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Bitterne Park: the origins and growth of a Victorian suburb 1882-1901

Bitterne Park is a suburb of Southampton on the east bank of the river Itchen, dating from the 1880s. The medieval town was situated on a headland at the top of the Southampton Water between the rivers Test and Itchen, and by 1880, when the population had passed 60,000, the town had expanded along the west bank of the Itchen as far north as St Denys, and the river had been traversed by a toll bridge at Northam and a railway bridge further north, on the route of the Southampton-Netley branch line. Bitterne Road railway station, renamed Bitterne in 1896, served the village of Bitterne and the ribbon development on the eastern approach to the Northam toll bridge. In 1880 the river Itchen was the eastern boundary of the borough.

The instigator of the suburb was the newly founded National Liberal Land Company (NLLC), incorporated in 1880. With a capital flotation of £100,000, of which £72,500 had been subscribed by April 1883 and for which an interim dividend of six per cent had already been declared for the first half of 1882ⁱ, it quickly acquired a number of sites for suburban development, at Bowes Park (Wood Green), Beaumont Park (South Acton) and Southborough Park (Surbiton) in London, and also in Chatham, Leeds, Newcastle upon Tyne, Portsmouth and the Potteries as well as Bitterne Manor Farm, which it bought for £26,415 in 1882 and mortgaged to the Gresham Life Assurance Society in 1884ⁱⁱ. The purchase consisted of 317 acres of farmland and woodland adjacent to the Itchen on ground rising to a height of 200 feet, on gravelly soil favoured by suburban developers. The NLLC was an untypical developer, in that it had an express purpose of furthering the interests the Liberal Party. Six Liberal MPs were numbered amongst the directors, trustees and standing council. The chairman was Professor James Edwin Thorold Rogers (1823-90), MP between 1880 and 1886, disciple and friend of Richard Cobden and an economic historian still celebrated for his work on agricultural wages and prices. The dubious rationale of the company, as set out in its prospectus was that 'nothing is better calculated to extend the voting power of the Liberal Party in boroughs and counties than the encouragement of small freehold tenure, urban and agricultural'ⁱⁱⁱ. This Liberal strategy was based upon a belief, shared by some modern historians, that the arrival of the lower middle class in suburbia by the 1880s favoured the Liberals, for they were more likely to vote Liberal than the wealthier élites who had initiated the suburban revolution.^{iv} But even before the company had time to test its thesis, the ground was to some extent cut from under its feet, for the Conservatives' 1884 Representation of the People Act extended male suffrage to all householders and lodgers paying £10 rent a year for unfurnished accommodation, thereby enlarging the electorate to 5.5 million, an estimated 40 per cent of men. Other historians have argued, on the other hand, that suburbanites favoured the conservatives. In the case of Southampton, the post-1884 parliamentary borough took in suburbs and villages around the town including Freemantle, Millbrook, Shirley, Itchen, Woolston, Sholing and Bitterne as well as the southern section of Bitterne Park, and Patterson (1975) believed that 'apart from Millbrook and perhaps Woolston, which contained many working-class voters, the large number of newly enfranchised householders in these districts were mostly typical suburbanites and mainly Conservative inclined...'^v

The evidence from elections supports the latter view. The 1885 election was a clear Conservative victory with its two candidates topping the Southampton poll. Their

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majorities were reduced in 1886 and in a bye election in 1888, the Liberals did manage to win one of the two seats. The seats were again split in 1892, but in 1895 the Conservatives won both, a feat which they repeated in 1900. The northern part of Bitterne Park, where properties had lower rateable values, might have seemed more promising territory for the Liberals but this part of the estate was placed in a different constituency under the 1884 Redistribution Act, that of Fareham or Southern Hampshire. However, this seat proved no more fertile territory for the Liberals, being held solidly by the Conservatives from 1884 to 1918. In local politics, it is equally difficult to perceive positive effects, in fact the reverse. The Liberals predominated in Southampton Corporation for most of the 1870s, had a narrow majority in 1879 which they lost in 1881, and for the middle part of the decade they shared power with the Conservatives under an arrangement whereby an equal number of candidates from each party were returned unopposed. Southampton became a county borough under the County Councils Act of 1888, and following boundary reform in 1890, the Liberals gained a substantial majority which they held until 1895. However the extension of the borough boundaries in that year, including the incorporation of Bitterne Park and other suburbs, had the reverse effect to that envisaged by the Liberals fifteen years before, for the Conservatives won control and held it into the twentieth century.^{vi} By that time the NLLC had abandoned its political agenda, and in 1890 had reconstituted itself as the National Land Corporation (NLC), distancing itself from the Liberal Party and the mandate of extending suffrage.

The NLLC purchase of the estate was immediately followed by development of the infrastructure, water, drainage, roads and an iron bridge over the Itchen from St Denys at a cost of £20,000 named after Thorold Roger's mentor, Richard Cobden. The bridge, free of tolls and presented as a gift to the town of Southampton, was the cause of complicated and protracted litigation with Hampshire County over responsibilities for its maintenance, with the courts finally finding against the NLLC.^{vii}

The marketing of the estate emphasized the advantages of suburban living found in the literature of the day, – rural seclusion, sports facilities, health, transport links, and, for the cherry on the cake, the absence of high urban rates, suburbanites notoriously being heavy users of municipal services whilst avoiding having to pay for them. In 1886 auctioneer Mr Tewson boasted that 'the rates in that parish did not amount to more than 3s in the pound, while in the town of Southampton they were 6s 8d or 7s, and they all knew that in large towns there was a temptation to gradually increase them'.^{viii} Liberal borough councillors may not have been too pleased. These themes made their appearance in the first Bitterne Park prospectus of 1883, which spoke of the 'picturesque character of the scenery of the district', 'sylvan beauty', 'a capital supply of the purest drinking water', the 'close proximity to London and Southampton' and the 'immediate neighbourhood of the sea and a navigable estuary' for those 'seeking rural and yachting retreats'. Sport was to be promoted through the provision of a 'magnificent site of upwards of eight acres, reserved for ... a cricket and lawn tennis ground' situated between Whitworth Crescent and Bullar Road. At the lunch to celebrate the launch, the Company expressed its desire 'to banish the jerry builder' and to 'provide homes with proper sanitary arrangements, thus promoting health and increasing longevity'.^{ix}

The development of the estate occurred in two stages, the first, from 1882 to 1890 concentrating on the southern end of the site, on the higher ground and the land adjacent to Bitterne railway station. First to be developed was the wooded grounds of Cobden Bridge Road, Midanbury Lane and Thorold Road where large villas were envisaged.

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Plots in Midanbury Lane were over an acre, in Cobden Bridge Road half an acre and in Cobbett Road about a quarter of an acre.^x Today the villas are mostly gone or converted, but many of the trees remain. Next to be developed was the middle- middle and lower-middle class area around Bullar Road and Whitworth Road, on plots of 400-500 square yards, targeted at the white-collar workers whose numbers increased from 150,000 in 1851 to 900,000 in 1911, representing 2.5 per cent and 7 per cent of the workforce respectively.^{xi} They included the 'army of clerks', whose numbers had risen 'geometrically' after mid-century, firstly in London and then elsewhere.^{xii}

Initial sales figures appear satisfactory, for of the first 43 sites auctioned on 27 June 1883, all but a handful were soon sold, and of the next 62 offered for sale on 15 November 1883, 43 were taken, realising £1761. For comparison, however, in an auction of another NLLC estate, Beaumont Park in South Acton held in April 1882, all 70 plots offered were sold. At Bitterne Park, 78 plots were auctioned at the third sale, held at the end of April 1884, but on this occasion 'there was no demand for plots in the higher part of the estate', whilst those in Cobbett Road realised £300 per acre and Whitworth Road £450 per acre. Shop plots fetched around £700 per acre. At the sale of 54 lots held on October 14 1886 'the biddings were anything but spirited', and only 18 were sold. Some 46 lots were auctioned on 7 December 1886 and a few more in 1887, after which sales activity appears to have ceased until 1892.^{xiii} At the time of the 1891 census, there were just 32 habited properties on the estate, Bullar Road accounting for nearly half. General Manager of the NLC Mr Dorrell admitted in 1894, reviewing the first 14 years of the company's existence, that 'things were dull at first'^{xiv}, a state of affairs which political opponents had noticed and enjoyed from as early as 1885. Conservative MP Mr Alfred Giles, addressing the Conservative Association in Shirley in October of that year spoke of 'the fashion of the Radicals to say men could not get land, and he would point to one little estate in their own neighbourhood which to his certain knowledge had been in the market for several years, and the head of it was a very liberal-minded man indeed – Professor Thorold Rogers. (laughter). He alluded to the Bitterne Park estate, and it could not find purchasers on tolerably easy terms. It showed the folly of the Radical saying that land could not be purchased'.^{xv} The joke appears not have staled with the conservatives, for as late as 1899 (nine years after the NLLC had transformed itself into the NLC), Mr S.Leighton, MP for Oswestry, Shropshire, during the debate on the Small Houses (Acquisition of Ownership) Bill regaled the House of Commons with quotations from the NLLC prospectus, to further laughter.^{xvi}

The difficulty in attracting buyers was felt most strongly with some of the larger and more prestigious sites, in Thorold Road for example. Here the NLLC had themselves constructed two mansions, seemingly the only two they built on the whole estate. They were described as in the Queen Anne style with, on the ground floor three reception rooms with bays. On the first floor were four bedrooms, a w.c., and dressing and bath rooms (hot and cold), and on the second floor two large bedrooms. The houses were fitted with electric bells and mains water and were set in half-acre well-planted gardens. The rent or lease was £85 and freehold sale price was £1,600. or £1,400 on a 999 year lease with ground rent of £9 per year. They were first offered for sale in April 1886 and subsequently in September 1886.^{xvii} Other plots in Thorold Road also proved problematic, and a large plot of two roods 29 perches was eventually bought by Thorold Rogers himself, and made over as a site for a parish church. Rogers had been an ordained priest.

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One of the reasons for the desultory growth of Bitterne Park was that the NLLC's dream of expanded owner occupation proved illusory, even in the most expensive parts of the estate. Building societies and freehold-land societies before the 1930s almost invariably limited loans to 75-80 per cent of the purchase price, putting owner occupation beyond the means of 90 per cent of the population.^{xviii} Data from the first surviving rate book for Bitterne Park, covering the period 1st April 1914 to 31st March 1915 confirm that owner occupation was at a low level, and that, as was normal elsewhere, most of the houses were in the hands of small investors. The process of financing a project began with solicitors or estate agents acting for these private investors. The 43 plots sold at the end of 1883 for example included seven plots bought by Bance, surveyors and estate agents in Southampton, and five plots bought by Richard Eve, solicitor, Aldershot. Eleven plots went to Williams of Fenchurch Street, London, four to Frederick Arthur Alexander Rowland, solicitor for the NLLC, and three to a third in London, Charles Jenkins Jones. James Lumber/Lumby, auctioneer, mortgage broker, house and estate agent, bought one plot. A second major group of purchasers came from the building trade, five plots taken by Doggrell, a Southampton house decorator and plumber, two by Blake Pemberton, brick merchant, and one by George Franklin, builder's foreman. A third category of buyer was the small investor looking for a direct income in preference to the mediation of a solicitor or estate agent. In this Bitterne Park sale of 1883, this group was represented by Fanny Aslett, spinster, who bought two plots for £80. The census enumeration return for Bullar Road in 1891 showed Asletts in residence, but not Fanny.^{xix}

The second phase of the development of Bitterne Park occurred after metamorphosis of the NLLC into the National Land Corporation Ltd (NLC), which coincided with the death of chairman Thorold Rogers in 1890.^{xx} With the distancing of the company from the Liberal Party, perhaps one can detect a more business-like approach. Captain Ivory, general manager of the company, claimed in 1894 that 'his Society had done something for Southampton, and although people said they came there to make money, they did so, but honest, commercial enterprise was the backbone of the country.'^{xxi} The vanity of naming the streets after themselves (Cobbett Road after Pitt Cobbett Esq, Thorold Road after James E Thorold Rogers, Whitworth Road after Benjamin Whitworth Esq, Harcourt Road after Sir William Harcourt, Dalhousie Road – later renamed Station Road and subsequently Macnaghten Road– after the Rt Hon the Earl of Dalhousie) gave way to names marketed with a whiff of ruritania and garden suburb, Manor Farm Road, Ash tree, Oak Tree, Hillside Avenue, though there was an exception in Bond Road, named after the then chairman Edward Bond. More significantly, a more realistic marketing strategy targetted the investor as opposed to the owner occupier. It was land 'which would rapidly increase in value' said Wheatley the auctioneer in 1892; the estate afforded 'an opportunity for the safe investment of small amounts' claimed the auction sale notice in 1893; and in 1895 the company made their appeal directly to 'builders, merchants, investors and others – for occupation or investment'.^{xxii}

The change of focus was also reflected in efforts to tailor their product for the newly-emerging lower- middle class tradesmen, even prosperous labourers. Colonisation of suburbia by blue collar and labouring classes was a new phenomenon, encouraged by cut-price public transport, advancing real incomes due to a major fall in world commodity prices, greater security of employment and shorter working hours (permitting longer travel-to-work time).^{xxiii} Their arrival in suburbia, armed as many of them were with their recent enfranchisement, was a cause of anxiety for the middle classes. A ditty in

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Punch in 1892 raised the spectre of the working man invading their seclusion with parliament impotent to prevent him, for 'his vote, his demagogues, protect him'.^{xxiv}

To attract this clientele, the 70 freehold plots offered in July 1894 were described as being of various sizes 'to suit different classes of buyers'^{xxv} and on average they were smaller than those sold in the 1883-8 phase. Whether this constituted a change in policy or had been envisaged by the NLLC from the start, the consequence was a distinct difference in the profiles of the pre- and post-1890 parts of the estate. Astutely or fortuitously, the NLLC developed the estate top down, so that each new wave of colonists was generally less affluent than the preceding. The new colonists would have been happy to brush shoulders with those already in place, those 'seeking rural and yachting retreats'; and the existing suburbanites could find some solace in their geographical separation – to a large extent, these were not streets of mixed housing. The plots in the southern half of the estate were mostly sold in the 1883-8 phase, with the exception of Station Road, where smaller plot sizes were now offered. The 1909 1:2500 Ordnance Survey map gives a graphic illustration of the small Station Road plots squeezed between the more generous portions in Bullar Road and Whitworth Crescent. Valuations in the County Borough of Southampton rate book for 1 April 1914 to 31 March 1915 for Thorold Road range from around £24 to £64. Typical valuations for Bullar Road were between £14 and £19. In the new northern part valuations in AshTree Road were between £9 16s and £12.16s, in Newton Road mostly £11 4s and in River View £10 8s.

The suburb has been described as 'an invention for accentuating and even refining class distinctions' and 'an arena for a many layered class war...'.^{xxvi} Perhaps mindful of such anxieties, the NLC made a divide between the older and newer part of the estate, and left clear spaces in the approaches to the Cobden Bridge, where the Congregational church was dedicated in 1899, and where the Church of England Church of the Ascension later came to face it. The original temporary iron church, also dedicated in 1899, was situated higher up Thorold Road.^{xxvii} Symbolically the more modest Baptist chapel was situated in Oak Tree Road, in the new part of the estate. The houses themselves mirrored the social divisions. Before 1914, it has been suggested, the typical lower-middle class family lived in a terraced house, the middle-middle class boasted a semi-detached and the upper-middle a detached.^{xxviii} Examples of all three are found in Bitterne Park, though very few terraced – one row constituting Manor Terrace and another at the southern end of Station Road. However, some of the semi-detached and detached houses were built in such close proximity that it is difficult to squeeze between them. The style of housing, apart from the Queen Anne and other mansions in the prestigious part of the estate, was uniformly Victorian two storey, with bow windows. There are no examples of bungalow from this period, still considered too bohemian and risqué. Some of the houses may have been architect-designed, but more often jobbing builders adapted or copied standard designs. George Blake, builder of Aberdeen Street, St Denys was prosecuted by architect Edmund Walter Evans in 1884 for allegedly using a set of his plans for his Bitterne Park houses without authority. The builder promised to pay.^{xxix} House names encouraged suburban fantasies, with a plethora of 'villas' and 'cottages' inaccurately attributed to semi-detached houses. Apart from the extensive floral names – acacia, lilac, daisy, pansy, violet, rose, laburnum, woodbine and so on with infinite variety – , there were dreams of far-off exotic places, such as South Africa (Mafeking and Transvaal) and romantic Scotland (Rothesay, Rosslyn). Others reflected a literary bent (Bronte Villa, Valkyrie) or philosophical preoccupations (Spero Villa, Perseverance, Utopia). Many of these names remain, etched as they were in the stone or plasterwork of the buildings. The prosaic Appleton Road and

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Manor Terrace for the lower-middle classes and working classes confined themselves to house numbers.

Despite the new focus, sales in the 1890s continued to be patchy. The auction held on 21 November 1893 was described as successful 'on the whole' whilst the newspaper report of that held exactly a year later less one day suggested that 'considering the very bad weather and other circumstances, the sale was considered satisfactory, the total amount sold realising between £1300 and £1400'. At the auction held six weeks previously several plots had been withdrawn. Despite this, general manager Mr Dorrell claimed that 'latterly the estate had gone off well, and whereas in 1892 they had 250 acres of land for sale there they now only had 150 acres left, which showed something of the building development which was going on in and around Southampton'.^{xxx}

One of the main planks in the marketing of the suburb, the avoidance of high borough rates, was rendered null and void with Bitterne Park's annexation, along with a number of other suburbs, by Southampton County Borough in 1895. There was some vociferous opposition in the press, both from some residents and from South Stoneham Rural District Council, which was set to lose around £2500 income from rates.^{xxxii} A more positive response saw the establishment of a Bitterne Park ratepayers' association; and in return some positive moves from Southampton local authorities on policing, public transport and lighting, but most notably with the building of Bitterne Park School for 900 children at a cost of over £14,000 and for which the foundation stone was laid in 1900.^{xxxiii} The ratepayers' association can serve as a paradigm of the suburb's underlying social tensions. Of the 15 members elected as office bearers and committee members in 1897, eleven were registered in the 1901 census, three each in Bullar Road and Whitworth Road, two in Manor Farm Road and one each in Cobden Bridge Road, Oak Tree Road and Station Road. Two were living on their own means, two were master tradesmen (employers), and there was a brewery manager, a laundry proprietor, a master mariner, a civil servant, a retired naval officer, an estate agent and a postman - far from a representative cross-section.

A profile of the new suburb's inhabitants can be constructed from data recorded in the census enumeration books for 1901. Table 1 compares the age profile of Bitterne Park in 1901 with those of Southampton as a whole and of Hampshire. The differences are striking. Southampton and Hampshire are almost identical, but Bitterne Park has a markedly younger profile, with 48 per cent of its inhabitants aged under 20, against 40-41 per cent in the others. The suburb was clearly the desirable abode for young families. It is also possible, though not verifiable from the data in this study, that the death rate among children was lower in Bitterne Park, thanks to its modern systems of water supply and drainage and its lower population density than the older parts of Southampton, where over 150 people had died in a cholera outbreak in 1865.

Table one: age groups, Hampshire, Southampton and Bitterne Park 1901 (percentages)

	Ages 0-19	Ages 20-9	Ages 30-9	Ages 40-9	Ages 50-9	Ages 60-9	Ages 70-9	Ages 80 plus
Hampshire*	40.63	18.41	14.22	10.59	7.65	5.15	2.61	0.74
Southampton County Borough	41.14	18.61	14.72	10.67	7.26	4.68	2.31	0.60
Bitterne Park	48.04	16.67	14.82	9.78	6.55	2.97	0.90	0.22

*County of Southampton together with County Boroughs and Isle of Wight

Sources: *census enumeration books Bitterne Park 1901* RG13/1068

Census of England and Wales 1901: County of Hants (Southampton) Table 23 p 60; Table 24 p 63

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Table 2, in which Bitterne Park age profiles are broken down by street, shows a wide variation amongst the 0-19 age group, ranging from 39 to 73 per cent of the population. However the two highest scoring streets, Appleton Road and Manor Terrace, had small total populations, so their percentages may not be statistically significant. On the other hand, there does appear to be some correlation between the percentages of the 0-19 age group and social class. The more middle class streets on the whole have lower proportions of young people, which may be due to the fact that they were the first to be developed and therefore more of their children had left home, but it may also be partly the result of family planning. By late Victorian times, the middle classes were practising the rhythm and withdrawal methods and using condoms and a variety of diaphragms and caps. Douching was effective, but depended upon access to bathrooms with running water, as provided in Bitterne Park.

Table two: age groups Bitterne Park, by street, 1901

street	populati on	0-19 age group	<i>Per cent 0-19</i>	20-9 age group	<i>Per cent 20-9</i>	30-9 age group	<i>Per cent 30-9</i>	40-9 age group	<i>Per cent 40-9</i>	50-9 age group	<i>Per cent 50-9</i>	60-9 age group	<i>Per cent 60-9</i>	70-9 age grou p	<i>Per cent 70-9</i>	80-9 age grou p	<i>Per cent 80-9</i>
Appleton Rd	60	44	73	4	7	4	7	7	12	0	0	1	2	0	0	0	0
Ash Tree Rd	206	116	56	31	15	21	10	22	11	12	6	2	1	2	1	0	0
Bond Rd	92	39	42	16	17	13	14	16	17	5	5	3	3	0	0	0	0
Bullar Road	237	101	43	39	16	32	14	16	7	27	11	13	6	7	3	2	1
Cobbett etc*	130	55	42	25	19	13	10	14	11	15	12	5	4	1	1	2	2
Harcourt Rd	72	37	51	9	13	13	18	11	15	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0
Hillside Ave	104	45	43	21	20	24	23	5	5	5	5	3	3	0	0	1	1
Manor Farm Rd	231	98	42	42	18	37	16	22	10	19	8	10	4	3	1	0	0
Manor Terrace	88	55	63	9	10	8	9	10	11	3	3	2	2	0	0	0	0
Newton Rd etc+	85	47	55	9	11	14	16	8	9	5	6	1	1	1	1	0	0
Oak Tree Rd	320	158	49	63	20	44	14	31	10	12	4	12	4	0	0	0	0
River View	73	37	51	16	22	14	19	2	3	2	3	2	3	0	0	0	0
Station Rd	402	192	48	61	15	71	18	46	11	26	6	3	1	3	1	0	0
Whitworth Rd	176	69	39	35	20	26	15	17	10	15	9	10	6	4	2	0	0
Woodmill etc°	45	22	49	7	16	10	22	0	0	5	11	1	0	0	0	0	0
Total	2321	1115	48	387	17	344	15	227	10	152	7	69	3	21	1	5	0

*Cobbett Road, Cobden Bridge Road, Midanbury Lane, Thorold Road

+ Newton Road, Wellington Road

° Woodmill Lane, Brickyard, Diamond [sic] Rd

Manor Terrace was part of Manor Farm Road, but has been treated separately because of its distinct social and economic character.

Whitworth Road was split into Whitworth Road and Whitworth Terrace after 1901.

source: *census enumeration books Bitterne Park 1901* RG13/1068

Details of household composition are given in Table 3. As expected, the incidence of living-in servants was heavily weighted towards the upper-middle class streets, which also showed stronger propensities for multiple and extended households. Once again Appleton Road and Manor Terrace are distinguished, this time by their high proportion of nuclear households, 78 and 87 per cent respectively. There was clearly no room in these smaller homes for in-laws and ageing parents. As in Young and Willmott's classic study of the working class in the East end of London, relations lived, where possible, in proximity, but not in extended households.^{xxxiii} Evidence for such clustering is difficult to establish in Bitterne Park because it would require considerable research in the civil registers, which are notoriously unsuitable for the task. In substitution, a general impression of clustering can be obtained from the 1901 census enumeration books, through an analysis of duplicate surnames and shared places of birth. Sixteen possible family clusters were identified, three with three households and 13 with two households. In nine instances they were next-door neighbours and in most others living no more than

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two or three doors apart, the highest concentration being in Oak Tree Road and Station Road, with four examples in each. Caution is needed in interpreting these data, as there is no proof that those sharing surnames and birthplaces were necessarily related. On the other hand, it is likely that there were a number of hidden relationships. The exercise was only applicable to those with relatively uncommon surnames, and in the case of shared birthplace, it was almost impossible to link married women to siblings and parents in the neighbourhood if they all hailed from Southampton (i.e. 43 per cent of the population). Taking these factors into account, it would seem that family clustering was a feature of the suburb, but not on the scale found, for example, in London's East End.

Table three: household composition, Bitterne Park, 1901

street	No of house holds	Avera ge house hold size	House holds with serva nts	Nucle ar with childr en	Per centa ge	solita ries	coup les	Multi ple house holds	With board ers, lodger s	Thre e gene ratio ns	Two fami lies	With pare nts	With siblin gs	With niece s, nep hews etc	With gran dchil dren	With marri ed child ren	Serv ant hous ehol ds	With more than one previou s	
Appleton Rd	9	6.7	0	7	78		1	1										1	
Ash Tree Rd	35	5.9	1	20	57		4	11	3		5	1		1				1	
Bond Rd	20	4.6	1	11	55		3	6	1		1		1	1				2	
Bullar Road	46	5.2	7	19	41	1	2	24	6	3	3	2	1	3	1			1	4
Cobbett etc*	24	5.4	13	8	33	1	3	12	1		1	2	3	1				4	
Harcourt Rd	15	4.8	0	7	47		2	6	2		1		1	1	1				
Hillside Ave	24	4.3	2	13	54	1	4	6	2		2			1				1	
Manor Farm Rd	54	4.3	5	30	56	2	5	17		4	2	3		7			1		
Manor Terrace	15	5.9	1	13	87			2	1									1	
Newton Rd etc+	18	4.7	1	11	61	1	3	3	1		1			1					
Oak Tree Rd	62	5.2	3	34	55		7	21	5	2	4	3	2	2				3	
River View	14	5.2	0	10	71			4	1			1	1		1				
Station Rd	89	4.5	2	61	69	1	7	20	5		2	1	5	1				1	5
Whitworth Rd	36	4.9	5	17	47			6	13	2		3	1	2	2				3
Woodmill etc°	9	5.0	0	5	56			4	1					1		1			1
Total	470	4.9	41	266	57	7	47	150	31	9	25	14	17	21	4	1	6	22	

Source: census enumeration books Bitterne Park 1901 RG13/1068

Table 4 compares the birthplaces of the Bitterne Park inhabitants with those of Southampton as a whole and of Hampshire. The profiles for Bitterne Park and Southampton were very similar, and indicate low rates of mobility, 67 per cent of the inhabitants being natives of Hampshire (including Southampton). By contrast, the inhabitants of Hampshire were more mobile, under 59 per cent having been born in the county. A small amount of the difference (around two per cent) can be accounted for by the fact that Southampton was located in the centre of Hampshire and therefore short-distance migrations would be from within the county and not from neighbouring counties as would be the case in some other parts of Hampshire. Independent migration amongst the 0-19 age group was limited, most of them having moved with their parents or having been born in Bitterne Park itself. Some 633 persons or 58 per cent of this age group living with their parents were natives of Southampton and a further 20 per cent of Hampshire, as against 43 per cent and 24 per cent respectively for the whole population of Bitterne Park. If those in the 0-19 age group living with parents are excluded from the calculations, only 30 per cent of the remainder of Bitterne Park residents were from Southampton, and 29 per cent from Hampshire (365 and 353 individuals respectively). Thus 40 per cent of Bitterne Park's adult population had made a more substantial

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migration, though, as the figures for the 0-19 age group indicate, many outsiders had migrated more than once, firstly into Hampshire or Southampton, and then to Bitterne Park.

Table four: birthplaces, Hampshire, Southampton and Bitterne Park, 1901 (percentages)

Place of birth	Hampshire inhabitants	Hampshire per cent	Southampton inhabitants	Southampton per cent	Bitterne Park inhabitants	Bitterne Park per cent
Hampshire	467,951	58.67	71,012	67.74	567	67.43
Berkshire	9649	1.21	692	0.66	14	0.60
Dorset	26,747	3.35	3868	3.69	55	2.37
Surrey	13,400	1.68	850	0.81	30	1.29
Sussex	17,777	2.23	1309	1.25	36	1.55
Wilts	18,492	2.32	2461	2.35	66	2.84
Bordering counties	86,065	10.79	9180	8.75	201	8.66
London	50,763	6.36	5339	5.09	157	6.76
Kent	12,107	1.52	1157	1.10	30	1.29
West Country	27,700	3.47	3649	3.48	71	3.06
E. Anglia	15,406	1.93	1648	1.57	43	1.85
Midlands & Wales	44,513	5.58	4565	4.35	104	4.48
North & Scotland	29,127	3.65	3385	3.23	67	2.88
Overseas	31,840	3.99	4100	3.91	46	1.98
CI and IOM*	2993	0.38	990	0.94	34	1.46
Not specified					3	0.13
Total	797,634		104,824		2321	

*Channel Islands and Isle of Man

East Anglia: Cambridgeshire, Essex, Norfolk, Suffolk

London: London, Middlesex

Midlands: Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Cheshire, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Hertfordshire, Huntingdonshire, Leicestershire, Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire, Nottinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Shropshire, Staffordshire, Wales, Warwickshire

North: Cumberland, Durham, Lancashire, Northumberland, Scotland, Westmoreland, Yorkshire

West Country: Cornwall, Devon, Somerset

sources: *Census of England and Wales 1901: County of Hants (Southampton)* Table 36 p96;

census enumeration books Bitterne Park 1901 RG13/1068

Table 5 sets out the detail of Bitterne Park birthplace data. One would perhaps have expected that the highest proportion of Southampton and Hampshire birthplace would occur in the streets with a higher working class contingent. For labourers, the uncertainties of a long migration would have been compounded by there being no promise of secure employment, which would more likely have been offered to blue collar and white collar workers. However, the evidence does not altogether support this thesis. For though the highest percentage of Southampton and Hampshire births was recorded for Manor Terrace, River View has a low score. On the other hand, most of the southern streets have lower scores than the northern ones.

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Table five: Bitterne Park inhabitants 1901, place of birth

County of birth	Appl eton Roa d	Ash Tree Road	Bond Road	Bullar Road	Cobbe tt Road ^o	Harco urt Road	Hillsid e Avenu e	Manor Farm Rd	Man or Terra ce	Newt on/W elling ton	Oak Tree Road	River View	Station Road	Whitw orth Road	Woo dmill etc	Total
Southampton	30	71	53	92	39	25	42	105	42	26	145	39	204	72	13	998
Hampshire	13	53	9	51	26	26	23	52	28	42	95	8	91	39	11	567
<i>% So'ton/ Hants</i>	<i>72</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>67</i>	<i>60</i>	<i>50</i>	<i>71</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>68</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>75</i>	<i>64</i>	<i>73</i>	<i>63</i>	<i>53</i>	<i>67</i>
Berkshire	2	2	0	1	1	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	3	0	0	14
Dorset	0	6	2	8	3	6	3	12	0	1	7	2	0	0	5	55
Surrey	0	1	2	4	3	1	0	6	1	0	2	0	8	0	2	30
Sussex	0	0	0	11	8	0	3	8	0	1	1	0	2	2	0	36
Wiltshire	0	8	0	9	4	4	5	4	8	0	10	1	8	3	2	66
Bordering counties	2	17	4	33	19	11	11	31	9	5	21	3	21	5	9	201
London	1	32	3	20	7	4	13	12	2	4	17	12	19	10	1	157
Kent	0	5	3	2	1	3	0	2	3	0	4	1	2	4	0	30
West Country	3	0	5	7	3	0	0	9	1	4	10	0	15	13	1	71
East Anglia	1	4	1	4	11	1	1	4	1	0	3	1	9	2	0	43
Midlands	9	15	1	14	9	1	2	5	1	2	8	3	13	15	6	104
North	0	3	2	3	12	0	3	8	0	0	2	1	20	12	1	67
Overseas	1	5	6	1	3	1	0	3	0	0	12	3	8	2	3	48
Channel Isles	0	1	5	10	0	0	9	0	0	2	3	0	0	2	0	32
Not known	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	3
Total	60	206	92	237	130	72	104	231	88	85	320	73	402	176	45	2321

Source: *Census enumeration books Bitterne Park 1901* RG13/1068

Table 6 compares parts of the employment profile of Bitterne Park with that of Southampton as a whole, and some salient differences are evident. The proportion of females working as domestic indoor servants was much lower in Bitterne Park, 6.86 per cent against 10.27 in Southampton as a whole. Similarly, the proportion of households with servants was 8.72 per cent in Bitterne Park as against 19.3 per cent for Southampton County Borough. The figure for the Municipal Borough of the City of Winchester was 35.5 per cent, and for Bournemouth County Borough 56.9 per cent.^{xxxiv} It could be that the local demand for servants was reduced because of labour-saving devices in the new houses, the water closets and the running hot and cold water for example. There was also a slightly higher proportion of laundry workers and charwomen in Bitterne Park. On the other hand, there was obviously a demand for outdoor services, as 20 Bitterne Park gardeners are recorded. The very high figure for employment category VI in Southampton, *Conveyance of men, goods and messages* at nearly 22 per cent, is explained by the importance of shipping in the town's economy, the impact of which would have diminished at a distance from the town centre. Nevertheless, 72 Bitterne Park inhabitants were recorded as engaged in shipping activities, both in conveyancing and construction, and the true figure was probably higher, as some of the absent husbands were probably away at sea. Twenty four Bitterne Park residents were employed by the Ordnance Survey, whose UK headquarters had been established near the town centre in 1841, in capacities varying from draughtsman to engraver, manager to labourer. The 'army of clerks' populating the suburbs was very evident, 83 individuals representing 10.55 per cent of the work force against 3.43 per cent for Southampton as a whole. The percentage of teachers was more than double that for Southampton. Building trades (employment categories XII and XIII) were by far the most important source of employment in Bitterne Park, constituting nearly 17 per cent of the work force. The figure was significantly higher than in Southampton as a whole, where just under eleven per cent of the work

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force were similarly employed. The ongoing construction of the suburb itself was probably a factor. Thirteen apprentices were recorded. One of the master builders, John Clark, a 27 year old resident of Thorold Road, was to become the major player in Bitterne Park's twentieth-century development.

Table six: Southampton County Borough and Bitterne Park, employment profile, 1901

Employment category	Southampton numbers	Southampton percentage	Bitterne Park numbers	Bitterne Park percentage
Total engaged in occupations	43295	100	787	100
III.4 teaching	663	1.53	26	3.30
IV.1 female domestic indoor servants	4447	10.27	54	6.86
IV.3 laundry and washing	843	1.95	21	2.69
V.2 commercial or business clerks	1487	3.43	83	10.55
VI conveyance of men, goods and messages	9461	21.85	60	7.62
X3 engineering and machine making	1465	3.38	45	5.72
X8 ships and boats	779	1.80	20	2.54
XII and XIII building construction, fitting, decorating	4717	10.90	132	16.77
XVII paper, prints, books & stationery	598	1.38	23	2.92
XIX dress	2947	6.81	47	5.97
XX food, tobacco, drink and lodging	3855	8.90	56	7.12

Sources: *Census of England and Wales 1901: County of Hants (Southampton)* Table 35A pp 94-5; *Census enumeration books Bitterne Park 1901* RG13/1068

Table 7 presents a street by street occupational survey. The primary purpose of the employment categories developed by the General Register Office from 1851 onwards had been to assess occupation-specific mortality rates, not to identify social and economic classes.^{xxxv} To throw light on the latter, some of the categories have been modified, to identify for example shop workers and labourers, irrespective of their sphere of employment. Employers (e.g. master tradesmen, shopkeepers) have been noted within their spheres of activity – these are the figures in brackets. The numbers of those in domestic service differs markedly from those in Table 6 because they included males as well as females, hotel servants, outdoor servants such as gardeners and other service providers such as laundresses. Table 7 shows that clerks was overwhelmingly located in the southern half of the suburb, principally in Bullar Road, Station Road and Whitworth Road, which among them accounted for 53 of the 83 clerical workers. Professional occupations were also concentrated in the southern half, with convenient access to Bitterne railway station for the 8.10 commuter train to Southampton. Station master Mr. Strickland claimed that there were between 80,000 and 90,000 users of the station per annum.^{xxxvi} Those taking the horse drawn omnibuses were provided with 'a convenient waiting room' and by 1900 an extension of Southampton tramways to Bitterne Park was proposed.^{xxxvii} Almost half of the living-in servants were found in Cobbett Road, Cobden Bridge Road, Midanbury Lane and Thorold Road. Eighty three per cent of labourers were resident in the northern half of the estate developed after 1892 (436 occupations are recorded in the northern half and 380 in the southern). Domestic servants living at home also predominated in the northern half, with 72 per cent of the total. Professionals were mostly in the southern half, Bond Road being the only street strongly represented in the northern sector.

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Table seven : Bitterne Park employment 1901

street	Professional			Commercial				Industrial						Domestic (at work)	Domestic (at home)	Total		
	Own means	govt/armed forces	Other professions	agents/salesmen	clerical	Conveyancing	Boots, printers	Machinists	Building trades	Shipbuilders/wrights	Food and lodgings	Dresses	Others				Shopkeepers	Labourers
Appleton Rd					1	1		1	5(1)		1				1		2	12
Ash Tree Rd	3	4	3	2	4	12	1	3	17(2)	1	1	4			8	1	6	70
Bond Rd	4		8	2	5	2	1	1	2		2	3	3		1	1		35
Bullar Road	6	2	12	3	20	4	3	3	14(3)	4	6	6	5	4		6	1	99
Cobbett etc*	4	1	6	1	1	1(1)	1		6(2)	4	1		1			27		54
Harcourt Rd		1					2	1	3		1	2	2	1	2		6	21
Hillside Ave	1	1	3	3	7	3	2	1	2	1	2				5	1	1	33
Manor Farm Rd	5	2	1	2	6	6	2	5	17(1)	1	2	6	6	3	7	4	20(1)	95
Manor Terrace						3		1	6(1)			1			13	2	2	28
Newton Rd etc+						1	2	1	4	1	2		3	2	3	1	5	25
Oak Tree Rd	4	4	5	5	4	8	4	7	20(2)	1	6	4(2)	11	4	9	2	10(3)	108
River View				1	2				5(1)		3(1)	2		2	2			17
Station Rd		4	5	2	18	9	3	17	25(1)	5	6	8	8	5	7	5	9	136
Whitworth Rd		2	7	1	15	8(4)	3	4	6(1)	2	6	6(1)	1		1	6	2	70
Woodmill etc°	2			1								5(1)	1	3			1	13
Total	29	21	50	23	83	60	22	45	132	20	39	42	45	27	58	56	64	816

categories of occupation

government and armed services: army officer, civil servant, civil servant (ordnance survey), customs officer, domestic navy, naval, navy, navy carpenter, navy inspector of machinery, policeman, prison officer

professional (other): barrister, clergyman, congregational minister, evangelist, artist, sculptor, photographer, engraver, school teacher, piano teacher, nurse (hospital), medical profession, civil engineer, surveyor

commercial: assurance agent, commercial traveller, contractor's director, emigration agent, estate agent, insurance agent, life assurance inspector, salesman, servants agency, trade protection agent, traveller, travelling salesman

clerical: clerk, bookkeeper, secretary, office lad, typist

conveyance/distribution: brewer's drayman, carman, coal hawker, donkey man, messenger, nautical mail service, postman, railway guard, railway porter, railway signalman, railway station master, tramway conductor, storekeeper, counter rep shipyard, storeman, warehouseman, seaman, marine superintendent, mariner, master mariner, purser, yacht captain, telegraphist, attendant telephone office, night inspector of ships, ship's steward, stevedore, steward (club), yacht steward, proprietor stable,

printers: bookbinder, draughtsman, foreman O.S., marine draughtsman, printer, sign writer

machine makers, fitters: boilermaker, coat wheeler, furnaceman foundry, gunmaker's assistant, iron driller, pattern maker, water gas maker, engine cleaner, engine driver, engine fitter, fitter, gas operator, gas stoker, machinist, mechanic, saw sharpener, ship's fireman, stationary engine driver, stoker

building trades: bricklayer, builder's merchant, carpenter, french polisher, gas fitter, hot water fitter, house decorator, house painter, joiner, master builder, plasterer, plumber, polisher stone mason, upholsterer,

shipping : sail maker, shipbuilder, ship's engineer, ship's joiner, shipwright, yachtbuilder, yacht engineer

food and lodgings: baker shopkeeper, baker, baker's assistant, brewer's manager, brewery manager, butcher assistant, butcher's boy, contractor refreshments, dairyman, fishmonger, fishmonger's boy, fish salesman, greengrocer, greengrocer's assistant, grocer shopkeeper, grocer's assistant, grocer's cashier, grocer's packer, grocer's porter, grocer's manager, hotel manager, milkman, milk vendor, miller, barman, cook, potman, publican, waiter

clothing: bootmaker, draper's assistant, dressmaker, mantle maker, milliner, outfitter, shoemaker, tailoress, tailor,

other: assistant florist, blacksmith, brass finisher, brassworker, brick burner, brickmaker, chemist, dealer (general), dyer, florist and seedsman, foreman brickyard, general shopkeeper, ironmonger's assistant, lady florist, oil and wood merchant, sawyer, smith, wheelwright, electrical engineer, gas engineer, shopkeeper sub post master, timber merchant,

labourers: labourer, wood chopper

domestic service: butler, charwoman, coachman, companion, cook, gardener, general servant, housekeeper, page boy, parlour maid, barber, hairdresser, carpet/window cleaner, ironer, laundress, laundryman, laundry owner.

Source: *census enumeration books Bitterne Park 1901* RG13/1068

Notwithstanding the setbacks of the first two decades and a depression of property values in the 1890s^{xxxviii}, Bitterne Park entered the twentieth century as a sizeable community, with 2321 persons in 470 households recorded for the census of 1901. Further expansion was envisaged, for the NLC had purchased adjoining land, the Bitterne Manor estate between Northam Bridge and the railway line, in 1899.^{xxxix} Social structures were developing too. For the dedication of the Ascension Church in 1899, 'the seating capacity [of 400-500] was severely tested'^{xl}. Two public houses had been established early in the

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site's development, a football team was formed, concerts were held, two piano teachers were operating in the southern half of the estate (census 1901) and a Glee Society was founded^{xli}, though the cricket and lawn tennis grounds between Whitworth Road and Bullar Road promised in 1883 and again in 1886 failed to materialise.^{xlii} Walter Besant, discussing in 1909 the pros and cons of suburban life, which for a long time had been without any society, social gatherings or institutions, where 'the man went into town every morning and returned every evening; they had dinner; they talked a little; they went to bed' noted that sports clubs, bicycling, dances, dinners and physical fads had taken hold, especially for the wives left behind in the suburb all day.^{xliii}

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