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Chapter 5

Corffe House and its Occupants.

The Lovatt family came to live at Corffe House sometime in the mid 1630's. Sir Robert Lovatt sometime High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, a lawyer and close friend to the Earls of Bedford and their families.

The Earls were powerful people in Devon. Elizabeth Russell a sister of one of the Earls married the 3rd Earl of Bath. They lived at Tawstock Court and it is likely that Sir Robert and his family were close friends of the Bouchiers, who of course were the Earls of Bath. One of Sir Roberts daughters married Richard Downe a Rector of Tawstock in 1636.

Eventually Corffe passed down through the family to a Penelope Lovatt in 1707 who married a Dr Henry Northcote in 1709. They had one son who became the heir to the Northcote family, on the death of his father in 1730. The estate was exchanged with the Bouchiers in 1790 for the old rectory near the church and some glebe land.

As time went by a new parsonage was built at Corffe. Bouchier William Wrey was the first rector of the family to live at Corffe he was rector from 1801 - 1840, he was succeeded by Henry Bouchier Wrey in 1840 - 1883. Then Charles John Down followed in 1883 - 1893. Albany Bouchier Sherard Wrey became rector in 1893 up to his death in 1948, a span of 53 years. In 1936 on the death of his nephew, Sir Bouchier Philip Sherard Wrey, Albany Bouchier Sherard Wrey became the 13th Baronet. Sir Albany was the 3rd son of Sir Henry Bouchier Toke Wrey. All of these parsons lived in Corffe House.

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On the death of the Rev Sir Albany Bouchier Sherard Wrey in April 1948, the title was inherited by Bouchier Richard Wrey a nephew. he lived at Corffe House for a few years then he moved away and let the house. Eventually it was sold off in the 1970's to John Wakefield. He lived in the house and converted the garage stable and outbuildings into a holiday let complex, very neatly done. Just recently the property has been sold again.

How time can bring about change! Corffe House as a Gentleman's residence, then rebuilt as a parsonage, later to become a private residence, then a private residence with a holiday complex in the court yard. The land which used to belong to Corffe House Estate was I found called Corffe Farm occupied by George Copp. Sometime in the 1860's it was renamed Hillside Farm occupier George Copp.

In a book titled "Murrays Handbook of Devon and Cornwall 1859", I found an entry headed "Corffe House and Little Corffe" - and I quote - Tall three storeyed regency house, stuccoed front with deep bracketed eaves. At the side a shallow bow window with pretty tented balcony. Older west wing with 1600c moulded beams.