

THE MILL

Harbertonford | Totnes | South Hams





Developing stunning homes in the South West

At Poppy Developments we only pick the most unique projects and locations so that the final result is very special



We specialise in all types of properties in Devon and rural developments throughout the Southwest, be it Grade II Listed barn conversions, townhouses or a unique Devon Longhouse. The locations and build projects are picked for their stunning views, whether set amongst the rolling countryside or with beautiful views of the Devon coast. Based in Totnes, Devon, we operate across the South West and have developed barns and rural buildings throughout Devon, Cornwall and Somerset.

We breathe new life into old buildings. We preserve and keep as many original features as possible often turning them into a talking point of the home. We thrive on keeping and conserving the feel and style of a property, then compliment this with quality modern features and technology; providing you with a stunning home.

We truly care about the homes we create and put a great deal of thought into every aspect of the conversion process. Whether it's a magnificent old mill, a large barn or a beautiful quaint thatched cottage, we lovingly restore them, taking the time to source the right materials and tradesmen for each particular project; you can be assured of an exquisite new home with character.

"I bought my gorgeous home near Slapton in early 2013. It is fabulous, thoughtfully constructed, very spacious, comfortable and modern while preserving the charm and original character of a converted farm building. Simon Stone is a pleasure to deal with - nice touches like a welcome card and bottle of fizz when we moved in. They are always on the end of the phone, responsive and helpful (even out of hours) with any queries I might have. Definitely get a gold star from me" S Wrigley

THE MILL

A breathtaking development of just seven luxury 3, 4 & 5 bedroom town houses

The Mill is located approximately 200 yards to the west of the A381 in the village of Harbertonford.

The Mill is a Grade II Listed Woollen Mill dating back to 1769, which is being sympathetically converted in to just 7 luxury 3, 4 and 5 bedroom town houses. It is vital that we preserve the history of this outstanding building for generations to come. A clever combination of contemporary design and traditional materials harmonise perfectly with the original character features of this old building resulting in a truly unique and stylish home. Each property benefits from southerly facing gardens overlooking the Harbourne River.

Harbertonford is a village of about 300 houses south of Totnes in the region of the South Hams. It lies in the valley of the Harbourne river which is a tributary of the Dart. The river has a steep gradient and has served a string of water mills. The village has a pub, garage / store, primary school, church and several small businesses.

The Medieval market town of Totnes is just 3 miles away and offers a wealth of shops, superb locally sourced food and great places to eat. One mile on from Totnes is Dartington, known for its famous glass and as a haunt for artists and writers. The busier resort of Torbay sits 10 minutes in the other direction with its beaches, zoo and attractions. This part of Devon is renowned for its outstanding natural beauty with Dartmoor National Park ten miles to the north and stunning beaches 7 miles to the south.

One of the many attractions of this unique development is the mainline train station providing direct access to London Paddington in 2 hours 40 minutes as well as Birmingham, Leeds and Glasgow.

There are a number of fantastic Primary and Secondary schools within close proximity.

Source: Western Morning News – January 1953

Harbertonford



Hand Made Tools at the Edge Tool Factory

Without bus, rail or telephone facilities and with a water wheel standing in for “grid” electricity as a power supply, a small factory making agricultural tools near Totnes would probably claim to support an industry as truly rural as any in the country.

Set in a pleasant valley between the villages of Harberton and Harbertonford, the factory has been making “edge” or cutting tools for more than 129 years.

The craft of making the tools which is one of the oldest in Devon is said to have been handed down through one generation to the next, often through families, from early times.

A quarter of a Century ago the factory used to make some 100 different type of hooks, hoes and shovels; today production is confined to about 35 types, mostly grass cutting hooks and special orders.

Special Patterns

These “special orders” give a clue as to how such a factory is able to compete successfully against modern mass production methods. At one time individual workers used to have their own patterns for the tools and the factory would make them up to their own specification.

Some of the bigger hooks made for grass, woodcutting and verge trimming go to Cornwall. “Don’t ask me why” says the factory manager Mr Tucker. “Maybe they are bigger men down there. We make hooks up to two and three quarter pounds in weight. It must be like swinging a frying pan around but that is the traditional pattern and those who use them won’t have any other.”

Farmers Demand

The factory’s products find a market as far away as Dorset and parts of Somerset and Gloucester as well as throughout Devon and Cornwall.



Farmers and farm labourers in this corner of England will not, it seems buy tools made in the big industrial areas. They demand the locally made article.

Another factory has also no doubt contributed to the survival of manual methods. Mr Tucker observes “Handmade tools are superior; I do not think you can expect a machine to forge tools as well as a man can forge them. The men here know as much about the using of the tools as the making of them. They therefore know how best to make them for any particular jobs.”

Source: Western Morning News – January 1956



Industrial Village

Churchwards woollen mills close after 100 years

The closure of the factory which dominated the village is put down to the cost of bringing the old mill up to date for it to compete in the modern blanket and wool cloth trade. The looms, carding and spinning machines weighing as many tons as the floor will stand and therefore in need of modernisation. During the two world wars the looms at Harbertonford Mill turned out serge to be dyed blue for the Royal Navy. Their trademark in the corner of each blanket depicts Buckfastleigh Church, as it was there that John Churchward traded in wool and agricultural seeds. 30 men and 45 females currently employed would lose their jobs.



John Churchward had been operating at Harbertonford for nearly 100 years (at Buckfastleigh from 1825). When he took it over it was a gristmill with a wheel in the Harbourne stream. Two floors extended to six when it changed to wool. The tall chimney was built in 1906 and the mill was lengthened and a row of cottages incorporated.

Source: Western Morning News - October 2008



Lost world of river that once roared with life

There's a dark, bleak, empty moor that you can spy on from the main Exeter, Plymouth highway that gives birth to a hidden vale which is now the realm of herons and trout and not a lot else. Not long ago the valley of the Harbourne River was booming and roaring with the sound of human industry.

It is the memory of all this industry and endeavour that has inspired one WMN reader to make the river his Site of Special Sentimental Interest (SSSI). Henry Harris from Totnes can recall when the fast-flowing but, nowadays, little known Harbourne played host to all manner of mills that took power from its clean flow. Indeed, his wife Joyce used to work in the largest of the mills which is now a big, sad looking hulk that looms over the village of Harbertonford.

Harbertonford is the river's capital. In fact, Harbertonford is probably the only place where most of us realise we're rubbing shoulders with the stream. We may even catch a brief glimpse of it in the village as we head south from Totnes on the A381 towards Kingsbridge to Dartmouth. Turn off the main road and head either up or down the valley and you enter another world. A dingy-dell land set deep in Devon's rural idyll where cattle munch lush grasses, where electronically operated security gates hide posh converted barns and where heron and trout play out their watery chase.

This is a vale of memories, a world that Henry Harris recalls with glee and yet laments. While exploring the Harbourne with Henry and Joyce recently I heard him sigh time and again as he pointed out some change or other.

"Hasn't it grown in....." he kept saying as we potted down the narrow lanes now bordered by thick hedges and high trees.

Like so much of the British landscape, Harbourne country has that overgrown look that belies the labours of Centuries of hedge-layers charcoal burners, coppicers, hurdle-makers and farmhands.

"There was a mill there A chapel there That used to be a mill. A leat used to start here Boats used to come up as far as here "

Travelling the Harbourne with Henry was like entering a lost world. A busy, jangling world of sweat and hard work. A world in which the countryside was a place of labour rather than of leisure.

He first arrived in the valley as a boy when his parents moved from the Exeter area. "I came to live in Harbertonford on November 5, 1938", said this small, ebullient man as we stood looking at the village's new, attractively laid-out flood relief scheme. "I went to school here, grew up here and married here. The village has a lot of childhood memories for me."

As for his beloved river, "I grew up by it, played in it, fished in it, people worked by it and there were lots of mills here employing people At one time years ago it was busy, but the woollen mills have all closed down."

"They used to use the water a lot," said Henry as we walked up past the graveyard towards the big, gaunt old mill building that dominates the slope to the North of the village.

"It drove the turbines which drove the machines and a hundred people were employed here"

The mill was famous for its serge cloth which was used mainly by the military for making thick blankets and hardy uniforms. Joyce can remember working on the looms whose noise she says was deafening. Henry, who worked in the building trade and who occasionally did jobs at the mill agreed.



Source: Newspaper



The Site of the old woollen mill produced Navy's serge

It is difficult to imagine that a large woollen mill once existed in Harbertonford.

The mill had a 120 foot high chimney which dominated the skyline. The six storey building which was owned by John Churchward and Sons was a short walk from the church and its huge machines weighing many tons turned out serge to be dyed for the Royal Navy while blankets produced here were 100 per cent wool.

The woollen mill closed in 1956 and three years later the chimney, consisting of 33,000 bricks, was toppled by Dawson Steeple Jacks Ltd. Clutton, Nr Bristol on Wednesday September 2nd 1959.







Specification

The high specification at The Mill includes:

- Premium fitted kitchens, individually designed
- Integrated fridge, freezer, dishwasher and washer dryer
- Bosch appliances
- Villeroy & Boch sanitaryware
- Contemporary bathrooms with porcelain tiles and heated towel rails
- Oak internal doors with brushed stainless steel furniture
- Designer column radiators throughout
- Oak beams and steel stanchions
- Handmade hardwood double-glazed joinery (made by local craftsmen)
- Highly insulated
- Gas central heating
- South facing gardens
- Patios and hard landscaped areas
- Allocated parking
- 6 year warranty
- Minimal service charge

Each home has been built by local craftsmen and will be warrantied with an architects certificate, ensuring that all building regulations and standards have been met to ensure peace of mind.



River Dart - Totnes



Dartmouth

Just a short journey away lies Dartmouth. The town's maritime past has been well documented for more than 800 years. This famous centre for maritime history is the perfect place to relax with a meal or a drink and watch the world go by.



Salcombe

Located at the mouth of the beautiful Kingsbridge Estuary, Salcombe is the most recognisable destination in the South Hams. With its warm micro-climate, its stunning location and wonderful character it is easy to see why visitors return time and time again.



Bantham

Nestling deep in the South Hams at the mouth of the little known river Avon, Bantham beach is one of Devon's premier beaches. Within easy driving distance of Salcombe and Kingsbridge, Bantham beach offers beautiful scenery with panoramic views over Bigbury Bay and the famous Burgh Island.

Bigbury Bay itself is a shallow sandy bay, which makes Bantham an ideal beach for swimming and paddling for all the family. Owing to the natural topography of the bay, Bantham also has a reputation as one of the best surf beaches in Devon.



Bantham



Thurlestone



Hope Cove

Thurlestone

Thurlestone is a village located slightly inland on the spectacular Devon Coast in an area of outstanding beauty. It offers a panorama of coastline dotted with dramatic cliffs, sandy coves and vistas of rolling hills covered in farmland. This small, quintessential English village with its thatched roofed, cream and pink cottages has become a well known stopping point.

Hope Cove

Hope Cove is a beautiful coastal sanctuary, a place to relax and unwind. Once a favourite haunt for smugglers, now a charming holiday destination.

The village of Hope Cove nestles in the shelter of Bolt Tail in the curve of Bigbury Bay. With its clean sandy beaches and peaceful, relaxed atmosphere, Hope Cove offers the ideal holiday retreat. There are miles of delightful and varied scenery along this rugged Heritage Coastline.



Burgh Island

Client Testimonials

Stephen Woods

I am so very pleased to report that Simon has delivered everything he promised and I feel very much at one in my new surroundings. I really cannot imagine a more creative, a more helpful, or a more well disposed group of builders. During my moments of despair, when I first moved in, Simon calmly told me that he had never had an unhappy client and he has proved to be a man of his word.

A Poppy Developments home is a bespoke, hand made home and all the craftsmen who work with Simon really care about the quality of their work. The result is not a factory product and the hand of the craftsman is very much in evidence.

Peter and Carole Larratt

Simon Stone and his dedicated team of craftsmen have delivered a truly stunning development of 7 barn conversions, each one individual, each one exceptional. The attention to detail is second to none, and we love the contemporary, open plan feel of the interior of our new home, whilst the outside retains all the features of a barn this age with so many years of history.

Throughout the buying process, Simon was always accessible to answer our questions and gave us all the time and information we needed and was more than willing to accommodate special requests we had for our new home. Simon likes to say that “every problem has a solution” and we have found that he puts this into practice all the time. Equally importantly, Simon has remained just as accessible after our purchase was completed. We are truly delighted with our beautiful barn conversion and would recommend Poppy Developments without hesitation.

Garth and Gaye Allen

We moved into our new Poppy Developments Barn in the Spring of 2015. We had been searching for our ideal barn conversion in the South Hams for two years when we were advised by the Estate Agent to view Poppy Development's latest barn development project at Hernaford Barns. The near derelict detached barn needed total reconstruction inside and major renovation outside.

We were able to liaise with Simon Stone of Poppy Developments from the very beginning of the build. It was a delight to work with Simon and his team and nothing was too much trouble. Simon's team responded positively to all our questions, niggles and site visits! We have moved many times during a long married life but this property has been a true labour of love for both Simon and ourselves. He has spent a professional lifetime working on barn conversions but we always felt that building our barn was a project close to his heart. He was as excited about the process and the outcome as we were. Our experience of Poppy Developments is that they can be trusted to work to the highest standards and in a manner totally responsive to the client's wishes.



Directions

- From Totnes take the Westerly bypass signposted to Kingsbridge A381
- Travel along this road for approximately 3 miles and take the first right turn after entering the village of Harbertonford by the church
- The Mill is located around the corner on the left

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