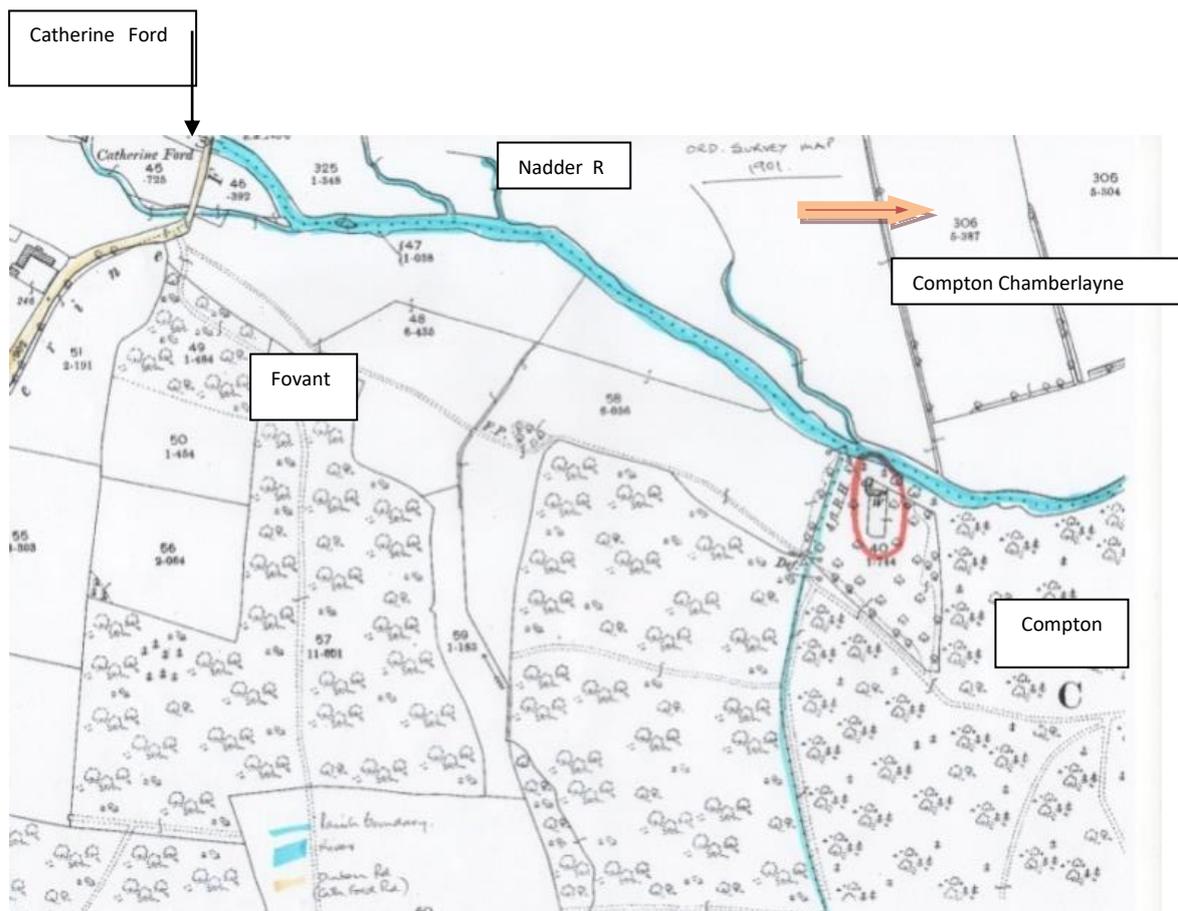


## Fever (Isolation) Cottage

Interest in this structure began with an extract from Lou Winter's book of memoirs about her childhood in Dinton, called "*Tales of a Carter's Daughter*"

*"This was a red brick cottage built in the Fovant Woods close by the side of the Nadder, which was used by anyone suffering a fever etc. who needed isolation. It must have been in used as a hospital in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century as when we came to Dinton in 1905, it was a private residence. An old couple lived there, their name was Churchill. He had a white horse and trap which he used to come to the village shop. He also delivered the Western Gazette our local weekly penny paper....the cottage was then known as Churchills.'*

The cottage is actually in Compton Wood, just on the border of the three Parishes – C.C., Fovant and Dinton. It returned to being the Forester's cottage in the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century when the Salisbury Infirmary was built.



*OS map dated 1901 & there are even earlier maps which also show a cottage in the woods.*

In 1849 the cottage, garden, and adjacent land was rented from the Compton Estate (then owned by Penruddocke) by **Samuel Cavil** for 1 shilling. (P. Papers, Trowbridge PRO)

The 1851 Census records that it was occupied by **Mary Cappel, widow, address - Compton Woods, aged 65, occ. Late labourer's wife, born Martin. Thomas Mitthead, grandson of above, aged 29, married, agricultural labourer, born Swallowcliffe.**

Sarah **Mitthead**, wife of above, aged 19, born Dinton.

The change in name could have been because the person reporting to the Census Recorder (Mary herself or Thomas, her grandson) had a cold!!!

An elderly villager of Compton Chamberlayne said that Mr Churchill was still there during the WW1. At one point he insisted on keeping his horse in the kitchen at night in case the Australian soldiers pinched him . This was not a xenophobic response to strangers roaming the woods but a sensible precaution when three Australian soldiers went AWOL from the Hurdcott camp living rough in the woods, stealing what they could to keep alive. Mr Churchill later committed suicide.

Later the cottage was demolished and the building materials used in the construction of new farm workers' cottages further downstream. Foundations, some worked stones and some iron bits are still to be seen as are the outlines of the garden surrounded by box hedging.



Box hedging marking the boundaries of an extensive garden. There are fruit trees amongst rogue scrub and shrubs which have taken over.





More stones with sculpted grooves and marks possibly used for boundary walls or outside shed/?stable.



Don Clarkson, an Australian soldier in Fovant Camp, wrote in a letter to his family in August 1918 just before he went to France :-

Things have been very hot here lately, there is a band of regular outlaws about here and they can't get them. They reckon they are about, hiding in the woods all day and they come out at night and steal, and it is not safe to be out at night in a lonely place.

One of the fellows from Hurdcott that is about two miles away, was here last night and he said the night before that two fellows at his camp had been killed - they had sandbagged them and cracked their skulls.

We had a big parade yesterday and the Colonel told us all about it and asked us to help in any way we could to keep order or to try to assist in catching them as they were giving a very bad name to the Australians.

I expect they are chaps that were absolute bad eggs in Australia and probably had to get out of it for their own health. Anyhow they have made things so willing that none of us care about being out late at night on our own. There have been about a dozen cases of sandbagging in the last month.

this morning we were supposed to go

Questions still to be answered:

Did the Parishes share the cost?

Did the forester and his family continue to live there when a contagious patient came to stay there?

Did the forester's wife nurse and care for the patients? Was she paid for this?

*M.McKenzie 2021*

