



Map extract: OS Wiltshire LXIX.7 Surveyed: 1886, Published: 1887



One of the things that gives Ansty Village a real sense of identity are its stone cottages and stone walls.

The earliest stone building would have been the Norman Church (St James) followed by the Manor House and the Commandery building at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Most of the stone cottages in Ansty have origins dating back to the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries.

Most of the stone buildings are built of Tisbury stone (or Chilmark stone) but most of the footings and drystone walls are composed of local 'greensand' stone. Tisbury stone varies from a highly calcareous, greenish-grey sandstone to pale cream sandy limestone, all containing a speckling of glauconite grains (a dark green iron silicate mineral). This pleasant looking stone has been used to build most of Ansty's stone cottages as well as throughout other local parishes.

Ansty once had 2 or 3 local quarries producing a 'greensand' stone which also gives a distinctive character to some of Ansty's buildings and can be seen in drystone walls, plinths, and footings of buildings in the village. These local greensand stone quarries (which offered employment to local villagers) and indeed most of the Tisbury stone quarries once belonged to the Wardour Estate which included vast tracts of local land and parishes, including Ansty, and all owned and administered by the Arundell Family who came to our area in the late 16<sup>th</sup> century.

One small quarry can still be seen on the left of the High Street just before you turn left on to the A30 to travel to Salisbury. The other was a larger quarry (now on private land) just across the A30 Holloway – is seen as a mound on the left as you climb the hill towards Ansty PYO and on to Shaftesbury. Both quarry sites fell into disuse more than 100 years ago, although the small site off the High Street was referred to as a sand pit for a while later. The larger quarry site was used as a tip by locals and apparently RAF Chilmark for a while in the post WW2 years – before the scrub was cleared and planted with trees replenishing part of Denmead Copse in the mid to late 1980 by the then landowner.

The greensand stone quarried in Ansty was found to make a good damp course as it was relatively impermeable and was commonly used as building foundations in Ansty and other villages nearby. In the next section we will look briefly at how this stone was used to build most of our our wonderful walls!



1 Greensand plinth at foot of southern gable end of the Commandery building built at the end of 16<sup>th</sup> century. 2 & 3 Capped and uncapped greensand stone wall near St James' Church. 4 A wall beneath the Ansty Public Noticeboard – note the different style of capping. 5 Another long run of greensand walling below Lower Farm, looking west towards 12 Acre Copse. This wall displays different styles of capping. Part of it was damaged in recent years but nicely repaired. 6 A low-walled paddock opposite the noticeboard. Note the odd irregular block of greensand stone marking the verge. 7 & 8 Better dressed blocks enable the walls to be built with considerable durability. You can sometimes see Tisbury Stone and other rubble stone inserted in random places possibly as a repair at some stage.



## Ansty Village Stone Walls 2