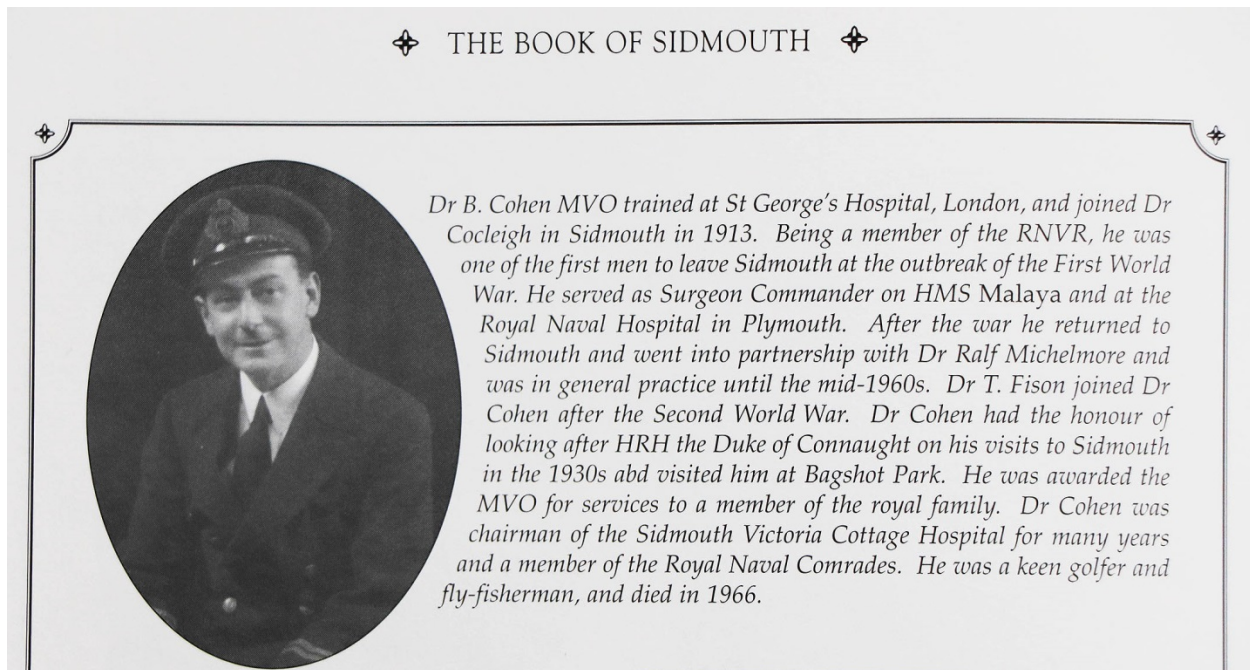


Dear Friends of Glen Goyle:

I was so excited to hear recently of your ongoing work in the reclamation of the Glen Goyle. We were so lucky as children to stay every Summer, Easter and at earlier times, Christmas, at our grandfather's house, Asherton. We swam and played tennis in the mornings and walked in the afternoons in the hills and valleys around Sidmouth. When it rained we walked in Harpford Woods and waved to the steam trains as if we were the "Railway Children".



I recently made a sketch based on my memory of the gardens in the 1960s that might be of interest (attached). My grandfather, Dr. Bertram Cohen, moved in the late 1940's to Asherton from Hillsdon on the High Street, where on the ground floor, he had his surgery (now a real estate agent) with a pharmacy next door (now Lloyds Pharmacy). I believe that it was at that time that Asherton was converted into 4 flats, with my grandfather living on the ground floor with a couple of extra bedrooms up on the 1st floor at the back. My mother's younger sister, Ruth Cohen, at that time lived at Asherton, developing kitchens to support her homemade cake shop on Olde Fore Street (Ruth's) – now a Boots Opticians – a project in which she collaborated with Marge Brazier, who at one time lived in a Glenside (Old) flat. My aunt later married John Brown and after he died, continued to be very active in Sidmouth life. (<https://www.sidmouthherald.co.uk/news/20466656.tributes-paid-former-sidmouth-citizen-year/>)

Although my grandfather set up a consulting room and dispensary within Asherton, he may well have initially maintained a surgery with Dr. Tom Fison at or near Hillsdon, since I recall him being phoned about the possibility of damage from the fire at the old Grand Cinema in 1956. At some point, Dr. Fison moved with his family from Milford Road to Spring Gardens on Station Road, where he established a surgery. By the time my grandfather died in 1966, Asherton's infrastructure was so deteriorated that the house was demolished followed by the estate being developed. There is a story that my father as my

grandfather's estate executor, tried to or was perhaps successful in initiating tree preservation orders on several of the unique Asherton trees, perhaps mischievously to hinder the developer's building plans. We were so pleased that the Far Lawn became part of the Glen in 1978, that I read in your History was gifted by the developer as part of the planning permission for the houses being built on the site. A perfect outcome since members of the public often sat on a bench on the Far Lawn (see attached) having made it through a gate at the end of the Glen via what was then a rickety bridge.

During this last week, I accessed your website and have enjoyed not only reading the History of the Glen, but also viewing the many maps and photographs, bringing back a flood of childhood memories.

### **Glen Goyle:**

Obviously since the 1960s the Glen has been subject to extensive erosion and perhaps considerable deepening of the "Goyle", especially at the north end. It used to be well maintained with a variety of shrubs. I may be wrong, but Fuchsias might have been quite prominent. Clearly trees have grown and died in the interim.

### **The Houses Around Glen Goyle:**



In addition to the above print, I have seen a print that showed not only Asherton Cottage, but etchings of Cotmaton and Cottington houses. I have not been able to find any reference to Cottington House,

although it can be seen on the O.S. maps from your website. The etching of this latter house demonstrated a Regency styled veranda surrounding the house in a similar style to Witheby, as shown in your History. However, I did find etchings on the internet for the following:

Cotmaton New House <http://www.culturegrid.org.uk/search/1793799.html> 1917 (John Carslake Esq.)  
(Old) Cotmaton House <http://www.culturegrid.org.uk/search/1793800.html> 1926 (E. Stuart Esq.)  
Asherton Cottage <http://www.culturegrid.org.uk/search/1793786.html> 1926 (John Carslake Esq.)

In addition, I found on page 43-44 of a "Descriptive Sketch of Sidmouth," text that is consistent with John Carslake renting out these properties as mentioned in the Glen History.

[https://books.google.ca/books?id=GpIYAAAaAAJ&pg=PA44&lpg=PA44&dq=history+of+cotmaton+new+house&source=bl&ots=GOPxc5H\\_Zc&sig=ACfU3U1ck4INI\\_nHzFZCoFpZdqg5OwwHHg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjqJL0wqb6AhXdAzQIHRd0D3QQ6AF6BAgqEAM#v=thumbnail&q&f=true](https://books.google.ca/books?id=GpIYAAAaAAJ&pg=PA44&lpg=PA44&dq=history+of+cotmaton+new+house&source=bl&ots=GOPxc5H_Zc&sig=ACfU3U1ck4INI_nHzFZCoFpZdqg5OwwHHg&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjqJL0wqb6AhXdAzQIHRd0D3QQ6AF6BAgqEAM#v=thumbnail&q&f=true)

*The continuation of the gravel walk through the fields, is over a neat iron bridge , from whence most of the houses at the upper part of Mill lane may front towards it ; but to prevent confusion in the description, it will be well to follow the more regular, and beaten tract, and returning again to Mill lane, we pass over a wooden bridge, and arrive at a retired and neat cottage, now occupied by the Rev. Mr. Hutto ; beyond this on the same side, surrounded by an extensive lawn, and fine old timber, is Springfield cottage, the delightful abode of Mrs. Bernard, one of the most interesting in the vicinity of this place; on the opposite side, are three agreeable residences, the property of J. Carslake, esq.; the first called Asherton , is occupied by Mrs. Hancock ; the second new Cotmaton, the abode of Miss Bethell; and third old Cotmaton , the residence of H. Stuart, esq.; these all possess their respective beauties of landscape . " Cottrington , or Cotmaton , " says Polwhele " is an ancient seat, commanding a pleasant view of the bay, " it was sold by Mr. Duke, of Otterton , to William Harlewin , esq .; Sir John Harlewin , who was knighted for his valour in the reign of Edward IV. , lived at Sidmouth, and his relations continued to reside there until the time of Charles II.*

New Cotmaton House is clearly the current Retirement Home; but does anyone know what happened to the Old Cotmaton House since it might have been around in the 1950s. Was Cotmaton Hall also on the site at the same time as these other two residences prior to its demise? I do not remember Cottrington House, but the land might have remained vacant after its demolition, prior to the building of Cottrington Court Apartments around 1960? The only other house in the area that was of interest to our family was Glenside, where my parents met before the war at a party hosted by the Smyths. Marguerite Smyth and her husband vacated the premises during the war to make way for the Air Force Dental Hygiene Training Programme. The house was subsequently converted into flats and Marguerite, who used to handwrite the labels for the homemade jams and chutneys sold at Ruth's cake shop, eventually moved to the ground floor flat at Crossways opposite the Manor Hall.

## Asherton Gardens:

In the attached sketch, I have marked some of the garden features and trees. Near the new entrance at the end of the Glen Extension there use to be a small bridge over the stream above the waterfall. Although as a small child in the summer the waterfall seemed quite formidable in height, the flat stones lining the bottom were slippery and my wellington boots were also quite small and readily filled. I spent lots of time staying just downstream to make dams with the stones from the bottom of the stream. Two other great places for us to play were inside the two trees that I have marked in green as possible Leyland Cypresses, although my mother identified them as Macrocarpa trees. However, my website searches with my memory of their shape, seeds and bark, suggest they might alternatively have been either Leyland or Lawson Cypresses. However, I should note that my mother did study horticulture. These trees were cone-shaped with foliage right down to the ground made possible by branches emanating at right angles from the base of their trunks prior to curving vertically near the perimeter.



You could walk inside to shelter from the rain within a wonderful airy cathedral like canopy. The smaller one on the south side of the stream was situated on a high grassy bank that has now been replaced by a relatively low retaining wall and I see from your photograph of the north exit from the lawn, a new tree identified as a Lucombe Oak. You used to enter the canopy of this tree via the sets of steps that your pictures demonstrate. This tree had one very thick lower branch that curved up with a horizontal section a few feet off the ground before going vertical, on which I use to climb up

on and pretend to be riding a horse. The much larger of the two trees was on the north side of the stream. My older sister use to take my grandfather there for afternoon tea. I notice that beside the stream and on the other side there are what perhaps could be offspring of these two magnificent trees.

During a visit several years ago, I found the remains of the iron arch from the rose-covered bridge seen in the picture I took with my Brownie box camera in the late 50s. My sister Pat indicated that you have unearthed a round concrete structure to the left of where this bridge was located that appears to be the base of an anti-aircraft gun emplacement. I find this a fascinating find, but I would have thought it unlikely to be in its original location, since the arc of fire of an AkAk gun would be too narrow to be effective when located at the bottom of a valley surrounded by trees.

The tree on the far right of the picture I thought might be a Copper Beech but I can see from your picture and tree map that it is a Japanese Maple of a type that stays red throughout the season. The Far Lawn was laid out as a golf putting green. I have marked where bamboo used to grow. I was told that the gigantic Lime tree was a result of being grafted onto something else. Its contorted trunk at the end of its life, looked as if had been built on top of another type of tree, consistent with this observation. My childhood memory of dead bumble bees indicate that this Lime was one of the toxic variety.

I am particularly interested as to whether or not the tree I have marked on my sketch as a Magnolia as seen in the Google Map satellite picture, is still there in front of the new houses. You can just see branches of the Magnolia and the Cypress tree on the right and left sides of the painting, respectively. This watercolour was painted by one of Asherton's tenants just before the property was sold and then demolished. The lily pond use to be full of newts.

Finally, I have marked what was used to be called Asherton Cottage that was part of the estate. The front door use to open out directly onto Cotmaton Road and the back consisted of a lean-to extension, now replaced by two story extensions all around the original structure. I have also marked the neighbouring house that I believe use to be called Cherry Hayes but now referred to as "Cherry Cottage", that was the home of the Sanders family whose solicitor or real estate offices were opposite the Museum, now housing the Michelmore's solicitor offices. It is such a small world as about 30 years ago on a visit to the Ottawa area, I met a friend's neighbour who worked for one of the Sidmouth Sanders family in Cirencester. Are there members of the Michelmore family practicing as medical doctors as they have in the past?

Please feel free to abstract any of this material for your website and thank you for helping me travel down memory lane. I look forward to meeting with you all sometime next year when I hope to make a trip home to the UK, at which time I will try to locate the print of the combined etchings of Asherton, Cottington and Cotmaton (Old) houses.

I would like to make a financial contribution to your project. Could you please let me know how I might be able to do this.



Best regards

David J.P. Bassett  
Ontario  
Canada