

The Huxtable Family on Brook Street, Timberscombe



This photograph was donated by Timberscombe School in 2019.

A photograph of the Huxtable family at their long-time home in Timberscombe. Huxtables have been recorded in Timberscombe since at least 12th September 1742 when Elizabeth, daughter of William and Mary Huxtable, was baptised (1). The Huxtable family is known to have been at this property since the 1841 Census, when James and Maria Huxtable lived here with their children, Ann, Henry, Jane, and Sarah. The cottage was (and is) situated where the Old Dunster Road, having approached Timberscombe from the northeast, curves in a southern direction toward the centre of the village. It is on the section of the old road later called Brook Street.

According to the 1843 Tithe Map, James Huxtable was leasing the house and garden from Robert Blackmore, owner (and possibly the builder) of this property, as well as the semi-detached former Rose and Crown Inn with its stables (later becoming Game Cottage and The Linhay) and the two cottages to their right (later Ivy Cottage and Burrow Cottage). All of these properties are probably late 18th/early 19th century in origin (2).

The census, as taken in West Somerset in the 19th century, often did not indicate specific names and addresses of houses located in a village. A listing number assigned to a house could vary from census to census but in 1881 and 1901 the Huxtable's home was identified as Village House, No. 25. (However, the Huxtable's house is listed as No. 36 in 1871 and No. 62 in 1991. Due to it's location near the Rose and Crown, and the fact that it is always occupied by Huxtables, the house is easier to ascertain than most.) In 1881, John Huxtable lived here, with his wife, also named Maria (sometimes identified as Mary). By 1901, John and Maria's son, John, was head of the household, with his wife, Ann and children, Mabel, William, Morley, Edith, Frank, Ethel and Ernest.



This October 1908 photograph was taken at the wedding of Mabel Huxtable (1882-1960) and Frederick James Scott (c. 1881-1940), donated by Maurice Huxtable in September 2020. Mabel was the eldest daughter of John (1850-1914) and Ann (nee Coles) Huxtable (1851-1914). The bride and groom are in the centre of the photograph and her father stands second to the right on the back row, the gentleman with the white beard. It would seem that the woman to his right could be Mabel's mother but this is not verified. Mabel's siblings are the six young Huxtables seated along the bottom row. From left to right, they are William Bailey (Bill) Huxtable (1885-1962), Ernest Albert (Ern) Huxtable (1897-1967), Edith Mary Huxtable (1888-1968 and later Mrs. Luxton), Ethel Mary Huxtable (1892-1966, later Mrs. Summers), Frank Huxtable (1889-1962 and the grandfather of Maurice) and Morley John Huxtable (1886-1979). There was another daughter, Margaret (Maggie) Huxtable who lived from 1883 to 1889 and is buried with her parents at St. Petrock's Churchyard (3). The young woman to the left of Mr. Scott and the other people in the back row were members of his family (4).

Looking at the photograph of the Huxtable's house on the first page, four windows are visible across the first floor of the main wing. Under the first two windows to the left (and

blocked from view by the corrugated metal shed) was Timberscombe's funeral home, where the deceased were prepared for internment. This was later operated by Frank Huxtable (5), the third son of John and Ann, pictured on the bottom right corner of the wedding photograph on the previous page, who also worked as a carpenter and wheelwright (6).

Around the later 1980's the Huxtable's house was renamed Tiki Cottage (7). The wing to the left (where a ladder stands) was later renovated to become Bamboo Cottage. The garden to Tiki Cottage is on the right front of the house, with the area where the shed stands in the photograph becoming a courtyard. The bearded gentleman standing in front of the shed is likely John Huxtable, possibly with young Frank Huxtable to his left (8). The wooden doorway, seen here beneath the curved metal porch survived until the summer of 2019, when it was replaced with a new door and porch made by Roger Fewlass. His wife, Marion Fewlass was Marion Huxtable, the great grand-daughter of Frank Huxtable and the great great grand-daughter of John Huxtable.

Of course, Marion Fewlass is also the great-grand-daughter of Eva (nee Buttle) Huxtable (1889-1975), the wife of Frank. They married in 1911 (9). Their son, Dudley Frank Huxtable was born the same year and a daughter, Muriel Ann followed in 1913 (10). By 1928, Eva was operating the motor spirit service station (11) facing Brook Street in front of the Huxtable house, as pictured below. The photograph was likely taken in the late 1920's or 30's and shows a rather dramatic storefront with a sign where "E. HUXTABLE" is clearly visible. Petrol pumps can be seen to the left, along with various containers and items.



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Mrs. Huxtable's shop sold general goods including nails, pyrex dishes, oil, paraffin and also offered knife sharpening. Outside, free-standing pumps provided petrol to passing motorists. During this time, unsurprisingly, the Huxtable's home became called Pump Cottage (12).



This photograph was taken c. 1939, with Cyril Copp, Dudley Huxtable and Billy Baker in front of Eva Huxtable's shop, observed by young Maurice Huxtable, son of Dudley.

Another petrol station had been built by Mr Henry Phillips at Cowbridge Mill in 1920. In 1936 Mr Phillips died and his widow passed the ownership of the petrol station to Eva Huxtable. It is likely that she closed the Brook Street station a few years later, concentrating on the business at Cowbridge. In 1959, Eva gave the business to her son, Dudley (13). The pumps in front of the Huxtable's house remained in place, probably until the later 1980's and after their removal was when the house was re-named Tiki Cottage (14).

This Alfred Vowles photograph was taken in 1930 at Knowle House with Girl Guide Troop leader, Lady Audrey Anson. The girls had won a dancing contest (15). The young woman seated on the right end of the bench is Muriel, sister of Dudley Huxtable. She married Billy Baker (seen with Dudley on the previous page) in 1943 and died in 1986 (16). On her right is Grace Irene Cook. Born 1915 in Wiltshire, she married Dudley in July 1932 and is the mother of Maurice Huxtable, who donated this photograph. Grace passed away in 2007 (17).



On the left end of the bench is Maude Gooding (1915-1983) and standing to her right is Nellie Brewer (2016-2001). Maurice Huxtable believes the shorter girl standing behind his mother and aunt is one of the Slade sisters, possibly Kathleen (1917-2001). If anyone can identify any of the other women, please let us know.



Maurice D. Huxtable worked for 34 years as a tractor and Land Rover mechanic at the Luttrell Arms Garage. He married Mary E. Palfrey in April 1952 and they had three children, Marion, Maureen and Ian. Mary died in 2002 and is buried in St Petrock's Churchyard.

Maurice, donated by Maurice Huxtable. 2002



Maurice Huxtable kindly contributed to the St Petrock's Timberscombe Oral History Project in July 2019. His interviewer was Alan Hines who also took this photograph of Maurice.

A 90 second audio clip extract from this Oral History is embedded in the email which accompanies this St. Petrock's History Group Newsletter, describing a war-time incident.

NOTES:

- (1) "TIMBERSCOMBE PARISH REGISTERS", transcribed by T.L. Sloane, Harry Galloway Publishing, 1995
- (2) Historic Environment Record, Exmoor National Park, Victoria County History.ac.uk and Somerset, England, Church of England Baptisms, Marriages and Burials, 1531-1914
- (3) England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth and Death Indexes, 1837-1915
- (4) as recalled by Maurice Huxtable of Ye Olde Malthouse in September 2020
- (5) as

recalled in 2019 by Marion and Roger Fewlass of Tiki Cottage and as reported in the West Somerset Free Press, March 15, 1947 (6) as recalled in 2019 by Maurice Huxtable and Kelly's Directories of 1894, 1897, 1906, 1914, 1919 and 1923, where Frank Huxtable listed himself as "wheelwright" and 1931 and 1935, where he was listed as "carpnr" (7) as recalled in 2019 by Marion and Roger Fewlass (8) identifications are based on other photographs, including the wedding photograph on page 2 of this article (9) 1939 England and Wales Register and England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1837-1915 (10) 1939 England and Wales Register and England & Wales, Civil Registration Birth Index, 1837-1915 (11) as recalled by Maurice Huxtable and Kelly Directories of Somerset, 1931 and 1935, listing "Huxtable Edith (Mrs)" as owner (12) "A Village History", by the schoolchildren of Timberscombe, 1998 (13) TimberscombeVillage.com/ History of Timberscombe/ Other Historic Structures/ Cowbridge Mill, written by Lesley Webb (14) as recalled in 2019 by Marion and Roger Fewlass (15) the date and the winning of a dance contest is handwritten on the reverse of photograph (16) England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916-2005 and UK & Ireland, Find A Grave Index, 1300's-Present (17) Wiltshire, England, Church of England Births & Baptisms, 1813-1916, England & Wales, Civil Registration Marriage Index, 1916-2005 and England & Wales, Civil Registration Death Index, 1916-2007



In September 2020, Maurice Huxtable said that the men in his family were not ones for horse riding but certainly enjoyed cricket and football. In this photograph of the 1948/49 Timberscombe Football Team, Maurice (aged 16 or 17) is seated third from the right. His father, Dudley Huxtable, stands second from the left. His grandfather, Frank Huxtable, is second to the right end of the back row. A copy of this photograph was donated in 2019, shortly before his passing, by Charlie Parsons, in football kit, 4th from the right end of the standing row.