

CLARE STREETS & HOUSES

BOOK II of CLARE, SUFFOLK

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Book II: Clare Houses

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CLARE SUFFOLK; BOOK II THE OLD STREETS OF CLARE AND THEIR BUILDINGS

INTRODUCTION

For general introductory comments please see the start of Book I, the A-Z of historical features.

My starting point for the information here in Book II was the official list 'Buildings of special Architectural or Historical Interest'. In the text I have called this just 'the Listed Buildings list', and I have inserted some of its technical phraseology when it seemed appropriate. Suffolk County Council has said that when the system started (in the early 1950s) it was carried out intermittently and sometimes superficially. The copy I used apparently dates from the 1970s, the Council indicating that there had been only sporadic investigation as far as Clare was concerned. Some re-numbering of houses has taken place since that list, and I have taken notice of this in trying to identify buildings.

As indicated in the introduction to Book I, I have incorporated material from David Ridley's research over the years much of which is now gathered in the CD-ROM at the Ancient House. Occasionally an entry there has revealed differences from the Listed Buildings list I had used. In such cases I have usually accepted David's view. I have also drawn material from a number of other sources including some house owners, although any suspect information in my final text is, of course, my own responsibility.

My original photo-copied version included many photographs of buildings, close details of some features, and various scenes in Clare, together with maps and other items. I have not felt able to bring these into this present version. The museum's CD-ROM already includes photos of at least the listed buildings. A collection of my photographic slides of local buildings, scenes and events since 1982 is also housed at the Ancient House museum.

David Hatton, July 2006.

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EXPLANATORY NOTES

I have occasionally included the number of a house although I have known little or nothing about it. This is usually to facilitate identification of others nearby.

Although interior beams and other timberwork are sometimes specifically mentioned, this does not, of course, imply these are the only buildings containing such.

Occasionally an entry has another name in brackets. This may be a former name of a house, or the present name, or the trade or profession carried out on the premises at the time of writing, or similar aids to recognition.

Roads and streets. The word 'street' instead of 'road' appears often in Clare, as in other old towns. The original distinction between the two was that a road was an unmade way along which horses were *ridden*, whereas a street was paved - the name having originated from Latin in Anglo-Saxon times to describe the Roman roads which were far superior to anything previously known in Britain. This distinction lasted until the end of the Middle Ages. Another point and one which finds expression locally in the name Nethergate Street is that the word 'gate' has two meanings. One is our present-day meaning, so indicates a town entrance or other gate. The other meaning of 'gate' which occurs in medieval street names is 'street', derived from both the Saxon word 'gatte' and from Old Norse. The word 'nether' means 'lower' so etymologically the name Nethergate could mean 'lower street' or could relate to the lower gate of the castle, to which it led.

The numbering of houses. As frequently with ancient streets, Clare's numbering of houses is often consecutive, up one side of the street and back along the other - not 'odds one side and evens the other'. There can also sometimes be confusion over the current number of a house. As mentioned above, the number may now be different from what it was on the original Listed Buildings list. Also, sometimes a house bears two numbers because it was originally two houses which have since been joined. Sometimes the opposite has happened, necessitating the addition of an 'a' and 'b' to a number. Some numbers seem completely missing. Sometimes houses have been fitted in perhaps at the back, and the missing numbers may be found there. I have varied in the way I have used numbers according to what I judge will help - sometimes to assist in identifying the premises, sometimes to reflect a building's history.

Pargetting is a feature of a number of houses in Clare, both old and new. This decorated plaster-work was a local craft, once widespread in the town. The 17th century was the heyday of pargetting, although it continued in following centuries. Clare contains a number of examples. Much of this work was done to old timber-framed buildings which probably had to be

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plastered anyway to cover up draughts caused by the shrinking of the timbers over the centuries. While the plaster is wet it is either worked over with implements such as wooden combs to produce herring bone, shell and similar patterns, or shapes are applied with moulds or sculpted by hand to make more individual pictures. Pargetting needs to be renewed from time to time, and is most striking if seen (and photographed) when a sinking sun lights it from the side. A later note on the house Netheridge, 15 Nethergate Street gives more information about pargetting.

House construction. East Anglia had little local stone suitable for building. Many of Clare's old houses were made with timber or stone foundations. Walls were composed of timber uprights, spaces between which were filled with wattle - thin sticks, often arranged like basket weave, on which mud or clay was daubed, spread smoothly and left to dry. Many of these have since been covered over with plaster and colour-washed in a variety of colours, thus hiding the timberwork. The wattle construction developed into the lath-and-plaster construction more commonly found, to be followed later by plasterboard. Roofs were either thatched or tiled. A **stone house** (one where the interstices were filled, not with plaster, but with flint, brick fragments, and conglomerate stone) was a sufficient rarity for it to be specially named sometimes, as in the case of Stonehall in Nethergate Street. Many houses have carved lintels under their windows, or carved exterior timber beams, nearly all of which can, according to one writer, be distinguished by the 'spade' device. There is also much beautiful carved work inside the buildings. See the entry Hall Houses in Book I for further information on house construction.

Stone crosses about 25 cm (10 inches) high were still in existence outside a few houses in 2003, e.g. between 42 and 43 Bridewell Street, but are disappearing as time passes. A council department said these seem to relate to the old sewerage system, perhaps indicating junctions which allowed possible connection to the backs of houses.

SHORT ARCHITECTURAL GLOSSARY

Barge-boards are projecting boards placed against the incline of a gable, and hide the ends of the horizontal roof timbers. They are sometimes decorated.

A bressumer is the principal horizontal beam along the side of a timber-framed house, sometimes carved. The word is also used for a massive beam over the opening of a fireplace.

A dormer window is a window placed vertically in a sloping roof and has a roof of its own. The name derives from the fact that it usually serves sleeping quarters.

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A **gable** is the upper portion of a wall which carries a pitched roof and is usually triangular but sometimes semi-circular or with curved sides. It is where barge-boards are found.

A **hipped roof** has sloped instead of vertical ends.

A **jettied storey** of a house is an upper storey which projects forward beyond a lower one.

An **oriel window** (sometimes just called an **oriel**) is a bay window on an upper floor, or a tall dormer window. The base of such windows was sometimes finely carved.

A **pediment** is a triangular part crowning the front of a building especially at the porch.

A **pilaster** is a shallow column projecting only slightly from a wall.

Spandrels (or spandrils) are the spaces between or around arches.

Suffolk white bricks are found in some local houses. Actually light buff in colour, they are the result of brick-making when the brick earth (the mixture of clay and sand used) contains chalk instead of the more common iron oxide which produces red bricks.

LIST OF THE STREETS INCLUDED

(which are mostly presented in alphabetical order):-

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USE OF ASTERISKS.

Books I and II are inter-related. *The use of one asterisk indicates there is a related entry in Book I which can be found in its alphabetical position. **Two asterisks indicate a further entry here in Book II.

BRIDEWELL STREET and a few buildings beyond

Taking its name from the old **Bridewell*, this street was previously part of Gosford Street, as also was Callis Street. The street grew as additional houses were built on the east of the common lands in the 17th century. A town plan of 1809 calls it Goswell Street. The name Bridewell Street only occurs in the later part of the 19th century. Some of its houses cut into the earthworks of Clare camp at the rear, see **the Common*. The west side (the left when leaving town) has houses since the 1600s, of which one or two survive. Some on the east are older. Among the present houses are some pretty thatched cottages and some 15/16th century. houses with exposed timberwork.

A former turning off Bridewell Street which was called Water Lane (lying opposite Sheepgate Lane) was remembered by older residents at the time of the first writing of this book as leading to Little Meadow and on to Cats Meadow, where they played as children. There were also osier beds in the locality, used in basket making.

Bridewell Street starts just beyond the block of buildings to the north of Common Street.

West side (the left when leaving the town):

1-4. A terrace of early 19th century timber framed and plastered houses, now faced in roughcast. A good example of its period which has survived almost unaltered.

5-8. An early 19th century terrace of houses.

The ***Common** can be entered between houses 8 & 10.

13-15. CLARE COTTAGE. A pretty row of colour-washed pink cottages with thatched roofs and five dormer windows. They were originally all one 17th century house, no.15 perhaps originally being an extension made just a little after the basic old house. Renovated in the 20th century, and pargetted front panels also 20th century.

28. BRIDEWELL HOUSE. A pleasant house with a barn/work shed, formerly the house of the jailer of the old **Bridewell* (prison). It became a more private residence in 1787.

The medieval *Sheepgate Lane (once called Sheep Cott Lane), now a public track to the **Common*.

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The **CLARE HEIGHTS HOUSING ESTATE** can be reached by the footpath which runs parallel to Sheeppgate Lane. All the roads on this estate bear names relating to the lords of Clare.

The return side of Bridewell Street will be found be after the next note.

A short distance further along, going out of Clare, a road on the right leads to new houses and a lane to **HERMITAGE FARMHOUSE**, 17th century with 19th century windows and 20th century door and porch.

500m further still the road leads to the junction with the Poslingford road. On the corner stands

CHAPEL COTTAGE, formerly **WENTFORD** or **CHILTON CHAPEL**. This building, now a cottage, was originally a Norman chapel, St Mary Magdalene, Chilton, and is dated c.1190. It was probably built as a wayside chapel, and would have prospered especially when the Wentford fair, one of the most important in East Anglia at the time, was held nearby. Court documents of 1403 showed distress at the fact that services had not been continued and the building was in disrepair. It was granted to the Guild of St John the Baptist in Chilton by Richard Duke of York in 1444. Before its dissolution, records show that the priest who said Mass there also worked at Clare parish church and taught at the Grammar school. At one stage the priest's stipend was £1.4s.8d. In 1550, following the Dissolution, Edward VI gave the chapel to Thomas Marsh, when its yearly value was £2.4s.8d. It was converted for domestic use in the mid-16th century, shortly after the Dissolution, when it was changed to two storeys, and the south door altered. It was used as a powder magazine during the civil war in the 17th century.

The cottage is of flint rubble with stone quoins. The roof is thatched on the north side and has 20th century tiles on the south. There is the moulded brick base of a Tudor shafted central chimney stack. On the north side is a late Norman (12th century) semi-circular arched doorway with capitals, but the shafts are missing. Inside the archway is a 13th century pointed arch. There are remains of two original 12th century Norman windows, now blocked, in the east gable, and traces of a bellcote in the western gable. The interior has heavy timber-framing. One beam has embattled ornamentation.

A mile and a half further on is the hamlet of Chilton Street. Some details appear after the entry Well Lane.

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BRIDEWELL STREET continued:

East side (the left when approaching the town centre):

This area is known as Townsend.

Bridewell industrial estate lies behind houses here, occupying the site of the former blacksmith's works of Peck and Bloomfield.

The **Bridewell House** on this side of the road is not connected with the old **Bridewell* itself, but perpetuates the ancient name of Bridewell field, which was behind it.

31 and 33. Originally a single building. The north end (the end away from town) is a 16th century cross wing of the old house. The end towards town is 15th century, renovated in 20th century. The roof has heavily blackened timbers and a plain crown post. The front has a projecting upper storey and exposed timber-framing, and a 20th century window.

37. Once a pair of early 19th century cottages with a small 19th century shop window.

38. 19th century with a 19th century shop window and a carriage entrance at the south end now converted into a garage.

39-44 was originally one house (or two semi-detached?) later expanded into a terrace.

For the **little stone cross between numbers 42-43** see the note 'stone crosses' in the Explanatory notes to this Book II.

45 Formerly the OLD RED LION INN. 17th century, re-fronted in 19th century partly in red brick. An inn of this name is mentioned in the probate inventory of John Turpin of Clare (1688), a brewer and baker of some substance. The inn closed when the landlord moved to The Globe, 10 Callis Street.

46-47. A small 15th century house based on two 15th century cottages originally divided into hall and services. Now two tenements. 20th century windows. Its original structure includes a crown post.

48. Originally based on Waypond Farm, the present building is a late 15th century or early 16th century house set at right angles to the street, with exposed timber framing on the south side. The upper storey originally projected on the north side. Windows are mostly 20th century but there are remains of original windows on the first floor. The interior has moulded beams and ceiling joists and a large open fireplace with a lintel carved with a double row of battlemented ornamentation.

From **CALLIS COURT**, which is sheltered accommodation, **the road changes its name to Callis Street.**

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CALLIS STREET

Callis Street is part of what used to be called Gosworth and then Gosford Street, a reference to a stream which once crossed the road to join the Chilton or Clare Stream. See **Rivers and Bridges*. Mention is made in 1387 to a bridge here (see **Gosford Bridge*). Later the stream was diverted into a culvert under the road (see below under the entry for houses 31-35).

The name Callis came into use in the 16th century. This name also appears in other towns around the country. It is thought probable that it derives from the name Calais, then an English port. Calais was the centre through which most commerce with Europe passed. Traders used to assemble at set places to travel there in convoy and their meeting places were known as callises. This general practice would have been recognised locally because staplers or merchants from Calais came to do business in English wool towns, and Calais was the place through which wool en route to Flemish, Dutch, Spanish and other merchants needed to go, so this seems the most likely explanation of the name of this street. Incidentally a Clare town plan dated 1809 calls this street 'Calais Street'.

A will dated 1551 calls the street Calyce, which might be an alternative spelling of Callis, but the fact that there was a prominent trading firm in Calais called Celys may provide another origin for this variation. But in earlier days there was often no standard spelling - names were often spelt as they sounded, so the spelling varied.

The 1809 town plan shows the road as much wider, absorbing what are now the large front gardens of the houses numbered 28-30. This could have served a number of purposes over the years. It could well have been the meeting area for those traders en route to Calais as mentioned above, but perhaps the earliest (Saxon) market was here? Or the space may have been to assemble animals before driving them into town.

Callis Street now terminates on the one side in the area of the old vicarage as it did in earlier days, and at Callis Court on the other, but in the 17th century it extended northwards and included the street renamed Bridewell Street in the 19th century. A deed of 1675 mentions a St Mary's House, owned by the chantry, in Gosford Street. This was the house now known as Norfolks. There was also a house called Paycocke's.

West side (the left when leaving the town):

CLARE COMMUNITY CENTRE. Formerly a Victorian school built on part of the site of an old farmhouse and granary which had been demolished in 1858. The school was built in 1862 in Gothic revival style with Early English style windows. There had been a grammar school in Clare since the 14c and a school for the poor since 1811 so the arrival of this building brought two old traditions together. Built to hold 200 children, within 20

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years there were 367 there, and extensions were made. It was in use as a school until 1974. In 1990 the building was restored at a cost of £260,000 and brought into use as a community centre, with several inter-linking halls, a kitchen and other facilities. It is used for regular activities such as a day centre offering meals and companionship for pensioners and people with disabilities, play groups, and meetings of some of the many societies and miscellaneous groups of which Clare has reason to be proud. Management is local, and operated in conjunction with the restored Town Hall. For Clare's schools through history, see **Schools in the life of Clare*.

A footpath here leads to the **PRIMARY SCHOOL, FORMER POLICE STATION and ERBURY HOUSING ESTATE**, with sheltered housing.

2. An 18th century building rebuilt in 20th century and now part of the Cock inn.

3. **The COCK INN.** This may date from the 15th century but the first reference to it as an inn is in 1636. Part of the building was used as a schoolroom for a few years from 1834. It was renovated in 20th century. The premises now in use combine half the original inn with a converted barn. The doorway has an 18th century doorcase. Records of the 17th century include mention of surveyors being fined '*for a Rail lying open to the Cock Ditch*' at the rear of the inn. Old residents at the time these words were first written (1994) said they could recall Alf Jolly's family butcher's where the restaurant now stands, and a slaughterhouse at the rear.

4. A 17th century house, originally part of the Cock.

5 (PETERHOUSE). A 17th century building with early 19th century shop window, originally an extension of the Cock inn. This house has a purple pig painted on it which children touch 'for luck' on their way to school. The pig is also a reminder that this house achieved national fame in the early 21c. It was painted purple, which some alleged was not a suitable colour for the area. The dispute nearly reached the European Court but a local builder provided a special tone of pink paint to bring it more into line with tradition, but the pig was left as a reminder of this piece of history..

6-9. An 18th century range of houses. No.6 has 19th century windows.

10. **The GLOBE INN.** A charming building dating from 1695, re-fronted in white brick early in the 19th century, with a hipped roof. It was built in what used to be the grounds of Holboroughs (see no.14 below), and was originally a late 17th century L-shaped building incorporating nos. 11 and 12. The conversion of this section to an inn was probably around 1880.

11-12. Originally part of no. 10, probably 18th century, with 20th century casements and doorway. It has a hipped roof.

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13. GOSFORD HOUSE. 17th century. Has a shafted red brick chimney stack. 'Listed Buildings' says it was once called Malting House, and some internal beams connect the house to no.14.

14. THE OLD MALTINGS. Part of a 15th century or 16th century timbered mansion, with 18th century additions and other restorations. It has excellent barge-board carvings and a good brick chimney of four diagonal shafts in a row, with a modern top. There are remains of old windows. The present house is possibly the surviving south cross wing of a former large hall house called Holboroughs. The north wing was demolished early in the 20th century and replaced by a garden in which a well was re-discovered by an owner in the 1990s. Old photographs show this wing, which contained the maltings, as a long barn-like structure running back parallel to Common Street. For the brewing process see **Malting*. Another suggestion is that the house was originally a very large square one with an internal courtyard and grounds stretching all the way back to the Common Pasture. These premises were used for the local library before the new purpose built one in High Street.

15. THE OLD BAKERY - the house beyond Common Street and directly facing the Ship stores. Built 18th century, and extended in 19th century. It was a shoemaker's before it was a bakery.

16. THE OLD VICARAGE and numbers 17-18. A house which was granted to the vicars of Clare in the 14c stood on the site of what is now 17-18 Callis Street. This house was demolished about 1910 to make way for two villas. The house now called the Old Vicarage was built on the site of an extension to the original vicarage. Its back garden runs the length of Common Street, touching many gardens on the way and leading its owners to claim they have more neighbours than anyone else. In 1882 the house 'Sigors' in High Street was given the role of vicarage, though this function has now also ceased, having passed to the house next door.

East side (the left when approaching the town centre):

CALLIS COURT (sheltered housing).

19- 21. A brick terrace built in the first part of 19th century.

22 and 23. SHIP STORES and residence. A 16th century inn and later tenements. 18th century windows on the north, and half-hipped roof. At one time an exterior staircase led to drinking rooms in the upper storey, the lower one being a shop. The inn featured a passageway through the middle, leading to a house at the back. It has an early doorway but the present shop front is 20th century. The name Ship may have been a corruption of 'sheep' (a name sometimes appearing on old records) and was an alehouse much favoured by local shepherds in former days, and may therefore link up also with **Sheepgate Lane*, which is nearby.

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24. Formerly called Prentices, records of property on this site date back at least to 1635. In earlier days the site included a barn and weaving shop. It was a blacksmith and wheelwrights in the 19th century.

26. (Formerly Calyce). The site's history goes back to the 17th century, but the present house only dates from 1937, when it resulted from the demolition of two cottages. Note the interesting barge-boards at the west end, facing the road.

27. Formerly called Callis or Callice House. A good example of an early 19th century white gault brick house with double gables in the north and south ends. The centre window has pilasters and an open pediment. The central gabled porch is 20th century. For a time it was colour-washed but it has now been restored to its original white.

28. GOSSE FORD (formerly called Brookside). A 16-17th century timber-framed and plastered house, substantially rebuilt in early 19th century. During a short period before 1820 the building is shown in the records of the Duchy of Lancaster as being two tenements. It has louvered shutters. A Tuscan portico with plain columns and a cornice projects on the front, with a 20th century door. Gabled wings and 20th century extensions project at the rear. The front of the house seems to have been shaped to match the line of the original road, giving rise to the queries raised above in the introduction to this street.

29. NORFOLKS (formerly known as St Mary's House). Its porch bears the dates 1506-1906, the first of these indicating the date of the original building, while the second gives the date of additions at the rear and other alterations. It has interesting gables. A 20th century door is set in a Tuscan portico. For a time it probably held the school, Grenville College. For the identification of this house with the former St Mary's House, see the note above in the introduction to this street.

30. THE GROVE. This 15th century house is a lovely one with a unique front of five picturesque gables, and a wing with a projecting upper storey. It was originally a hall house with two cross wings. It was divided into two storeys in the 16th century and two gables inserted between the cross wings. It was re-fronted early in the 19th century. The five window range has early Gothic pointed arched casements and the porch is early 19th century with fluted Greek Doric columns. The ground floor windowsill towards the south side of the front is the base of a former 16th century oriel window, and is carved with a huntsman, a small deer and hounds. Grove House housed a Free Grammar School (free in the sense of not having religious ties) in the 19th century, the 1851 census showing the school as then having nineteen boarders aged 7 to 15 years with a resident professor of music and a French master.

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Eli Wiffen, who bought the house in 1885, was a coachbuilder. Sheds between here and nos. 31-35 were presumably the workshop and place where a fire engine was housed in the latter part of the 19th century, see **Fire Fighting*.

31-35. Although sometimes claimed to be one large L-shaped 17th century weaver's house altered in the 18th century and 19th century, Listed Buildings shows 34-35 as a separate house, and another assertion is that part of what is now a wing to the east was originally a fill-in cottage. Numbers 32-35 face the street, and have an early 19th century shop front and a blocked corner doorway. No. 31 (at the side of the block) and the original No.32 (now incorporated in No.33) together form a wing extending to the east (the rear), with some 18th century casements. The Gosse stream which led to the street's old name 'Gosford Street' runs beneath number 33, supplying water in the cellar and presumably used in fulling and dyeing. At one time these premises were a malting.

36. A small 19th century house to fill the gap between nos. 35 and 37, with an early 19th century shop front.

37. Mid 19th century white brick house, gabled at north and south. The 20th century door has a 19th century fanlight.

CAVENDISH ROAD

The old name for this road was Puddle Lane, although the Chilton (or Clare) stream which led to that name has been bridged for many centuries. The road contains reminders of interesting history. Early in the 18th century there was a turnpike at the bridge over the Chilton stream. This bridge was formerly called **Pysenebregge*, and in the 16th century was presumably a weighbridge with tolls. Over the road from the Bell hotel there was a 15th century stonehall, a house originally faced in flint instead of plaster (see the note on house construction in the introductory notes to this section, and **Hall houses*). An old Quaker burial ground was at no.3 nearby. A fire engine was housed in a space known as Skilling's Yard from late in the 19th century (see **Fire fighting*). St Mary's barn (see under *Royal Clarence Lodge* below) used to stand on the south side (the right going out of town) just beyond the Bell Hotel, but there were few houses beyond this point then. Less romantically, the gasworks, built in 1853, were along this road. The old Baptist burial ground (see **burial grounds*) can still be seen by the small entrance to the Country Park. Higher up there was a windmill on land which had been castle grazing lands even earlier, and at one stage a chantry (see **Chantries*).

North side (the left when leaving the town):

The corner premises - see under ***20 Church Street* for house origins in this area.

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1. Presumably originally associated with 20 Church Street.

FORGE HOUSE. A glance along the side reveals the older house. John Jarvis, who owned and did much with the corner house, built a forge in this area in the 1830s, and this house is a later conversion of one of his barns. A small forge was still operating early in the 20th century.

3. Formerly two cottages. Very early 19th century. Its garden now hides the site of an old Quaker burial ground. This had been given to the Society of Friends (see **Quakers in Clare*) by Francis Waldegrave in 1695 (although it had been in use since at least 1680) and at that time contained 230 square metres. It was turned into a garden in the 18th century, and the tombstones of Giles (1680) and Frances Barnardiston (1686) were taken away. Later encroachments greatly reduced the size of the garden, which was let at £1 a year when sold in the 1920s.

ASCOT HOUSE. **Playing field and river bridge** (**Pysenebregge*). **Harp Lane**, part of the circular walk around Clare and leading to Eastfield Farm and to an office block including a police office, which was fashioned from an old barn in about 2006.

More houses of mixed ages climb the hill. **Clare Middle school** is a little way along the road. **CLARE HALL.** Just beyond the Middle School, and formerly called Hill Farm, is a pleasing 17th century farm house with an unusual gabled facade facing the road - two larger outer gables and a central small gable. It was re-fronted in brick in 19th century, and is now colour-washed pink following local tradition. The interior has a good 18th century staircase, lit by an original window. **South side (the left when approaching the town centre):** **HIGHFIELDS HOUSING ESTATE** leads to Bailey Lane and the old ***Mill Road* down to the river. **Riverbank Close.** A 1990s development. **Wall** - part of the coke oven wall of the former **Gas works*, built in 1853 **BRIDGE HOUSE** behind the old gas works wall. **Footpath** to the **Country Park*. **Old Baptist burial ground.** The first *Baptist* chapel in Clare was built here in 1805, and rebuilt in 1821. It was dismantled and its materials carried to the High Street and re-used for a new chapel there in 1860. See **Nonconformist religious groups in Clare*. **1-7 Park View** - a group of 1990s houses. **26. FLINT COTTAGE.** This colour-washed period cottage could well be the one mentioned in documentation from 1597 onwards, and associated with Horsecroft Farm which was in this locality. **32.** Perhaps a fill-in house, or an extension from 33? **33. RUSHBROOK HOUSE** (formerly Hillside). Late 18th century or early 19th century. There is a carriage entrance on the west end. **34. (SUNNY BRAE).** Built or possibly extended from an older building c.1850. **BAREHAM'S YARD 1,2,3.** A tastefully development from an old **BARN** in 2006/7 **The flint wall** which adjoins the barn was built in about 1839 in connection with a workshop to be developed there, and stands on the boundary between the

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old **Borough of Clare* and the Manor of Erbury, although Gladys Thornton suggested the borough reached as far as the river crossing. **ROYAL CLARENCE MASONIC LODGE.** This stands on the site of St Mary's barn, a possession of **St Mary's chantry*. The barn burnt down in 1826 and was replaced in 1839 by the grammar school, reusing the material from the market cross which had stood at the south of the market place and previously housed the school. When this closed in the 1870s the building was leased to various tenants and eventually the Freemasons, who bought the building for their lodge in 1879 and refronted it. **36-37. BELL VILLAS.** A pair of semi-detached houses, built late 19th century on the site of a cattle market in the yard of the Bell Inn which became redundant when the coming of the railway induced farmers to send cattle to larger markets.

CHILTON STREET. See at the end of these notes, following the entry Well Lane.

CHURCH LANE

This lane consists of a small group of almshouses to the south of the Church, near the Ancient House. References to almshouses date back to 1462. See **Almshouses*.

CHURCH STREET

In the 16th century this was known as Rotten or Ratten Row, a name which may have come from the French 'rue', perhaps dating back to when the Normans built a church here. In the 19th century the road was known as Honey Hill, and then in succession as Church Street, Queen Street, and finally Church Street again. In the mid 19th century the roads along both ends of the church were considered branches of Church Street, but the one at the west end later became part of High Street. The 16th century Rotten Row was longer than the present Church Street, running along what is now Market Hill as far as the Bear Hotel. At one time butchers lived here and the road was called 'Ye Butcherrie' in the court rolls of 1624. Around the year 1800 it was an industrial area, with two maltings and a tanyard. For the processes involved in these premises see **Malting* and **Leather*.

West side (the church side):

1-4. Part of a block with No.11 Market Hill, although no.3 is now a separate tenement. Late 17th century with 19th century red brick front. No.4 adjoins these although it has a different roof level.

AUCTIONEER'S OFFICE.

East end of the PARISH CHURCH – the Church of Saints Peter and Paul. See ***High Street* for some details, and Book IV for a full account.

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East side (the side opposite the church):

MERTON HOUSE. A mid 19th century white brick house built on the site of an 18th century malting (see **Malting*). It faces down the road. **GOTHIC HOUSE.** The wings of a white brick fronted early 19th century house enclose a structure dating back to the early 17th century. In the 18th century and 19th century this was a residence of tanners, with a tanyard (see **Leather*) in the garden. **9. (DORMERS).** An early 17th century house, divided into three in 19th century. Associated with the wool industry –see **Wool Industry in Clare*. **10 and 11.** A mid 19th century house with a shop front on a site whose records go back to 1515. The pargetted panels on the north side are 20th century. (For pargetting see Introductory Notes at the start of this section). **12-15 (and 16?).** Possibly until 1640 one 16th century or 17th century weaver's house, the biggest weaving factory in town (or two according to the Listed Buildings list) with 18th century plastered front, now divided into four dwellings. It once belonged to Clare **Chantry*, its rent paying for priests who prayed for the souls of benefactors. It was occupied in 1656 by George and Richard Crisp, saymakers and baymakers, and was the biggest such business in town (see **Wool Industry in Clare*) as is shown by their tokens there. Weaving rooms were at the rear. **16. ROSINA COTTAGE.** Originally combined with 12-15? 19th century frontage. Doors 20th century. **17-18.** A pair of early 19th century. houses with shop windows. **19 (WINTER COTTAGE) and 20.** An early 19th century red brick front conceals a 16th century house with a corner entrance to number 20, now a separate dwelling. This is one of the oldest houses in Clare in origin, one of the town's few stonehalls (see 'House construction' in the Introductory Notes to this section) owned by the castle, perhaps to place soldiers in the town to control the populace. In 1823 the yards and barns of this property covered the area bounded by Rosina Cottage in Church Street and the garden of 3 Cavendish Road. The owner in 1814 was John Jarvis, who ran a **brickworks* in a field to the north of the town. He re-fronted the house with his own distinctive bricks, and was also responsible for the two adjacent houses in Church Street. He built a forge along ***Cavendish Road*. In the late 19th century the premises were converted to a public house, the Wagon and Horses, but this closed after the 1914-1918 war. The public library was once housed here.

COMMON STREET

This leads to the present **Common* and Clare camp and is also the site of the earliest Clare common and the location of a substantial excavation, presumably for flints used in the building of the church and castle. Two fields at the end were given by Catherine of Aragon as common pasture for the cattle of the poor, an area which has been referred to as 'the common'

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since the 16th century. When these fields came into common use, the older common was no longer required for its former purpose and began being built upon in the 17th century. Several houses date back to that time, numbers **1 and 2** with their dormer windows being the most distinctive of these. Number **3**'s neat modern exterior conceals beams and other indications of a similar age in what used to be two cottages. No.**4** is a 19th century conversion of a stable block. No.**12** is 18th century, and no.**17** is 17th century although much altered in the 1980s. Other houses seem to date from the 18th century and 19th century, often modified over the years. Gardens along here were among the last parts of the old common to be turned to private use, in 1823.

HIGH STREET

This was formerly known as Heigh or High Row, and at one stage shared the name Church Street with the road on the far side of the church, the east end. Further south little lanes named Huwes Lane and Souteres Rowe connected it to the market. Two lanes still do, but unfortunately earlier history was forgotten when the names Buck Lane and Pashlers Alley were affixed in the 1990s. High Street contains a number of old houses worth seeing.

West side (the side with the pillar box - the opposite side to the church):

1. The Listed Buildings list suggests that this building, which was the post office until 2002, together with 41 Nethergate Street, is a late 15th century or early 16th century house which formed the new half of The Moon (see no.2 below). Its original connection with the latter seems proved by the beam running continuously through the two premises. Together with 41 Nethergate Street, this was converted into a shop early in the 18th century, and much altered and re-fronted in early 19th century. The section which is now 41 Nethergate Street has two early 19th century shop fronts. Over the centuries extensions to all three buildings at the rear now cover what was originally the yard. As so often in Clare, an exterior which is unassuming at first glance hides an older interior whose beams still speak of the past. The building was originally jettied but the ground floor has been extended forwards, so this feature is now concealed. A beam in one corner inside bears a truly beautiful carving of a face, with whiskers which look almost Chinese. Did such beams come from the Priory, many of whose treasures may have been scattered around Clare at its dissolution? We cannot tell. Until late in the 20th century the base of an oriel window was still in position outside the building, but this crumbled away. It pictured two lions and a shield. Letters for the local area were sorted here until earlier in that century.

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2. HALF MOON HOUSE. This 15th century building, a sales auction office until 2003 when it became an Abbeyfield House for the elderly, used to be an important inn, described in 1549 as 'Le Moone Inn', and was included in the list of lands belonging to **St Mary's Chantry*. In the 17th century the owners extended their premises by buying the house on the corner of Nethergate Street. It lost this other half when the part fronting Nethergate Street was separated from it, so the Moon became the Half Moon. It has a 17th century projecting upper storey. The house was re-roofed in that century, replacing the earlier double gabled roof. The door is 20th century. Three gables project at the rear, and an early 19th century wing contains the remains of an inn gallery, enclosed and re-faced in the 20th century. The interior has a good 18th century staircase with twisted balusters. In a paper read to the Suffolk Archaeological Society in the 19th century a suggestion was made that the half moon sign may have been derived from the crescent on the sign outside the Swan, but this sounds like a pure guess. In the 19th century coaches to London ran from the Half Moon yard.

3. SHOP (HUDGIES HARDWARE) AND HOUSE. The house is 16-17th century, reconstructed in the 19th century when shop premises were built on a yard, becoming an ironmongers in 1835, as the sign still above the shop in 2006 indicates. Until the coming of the railway much of its merchandise was made in its own workshops that had previously housed six linen looms. In the 1980s the shop, although having some interesting ancient items on view, remained much of a backwater. A more recent owner brought it really up to date and is remembered by his nickname 'Hudgies', which remained on the shop front when he left. A new owner in 2002 transformed the shop into a veritable Aladdin's cave, where anything from a single screw to – well, elephants are not on view, but.....? Hudgies Hardware has featured in the national press, was a finalist in 'Retailer of the year' awards for 2005 and won a contract to supply Cambridge University with spades, shovels and mattocks for archaeology.

A very short walk along the footpath beside the Swan inn will give a glimpse of the old town walls, a right-angled line of which exists behind and parallel to High Street and Nethergate Street. The present walls are a mixture of 19th century brick and other material: could some date back to the time the castle fell into disuse? The cross path here bypasses the town, running from the Stoke road to **Sheepgate Lane*.

4. THE SWAN INN. The present inn front is 19th century or early 20th century. Today's basic structure was probably built around 1600, but a will of 1498 said John Norfolk bequeathed to his son '*a house (sometimes misread as 'alehouse') now called Le Swan but of old called Quylters*'. The house goes back still further for there is a reference to Quylters (described as

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‘a tenement’) in a Court Roll of 1361. Another record goes back even earlier, showing one owner died ‘tempore pestilence,’ (i.e. from the Black Death) in 1349. The central chimney stack with four octagonal shafts and a modern brick capping is a fine one. The public rooms are of around the year 1600, and the interior has exposed framing, beams and joists - an impressive array easily seen by stepping inside, where many other interesting artefacts from earlier centuries will be found.

What is now used as an inn sign, possibly the oldest inn sign in England, is a carved solid block of oak about three metres long. It may have been used in connection with the earlier inn, but the arms and richness of the carving suggest its actual origin was more impressive. It seems likely that it started off as the base of an oriel window at the castle, made in the reign of Henry IV in the earlier part of the 15th century. It was covered with plaster for a long time, and only revealed again around 1800, since when it has been repainted from time to time.

The central figure is a chained swan with a crown around its neck, which was the badge of Henry IV. The coat of arms on the south end (left as we face the sign) is the Royal Arms of England incorporating the fleurs de lys of France in a form which first appeared around 1376. The arms on the north (our right) combine the Mortimers’ and the de Burghs’ arms, so indicate a member of the Mortimer/de Burgh family, a union which had come about when Edmund Mortimer married Philippa, daughter of Elizabeth de Burgh and Lionel Plantagenet, Duke of Clarence. The star in a crescent moon has often been used as a royal symbol. There is also an oak tree with two suns, and a grape vine which may link with Clare’s past fame as a wine producing area.

A detailed consideration of the sign appears in Book I, Appendix C, where it is suggested that it may relate to the marriage in 1406 of Richard of Conisbrough, Earl of Cambridge (who was of royal descent) and Anne Mortimer. The sign may have been made a few years later, and seems designed to honour their respective fathers rather than the wedding itself.

5. Two 17th century houses (note that the roofs vary, no.5 being slate and no.6 is tiled) now joined together and largely reconstructed in late 18th century or early 19th century.

6. Late 18th century or early 19th century with a two window range and early 20th century shop front and slated roof.

Numbers 7 to 13 and ‘The Jug and bottle’ premises form an interesting block associated with a 15th century mansion, Gilberts, and involving a farm including a windmill, barns, and slaughterhouse, with a gatehouse leading to lands at the rear. There are projecting upper floors and timbers and an old central chimney. Numbers **7-9** are late 18th century or early 19th

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century on land which previously belonged to the big house and perhaps include features from old wings of the earlier house. They now form a little group of shops with 19th century alterations including bay windows, and 20th century fronts. **NETHERGATE BREWERY** formed part of this group, until it moved away to be replaced by house numbers **10A & B** in 2005/6. Founded in 1986, this real-ale business has frequently won awards. After a small space **11-13** and the **Jug and Bottle** shop continue the range and are late 15th century or early 16th century houses. Behind the Jug and Bottle end of this group of buildings stood a barn which used to be a smithy. In the late 20th century Messrs Peck and Bloomfield followed the ancient craft of iron working here, making wrought iron gates, screens, candelabra, lanterns, fire baskets and household fittings. They moved to premises in Bridewell Street (since transformed into a small industrial estate) where they continued to produce decorative signs which identify and grace nearby villages.

A nearby drive leads to a group of 20th century dwellings and a 2006 development **Bloomfield Court** on the site of the former smithy, whose name it perpetuates.

14 is now the vicarage, a modern house considerably enlarged and improved in the 1990s.

15. SIGORS. This boasts perhaps the oldest surviving house name in Clare, having been mentioned in 1407. The present building is of various dates from the 16th century onwards, being much altered over this time especially in the 18th century. It was formerly a hall house with a projecting upper storey and a cross wing. The house was bought in 1714 by Joshua Brise, ancestor of the Ruggles-Brise family of Spains Hall, Finchingfield. He added the north wing. The west wing was added when it became Clare's vicarage in 1882. It remained the vicarage until 1992. It fell into some neglect but was handsomely restored as a private house in 1998. The interior has fine late 16th century or early 17th century and some 18th century panelling. The prominent colour-washed brick wall relates to an 18th century house used as servants' quarters which fell down.

16. GALLOWAY HOUSE. Built in 1854.

17-19. A range of houses which may be 16th century, and once had malting rooms. It was much altered and re-fronted with white brick in 19th century. No.19, which may be later, has a 20th century shop front. Interiors have timber-framing and no.18 has a moulded ceiling beam.

20-21. THE GUILDHALL. This is a three phased building with parts dating from the 14c. It has a projecting upper storey and a 15th century wing with crown post roof at the rear of no.20 which is generally accepted as having been the old Guildhall, the centre of Clare's religious guilds until

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about 1540. It was used as a school in 1550. Windows 19th century and door 20th century. For a fuller account see **Guildhall and Guilds in Clare*. The premises are now a doctors' surgery and health centre, so it is easy to walk in and view the old beams. A new building at the rear houses the local library, having taken over from the ancient barn which was there.

St Peter's Close, a small development of large houses reflecting part of the name of the parish church stands on a site which was previously a coal yard.

22. GRANNIE'S ATTIC. A late 18th century or early 19th century house with shop, and a later 19th century range at the rear and perhaps once an adjunct to the Guildhall.

23. CHURCH FARMHOUSE. A 15th century or 16th century mansion of a family of clothiers. It has a projecting upper storey, and oriel bays which are possibly 18th century. Ground floor bays are 20th century. The interior has moulded beams, exposed studding and remains of 16th century panelling. Some of its notable panelling, discarded in the 1920s, but recovered subsequently, may now be in the Victoria and Albert Museum. One ceiling is very similar to the late 15th century one still in the main room at the Priory. A wing extends to the rear and the farm ran on westwards from there.

The dovecote, which is visible from the drive leading to the cemetery and also from the footpath which runs along the back, is 17th century timber-framed on a brick plinth and with a tiled roof and small ridged gables to provide access for the birds. Dovecotes were often erected to cultivate birds on the way to being turned into dinners.

24. A red brick 19th century house.

BAPTIST CHURCH. Mid 19th century white gault brick building with a simple classical façade, built on part of the site of an old farmhouse and granary demolished in 1858. The church was opened in 1860, incorporating material from the previous building in ***Cavendish Road*. In the 1980s the church interior was radically changed and re-furnished, giving a large platform over the baptistery and comfortable seating. See also **Nonconformist religious groups in Clare*. **The adjoining Old Manse** dates from 1892. Its function as a manse ceased when a new house was built behind the church for that purpose.

East side (the church side):

PARISH CHURCH. This was presumably built on the site of a Saxon church, but there is no information about this. The tower is 13c in its lower stages and 14c above. The porches and adjoining south chapel are from 1380 onwards. A major reconstruction between 1460-1520 added a clerestory, west window, and aisles. The widening of the church encroached upon the porches as can best be seen in the south porch, where the truncated

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head above the doorway into the church (perhaps the head of a Green Woman - a rarity) and one of the side windows provide sure evidence of foreshortening. The faces around the doorway include several which have similarities to the Green Man. Small panels each side of the door (two metres above ground level) show the keys of St Peter, the sword of St Paul, and the Clare chevron arms. In giving the church greater height the 14c pillars were re-used by lengthening their bases. The chancel was almost completely rebuilt in 1617. The upper doors by the arch indicate the rood was of exceptional height. The east window contains scattered fragments of old glass as well as arms of benefactors. Renovation of this window in 2002-3 revealed that it contains 2667 pieces of glass, some of which date back to the 14c, some between then until the 17th century, while some are Victorian. William Dowsing did much damage here in 1643. The unusual 17th century pew-gallery near the entrance was used by the family of the Priory when it was a private house. The chantry chapel further along the south aisle probably dates from the Tudor period and contains a commonly found crowned monogram with the letters MARIA for Mary, Queen of Heaven, but with the Clare chevron inserted as part of one letter. For fuller details of the church see Book IV. Guides, photographs and other souvenirs and books are on sale in the church.

The **ANCIENT HOUSE**. This is one of the town's most pictured features, and often appears on calendars. The date now on the west gable is 1473, which may be the date of the east wing, but the house's origin was probably some time between 1350 and 1450. It is thought to have started as a medieval open hall with a two bay cross wing jettied to the High Street – possibly early commercial premises with shop windows, but this is by no means certain. The rear of this cross wing seems to have been truncated at the time of construction of the Priest's House, which faced the churchyard and now appears as the front of the building. Perhaps the open hall was demolished and replaced with a floored range in the mid to late 17th century, retaining some of the medieval sooted rafters. Perhaps about 1767 the original staircase serving the chamber was removed, a new door made into the chamber, the front door blocked up and a new staircase serving the first floors of both parts of the house was inserted. Much original woodwork remains. The house was used as a workhouse for a time in the 18th century. An early 17th century record shows the garden being let separately from the house and used for pasturing animals. It was in this garden that Samuel Brise (who let the premises as a bakery, a use which was continued between 1750 and 1900) built a billiard room in the garden, later replaced by the present lawyers' offices. The north front (which faces the church) and the west gable (facing High Street) provide outstanding examples of 17th century parquetry, although needing periodic restoration. The main pattern consists of conventionalised flowers standing out in good relief and divided

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into panels. There is also a shield bearing the chevron arms of Clare. On the north side a new door has been fitted into the original doorway with its carved spandrels. This side was the cross wing, and is worth exploring. The gable has lovely and very unusual traceried barge-boards leading up to its apex at the roof.

There are 5-light oriel bays on the ground and first floors, both with moulded sills. That of the upper window has good carvings including heraldic arms and supporting animals. Details are difficult to read, apart from apparent fleures de lys, so the imagination can run riot. Have the figures got asses' heads? And bare feet? The supporters look as if they have scales, but chain mail may be more likely although at Rutten in Belgium a Green Man dressed in ivy leaves sewn like dragon scales appears in May festivities. But perhaps a simpler explanation has to be accepted. The Landmark Trust states that the arms are those of the Hamelyn or Hamelden family (of Great Waldingfield), supported by two leaf-clad woodwoses (wild men of the woods). This family probably built the house and they may have installed a chantry priest or perhaps lived here themselves for a time.

The interior contains many old beams and woodwork including a fine ceiling, but has been much altered over the centuries to improve domestic comfort. The main hall, which probably included a small gallery at its west end, has been divided into small rooms, and a more convenient staircase installed instead of the open stairs which originally led to the upper rooms. The open smoke-hole has long since disappeared and was replaced by much later conventional fireplaces and chimneys. Early in the 20th century the house was in danger of being sold and shipped to the USA, but Mr C.W.Byford, a prominent local resident, purchased it in the 1920s and presented it to the Parish Council. In 1976 for a time it became a museum of local archaeology, geology, farming and craft tools, household items, toys and costumes. It was closed many years and then given extensive repairs. It was ultimately opened as a museum with many items of local interest and much research material made available through modern techniques, but some rooms have been left available for holiday lets.

27. WAYMAN & LONG, SOLICITORS. Early 19th century. on a plot formerly linked to the Ancient House. The doorway has a Roman Doric portico. The addition at the rear is 20th century, on the site of a one-time billiard room in the former garden of the Ancient House (see above).

Buck Lane runs through to Market Hill.

An old **store or barn** associated with a shop in Market Hill.

27A & B, a small **housing development** built in 2006 where the butcher's slaughter house once stood.

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Pashlers Alley runs through to Market Hill.

(See Pashler's Lane by Elizabeth Holdgate [Fell Beck Press, 2002] for a description of this area in the 1930s).

28-29. Built in 1830, this was a gents outfitters until 2006, recalling the wool-trade wealth of earlier centuries. It was known as Alston's in 1840. Ince's Tailors was founded here later, and its life as outfitters ended under the name of Peddar's in about 2005.

30. A group of shops, a conversion from barns belonging to the workhouse which previously stood here.

31 (1 Well Lane). BAKERY. 17th century with late 18th century or early 19th century brick front on the south and 19th century shop front with a corner entrance.

MALTING LANE (once known as, or incorporating, Mill Lane)

This road was formerly called Mill Lane, and earlier still was Mault Mill Road. It leads down to a footbridge over the mill stream. Domesday indicates that in Saxon days a water mill stood here. (See *Mills). By the early 19th century the road became known as Malting Lane, a misnomer because there was never a malting here.

It was the scene of a colourful sight in 1385. Sir Thomas Mortimer and seven other knights had seized a thief taking sanctuary in the church at the Priory, and cut off his ears. The Bishop of London ordered them to do penance by walking barefoot and bareheaded, clothed in rough brown garments, and carrying heavy candles and rich cloth of gold, down Malting Lane and over the bridge to the Priory. There they were required to lay the offerings on the altar as an act to absolve them from their sin. More details of this story will be found in Book III, Clare Priory.

South side (the right when going towards the park):

Numbers 1 and 2 Broadway together probably formed one house, Broadway, a weaver's, and is basically 15th century, altered in the 18th century and later. A stream ran under the property, with access for use when fulling and dyeing. In the 18th century it was for a time part of the Bull Inn, 1 Nethergate Street. Later the same century it was divided into two. This group has nice pargetting.

1-5 Malting Lane. A row of mid 19th century brick cottages, built in the yard of the Bull inn. There were six but no.6 was demolished.

ANTIQUES WAREHOUSE. This used to be Byford's mill, sometimes known as 'the grist mill', mostly built in 1908 but with the southern end added a little later. A guide book written at the time says that when houses were pulled down and foundations being dug for the mill, a large number of

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old skulls and other bones were found - the author asserting they were 'probably those of victims of some great battle of former times, being situated close to the castle' (but we do not know of any such battles. At a guess, could they have dated back to the time when there were executions at the castle?) The workmen displayed these bones irreverently. The then owner of the priory objected. Imagine his surprise when a large parcel was delivered to the house and proved to be the bones, which the workmen had sent him so that he could give them the better treatment he apparently wished! The mill produced animal fodder by grinding barley, rye etc, its mechanism being driven by gas produced at the north end of the premises. A large opening by the present small entrance enabled lorries to enter and load. It is now a commercial business displaying items from a large number of antiques dealers, which makes it worth exploring as a kind of museum.

9 and 11. Formerly three but now two houses in a pleasant position leading down to the mill stream, this was once a row of six lath and plaster cottages.

To the left at the bottom of Malting Lane the Country Park can be entered through the car park or by crossing the small footbridge and turning left across the former railway bridge.

Other short walks can be taken from this point after crossing the little footbridge over the mill stream:-

Turn right and walk along the water's edge (or use the wider disused railway track a few yards higher) to the **Iron bridge* and the Ashen Road. Turn left along the road for a short distance to the main entrance to the Priory grounds and walk through them back to the starting point. For details of the Priory, see under **Priory* in Book I.

Turn right along the former railway track, and drop down almost immediately to the left where the Priory grounds can be entered by a small gate and the last walk can be followed in the reverse direction.

Bear left, ignore the former railway bridge but take the path to the left along the further side of the mill stream (the opposite side from the main part of the Country Park). The River Stour is the smaller stream on your right, soon to wind away over the meadows. Proceed along the path to and beyond the bridge over the weir, with its view of the mill pond, followed by a view of Mill House across the stream as you walk along a meadow. Soon turn left through a turnstile, pass the remains of a water mill, then pass Mill House and walk along Mill Road, cross the bridge over the former railway track, and soon drop left again for the path back into the Country Park.

North side.

The bungalow here, built in 1970, stands on the site of former houses which were associated with the Boar and Griffin in Market Hill.

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MARKET HILL.

There are buildings from different ages in Market Hill, running from the Elizabethan period through to interesting examples from the early 19th century, when the west side was largely rebuilt. The 19th century buildings include the present (in 2003) butcher's shop (built about 1800 and continuously used for this trade since that date), the greengrocer next door (on the site of the old Angel inn), and the buildings to the south of the butcher's shop (dating from about 1840 and 1860 and most of which are on the sites of the old **Workhouse* and old Crown inn). One feature is of special interest, although sadly it cannot be seen because it lies below the manhole cover in front of number 4. It is described below. The war memorial dates from October 1921 and is on the spot where 37 Clare Territorials assembled in 1914 to form G Company of the 5th Suffolks. The adjoining rest area and seat mark the commemoration of the Millennium in the year 2000. See ** the Market in Clare* in Book I for an account of changes in the layout here over the centuries.

West side (the side opposite the Town Hall):

The house on the corner leading to Nethergate Street and the adjacent ones, are now part of **Well Lane**.

1. CLARE HOUSE (previously BEVERLEY HOUSE). A mid 19th century grey brick house with 20th century windows on the ground floor and a carriage entrance at the south end. Numbers 1 and 2 were the site of the White Hart Inn and later of the **Workhouse*. No.1 became a **Temperance hotel* in 1869.

2. (Previously BRUNDON). A mid 19th century brick house, now colour washed, with a small 19th century shop front, probably incorporating an earlier structure.

3. An early 19th century house with what was probably originally a shop window. The site of the former workhouse yard.

4. The shop which is an integral part of domestic premises to the south of the lane through to High Street (**Pashler's Lane**) hides important vestiges of one of the town's oldest features. The present corner shop front is 19th century and the interior has remains of exposed timber-framing and a good moulded beam with running-leaf ornamentation. However, it is basically a late 18th century or early 19th century house which when reconstructed incorporated a 15th century building. Below the shop, entered by a steep stair, is a splendid vaulted cellar of the 14c or 15th century with a groined roof, comparable to a church crypt. One visiting historian described it as 'by far the best in the county'. The cellar is six metres square and the vaulting, which springs from attached shafts in the corners and centres of the side

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walls, is supported by a central octagonal pillar which has a moulded capital and eight semi-circular pilasters. The base of the pillar is buried beneath the floor owing to the fact that the ground level is now higher than it was originally. In the east wall is a large pointed arch and a flight of stairs up to Market Hill. Some say this is a unique example of an underground store room for merchandise. Alternatively it has been described as an undercroft chapel, perhaps a Morrow Mass Chapel. (A Morrow Mass was the first mass of the day). This interesting relic of the past shows that the market place, which once extended right across to what is now the High Street, was built over at quite an early period.

5. TWO SHOPS. Early 19th century house, with later shop front and corner entrance inserted. One has been a butcher's since 1789.

6. HOUSE and SHOP. Late 18th century or early 19th century with 19th century shop front, on the site of the old Angel inn. The Angel had ceased to be an inn by 1650.

7-8. SHOPS (including Co-op). A terrace of grey brick houses and shops, originally one tenement, sometimes four, now two, built c.1860-1870 by the third generation of the Goody family, who had a grocery store here from 1786 to 1900 and who were followed by the Metcalfes. No.7 has a 20th century window. The present range of buildings has taken the place of a 17th century wholesale business which had an inn and brewery attached. The nearby ***ALMSHOUSES** come into Church Lane.

North side (backing towards the church):

The buildings on this side have been subject to many changes over the centuries, making an interesting roof line.

9. TWO SHOPS. A late 16th century or early 17th century house with double gables, now with 20th century shop fronts. At the rear a 16th century range extends to the north, originally a separate house. Door 20th century with 19th century doorcase.

AUCTION ROOMS at the rear.

10. A late 16th century or early 17th century house, the surviving wing of a larger building, with a projecting gable on the front, and 20th century shop front and 1st floor window. When the shop was let to a watch maker by the church, his rent was covered by an agreement to wind the church clock.

11. TWO SHOPS. Originally a 17th century house, much altered in 20th century, including early 20th century shop front. There are impressive beams. This house used to be part of a single building, the other part being round the corner in Church Street including what is now 3 Church Street with its 19th century red brick front. When this book was first written older

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residents still remembered it as a butcher's shop with a flap folding down as a counter, and purchases being made across this from outside.

East side (the Bell Hotel and Town Hall side):

12. BELL HOTEL. This seems always to have been an alehouse or an inn, and has celebrated its 400th anniversary. It has been suggested that the hotel's present reception area was the original small alehouse site. It was extensively altered to become the Green Dragon Inn around 1580. Records show town officials having dinner there in 1611 at a cost of eleven shillings. It was greatly expanded to a post house in the 1750s when the beautiful interior carved beams including ornately carved ceilings, some with folded leaf ornamentation, were added. These are similar to the beams in the Priory and The Grove, 30 Callis Street. The Green Dragon was a wholesale trading house with brew house and bar, and at the beginning of the 19th century it specialised in chandlery - oil, ropes and candles which were made on the premises. It was a post house, providing changes of horses, and gigs to rent to travellers, and remained an important posting house until the mid 1920s. Barns and yards at the rear were used for the cattle market in the mid 1800s, but the site was redeveloped as the 'Bell Villas' later in the century.

In about 1825 it was enlarged and modernised and an adjoining small shop incorporated with the original building. When the outside timbers were exposed in a much later period the join became clearly visible from the outside. The pitch of the roof can be seen to have been adjusted to give a better height to the bedrooms. Parts of the original building can be seen in the long irregular wall fronting the Cavendish road, where there is a low, nicely-carved, beam. The 18th century stables were converted to bedrooms in the 1970s giving the Bell twenty three rooms, all with period furniture. Some parts of the timber-work on the west front are of modern origin, presumably to help give the feel of the period. Doorways are 19th century and 20th century.

The alterations over the years did not please everybody. A certain highwayman did not seem to like the conversion of the old stables, for it is said his ghost sometimes haunts them. The ghost of an old woman is alleged to visit a cottage incorporated in the hotel in the 1960s, and it is claimed that on rare occasions the ghost of an old man walks from the kitchen to the restaurant. A story with perhaps more truth, and, one could say, more body, was related in the Suffolk Free Press in January 1903. A cow escaped from its drover, turned into the hotel yard, and entered the back door. It walked along one passage and turned into the narrow passage leading to the smoke room, the door of which was closed in its face. It tried to enter the bar, but that door was also shut. It did manage, however, to get into the commercial room, where it studied its reflection in a mirror over the fireplace before walking into the street again.

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13. HOPE COTTAGE. 1823, with 20th century windows.

14. An 1880 alteration on the site of a 16th century mansion, with 20th century window.

15-16. Probably originally one late 16th century or early 17th century blacksmith's house, altered early in 19th century. No.16 was most likely the cross wing of the original house. No.15 has a 19th century shop window.

17. SHOP AND HOUSE. An older house at the back with early 19th century front premises, for long a smithy, with a shop window, and a 20th century glazed double door at the corner. Old residents at the time this book was first written remember the time between the two wars when this was a saddlery, selling harnesses and leatherwork.

TOWN HALL. This is on the site of stables of the **Angel Inn*, which was opposite. A Corn Exchange measuring twenty by twelve metres was built here by James Fenner in 1838, when corn brought a new era of prosperity to Clare, perhaps part of the general increase in this industry which may have been helped by the fact that the wars with France between 1793-1815 disrupted food supplies from abroad. The Exchange was erected near the site of the market cross, which was demolished that year. Market crosses on this spot went back a long way, for an earlier one was said to have been in need of repair in the 16th century, and was replaced then – see **the Market in Clare*. In 1913 the Corn Exchange was reconstructed as a Town Hall, including the replacement of the glass roof with tiles, to commemorate the coronation of King George V in 1911. Major alterations and refurbishment in 1988 have made it into an attractive venue for all kinds of occasions. It is a building of which a little town can be proud, with a main hall able to seat 220 for concerts, or 120 for dining, a stage of nearly ninety square metres, and a kitchen and bar.

18 and 19. LLOYD'S BANK BUILDING. A 19th century 3-storey white brick building with 20th century bank frontage. **18** is now in use as a private house and office. **19**, a single storey annexe, continues the bank facilities.

20. THE OLD BEAR AND CROWN HOTEL - at the corner of Station Road. The Suffolk Historic Buildings Group state this is one of the most important buildings in Clare. Formerly the Bear and Crown inn, sometimes known just as the Bear, and earlier as New Hall, this is a 16th century double gabled house built on the site of the bailey barn and wood yard, and much altered early in the 19th century when it was re-fronted. It has much history, unobtrusively hinted at by the little figures in the two old corner posts high up at the front of the building. It was originally a trading house, probably for woollen goods. A claim has been made that it was once the town's Woolhall, but neither the deeds of the house nor other records confirm this, so at best the claim must be reckoned to be an unsubstantiated

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tradition. It used to be called Newhall, under which name the establishment is known to have existed in 1547. For a time it was a private hotel, then business premises, and in 1998 was restored for private residential use. It comprised a hall, the central truss with crown post of which survives, and two cross wings which originally had projecting upper storeys and whose dragon beams survive on the inside. The spandrels and moulded arch of the original carriage entrance, with beautifully carved and painted green dragons, have been re-set inside the hall of the present building. The interior has some moulded ceiling beams and exposed timber framing. Regarding the carvings, a paper read by 'W.S.W.' to the Suffolk Institute of Archaeology June 14th 1849 (presumably before the removal of some beams, although a few of the figures mentioned are still visible on the exterior) says:- *'In front of the Bear are some carvings on a small scale. They are all below the overhanging part of the chamber. On a bracket which supports this at the north end there is what I think must have been meant for a falcon having the head of a maiden with flowing hair, one of the badges of the House of York; and on the uprights of the window are a falcon and a dragon, which, if latter were black, were also badges of the same family; but if the dragon was red, it must be referred to Henry VII, and the figures may have been executed in his reign, when, by his marriage with Elizabeth of York, the two rival houses had become united; and this appears the more likely as a piece of ornamental carving, resembling the Tudor flower moulding, occurs on the above-mentioned bracket. There are some other subjects, which I think are a dragon of a different shape, and some lions, and a human head with flowing hair between two lions; but of these I am not at present prepared to offer any explanation'.*

MILL ROAD

(Reached by going along the Cavendish road and then through Highfield)

MILL HOUSE. An early to mid 19th century white brick house. For the mill which used to stand nearby see **Mills*.

NETHERGATE STREET and ASHEN ROAD

This was originally known as The Nethergate, presumably coming from the Old English 'nither geat', meaning 'lower street' (but see the Introductory Notes at the beginning of this section for further notes regarding the name 'Nethergate'). It is probable that the early settlement of Clare was principally in this area, near the River Stour, and that people moved northwards as the Priory came into possession of more land. The road has perhaps the greatest collection of interesting houses in Clare, and forms a lovely approach to the town when coming from Stoke by Clare, especially

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when the trees are covered with blossom. Two much restored 16th century houses on the right hand side in Stoke Road and a third in Nethergate Street just beyond the Ashen Road junction make Clare's historical character immediately recognisable, and subsequent 16th century and 17th century houses and chimneys and a typical Georgian red brick house complement the scene.

South-east side (the left side when leaving town):

1. BROADWAY HOUSE with shop. Despite bearing this name, this is not the original Broadway house, which was in Malting Lane and is now known as **1 and 2 Broadway, Malting Lane*. The confusion probably arose because when the council wanted to add a defining label 'Broadway' they fixed it to 1 Nethergate Street instead of the adjoining premises, and the name has stuck. 1 Nethergate Street was the Bull Inn in the 17th century and became a residence again by 1800. The doorway, approached by steps, has a 19th century doorcase.

2. TUDOR COTTAGE. Early 19th century.

3A and 3B and BOAT HOUSE MEWS. These houses, built in 2005/6, are on the site of a car repairs garage. At least from the 1850s the name of Deeks was associated with coach building here. Early in the 20th century the Deeks Brothers were employing many craftsmen in this work, and supplied the Bell Hotel with wagonettes which could be hired out.

4. ROCHFORD. Late 18th century or early 19th century.

5. CLARENCE HOUSE. Early 19th century red brick house with white brick front, three bays and a central doorway with Tuscan columns.

6. MEDINA HOUSE (previously CLEVELAND HOUSE). Late 18th century or early 19th century. The stucco doorcase has pilasters of acanthus leaf ornamentation on the capitals.

7. WAYSIDE HOUSE. This used to be two villas but was reconstructed as one house in the 1860s by the postmaster, who took the opportunity to add a lath and plaster extension to the rear of the premises. Although the change made one front door superfluous, evidence of it remains identifiable, making an interesting feature.

8. NETHERGATE. For the greater part of the 17th century this Tudor house was the home of the Crosse family, wealthy clothiers, wool merchants and cloth workers – the largest weaving firm in the town in and after 1660. They employed many local people as weavers, dyers, and spinners at the height of their prosperity in the middle of the 17th century. See **Wool Industry in Clare*. As seen today it is an interesting example of domestic architecture, described in *Country Life* as being 'in the Transitional Classic

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style, a twin brother of the famous Paycocke's at Coggeshall'. See **Hall Houses*. (For hall houses in general see also 'An Historical Atlas of Suffolk' sections 59, 61 and 62). In 1518 Thomas Paycocke of Clare left £40 for 'the fowle ways between Clare and Belchamp and Ovington'.

It was probably built early in the 1490s. The two side wings are slightly lower than the centre, and their projecting upper storeys have splendid bressumers carved with running-leaf ornamentation. The house was partly rebuilt on a larger scale in the 17th century, the front being altered, the roof of the central part (the hall) raised, and two dormer windows built. Francis Crosse junior carried out some alterations in 1644, while the raising of the roof giving the differing roof heights probably came in 1699.

The interior was much altered at the same time, including the addition of a fine oak Caroline staircase with turned balusters and carved posts at the side of the hall. The other staircase is of the William and Mary period. There are moulded beams and ceiling joists, some 17th century panelling on the ground floor, and 18th century panelling on the first floor. Some of the fine timberwork inside is of the 15th century. The great oak board spanning the open fireplace in the hall, with its two carved rows of battlements similar to those in Clare church, may originally have been a beam in the castle? The suggestion has been made that the builders of this house, as of others in Clare, may have also used timber that had come from the Priory at the time of its dissolution.

The wood doorcase with pilasters is late 17th century. The fine 17th century style decorative chimney shafts with octagonal shafts, spur caps, and moulded bases, were built in the early 20th century to take the place of former ones, and sit attractively on the tiled roof.

At the rear there are five short gabled wings and a long wing extending to the south-east, with exposed timber-framing. A dormer carries the date 1644 and the initials FCE (standing for Francis Crosse and his wife Elizabeth). A lead rain waterhead bears the date 1760 and has the initials A over DM, indicating the name Maynard. Originally there were two long wings at the rear but one burned down in 1900 and was partly rebuilt.

For a period in 19th century the house was used as a school, but around 1862 a newly appointed headmaster decided that a move to the Priory would mean more suitable premises for the students.

In the 1960s Nethergate was a hotel, reputed to serve excellent meals.

THE CLOTH HOUSE is the apt name now given to the wing on the left of Nethergate, for it was probably the weaving shed in earlier years, although now shortened from its original length. A document of 1700 shows that the garden, running as far as an ash tree at the riverside, used to be the taynter's yard where the cloth was stretched. See **the Wool industry in Clare*.

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9. WHITE HOUSE. Early 18th century. The doorcase has Tuscan columns. Three gabled wings project at the rear, and a stable wing extends to the rear at the north end, gabled on the front and attached to the main block.

The open land between the White House and Thornton House is the site of earlier houses which were changed to a pasture and lawn by an 18th century owner of the Cliftons, across the road.

10. THORNTON HOUSE (previously VERANDAH HOUSE, but fittingly re-named to perpetuate the name of the author of the 1928 book 'A History of Clare', who lived here). This house, at the junction with Ashen Road, and which has an upper projecting storey along the whole frontage, is probably of the 16th century, but has been much altered since, including the insertion of its interesting series of early 19th century pointed windows. The house was lengthened c.1800, and the barge-boards removed from the old to the new gable end. The gable on the town side, just visible when the hedging is not too thick, has carved 16th century barge-boards, tie beam and curved braces, with folded-leaf ornamentation. The interior has moulded ceiling beams and joists and an early 19th century staircase. It was originally a farmhouse but was acquired by the Priory, so might at some time have been an outer guest house or an almonry of that establishment, the entrance to the grounds of which was just round the corner in Ashen Road. In the 1750s it was the Ruggles-Brise family's farm bailiff's house.

Nethergate Street changes to Stoke Road at this point – see below for the other side of Nethergate Street.

The circular walk around the edges of Clare in both directions may be joined here.

A short diversion along the ASHEN ROAD will permit a look at interesting features:-

The millstream and River Stour separate here. **KEEPER'S COTTAGE**, formerly the house of the keeper of the level crossing gates, with its garden fronting the River Stour, and its garden pool. The route of the old Railway can be seen here, running to Clare Station and Sudbury one way and Haverhill the other – see **Railway and station*. The old ***IRON BRIDGE** over the mill stream. From the waterside footpath an inscription '1813' can be seen, indicating this to be one of the earliest of cast iron bridges, the first of which was only 34 years earlier. **Snowdrops** then daffodils in vast numbers can be seen in gardens behind Nethergate Street in winter. The main entrance to **THE PRIORY** lies along here. Although the walk to reach it passes through Essex, the stay in that county is very brief because Suffolk is re-entered as soon as the bridge along the Priory drive is crossed. A very attractive cottage stands at the start of a private track through to the **CLARE**

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PRIORY FARMHOUSE, now a private dwelling house, originally mid to late 16th century but with extensions made early 19th century and in the mid 1960s, though retaining its interior beams. The book *Pashler's Alley* (see Bibliography) describes how milk was brought from here in churns on a cart to sell to people of Clare waiting on their doorsteps with jugs. For details of the Priory see under **Priory* in Book I, and Book III for a full account. There are glimpses of **outlying houses** across the fields.

NETHERGATE STREET continued

North-west side (the left side when approaching the town centre):

11. CLIFTONS. A lovely house still retaining some Tudor features, usually said to be 16th century. The wings incorporate a 17th century cottage and coach house. The house was extensively altered about 1760 when it was given a new front and extension at the rear. In that century the house was in the possession of a branch of the prominent Ruggles-Brise family. Earlier residents, the Cliftons family, had supported the king in the Civil War, and were given manorial rights by Charles II after the restoration of the monarchy.

The fine cut and moulded red brick chimney stack on the ridge of the roof is a very decorative feature, originally of the early 16th century although renewed in recent years. This has four highly ornamental shafts with star tops and spur caps on a moulded base, which the present slated roof sets off. A bye-law in 1614 demanded that chimneys be built in brick and be four and a half feet (one and a half metres) above the roof of the house, on pain of a £5 fine. Such regulations were to combat the risk of fire, but were frequently disregarded: chimneys were still being made of clay in 1719, for fines of 10s were recorded then, and offenders given three months to rectify matters. This chimney stack at Cliftons has interesting small horse's head ornamentations at its foot. Another Tudor chimney stack, with two circular shafts with moulded caps and bases, lies more to the rear of the house. The original Tudor roof continued to exist in what became lofts, then being covered by a Georgian roof bearing the date 1824 on some of its timbers.

The main door has a wood doorcase with plain Tuscan columns. The interior has fine Jacobean features - one room in particular being spectacular with its over mantel and panelling - and there is also some late Georgian work. Some of the beams are obviously older, because they were turned and re-used when installed here in Tudor days, so had been used somewhere previously. Some, in particular in what used to be domestic quarters, are too ornate to have been first sited there, raising the possibility that they, perhaps like some in other buildings, were acquired from the Priory when that was dissolved. Other beams bear names as well as dates, including that of the Deeks - a name mentioned under Boat House Mews near the start of these

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notes on Nethergate Street. There are interesting remains of an old wall-painting in one room. The 17th century wing at the rear makes a T-shaped plan for the whole.

The premises have been amply restored following a horrendous fire in 2001 but that fire may have affected some of the woodwork mentioned above.

TWO FORMER BARNs stand at the rear of Cliftons, both now converted to houses. These were presumably part of a working farmyard and have been variously dated between 16th century and early 18th century. The further, tiled, one was a barley barn with three bays, at some stage weather boarded. It now has three storeys, and includes a galleried reception hall with massive exposed oak timbering and stone corbels, and a hand built staircase. The nearer, thatched, one, was converted to a house in 1995-6. It was one of the finest cart sheds in Suffolk, and had seven bays. It was open-sided, and an aisle was created on one side by bringing the roof down lower, which led to there being more space behind the main posts on that side.

There was a second storey at one end, providing storage space above sheds. The timbers are heavy and many of them bear assembly marks, or signs of having been first used elsewhere. One is carved on at least three sides with praying figures under crocketed canopies, and was presumably brought from elsewhere - perhaps (a pure guess) the priory? (For an interesting article on old barns see section 60 of *An Historical Atlas of Suffolk* listed in the bibliography).

13. OLD COURT. This house with red brick on the sides and a white brick front was built in 1848 and is of the Regency style, with a stucco Roman Doric pillared portico. It was the police station and court, with petty sessions held monthly, but in 1968 a new small police station was built to the north of the town – which has now in its turn become a private house. In 2003 there were plans for a new police station close to the playing fields. Some local residents at the time this was first written still remembered when Clare was served by two constables, a sergeant, an inspector, and a superintendent who rode around in a horse and trap - in contrast to today's occasional visit from a constable or traffic warden. Did the town need all these to fight crime in those days? Not necessarily, for two policemen were occupied in traffic control at Clare's notorious blind corners at the Bell and Well Lane. In 1850 the superintendent had the unhappy name of Oliver Death. See also **Courts in Clare*.

14. Probably mid 19th century.

15. NETHERIDGE. An impressive house mainly built between 1450 and 1500 but in part dating back to the 14c and with 16th century and 17th century alterations and additions. This house provides a good example of how such premises originated and were later altered, so I have included

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more details - kindly supplied by the owner - to illustrate the kind of change which doubtless happened also to other houses in the town.

The roof was originally thatched but later changed to Tudor tiles. Its box-frame is made of split trunks of oak trees with branches lopped, together with cut wood supports. Some of the debris from the original thatch was found where it had been left inside the frame. The house stands at right-angles to the street with two gabled wings set back at the north-east end. It was originally a hall house consisting of a hall (the main living room) whose original frame remains and one or two small service rooms adjoining, used for the storage of household utensils and supplies and with another room above them. Access from the hall to the service rooms was through a cross passage, evidence of which can still be seen. The main hall survives intact, although after 1500 it was modernised in the way common at the time by the insertion of a ceiling, so that it now forms a normal two-storey block. At the same time a large brick chimney-stack was built against one side wall to take the smoke which previously had just drifted out through a louvered aperture in the roof. The original crown post roof structure remains over this part of the house, and most of it can be seen. There is a fine heavily timbered ceiling. The house was extended in the early 16th century, and a new parlour-wing replaced the medieval service area. This wing still consists of one large ground floor room, though the room above it has been altered. The wing was originally jettied along one side, but was later under-built. In the late 17th century a further block made of flint, brick fragments and conglomerate stone was added at the side of the parlour. At the northeast is some exposed close spaced studding. The block to the southwest was rebuilt in the 20th century.

The exterior at the front is heavily pargetted, an early 20th century renovation having been carried out to the old, basically floral, pattern (here perhaps symbolising the Tree of Life) and by a similar method - the more unusual raised work. The design was modelled freehand with the fingers, aided by a few small tools and simple impressed moulds for the circles. A mixture of lime, sand, and cow dung, with animal hair incorporated as a binder and animal fat as a further protection against moisture, was used in the process. See also the item *Pargetting* in the Explanatory Notes at the start of this Book II.

Over the years the whole set of premises was sometimes divided into a number of tenements and on occasion parts were used as trade premises including a wheelwright's workshop and a bakery. Ground to the rear has been used as a timber yard. At one time in the 19th century there were thirteen separate tenements, including buildings on what had been the timber yard.

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For general points on old houses see the introductory notes in this book, and the note **Hall Houses* in Book I.

17. THE RED HOUSE. A typical 18th century Georgian house with a red brick front built on to an earlier timber-framed L-shaped building at the rear, probably 17th century. The central doorway, approached by stone steps, has a doorcase with Tuscan attached columns. In 1871 this housed a girls' school with 16 boarders.

18. A small late 17th century or 18th century house.

19. THE CLARE HOTEL. Built in 1866 after a fire had destroyed the 18th century house here, this became an inn in the late 19th century and is now a very picturesque hotel, usually surrounded with masses of flowers. Until 1993 it was called the Seafarer Hotel, while earlier it had borne the more traditional name Rose and Crown. See **Fire fighting* for an account of a fire appliance used in a fire here.

20. RICHMOND HOUSE. A late 16th century house re-fronted in the 18th century. An impressive chimney sports two decorative small horse heads at its base.

21 and 22 (ORCHARD HOUSE). These two once formed a single 17th century house, re-fronted in 19th century. It was one of the town's big trading establishments.

23. A 17th century house, much altered in early 19th century when it was refronted. The carriage entrance to the yard remains. The house's central door has a wood Doric portico, and its fine red brick Tudor chimney stack with two octagonal shafts with moulded bases has a small horse's head ornamentation at the base.

24-26. A range of 17th century or earlier cottages, re-fronted in the early 19th century.

27-32. A terrace of plain red brick houses built in 19th century on the site of a 16th century house.

33-34. BARTON COTTAGE and WINIFRED'S. Two semi-detached houses, with a tablet 'Rose Villas, RM 1903'.

STONE HALL. A stone tablet high on the wall records that this stands on the site of a medieval stone (that is, faced with flint) hall, which was rare in an age when buildings were usually faced with plaster. It is the earliest named house in the Ministers' Accounts (which, of course, does not necessarily mean it was the oldest house around) and is documented as far back as 1309, when it was called 'Le Stoonhalle.' In 1367-8, when Lionel of Clarence granted the tenement to his yeoman, it comprised four rooms under one roof and a kitchen. There is now no trace of this old building. The present house has a 16th century frame, but was reconstructed in 1937

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although retaining a few features of interest including the doorway and a casement with lattice leaded lights. A look along the sides is worthwhile. At the rear, irregular 14c brickwork can be seen at the bottom of the chimney stack - a reminder that chimneys replaced the original 'hole in the roof' which was the only way smoke from fires could escape in the older houses. There is also 16th century timber work at the rear. During the 20th century the premises were used as the Rural District Council offices and an Institute and parish reading rooms, and are now business premises.

THE UNITED REFORMED CHURCH. This stands back from the road, along a path. There have been churches on the site since about 1690. The present church with vestries and a Sunday school room attached was built in 1841, at a cost of £700. Its opening was celebrated by a dinner at the Half Moon Inn at 2s.6d per head, attended by forty-one diners - the minister being allowed in free. A separate schoolroom was built alongside the church in 1926. In 1984 dwindling numbers led to the closing of the church building, but services continued in the adjacent hall. After some years of disuse of the church building itself, during which services were held in the school room, a re-opening celebration in 1991 crowned the strenuous efforts by a few people over five years to repair and restore it, making it again an excellent example of a building of its period. An ancient graveyard, which had over 200 burials, adjoins the buildings. This continues under part of the present building, and a later note in the burial register comments '*there are several bodies buried under the pews*'. A small square stone in the church floor is further expounded by a memorial above concerning the Rev. Thomas Giles, who died while in the act of preaching on November 25th 1861, an event very appropriately marked by a reference to Genesis 5.24 '*And he was not, for God took him*'. See also **Nonconformist Religious Groups in Clare*.

37. This building has a Green Man set in the wall. Although this example is modern it provides an interesting reminder of older representations of this figure. For some details of his meaning see **Green Man* and article in Book IV (Clare parish church).

37a and 38. A record from 1710 refers to a pair of cottages here. 38 now has modern pargetting depicting flowers in two large panels on the right-hand end, while on the front is a scene of a man hoping to shoot a pheasant, his two dogs, another bird passing overhead, with Clare castle keep in the background.

39. 39a and 40, a row of pink cottages which originally formed one 17th century building. It has four gabled dormer windows.

41 and the shop on the corner. This was at one time linked with the shop (former post office) and other buildings round the corner. See ***1 High Street*, where more detail is given.

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SHEEPGATE LANE

This ancient cart track leads off Bridewell Street and provides a short rural walk to the Clare Heights housing estate and a longer walk around **the Common* and the edge of Clare. See paragraph **Sheepgate Lane* in Book I.

STATION ROAD

So named (of course!) because it gave access to the railway station in what is now the **Country Park*. The earlier name was Castle Walk, and the ancient road here used to continue through the outer bailey (now part of the Country Park) to reach the main entrance to the castle by a drawbridge. It is difficult now to imagine how busy this road must sometimes have been in earlier centuries, as described in the Additional Note on Elizabeth de Burgh in Book I Appendix B.

North side (the left when approaching the Country Park):

1-2. Cottages built in the then garden of the Bear and Crown in the 1870s.

A ditch used to run between numbers 2 and 3, marking the original bailey of the castle. This landmark disappeared in 1830, when this end of the bailey was sold to the owners of Market Hill properties, a speculation which bankrupted the owner of the Bear.

3-7. A terrace of red brick houses built in 1880 on land which was previously part of the bailey.

FIRE STATION. The present fire station was built and opened in 1954, although there have been fire appliances in Clare for at least 200 years. See **Fire Fighting*.

TOILETS (inside park entrance).

Opposite is the **SOCIAL CLUB** - ex-servicemen and working men, but now open to anybody. A working men's club has existed in Clare since at least 1912.

South side (the left when returning to the town centre):

8-9. Built in 1849 as a pair of houses intended for workmen by the then owner of the Priory, these have small gables with shaped barge-boards. A plaque says 'Model cottages, 1849.' There are small side wings, and an adjoining white brick block at the rear also has shaped barge-boards.

10. A large residence on the site of three very old cottages. A path which used to be here led to the Quaker Meeting House which stood behind.

-, 13. 15. A terrace of three houses built in brick in 1840 and more typical of the workmen's cottages at the time. An interesting feature is that the bricks are used on their sides, forming an early kind of cavity wall dubbed the 'rat-trap bond'.

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STOKE ROAD

The left side, going out of town.

STOUR HOUSE. An early 15th century thatched farmhouse whose projecting upper storey has an attractive bressumer carved with vine ornamentation facing the road, and exposed timber-framing. The house was extended at the northeast end, probably in 17th century, and there is a wing at the rear. The windows are 18th century or early 19th century. The interior has exposed framing and moulded beams.

RIVERSIDE. A much restored early 16th century farmhouse, with projecting upper storey. An extension was added at the southeast end in 17th century. There are windows from the 18-19th century and 20th century. The interior has exposed framing and striking moulded and carved beams of an ornate nature. In the grounds was an 18th century hop kiln, which served the town's several maltings. (For this process see **Malting*). At one time it may have been seven tenements. In the 18th century it was let to the parish for a time, and used by them as a workhouse.

Further along a lane leads to a small golf links and **DANUM LAKE HOUSE.** In this area a house **DANEUM HOLT** was at one time a country club. It was given this name in the hope of attracting a railway halt there.

Continuing along Stoke Road:-

DANUM HOUSE. A conversion from a pub named The Castle built in 1896.

1 and 2 THE MILLERS. In 1883 it was probably one of these houses which the owner, Richard Linsell, a prominent cricketer, made into a pub the Cricketers' Arms, later re-named the Miller's Arms. For a story concerning the premises see **the Cricketers'*.

Further still is

HALFWAY HOUSE FARMHOUSE. A 16th century house renovated in 20th century. The central red brick chimney stack has diagonal shafts on a rectangular base. The interior has exposed timber-framing.

Returning towards Clare,

modern houses include **Westfields estate, Lutus Close** and **The Granary** (1997), a name which recalls earlier premises on this site.

WELL LANE

This is the name of the continuation of Market Hill round the corner and towards Nethergate Street. Its name recalls the common well which used to be near the market cross here. There were other wells around the town in past centuries, of course, but this one was very important and records show that in the 17th century nine local inhabitants were held personally

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responsible for its upkeep. There are some large 18th century houses here which have often been used as shops.

North side (from the bakery round into Market Hill):

Some houses working round the corner into Market Hill were numbered as being in Market Hill on some lists, but have now been re-numbered as part of Well Lane:-

1. BAKERY. See 31 High Street.

2 and 3. A 17th century house with a 20th century shop front, now two tenements. The interior has exposed timber-framing.

4-7. A grey gault brick building dating from 1840, with 19th century shop fronts, doors on each road, and a double door (now closed) with fluted Doric columns on the splayed corner. This is the site of the old **Crown Inn* which was turned into three workmen's tenements by the early 18th century and demolished in 1840.

The next houses, beginning with Clare House, are numbered in Market Hill.

South side (from the Station Road corner):

MOOTHALL, other premises, and SADDLERS all stand on parts of the site of an ancient dwelling house which was taken over and used as the town's Moothall from at least the 15th century. For detailed information about this see **Moothall*. See also **Courts in Clare*.

MOOT HALL is a 17th century house, re-fronted in the 18th century, whose deeds show it replaced an earlier building. It was used for parish meetings until early in the 19th century. The crow-stepped wall on the east side relates to a later extension.

SHOP (The Clare café in 2006) AND SADDLERS.

This has an H-shaped plan comprising mainly an early 17th century reconstructed central open hall block incorporating an older (possibly 14c) structure and a 14c cross wing. The present centre part and one wing is now Saddlers, and the other wing is now a shop (2006) and has a good 14c cellar beneath. Its shop front led to an open hall behind. (A private residence often used to have a shop at its front so that profit could accrue from the house's location on a busy road). Saddlers also once embodied a shop. The cross wings have 20th century shop fronts. A decorative wall-painting dated about 1650 surmounts a fireplace on the first floor of Saddlers, obviously post-dating the insertion of that floor when the original open hall arrangement was modified.

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MEMBURY HOUSE AND WELL HOUSE form a pair of 18th century houses given white brick fronts in 1845. Membury House was once a saddlery. Well House has a 19th century shop frontage.

THE PHARMACY with house. A 16th century house altered early in 19th century when it was re-fronted in brick. The shop front is also 19th century. A gabled wing extends at the rear and a white brick wing was added in 1840. The interior has a carved ceiling beam with running leaf ornamentation, and the roof has a plain crown post.

COMMERCE HOUSE - NEWSAGENT AND STATIONER'S. A 17th century house much altered in the 19th century and 20th century, with a 19th century shop front and 20th century shop window.

TWO SHOPS (one forming an extension to the newsagent's in 2003) **and THE GRIFFINS.** See under Boar and Griffin below, with which these were once linked.

THE BOAR AND GRIFFIN. (Specialist books and tools shop in 2003) used to be The Boar and Griffin inn. It is a 16th century building and comprises a main block with two separate additions on the south-west side. The main block was re-fronted in the 18th century. One addition to the south-west was probably a stable block with a carriage entrance. Through the carriage entrance lies a 4-gabled block now used as garages. The shop fronts are 20th century. It was once a very important house. A record dated 1622 tells of a Gabriel Golding paying a rent of 4s.1d to Clare Honor for this, his 'chief house'. This was a sum which was considerably more than that paid by many others, who might only be required to pay one penny. (For a note on the Honor of Clare see in the Outline History of Clare at the beginning of Book I: Clare A-Z) The premises then included the adjacent private house and adjoining two shops. In addition to having been an inn it has been a wholesale trading house, and also varied business premises in the early 18th century.

At one time the whole set of premises from the Boar and Griffin to the present newsagent and stationer's comprised one exceptionally large shop, selling a very wide variety of goods from needles to furniture, including groceries and household goods, drapery, millinery, men's wear, footwear - and also contained a bank. At the time this book was originally written, older Clare residents could remember how this emporium employed between six and ten assistants who lived in and were looked after by a maid and a cook. Once a year they were given an outing to the seaside. According to legend boy and girl apprentices, having separate dormitories, used to meet on the roof at night.

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CHILTON STREET HAMLET

Although this hamlet is incorporated with Clare in the List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interest, and had close links in older days, so a few details are included here.

CHILTON COTTAGE on the left just before the junction. The west end is 16th century, with another block being added later in 16th century. There is a massive internal chimney stack and two original fireplaces. The windows are mostly 19th century, and the porch 20th century. **HOME FARM FARMHOUSE**. 17th century with a wing added at rear.

CHILTON HALL. 16th century considerably altered since. The front is now mainly 18th century. It is L-shaped with wings to the south and the east. There is a five window range on the north, and four on the west. Some windows may be late 17th century. The door is 20th century with a late 17th century or 18th century carved swag above it. The wrought iron ornamental gates and railings are late 18th century or 19th century. **CHILTON LODGE FARM FARMHOUSE**. Late 16th century or early 17th century with cross wings. Windows 20th century, porch 19th century. The interior has exposed timber-framing. **MOTT'S FARMHOUSE**. Late 17th century.

Former **MALTINGS**, now converted to a house. Built in 1830s, the tower section in 1875.

COTTAGES BETWEEN MOTT'S FARM AND HOME FARM. Late 18th century or early 19th century, now modernised. **HOME FARM GRANARY**. Early 19th century. Loft hoist at east end. The ruins of a windmill stand nearby.