

# FAVOURITE PLACES, FAVOURITE LANDSCAPES

Barbara Farquharson

## • INTRODUCTION

### ***The setting***

*In the Parish of Branscombe five steep combs finger their way to the sea. The small streams come together around Manor Mill and flow seawards but because of the great shingle bank across the mouth of the valley only a small stream snakes through to the sea.*

*It's a pastoral landscape - small fields and stretches of woodland clamber the valley sides. Half a century ago there were 20 farms now there are five at most, and most have had to diversify.*

*Geologically, the Parish is an astonishing place. The high cliffs (and Undercliff) to the East of the Mouth are greensand and chalk, those on the West are Red Mudstone, with gypsum at the base and cappings of greensand and chalk at the top. These strata continue in the hills inland.*

*The village was once a series of small hamlets strung out along the main valley, and even now two pubs mark the difference between Street at the top end and Square at the bottom.*

*Quite a lot of the land, and some properties, belong to the National Trust and so, in a sense, it's been 'preserved'. Estate agents sometimes describe it as 'iconic', which is not good news. House prices are high, and nearly 30% of the houses are second homes or holiday lets.*

*This is not the place to tell you about the long history of the village – but, if you learn how to read it, it's all there in the landscape - in the leats and shutes, fields and hedgerows, and place-names.*

*We've always known, but it's become even clearer whilst we've been working with people's Favourite Places and Landscapes, that people have a great love of this place. What we'd like to explore, is what forms this attachment takes.*

### **Number Crunching**

Two hundred and twenty three dots on the map. Of which 186 placed by villagers<sup>i</sup> or people who once lived in the village (red pins on the map); 10 by people with caravans, holiday huts or chalets (blue pins); and 27 by people who 'live away' but come often and know the village well (green pins).

ii

At the last count, there are 318 houses in the village (this includes Weston). Of these, 96 (thus nearly 30%) are second homes or holiday lets. That leaves around 229 full time owners and another 30 where second homes have been rented out full time. So roughly speaking there are 260 full-time households in Branscombe.

Many second-homers come often and on the map we've made no distinction between them and full-timers (they're all marked with red pins).

### **People placing dots**

We haven't made a great fuss about distinguishing 'Landscape' from 'Place' because the differences are often pretty fuzzy. By and large you might think of 'landscape' as out of doors and more outward looking, 'place' as more contained and perhaps more familiar. But that's a very rough guide.

Some people knew immediately where they wanted to place their dots; some hesitated; very occasionally someone would say they didn't have a favourite place – they liked the whole village.

Pete Wilson was working in the Masons Arms' garden when we asked him.

*No, he said, too many favourite places. I mean, I could choose up on top of West Cliff, where the chalk is, where the humps are. It's very interesting – it's an 'unnatural' landscape that's become naturalised. Or another favourite, the Undercliff, again it's an area that's been used and gone back to nature. Or again, the path opposite the Fountain Head – the one that goes up through the Pits. But then, I could be sitting in my garden and looking out at the view and I'd see deer and foxes and pheasants. And anyway, he said, they've changed through time – the ones we liked best when we first came aren't necessarily the ones we'd choose now.*

Probably many of you would agree - you've got lots of favourite places and landscapes, and they've changed through time. They won't be same ones that Pete chose, and even if they were, you'd probably give different reasons for choosing them.

***The thing about landscape – or place – is that it's never objective, it's never just 'out there'. Or, perhaps more precisely, it is 'out there' but since it's we who do the looking and experiencing of it, it's always different. And then again, the way we come to a place and experience it depends on so many things - the season, perhaps, or the weather, the time of***

*day, the mood that we're in, our reasons for being out and about, whether we're alone or with other people – and which other people they are, and indeed, what sort of people we are ...*

## Different Sorts of Landscapes

I've very much enjoyed thinking about the reasons that people gave for their choice of place or landscape. I've tried to group them together, although, as you'll see, it's hard because people often give lots of reasons – *It's a great view, they say, and it's peaceful, and it's where we scattered Dad's ashes ...*

You probably won't agree with some of the categories that I've created. And, for lack of space, I've only scripted some of your responses, not all.

- **LANDSCAPES AS 'VIEWS'**

At least 70 people chose panoramic views. The Branscombe landscape, with its deep combs and its high cliffs, lends itself to what you might call '**landscape bursts**'. That moment when you come over the top of a hill, or come out of a wood, get a glimpse of the village from the coastal path, or turn a corner and – Wow! there it is!

There are some obvious **clusters of panoramic views**.

- **East Cliff** is the most chosen viewpoint with 15 dots. Let's hear what people say:

*Marie Dowell (26)<sup>iii</sup> Four very good views –to the sea, to the Sea Shanty and right up over, down to the beach and looking towards Beer and the look-out box*

*Barbara Farquharson (2) Looking across Branscombe Mouth at the 'Old dinosaur' – the great wooded hill across the valley*

Often people anchor their East Cliff vantage point to the seat at the top, or the one half way up:

*Rosemary Lambert (128) Walking from Beer, top of East Cliff, near the seat – quintessential English landscape*

*Rob Ayles (192) At the top, by the bench –a view right up the valley and a lovely seascape down the coast*

*Damian Love (201) We always take visitors up there, and it's usually pretty blustery. We always stop for a rest (and a snack) at the bench just before you get to the highest point*

*Rod and Julia Colwell (163) Base Camp One – best view in Branscombe without going to the top of the cliff.*

- There's another cluster of 6 dots at **Berry Camp**. It's noticeable that the age-old divide between Street people (upper end of village) and Square people (lower end) still holds. East Cliff are mainly from the Square end (or people walking across from Beer), and Berry Camp are mainly from the Street end.

*Mike James (52) view of the whole of Lyme Bay – atmosphere, nostalgia*

*Mark White (157) Top of Berry Cliff – looking out over the sea – you can see all Lyme Bay on a good day. Where they had the machine gun emplacement*

- People who have lived in the village all their lives and/or are keen walkers often choose inland views. A favourite one (9 dots) is coming out of the woods at the end of Northern Lane and suddenly looking out over **Culverwell**

*Ben Wells (51) Where the road past Hole Pits first gives full view down to the sea – after being closed in on Northern Lane through the woods, the sudden view as you reach the spot is truly amazing!*

*Jean Brimson (188) Coming out of the woods and looking out towards the sea – like little Switzerland!*

You can also take in the Culverwell view from the top of School Lane:

*Sue Brewer (205) Where the trees thin out – the village, the sea, Branscombe in a nutshell*

Or from the other side of the valley:

*John (Chink) Ward (214) Looking down on Hole Mill from Woodhouse Pits – little Switzerland! It's unusual*

- For 7 people **Margells Hill or Rock** is special:

*Jenny Newton (17): The view down to the sea and up the village, up past Culverwell – the nearest place to heaven*

*Terry Flay (133) See – you can see the church and up the valley, and the beach, Vicarage Hill, Masons. Yes, you can see it all.*

*Martin Willmington (151) Look out all across the village – without moving!*

- And then again, **Stockhams Hill** is very highly regarded – 6 dots:

*Fiona Strange (109) Looking over the village from Stockhams Hill – I love looking down over the village – looks like ‘toy village’*

Sometimes it’s more than a view:

*Marilyn Woolland (76) Stockhams Hill - wild flowers, birds, and view*

And sometimes the reasons for choosing are unexpected:

*David Strange (108) South end of Stockhams Hill – a fantastic spot for star watching*

- The view from **Beach Road** (4 dots) is very similar to the one from Stockhams Hill:

*John Fryer (100) Beach Road looking up the valley – enormous pleasure, looking up the valley to where I live, the winding road, the cluster of houses with the Masons Arms, the lovely piece of woodland on the left hand side. It’s the distance you can see*

*Annette Freathy – I like to stand at the rail and overlook the whole village below me – like a little toy town model village*

- Other views that get several mentions are **Ball Hill** (3 dots); different spots along the **Southwest coast path**– often framed by trees (5 dots):

*Nic Smith (149) View of the church from above the mill through the arch of the trees – should photograph it for a postcard at different times of the year*

**The gateway before the bend at the top of Vicarage Hill** (3 dots):

*Ian Barlow (200) On the bend before you come down Vicarage Hill – the female V of the valley, and the first time you see the sea*

### The top of West Cliff (5 dots):

*Sam Farquharson (220) Top of West Cliff, where it flattens out beyond the seat – I love this part of the steep hill climb when it opens out into what feels like a perfectly arranged carpet of flowers and rabbit trimmed grass. Looking down you realise you’ve gained this amazing perspective of the beach below, whereas above is just the top of the cliff and the sky. I was lying here when a small hawk hovered over the edge. It appeared to stay in the exact same spot for what seemed like ages*

*Max & Isla Anderson (27) West cliff: secret little outlook over the cliff and down to Branscombe beach. It feels very high up*

### Down Sellers Wood road (2 dots)

### From School house, or the hill behind (4 dots)

- **LANDSCAPE ATTACHMENTS**

People often lay claim to their landscapes – either through land- ownership or through association with their home.

**Land ownership.** Some of the farmers or landowners choose a view that is taken from *their* land – a quiet claiming of place:

*Andy Westlake (210) Up at the top of East Cliff, **on our land**, coming down the bridle path that leads to Great Seaside – the view up the valley*

*Ian Westlake (212) Top field by the path going up behind Manor Mill, before you reach the coastal path – right up there, it’s **our field**, great view*

*Nicky Westlake (211) Reaching the top of School Lane, turning sharp left onto the old track that goes out above School house – **our land**, going up there, to the highest point, and looking back at the valley. We always go blackberrying there*

*Dorothy Flay (197) Margells Hill – visited it very often when I **was connected** to Gays farm*

*Sandy MacFadyen (132) Seat on the junction of Weston track and coastal path – it’s **my ground**, a beautiful view looking west*

Tony Sellick (145) From the tump at the end of row B in the East Cliff caravan park –the beauty of it is that you have a **commanding view of the caravan park** and West beach. Also on a clear day with low water you can see Portland lighthouse, Berry Hill lighthouse, Start Point lighthouse

Ross Willmington (101) 'The Pits' Woodhouse Hill – it's home, it reminds me of family and **our history**. And a great view!

Sue Glasper (117) View from **our field** beyond the garden looking towards the sea. First thing I see in the morning is out to sea, and you never know what you're going to see – sea-gulls, crows, container ships.

Perry Tucker (203) Green Lane, the bench on the hill opposite **Tula barn** – all you can see is that lovely meadow and the lovely dead chestnut tree that's been there since I came in 1964. No other properties at all

Hazel Dixon & Jamie Goodier (57) **Granny's patch** below and by Vicarage fields – view, orchards, and child friendly area for playing in

You could say that both Linda Hughes and her son Richard's views are attached to a working landscape – only this time it's the sea – their views encompass the sea and allow them to check whether it's rough or smooth.

Linda Hughes (74) Top of Vicarage Hill, by the gate-way – first view of the sea – is it calm – is it rough?

Richard Hughes (147) Top of East Cliff – because of the view of the sea, which way the wind's blowing

### **More frequently there's attachment to home**

Sometimes the view from away takes in the viewer's house (2 dots):

Robert Kerr (113) On West Cliff, after the first gate, view of Square part of village and in winter/spring view of our house, Thatch Barton

Pam Ayles (65) Up West Cliff beyond the stile and the bench – lovely view up the valley and also we can see our house

More often, home is the centre from which you look out – it becomes ‘your house’ and ‘your view’ (15 dots):

*Jon Russell (209) It has to be the view from where we live – near Edge – we’ve only been here for two years – I wake up and look across and that’s the view that greets me every morning. I feel so lucky*

*Marie Wilson (115) The view from Bennetts Close – the view of Manor Mill farm from our back garden is the best view in Branscombe*

*David Lamb (24) the valley opposite our house, Moorside, because our grandson likes to watch the deer in the field*

*John Ponsford (53) Panorama from my doorstep (Wobble) – always changing*

*Penny Perryman (19) view from Bank Cottages. Where Martin Perryman was born – green heaven*

*Ros & Gordon Gunn (116) Watercombe – a hidden gem, especially on a lovely day. We are lucky to live there.*

*Julia Heckford (136) Looking west and south from Eastcotte – double aspect – church and sea*

*Ian Sutherland (63) Eastcotte – view along valley to the sea – we have enjoyed this view for 35 years and never tire of it. It is spectacular in all seasons*

*John Hughes (138) My garden (Great Seaside Cottage) – I can sit there and I can see the deer and, out to sea, the dolphin*

*Zita and Clive Thompson (66) sitting by our hut (near the Sea Shanty) – looking out to sea*

*Andy Wilcox (30) Hill Arrish – waking up every morning to this view*

*Sheila Wilcox (121) From Hill Arrish down our valley – always in sunshine with buzzards*

*Andy Limbrick & Jill Whitten (103) 2 Cliff View Cottages – our garden, the best location for breakfast! Our evening choice – a wonderful panorama*

*Ike Dowell (180) Bakery and blacksmith - the view from my bedroom window every day – I always look at those two*

*Mike Lambert (127) Our House (Lower Weston) – when we found it, it was the view from the house across to the Masons Arms and towards the sea that sold it to us*

The 'Mill-Laners' were particularly attached to their views (4 dots):

*Tanya Cload (206) The views from my house – up the valley you can see the church and down the valley you can see Hooken, the fields, the dip to the beach, the mill. I wouldn't swop it for anywhere else! And the people!*

*Mary Taylor (92) Up the valley towards the church – at night the illuminated church, by day the cows grazing*

*Audrey Maskrey (107) View from my garden – lovely view towards church and cottages – ever since a tree was blown down*

Katie Gray, headmistress of Branscombe Primary School, substituted school for home:

*Katie Gray (20) view from the school playground. It makes me think how lucky the children are to attend school in such a stunning location*

Occasionally the landscape is anchored to some-one else's house!

*June Robinson (218) The view from the balcony of Jonny and Alan's house (Great Barn) – nothing like it – the best view down our valley to the sea. You can't see another house – except the Willmingtons.*

***There's also attachment expressed through arrival:***

*Barbara Farquharson (1) I Come over the brow of the hill and see my home and the sea. Bliss! Now, of course, it's become memory lane.*

*Joan Doern (87) Top of Sellers Wood road – the valley opens up – we're home!*

*Julia Heckford (135) Locksey Lane – flat corner (wide green area) - almost the first view of sea and we're almost at Eastcotte where we can relax*

*Doug Yeabsley (132) Top of Vicarage Hill, near the gate-way – see the lights in the village, see the smoke. Fantastic! Memories of coming back – you’re home!*

*Catherine Bright (172) Undercliff Caravan – arriving back at our favourite place!!*

- **LANDSCAPES CAN BE BOTH FAR AND NEAR**

You’ll already have noticed that people juxtapose distant landscapes and things close up. Often in mentioning plants or animals, they’re also acknowledging the seasons:

*Edwin Purchase (10) Between the cattle grids above Culverhole. Lovely view – and seeing primrose and violets there – really wild.*

*John Marchant (184) Pits, School Lane –the view to the sea and the sea of wild garlic flowers in the spring*

*Glynis & Bruce Newman (60) Looking down Watercombe valley – just able to see the sea. Watching swallows, bats and buzzards*

*John Freeman & Amanda Paul (34) Weston Cliffs – most of all when the swallows come.*

Sometimes these close-up views are more about place (a more contained space) than about landscape:

*Emily Gladstone (222) Turn left off the coast path, past the old corrugated iron shed, a passage way of trees before you come out on top of the cliff – they’re sloe trees and I used to pick them in the autumn. I used to go there a lot when I first moved to Branscombe and we lived up Street*

*Priscilla Trenchard (89) Orchard opposite the Forge – it’s a romantic thing – the orchard in bloom with that cottage and the blacksmith*

*Patrick Dillon (194) Weston Mouth – glow worms!*

*Bruce Doern (31) Road view west of Millers Lea. Early April –seeing the baby lambs gambolling in the field*

*Pat Bansal (39) Cowslip field on coast path going west from Berry Barton – I just love the cowslips!*

*Steve Griffin (54) Higher House garden – listening and watching the birds, and the stars at night*

*Jill Shorthouse (160) Nearly opposite Bulstone Corner, the path to the left goes up to a beautiful wild flower meadow in the spring-time, with sea glimpses*

- **LANDSCAPES AND PLACES ARE EMOTIVE**

That's already become apparent from the descriptions we've had. Surprisingly – or perhaps not surprisingly given the busyness of people's lives – again and again people talk about peacefulness in the landscape. Sometimes what adds to the peacefulness is that it's a secret place, and sometimes it's the rough sea that is comforting:

*Lizzie & Granville Wilcock (58) Berry Barton west end of field, big ash tree above our caravan – view of Lyme Bay from Start Point to Portland Bill. Peace, only birdsong, 25 years of pleasure*

*Rose McDonald (32) Reaching cliff path from Dawes Farm – the quietest open space with cowslips and views and soaring birds*

*Laura and Jon Williams (215) Coming up from the churchyard, cross over the coast path and go straight up another slope to the cliff. When you get to the top, immediately south going down, there's a kind of grassy amphitheatre looking out to sea – we used to come whenever we had to connect with why we're here. A feeling of safety and awe and connection. An amazing spot to absorb sun rays and stare at the horizon*

*Glenn Everett (213) Kiln Lane looking East, Berry Fort to the right – feels very calm, quiet and tranquil, and the dog gets to run off her lead*

*Graham Walford-Howell (28) East Cliff – wonderful view, especially clear winter's night, overlooking whole of Lyme Bay, to Portland and westwards. Great for reflection and clear thinking. And the dogs love it too!*

[Worth noting that dogs play an important part in people's appreciation of landscape – they take you places, and make you pause!]

*Nigel Sharman (182) Hazelwood, at the top of Stockhams Hill – in the later afternoon in the sunshine, the air looks thick and the village peaceful*

*Brian Sharman (183) Daphne's patch – total tranquillity*

*Eileen Ardern (80) Pop's Seat – beautiful view and very peaceful*

*Helen Poyner (170) Far east end of Branscombe Beach where you have to start climbing over the rocks to get round – sitting high in the rock-fall looking out over the sea, it's wonderfully peaceful and away from everything and everyone. Created a performance installation here in 20\*\*...*

*Don Hunt (174) Berry Barton cliff – I've been living there ten years. View and solitude.*

*Gary Hall (164) Sitting on the Napoli anchor looking out to sea – especially when the sea is rough*

*Polly Farquharson (91) West cliff, the coastal path just near the cliff top – I love stopping in this place and looking down at the beach below, listening to the sound of the waves and shingle*

*Chris and Lorna Page (93) In front of the beach huts – breakfast on an empty beach*

*Gary Rivers (105) Littlecombe – enjoying a quiet lunch on an empty beach*

*Caroline Powell (123) Footpath through the woods from Ball Hill to the Fountain Head – atmosphere – tranquil, natural*

*Emma Cox (99) Junction of Undercliff path with Coast path on East Cliff – looking west – Castle Rock plus coastline – tremendous feeling of space and peace*

It's noticeable that sometimes women feel the need to unwind:

*Amanda Bentley (191) Half way up East Hill going out from Great Seaside, where there's a little bench – I like to sit there and look at the view and clear my head. It's a peaceful place*

*Chetna Jones (189) Walking down to school from Street – clears the mind, all the stress. When the children were little – it's not about the view.*

*Amanda Love (202) The beach to the west beyond the beach chalets – just sitting, standing, walking there, looking out to sea, particularly when it's at its wildest*

Sometimes the church seems to be important in a 'peaceful' landscape

*Jill Johnson (77) view of church and the valley to the sea – beautiful and peaceful spot*

*Kathy Chadwick (81) Looking across to the church and hillside – I love the ancient peaceful feeling and long standing beauty*

*Richard Chadwick (82) from our cottage looking at the church – spirituality and tranquillity*

*Pat Crowe (146) The churchyard – the atmosphere very peaceful as I walk down the path to do the flowers*

- **LANDSCAPES AND PLACES OF MEMORY**

**Very often people wind stories into the landscape – mainly stories from their past, about their memories.** Often they're attached to significant places rather than landscapes, or places within a larger landscape

**Sometimes the memory attaches to home:**

*Bill Carpenter (5) Fern cottage, Street. Here, where we lived*

*Tony Lambert (70) Brookside – home, sweet home!*

*Linda Hughes (75) Great Seaside Cottage – the only place I've lived in 42 years of married life*

*Sheleen Nicklin (102) 'Bridge View' - it's my home. My son was born there, lovely view. I love it*

On Littlecombe Shoot people wove memories around their huts:

*Fran Ellis (18) I've been coming here since I was a young child. I now bring my own children. My Dad loved it here and our hut is dedicated to him – he died in 2002. I will always love it here*

*Flo Pearson (84) Our hut at Littlecombe Shoot – it's our hut – it's been part of my life always and is my favourite place in the world. My father's ashes are there and years of plants we've tried to protect from the brambles!*

For people who'd lived in the village or in the neighbourhood all their lives places often evoked

**childhood memories:**

*Betty Rowson (3): Goosemoor. Where I lived as a child. I was happy there.*

*Mike Sweetland (186) Church copse – used to play there when I was a child – swings in the trees – went before we went to school. One boy came down off the swing in the wild garlic – got sent home from school because of the smell!*

*Mike Fielden (207) Up at Weston – as a kid, going there. My father used to launch his glider up there – with an elastic band and a Jag! He was a world class pilot!*

*Geoff Squire (22) The school house garden – put there for many hours in my pram. First awareness of the 'great outdoors' in Branscombe*

*Geoff Squire (23) The school allotment. Many hours there with my father – especially taking buckets of water from the stream to water the tomatoes grown behind the shed*

*Rosemary Pavey (42) Opposite Edge cottage – family memories of the house, and standing on the tump on the top of the field opposite looking down the valley*

*Mervyn Tims (85) Under Hooken cliffs and cave – mainly for fond boyhood memories as favourite playground.*

*Andrew Sweetland (216) Cliffs between Branscombe and Beer – messing around – messing around as kids. The cave – I don't know if you still get up there*

*Simon Bird (69) Big flat rock on east beach towards Beer Head – that's where we had the boat, illicit parties, bonfires, cooking fish, swimming, stealing fresh salmon from the nets*

*Dougal Bird (134) West side of the beach at Branscombe Mouth, beyond the chalets – that's where I used to sleep out in my sleeping bag!*

*Emma Brock (88) Top of Ball Hill – childhood walks from the hut at Littlecombe to Fountain Head. The smell of garlic coming through the wood, and looking down and seeing the village*

*Chris Bass (120) Branscombe Beach – many happy days on the beach working John's self-drives and heading out to sea*

**Those who've come to the village and brought up children there also wrap their stories around particular places:**

*Angela Lambert (61) Behind Lancaster Cottage, turn left up to edge of wood – old clay working exposed in massive roots of oak, children played, climbed and dug clay for modelling*

*Angela Lambert (62) Littlecombe – lovely long walk ... picnic/fire-sleeping bags – sleep under stars and swim in morning and home for breakfast*

*Joan Doern (86) 'Witches Wood' (Hole Pits) My children learnt to ride there in '76/'77 and we dug the Victorian tip with the Glaisters and loved the stories of the '50's witches coven meeting there*

*Angela Patterson (169) The bumps above Culverwell – wonderful view, great place for children to play*

*Sarah Miller (64) out in John's boat, looking back at Branscombe Mouth – memories of happy times with the family going out mackerel fishing*

*Rowland Molony (119) The start of the footpath back up through the landslip towards Beer – this is where the goblins chuckled for Emma, aged 6 or 7 in the 1980s*

Very few people in Branscombe associate landscapes with work. Perhaps because, on the whole, people either work outside the village, or are retired, or associate favourite places with leisure.

Here's a rare working memory:

*Graham Williams (190) Working in the garden at Eastcotte – great views*

**Sometimes the memories come from particular moments or occasions in a person's life:**

*Andrea Bass (118) Berry Cliff, east of Berry Camp, on the cliff edge – this is where Chris proposed to me! Looking west you can see the peregrine falcon from here*

*Jackie Yeabsley (148) Our hut at Littlecombe Shoot. Doug built it in 1952. When we first met Dug took me down to the hut, my first view of Branscombe, and after that, the summer holidays we spent there before we bought Melbourne House*

*Abi Fuell (177) The church – because of my girls' christening. I got married there, and Chris cuts the grass*

*Kate Norbury (37) Bench on coast walk overlooking Hooken Cliff – bench put there for our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary by our friends*

*Bill Carpenter (6) East chalet, Branscombe Mouth. When I retired I took Eileen on a holiday away from Street, we took a chalet on the beach – and so my favourite view is of the Pinnacles and round the coast.*

*Phyllis Denning (9) Manor Mill. My brother lived there and we had one or two nice barbecues at the back of the water wheel*

*Kingsley Squire (12) Village Hall – centre of activity – attended barn dances there. Hub of the village fete, sports held in the field across the road<sup>iv</sup>*

#### **Often the memories circle around death:**

*Doreen Franks (130) Rams Horn Rock, corner of Weston path and coastal path – emotional! Childhood with my dad, right from five years old, summer evenings, walk out there lay down and crawl forward to the edge of cliff, watch the wild life. Taking Roge there when we first went out. And when Doug died, sitting on the stile and crying. Somewhere to go with someone close or to be on my own.*

*Tony Sellick (145) From the tump at the end of row B in the East Cliff caravan park – because my father's ashes are up here.*

*Sid Sweetland (4) Littlecombe New Plat. All my memories are there, and my father-in-law died out there*

*Sarah Ince (8) Off Castle Rock, [ashes taken out to sea] Where we said goodbye to Dad – after so many family days and happy memories growing up here*

*Chris Woodruff (35) Kimmo's seat near leat at Manor Mill – a lasting memory for our dear friend*

*Emma Cox (98) just as you leave Pitt farm, view towards sea and valley – a favourite view for my Mum*

*Tony Johnson (159) Just before the east entrance to Littlecombe Plats – Ash Cliff! Where Pete Herniman’s ashes are scattered, where we’re going to be scattered. Grassy bank with wonderful orchids.*

*Ros Sutherland (179) View from Percy’s veg garden, Eastcote – view over the village, not a veg garden any more, it reminds me of my dad*

- **SOMETIMES MEMORY TOUCHES HISTORY**

Remember Pete Wilson at the beginning of this account?

*Pete Wilson (221) The undercliff – the feeling of an area that’s been used and gone back to nature*

*Jill & Jim Coble (195) Weston Mouth – because Orlando Hutchinson discovered it!*

*Mike Green (122) Looking from the footpath to Beer down on the Masons etc – if you do it when it’s dimpsy it conjures up smugglers secretly leaving or approaching the Masons*

*Ann Richardson (59) My great-grandfather Cluffy Gosling farmed on the cliff, there is still a track where he turned the donkeys. The view in both directions can’t be beaten*

*Jennie Salter (73) Woodhead – my grandfather – James Salter, Uncle George, my Aunt Mary, and my father Martin. They lived and farmed here during WW11*

*Sue Dymond (144) The cliff top above Littlecombe Shoot – as a local historian I am drawn to landscapes which I know some of the history of, working landscapes if you like. At Berry I can picture the cliff farmers working their plats below me from the eighteenth to mid twentieth centuries. I can imagine the coal boats coming into the bay to land their cargoes, which will be used to fuel the limekilns dotted along the cliffs hereabouts. Smugglers will have walked here, Excise men too. In WW2 the Home guard paraded along the cliff tops nightly, and a searchlight battery was based just here as well. This spot for me is peopled with ghosts of the past, which makes it all the more interesting. The view is amazing too!*

- **MOVEMENT IN THE LANDSCAPE**

People often think of landscape as a place you stop and look AT. But often the pleasure, and the 'scape', is *part* of walking, and seeing a sequence of places. Or maybe walking and then stopping. Maybe your dog is part of the story.

*Dave Seward (36) Car park at Weston – many good walks originate at the Weston car park – along the cliff, along the beach*

*Dinah Denning (38) Pooh Stick bridge – walking through the meadows to Pooh Stick bridge and overlooking the stream that winds its way to the sea*

*Auriel Sharman (193) Branscombe Meadow from Manor Mill, through the stile, over the stream and through the woods – very changeable, so more interesting. Anticipation of seeing what sort of sea it's going to be*

*Rebecca Russell (208) Walking from the forge to the beach by Manor Mill – compared to going by road, it's so short and so pretty and by and large the sea comes as a surprise. and usually it's so peaceful.*

*Andrew Gibbins (175) Off the footpath goes from the Fountain Head to Branscombe Old Pits – view of the valley, then climb a bit and view of the sea with the trees and the valley in front of it*

*Liz Molony (90) My first English walks – October, icy sleet, but a little taste of 'wilderness' through brambles looking down onto Branscombe*

*Liz Lawrence (125) Standing on the upper slope of Pitt hill looking over to the west end of the church after a long walk*

*Nigel Freathy (111) The beach at the Sea Shanty – end of a favourite walk*

*Viv Lamb (198) East Cliff – the achievement of climbing such a high hill (for me!!), the reward being a wonderful view of the Red Cliffs*

### **Sometimes the sea is the story, and swimming:**

*Tony Lambert (71) The big rocks on the beach at Hooken – wonderful spot for swimming about the rocks at high tide. Beautiful clear water.*

*David Shrigley (150) Sea at Branscombe Mouth – I like swimming in the sea*

*Diane Bird (83) coming down the small, now washed out, path to the sea from East Hill caravan site – the crunch of the first footstep onto the beach – good swimming to the east.*

*Annie Pfingst (171) Far end east beach – cliffs and caves – exciting tidal place – can only access it at low tide – magical!*

- **POSTSCRIPT**

Maybe it was a mistake to ask people whilst they were drinking their beer up at the Fountain Head. Suddenly the landscape became very particular!

*David Lawrence (124) Fountain Head – the best pub in the world*

*Jan Bagge (129) View of the Fountain Head from the top of the footpath near the Old Pits – because the next pint of Branoc will be very close!*

*Rachel Taylor (96) Street – great pub and wild daffs in the spring. Remember coming for walks here as a child*

*John Woodley (139) Fountain Head – good beer, good food, not too far to stagger home!*

*Teresa Hoare (140) Fountain Head – what better place to be – I work here, we run it, it's a unique place to be*

*Roger Winchester (141) Fountain Head – without a question the best crab sandwich on the finest granary bread washed down with a magnificent pint of Branoc*

*Pat & Mike Sweet (97) Berry Barton Caravan Site – 54 years happy caravanning and the Fountain Head*

*Sylvan Robinson (217) Road from Berry Barton to the Fountain Head– looking across the group of houses and the track up the hillside beyond – nice place when stopping the car and thinking of the drink you are going to have. Catches a classical old village scene*

Much the same thing happened talking with Ian Barlow at the Masons Arms:

*Ian Barlow (199) Sign at the Masons Arms – ‘Now Ye Toil Not’*

We'll end with Norah Jagers (196) *Branoc Hall – the talks and exhibitions are so fascinating!*

---

<sup>i</sup> However, 14 people got to have two bites of the cherry – thus the *real* number of villagers placing a dot is 172.

<sup>ii</sup> There are about 318 houses in Branscombe, of which 260 are first homes. The dots have been placed mainly by full time residents, but also by second-homers. Taking into account people who had two bites of the cherry and households where more than one person put a dot, about 207 households (first and second homers) are represented.

<sup>iii</sup> The numbers in brackets refer to the pin numbers on the Google map.

## **A HUGE THANKS**

**Quite literally, without you, it would never have happened ...**

**First, to all the people who put their dots on the map and talked about their favourite landscapes and places.**

**Second, to all the people who took photographs, most particularly to those who took several photos: Chris Bass,**

---

Polly Farquharson, Tony Johnson, David Lawrence, Annie Pfingst, Fiona & David Strange, and John Torrance.

Third, to those who drew or painted scenes for us: Simon Bird, Angela Lambert, Cory Lyons, and Priscilla Trenchard.

Fourth, those who lent us drawings or paintings: Diane Bird, Kathy Chadwick, Mike Lambert, Sandy MacFadyen, and Brian Sharman.

Fifth, to the Parish Council for the use of old photographs.

And, finally, most particularly, to Chris Bass who created the monster Google map.