 25" OS map. The trade directory entries for High Cliff (and more than one High Cliff Lodge) and occupants seem confused from 1839 to 1870.

Sir Dudley Hill was a socialite, a military man and a strong supporter of the Tory party and boroughmonger Attwood's corrupt election practices. An 1841 newspaper article¹⁷ recalls a ball followed by a dinner and the wedding of his daughter to Lyme solicitor George Denis O'Kelly Templer:

Lyme, Oct 6 - Our gay little town has during the past week worn an unusual aspect of pleasure and gaiety. On Thursday last a splendid ball and supper were given by Sir Dudley and the Misses Hill, at their mansion, High Cliff, to upwards of a hundred guests, being a galaxy of the beauty and fashion of the town and neighbourhood. Moore's Quadrille Band was in attendance and played some extremely enlivening and well selected pieces in a manner that did them much credit and elicited the general approbation of the company. Refreshments were served up in the breakfast room and were occasionally partaken of between the quadrilles. At one o'clock the large dining room was thrown open for supper, where a most sumptuous repast, consisting of every thing that wealth could procure, awaited the numerous assemblage; after which dancing was resumed and kept up with renewed spirit until six o'clock in the morning, when the party separated, highly delighted with their night's amusement. The service of plate displayed on the supper table was exceedingly magnificent, and was greatly admired.

Amongst the numerous company were Mr, Mrs & Misses Hussey, Mr Thomas Hussey, Mr & Mrs Cornish Henley, Mr & Mrs Cartwright, Col, Mrs & Misses Campbell, The Officers of the 9th Lancers, Capt & Mrs Bennett, Capt & Mrs Warren, Capt Boteler, Capt Henry, Capt & Miss Fane, Miss, Mr & Mrs Hebden, Mr & Mrs Moore, Mr & Mrs Tartt, Mrs Fewtrell, Mrs Daniel, Mrs & the Misses Harriett, Mr & Mrs Dawson, Rev R Daniel, Mr & Miss Coles, Miss Gollop, Misses Chichester, Misses Burr, Mr & the Misses Hill, Miss Gordon, Mrs & the Misses Hayward, Misses Roberts, Miss Sutherland, Miss Black, Lieut Stocker RN, Messrs Symons, Templer (4), Jebb, Hingeston (2), Hunter, Codrington, Hussey, Lee, etc, etc

The next day, Friday, Sir Dudley Hill entertained a large and fashionable party to dinner; and on Saturday the week's *amusement* [was] concluded by the marriage of Miss Hill to George Denis O'Kelly Templer Esq which was celebrated in a style of splendour never before recollected here. The procession to church consisted of ten carriages, [?] led] by a galaxy of youth and beauty of no ordinary class. After the wedding a very *numerous* and highly fashionable party, including the wedding party, partook of a splendid breakfast at High Cliff House, after which the fair bride and bridegroom departed in a travelling carriage on a tour to enjoy the honeymoon.

On 23rd October 1851 the administratrix of **Major General Sir Dudley St Ledger Hill's estate** advertised in *The Times*¹⁸ a *substantial residence consisting of a suite of drawing rooms, connected by a picture gallery, dining room, library, billiard room, ten bedrooms, servants' offices; double coach house, stable, lodge entrance, carriage drive, shrubbery, pleasure ground, and walled garden, in all about 6 acres, and with or without furniture.*

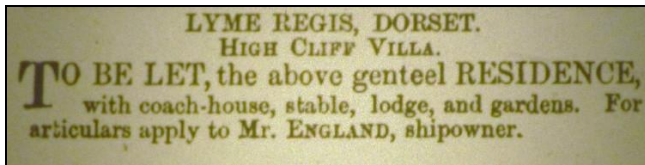
Hill died in India in 1851, whilst his son-in-law Lyme solicitor George Denis O'Kelly Templer was living at High Cliff with his wife, Caroline, who was granted probate. Templer had been Election Agent for the 1847 Lyme Parliamentary candidate, Sir Fitzroy Kelly, who was put up by the notorious pocket boroughmonger, John Attwood, MP for Harwich. Templer is very likely to have used High Cliff for election treating, but it was not mentioned in the subsequent Select Committee hearing into corrupt practices in that election¹⁹. However Hill was very much involved in the celebrations after the election, warmly praising Attwood, who was later convicted of bribery.

¹⁷ Dorset County Chronicle 10th Oct 1841, Lyme Regis Museum Landslip files transcribed by Graham Davies.

¹⁸ The Times on-line archive for 23rd October 1851

¹⁹ HC Select Committee Report into the Lyme Regis Parliamentary Election Petition of 1847, published 1848

The lease passed to his eldest son, Major Dudley Clarges Hill in 1851. Meanwhile the house and grounds was rented by Mrs Travers in 1851, John Montague in 1855 and the Countess of Lucan around 1859-61. That she left early in 1861 is probably clarified by a complete sale of the furniture of the house on 28th June 1861: the advertisement²⁰ stating that it was all quite new and had been placed in the house within the last three months – implying another tenant after the Countess.



Pulman's Weekly News 19th February 1861

In 1864 John Wright Treeby, who lived in Westminster, acquired the house, and seemingly the freehold, in order to be better able to woo voters in the Lyme Regis parliamentary seat after failing by one vote in 1859 to dislodge the sitting Whig MP, William Pinney. He succeeded in the 1865 election by nine votes, his electors may well have rewarded by a certain amount of treating at High Cliff. The Second Reform Act (correctly the Representation of the Peoples Act, 1867) widened the franchise, thereby making this much more difficult and expensive.

In the following year the Representation of the Peoples Act (Scotland), 1868 created additional Scottish seats in the Commons at the expense of seven English borough constituencies, including Lyme, which were disenfranchised in order to achieve a fairer distribution of seats overall. Lyme was amalgamated into the existing Bridport constituency. As the Bridport candidature was already spoken for and the seat was too big for him to influence anyway, Treeby had no further interest in the house and grounds and put the property up for auction by Messrs Rusworth, Abbot & Co of 22 Savile Row, London W. on 22nd June 1870²¹:

High Cliff Lyme Regis A Capital FREEHOLD MARINE RESIDENCE, with all the appropriate Furniture, Stabling, Gardens, and Paddock, altogether five acres, with possession...containing **eleven** bed-rooms, **four** reception-rooms, billiard-room, and domestic offices, pleasure grounds **with lodge entrance**, fruit and vegetable gardens, good stabling, orchard and paddock. The situation is elevated, commanding charming views over the English Channel and, as the Furniture is included, immediate enjoyment may be obtained.

Arthur and Joseph Lister and their brother in law Smith Harrison bought the property in 1870²² to use it as a family holiday home. Gulielma Lister thought that Smith Harrison sold his share to Arthur Lister in 1878, the same year that that Arthur rebuilt the gate lodge. Harrison died in 1883 leaving £149,039. Gulielma thought that Joseph Lister sold his share to Arthur in the first years of the 20th century²³ - leaving Arthur Lister the sole owner until his death in 1908, when it passed to his widow Susanna (nee Tindall). When Susanna Lister died in 1915, the house passed to her spinster daughters Gulielma, Edith and Isabella²⁴ who continued to use it as a holiday home for all the family and friends. Meanwhile their Leytonstone was house retained, even after Arthur Lister retired to High Cliff in 1888.

In 1871 Arthur Lister bought West Field (Tithe Map No. LT386), south of the Sidmouth Road at Morgan's Grave, from George Giffard. At some time the Listers purchased one acre of meadow, called Paddock on the Tithe Map (LT378) at Morgan's Grave, fronting Clappentail Lane. This

²⁰ Bridport News 22nd June 1861

²¹ Dorset County Chronicle 26th May 1870

²² Trimmed newspaper cutting *100 years Ago* in Lyme Regis November 1971 - "Professor Lister has just concluded the purchase of High Cliff, the residence of our ex-MP"

²³ Gulielma Lister's Thesaurus *ibid*

²⁴ Gulielma Lister's Thesaurus *ibid*

formed Lot 2 when Gulielma and Edith Lister sold High Cliff in 1929 and returned to Leytonstone after their sister, Isabella, died in 1928.

The Listers advertised it as²⁵:

Lot 1 High Cliff²⁶, built about 120 years previously, into the slope of the hillside, floor plans provided...of brick, partly rendered, stone, slated, some hanging slates, south corridor, dining room, sitting room, bathroom, billiard room, **four bedrooms**, two staircases, long gallery, boudoir, drawing room, **five (further) bedrooms**, **four attic bedrooms**, boxroom, domestic offices; servants hall, pantry, boiler room, kitchen, scullery, coal cellar, servants WC, boot and knife rooms, two larders, dry cellars. (**High Cliff**) **Lodge**; of stone, slated, tiled, living room, two bedrooms, glazed yard with wash-house (copper), EC (earth closet), wood and coal stores, second EC in garden, (lodge) occupied by gardener. **Out Buildings** of stone, slated, three-stall stables, two coach houses suitable for garage for three cars, loft and two men's rooms over all. Stone cow-shed and pig-sty in orchard. **Land** totalling 6.5 acres. Gardens with attractive summerhouse, walled kitchen garden with heated greenhouse, ground frames, two summerhouses with potting shed beneath one. Orchard and two acres of pasture.

Lot 2 One acre of **Meadow** at Morgan's Grave cross roads, fronting Clappentail Lane. [NB 11 Bedrooms altogether]

Evidently **Lot 2** (Paddock) did not sell, for a letter in Hillman and Bond copy book for August 1933 to April 1934²⁷ to a London solicitor states:

A client of ours has heard that your clients the Misses Lister formerly of High Cliff in this town are willing to sell the field of one acre adjoining Clappentail Lane here. If this is so, our client is prepared to offer £200 provided the property is freehold and subject to no outgoings other than ordinary rates, taxes and tithe rent (sic) charges.

Lot 1, the house and grounds was sold to a local property developer who sold the house and some or all of the remaining land on to Mr and Mrs George Snell in 1933.

The Snells converted the house into a hotel by²⁸:

In the basement - removing partitions in the scullery and kitchen, adding a concrete stair up from the billiard room to the dining room and a dumb waiter from the scullery to the dining room,

On the ground floor – no changes except the stair and waiter already mentioned,

On the first floor - (which is only at the back of the house between the two stories at the front) – making seven bedrooms, a bathroom and a linen room from four or five bedrooms,

On the second floor – making the oval reception room in the SE bow into a bedroom, retaining four other bedrooms and lowering the ceiling and roof between the bows, and

On a new third floor building five bedrooms, three of which look out onto a veranda between the roofs of the two front bows, a bathroom, two WCs and adding a fire escape at the back. This roof extension is under a pyramidal steep slate roof and represents an incongruous and out-of-character change to a fine Regency frontage and low roof line, having the appearance of a bungalow placed on the roof. It is particularly damaging in long views, such as from Holmbush, as well as from the lawn in front of the house. At the back

²⁵ Devon Record Office have a sale catalogue for 1921, indicating an earlier sale attempt by the Lister sisters (547B/P2879)

²⁶ News cutting in Lyme Regis Museum

²⁷ Copy book in the possession of Lyme Regis Museum to be passed for storage to the Dorset History Centre in due course

²⁸ from Frederick Kett's detailed plan – *Proposed Alterations for G Snell Esq August 1936* in Lyme Regis Museum

the new third floor simply extends the original wall upwards and the new roof line maintains Regency proportions reasonably well.



High Cliff from the Cobb – Dunster engraving of maybe 1850 and 1900 photograph

The extent to which this third floor is entirely new is uncertain. Certainly there was no pyramidal roof, but there may well have been a roof terrace set back from the front behind a low slate roof, as the original staircase appears to extend up to the original roof. Distant photographs only show some low roof structure. There may have been garrets, but they are not visible in photographs of either front or rear elevation, nor do the Listers or any sale advertisements mention their existence²⁹. These Regency houses had restrained, low roofs set back from their verges, which makes the roof extension quite incongruous, as it is now very apparent from the ground looking up from the lawn, which would never have been done under the original scheme. It is clear that Kett was able to extend original thick walls upwards to form the shell of his new third floor structure. However, a large tree on the lawn obscures all pre-1936 photographs except one - close up and from the Cobb. An engraving drawn from the sea, marketed by David Dunster and undated but probably 1850s, shows High Cliff reasonably clearly and it certainly does not appear to have garrets. It appears that a low slate roof linked the low lead-capped slate roofs of the bowed bays.

Now with 17 bedrooms, the house was opened as the High Cliff Hotel, probably for the summer season of 1937 – there is some doubt in that the Snells may have opened the hotel in 1935, closing during the conversion work. It featured the “Lister Lounge” and a “unique” oval bar made from the Morning Room in the right hand bow, which was the Listers study and laboratory. There were “lawns and ample car parking front and rear”. One could comment that Listers didn’t do lounging - they were always too busy for that. Of the 17 hotel bedrooms, only one was en-suite. There were three other bathrooms and three separate WCs, adequate by 1936 standards. Advertisements for the hotel state hot and cold water in all rooms and central heating.

During WWII George Snell, who had been previously involved with the Secret Service, ran a National Pigeon Station at High Cliff. There he raised and trained birds for clandestine operations overseas, using them to send and receive messages. Birds were parachuted in over enemy occupied territory bearing requests to the local population to send back information about Axis operations. The birds homed back to High Cliff, hopefully with messages for GCHQ. People in the town involved in breeding and training birds for Snell received certificates at the end of the war, but Snell, an agent for GCHQ, would have expected no recognition.

As well as developing the hotel the Snells sold off much of the remaining land for housing, with houses built along on a new road, called Highcliff (sic) Close, extending across the western part of the Lister’s lawns. The gate lodge was advertised separately on 8th July 1988 for £50,000, which compares with the £2,160 (£2.01M today) that Stein paid for the lease of High Cliff house and 5½ acres in 1829.

²⁹ See RCHME statement below

In 1998 Mr S Sweet of Stowford Homes, Musbury, a property developer, bought the High Cliff Hotel, coach house, garages and three building plots from Mrs G Snell and her daughter, Mrs Pat Webb³⁰. He converted the house into flats, but Stowford Homes retains one as an office, undertaking bespoke building conversions for private clients. Overall central heating was replaced by electric radiators.

The orchard and walled garden are now built-up and are reached by a new drive which branches off the main drive and runs close by the rear of the house, where a three-bay garage block has been built. There is another house in gate lodge position, opposite the original gate lodge. To the east of the house the **Coach House** has been converted to flats with conservatories, the upper floor being already occupied by garden staff in the Listers' days. The Coach House is elongated north-south under a hipped slate roof, with a yard on the west side. It overlooks the sharp drop onto the modern Coastguard Station and Telephone Exchange below. It is not mentioned in the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments in England (RCHME) inventory, nor is it covered by listing.

High Cliff House – Conservation Status

The building is listed Grade II. RCHME described it in 1952³¹ (my additions in brackets) as built around 1840 (now known to be 1811) in two to three stories, (with) plastered (outside) walls (under) a slated roof. The south front (the principal elevation) is symmetrical (with an) enclosed porch with Doric columns and entablature, flanked by round-headed windows set in shallow sinkings. At either (end of the elevation) are two (very characteristic) broad segmental bays. (The) first floor windows (have) plain, tall rectangular openings. The windows in the bays are probably not original. The eaves are wide and plain and the roofs are of low pitch, (with) former attics rebuilt³² and raised (under a hipped slate roof in 1936, set back at the front to form a balcony between the bays, but flush at the back). The entrance (from the porch) is into a wide corridor running east to west parallel with the front elevation divided into three bays by coupled strip-pilasters, each bay has a plaster semi-circular cross vault with applied ornament at the intersections. The room at the east end is oval in plan and has a delicate leaf pattern cornice. The reeded door architraves with modelled blocks at the corners, the staircase and a number of fireplace-surrounds are original.



South or Front Elevation of High Cliff in 1901

– photo by Francis Godlee in the Lister Thesaurus

The Elevations Described

The RCHME description fails to mention that each elevation is quite different:

The **south elevation** (front) is the principal feature of the house, typified by the double bows either side of a central Doric porch, which leads into a cross corridor. The hotel had this as the main or front door and, as it was designed to impress, so must have George Holland. But it is exposed to the full force of SW gales, so in bad weather it would be more appropriate to

³⁰ Bridport & Lyme Regis News 7th October 1988

³¹ From RCHME *Lyme Regis Inventory* 1952

³² No evidence is given for this statement

use the back door for access. Both front and back doors are equally served by the drive, which goes right around the house, and both have substantial enclosed porches. At the front a veranda now rests on the lowered ceiling between the bows, and a railed-off area above the porch provides a small balcony.

The **north elevation** (rear, back) is like two self self-contained Georgian townhouses, one set back behind a railed area for basement light, with central porch and two storeys of sash windowed bays either side, above basement windows. An offset round-headed between the porch lights the stairwell. This section was raised in 1936 with the addition of three decreasing sash windows below a low slated hipped roof with a plain, moderately overhanging verge. To the left is an un-raised section which reaches out as far as the railed area, with plain sash windows and an overhanging verge. To the right is a section which housed the billiard room in the basement and a bedroom above, behind which rises the rear of the Drawing Room. This section appears to be an extension built by Sir Dudley Hill. The porch stands over an area protected by railings which serves to light the basement.



(l) Rear Elevation with Gulielma Lister (figure on the right) in 1924 (from her Thesaurus) and (r) in 2013, with the upper storey added in 1936.



The Porch over the Area on the rear elevation in 2013

The **east elevation** (facing Lyme) is of more Lyme-vernacular in appearance, with a balcony between projecting bays under hipped slate roofs, one wall of which is slate hung (see frontispiece).

The **west elevation** is partly two storey and insignificant, although it is the first to be seen on arrival.



The West Elevation shows the differing floor levels back and front, in 2012.

The former Billiard Room, with its round-headed windows, was at the back of the house in the **Basement**. Directly above this was a bedroom, with two sash windows, on the **First Floor**. The near sash window was in the Dining Room on the **Ground Floor** and above that the bay window lit the Drawing Room on the **Second Floor**. Photograph taken in 2012.

The Floors Described

Kett's 1936 plans³³ show the works intended to convert the building to a hotel and also show much of the building as the Listers had it. Most of twelve of Holland's bedchambers and other named rooms can also be traced.

Kett provided no plan for the **Cellar**; its presence only indicated by steps leading down under the oval room the SE bow from the yard in the east elevation.

The **Basement** is shown in detail. It does not extend under the bowed front rooms, but contains a billiard room (used by the Listers for their stuffed bird collection) with round-headed windows in the NW corner, a large scullery, a kitchen and a staff room (probably the housekeeper's room). Reached from the yard on this level are a larder and a boots room for wet clothes. The basement opens into the Area in the north elevation, and under the porch a door opens into the coal cellar extending under the drive, originally for easy delivery of fuel through a chute.

The **Ground Floor** contains the porch in the south elevation leading to a cross corridor with a paved floor, presumably Holland's "noble hall". To the left (west) of the porch is the dining room (eating room of Holland) and to the east (right) is the oval writing room (Holland's morning room and Lister's study). These two rooms have large bow windows, and because of their 15ft 6in ceilings, the main staircase across the hall from the front door ascends to an intermediate floor level, or first floor.

³³ Kett, *ibid*

The **First Floor** is level with the rear entrance door in the porch in the north elevation. This floor probably contained six bedrooms, and a corridor to the northern porch with the secondary staircase behind the back door.

The main staircase continues up to the **Second Floor** with five of Holland's original bedchambers - and behind the south elevation, an oval room on the east which may have been the library, and the drawing room on the west, both with bow windows, linked by a cross corridor corresponding to the "noble hall" below.

Kett added a **third floor** of five bedrooms, three of which faced south onto a new veranda above the south elevation.



High Cliff as a Hotel, the front of the house, with roof extension and veranda, probably about 1970 (Lyme Regis Museum)



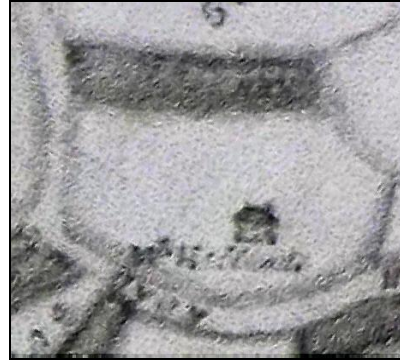
The front of the house in 2012

Maps and Air Photos of High Cliff house and grounds

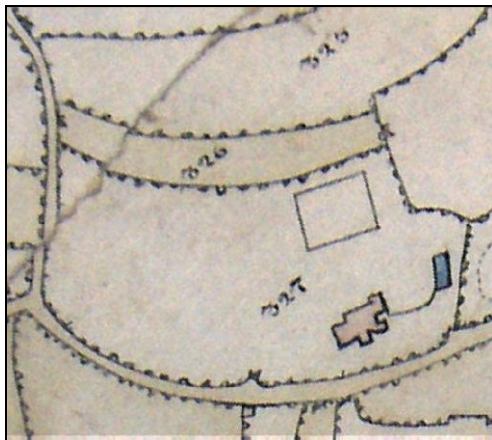
All the maps and photos are adjusted to a common scale of about 1: 2,500 (25" to mile), except the close up air photo of High Cliff house, and are in the collection of Lyme Regis Museum as originals - except the 1819 Henley Sketch Map (Somerset Record Office), 1825 Parish Map of Lyme Regis (Dorset Record Office), 1841 Tithe Map (Dorset Record Office) and the Google air photos which were downloaded in 2013. The Museum has photographic copies of the maps for which it does not have originals.



1809 OS 1" to 1 Mile
The site of the future High Cliff obscured by hachuring

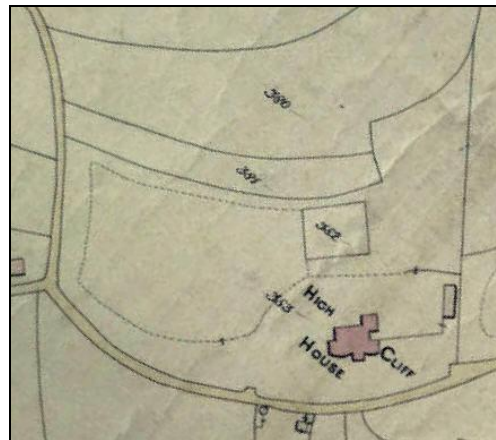


1819 Henley Estate Sketch Map
with "Mr Holland's" High Cliff in place and only the Long Strip shown as Henley's

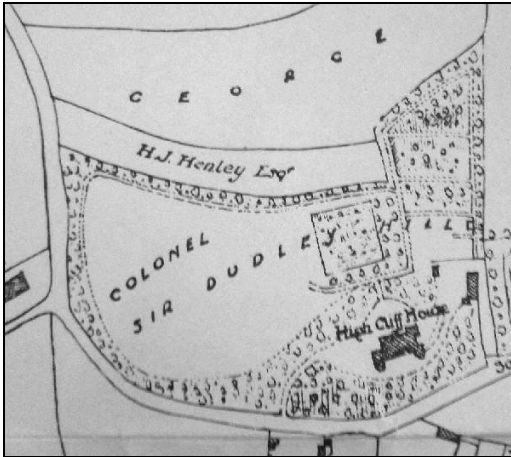


1825 Map of the Parish of Lyme Regis

Both these maps show the house complete (apart from the billiard room in the NW corner), with the coach house and the forerunner of Umbrella Cottage across the Sidmouth Road and Henley's Long Strip. On both maps pink indicates houses, blue outbuildings. Higher Deer Close was incorporated in 1839.



1841 Tithe Map



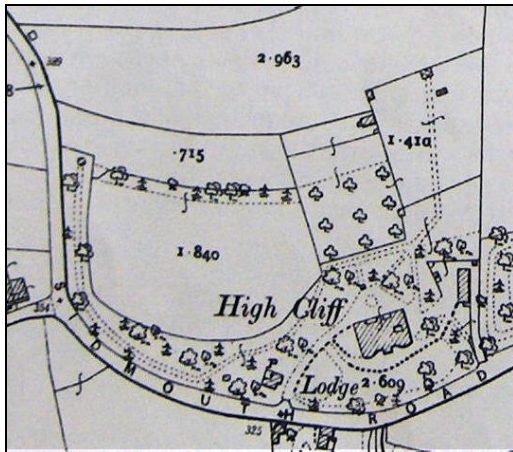
Wood's Plan of 1841

Higher Deer Close is now planted as well as the orchard in part of walled garden



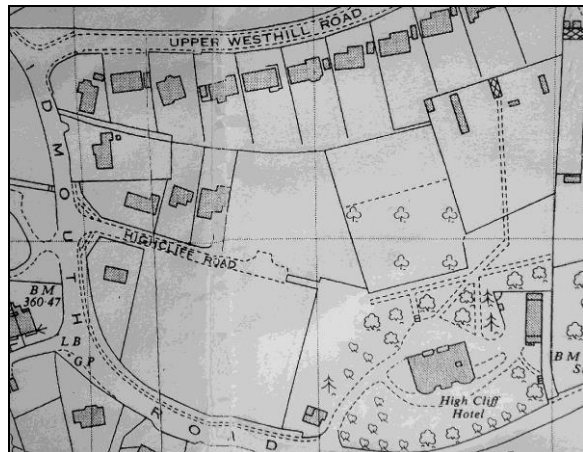
Cox & Davis Chart of 1854

The Long Strip is now incorporated, but the saplings in Higher Deer Close did not impress the surveyors



OS 25" 1903

The Lister era - the grounds mature

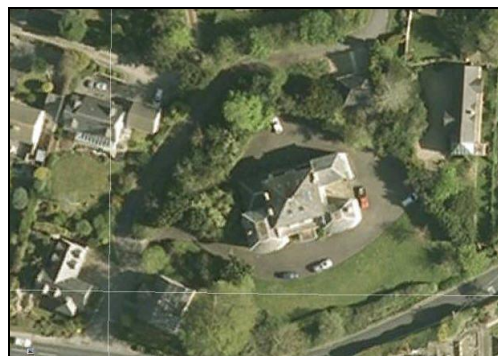


OS 25" 1963

Suburban development encroaching



Google 2013 vertical air photo
Suburban development complete



Google 2013 vertical air photo close up of house
Showing the 1936 roof and the enlarged gate lodge

The Grounds

The only information on the grounds before 1900 comes from the maps already shown and odd snippets in the sale advertisements. Gulielma Lister includes many photographs, dating from 1901 to the 1920s, in her Thesaurus, labelled with the names of individual garden areas, specimen trees and the names of gardeners. There is no overall watercolour photograph or postcard known, not even for the era of the High Cliff Hotel. For such a family of talented watercolourists, this is surprising, unless the Lister family still have material. The Wellcome Foundation's Lister Archive contains a drawing by Lord Lister which was wrongly presumed to be High Cliff.

Therefore Holland's Regency garden layout is unknown – in 1818 he advertised the house with a coach house and four-stall stable, large walled and kitchen gardens, lawn, plantation; encompassed by a substantial wall and four enclosures of rich meadow land, lying compact, and containing altogether upwards of twenty-two acres. From this we glean that the grounds (not the pasture, which he retained) was enclosed by a ring wall and that was a walled garden or two.

Successive owners developed the grounds, but the overall description remains similar, with additional mention of pleasure grounds in 1825, an entrance lodge, carriage drive and shrubbery in 1851, fruit and vegetable gardens, orchard and paddock in 1870 and two coach houses suitable for garage for three cars with loft and two men's rooms over all, stone cow-shed and pig-sty in orchard, attractive summerhouse, walled kitchen garden with heated greenhouse, ground frames and two summerhouses with potting shed beneath one in 1929.

The maps demonstrate this gradual evolution of an English layout of informal lawns in front of the house, with fringing shelter belts designed to link the gardens with the wider countryside beyond. More formally planned and more utilitarian were the square orchard behind the house and the walled garden to its east. The curved drive to the house is relatively short, but was designed not to reveal the house at first, which would then appear, framed by large trees.

Gulielma mentions particular features – the walled garden, a more formal garden called Corisand with a thatched enclosed summerhouse or shelter, an upper and lower Rock Garden. Overlooking the walled garden was a tiled, open summerhouse, more a raised Gazebo, built on top of a potting shed and a pigsty which all backed onto a thatched cowshed in the adjoining field. The Gazebo had a wonderful open view down into Lyme and across to Black Ven and Stonebarrow. A circular gravelled area linked the gardens as part of Smith Harrison's Walk. These features can be identified with some certainty using the Thesaurus photographs on the 1903 OS Map. Gulie also refers to the Long Strip as the Archery Lawn.

The front lawn was blessed with specimen trees by 1913, labelled in photographs by Gulielma. These were large enough to have been planted by as far back as Sir Dudley Hill – a purple beech, a large yew and large Monterey pines.

The photographs which follow are from Gulielma's Thesaurus and were taken between 1901 and 1920 by Francis Godlee and Nelly Goodman. They do not adequately convey what the grounds must have been like – and there are several more in the Thesaurus than can be shown here.

Today the house stands behind the lawns, but little else remains except the lodge, drive and remaining parts of the walls, including the high retaining wall along the Sidmouth Road to the east of the drive entrance. The walls of the walled garden largely survive and enclose three modern houses.



The Walled Garden from the raised gazebo



Thatched gazebo in the Corisand Garden



The cowshed, pigsty and raised gazebo



The lodge by the drive entrance



The raised gazebo and the rock garden

*Photographs of the grounds around 1920 by Francis Godlee and Nelly Goodman
(Lister Thesaurus)*

Part Three: The Listers, Lyme and High Cliff

Introduction and partial recapitulation

The Lister bothers Joseph and Arthur and their brother-in-law Smith Harrison bought High Cliff in 1870 as a holiday retreat whilst living in Edinburgh (Joseph) and Essex (Arthur and Smith).

Smith and Joseph sold their shares to Arthur (probably in c.1878 and sometime after 1900 respectively).

Arthur Lister and his family used High Cliff as their main residence from 1888, keeping Sycamore House in Leytonstone, Essex, as a London base. All the Listers (including the extended family with Tindalls, Godlees and Harrisons) aimed to meet at High Cliff each year for Christmas, High Cliff replacing Joseph Jackson Lister's Upton House in West Ham for this purpose.

Joseph's last visit was Christmas 1902. Arthur died at High Cliff in 1908, having willed it to his wife Susanna, who died at Sycamore House in 1915.

Edith and Gulielma Lister sold the house in 1929 and went back to the Sycamore House, where Gulielma died in 1949 and Edith in 1950.

Why did the Listers' buy High Cliff?

There is no clear indication, so this section is mainly my musings mixed with what Lyme was like at the time. It is unlikely that purchase was motivated by ostentation or the need to socialise in polite society – the Listers, as Quakers, were not like that, and if they had been they would have chosen somewhere more fashionable. Their father, John Jackson Lister, had visited Lyme Regis in 1852, staying at Library Cottage, so they may have been told about it or even been with him³⁴. By 1870 this Regency house would have seemed old fashioned – too plain and unfussy by Victorian standards. The purchase coincides with the settlement of their father's estate in 1870, following his death in 1869, and the sale of Upton House to developers. This no doubt provided the funds from the up to £80,000 which he left (£8M in 2012 terms). High Cliff neatly replaced Upton House for the family Christmas gatherings.

The draw was undoubtedly the natural attributes of the coast and country around Lyme, the scope for walks, rides, sketching and bird watching, its gardens and parkland setting, the coastal views from the house and the opportunities the house gave for family gatherings and as a base for natural history studies, including laboratory space. Arthur had collected mosses whilst at school, but he started a systematic interest in botany whilst on a holiday with Joseph in Torquay in 1866. This interest later "descended" the botanic scale from mosses to fungi, lichens and so to slime moulds and depended more and more on microscopy and Arthur's ability to make drawings using *camera lucida* microscope attachment developed by their father. He also collected butterflies, moths and birds and studied sea squirts, one of which from Lyme Regis is named after him. Joseph shared some of these interests, particularly birds. The area around Lyme is rich in all these things and the geology that Arthur, Joseph and Gulielma celebrated in their writings, sketchbooks and notebooks and about which Muriel Arber³⁵, speaks in fond reverence of Gulielma. High Cliff allowed Joseph somewhere quiet to escape, where, with Agnes' help and Arthur's advice, he could write papers and prepare addresses. There he experimented on the decay of plant and animal material, the fermentation of milk and the effect of carbolic acid in delaying or preventing decay by killing bacteria and fungi. Holiday retreats were vital

³⁴ Gulielma Lister *ibid*

³⁵ Muriel Arber was the daughter of Newell Arber (palaeobotanist and geomorphologist) and Agnes Arber FRS (botanist) of Cambridge. Agnes was a friend of Gulielma and Dorothea Lister, and with Muriel, became regular visitors to Lyme with encouragement from the Lister. Gulielma gave the young Muriel every support as a budding scientist as an aunt-like figure. Muriel became a strong supporter of Lyme Regis Museum and published her memories of Lyme in *Lyme Landscape in Figures* (Dorset Books 1988). She included a chapter on the Listers, placing the family in the contexts of Lyme, Essex and Cambridge.

to Joseph in providing thinking and writing space, away from the everyday hustle and bustle of hospital and teaching.

The draw was not the Lyme social round – the Assembly Rooms, concerts and such like – in any case these were amongst Lyme’s fading glories by the 1870s. Anyone who knows Lyme knows that the town is a fatal attraction for those visitors who appreciate its charms – and those with a house there know that this extends to their children and grandchildren. Countless winter-empty family second homes in the town and surrounds testify to this draw – and have done since at least the 1770s. Visits become regular, more frequent than annual until the visitor, maybe on retirement, comes to regard Lyme as their main home – exactly what Arthur and Susanna Lister and some of their children did, despite eventually retuning to Leytonstone.

Arthur and Gulielma furthered their natural history studies in Lyme and brought a great deal of equipment here to do it, such as microscopes, something which made Muriel Arber, on much more modest means, slightly envious. That Lyme was becoming run down again, with a lack of modern services, would have concerned them, but would not have impacted greatly up at High Cliff, where they would have been comfortable enough, with their own staff brought from Essex. Only after 1900 did things change in Lyme for the better, with the coming of the railway, water and electricity supplies and a sewerage system which at least took effluent to the low water mark. Being high up on the hill out of town, High Cliff would have been isolated from the last three for many years, although the gas mains probably stretched that far well before 1870. High Cliff had its own private water supply and, no doubt, its own septic arrangements for the closets.

Certainly there were unpleasant aspects to Lyme in 1870. Just before they came, in 1864, there was a food riot in Lyme because of high bread prices – a crowd of 500 attacked the Town Mill. The town was run down after years of mismanagement and neglect by the Henley Estate and the Borough, which had been dominated by vested interests even after the Reform Act of 1832.

Aspects which must have concerned Joseph Lister would have been the lack of a hospital, poor food and poor hygiene amongst the working class of the town. He took steps to introduce antiseptic surgery here. The Public Health Act of 1875³⁶ was not properly enforced in the town until the 1890s. A correspondent to *The Builder* of 1876 (p. 769) complains of the inadequacy of its sewerage system, with no “stench traps” in street gullies where street drainage enters the system and no ventilators for sewer gas, of which it said the resultant smells were “very offensive”. One fifth of the population of Lyme was forced to use the river for disposal of sewage and vegetable waste and refuse, which had to bear the load of several closets and drains. In the lower parts of the town the poorer people had to make do without any piped water supply. Serious cholera and typhoid epidemics had only been avoided with luck. Air pollution from the Monmouth Beach cement and tile works, burning cheap sulphur-rich coal, may have affected High Cliff directly, it being above the works.

These issues would affected London (the “Big Stink” of 1858) and Edinburgh (where Joseph Lister was at the time), long known as *Auld Reekie* from coal smoke. Today life in Charlotte Square, queen of the Edinburgh New Town, would seem idyllic. But then the smoke-blackened buildings would have been more savoury than those of the medieval Old Town, across the Princes Street gardens. In Essex, Leytonstone and Plaistow were starting to be built up; old memories of Upton were being erased by suburban development.

The opening of the railway to Axminster in 1861 made the journey from London much more possible – even in half a day - and it was normal for well-to-do families to hire a family carriage which would take their trunks and their servants as well as themselves, which would have made the journey for Arthur Lister and Smith Harrison’s families relatively easy. For Joseph and Agnes the distance from

³⁶ Richard Bull 2011 *Industrial Lyme – the Sewerage Industry* Lyme Regis Museum (see www.lymeregismuseum.co.uk)

Edinburgh made travel more difficult – it was until 1877 that they settled in London. Arranging a conveyance from Axminster Station to High Cliff would not have been difficult then - they had retainers at High Cliff in the form of James Burt and Frank Hitchcock, their gardeners, when the house itself shut up.

The Listers were intrepid travellers. Joseph took long and frequent holidays and lecture tours in the UK, Europe and North America and trips to places like St Ives, Swanage and Lyme to have time to write or experiment. He always travelled with Agnes. In their commonplace book they record³⁷ a long holiday journey to Lyme with Arthur and Susanna, having left Edinburgh two days before. From Leytonstone they went via Oxford, Stratford-upon-Avon, Malvern and the Wye Valley, then steamer to Bristol from Chepstow and finally by rail to Chard. There they hired a road carriage, but it crashed near Axminster, without personal injury, requiring a rescue carriage. After 1903, when the Lyme railway opened, a family railway carriage could have been sent through to Lyme.

The plus side for them was that Lyme was in an area of high biodiversity, both on land and on, in and under the sea. As an area of relatively high rainfall, mild winters, warm rather than hot summers and low atmospheric pollution, even with the cement works, it was ideal (compared with the Essex fringes of London) for collecting and studying fungi and mycetozoa – and for maintaining varied plant collections in the garden - whereas Leytonstone was on the fringes of expanding London and rapidly became built up after the Great Eastern Railway opened Leytonstone Station in 1856, quite close to Sycamore House. This opening, of course, eased the Lister's getaway. Maybe they had feared that their house was about to be sunk in a sea of not too salubrious suburban development, but in fact any eastward sprawl was limited by the purchase of Epping Forest by the City of London in 1878, although Agnes Arber described it as a beautiful old house which had become engulfed and isolated in a very poor neighbourhood³⁸. The proximity of Epping Forest and Wanstead Park enabled Arthur and Gulielma to indulge it is wildlife (particularly the mycetozoa) as well as the activities of the Essex Field Club, including its Stratford Museum

The Listers all liked Lyme. “The sweet distractions of Lyme” were sufficient to discourage Joseph from visiting on occasions when he wanted to write up a paper or prepare an address – for example when he wanted to write a paper on lactic fermentation in 1879, he and Agnes went to St Ives to do it, fearing it would not get done at High Cliff³⁹.

Moreover, they could afford it. Although originally not from a wealthy background, the source of family wealth was from the hard graft in the London wine trade, safeguarded by Quaker principles. As a top surgeon – and surgeon to the Royal Household – Joseph must have done alright, although he did not leave as much money as Arthur. Those Quaker principles may have limited his earnings from patenting his discoveries, preferring to see antiseptic surgery adopted quickly. The families employed many servants. Arthur and Susanna had a governess for the children. Even in 1911, when the three spinster sisters were alone at High Cliff, they employed a cook, a gardener, three maids and a page boy. They left substantial sums in their wills.

The Listers' family background and influences

Arthur and Joseph shared many characteristics, as well as a life-long brotherly love and companionship in scientific endeavour and natural history pursuits. Much of their character was derived from Quaker principles - Quakers were shut off from the old universities and from the armed forces by virtue of their stands against the Articles of the Church of England and armed conflict. They did not indulge in ostentation or expensive sports or pastimes, theatre or dancing and tended to be frugal and serious.

³⁷ in Richard Fisher 1977 *Joseph Lister* Stein & Day New York

³⁸ in Muriel Arber *ibid.*

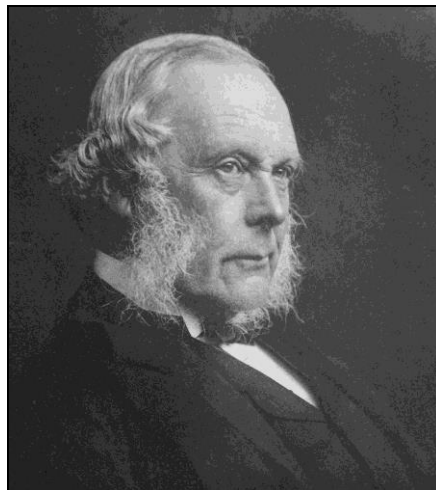
³⁹ from Joseph Lister's common place book quoted in Fisher *ibid.*

The family was closely associated with other prominent Quakers through the Plaistow Meeting. When later Listers were involved in armed conflict, whether as medics or out of a passion to drive out the greater evil of Nazism, took holy orders or married non-Quakers, it was after they had left the Society of Friends. Joseph himself left the Society to marry Agnes Syme, but remained firm in his Quaker upbringing, seeking enjoyment through the natural history, coast and countryside of Lyme, rather than being entertained through music, dancing and theatre in resorts. When writing to his dear brother he always used the Quaker forms of “thee” and “thou”.

Their father, Joseph Jackson Lister FRS was principally famous for designing the achromatic compound lens, which at last brought clear images to microscopy. Previously images were ringed with the rainbow of the spectrum, blurring the outline and making high magnification work very difficult. As well as the optics and techniques of microscope construction, he was interested in the structure of cells, something which could not be seen clearly without his lenses.

With his father’s microscopes Arthur and Joseph were able to see the structure and mechanism of living cells, so that they could study the organisms involved in the putrefaction and decay of plant and animal tissue about which so little was known before. This covered bacteria, fungi and Arthur’s speciality, the mycetozoa. Joseph was able to study the role of bacteria in fermentation of milk and the effect of carbolic acid in inhibiting their multiplication. He combined that work with Arthur’s knowledge of other lowly organisms, into new methods of encouraging rapid healing of surgical and other wounds. The resultant reduction in inflammation and the eradication of pus formation and gangrene enabled much better outcomes than before, and, coupled with the introduction of anaesthesia a few years before, resulted in a huge reduction in post-operative deaths. This work took him beyond antiseptic surgery, ie the killing of pathogenic bacteria already present, to aseptic surgery: the total prevention of infection through absolute cleanliness in surgery, in wound dressing and in hospital wards.

Joseph Lister, Lord Lister of Lyme Regis FRS (& President) FRCS FRCSEd OM PC 5th April 1827- 10th February 1912



Joseph, Lord Lister of Lyme Regis by R A Bickersteth in Godlee 1917

Joseph Lister was born at Upton House in 1827, the second son of John Jackson Lister. There is much written⁴⁰ about him, with at least five biographies, a commemorative volume by surgical colleagues

⁴⁰ Volumes in Lyme Regis Museum on Lister:

Turner, A Logan 1927 *Joseph Baron Lister Centenary Volume* Oliver and Boyd Edinburgh
Fisher, Richard B 1977 *Joseph Lister* Stein & Day New York (the most comprehensive account)
Wrench, G T 1913 *Lord Lister, his life & work*. Unwin.
Godlee, Sir Rickman jnr 1917 *Lord Lister*. Macmillan.
Godlee, Sir Rickman jnr 1921 *Six papers by Lord Lister* Bale & Danielsson.

and a collected volume of papers. Most of this writing is about his medical discoveries: there is less about his life in general and very little written about the time in Lyme Regis that he and Agnes so adored - or about his natural history interests outside those lowly life forms directly concerned with his medical work. So attached was he to Lyme that he chose to be known as Baron Lister of Lyme Regis when elevated to the peerage.

Being a Quaker, bared from Oxford and Cambridge, he graduated BA from University College London in 1847, followed by MB in 1852. He started as a houseman at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary from 1853, later Assistant Surgeon, where met and married Agnes Syme, the daughter of the Professor of Surgery there. In 1860 he took the Regius chair of surgery at Glasgow, where he first applied his antiseptic principle - after reading Pasteur and noting that death rates from sepsis were much lower in Naval amputations, where tar was used to close the wound and hearing that carbolic acid from the town gas works was used successfully to purify sewage in Carlisle. In 1869 he returned to Edinburgh to Syme's now vacated chair, until 1877 when he moved to Kings College, London. Created a baronet in 1883, Sir Joseph Lister was elevated to the peerage in the Queen Victoria's Jubilee New Year's Honours List of 1897. He was President of the Royal Society 1895-1900 and President of the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1896. He retired from Kings College in 1893, the year in which Agnes died.

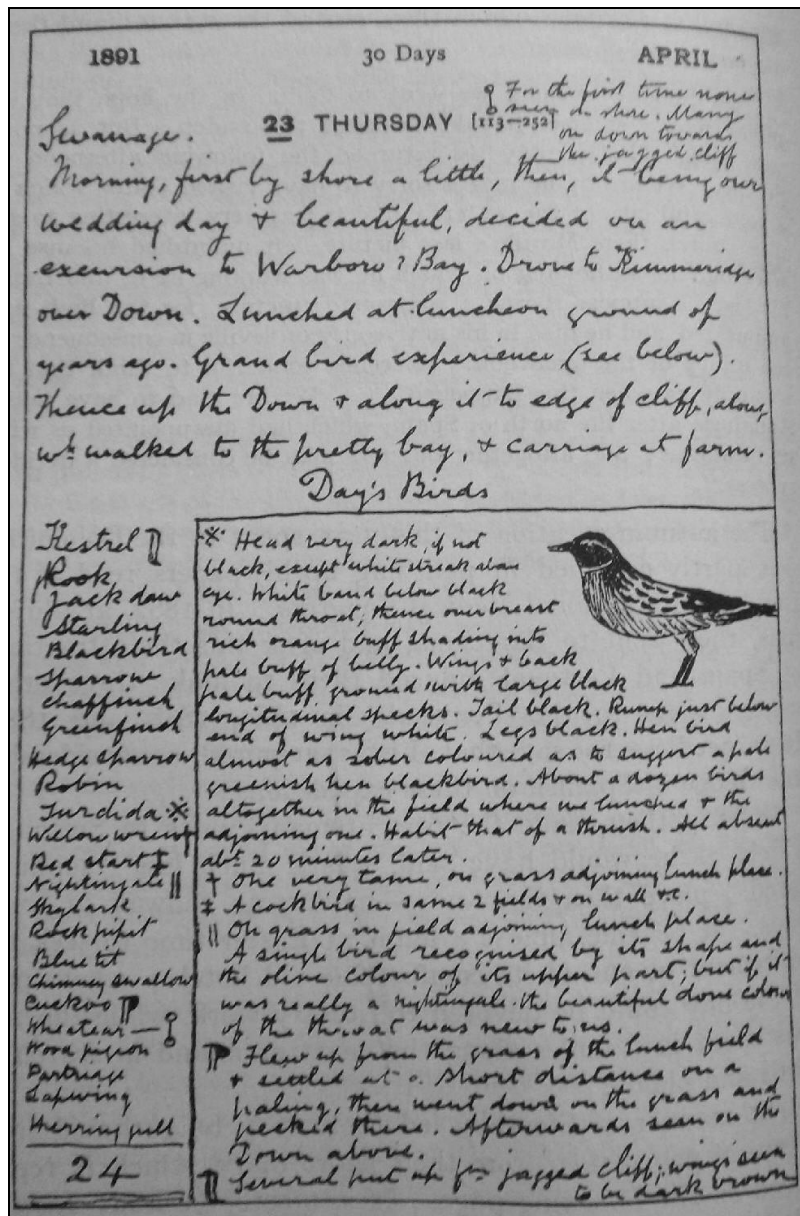
Apart from his novel use of a spray of pure phenol dissolved in water liberally wafted around in theatre like an incenser in church, he pioneered total cleanliness in surgery and in wards. He also advocated the use of steam-sterilised instruments, new forms of ligature, wound drainage and new surgical procedures. With reduced infection, it was no longer necessary to keep cleaning and draining wounds, thus creating the potential for the healthy re-growth of tissue. He developed the use of waterproof dressings treated with antiseptics to exclude external infective agents (pink-dyed Macintosh treated with phenol – but think of modern sticking plaster). Although this all seems so obvious to us, before Lister surgery had been a filthy business where many, and in some wards, most, patients died of shock or infection. Amazingly, inflammation and fever were actually once seen as helpful in the process of recovery. Because of these things, before Lister, extent of surgical intervention was limited by the likelihood of sepsis. Once set in there was nothing to limit its spread other than the patient's inevitably compromised immune system, continual cleaning and re-dressing of wounds which also removed growing tissue, and horrifically, further surgery.

He studied the process of putrefaction of wounds and was interested in the parallel degradation of plant material and the lactic fermentation of milk. His brother, Arthur, with his knowledge of microscopy and of lowly organisms such as fungi and slime moulds, provided a useful person to discuss the growing new science of bacteriology whilst at High Cliff and joint experiments were conducted there and with cows that Smith Harrison owned. Some of these involved the injection of carbolic acid into their teats to see if this would inhibit the lactic fermentation of milk, because he supposed that the organisms responsible for it were air-borne, rather than inherently in the milk. This was about the same time that Pasteur discovered that boiling of milk kills the bacteria which cause lactic fermentation. Lister found Pasteur's papers about this time. He conducted many animal experiments, some which now seem very cruel – refusing Queen Victoria's direct request to support her stand against vivisection, arguing in a long letter to her that we had a right given by scripture to use animals to relieve human suffering. Lister stumbled across lactic mould as a cure for bacterial infections, and even cured a nurse whose infection had failed to respond by using it, but had not realised that a chemical agent was responsible for the antibiotic property and that it could be isolated, despite giving the mould the name *Penicillium*. Given the discussions on moulds, fungi and lactic fermentation which took place between the brothers at High Cliff, it is a pity that it had to wait until 1928 for Alexander Fleming to stumble across the antibiotic properties of the mould that he found by chance, which could be found in cheese. Lyme Regis could have been the birthplace of antibiotics, not St Mary's Hospital, Paddington.

Dukes, C 1924 *Lord Lister* Parsons

Truax, R 1947 *Lord Lister, father of modern surgery* Harrap.





A page from Joseph and Agnes's diary with birding notes at Worbarrow Bay, from a diary of a holiday in Dorset on their wedding anniversary in 1891 (from Godlee's *Lord Lister* of 1917)

Christopher Lawrence⁴¹ reported that Lister was regarded by his enemies as distant and even his friends agreed he was not given much to laughter. As becomes a Puritan household everything was correct, if plain. There was no smoking and wine was partaken sparingly. Politically he was Conservative. Although strictly distant to his medical juniors in a Victorian fashion, he was very supportive of his students and always an avuncular figure to his nieces and nephews in Arthur and Susanna's family at the High Cliff Christmas gatherings in Lyme.

It is known from Rickman Godlee's biography that they visited Lyme in 1873, 18812, September 1882, Christmas 1886, Whitsun 1889, Christmas 1890 and May 1891, but probably there were many more visits than this. His particular "distractions" were walking, swimming and bird watching. After Agnes died in 1893 he was supported by her sister, Lucy. Joseph sold his share in High Cliff to Arthur,

⁴¹ Christopher Lawrence, *Lister, Joseph, Baron Lister (1827-1912) Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/34553, accessed 13 March 2013]

but always came to Lyme at Christmas until 1902. Then he could not longer manage the disruption caused by grand-nieces and nephews. With Lucy's support he was still able to take part in the work of learned societies. He had a serious illness⁴² (probably a stroke) in Buxton in 1903 at the age of 76, which made him an invalid.

After Arthur's death in 1908, which hastened his decline and with sight and hearing impaired and crippled with rheumatism, Joseph moved to Walmer, where he died on 10th February 1912. Joseph had been financially secure, although not as wealthy as maybe he deserved, leaving £67,996 (£6.6M). The funeral service was held in Westminster Abbey on 16th February 1912 and the burial took place at the Hampstead cemetery.

What Lord Lister did for Lyme Regis

Dr Bangay at Belmont had been closely involved with the vicissitudes of the Lyme Regis Cottage Hospital at its various sites, both as GP, in its management and helping to raise the money for its establishment and improvement. As the first Medical Officer for the Borough under the Public Health Act, he had argued strongly for public health improvements in the town, such as proper water supply and sewerage arrangements. Whether Lister was involved in supporting these arguments is not known, but he must have known Bangay and his successor Dr James Spurr, because the Listers were closely involved with the hospital committees. New utility systems were installed in 1900-3. Joseph Lister paid for an operating theatre for the Cottage Hospital⁴³ when it was at The Gables in Church Street in 1903, the year after his last Christmas in Lyme and the year of his serious illness in Buxton. Arthur Lister equipped the theatre and Isabella Lister was a tireless member of the ladies committee. Not every small hospital then possessed a theatre and the little room at the Gables became very active – especially for tonsillectomy and appendectomy by the later Lyme GP, Dr Lumsden.

Rev William Prior told⁴⁴ the Friends of the Museum in 1990 that a family folk memory within his Palgrave-Lister family was that Lord Lister had owned an oyster fishery at Lyme, which was destroyed by the sinking in the First World War of the *Baygitano*, an armed collier which was torpedoed over it. This story seems unlikely, as oysters are grown in estuaries and a prominent local fishing family have no recollection of an oyster fishery.

Lord Lister Memorials

There are monuments or plaques to Lord Lister in each of his universities and monuments in Westminster Abbey and near his house at Regents Park. The Royal Society started a public subscription after his death to create a Lister Memorial Fund to make a lasting mark of respect to his memory, which is now administered by the Royal College of Surgeons of England. A cash prize and a medal are awarded to those who have made outstanding contributions to surgical science. They are expected to give a public Lister Lecture. There are none in Lyme, except at a private one at High Cliff.

A somewhat infamous bacteria *Listerella* or *Listeria*, is named after him, as is the mouthwash Listerine, the medical research Lister Institute, and many Lister wards, surgeries, medical centres and streets in various towns.

The Lister Centenary

1965 was the centenary of Joseph Lister's first use of carbolic acid (phenol) in surgery. The year was marked by a national celebration, with postage stamps issued by Royal Mail, although Lister did not publish his results until 1867.

⁴² A Logan Turner, *ibid*

⁴³ Anon undated ?1973 *The Story of Lyme Regis Hospital 1873-1973* booklet in Lyme Regis Museum Collection

⁴⁴ Rev William Pryor – notes for a lecture on the *Lister and Palgrave Families and Lyme Regis* to the Friends of Lyme Regis Museum on 7th April 1990 Lyme Regis Museum Collection



1965 Royal Mail stamps (l) 4d with Lister's antiseptic spray apparatus and (r) one shilling with Lister surrounded by the chemical structure of phenol – a ring of 6 carbon atoms with one hydroxyl (hydrogen-oxygen) radical (OH). (R&B Bull collection)

Lyme Regis Borough Council marked the centenary in 1966 by naming Lyme's new public gardens as the "Lister Gardens". These were created after the stabilisation of the Cliff House landslip of 1962-3. These gardens, with magnificent views of the Cobb and Bay, are a fine extension to existing Langmoor Gardens. This was very apt; for Joseph Lister depended on frequent walks in open spaces close by his various houses, whether it was the Princes Street Gardens, Regents Park or the grounds of High Cliff. Unfortunately there is no memorial to Lord Lister in the gardens bearing his name – the only indication being only one plastic sign, rendered unceremoniously and without explanation, as the "Langmoor-Lister Gardens". The new Lister Room in the Shelters seems to be named after the garden, not the man.

Also in 1966 the Lyme Regis Group of the Dorset Floral Decoration Society marked the centenary by a presentation at the Guildhall called *The Life of Lord Lister in Flowers with Period Accessories*. The proceeds went to the Lister Memorial Fund and the event coincided with Joseph and Agnes wedding anniversary.

However there is one plaque in Lyme to commemorate Lord Lister, installed in the High Cliff when it was a hotel. Unfortunately it is now inaccessible to the public.

In 1966 Dr William Lister presented a cheque to the NHS authorities for £168 collected by the League of Friends of Lyme Regis Hospital at the annual open day in memory of Lord Lister. William was a great nephew of Lord Lister and a GP at Tavistock, but I have not been able to trace him besides⁴⁵.

Agnes, Lady Lister nee Syme 1834-1893

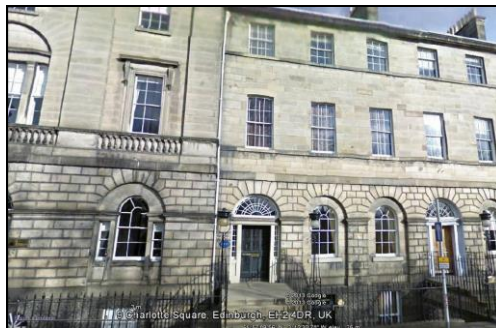


Agnes Lister nee Syme

⁴⁵ Lyme Regis News 1st July 1966

Agnes Syme⁴⁶ was born in Edinburgh on 23rd November 1834, the daughter of Professor Syme, Joseph's "master" at Edinburgh Royal Infirmary (Edinburgh medical students had called Joseph "the Chief" and Syme "the Master"). She was a reserved person, quiet and perhaps plain, but it is clear Joseph and Agnes suited each other very well: neither were ostentatious or deliberately seeking fame and fortune. They were married on 24th April 1856 in Edinburgh at the Symes' house Millbank, out of consideration for Quaker relatives who would not go into the Symes' St Cuthbert's Episcopalian Parish Church.

They lived subsequently near Syme's consulting rooms at 11, then 3 Rutland Street, before, in 1870, moving into 9 Charlotte Square, all in the New Town and near the western part of Princes Street Gardens, for which Joseph purchased a key to be able to walk and observe nature in the then private subscription gardens. Designed in 1791 by Robert Adam, Scotland's foremost 18th-century architect, Charlotte Square was one of the most fashionable and desirable residential addresses in the New Town. This Georgian house is a fine example of Adam's urban architecture – 'a grand design'. The move, like the purchase of a share in High Cliff in the same year, must have been financed by the bequest from his father and the sale of Upton House.



9 Charlotte Square, Edinburgh – Lister's Blue Plaque is just visible (Google Earth images)

The Symes were Anglicans, and this presented some difficulty, as Agnes was not about to become a Quaker, even though her temperament was already well suited to Quaker principles of industry and education, rather than flamboyance and seeking mere entertainment. Lister resigned from the Society of Friends before they threw him out, as would have been required by the Rules of Discipline, and joined the Anglican Church. Joseph Jackson Lister accepted this arrangement reluctantly for the sake of the couple and agreed a reasonable marriage settlement with Syme – after all, he could have cut him off for leaving the Society.

Agnes was Joseph's constant travelling companion and research assistant – in fact she wrote many of his letters, kept research notes, prepared specimens, wrote up sections of his papers and filled in his commonplace books and natural history field diaries. In this kind of work she had some training from her father, a leading surgeon in Scotland. Other than her notes for and about her husband, not much more is known about Agnes, but clearly they shared common interests in travelling and natural history – and indeed started their marriage with an epic 4-month tour of Europe, including visits to all the great medical schools. She participated in the annual Christmas and other visits to Lyme and became involved in the usual pursuits there of walking and natural history. Detailed notes were kept of pressed flowers in a journal which they would read on Sunday mornings as a refresher. After 1877 a deeper mutual interest in bird watching developed, again with detailed notes of sightings – particularly in Dorset.

Agnes kept a household which was "rich with opulence and comfortable within the limits set by Victorian technology. One images it practical, rather than a beautiful home. Housekeeping was

⁴⁶ Information and quote from Richard Fisher *ibid*.

complicated by the continuous research programme going on beneath its roof⁴⁷. There was a butler, cook, junior staff and a coachman. In 1877 they moved to Regents Park in London, which made trips to Lyme Regis so much easier. It continued the Lister theme of needing access to open spaces: Lister could walk in Regents Park as a relaxation. It also continues the theme of living in Georgian and Regency houses.



12 Park Crescent, Regents Park, London (Google Earth Images)

They had no children and her attitude to them is not known. Agnes died in 1893 from pneumonia after a heavy cold whilst on holiday in Rapello, aged 59. Joseph was devastated and was subsequently supported by her sister, Lucy Syme.

Arthur Lister's Family – Introduction

Arthur Lister and one of his daughters, Gulielma, were amateur naturalists whose work greatly influenced the life-cycle and classification of slime moulds (Mycetozoa or Myxomycetes), an order of rhizopod protozoans which includes slime moulds when they are regarded as animals – see box on p.33). The Listers produced many publications on the order, paying special attention to the effect of environmental conditions on their occurrence and on the structure of their fruiting bodies. Their *Monograph of the Mycetozoa* was first published in 1894, and the 2nd and 3rd editions are a tribute to the Listers' artistic ability.

Their interests were much wider than just slime moulds – all of nature and geology intrigued them and there was much serious work on another strange animal group, the *ascidians*, or sea squirts (see box below), which occur on the Lyme ledges. Two species named after them, *Perophora listeri* and *Diplosoma listerianum*. Much of this work was done at High Cliff, particularly after 1888.

Sea squirts, tunicates or ascidians are a group of primitive marine animals that are quite common in inter-tidal areas, but often little noticed, as they are often translucent. They show regressive metamorphosis from a free-swimming tadpole-like stage which has a sort of primitive backbone. This “cord” is lost and the animal becomes little more than a fixed tube in the shape of a tunic (hence *tunicate*) which is mostly stomach, but has an arrangement for pumping sea water and the means for extracting and digesting plankton. They squirt water from time to time, particularly when walked on; hence the English name sea squirt.

Muriel Arber⁴⁸ describes them as a spartan family who worked hard even when tired, with their own term for getting on with it, to *ruggle on*. She describes High Cliff as they had it – behind the eastern bow on the ground floor was the study “with a curiously curved wall” – it had been Holland's Morning Room and later became the High Cliff Hotel's Lister Lounge. Muriel thought it was equipped for science as a laboratory, with microscopes, but of course there was plenty of space in the house for specimens and, hopefully, dry storage for mycetozoa (or otherwise the specimens, unless killed would come back to life and creep away). Joseph would have been able to conduct some bacteriological experiments and observations there – there was a mutual family interest in the

⁴⁷ Richard Fisher, *ibid*

⁴⁸ Muriel Arber, *ibid*

breakdown of tissues, whether they were animal, human or plant and the bacteria and fungi that contribute to that breakdown – and both needed powerful microscopes for that work. Cultures of “living creepies” as Arthur Lister used to call them, were constantly carried on at High Cliff. The billiard room contained their stuffed bird collection: Muriel’s implication is that the family did not waste their time with anything as frivolous as billiards. She mentioned the large kitchen garden in the grounds, and the two gazebos, one to take full advantage of the view.



Arthur and Susanna Lister with six of their children about 1875 Left to right (with approx ages) Edith Mary (16), William (6), Arthur Lister sen (45), Joseph Jackson (18), Gulielma (15), Arthur Hugh (10), Isabella (19), Susanna (39), (Ellen Francis (8) is missing).
Photo taken by W Edward Wright Hoe St Walthamstow (Lyme Regis Museum Collection)⁴⁹

Arthur Lister FRS FLS JP 17th April 1830-19th July 1908



Arthur Lister (from W D Lang’s paper)

⁴⁹ NB: there is no evidence that this unlabelled picture found in Lyme Regis Museum is the Listers, but the faces bear likeness to those of other Lister pictures and the photographer’s studio was close to Sycamore House. It could have been the gift of Gulielma Lister to Lyme Regis Museum when clearing High Cliff in 1929.

Arthur Lister⁵⁰ was born at Upton House on 17th April 1830, the youngest son in the family of four sons and three daughters of Joseph Jackson Lister. Unlike his brother Joseph, he was a lifelong Quaker, educated at the Friends' Schools at Hitchin and Tottenham. D H Scott quoted notes from Gulielma Lister in his obituary of Arthur Lister. These give an interesting insight into his early interest in natural history:

“From his early childhood his greatest delight was in being out of doors and in observing nature. The difficulty of learning to read was removed when his mother gave him reading lessons from [Gilbert] White's [*Natural History of*] *Selborne*, for that told of birds, and birds were almost a passion with him. He learnt to know them in the delightful home garden, and identified them from [Thomas] Bewick's wood-cuts. These illustrations he often copied in pen and ink, and before going to school at the age of eleven he had taught himself to engrave on wood, in order that he might reproduce his favourite cuts. The weather changes had great attraction for him; when he was about ten he was given a thermometer, from which he made daily records of the extremes of temperature”.

As a boy he collected mosses and was an enthusiastic ornithologist. On leaving school at 16 he apprenticed to a manufacturing chemist in Ampthill, Bedfordshire and sometime he worked in Bradford wool business. There he learned drawing and painting from the famous Bradford watercolourist James Lobley (1829-1888). Returning to London at the age of 21 he entered his father's wine business, Lister & Beck, wine merchants, at Gracechurch Street in the City of London. On 2nd May 1855 he married Susanna Tindall, whom he had met in Bradford. She came from East Dulwich and they were wed nearby at the Friends Meeting House in the parish of St Georges in Borough, a district of Southwark.

In 1857 Arthur was wealthy enough to buy a large house in grounds at Leytonstone in Essex. Here, at Sycamore House, they brought up three sons and four daughters (see family photograph above). He succeeded his father as senior partner of Lister & Beck in 1869. With Joseph Lister and Smith Harrison Arthur bought High Cliff as a holiday home in 1870 and was able to afford to maintain it as well as retain Sycamore House. As the children partly grew up in Lyme Regis I have included a section on each of them below.

In Essex his public service involved being a Justice of the Peace for the County of Essex, a member of the local School Board and a member of the Board of Guardians of the West Ham Union Workhouse in nearby Leyton.

On his retirement from the wine trade around 1888 he was wealthy enough from the business to support his activities as an amateur scientist and maintain Sycamore House in Leytonstone. He is specially identified with painstaking researches on the Mycetozoa and published many articles in the *Annals of Botany*, the *Journal of the Linnaean Society*, and the *Proceedings of the Essex Field Club*. His principal work, *A Monograph of the Mycetozoa*⁵¹, the seventy-eight plates for which were produced by his daughter Gulielma Lister, was issued by the Trustees of the British Museum (Natural History) in 1894 and is the definitive catalogue of the specimens in the national herbarium, many of which the Listers provided, often from Lyme Regis and Epping Forest. He was also the compiler of the Natural History Museum's *Guide to the British Mycetozoa* in 1895⁵².

⁵⁰ Sources: Joseph Jackson Lister FRS jnr *Obituary Notice of Arthur Lister* Phil Trans Roy Soc B vol 88 1908, D H Scott *Obituary for Arthur Lister* J Botany vol 46 1908 and J. Webster and D. Moore *Lister, Arthur* Oxford Dictionary of National Biography on-line edition accessed 13th March 2913.

⁵¹ Arthur Lister with illustrated by Gulielma Lister 1895 *A Monograph of the Mycetozoa* British Museum (Natural History) - revised 1911 by Gulielma Lister and issued with colour printed plates.

⁵² Arthur Lister, 1895 *Guide to the British Mycetozoa exhibited the Dept of Botany at British Museum (Natural History)* British Museum (Natural History).

He was elected a fellow of the Linnaean Society in 1873 and was vice-president 1895–6. He was elected Fellow of the Royal Society on 9th June 1898 and was vice president of the British Mycological Society⁵³ 1895-6 and president 1906–8.

What Arthur Lister did for Lyme Regis

Although Arthur did not much enter public office in Lyme, he was a Trustee of the Cottage Hospital and paid to equip it. In 1916, after his death, Arthur Lister is recorded as paying for an extension to the hospital, but this may have been his son Arthur, who died that year. He was Lyme Regis Children's Flower Show President in 1907. The Burgess Rolls for the Borough of Lyme Regis list Arthur Lister, but he was not entitled to vote as parochial elector. Elsewhere he is listed as a Dorset County voter in 1876-7, 1889 and from 1901-08.

He was a member of the Dorset Field Club and on 22nd July 1891 invited 70 members to lunch at High Cliff as part of their yearly two-day gathering in Lyme⁵⁴. Papers were read on the geology of the Dorset coast from the viewpoint of the Gazebo by the Rev H S Solly and by Arthur on slime moulds, illustrated with drawings and actual microscope slides. On the previous day a small “museum” had been created at the Guildhall for the members to view by the Mayor, T E D Philpot, and a neighbour of Arthur at the time. The civic charters, regalia and various historic and natural history items were displayed. This “museum” may have stirred Philpot to build Lyme Regis Museum ten years later. It is difficult to think that Arthur would not have been involved in some way in the formation of this Museum, as he had been in the Stratford Museum of the Essex Field Club, but there are few early records of its foundation.

Besides the Arber family, many scientists of natural history were regular visitors to High Cliff. These included the famous palaeobotanist Dukinfield Henry Scott FRS (1854-1934), the son of the architect Sir George Gilbert Scott and friend of Dr William Lang FRS. It was Scott who contributed the obituary to Arthur cited above and Lang who later lived in Charmouth.

According to Scott, Arthur died somewhat suddenly at High Cliff on Sunday 19th July 1908 aged 78. He had been failing for some little time, but he was able to enjoy his favourite walks around Lyme almost to the last. Despite all his Lyme connections in later life, he was buried at the Wanstead Quaker Burial Ground near the Sycamore House. He left an estate valued at £147,130, probate given to Arthur Hugh Lister MD; William Tindall Lister, Surgeon; Ernest Beck, Wine Merchant and Theodore Godlee, Solicitor. At 2012 prices this would be worth £13.933M. He bequeathed his natural history collections, books, microscopes, specimens and apparatus to his daughter Gulielma.

Sir Rickman Godlee junior, Arthur's nephew, wrote⁵⁵ that he “was a true lover of nature, with a special leaning towards field ornithology and botany. In their rambles he taught his brother the notes and flights of birds, and found him an apt pupil; together they eagerly pursued the study of fungi, the best possible introduction or adjunct to the science of bacteriology”.

⁵³ The society for the study of fungi including covering all the organisms that historically have been treated as fungi, including lichen-fungi, microsporidia, oomycetes, mycetozoa (slime moulds), straminipiles and yeasts.

⁵⁴ Reported in *The Grove* vol 1 1891 Dunster Lyme Regis and in more detail in the *Dorset County Chronicle* 24th July 1891

⁵⁵ Sir Rickman Godlee 1918, *Lord Lister*, Macmillan London





A common slime mould – the plasmodium of Flowers of Tan *Fulego septica*.
 This is a blob of streaming protoplasm and moves backwards and forwards eating fungi. (Picture 20cm across, from Keresh on Wikipedia).

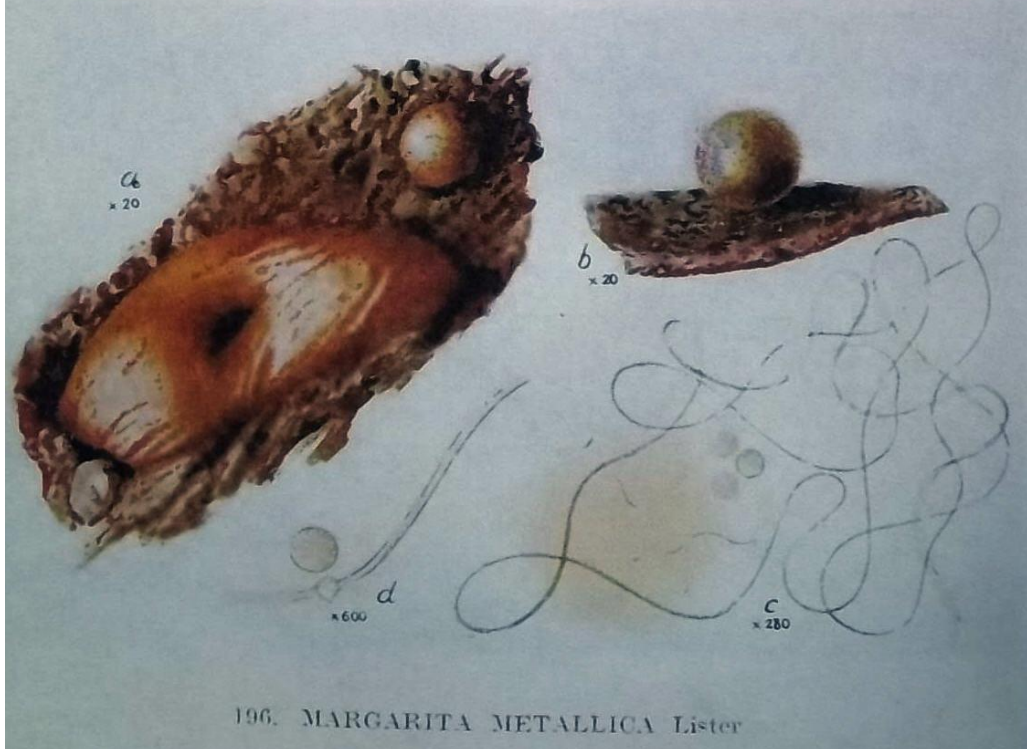
Mycetozoa (also known as myxomycetes) are known in English as **slime moulds**, but are neither always slimy nor are they moulds. Some would be broadly familiar to anyone who has walked in damp woodlands and seen small patches of jelly-like plasmodium or hard crusts resembling fungi, mostly brown or reddish but some brightly coloured, adhering to leaves, wood or bark. Few people could identify them as slime moulds, let alone name any individual species. Several different species occur in the Lister haunts around Lyme and in Epping Forest – but hardly any have common English names, one being **Flowers of Tan**, from its frequent occurrence in tan-yards on heaps of spent oak bark. It is perhaps the most abundant and widely distributed of all the Mycetozoa. The colour of the plasmodium (naked protoplasm) is usually bright yellow and it eats fungi. In fact it has an antifungal effect *Candida* (thrush) infection by consuming the fungus.

The Listers systematically described species from material collected at Lyme Regis and from around the world. They curated and monographed the collection at the Natural History Museum⁵⁶. The slime moulds are a kind of half-way house between plants and animals. Arthur worked out their life cycle and showed that they reproduced by spores produced by fruiting bodies, thus resembling fungi or the lower plants. But the spores give birth to *swarm-cells*, which are amoeboid single-celled animals, with a flagellum enabling them to creep in damp places or swim in water. They feed on bacteria caught by *pseudopodia* and absorbed in internal spaces called *vacuoles*, which form to digest them. Like amoeba, swarm-cells reproduce by division, but a few days later coalesce into *microcysts*, which dry out, until rain causes the cyst walls to rupture when the swarm-cells re-emerge and resume their motile state. Forming clusters again to become *plasmodium* it penetrates dead wood or the surface of dead leaves and the clusters are generally white, but maybe green, pink, yellow or purple. Internally there is a streaming movement backwards and forwards which makes for a general forward flow of the plasmodium as it searches for its fungal food over the surface of the wood or leaves. Literally this is creeping, naked protoplasm – and it can be jelly-like! This feeding may go on for perhaps for twelve months before either drying as *sclerotium*, a resting stage and starting again to creep in damper conditions, or becoming a *sporangium*, a mass maybe half an inch across. This grows stalks capped by spore-bearing fruiting bodies, but there are many different forms. It is the sporangium that is usually noticed with the naked eye, and can be found at any time in woods, except during dry or frosty weather.

⁵⁶ Arthur Lister *ibid*



195. PROTOTRICHIA METALLICA Mass.



196. MARGARITA METALLICA Lister

**Stages of the slime moulds *Prototrychia metallica* and *Margarita metallica*
Both specimens are from Lyme Regis and the later was named by the Listers.**

Drawn by Gulielma Lister and taken from the 2nd edition Monograph of 1911 plates 195 and 196

Mrs Susanna Lister nee Tindall c.1834-1915



Susanna Lister

Susanna was born in East Dulwich about 1834, the daughter of ship-owner William Tindall. Apart from bringing up the children and maintaining the households and the staff at Lyme and Leytonstone, nothing is known of her interests or her involvement in either place. She continued to live at High Cliff after Arthur's death in 1908 until her death in 1915. In 1911 she was a visitor at the Harrison household, by now in South Woodford in Essex.

The Children of Arthur and Susanna Lister

Isabella Sophia Lister (ISL) 1856-1928



Isabella (l) and Gulielma (r) at High Cliff around 1913
photographed by Francis Godlee

The first child and eldest of the spinster sisters, Bella was a very practical person⁵⁷ and an artist. Muriel Arber thought that she was mainly responsible for the housekeeping at High Cliff. She was much occupied with charitable work in Lyme, especially for the Lyme Regis Cottage Hospital, where she had been a generous subscriber and a member of the Ladies Committee for twenty years – this was the body responsible for nursing and domestic arrangements⁵⁸. Having been a nurse in London, she also helped with nursing.

⁵⁷ Muriel Arber *ibid*

⁵⁸ from an undated contemporary local newspaper cutting reporting of a meeting of Lyme Regis Borough Council in Lyme Regis Museum's Lister file

Isabella was also closely involved with the WWI hospital at Rhode Hill, Uplyme, where, as Ivy Caddy⁵⁹ remembered, she was often to be found scrubbing floors.

She died at the aged of 72, tragically after falling over a precipice at Gavarnie in the Pyrenees, where she had been sketching with one of the sisters.

Joseph Jackson Lister (junior) (J JL) FRS 1857-5th February 1927



Joseph Jackson Lister junior – about 18 at Leytonstone, on a Christmas Island stamp, with Lister's Palm *Arenga listeri* and a Christmas Stamp with his *Asplenium listeri*

Joseph was born at Sycamore House in 1857. He graduated with a BA in the Natural Sciences Tripos at Cambridge, a fellow of St John's College. He married Dorothea Charlotte Edith Marryat and they lived at Merton House, Grantchester, outside Cambridge. His history is confused by references to his eponymous grandfather. A zoologist, he taught Animal Morphology at Cambridge: Dr William Lang⁶⁰, a former curator of Lyme Regis Museum, recalls excited admiration for the watercolours Joseph used when teaching dissection in the 1890s.

Joseph made valuable collections of plant and animal specimens during his travels in Africa, Asia, Australasia and the Pacific, serving as volunteer naturalist on two surveying voyages of *HMS Egeria*, one in 1897 to Christmas Island in the Indian Ocean, the other to the Pacific. Various species are named after him: an orchid, *Phreatia listeri*; Christmas Island Spleenwort *Asplenium listeri*, Christmas Island Lantern Flower, *Abutilon listeri*; Lister's Gecko, *Lepidodactylus listeri* and Lister's Palm, *Arenga listeri*, for which he is featured on a stamp. In the animal kingdom his researches⁶¹ on Foraminifera have thrown important light on the life-history and reproduction of this microscopic single-celled group which forms such an important part of the marine food chain and whose fossils are so important for rock-building and for dating strata in oil exploration. A foraminiferal genera, *Listerella*, was named after him by Cushman⁶² in 1933, but has since been dropped.

He was elected a fellow of the Royal Society in 1900.

As a child he would have been on the annual migration to High Cliff and later to the annual family Christmas meetings. He was there at the census in April 1901. He died in 1928, leaving £40,353 (£2.147M at 2012 prices).

Mrs Dorothea Lister (Dolly) nee Marryat (1881-1928)

Dorothea was the wife of Joseph Jackson Lister junior. Muriel Arber⁶³ tells us that in 1922 Dolly gave her mother, Agnes Arber, £25 to enable the holiday at Lyme. Agnes had studied with Dorothea at Newnham College. The holiday started Muriel's love affair with the town. Isabella Lister found their

⁵⁹ Ivy Caddy, a transcription of an interview in *Lyme Voices* Lyme Regis Museum 1993

⁶⁰ W D Lang 1961 *The Listers, Father & Daughter* Proc Dorset Nat His & Arch Soc vol 83

⁶¹ J J Lister 1894 *Contributions to the Life History of the Foraminifera* Stud Mar Lab vol 6

⁶² Joseph Cushman *Foraminifera their classification and economic use* Harvard 1980 edition

⁶³ Muriel Arber, *ibid*

lodgings for them in Guildhall House, opposite the Museum, which had only opened the year before. Dorothea also gave Muriel Arber an ormer or abalone shell, which had been Lord Lister's "worry bead".

Edith Mary Lister (EML) 1859-1950



Edith Mary Lister

Edith was described by Muriel Arber as delicate, somewhat fragile looking and rather ethereal person, but charming and a very good artist – her main occupation was painting. Unlike the others, she did not involve herself in robust activities⁶⁴. Ivy Caddy remembers Edith as a charming woman⁶⁵.

Stewart Case of Little Park has two of her sketch books, one with sketches of members of the family as small children in 1904 and one with a pencil sketch of Ware Farm.

Jointly with Gulielma, she gave £100 to the fund opened for extra medical equipment for the new Lyme Regis Cottage Hospital in Pound Road in 1926⁶⁶.

Gulielma Lister FLS (Gulie, GL, "Miss Gulie") 28th October 1860-18th May 1949



Gulielma Lister

Gulielma was born on 28th October 1860 at Sycamore House the third of four daughters of Arthur and Susanna Lister. Muriel Arber says that she pronounced her name with a hard *G*, as *goule-li-el-ma*, but in Lyme she was generally known as "Miss Gulie": John Fowles presumed that was rendered *gewly*.

⁶⁴ Muriel Arber *ibid*

⁶⁵ Ivy Caddy *ibid*

⁶⁶ Martin Roundell Green 1926 *Electric Lyme* Crewkerne

Gulielma was educated at home by a governess. In 1871, when she was eleven, the task was entrusted to Susanne Wreay. Around 1876 she spent a year at Bedford College for Women, where she acquired her grounding in systematic and structural botany. The college was founded 1849 as a higher education college specifically for women and, as such, played a leading role in the advancement of women.

Gulielma's Character

Her personality has been described as generous and self-effacing by two people who knew her well, Muriel Arber⁶⁷ and William Lang⁶⁸. These are typical Quaker qualities where personal self-aggrandisement is eschewed. She may have given service, but she would not have expected, nor wanted record, payment or reward. Lang describes her as devoted to Lyme and its surroundings and a friend of all here. A gentle, kindly, generous woman of attractive personality, she had a wide circle of friends and numerous correspondents in many countries, including the Emperor of Japan, in whose honour she named a specimen from the palace gardens and whose gift of a pair of porcelain vases in a silk-lined case she cherished. It seems that the Emperor had an interest in slime moulds!

Fellow mycologist Elizabeth Blackwell describes Gulielma her as having a vivid personality, as tall, slender, handsome, dignified, but gracious and so kind, a perfect gentlewoman with an old word courtesy⁶⁹.

Muriel Arber says that she was passionately interested in natural history and encyclopaedic in her information, but as a child Muriel was conscious of falling far short of the standards she expected. She remembers Gulielma's shocked silence as she inspected a nature calendar that Muriel was making. Gwen Harding was so much afraid of misidentifying flowers that she made as rule of never referring to a plant by name in Gulie's presence. On one occasion she forgot and Gulie's dry comment was "So, there's one flower Gwen knows".

Ivy Caddy⁷⁰, of the family of builders that built the Museum, remembers "Miss Gulie", but not quite so fondly, claiming that she was "more of a horsy sort of man", which seems highly unfair from what everyone else says about her. On the contrary, in Lyme the local press reported the loss as of a person who had taken a great interest in the town⁷¹. An example of her kindness is that when her servants, Barker mother and daughter, were bombed out of their Leytonstone home they were invited to live in at Sycamore House.

Gulielma's Scientific Contribution

Long her father's companion and helper in his natural history studies, in the late 1880s Gulielma joined him in his classification study of slime moulds. Together they worked over the collections in the British Museum (Natural History), at Kew, in Paris and Strasbourg, Gulielma making notes and drawings for their Monograph. Their work brought a great influx of new material to the Natural History Museum which in turn led to the recognition of new forms and extended knowledge of geographical distribution of the group. Later Gulielma brought out an expanded second edition illustrated with colour printed plates in 1911 and a third, further enlarged edition in 1925. The latter remains the definitive work on the taxonomy and nomenclature of the Mycetozoa. The Natural History Museum has 74 research notebooks containing a wealth of material, including the results of the Listers' early classification studies of historical collections, accounts of their own collections and research (which included some early natural history studies), notes on materials submitted to them from collectors worldwide and many fine watercolour illustrations.

⁶⁷ Muriel Arber, *idem*

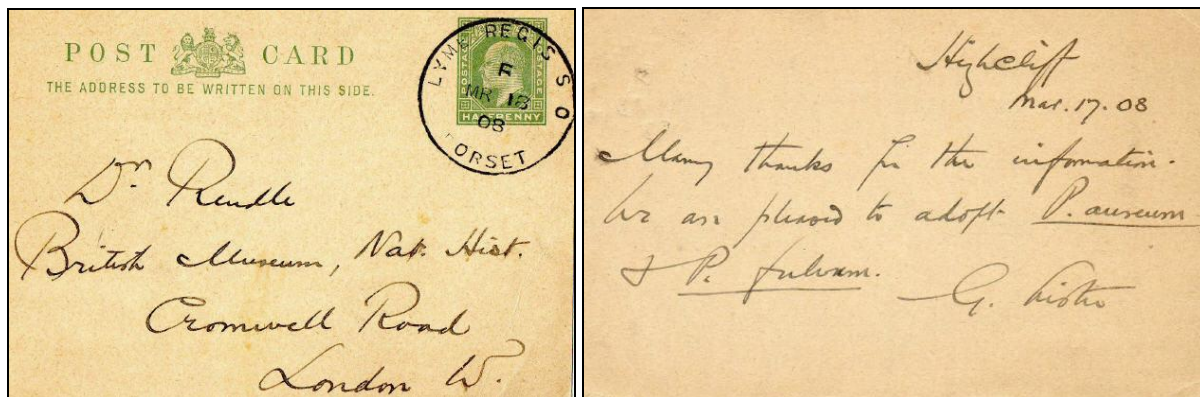
⁶⁸ W D Lang *idem*

⁶⁹ Quoted without source by Professor Haskins in a letter to John Fowles 12th March 1989

⁷⁰ Ivy Caddy *idem*

⁷¹ Undated unlabelled press cutting.

A long succession of their papers published in botanical journals includes a number of reports on Mycetoza from Switzerland where Gulielma Lister and her father especially enjoyed collecting. Gulielma's real hunting grounds were Epping Forest and the region around Lyme Regis. Painstaking and accurate in her observations, free from bias and preconception, she kept abreast of studies by others in the field. Her close association with the Natural History Museum lasted from the late 1880s until 1939, when wartime conditions prevented her travelling to London. For many years she was virtually honorary curator of the collection. At the museum she, and her close friend lichenologist Annie Lorrain(e) Smith, were remembered particularly for their interest and understanding patience in teaching younger workers.



Gulielma confirming naming of two slime mould species with the Natural History Museum (scan by Gill Sheppard of a postcard in her possession)

As foundation member of the British Mycological Society, Gulielma Lister gave it considerable help in its early years and served twice as president, in 1912 and 1932. She was one of the first women fellows of the Linnaean Society (from 1904) and was its vice-president from 1929.

Her accomplishments were substantial at a time before women's rights were fully established. She gained much greater public recognition for the work she did with her father than her aunt, Agnes Lister, got for acting as her husband's assistant.

What Gulielma did for the Lyme Regis and its Museum

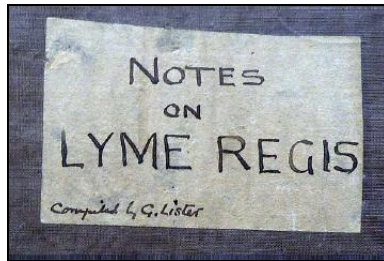
In Lyme, where Gulielma was always known as Miss Gulie, I suspect that Gulie did a great deal for the Museum, but its early records are sparse - lost in the curatorial interregnum that occurred after 1948. She was living in Lyme at the time of the Museum's construction at the turn of the century and through the hiatus until its opening in 1921. She certainly corresponded with two individuals who later became its curators, Cyril Wanklyn (History, 1927-1940) and Dr William Lang FRS (Geology, 1937-1948), himself formerly Keeper of Palaeontology at the Natural History Museum. At her death she left a bequest, acknowledged in an appeal for the Museum by the Mayor, G F Eyre, in 1936.

She gave many items to the Museum, mostly in 1929 when she and Edith finally left Lyme:

The Lister Thesaurus is one of the Museum's most treasured items, a hefty album (1943/10-1) of photographs, drawings, maps and notes about the history, geography and geology of Lyme Regis which she had compiled with Abba Blanche Palmer (1852-1920), a friend living at 12 Silver Street in the town. The compilation started about 1906 and items were entered up until the 1920s. The quality and detail of some of the photographs in the album is quite amazing. Museum Curator Cyril Wanklyn, the second famous historian of Lyme, christened it **The Lister Thesaurus**, so useful is it as a work of reference. He had it bound and indexed, but he died in 1943 and no-one replaced him as curator.

It was subsequently lost and not found for twenty years, when it was found languishing at the bottom of a chest which had belonged to the Town Clerk by estate agent Mr Fortnam. Recognised for what it was, but not as Museum property, it was shown at the 1966 *Lord Lister*

in Flowers show in Lyme (see Lord Lister paragraphs above), where Museum Curator Ted Gosling noticed it. He recognised it from Muriel Arber's description, Muriel having borrowed it from Gulie in 1942. Meanwhile the Town Council had loaned to the Royal College of Surgeons for the Lister Centenary of Antiseptic Surgery in 1966, but on its eventual return in the early 1970s the next curator, Henry Chessell, claimed it back for the Museum. Curator John Fowles later had it re-bound⁷².



Gulielma's title on her scrapbook, the *Lister Thesaurus* (1943/10-1)

Watercolours – an accomplished watercolourist, she gave one by her sister Isabella (2000/48/97) and four by herself, one of watercolour of the house called Wings where Jane Austen was once thought to have stayed (1943/3a), one of a view of Church Cliffs (1994/44) without sea walls done in 1911, a long geological section of the cliffs (1991/45) and the only drawing to show St Andrew's Well before it was demolished (1943/12).



The house called Wings which used to be on Marine Parade by Gulielma Lister (1943/3a)

- **Documents** - the Lyme Burgess Rolls for 1874 (1929/?) and 1902 (1929/7).
- **Metal objects** - some pewter candle sticks (1929/3-4) and measures or tankards (1929/5-6) and a cannon ball (1929/2).
- **Pencil Sketches** - two unsigned and un-sourced pencil sketches of Joseph Lister (1993/44 and 1993/65) which may have come from her.

⁷² Information taken from a letter from Muriel Arber to John Fowles inserted loosely into the Thesaurus

- **Early Transactions of the Geological Society** to Lyme Regis Museum, with papers autographed by the likes Henry de la Beche, Conybeare and Buckland, including material that had been owned by the Philpot sisters.

The Museum has some of her letters to Agnes Arber from 1937. Agnes⁷³ already knew Gulielma, who had visited her school, the North London Collegiate School, finding her enthusiasm for wildlife, gave her a small collection of mounted slime moulds. She was kind and generous guide. When leaving Lyme she gave many geological books and maps to Muriel Arber, which in turn Muriel bequeathed to the Museum.

The Museum also a photocopy of a letter sent in 1938 to Mrs Porter of Madeira Cottage in Lyme about the new High Cliff Hotel, showing a continued concern for Lyme and her old house.

She had a close group of friends in Lyme, for besides Blanche Palmer, there were also the watercolourists the Eastment sisters amongst her friends. They lived at Keble Cottage, which used to sit by the roadside below High Cliff, and many of their works are in the Museum.



Gulielma Lister (left centre) and Dr William Lang FRS (far left) with Geoffrey Lang (centre) and Gwen Harding and her father W G Harding of Churnside, Lyme Regis to the right, in 1915.

At the time Lang worked at the Natural History Museum, later becoming Keeper of Palaeontology before retiring to a house at Charmouth which he had built, Lias Lea, and becoming Hon Curator of Geology at Lyme in 1937. From 1914 Lang published highly detailed bed-by-bed descriptions and measurements of the Lyme and Charmouth Lias which still stand. Here he would be helping the group to identify the individual strata by their quarrymen's names, which he saved by incorporation into his scheme. Geoffrey Lang has other ideas...photo given by Brenda Lang 1983/143-4

Her contribution in Essex

A distinguished naturalist with detailed field knowledge of both plants and animals, Gulielma Lister had particularly strong interests in birds and conifers. For many years she worked with quiet enthusiasm with the London School Nature Study Union, providing sound advice and for a time serving as chair. Her artistic skills often brought requests for help; she prepared the illustrations for both her other workers, including F. J. Hanbury's 1889 *Illustrated Monograph of British Hieracia* (Hawkweeds) and Dallimore and Jackson's 1923 *Handbook of Coniferae*.

⁷³ Muriel Arber, *ibid*

She became a member of the Essex Field Club in 1907, was its first woman president (1916), and thereafter a permanent vice-president. Long one of the club's leading spirits, participating regularly in its forays, she was especially active in the work of its Stratford museum, to which she donated material. Her classic work on the Essex Mycetoza⁷⁴ listed 18 species from Epping Forest as a whole, fourteen of which are noted as specifically occurring in Wanstead Park, quite near Sycamore House. In 1941 listed about three hundred flowering plants growing in and around Wanstead Park

Gulielma Lister died following a stroke at Sycamore House on 18th May 1949. Her ashes were scattered over her mother's grave in Wanstead Quaker burial ground. She left £37,449 (£1.1M at 2012 prices); probate was granted to John Lister, farmer and a third generation Arthur Lister, Ophthalmic Surgeon.

Lt Col Arthur Hugh Lister MD CMA CMG RAMC 1st Nov 1864 - 17th July 1916



Arthur Hugh Lister

Image supplied by Vernon Rattenbury

Arthur Hugh Lister⁷⁵ married Sybil Palgrave in 1896, the niece of Francis Turner Palgrave. Her uncle was the author of the Golden Treasury anthology and lived at Little Park in Haye Lane in Lyme. It was a long courtship and resulted in Arthur leaving the Society and the wine trade, as her father, Sir Reginald Palgrave, would not consent to Sybil marrying a Quaker and a person in trade. It was a long Lyme romance – the Listers effectively lived at High Cliff in this period - but as Palgrave was Clerk to the House of Commons, the wedding was at St Margaret's, Westminster.

They had eight children, including Sybil Mary Lister, who bought Little Park back from the War Office after WWII and, shortly before her death, gave nearby Slopes Farm to the Woodland Trust for the people of Lyme.

Arthur⁷⁶ graduated from Cambridge (Natural Science Tripos) in 1886. After some years in his father's wine trade, he resumed his academic studies in 1892, spending two years as a medical student in the University of Aberdeen and a third at King's College. He graduated MB in 1895. After further medical training at Aberdeen and the Middlesex Hospital he worked at Aberdeen Royal Infirmary and gained his MD from Aberdeen in 1904.

A long serving TA officer, he reached the rank of Lt Colonel by 1910. At the outbreak of WWI he volunteered for general service, despite suffering indifferent health from pulmonary tuberculosis. He was a physician in first in France and then in Egypt, in charge of the 19th General Hospital, Alexandria, as part of the Expeditionary Force. He worked on with unflagging energy until he was

⁷⁴ Lister, G.1918. *The Mycetoza* Essex Field Club Special Memoirs Stratford, Essex

⁷⁵ Rev William Pryor 1990 *The Lister & Palgrave Families of Lyme Regis*, notes from a lecture to The Friends of Lyme Regis Museum 7th April 1990

⁷⁶ Condensed from Royal Army Medical Corps Web Site downloaded March 2013

forced to give in to his illness and return home, but he died at sea on his way home on 17th November 1916, aged 51.

He too would have spent his childhood summers in Lyme and he left sufficient a mark here to be recorded on the Lyme Regis War Memorial and in the Lyme Regis Book of Remembrance, as well as the Leytonstone War Memorial.



One of the panels from Lyme Regis War Memorial with Lt Col Arthur Lister's name fourth down the right hand column

Ellen Frances Lister (EFL, Nell or Nellie) 1867-1952

Ellen married Dr Arthur George Phear CB 1867-1959 a physician and musician. He set to music a Kipling poem which was sung at the 1907 Lyme Regis Children's Flower Show.

**Col Sir William Tindall Lister KCMG KCVO MD FRCS 4th November 1868-July 7th 1944
Ophthalmic surgeon, Oculist to the King**

Like his brother Joseph, William⁷⁷ graduated, with a BA from Trinity College, Cambridge in the Natural Sciences Tripos, in 1889. After a clinical course in UCH London he gained MB and BCh degrees at Cambridge in 1892 and an FRCS diploma in 1895, followed by MA and MD in 1922. He married Grace Alexander (1868-1959).

When war broke out in 1914 William Lister had been ophthalmic surgeon to the London Hospital for some time; he then took charge of the ophthalmic arrangements for the BEF in France as colonel, setting up an ophthalmic consultant for each army. He ensured that eye surgery was available at certain casualty clearing stations and that the troops had access to a spectacle service, providing new glasses in maybe half an hour. At the end of the war he was re-elected to the staff at Moorfields, making use of his extensive collection of specimens, drawings, and photographs, many of which he had been too shy to publish. He was a lovable man and full of fun, he had great charm of manner and

⁷⁷ Condensed from an Obituary

was a delightful host. He had a great sense of duty, and, having considerable wealth, thought it right that he should assist the less fortunate. Many have reason to remember his kindness and generosity.

Sir William Lister opened the new Lyme Regis Cottage Hospital at Hernelee, Pound Road on Sunday 4th April 1927. He died at home in High Wycombe in 1944.

The children of Arthur Hugh Lister and Sybil Palgrave

Arthur and Sybil had eight children, Elizabeth, Thomas, Susanna, Hugh, Richard, Arthur, David and Mary. Mary became a Lyme resident of many years standing and a great benefactor to the town. The involvement of the others in Lyme is not known, but I have included Reverend Major Hugh Arthur Lister because his story is interesting and shows other aspects of the Listers' characteristic high achievement in the field of devotion to humanity.

Mary Sybil Octavia Lister (“Miss Lovely”) 11th September 1910-8th November 1989



Mary Lister

A special person in Lyme Regis and a long-term Lyme resident and helper at St Michael's Church, Mary Lister⁷⁸ was the youngest of eight children of Dr Arthur Hugh Lister and Sybil Palgrave. She bought back the old Palgrave house from the War Office who had requisitioned it during WWII. This was Little Park on Haye Lane, the long-timer holiday home of the Palgraves. She lived there until 1956 when she went to Zimbabwe as a missionary, where she spent 30 years. In Africa she was known as Sybil Lister.

Mary was a prominent Lyme citizen and, as Museum staff member Helen Case remembers, was known as “Miss Lovely” by the children of the Sunday school that she ran.

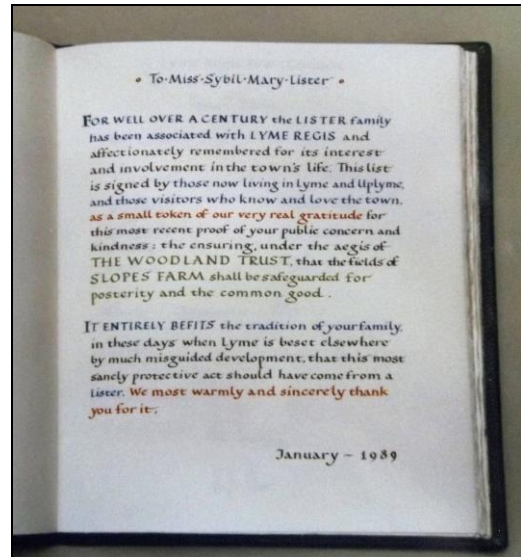
She is best known for very generously giving gave 11 acres of Slopes Farm to the Woodland Trust in 1989. This provides an open space for the people of Lyme and was planted up by the Trust to enhance the landscape and the prospects for nature conservation. This probably also saved it from any development that might have been permitted after her death. The West Dorset planning officer thought, with planning consent, the land could have been worth up to £5M – and that on planning grounds he could not successfully oppose an application for planning permission

At the end of her life her sister Mrs Elizabeth Pryor cared for her in Wantage and it was there that the Mayor of Lyme Regis, Denis Applebee and Lyme Town Councillor and curator of the Museum Liz-Ann Bawden presented her with a green goatskin-bound leather volume of thanks from the people of Lyme. This contained 750 signatures of Lyme people and visitors and was marked with the Seal of Lyme Regis on its cover.

⁷⁸ Information from notes prepared by John Fowles at the time of the gift and from the notes of a talk to the Friends of Lyme Regis Museum by the Rev Prior, Vicar of Wantage.

Mary died later that year and a service of thanksgiving was held on 21st November 1989 at St Katharine's Church, Wantage. Mary's life is recorded in the Book of Remembrance at St Michael & St George's Church, Lyme Regis.

She gave the Museum four colour photographs of Little Park (1992/37) and three other photographs of The Lynch, Pooles Fields and Uplyme Road (2000/53).



Mayor of Lyme Cllr Denis Applebee presenting the book of thanks from the people of Lyme Regis to book of thanks to Mary Lister at St Katharine's House Wantage on 5th May 1989

Rev Major Hugh Evelyn Jackson Lister BA MC 15th May 1901- 9th September 1944⁷⁹



Hugh Lister

Hugh Evelyn Jackson Lister, born at Aberdeen, was educated at Lancing and Trinity College Cambridge and graduated with a BA in Mechanical Sciences in 1922. An engineer with the Great

⁷⁹ Reduced from Lancing College web site http://www.hambo.org/lancing/view_man.php?id=278, seen 3/3/2013

Western Railway until 1928, he gained great empathy with the working men at Swindon. He took holy orders and became curate of All Saint's Church Poplar from 1929 to 1931 and London Secretary of the Student Christian Movement. Living on unemployment benefit proved ruinous to his health and he contracted tuberculosis. In 1934 he returned to work and became senior curate at the Eton College Mission at Hackney Wick, serving there for three years whilst also acting as chairman of the Hackney branch of the TGWU. He organised a series of strikes in the East End in the late 1930s across a range of industries and was outspoken in his opposition to the East End fascists and in favour of conscription to defeat Nazism.

He enlisted prior to the outbreak of WWII and was commissioned 2nd Lieutenant in the Welsh Guards in 1939, after Sandhurst training. He took part in the Battle of France in 1940 and the Normandy landings in June 1944, being decorated with the Military Cross for his action there before advancing across Belgium in September 1944. He was killed on the 9th September whilst taking a German-held house in Hectel. The regimental history states that "he was a priest of the Church of England, who thought it his duty to join with other men in fighting the evil of Nazidom and to share the dangers and sufferings this would involve." A fellow officer wrote "he was very caring person; he'd take a great deal of trouble of going to base hospitals or forward casualty collecting stations. You know you meet a lot of people in life who you just forget. You would never forget about him". Another officer wrote "he was totally unlike the picture you might have of a Guards officer...he was much more like somebody who had risen from the rank of Guardsman, rather than an officer who had come in from Sandhurst. He was buried at Leopoldsburg War Cemetery.

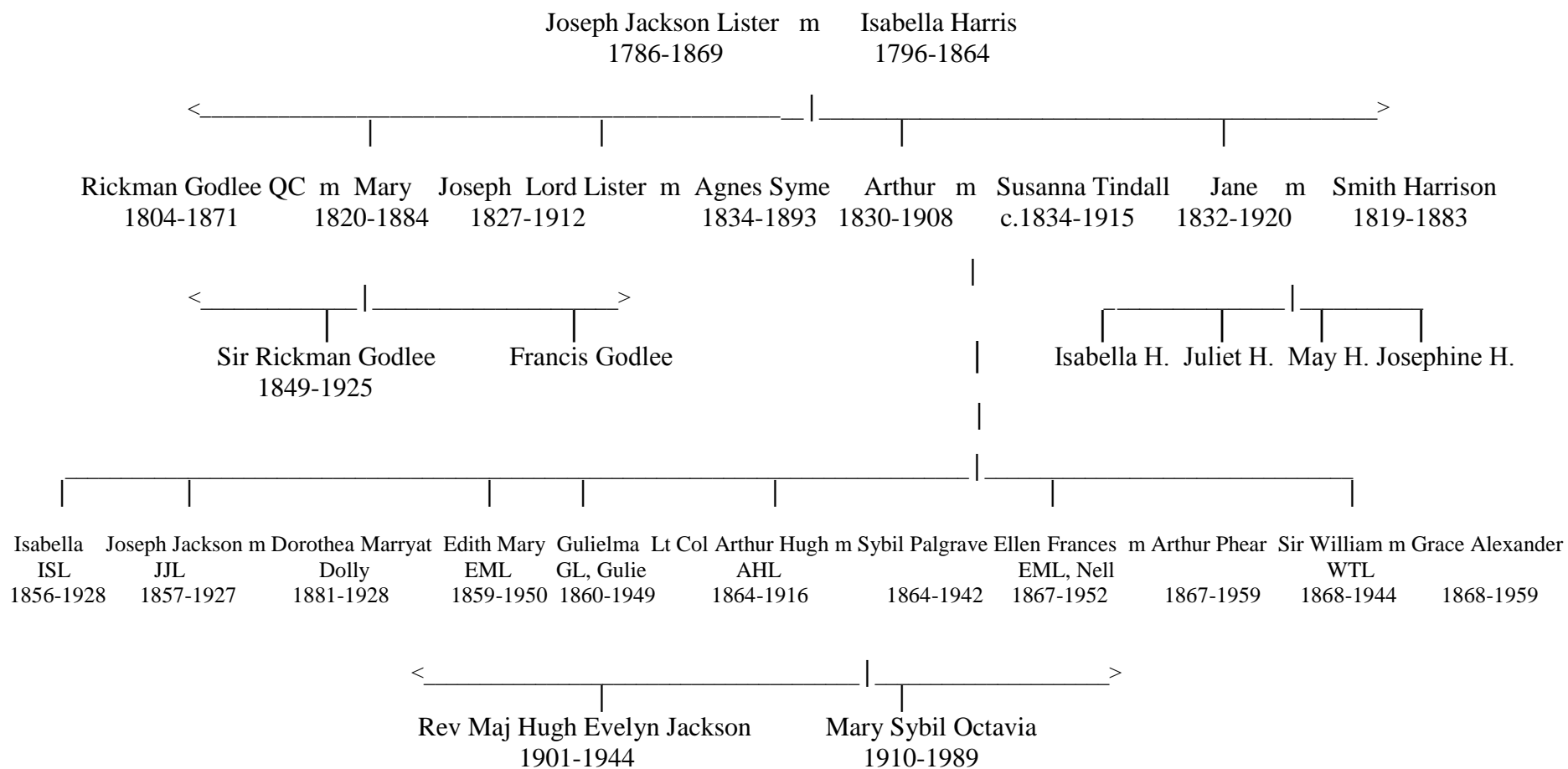
Acknowledgements

I am grateful for on-line discussions with Professor Peter Ayres (who supplied D H Scott's obituary of Arthur Lister), for research and comments on drafts by Diane Shaw, to Gill Sheppard for providing images of a postcard sent by Gulielma Lister, to my wife Barbara for discussions the area where she grew up around Plaistow and Leyton, to Graham Davies for providing cuttings from The Times and much other information, to the Leyton and Leytonstone Society, to Christopher Powell for his paper *George Holland and High Cliff* which provided a first-rate start to understanding the house, to Lyme estate agents Martin Diplock and Fortnam Smith & Banwell for providing old sales particulars and photographs of High Cliff, to Gill Steinberg for providing an insight to High Cliff from her late husband who had an office there and the collection of Lord Lister biographies and published surgical papers which he gave to the Museum, to those compilers of Lister family trees on Ancestry.co.uk who led me in various directions most of which were correct (except that Arthur and Susanna Lister were not married in Geo Township in Bong County of the US Quaker settlement of Liberia [the correct answer is St Georges Parish, Borough, Southwark]) and to Maurice Liddiard for proof reading the final text. Any errors are mine alone.

Appendix 1: Partial⁸⁰ Family Tree of the Listers of High Cliff

Including the Harrison family who shared High Cliff with the Listers

Surnames all Lister except where indicated



⁸⁰ This is not a complete family tree: siblings are only shown where they are connected with High Cliff or named in the text

Appendix 2: Ownership History of the High Cliff Estate – following land assembly by George Holland in 1811

See map based on John Wood's Plan of Lyme Regis of 1841 on the previous page. Information from Lyme Regis Tithe Map of 1841 and Apportionment of 1844 and notes made by Gulielma Lister from Abstract of Title of John Treeby dated 1870⁸¹.

<i>Tithe No. Owner/Occupier in 1841</i>	<i>Field Name</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Area</i> ⁸²
---	-------------------	--------------------	---------------------------

Land sold or leased to Sir Edward Synge in 1821, to John Stein in 1829 and to Sir Dudley St Leger Hill in 1839. Passed to his son Major Clarges Hill in 1851, sold to John Treeby in 1864 and to Joseph and Arthur Lister and Smith Harrison in 1870⁸³. Sold by the Lister sisters to a developer in 1929, sold to Mr & Mrs George Snell in 1933. Blocks of land gradually sold for development leaving only the house (as High Cliff Hotel, opened c.1937) and immediate lawns. Sold by Mrs. Snell and converted to flats in 1996.

LT382	Sir Dudley Hill/Sir Dudley Hill	Walled Garden	0-0-32
LT383	Sir Dudley Hill/Sir Dudley Hill	High Cliff House, garden, field	5-1-26

(Note: LT 383 includes Higher Deer Close purchased by Sir Dudley St Leger Hill of George Holland in 1839 which became the Plantation between the Walled Garden and Deer Close)

Land retained by George Holland after 1821 until at least 1844 (15ac-1r-35p)

LT368	George Holland/Joseph Lakey	Lower Deer Close	Pasture	3-2-26
LT370	George Holland/Joseph Lakey	Deer Close	Meadow	6-0-31
LT379	George Holland/Joseph Lakey	Windmill Close	Meadow	2-2-30
LT380	George Holland/Joseph Lakey	Bean Close		2-3-28

Land Retained by John Stein in 1839

LT352	John Stein/Monique Bellingham	High Cliff Lodge, offices & garden		0-2-31
-------	-------------------------------	------------------------------------	--	--------

Total acquired by George Holland in 1811 21.48 acres [8.68ha] 21-1-32

In addition:

Land rented by Sir Dudley St Leger Hill as a yearly tenant and purchased by John Treeby

LT381	John Henry Henley/Dudley Hill	Long Strip/Long Close		0-3-00
	[Holland never bought this despite its position within his estate: it was occupied by Thomas Manning in 1819 ⁸⁴]			

Land rented by Major Dudley Clarges Hill as a yearly tenant

LT380	All, or part of, or more than	Bean Close	
-------	-------------------------------	------------	--

Land bought by Arthur Lister in 1871 from George Giffard and auctioned for AF Wiscombe in 1926⁸⁵

LT386	Close south of Morgan's Grave	West Field		3-0-12
-------	-------------------------------	------------	--	--------

⁸¹ Lister Thesaurus, *idem*

⁸² In the imperial measures of the day: acres, rods & square poles 1 ac=4r, 1r=40p, one acre = 0.4 hectares

⁸³ The Listers bought a total area of 9 acres, 1 rod & 30 poles, including the Long Strip LT381 and West Field LT386.

⁸⁴ 1819 Henley Estate Map in Somerset Record Office

⁸⁵ Information from auction advertisement for OS172 in 1926 for land with 580ft frontage on Sidmouth Road at Morgan's Grave



Appendix 3: Domestic and Outdoor Staff Employed by the Listers 1861-1911

Forename	Surname	Birthplace	Job House	Syc ⁸⁶	Syc	Syc	Syc	HC ⁸⁷	HC
			Census Yr	'61	'71	'81	'91	'01	'11
Jane	Hargreave	Maldon, Essex	Cook	37					
Caroline	Prior	London		20					
Elisa	Paul		House maid	17					
Elizabeth		Leyton, Essex		21					
Charlotte		Kent		21					
Edward	Tidbury		Gardener	42					
Amelia	Tidbury		Gardr's wife	41					
Suzanne	Wreay	Ipswich, Suffolk	Governess		19				
Elizabeth	Tulhood	Bromley, Kent	Nurse		53				
D P	Bishop	Gosperton, Lincs	Cook		44				
Jane	Turner I ⁸⁸	Bedgrave, Suffolk	Parlour maid		30				
Glascat	Gaces	Fulham, Middlesex	House maid		24				
Elizabeth	Pursey	Plaistow, Essex	Maid		21				
Lavinia	Allen	Southwark, Surrey	Cook			29			
Barbara	Freemantle	Gosperton, Lincs	House maid			24			
Lizzy	Freemantle	Gosperton, Lincs	Ladies maid			22			
Jane	Turner II	Gosperton, Lincs	Parlour maid			37	47	50	
Elizabeth	Moore	Polton, Bedfordshire	Kitchen maid			19			
Arthur	Barker	Leytonstone, Essex	Page			15			
Matilda	Baldock	Ashwell Hertfordshire	House maid				28		
Emily	Hammond	Chigwell, Essex	Kitchen maid				16		
Florence	Calvin	Swanscombe Kent	Cook				19		
George	Mitchell	Leyton, Essex	Servant				15		
Frank	Hitchcock	Uplyme, Devon	Gardener					HC ⁸⁹	
Emily	Hitchcock		Gardr's wife					HC	
James	Burt		Gardener					HC ⁹⁰	
Jane	Turner III	London	Parlour maid					?24	
Ellen	Butcher	Essex	Cook					39	
Ellen	Shickle	Mkt Weston, Suffolk	Serving maid					28	37 ⁹¹
Alice	Bacon	Burnham, Essex	Kitchen maid					20	
William	Meade	Lyme Regis, Dorset	House servant					18	
John	Cox	Uplyme, Devon	Gardener					38	
Eliza	Cox	Portsmouth, Hants	Gardr's Wife					37	
Sarah	Weller	Harlow, Essex	Cook						36
Florence	Hill	Gt Addington, Cam	Parlour maid						36
Annie	Willett	Woodford, Essex	Kitchen maid						19
Sydney	Jeffries	Cromer, Norfolk	Page boy						15
Jane	Turner II	Gosperton, Lincs	Visitor ⁹²						60

4th November 2015

⁸⁶ Sycamore House 871, High Road, Leytonstone, Essex

⁸⁷ High Cliff, Lyme Regis

⁸⁸ There were three separate Jane Turners in Lister service

⁸⁹ Retained at High Cliff

⁹⁰ Retained at High Cliff, born c 1800 and had worked there since a lad

⁹¹ Ladies Maid in 1911

⁹² Given as "private means", presumably on holiday, retired from service on Lister pension.