



## West Moors: a History in Images

### *The Petwyn, Pinehurst Road & Woolslope ...*

The area encompassed by this section is now one of the most developed parts of West Moors but until the first decade of the twentieth century, Pinehurst Road was a moorland track, with the vast expanse of St. Leonard's Heath (or Priory Common) rolling away to the north, and fields attached to Woolslope Farm falling away to the Uddens to the south. The lower part of modern-day Station Road crossed the Uddens for many centuries by means of a ford – traffic was very light until the mid-nineteenth century. Then a series of bridges were built but there has always been very marshy ground either side of the stream – the present-day Slop Bog being a remnant of this landscape. It became an important local route when the railway was opened as it afforded access to the Wimborne – Ringwood Road (formerly a turnpike highway) and also to Stewart's Nursery – a huge undertaking dating from the mid-nineteenth century, lying just north of the Wimborne Road. Stewarts made extensive use of West Moors station to send plants away to customers until road competition increased after the Second World War.

#### ***The Petwyn . . .***

The name comes from one of the 17<sup>th</sup> century families who were allotted tracts of rough heathland for low-level agricultural use, e.g., grazing animals, gathering of furze, coppice management etc.



The image above is difficult to date precisely, but in the foreground, the rough ground is what is now known as 'The Petwyn' with Glenwood Road heading away from Station Road. There is no obvious street 'furniture' (white lines etc.) and the old private school-house stands on its own (where the flats are now) and suggests this is a pre-Second World War image.



We're now looking at roughly the same area, but from the opposite direction. It's not clear how the elevation was obtained to achieve this shot, but it must be post-1971, when the War Memorial was moved to The Petwyn in that year and before the 'Elephant and Castle' revamp (left-most building): it could be from the top of the flats at Penn Court. The view is towards the south, so the turning for Glenwood Road is just to the left and a little behind the car coming down Station Road.

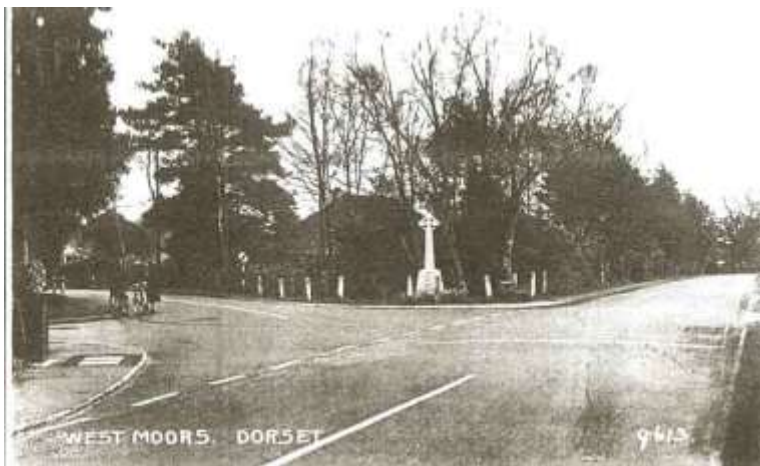
### ***The village War Memorial . . .***

As in many communities elsewhere across this country, the village suffered its share of losses in the two 'World' wars. After the Great War (1914-1918), towns and villages across the United Kingdom raised money to erect permanent memorial stones to honour those who had died in that conflict.

In West Moors the Memorial was erected at the junction of Station Road with Pinehurst Road in September 1920. The image below shows this monument at that location.



Given the 'crushed stone' surface of the roadway, this view (above) probably dates from the 1920s or early 1930s. The road to the left is Pinehurst (or Pine Hurst as originally given) Road and that off to the right is Station Road, heading for the Uddens thence to Wimborne Road and Ferndown. The entrance to Woolslope Farm would have been just off to the left of Station Road at the right-hand edge of this photograph.



We've moved on quite a time now – probably well after the Second World War. The road surface is now surfaced with tarmac, with the ubiquitous 'white lines' and even a speed limit sign. The buildings that can be made out behind the trees date from the 1920s and are mostly still extant.

When the memorial was erected in the 1920s this corner of the village was a quiet spot with only occasional passing (and relatively slow) local traffic. With the dramatic residential development across the former St. Leonard's Common (either side of Pinehurst Road) and a general increase in traffic along Station Road, it became too difficult to arrange the annual Remembrance Service at this spot and the memorial was re-located to its present position on The Petwyn. The photograph below is probably towards the end of its time at this junction.



The house in the background has now gone – replaced by a retirement complex. This junction is now one of the busiest in the village. A recent shot of the Memorial is shown below – others can be seen elsewhere on the parish council web site.



The following two images are recent, but they illustrate, in the absence of older photographs, the history we have in our midst.



This semi-detached cottage dates from the nineteenth century – it is certainly on the maps of the 1880s – and following the demolition of Woolslope farmhouse in the 1970s, is now the oldest dwelling in this part of West Moors. When built, what is now Pinehurst Road was little more than a rough cart track. Situated on the edge of common land the more important access was the ancient track that left Station Road near Woolslope Farm, heading north towards the heath – a remnant of this remains in the ‘restricted byway’ adjacent to ‘Blue Cedars’.

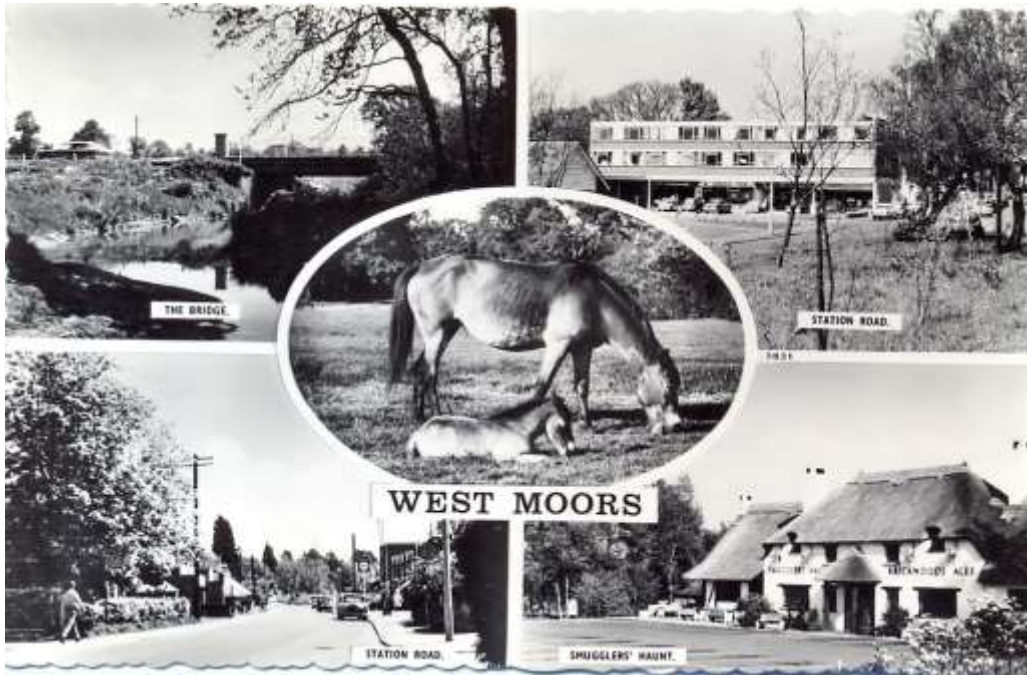


In the absence of photographs of property along Pinehurst Road in earlier times, this view is included to show the typical style of dwellings built in the first few years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. These houses would have had reasonable amounts of land attached, and facing south – with no properties on the other side of the road – would have had uninterrupted views over Woolslope farmland, the valley of the Uddens and on to the undeveloped heathland of Parley Common.



Gypsy folk are an important part of the West Moors story: this rare shot shows a family parked somewhere within the village. Many of these families used land in the modern-day Elmhurst, Oakhurst & Priory Road areas, harvesting the products of the nearby moorland – and sending their children to the local school. With the changing pace of life in Britain through the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, many settled in West Moors.

(photo: courtesy Amanda Gillingham)



This is a commercial postcard dating from the late 1960s. From top-left, working in a clockwise fashion, we have: the bridge over the Uddens at the bottom of Station Road; Penn Court shopping area with The Petwyn in the foreground; Smugglers' Haunt on the Ringwood Road (not strictly within West Moors parish) and a general view looking south along Station Road. No idea about the central 'oval' image but a scene that can be viewed even in today's busy world.



In 1925, this wooden chapel, originally located at Mannington, was rebuilt on this spot along Pinehurst Road – with the express intention of encouraging the local gypsy population to attend church. In the event, it was of more use to the growing 'settled' community in this part of West Moors.

The chapel was demolished in 2000 when it became impossible to insure and a bungalow now stands on the site – opposite the turning for Woolslope Road that leads to Pinehurst Park.

A view that isn't often seen of St. John's chapel: this is looking from the frontage of what was Shelley Nursery and frankly it's a pity that the building couldn't have been saved as it was obviously a feature of Pinehurst Road.

[This image supplied by Peter Bedewell]



This is a view along the Uddens looking towards the bridge on Station Road. In the years following the taking of this photograph, the vegetation has been allowed to grow unchecked and it would be difficult to obtain such an 'open' aspect now.

Recently, land to the north of the Uddens on the other side of the bridge – attached to the former Woolslope farm – is being managed on behalf of the community to provide recreational facilities. This will complement the 'Riverside Walk' which has been available for several years now – enabling a walk from the Ringwood Road (A31) near Trickett's Cross, along the line of the Uddens, and on through (or around) Pennington's Copse to meet the footpath leading to Ameysford and the Castleman Trailway.

[Last updated: March 2014]