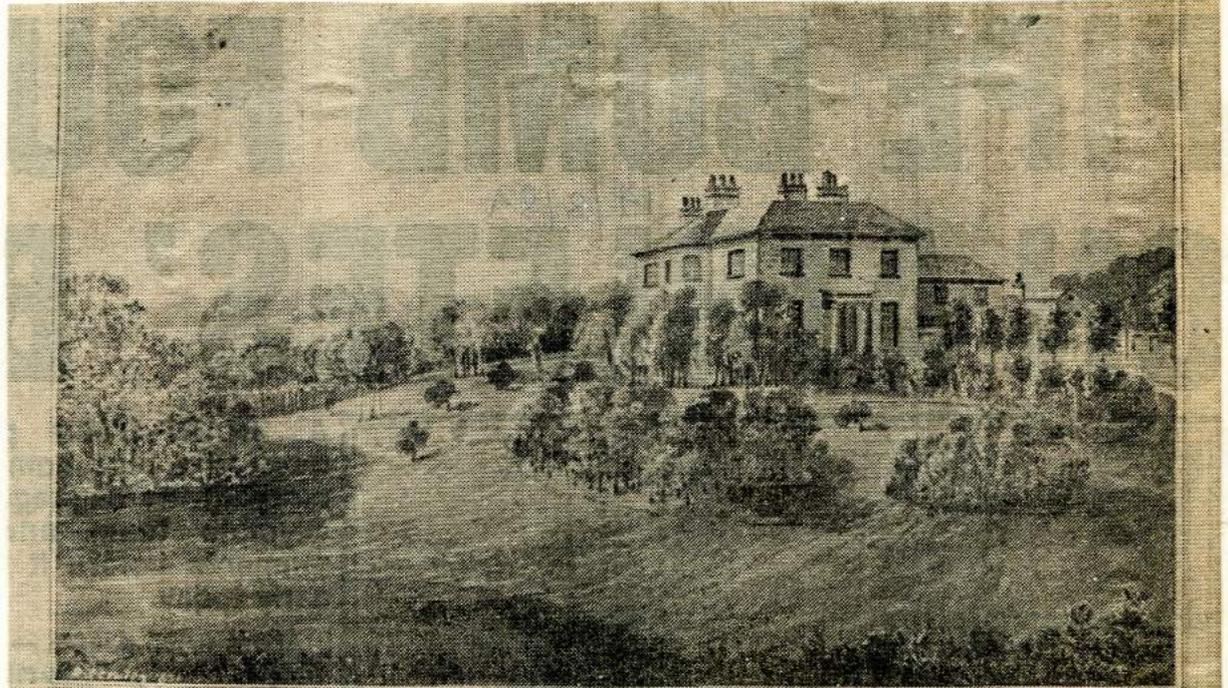


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NOT TO BE TAKEN AWAY

Bitterne

CLASSIFICATION <i>HS h</i>	SUBJECT <i>Ashtown Villa</i>	SOURCE <i>S.E.E.</i>	DATE <i>14-8-84</i>
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TO BE SOLD OR LET. ASHTOWN VILLA, BITTERNE, 2 MILES FROM SOUTHAMPTON, WITH EIGHT ACRES AND HALF OF LAND. THE HOUSE COMMANDS NEAR VIEWS OF THE RIVER ITCHEN, SOUTHAMPTON WITH ITS EXTENSIVE SCENERY AROUND, INCLUDING THE ISLE OF WIGHT. New Forest Co.

THIS old painting came to light in a Dean Road garage and was brought to the Bitterne Local History Society's exhibition in May 1982.

It was subsequently presented to Southampton City Museums and restored at the Art Gallery, where it is now kept.

Dated 1831, the neat watercolour is signed R. Scruton, an artist not otherwise known today.

He may have "prettified" both house and grounds, for the painting was done to support the notice below it: "To be sold or let: Ashtown Villa, Bitterne, 2 miles from Southampton, with eight acres and a half of land. The house commands near views of the River Itchen, Southampton with its extensive scenery around, including the Isle of Wight, New Forest etc."

Where and what was Ashtown Villa?

Mr. A. G. K. Leonard identifies it with the house usually called Little Chessel (originally Chessel or Cheesehill Cottage) about which he wrote in the Echo recently.

This medium-sized square Georgian house, standing a little to the north west of its grander neighbour, pre-dated by several years the Chessel House built for David Lance in 1797 and occupied by him until about 1820.

For 20 years until his death in 1840 the "big house" was owned by Lord Ashtown but a change of name to Ashtown House did not "stick". The 1831 painting indicates that Ashtown's name was also briefly extended to the nearby smaller house.

It was the home for some 50 years of the Misses Charlotte and Catherine Hale, who died in 1832 and 1853 respectively. It was demolished in 1859.

In the event no sale took place and the "Misses Hale" continued in occupation.

Some intriguing questions arise . . . Was Lord Ashtown hard up in 1831? Had he had words with the sisters? Did they assert their rights as sitting tenants to remain at Little Chessel for life?