

Millbrook & the Hollow 1600 series

What could be simpler than the origin of these two names? The Millbrook is fairly obvious. As J D Mills puts it the 'brook by the mill'. Except where was the mill ? There is no evidence for the existence of a windmill in the village so it would have to be a water mill but as a glance at any Ordnance Survey map of the area around a water mill will show, they are almost always associated with a river and a complex arrangement of water works, mill races, mill ponds and so on. There is no evidence for the existence of these around Millbrook and the stream itself enters the Stour well away from any waterworks associated with the water mill at Bere Marsh.

What then of 'The Hollow' ? Well this is a common name and there are two broad groups. The first are more accurately called 'Holloways'. They were deliberately formed to mark the boundaries between two landed estates. A ditch was dug on the boundary with soil being heaped up on both sides of the resultant ditch. Over the centuries the ditch got deeper through continued use. Our Hollow is not of this form. It is named simply because the Cross area is on a hill and so is Gold Hill. Between them is a valley and the road inevitably dips down between them.

1600 Millbrook House circa 1915



A fine picture of Millbrook House showing the garden frontage circa 1915 although without much interest as there are no people in the picture. According to the History of Millbrook House by Ann and Roger Tatler there is a brass plate in the dining room explaining that the floor was made from wood dating from 1624 so it is presumed there was a house of some sort on this site then. The house was restored in 1906. In 1977 Mr & Mrs Burdon bought the house and started the present retirement home there.

Owner: John Davies

1601 Millbrook House



The date is unknown. This is the back of the house and shows the main entrance as it is more or less today. Although there are no shadows indicating a sunny date it is clearly very hot and rather blowy. Many of the windows are open [including the arched window over the entrance] and the curtains have blown outside in some cases. It is summer as there are numerous plants in flower.

Two chairs and a small table can be seen on the left. The occupants are nowhere to be seen but a book or paper or drawing board are on the ground so they cannot be far away.

Owner: not recorded

1602 Millbrook House in 1999



Millbrook House, 1999

In 1993 an extension was added and it is shown here.

Owner: Millennium Book Committee

1603 Ibbespen House



There are a terrace of five thatched cottages in the Hollow of which this one is the first and largest. It is called Ibbespen House. They are clearly ancient, appearing on the 1840 tithe map, all are listed and the official entry from Historic England reads,

“Row of 5 cottages of various C18 and early C19 builds. Brick, nos 2 and 3 being colourwashed. 2 and 3 are thatched, others are slated. Brick stacks at ends and between cottages. 2 storeys, 9 window range. No. 2 has mainly casements with glazing bars and a panelled door to the right, No. 3 has 2 and 3 light casements with leaded-lights and part-glazed panelled door under a segmental hood on brackets. Remaining cottages have mainly 16-pane sashes with ground floor openings under segmental brick heads. They have C20 doors.”

Owner: Jane MacBeth

1607 The Hollow



The date of this picture is not known. On the left we see the continuation of the terraced houses that begins with Ibbespen House. It is interesting to see that there was a path running in front of them and in one garden some fine topiary. The photograph has been taken from the road and on the right today we would find the village hall built in 1909. On the right can be seen a thatched house which, judging by the number of buttresses is not in the best state of repairs. It would eventually be demolished. Just around the corner we can see the chimneys of Crate Cottage and Crate.

Owner: not recorded

1608 A little further down the Hollow



This picture is taken a little further down the road and has been cropped from a post card we saw earlier. The date is unknown but the Methodist chapel seen in the distance now has two dormer windows indicating that it has been converted to a dwelling house. On the right can be seen the end of Crate Cottage.

Owner: Jane MacBeth

1606 The Millbrook post 1913



This view of the Hollow is taken from what is now the house called 'Briarways'. A lady stands in her garden facing the photographer. On the right there is a fine view of the Methodist Chapel showing its buttresses and arched windows [now filled in]. In the distance we can see a footbridge over the Millbrook, together with the stream itself. The Millbrook was a pleasant name for what could at times be an unpleasant reality. In August 1913 Dr Mivart, the District Medical Officer recommended that *"The Council should take effectual measures to abate the nuisance caused by the outfall of crude sewage matter into the stream crossing the public road, and passing through private property at Child Okeford."*

It's clear that the District Council, then based in Sturminster Newton, had advance notice of his report because in January 1913 they had already written to Child Okeford Parish Council ;

"Sir, I am directed by the Rural District Council of Sturminster to ask if your Parish Council Consider that a Bridge over the Stream at Millbrook would be desirable in the interest of the Public and the Parish of Child Okeford".

What reply they received is not known but in May of that year the District Council approached the County Council in an effort to get them to help pay for the bridge,

"The Sturminster Rural District Council state that it has become necessary to build a bridge over the stream flowing across the highway near Millbrook House, in the parish of Child Okeford. The cost is estimated to be £110. They stated that the above highway is a particularly important one, having direct communication from Bournemouth with Bath and the West of England. Their object in approaching the County Council is to obtain

a grant and enquire whether it will be possible to obtain a contribution from the Road Board of, at any rate, three fourths of the amount which will be incurred by this improvement”.

It must have come as a surprise to the villagers to learn that their road was an important one in getting from Bournemouth to Bath! Perhaps the man resting on his bike by the side of the ford was one such traveller. Whether the money was forthcoming is not known but in any event the bridge was built and can be seen on the left of the road.

Owner: Merv Wareham

1604 & 1605 Methodist Chapel post 1913



Two versions of this picture exist the other one is simply a cropped version of this one without the name label.

It is taken from the road itself and is closer to the foot bridge. On the right is the Methodist Chapel. On the left we see the end of a house. This is Long Close and was once the farm house belonging to Millbrook House. In the centre of the picture we see the foot bridge over the Millbrook but the stream itself is not visible.

Owner: John Davies