

IMPORTANT BUILDINGS OF BURNHAM & DISTRICT

This is a quick reference guide to the important buildings in Burnham, Buckinghamshire and its neighbouring parishes. It does not include the parish churches which are amply documented elsewhere. And of course it is by no means complete. Any suggestions for additions or corrections are very welcome.

The [Manor House section](#) lists all of the local manor houses, though many have now long disappeared.

The [Alphabetical list](#) gives a brief history of each important building, and these may be mansions, listed historic buildings or simply long-established pubs.

.1 THE MEDIEVAL MANOR HOUSES [REF 6]

BURNHAM PARISH

Unusually, Burnham Parish had five medieval manors, though Huntercombe and Allards were combined under the Eyre family and Britwell became part of Cippenham Manor.

HUNTERCOMBE HOUSE (OS grid ref : SU 93150 80650)

A 14th C house partly rebuilt in the 17th C and extended in the 19th C, located on the east side of Huntercombe Lane South, just north of Burnham Abbey.

ALLARDS MANOR (OS grid ref : SU 95500 83800)

The manor house of East Burnham, located on the east side of Crown Lane. It was uninhabited from 1798 and taken down by Lady Grenville in 1837.

BRITWELL MANOR (OS grid ref : SU 93810 82650)

Now known as Grenville Court, located on Upper Britwell Road.

WEST TOWN MANOR (OS grid ref : SU 92200 80400)

This is now West Town Farm.

PENLAND MANOR (OS grid ref : SU 95800 87250)

This is now Pennlands Farm in Hedgerley.

OTHER PARISHES

HITCHAM HOUSE (OS grid ref : SU 92142 82679)

Located just north-east of Hitcham Parish Church, the house was taken down in 1804 and only parts of the garden and garden walls remain.

TAPLOW COURT (OS grid ref : SU 90670 82200)

A medieval manor house stood here until about 1700, but there is no trace of it today.

DORNEY COURT (OS grid ref : SU 92520 79020)

Built in 1440 and held by the Palmer family for over 450 years.

OLD HEDSOR HOUSE (OS grid ref : SU 90780 86147)

The remains of Hedsor Manor House includes a house wall re-purposed as a garden wall. The house was knocked down in the 19thC.

CIPPENHAM PLACE (OS grid ref : SU 94940 80300)

Thought to be the site of a royal palace, possibly of the Kings of Mercia, it was a manor house until the present building was erected in 1550.

.2 ALPHABETICAL LIST OF EXISTING BUILDINGS

Blythwood / Hitcham House

Burnham Grove / Burnham Beeches Hotel

Burwood House

Cliveden

Cloverdown

Dorneywood

Dropmore

East Burnham

Elibank

The Feathers

Grovefield

Hedsor House

Hitcham Grange

Hitcham House (Hitcham Manor House)
Hitcham Place
Hitchambury
Maypole / Olive Tree
Old Lodge Taplow
Nashdom
Rectory, Hitcham
Taplow Court
Taplow Hill
Taplow House
Tithe Barn
Waggon & Horses / Hitcham Vale
Westalls

BLYTHWOOD / HITCHAM HOUSE

Hitcham House, across the road from Hitcham Church, was built in 1868 by Thomas Roger Smith for George Hanbury and was originally called Blythwood. It is now a group of self-contained private apartments. Its name was changed to Hitcham House when the old Hitcham House, the Manor House was finally abandoned.

BURNHAM GROVE / BURNHAM BEECHES HOTEL

Built in 1727 as a hunting lodge it was originally known as Cant's Hill . Thomas Gray the poet spent some time there with his uncle and aunt. It later became called Burnham Grove and home to Edward Clifton-Brown, a City banker, who married Dora Hanbury the youngest daughter of George Hanbury of Blythwood. It was the main house on the Burnham Grove estate, immortalised in the Michael Twist books, which included most of what is now Britwell. In 1965 it was converted into a hotel.

BURWOOD HOUSE

Burwood House on Taplow Common Road is a relative newcomer. The land was sold in 1976 by the Pitkin family, reputedly to the Emir of Kuwait. The new owner built a modest villa on the site though it is understood that the owner has never visited it. In 2020 the renowned classicist architect Quinlan Terry put in plans for a major mansion to replace the villa but this was rejected on the grounds of being in green belt and also impinging on the view from Dropmore House.

CLIVEDEN

In 1666 the 2nd Duke of Buckingham purchased 160 acres with two small lodges and created the Cliveden Estate, on which he built a mansion. In 1696 it was bought by Lord George Hamilton, 1st Earl of Orkney who in

1706 removed the top storey. Orkney leased it briefly to Frederick Prince of Wales, whose wife Augusta was at Hedsor House. Both were out of favour with King George II and Queen Caroline. The Orkney family also owned Taplow Court. In 1796 Cliveden was badly damaged by a fire and in 1824 Cliveden was sold to George Warrenden who rebuilt much of it.. In 1849 Harriet, Duchess of Sutherland took over but it caught fire again and in 1852 was rebuilt yet again. Then in 1893 Cliveden was bought by American tycoon William Waldorf Astor for £1.2 million. In the First World War parts were used to create the Canadian Red Cross Hospital and in 1942 it was handed to the National Trust. However the Astors continued to live there until the Profumo scandal and in 1966 the National Trust took over its management, first being leased to Stanford University and now leased as a hotel. [REF 5]

CLOVERDOWN

Cloverdown is located across the road from the Rectory on Hitcham Lane. From 1869 to 1923 Cloverdown was a school financed by the Hanbury family and is now a private home. Google maps wrongly places Cloverdown within the Rectory grounds.

DORNEYWOOD

This is an 18th C house, originally a Georgian farmhouse remodelled in 1919 after a fire. It was given to the National Trust by Lord Courtauld-Thomson in 1947 for the use of a senior government minister, typically the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

DROPMORE HOUSE

Dropmore House was built for £14,000 in the 1790s for Lord Grenville, who later as Prime Minister pushed through the law abolishing the slave trade. The architect was Samuel Wyatt. Charles Tatham was architect for changes in the 19th century.

Requisitioned as a headquarters for the Canadian army in 1939, Dropmore House was in a sorry state when Lord and Lady Kemsley bought Dropmore from Lord Grenville's great-great-nephew in 1943, undertook a major restoration of the house and grounds in the early 1950s. Viscount Kemsley was the proprietor of The Sunday Times.

Following Lord Kemsley's death in 1968, the estate was owned for four years by the United States International University of San Diego, during which time the house fell into disrepair and much of the land was sold off. In 1972, Dropmore House and its remaining 195 acres of land were bought by the billionaire Arab businessman Mohamed Mahdi Al-Tajir, a

former United Arab Emirates ambassador to the UK and France. He commissioned a major renovation of the house, redecorating and modernising the interior, and building a swimming-pool complex in the grounds. Beyond that, however, the house was rarely used and little maintained.

In 1990 it was badly damaged by a fire that took four days to put out. Another in 1997 left the house uninhabitable.

With so little of the original 18th-century mansion left above ground, its re-creation represents a veritable architectural tour de force, which would have been impossible were it not for the visual evidence provided by the British Library's collection of 18th-century drawings of the Dropmore estate by J. C. Buckler, who worked for Lord Grenville both as an artist and as a designer of garden buildings and cottages. The other vital source of reference regarding the original design and layout of the house, and especially the proportions and decoration of its grand main rooms, was the *Country Life* articles of 1956, according to architect George Kalopedis. As a result, many important original elements such as fireplaces, staircases and Wyatt's soaring sash windows have been faithfully replicated using materials of the time, many of them acquired from their original source.

Dropmore was restored by the company Corporate Estates via the construction firm MP Brothers Limited into a number of private luxury dwellings around 2006–2008. The restoration included the house, Edwardian stables and a number of garden buildings including a Chinese tea house and aviary. Further plans over a 15-year period include restoration of the formal flower beds, Italian garden, woodlands, lawns, vistas, roads, bridges and gates. Allegedly the developer went into liquidation before the redevelopment was completed. Dropmore was then purchased in 2012 by Richard and Ian Livingstone. The historic research and masterplans were produced by a team headed by Papa Architects and the Terra Firma Consultancy, Landscape Architects.

The exterior of the house and the grounds were used extensively for the location filming of the Doctor Who serial *Day of the Daleks*.

The four-storey Victorian water-tower was built by Lady Grenville's nephew and heir, George Matthew Fortescue, in 1901. [REF 4]

EAST BURNHAM

The old manor house of East Burnham was pulled down by Lady Grenville of Dropmore because it was uninhabitable. The present East Burnham Park is a red-brick Elizabethan style house built by George and Harriet Grote in 1853, became a well-known show garden under Sir Harry Veitch and is now owned by Bishop Sport and Leisure Ltd with both accommodation and offices, though the gardens are for the most part now gone..

ELIBANK

Elibank was the home of Mr Seymour Grenfell. It was presumably on the same site as what is now called Elibank Court.

THE FEATHERS

The Feathers public house is located on Cliveden Road opposite the main entrance to Cliveden. It is a Grade II listed building that at least pre-dates 1863.

GROVEFIELD

Grovefield House was built in 1904 for Henry Fleetwood Fuller of the Fuller brewing family. It is now a hotel.

HEDSOR HOUSE

There has been a manor house in Hedsor since 1166 AD. A house on the site was occupied by Augusta, Princess of Wales (1719-1772) whilst seeking seclusion from public life. This house was bought by George Irby, 4th Baron Bolton in 1764. In 1795 the house was badly damaged by fire so Lord Bolton built a new house in the Italianate style. The house was purchased from Lord Bolton in 1925 by D'Arcy Baker an executive with FIAT Motors. When he died in 1932 it was bought by Philip Shephard, a construction entrepreneur for £12,000 and given to his son Philip in 1934. It has been leased by the US Air Force reputedly as a spy base, by the computer company ICL and, still owned by the Shephard family, it is available for weddings and for film locations.

HITCHAM GRANGE

Hitcham Grange is located at postcode SL6 0JD on the west side of Hill Farm Road near Taplow village between the High St junction and the Rectory Road junction. It was the home of Cecil Saumarez Irby, who was second son of the 5th Lord Boston who lived at the ancestral home at Hedsor House. It has been converted to flats.

HITCHAM HOUSE

This note refers to the ruined Manor House of Hitcham, probably built in Elizabethan times for the Clarke family and is now long gone. It was located a short distance to the north east of St Mary's Church and all that remains are a walled garden and a line of sweet chestnut trees.

When Lord Grenville purchased the Lordship of the Manor in 1780 he built a new house, Dropmore, in the north of the parish. He then leased the old Manor House to Dr Gretton who ran a boys' school there under the name Hitcham House. After a fire around 1840 the Manor House was pulled down. Eventually Blythwood (q.v.) was re-named Hitcham House.

HITCHAM PLACE

Hitcham Place is located at postcode SL1 8NW on Parliament Lane off Taplow Common Road. It was the home of Sir Henry Dixon Kimber a City solicitor, and later used by the Sisters of Cenacle a Catholic order, when it was known as Cenacle. It is now a nursing home

HITCHAMBURY

Hitchambury is located on Hunts Lane on the western border of Hitcham parish.

A manor house has existed on this site for centuries. Early documents state that the manor was “a timber building set on two storeys with a tile roof divided into fifteen rooms”. The house was enlarged in 1685 and 1702 and new barns were erected in 1679. There appear to have been a couple of fires along the way and the building as we know it today was built in the 1860s on the footprint of the old 1702 house.

Hitchambury Manor used to be the parsonage for Hitcham church. In 1909 the church sold the house to Mr. Charles Selwyn Awdry for £4200 and with it four and a half acres for a further £3429. Mr Awdry was a partner of the WH Smith book retailers. He was a decorated army officer, rising to Lieutenant-Colonel and was killed in action in 1918.

More recently Hitchambury was used as a nurses' hostel for the Canadian Red Cross Hospital which was located on the nearby Cliveden estate. When the hospital closed in the 1980s Hitchambury fell into disuse. It was bought by the present owner in the early 1990s since when work has been carried out to restore the manor to its former glory and Hitchambury is now used as self-catering serviced accommodation. [REF 3]

THE MAYPOLE / THE OLIVE TREE

The Olive Tree (formerly the Maypole) is located on the corner of Eastfield Road and Hitcham Road. Unfortunately, at present, we have no information on the history of the Maypole.

NASHDOM

Nashdom is located on Taplow Common Road. It was built 1905 to 1909 by Edwin Lutyens for Russian emigre Prince Alexei Dolgorouki and his wealthy wife Francis Fleetwood Wilson. The name Nashdom is literally 'Our House' in the Russian language.

Prince Alexis, a Chamberlain to the Tsar of Russia, came from a long and distinguished noble family in the direct line of descent from Prince Dolgorouki of Suzdal, the founder of Moscow in 1129.

The Dolgoroukis lived a happy social life, entertaining lavishly at their home in Upper Grosvenor Street in Mayfair. Fanny wanted to have a country house in the Thames Valley suitable to hold weekend river parties and Prince Alexis commissioned Sir Edwin Lutyens to build a house on a site in Taplow.

After Prince Alexis died in June 1915, Fanny spent most of her days abroad at her villa on the shores of the Mediterranean continuing to be a very generous hostess. She died in August 1919.

After their death the house, while remaining the property of the Dolgorouki family, was leased by a succession of tenants, including the Astors. It was eventually bought in 1924 by a community of Anglican Benedictine monks, founded in 1914, whose property in Pershore, Worcs., was proving too small for their growing numbers. Their move to Nashdom (which name they retained) was delayed until 1926.

The community added a new wing to the house in 1967-8, but apart from that the buildings are substantially as Lutyens and the Dolgoroukis left them. The monks left in 1987 and the building was damaged by vandals but was much later redeveloped and from 1997 converted into private apartments. [REF 2]

OLD LODGE TAPLOW (OS grid ref : SU 91179 82308)

According to the Bucks heritage portal this was the home of James Rutland a builder by trade specialising in restoring old buildings, and also the famous antiquarian and amateur archaeologist who excavated the Taplow Mound. In letters he used the address The Gables, Taplow, so

maybe this was the house's original name. 19th C, half-timbered.

THE RECTORY, HITCHAM

The former Hitcham rectory is located on the corner of Hitcham Lane and Hitcham Road a short distance from the church. It was originally called the 'New Rectory' having been built in 1909 to replace, as parsonage, Hitchambury which the church had sold. It was later re-named the 'Old Rectory'. This in turn was sold by the church and is now a private house and from 1981 the parsonage has been a more modest private house.

TAPLOW COURT

This was the site of a Saxon burial mound whose contents are now in the British Museum. A Tudor mansion there was burned down in 1616 but was soon replaced. The estate was bought by George Hamilton, 1st Earl of Orkney in 1700 (he had bought Cliveden in 1696), His successors the 2nd and 3rd Countesses of Orkney had usefully married their cousins the O'Briens, Earls of Inchiquin, Taplow Court was sold in 1852 to Charles Pascoe Grenfell (1790-1867) whose father had earlier owned Taplow House, and Taplow Court was later occupied by William Henry Grenfell, 1st Baron Desborough (1855-1945) until 1939 when it became first a girls school and then a hospital, and in 1946 it was leased to British Telecommunications Research and in 1963 to the Plessey Company. Since 1988 it has been owned by Soka Gokkai International, a Buddhist foundation.

William Henry Grenfell was a famous all-round athlete and his wife Ethel Fane a renowned society hostess. Taplow Court became well known as a meeting place of royalty and literati. One such was Joyce Grenfell, a well-known entertainer. She was born Joyce Phipps, the niece of Nancy Lady Astor of Cliveden. She married Reggie Grenfell (a great-great grandson of Pascoe Grenfell (1790-1867)) and so was a frequent visitor to both Taplow Court and Cliveden. Joyce had her own cottage on the Cliveden estate.

TAPLOW HOUSE

The original house on this site was built 1568 and gifted in 1628 by James I to the Governor of Virginia. It was destroyed by fire in 1680. The present building was begun in 1751 by William Vigor. It was bought by Pascoe Grenfell MP (1761-1838), a Cornish tin merchant, in 1794 and rebuilt in 1800. It was sold by the Grenfells in 1838, after Pascoe

Grenfell's death, to the Marquess of Thomond (related to Countess of Orkney) and rebuilt again in 1840. The history from 1838 until 1958 is unclear, it must have had a number of relatively obscure occupants. The house passed to Mr Neville Ward, in 1921, the census lists Edward Hugh Bowring-Skimming, a director of the CT Bowring shipping company, and in the 1925 History of the County of Buckinghamshire lists Mr W | Baring Du Pre MP . But in 1958 it was turned into a hotel.

TAPLOW HILL

A house now demolished which in 1911 was home to Oswald Serocold, a brewer. The location is a bit uncertain, but is likely to be the Cedar Chase development near Taplow Church.

THE TITHE BARN

This Grade II listed building, located immediately to the east of St Mary's Church, dates from 17th century and was converted into a residence in 1965.

WAGGON AND HORSES / HITCHAM VALE

The old pub known as the Waggon and Horses was located across the road from what is now Nashdom on what was then a main road from London to Bath, the bridge at Maidenhead being unreliable until 1777. When the new bridge was built, and more so when the railway came in 1841, trade plummeted. The pub was sold by George Fortescue of Cornwall and Dropmore to Harvey Ranking of St Helens Place London for £450 in April 1866 and became a private house, now known as Hitcham Vale. In 1915 it was the home of the Hon Mrs Bourke. It is currently a private school. [REF 7]

WESTALLS

Westalls Farm was converted into three houses. La Geneste lies on the corner of Taplow Common Road and Rose Hill and is a Grade II listed building, formerly a tithe barn linked to Westalls Farm. La Geneste is probably derived from the French name for the broom plant, similar to Plantagenet. A new house was built at Westalls farm which is now called Westalls, and the cowsheds became Rose Hill Cottage [REF 1]

REFERENCES

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