



HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND SIGNIFICANCE OF FRIARS CLIFF - 1700's to 1800's

In the 18th Century Friars Cliff was mainly a patchwork of small, managed, arable fields and farmland, with very few houses. On old Tithe maps the area is described as 'Common Gate' which likely relates to a 'piece' of gorse/common land close to Steamer Point that had a few points of access. To allow commoner rights to graze cattle the 'piece' would have probably been gated.

In the mid to late 1700s, the 3rd Earl of Bute built the original High Cliff mansion on the edge of today's Highcliffe. Lord Bute's estate was vast, stretching from Chewton Bunny in the East to Mudeford Quay in the West.

After a few years High Cliff mansion crumbled into the sea, and was later replaced by Highcliffe Castle, built further inland by Charles Stuart, later Baron (Lord) Stuart de Rothesay, his grandson.

The area we now know as Steamer Point marks the spot where in the late 1820s Lord Stuart de Rothesay most likely built a jetty and landed valuable materials and cargo from France to help build today's Highcliffe Castle. This broadly established the layout of Nature Reserve paths and tracks from Steamer Point to Highcliffe Castle that we see today.

In 1831 Lord Stuart de Rothesay sold the Bure Homage estate and this is where the first major land partition occurs - next to the avenue he created that ran all the way from Bure Homage house to the sea at Friars Cliff. Evidence of this tree-lined avenue can still be found today, concealed between the rear gardens of all properties between Island View Avenue and Friars Road.

➤ *Highcliffe Castle Land Sell Off - Southcliffe Road to Steamer Point*

From 1927 onwards, much of the land to the west of Steamer Point (up to Southcliffe Road) was sold for development. This generally was termed the Friars Cliff Estate (East and West). The earliest houses were built around the middle of Seaway Avenue and Seaford Road, and spread out around 1936 towards East Cliff Way Brook Way, Hynesbury Road and Southcliffe Road.

In 1939 there was a dramatic change of plan when the Ministry of Supply requisitioned the entire unbuilt area pretty much from Highcliffe Castle across most of the area.



➤ *Highcliffe Castle Land Sell-Off - Friars Road to Southcliffe Road*

Whilst the land eastwards from Southcliffe Road was sold to Alfred Barnes in 1927, the area between Friars Road and Southcliffe Road was sold earlier (around 1925) and houses began to be built on varying plots from 1935 onwards along Avon Run Road, Bure Road, Rook Hill Road and Friars Road.

➤ *Waterford Lodge and Bure Close*

In early days along Bure Lane was Bure Farm (where The Sandpiper is now located) and, next to it, a grand building known as Waterford Lodge.

The Waterford name originated from Louisa, Marchioness of Waterford (1818-1891), daughter of Lord Stuart de Rothesay.

Louisa married Henry, Marquis of Waterford in 1842, and in 1867 she inherited the Highcliffe Castle estate. Louisa died in 1891, and ownership of the Highcliffe estate then passed to her cousin Edward Stuart-Wortley. It was Edward who built Waterford Lodge we believe early in the 1890s.

Around 1897 the property was leased to Zoe Virginie Guinness who was very well connected and Waterford Lodge certainly hosted some well-known occupants! In 1927 Zoe, now Lady Manners, sold Waterford Lodge to Mr William Robert Smith.

Sometime after the sale the lodge was converted to a hotel. Also, on the two paddocks attached to the Lodge, the owner set up the Waterford Development Company to begin construction of the lovely cottages around Bure Close, which enclosed a central green.

Waterford Lodge survived many years as a hotel but in 2013 the main building was demolished, and in its place are seven new homes (Waterford Mews) that are attached to the previous existing wing of flats (Waterford Lodge Flats). So the Waterford name at least lives on in the area.



➤ *Bure Homage Land Sell-Off*

From the 1850s through to 1939 the Bure Homage estate was owned by the Ricardo family. In January 1939 the house and land were sold along with plans for 80 building sites and open spaces to new owners. However, almost immediately after purchase the estate was requisitioned (concurrent with the land at Steamer Point) by the Ministry of Supply, with Bure Homage house first being used as the HQ for the Air Defence Experimental Establishment (ADEE).

During this time special passes were needed to move around Friars Cliff, and permission from the Gun Captain at Friars Cliff was needed even to visit the beach (after all it was mined!).

A few years after the end of WW2 most of the remaining plots were sold off, with additional construction of Wellington Avenue and Auckland Road.

➤ *Housing Developments around Steamer Point*

Once both ends of Friars Cliff had established their separate lines of development it only remained for the 'bits in-between' to be filled in! Firstly though, Steamer Point remained in Government ownership having become SRDE, and this extended across The Green up to Hynesbury Road.

Sometime later around 1980 SRDE moved out to Malvern and the central Steamer Point 'triangle' became the MCA Coastguard training establishment. Associated land was then sold by 1983 to form the housing developments around Glengarry Way, Medina Way and Freshwater Road.