

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OLD HOUSE ON LUNDY

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ABSTRACT

An account of changes to the Old House from the construction, through its uses as a divided residence, the farmhouse, and the hotel, to the present Old House North, Old House South, and the Tavern block. The description is drawn from the evidence found in maps, written references, a drawing, plans and photographs.

Keywords: Old House, Manor House, Farmhouse, Hotel, Tavern.

INTRODUCTION

There have been seven known principal stages in the evolution of this complex of buildings:

1. The farmhouse built by Borlase Warren, 1776.
2. Additions made before 1822.
3. Modifications made by W. H. Heaven, 1838.
4. Additions made by the granite company, 1863-68.
5. Addition made by W. H. Heaven, 1875.
6. Additions and alterations by M. C. Harman, 1926-7.
7. Alterations made by the Landmark Trust, 1982-83.

Soon after John Borlase Warren became possessed of Lundy, in March 1775, he sent a professor of botany there to report on its condition. His report included the information that "there was but one dwelling house...(that) consisted of two storeys and three several (separate) rooms on each floor, which was in a very ruinous state and condition, notwithstanding the said Sir John Borlase Warren had caused the same to be repaired." (National Archive, 1776). It is considered that this referred to the house excavated in 1985 on the castle parade, because the description fits, and because the farm buildings were in that area at the time. The

repaired house would have provided housing while the larger house described in this paper, the Old House, was built.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE OLD HOUSE

The Ordnance Survey drawings of 1809, and the subsequent correction, (British Library, 1809, 1820/1834), both show the house with the two distinct blocks, with, it is thought, a ground floor corridor connecting them. It is proposed that the house was originally intended for temporary use by Warren pending the construction of his mansion. The temporary use would explain the unusual design, of two blocks, each with a separate staircase (Figure 1), if one part was intended initially for the proprietor and the other for servants. The diary of Vere Hunt in 1811, and the contents inventory of 1822, indicate that the building was similarly divided in use at that date.

The Trinity House map of 1820 (Trinity House, 1820) shows the house as one block, with a roofed addition to the south wall and a small enclosure to the north. The conclusion to be drawn from this is that the infill and the addition were made between 1809 and 1819 which is the earliest date that the Trinity House map could have been surveyed.

The earliest description of Warren's house is from 1822 (British Library, 1822), when the island was for sale, and the auction details advertised the dwelling house as having "An Entrance Hall, Two Parlours, Five Chambers (bedrooms), Kitchen and Domestic offices." (Figure 1). The house stands on a site which slopes west to east, and measurements taken from the plan of 1918 (North Devon Record Office, 1918) give the external dimensions of the original building as 65 ft x 21.25 ft (19.8m x 6.5m). It consisted of two two-storey blocks, with pitched roofs, windows east, chimneys north and south, with separate internal staircases in the north-west and south-west corners.

The drawing of 1838 from the Heaven collection (Figure 2) shows a single-storey central section in line with the eastern walls of the two blocks. There was a central door with a window on either side, and a pitched roof. A small two-storey cottage had been added to the south wall, with entrance east, and chimney south. At the north end of the farmhouse there is a single-storey addition of the same height and roof pitch as the central section, which suggests that it was added or altered at the same time as the central section, though the drawing is vague at this point.

A dairy, with slate shelves, was at lower ground level below the south block, and was reached by the internal staircase in the south-west corner. There was a well below the north-east room of the north block, the overflow for which remains on

the east exterior wall. The 1838 drawing also indicates a window or door below the north-east room, for which there is no later evidence.

It is noted that there is no indentation of the central section, and the four east windows on the lower level are not in alignment. It is difficult to know whether these were faults in the execution of the drawing, or whether alterations were made later. Since a later photograph (Figure 3) shows a distinct difference in masonry between the upper and lower sections of the central section, the former is more likely. The drawing would also seem to show a sloping roof, but drawings made when the hotel was dismantled in 1973 show the clear outlines of an earlier pitched roof.

Later in 1838 alterations to the building were made by W. H. Heaven. The north, south, and central pitched roofs were removed, the central section was built up, and a new roof and parapet were constructed. Drawings made in 1973 with the outlines of the previous lower central pitched roof level also show that there were two doors centrally in the north and south walls of the extension which are presumed to have given access to the new upper story from the north and south first floors. Langham (1994) has misinterpreted these drawings and shows the doors at ground-floor level.

Between 1863 and 1868 the Lundy Granite Company constructed a south wing against the south wall of what was by then the farmhouse. This wing, called the "New House" or "Big House", was separate internally as it had been intended for the use of the quarry managers. This would have involved the removal of the small cottage that stood there formerly. The interior was not finished when the company went into liquidation in 1868 (Figure 3). Another separate block was built at the north of the farmhouse to provide the Store and bake house, with storage rooms behind (to the south) and a carpenter's workshop above. A cottage and outhouse (with wash house and earth closet) for the storekeeper were built east of this block, and were separate from both the Store and the farmhouse (Ternstrom, 2005).

In 1875 Heaven's manager built a new dairy and salting house adjoining the west side of the original Old House, which formed a central wing projecting into the courtyard between the north and south wings. The south wing was completed for his own use by the tenant, Mr Wright, in 1885, with WCs at ground and first-floor levels built out against the south-west corner of the south block, abutting the new building. The plan of 1885 (Figure 4) also indicates that the wall enclosing the back yards, to the west of the complex, were built at that time, with two outside lavatories and a room that later became the Radio Room. Figure 4 identifies the use of the individual rooms after 1927.

It is noticed that there was by then a doorway connecting the south wing to the farmhouse. A stairway down to a cellar is indicated with the central staircase, though this was not the case within memory.

From the date of Mr Wright's tenancy (1885) the buildings were known separately as the Manor House and the Farmhouse, denoting the fact that he was a gentleman in residence. In the photograph of 1886 (Figure 3) the east wall of the north addition to the main building has two upper windows and one lower window (of a different style from those of the main building) and the chimney has been rebuilt. The masonry below the lower window shows a filled-in door, indicating that the addition was originally a separate dwelling. The symmetry of the original building, and the line of the masonry between it and the north part, confirm this as having been an addition. The plan of 1885 (Figure 4) shows this addition as "scullery and wash house" with through connection to the main building, and an entrance at the west.

Census returns provide the following information on the occupants of the building:

- 1851 Lessee, John Lee, wife, 6 employees with one baby.
- 1861 No details given.
- 1871 Granite company manager, Frederick Wilkins.
- 1881 Shepherd, Henry Tidball, wife and 8 children.
- 1891 Lessee, Thomas Wright, housekeeper and servant. At the time of the census the lessee was about to leave.
- 1901 Bailiff, Thomas Pillman, wife and servant.
Storekeeper, William Pennington.

The photograph (Figure 3) also shows that a further addition was made between this and the storekeeper's cottage at the north end of the building, of which only part of the east façade, with a door, and a first floor wall remained standing. In both the 1885 (Figure 4) and 1918 plans (North Devon Record Office, 1918) the area is shown as an enclosed courtyard. The long narrow upper window or doorway suggests the use of a hoist, but alternatively the roofline contiguous with the 1863-64 storekeeper's cottage to the north, may indicate an uncompleted addition. Any remaining evidences were lost during alterations 1926-27.

The plans made for Christie in 1918 (North Devon Record Office, 1918) also show the upper floors of the buildings, and the general plan is as it would have been when Mr Harman bought the island in 1925. Mr M. C. Harman made alterations and extensions in 1926-27 that brought all three parts of the complex into one

whole. A billiards room was built between the storekeeper's cottage and the farmhouse, which joined the two and gave through access from the Store to the south wing. Two bedrooms were built above, but these did not connect to the first floor of the storekeeper's cottage to the north.

The extension at the back (west) courtyard, between the north wing and the dairy wing, was used to make an interior WC and an exterior boiler room on the ground floor. A staircase was added to an upper storey with a WC, a bathroom and a connecting corridor to three additional bedrooms which were built over the dairy wing. The original two staircases in the Old House were removed during these works and that may have been when a new staircase down to the old dairy was made where formerly there had been a window. The dining room in the south wing was enlarged by removal of the wall dividing it from the breakfast room.

The Store was rearranged and divided at the west end by a wooden partition to separate the tavern and shop. The entire building from that time on was used as the hotel, though it still housed the office, and the functions of a farmhouse kitchen were fulfilled. Figures 5 and 6 show the layout of the hotel at this time, and Figure 7 gives a photograph of the east facade taken in the 1930's.

When the Landmark Trust took over Lundy in 1969 the building was in need of extensive repair and restoration, particularly in the south wing. Between 1971 and 1982 the porch and all the 1863-8, 1875 and 1927 additions were demolished, except for the north wing tavern, shop, bakehouse and cottage. A new "Square Cottage" was built on the site of the west end of the old south wing. The original farmhouse was divided internally to form two holiday cottages, Old House North, and Old House South.

A grassed courtyard was constructed where the hotel yards and dairy wing had been, and the former Radio Room is a small letting cottage. The exterior stairs at the east entrance to the old basement dairy were removed, and a new door inserted at low level in the south wall. The storekeeper's cottage was connected to the original Store to provide an extension to the tavern, with the bay window from the demolished south wing installed there. Kitchens and extra seating accommodation were made from the storerooms adjoining the original tavern, with three offices above the tavern, and one in the old bake house (1996), where the oven still exists behind a partition. The north and south walls that enclosed the hotel garden to the east have been removed, and a semi-circular platform built in front of the central east-facing entrance of the original building (now the entrance to Old House South).

THE OWNERS OF LUNDY DURING THE RELEVANT PERIOD

1775-1781	Sir John Borlase Warren
1781-1802	John Cleveland of Tapeley
1802-1818	Sir Vere Hunt
1818-1830	Sir Aubrey de Vere Hunt
1836-1883	William Hudson Heaven
1883-1916	The Revd Hudson Heaven
1918-1925	Augustus Langham Christie, of Tapeley
1925-1954	Martin Coles Harman
1954-1968	Albion Harman
1969-	The National Trust
	Lessees: The Landmark Trust

EXTRACTS FROM THE 1822 SALE PARTICULARS FOR LUNDY

On the island is

A DWELLING HOUSE

Substantially built of Stone, which might, at a moderate Expense, be rendered fit for the Residence of a respectable Family

Conveniently situated is a Large and Productive GARDEN, BARNs, Stabling, and suitable Farm Buildings.

There is also

AN OLD CASTLE

A CONSIDERABLE Edifice, (but in a ruinous state) with a spacious Esplanade in Front, commanding the Roadsted, and the Approach to the Summit of the Island, the views from which are very grand and Picturesque.

A FARM HOUSE

(But much dilapidated) adjoining the Castle. There are also Two Labourer's Cottages.

Rabbits are in abundance, in Warrens, capable of great extension. The cliffs are crowded with Birds, valuable for their Feathers and Eggs.

A Fishery extends round the Shores, esteemed very valuable; among the Fish, the finest Cod, Lobsters, and Crabs may be reckoned. Seals abound in Coves round

the island from which much valuable Oil has frequently been obtained. Fern, fit for Soap Ashes, and Samphire, for Pickling, (the former of an extraordinary luxuriance of growth), are found on the Wilder Parts of the Cliffs. The Island has an abundance of fine Granite; the Stone is of very great beauty, (as the New Lighthouse evinces), and has been made into Mill Stones, for which it is well suited. There is an abundant supply of Water, from many Springs, of excellent Quality; also of Peat for Firing. The estate is extra Parochial, not subject to any Land-Tax, Quit or Fee Farm Rents, Tythes, or any other Outgoing.

(British Library, 1822)

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The material presented in this paper was first written as Appendix 2 to the PhD Thesis by M. Ternstrom (1999), 'Lundy: An Analysis and Comparative Study of Factors Affecting the Development of the Island from 1577 to 1969', submitted to: Cheltenham & Gloucester College of Higher Education (now Gloucestershire University).

Information for the later alterations to this complex of buildings has been taken from my own observations and notes, made from 1952 to date.

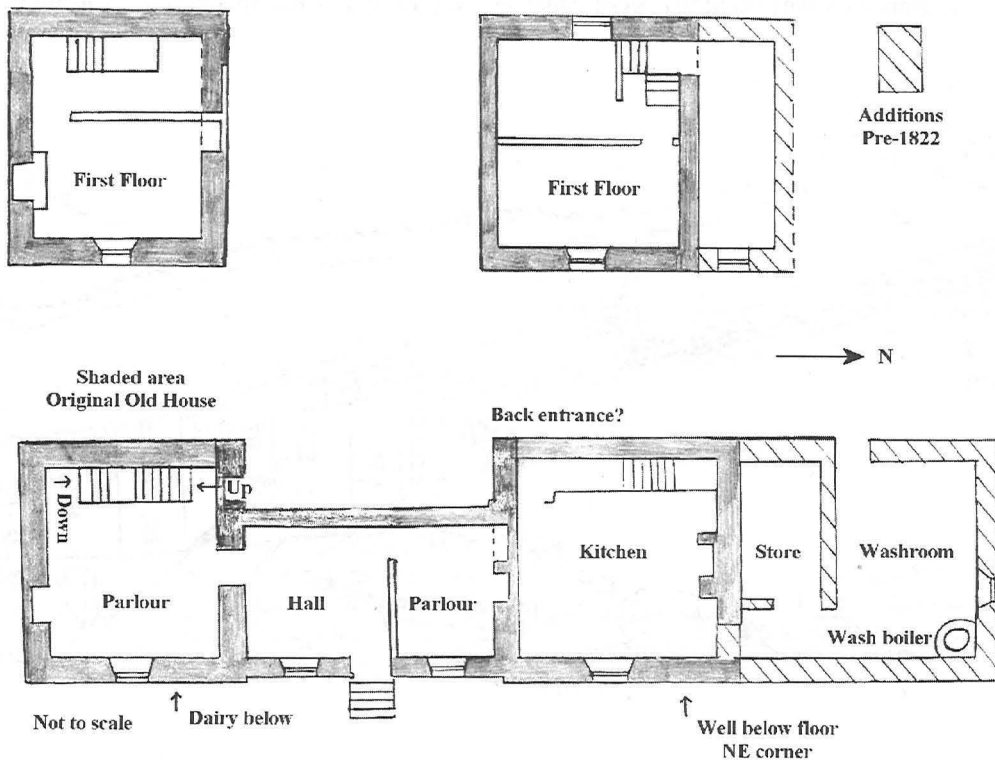


Figure 1. Projected plan of the Old House in 1822.

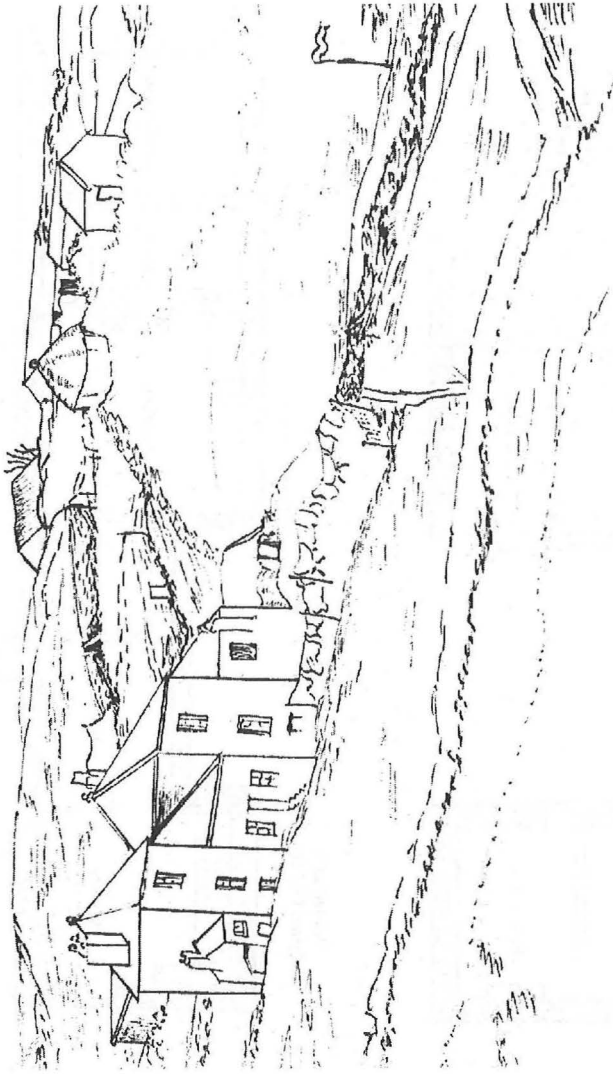


Figure 2. Part of a drawing of the Old House, dated 1838. (from the Heaven collection)



Figure 3. The Manor House and Farmhouse in 1886. (photo from the Heaven collection)

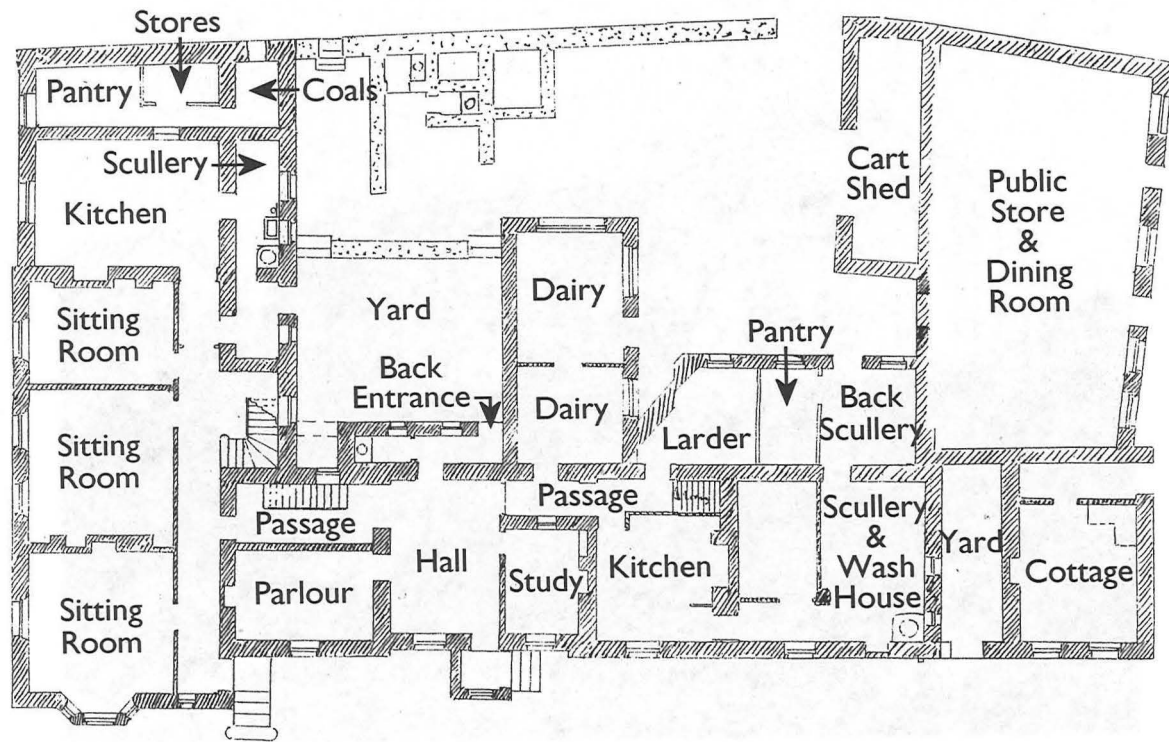


Figure 4. Ground floor plan of the house in 1885. (from the Harman collection)

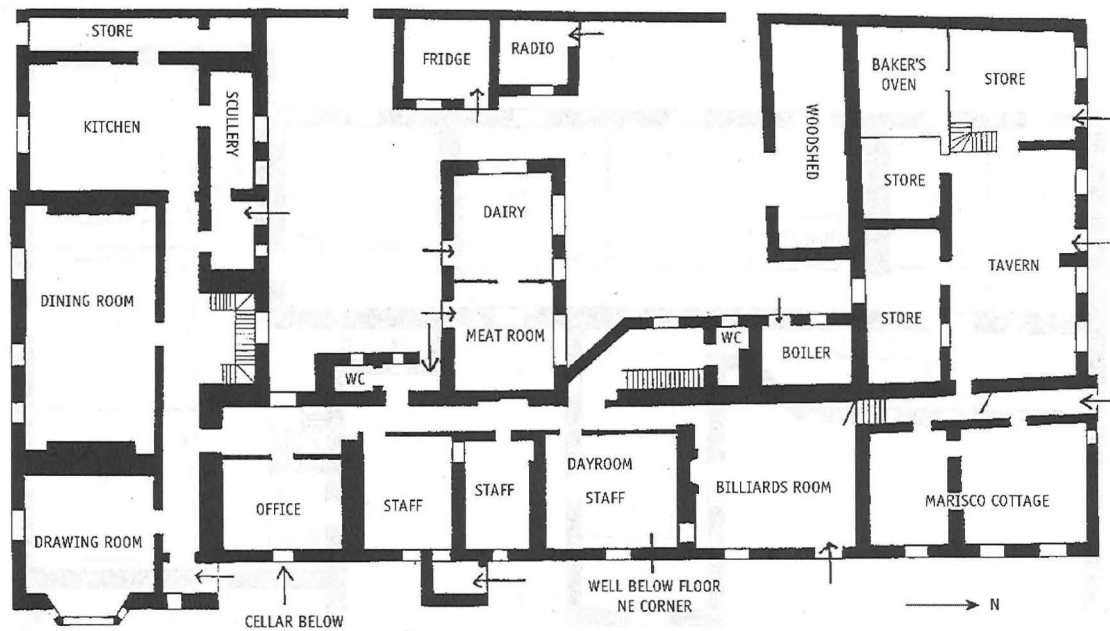


Figure 5. Ground floor plan of the Hotel drawn in 1971. (Colin Taylor and Myrtle Langham (Ternstrom))

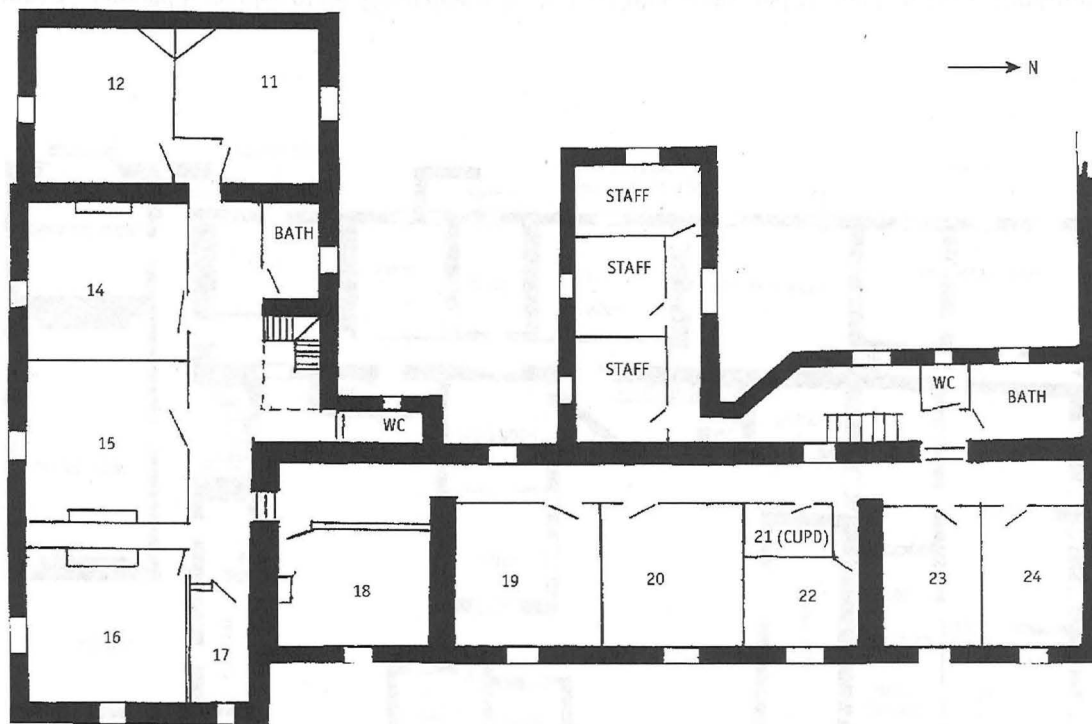


Figure 6. First floor plan of the Hotel drawn in 1971. (Colin Taylor and Myrtle Langham (Ternstrom))



Figure 7. The Manor Farm Hotel in 1930. (photo from the Ternstrom collection)

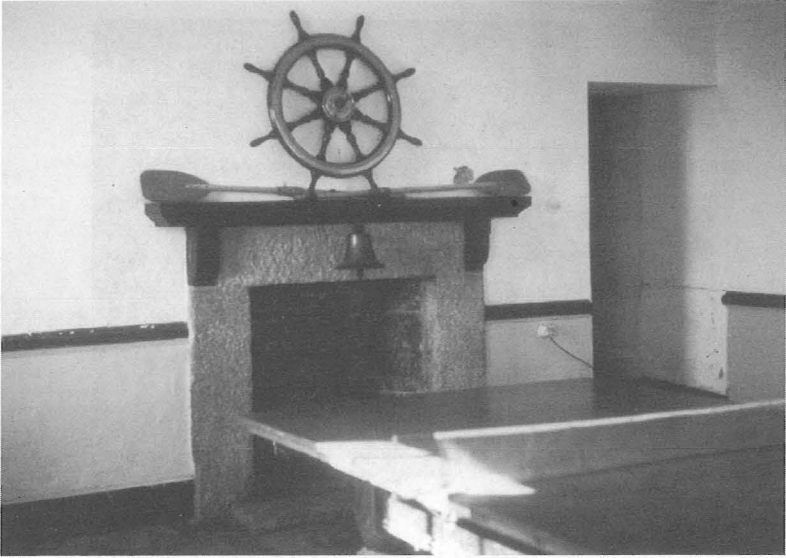


Figure 8. The Billiards Room in the Hotel in 1971. (photo: Roger Davis)



Figure 9. The north-west corner of the sitting-room of the Hotel in 1971. (photo: Roger Davis)



Figure 10. The dining-room of the Hotel in 1971. (photo: Roger Davis)



Figure 11. The backyard (south) of the hotel in 1960, on washing day. The back door is under the sloping roof. (photo: M. Ternstrom)



Figure 12. The backyard (north) of the Hotel in 1960. The door to the boiler room is open. (photo: M. Ternstrom)