

0805 Fontmell Parva House 1870



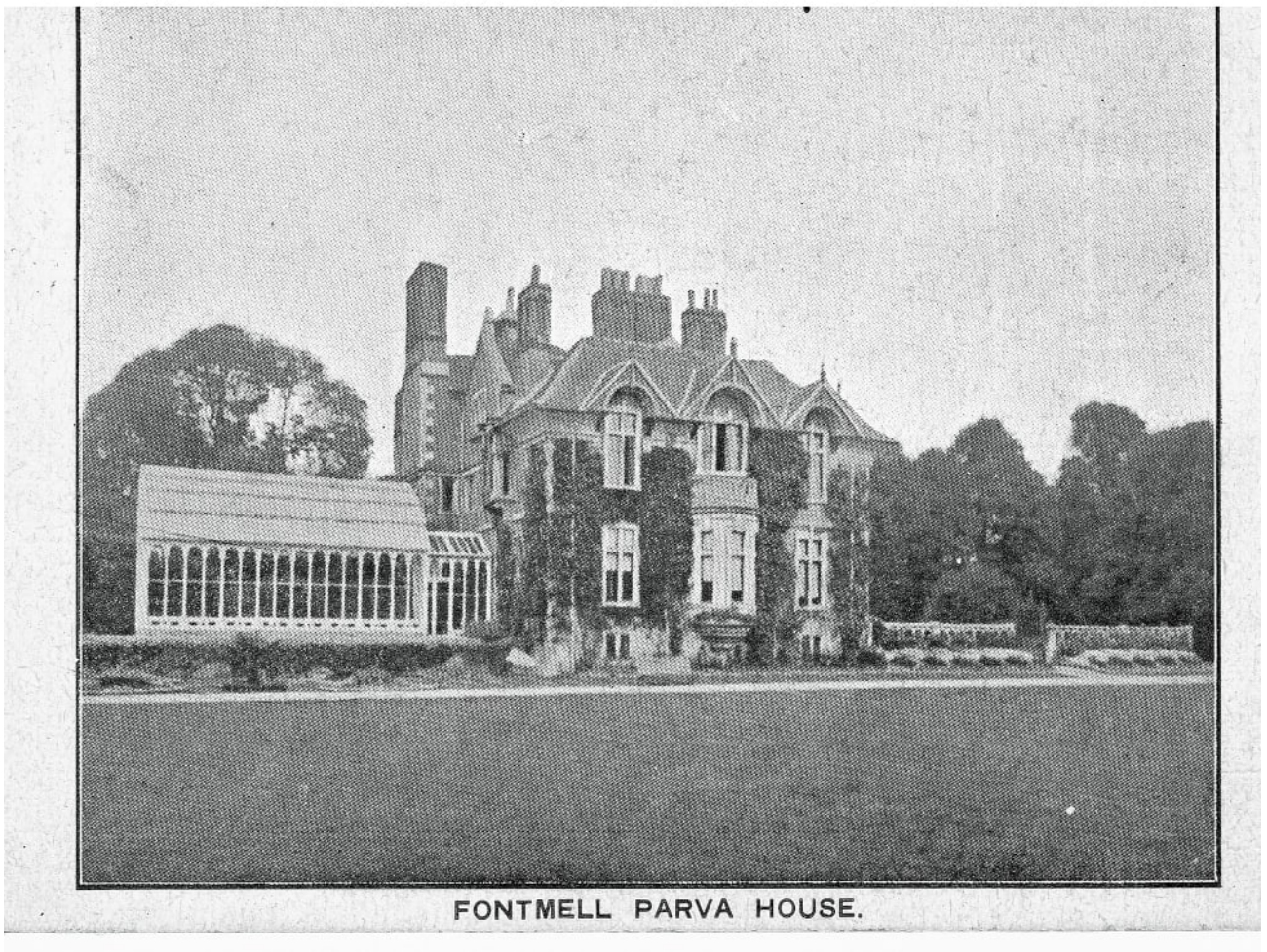
Well it's not a photograph but it is the earliest engraving of Fontmell Parva house. It was originally published in the 1871 version of Hutchins 'History and Antiquities of the County of Dorset'.

Members of the St Loe family had lived at Fontmell Parva since at least 1623. An earlier ancestor, Sir William St Loe, had at one time married the famous "Bess of Hardwick", an Elizabethan lady who married four times once to the Earl of Devonshire, owners of Chatsworth House.

The mansion house was built, by Admiral Edward St Loe in the late 1600's who is reported to have brought a load of timber home from his time serving with the Royal Navy in Honduras. The family however went into decline and in the 1841 census Laurence Edward St Loe the last of the direct line to live there is found alone with his son Charles Edward, one servant and a woman, Elizabeth Allen who may have been a distant relative. When he died it passed to a distant relative, Lieut-Col Malet who sold it in 1864 to the Rev. Henry Tregonwell Bower.

The next three pictures show details of the house but we have no more details about the pictures themselves.

0802 Fontmell Parva House



FONTMELL PARVA HOUSE.

Owner: John Davies

0803 Fontmell Parva House



Owner: John Davies

0804 Fontmell Parva House



Owner: John Davies

0800 Servants.



The date of this photograph is unknown but there is good evidence to suggest it is in the 1890's. Where it was taken is readily identified by the large glass house on the left.

There are eight women and ten men in the picture and they are the servants of the house. As befits a Victorian photograph, smiling is thought inappropriate and [almost] all sport stern visages. The 1891 census notes that there were eight female servants [together with a nurse and a governess]. The name of the house cat is unknown but the youngest member of staff, easily recognisable as the young girl in front, was Gertrude Bertha Ralph aged 15 in 1891 who was employed as an under house maid. Her family came from the village where her father was an agricultural labourer.

She was not to remain a house maid for ever as at some time she trained as an infant school teacher and was to teach in the village school until at least the 1920's.

In 1864 Fontmell Parva house was bought by Henry Tregonwell Bower and when he died it was left to his son Henry Syndercombe Bower. His wife had ten children [two died] which is why so many servants were needed.

Owner: John Davies

0801 More Servants



It is not clear whether this was taken at the same time as the previous picture nor who the people are.
Owner: John Davies.