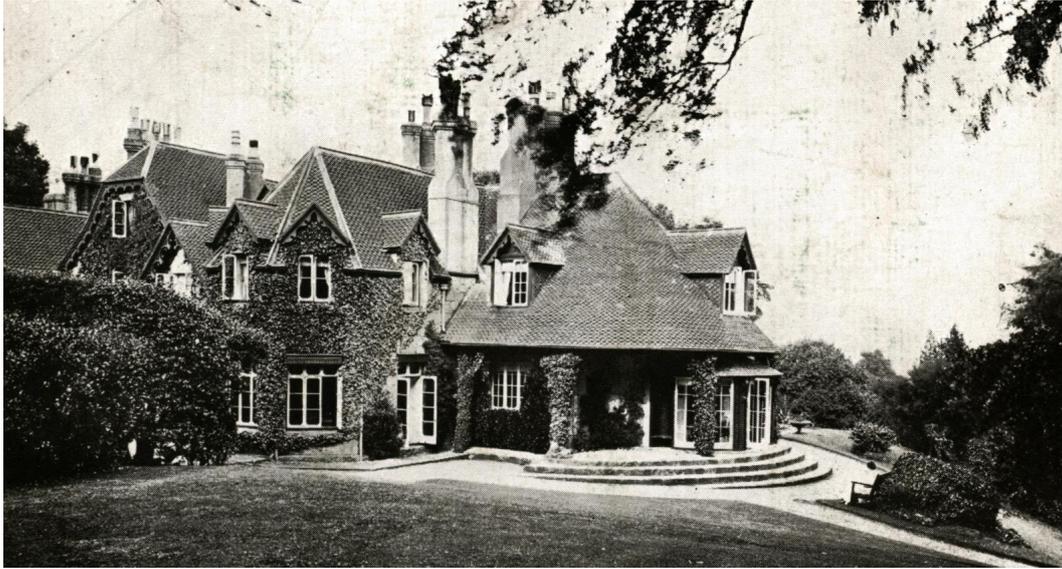




Puckaster



Among the many documentary deposits in the Heritage Centre is a remarkable collection of sale particulars for properties across the Undercliff. They came from the old-established firm of Sir Francis Pittis & Son and cover a period from about the 1880s through to the middle years of the twentieth century. The photo shows the house known as Puckaster on higher ground above Puckaster Cove, not far from Niton Undercliff. It figures in a set of sale particulars, dated 1925, produced by John D. Wood & Co of Mount Street, London W1, for whom Pittis were local agents.

The property had been built in the early 1820s as a summer home for a wealthy merchant, James Vine Esq., who was a patron of the arts. It thus became much favoured by generations of nineteenth-century visitors to the Undercliff as an illustration of the then highly fashionable *cottage orné* style. Soon after its completion, the property was depicted in a fine aquatint by Robert Lugar that was subsequently reproduced in illustrated guide-books to the area. The building seen in the photo, however, is a much extended version of the property built for James Vine. The sale particulars of 1925 reveal that it had been transformed into a small country house with a grand entrance hall, five spacious downstairs reception rooms and thirteen bedrooms upstairs. There were extensive 'offices' for staff, including butler, housekeeper and house servants. There was also stabling as well as garages. The grounds were described as secluded and extensive, conforming in parts to a luxuriant sub-tropical garden.



The property stands 250 feet above sea level, with easy access down to Puckaster Cove, with its sandy beach and bathing hut. Since 1925, as many will be aware, this part of the Undercliff has seen significant ground movement in places. However, coastal protection measures have ensured the survival of Puckaster itself.

Ventnor & District Local History Society: Michael Freeman, from files in Ventnor Heritage Centre



Ventnor & District Local History Society is a registered charity, working to preserve and record the history of our area and make it available to the public in the Ventnor Heritage Centre.

The Society and Heritage Centre are run and managed by volunteers.

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