

1400 Higher Common

Anciently there were two manors in Child Okeford and more land than could be cultivated by the available population. This excess land was known as the waste [later the Common] and in its original extent stretched from what is Fontmell Parva in the North, the River Stour in west, Gold Hill in the south and the parish of Shroton in the east. The waste was the land reserve of the parish which was normally only used for grazing livestock over winter but as the population grew encroachments were made into it to make usable fields or closes. This broke the common up into a 'lower' common near Gold Hill and a 'higher' common bordering Shroton the two parts being connected by a narrow lane known as 'Whist' lane which was extinguished when the last of the common was enclosed in 1845.

1400 The Common 1910



Today the higher common is known simply as 'The Common'. When the tithe map was drawn in 1840 this road did not exist. A rough track led out of the common to the cottages in the background which are close up to the Shroton border where - there was also no road; just another rough track. Indeed at that time the track led not to Iwerne Minster but to Farring[t]don¹ and then Shaftesbury.

The road seen here was constructed after the final remnants of the common were inclosed in 1845. The inclosure commissioner named it 'The Shroton Road' but it is more commonly known as the Shaftesbury road today. It is not known when the road connecting it to the current main road [A350] was formed. This card has been dated to 1910 and the house on the left at the front is Wellington Lodge and the central group of houses are 'Rose Cottages.' No name is attached to the cottages at the rear right. All are shown on the OS 25 inch map of 1886. The tithe map shows the houses at rear on the right as well as Wellington Lodge so Rose Cottages must have been built between 1840 and 1886.

Owner: John Davies

¹ Like all names two variations are found.

1401 The Common 1924



Fourteen years on and the year is 1924 when this card was sent. Nothing much has changed.

Owner: Jane MacBeth