

An aerial photograph of a rural landscape, likely in the Ashmore area. The image shows a mix of agricultural fields, some with distinct patterns, and a small cluster of buildings or a village in the lower center. The overall tone is high-contrast, with a lot of black and white. A white rectangular box is overlaid on the upper portion of the image, containing the title text.

# ASHMORE Parish Plan 2006



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of Ashmore
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the man who named the clouds

## SECTION 1

### Introduction and Plan Objectives

#### Introduction

Parish Plans are a Government sponsored initiative. Preparation of the Plan was carried out by a small but representative committee under the auspices of the Parish Council, following consultation with Simon Thompson of Dorset Community Action and Kevin Morris of North Dorset District Council. Its preparation was funded by a grant from the Dorset Strategic Partnership with further financial support from the Parish Council.



The Plan identifies all the relevant issues of importance to the community, incorporating issues of social, economic and environmental concern. These issues were identified through the results of a questionnaire completed by each household in Ashmore and from subsequent discussion with and presentation to, members of the community.

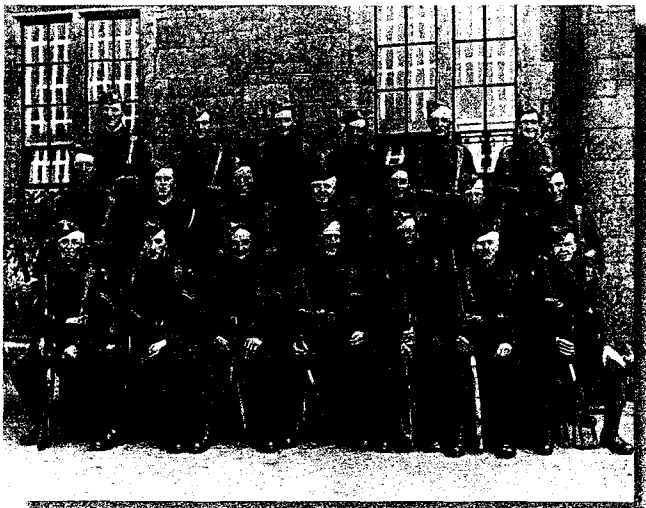
The Plan records the special features of Ashmore with respect to its past and the needs for the future. This sets the village in its surrounding area of outstanding natural beauty on the chalk hills of North Dorset and the particular characteristics of the village.

A copy of the Plan has been given to each household in Ashmore, to Dorset County Council, North Dorset District Council, planning authorities, Dorset Strategic Partnership, Dorset Community Action, neighbouring Parish Councils and other agencies as considered appropriate.

#### Plan Objectives

The Plan will be used to shape the future of Ashmore and is of relevance to:

- Residents, householders and businesses
- Designers, architects and engineers
- Planners, developers and builders
- Statutory bodies, public authorities and utility providers



An Action Plan for the future is at Section 4.

## SECTION 2

### The History and Environment of Ashmore



The History of Ashmore

The earliest mention of Ashmore is in the Domesday Book in 1086 where it is referred to as 'Aisemere', derived from the word for great pond or mere around which the village developed. The village covered an area of about 12 acres and there were 24 inhabitants, including 8 serfs. There are no earlier records though there is evidence of a Roman military camp and trading post and, even earlier, of a Neolithic settlement or market area. The history of the pond is uncertain and it is not known whether it was created in Roman or Saxon times. It probably started as a watering hole both for the settlers and for cattle being herded along the drove way to the markets in Sarum (Salisbury).



The earliest recorded national census was in 1891 showing 228 residents. This remained more or less constant though in 2006, when this plan was written, Ashmore only had 138 adults and 24 school age children living permanently in the village.

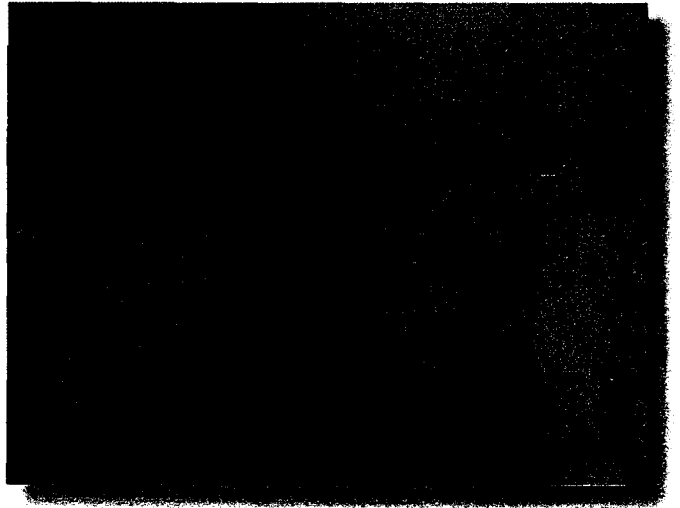
#### The Ashmore Environment

The Parish of Ashmore is located in an area of outstanding natural beauty on the chalk hills of the Cranborne Chase. One of the highest villages in the south of England and the highest in Dorset, it lies over 700 feet above sea level. It has all the features to be expected of a rural community, many of which

make it unique in North Dorset and a very special place in which to live. Although a fine new church was built in 1874, the majority of the villagers were Methodist. There was no inn or hostelry, mainly in deference to the Squire's Quaker beliefs, though there was a taproom in Stag's Head Cottage. The people of Ashmore were God-fearing and fiercely independent, intensely proud of their village and community and deeply suspicious of the outside world. They seldom ventured out of the village, nor wanted to. Indeed, many of the older inhabitants died without ever seeing the sea or visiting Salisbury, only 24 miles away.

#### Geology and Geography

The rock on which Ashmore rests was formed during the Upper Cretaceous period. Chalk dominates with an underlay of greensand which can be seen at the bottom of the steep hill leading to Ludwell. The landscape we see today was formed during the Ice Age, giving the rounded curves and the deep valleys. Man adapted to this environment and geography shaped his existence and the creation of Ashmore. The valleys were too low and wet to support farming and animal grazing and hilltops provided natural defences from predatory neighbours. Over the



centuries many hilltop settlements were abandoned – an example of which is Hambleton Hill near Child Okeford. Ashmore is a prime example of one which was never abandoned!

One of the major problems for these hilltop settlements was that of water supply. The chalk drained the water away, so to preserve water the hilltop settlers dug holes in the chalk and lined them with clay to retain the water. Ashmore has one such hole. Due to the height of the village above sea level -

some 700 feet – the relationship between evaporation and condensation was such that very little water was lost to evaporation; hence the name Dew Pond. This pond sustained a limited population which has changed little from Domesday to the present date.

It was this geology and subsequent geography which gave birth to the thriving and independent farming community of Ashmore at home in its unique environment.

#### The Natural Environment

Ashmore sits comfortably on Cranborne Chase which used to be an area of forest, a hunting ground for Kings and a wild place where thousands of deer roamed and wild boar thrived. Split into beats or walks, it was protected by law and overseen by rangers and their keepers. Kings and nobles who hunted the wild creatures of the forest such as stags and hare, guarded them fiercely and a poacher could lose a limb or his life if caught killing a beast.

The Chase today has been sculpted by the traditions of protecting the forest and the wild game living in it; there are still a good number of deer, both fallow and roe. The woods were also worked for their produce of firewood, hazel for hurdles and spars for thatching, as well as the hazel nut crop. Traces of the wild woods remain to this day in the flora, sentinels of ancient and mystic times and the indicators of the past – Dogs Mercury, Wood Spurge and small areas of Herb Paris. Large oaks still stand guard. Birch, hawthorn and blackthorn abound, home to hundreds of species of insect, as well as numerous species of lichen and fungi, each playing their ecological part.

In the skies above Ashmore buzzards and ravens soar in the thermal currents. In the Spring the call of lapwing and the skylark fill the air and in the Autumn the chatter of winter visitors – the Field Fare and the Red Wing – can be heard. The village boasts 3 species of owl; the Barn Owl, the Tawny or Brown Owl and the Little or French Owl, can be seen and heard calling during the day. Ashmore gardens are visited regularly by a large number of both farmland and woodland birds, thanks to the presence of mature trees in the village.

Though Ashmore has lost what once was a common

species of butterfly - as elsewhere in the UK - the Pearl Bordered Fritillary, it is still home to the Drap Looper, Argent and Sable moths – all equally important. Dormice live in the hedgerows and the woodland and a large population of hares is still evident in the fields. In sum, these represent the rich heritage this Parish Plan is designed to protect and preserve. A heritage protected by sympathetic farming and use of the landscape.

#### Farming

Since records began farming has been important to Ashmore. The bulk of the land, consisting of one large and 5 smaller farms, was estate owned until 1957. Then it was divided into smaller parcels of land and sold off. Holdings included South's Farm to the north of the village and parts of Gore Farm to the west. To the south and southwest are large tracts of woodland managed by the Forestry Commission.

The farms raised stock, grew corn and all had dairy to some degree. Church Farm and Glebe Farm dairy cows were brought through the village twice a day for milking, perhaps 'puddling' the pond and helping stop leakage. Today the dairy cattle have been replaced by sheep and beef herds.

#### Employment

Main employment in the past was related to farming. The estate and farms employed farm workers and skilled artisans to service the needs of the agricultural community. The larger houses would have employed domestic staff and many would have been employed nutting and cutting wood for fuel. A smithy owned by Tom Coombs existed until 1947 and a shop and bakery supplied villagers' needs. In 1992 Mr and Mrs Hudson closed the shop due to declining business and the reluctance of suppliers to deliver off main routes. The post office also closed around this time.

The increased mobility provided by the car means that most inhabitants work outside the village and changing national demography is reflected in Ashmore with many retired people in residence.

However, in keeping with the environs of Ashmore,





there is a flourishing lively business within the village, managed by Tim and Sherry Woolridge, providing a

valuable service across the Cranborne Chase.

### The Church

Religious worship was a strong feature of Ashmore, with the original church dedicated to St. Nicholas in 1423. It was a small stone and flint structure incorporating a wooden tower with 2 bells. It was acquired by John Eliot when he bought the estate in 1765. As a Quaker he was not allowed to own the Advowson and the church was separated from the estate. When it was rebuilt in 1874 none of the features of the old church were preserved, though the Chancel arch, possibly dating from 1692, is now used as the entry from the vestry into the church.

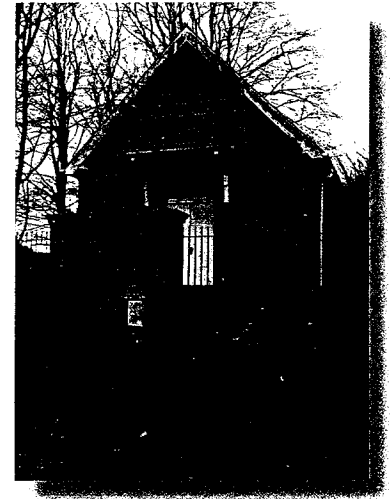


The present church of St. Nicholas cost £1400 to build and is designed to seat 160 people. In 1933, Geoffrey Howard commissioned John Skeaping, the animal sculptor, to carve hunting scenes on the corbels in the Chancel, based on Psalm 42. Carvings of St. Nicholas, St. Denis and St. Michael were also added, all in memory of Eliot Howard and his wife. In addition, a carved and painted Renedos and a redesigned Sanctuary were given by members of the Sturge family in memory of their parents, Arthur and Jesse.

### Ashmore Methodist Chapel

Methodists first met in a purpose built room at Manor Farm at the invitation of Samuel Hall 1768-1844.

A hall for the Sunday School and Band of Hope was built in 1904 in Green Lane. In the late 1960's, early 70's this was taken over as the Chapel.



### Education

Education records show that formal education started in 1770 when a Miss Dinah Newhook was paid 6s 4d per month to teach 10 children. It progressed from there:



- In 1815 boys left school at the age of 7 to work on the land so night school began from 7pm to 9pm.
- A purpose built school was funded by Luke Howard, the landowner, in 1842. Joseph Stainer, a local woodsman, was appointed headmaster, a post he held for 29 years. Of interest, Luke Howard is better known as the man who provided the names we use today for all the cloud formations. His story is reproduced at Annex A at the end of this brochure.
- In 1870 the Education Act required teachers to be qualified. Fortunately, Joseph's daughter gained a third class certificate and officially took over the school with her father's 'help'!
- Funding by the Howard family ended in 1903 when the school became a church school. In deference to its Quaker founders and the non-conformist pupils in the school, the Book of Common Prayer and Catechism were not taught.











- In 1944 the school became a County school and in 1957 Dorset County Council assumed responsibility.
- The school closed in 1974 and children were bussed to the enlarged school at Fontmell Magna.

### Sport and Leisure Activities

Other than shooting, there is no record of recreational sport in Ashmore before the First World War, but archery may have been practised at the Butts. In the 1920s there was a miniature rifle range next to Beales Mead (now Lynchet House) and a golf course near Compton Abbas airfield. A Women's Institute, Working Men's Club, Girl Guides and Boy Scouts Groups were formed and there were Sunday School trips to Bournemouth and Weymouth.

Skating was popular on the pond once the winter ice was thick enough and on one occasion in the 1930s, a dance was held on the ice to the music of a gramophone!

When Ken Langley and Cecil Coombs returned from the Second World War, they started a football team and cricket against local village teams was revived. Ashmore joined the Dorset League and quickly became a formidable side, topping the League from 1974 to 1976. During the 2005 season Ashmore played away due to the construction of the new Village Hall. Many of the team are now from outside the village as the number of young men in the village has declined.

One event, steeped in legend and held annually, is the Filly Loo. It is traditionally held on the Friday evening nearest to Midsummer's Day. It was reintroduced as a folk dance festival by Peter Swann in 1956, with the cooperation of the Ashmore folk dance club and guests from Warminster, Westbury and other villages in Dorset and Wiltshire. In recent years, the White Horse Morris and folk dance clubs have supported the evening. The popular Folk and Celidh Band have provided the music for over 20 years and 'dances for all' are interspersed with displays of Morris and Playford dancing. The origin of the name, 'Filly Loo', is surrounded in mystery. Some say it was originally held to celebrate the end of the cultivated hazel nut harvest – proper name, Filbert nut. One of the original instigators, a Louis Rideout, known as Filbert Louis, may have given his name to the event. Whatever its origin, the evening remains one of the best local attempts to keep tradition alive in Dorset for the benefit of future generations.

### Footpaths and Bridleways

Ashmore is blessed with a large number of footpaths and bridleways and sits about halfway along the Wessex Ridgeway running from Hungerford to Lyme Regis. The paths provide a variety of short and long walks with a mixture of steep climbs and relatively easy gradients. In Spring, many of the walks take one through magnificent bluebell woods and on clear days there are year round panoramic views towards the Isle of Wight, Purbeck Hills and, from linked walks, across to Bulbarrow and the Blackmore Vale.

### Crime and Disorder

No description of the environment of Ashmore would be complete without an examination of its historical misdemeanours! In this rural area, poaching takes centre stage over the years. In the 18<sup>th</sup> Century, landowners employed their own gamekeepers, who were allowed to 'preserve and kill on their own land every form of game except deer'. The deer belonged to the Lord of the Chase and landowners found it increasingly hard to protect their crops from damage inflicted by deer. It wasn't until 1859 that the fields of Ashmore were enclosed, so the villagers set snares to trap deer. These would have been hastily removed when the Lord's keepers raided the village. In 1826 Samuel Hall, a tenant farmer, wrote to John Eliot, the Squire of Ashmore who lived in London, to tell him that poaching was so bad it was time someone was 'made an example of' as a warning to others. Consequently, a Richard Turner was convicted and fined £5, but on refusal to pay was imprisoned for 3 months; perhaps he was lucky not to be transported to Australia!

There is a story of a hanging at Washer's Pit. Squire Barber, who bought the Manor of Ashmore in 1634 and lived in the village until his death in 1662, is said to have dreamt one night that there was a woman in distress at Washer's Pit. A Mrs Mullins, his cook, volunteered to investigate, provided she could use the Squire's best horse. On reaching Washer's Pit, she found a woman hanging by her hair. As Mrs Mullins was cutting her down, she was set upon by men hiding in the bushes. However, she managed to mount her horse and carry the woman back to the village. Squire Barber was so pleased with her that he gave her a cottage to live in. To this day that cottage is known as Mullins Cottage.

In more recent times, thankfully, there has not been any violent crime, but poaching and some house-breaking and robbery from farm buildings have occurred from time to time.

## SECTION 3

### The Development of Ashmore

#### Ashmore Today

Ashmore today is a village of some 80 houses of mixed architectural style, ranging from 16<sup>th</sup> Century to 20<sup>th</sup> Century designs, occupied by 138 adults and 24 school age children. Many people work away from the village and the number of retired residents is increasing. The cost of housing is expensive and difficult for the young first time buyer to afford. The village has no school, shop, post office or pub and is served by an infrequent bus service.

Despite this, Ashmore is a desirable village in which to live and its inhabitants are determined to make it an even better place. It is a prosperous and thriving community. It is well kept and there are several new houses and many of the older ones have

been tastefully and lovingly restored or converted. Although the land is well farmed, only a handful of people work on the land.

It is due to the considerable efforts of the community, in particular in the area of fund raising, that a new Village Hall was built in 2005. This has proved to be a major social centre for the village and has breathed new life into the community. There is no doubt that Ashmore is a beautiful place and is now a popular tourist attraction. The beauty of the surrounding countryside is unmatched and the planning of the Ashmore off the future is geared to preserving all that is best of the old while tastefully and carefully developing the new.



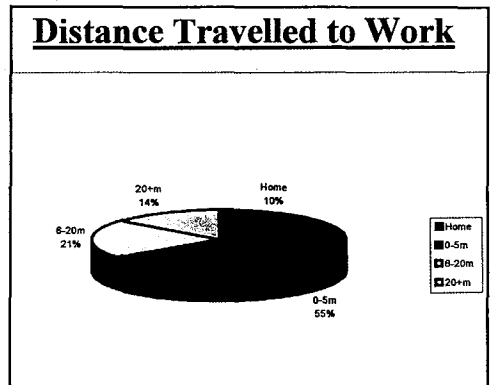
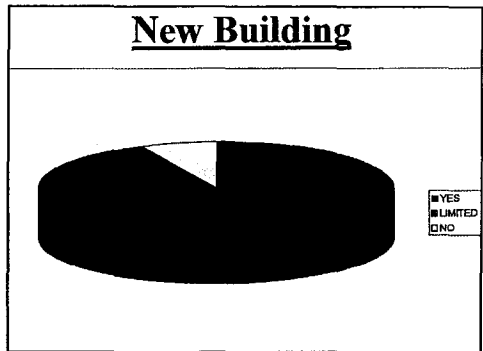
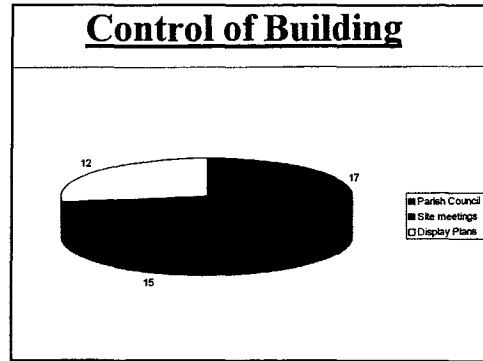
**Ashmore Tomorrow**

A survey carried out in the village during 2005 showed a real pride in the village but that some improvement was needed to ensure it maintained

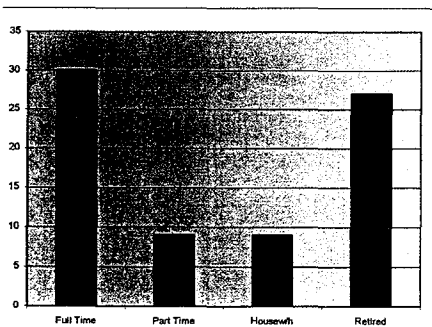


its quiet and dignified place in the North Dorset environment. The results of the survey, which have generated the Action Plan at Section 4, can be summarised as a desire to:

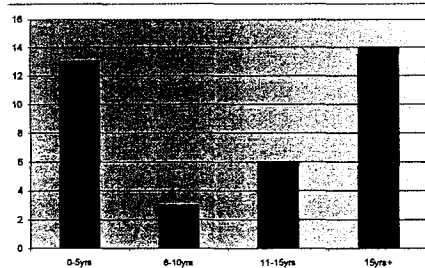
- See the village stay at approximately the same size, with no more than 10% growth over the next 15 years
- Place emphasis on affordable housing to encourage younger people to live in the village
- Enable the introduction of a sustainable village store
- Ensure all development was carefully controlled at both local and District level, and in keeping with the environment of the village
- Create more facilities for the young people of Ashmore
- Seek improvements to the local bus services to give more mobility to the elderly
- Manage the environment more actively to maintain the peace, tranquillity and appearance of the village



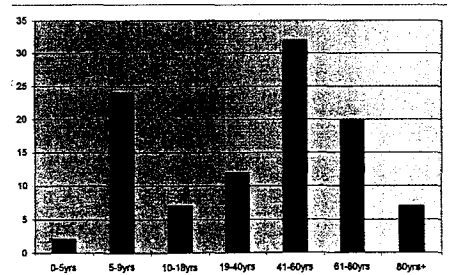
**Occupations**



**Years in Village**



**Age of Household Members**



## SECTION 4

### Action Plan

2006 - 2020

Category	Action	Timeline in Plan Years
Planning and Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure robust planning and development review process within the Parish Council</li> <li>• Generate close working relationship between Parish Council and District planning authority</li> <li>• Contain village housing growth to no more than 10% up to the year 2020</li> <li>• Ensure all development is in keeping with the environment of the village</li> <li>• Take into account the need for affordable housing</li> </ul>	<p>Year 1 to 15</p> <p>Year 1 to 15</p> <p>Year 1 to 15</p> <p>Year 1 to 15</p> <p>Year 1 to 15</p>
Services and Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Campaign to improve local bus services</li> <li>• Develop policy with District authorities for more regular street cleaning</li> <li>• In conjunction with major supermarkets examine potential for village shop</li> <li>• Work with District authorities to obtain youth leader to manage a village youth club in the Village Hall</li> <li>• Create plan to obtain all weather tennis court</li> </ul>	<p>By end year 2</p> <p>By end year 2</p> <p>By end year 2</p> <p>By end year 2</p> <p>Year 1 to 4</p>
Environmental Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange for introduction of serviced litter bins</li> <li>• Create awareness of need to protect grass verges. Target farm workers, tractor drivers, builders, oil and materials delivery firms</li> <li>• Liaise with District authorities to ensure roads are maintained in good and safe condition</li> </ul>	<p>End year 1</p> <p>Year 1 and 2</p> <p>Year 1 to 15</p>



## Annex A

# Luke Howard: Ashmore Land Owner and The Man Who Named The Clouds

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Luke Howard was born 28 November 1772 in London, England, the first-born of Elizabeth and Robert Howard. Robert Howard was a successful businessman and devout Quaker; Luke was sent to a large Quaker grammar school located at Burford, a community near Oxford, as soon as he reached school age.

While Howard was never trained as a scientist, he had a love for nature and the weather, particularly the clouds, from an early age. He became a devoted observer of the atmosphere for the rest of his life, augmenting his visual observations with readings from barometer and thermometer. For over 30 years of his life, Luke Howard maintained a record of accurate meteorological observations.

## Naming The Clouds

Prior to the beginning of the Nineteenth Century, most weather observers believed that clouds were too transient, too changeable, too short-lived, to be classified or even analyzed. With few exceptions, no cloud types were even named; they were just described by their colour and form as each individual saw them: dark, white, grey, black, mare's tails, mackerel skies, wooly fleece, towers and castles, rocks and *oxes-eyes*. Clouds were used in a few instances as forecast tools in weather proverbs, but mostly by their state of darkness or colour:

*"Red sky in morning, sailor take warning."  
"Mackerel skies and mare's tails, make lofty ships carry low sails."*

Then within a year, two cloud classification schemes were independently developed by Jean Baptiste Lamarck of France and Luke Howard of England. Lamarck was the first to present his cloud classification, publishing it in 1802 in the third volume of his *Annuaire Météorologique* in a paper entitled "On Cloud Forms." Lamarck realized the importance of clarity in observing meteorological phenomena:

He initially proposed five main types of clouds "related to general causes which are easily ascertained." They were:

- Hazy clouds (*en forme de voile*)
- Massed clouds (*attroupés*)
- Dappled clouds (*pommelés*)
- Broom-like clouds (*en balayeurs*)
- Grouped clouds (*groupés*).



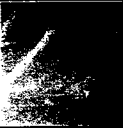
Three years later, he devised a more detailed classification scheme which comprised twelve forms. Unfortunately his classification system did not make an impression on the scientists and naturalists of the day, not even his countrymen and does not seem to have been used by anyone, except himself. Two possible reasons were given, in to the "Preface" of the *International Cloud Atlas* (World Meteorological Organization, 1939): ...due to his choice of somewhat peculiar French names which would not readily be adopted in other countries, or perhaps the paper was discredited through appearing in the same publication (*Annuaire Météorologique*) as forecasts based on astrological data."

During the winter 1802-03, Luke Howard presented a paper to the Askesian Society, of which he was a founding member, entitled "On the Modification of Clouds." (Day remarks that the word *modification* in the title would in today's English be replaced by *classification*.)


In that paper, Howard proposed that one could identify several simple categories within the complexity of cloud forms. The great leap that Howard took was to provide his descriptive categories with Latin names, the language of scholarship, thus transcending national and language borders in its usage. Unlike Lamarck's names, these were understandable to all European-derived cultures (and in non-European lands where the Catholic Church had made inroads, bringing Latin to the local scholars). And it did not hinder the system's acceptance that it was both very simple and nearly all-encompassing.

Howard believed all clouds belonged to three distinct groups:



	<b>Cumulus</b> (Latin for <i>heap</i> )	“Convex or conical heaps, increasing upward from a horizontal base -- Wool bag clouds.”
	<b>Stratus</b> (Latin for <i>layer</i> )	“A widely extended horizontal sheet, increasing from below.”
	<b>Cirrus</b> (Latin for <i>curl of hair</i> )	“Parallel, flexuous fibres extensible by increase in any or all directions.”

To denote “a cloud in the act of condensation into rain, hail or snow,” he added a fourth category:

	<b>Nimbus</b> (Latin for <i>rain</i> )	“A rain cloud -- a cloud or systems of clouds from which rain is falling.”
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According to Howard: “*While any of the clouds, except the nimbus, retain their primitive forms, no rain can take place; and it is by observing the changes and transitions of cloud form that weather may be predicted.*”

Clouds could also alter their forms, thus, Howard reasoned, when cumulus clouds bunched together so that they crowded the sky, they became:

**Cumulo-stratus:**

“The cirro-stratus blended with the cumulus, and either appearing intermixed with the heaps of the latter, or super-adding a widespread structure to its base.”

Similarly, he defined other intermediate categories of transformation:

**Cirro-cumulus:**

“Small, well defined, roundish masses increasing from below.” and

**Cirro-stratus:**

“Horizontal or slightly inclined masses, attenuated towards a part or the whole of their circumference, bent downward or undulated, separate, or in groups, or consisting of small clouds having these characters.”

Howard’s work made a big impression on those interested in the sky, particularly after his papers were reprinted in Thomas Forster’s successful *Researches About Atmospheric Phaenomenae* in 1813. The classification system quickly gained wide acceptance both in Britain and other countries. Among its biggest supporters was the German poet, philosopher and scientist Johann Wolfgang von Goethe.

Goethe used the Howard classification in his weather journals and eventually dedicated four poems to Howard and his Clouds.

Goethe wrote:

[Howard] “*was the first to hold fast conceptually the airy and always changing form of clouds, to limit and fasten down the indefinite, the intangible and unattainable and give them appropriate names.*”

Howard’s work on clouds also appears to have influenced many Romantic Era painters, notably masters Joseph M.W. Turner, and John Constable of England and Caspar David Friedrich (through Goethe) in Germany. They used Howard’s descriptions to depict clouds with greater detail and accuracy. Turner first learned of Howard’s work through the second edition of Forster’s book in 1821, and it inspired him to paint a series of cloud studies. (Howard also produced a series of his own watercolours depicting the various clouds.)

*Cumulostratus* by Luke Howard



An aerial, black and white photograph of a rural landscape. The image shows a mix of open fields, some with distinct patterns, and areas with dense trees. In the lower center, there is a small cluster of buildings, likely a village or farmstead. The terrain appears to be rolling hills or a valley. The overall image has a high-contrast, grainy quality.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful acknowledgements to:

Dorset Strategic Partnership  
Dorset Community Action  
North Dorset District Council  
Compton Abbas Airfield

Produced by Ashmore Parish Council July 2006 with considerable help and support  
from the people of Ashmore.