



Anyone travelling along Mitchell Avenue will pass the large building which stands on the Downs side of the road opposite the Bowling Club, perhaps not knowing its history.

Originally named *Greystones*, it was commissioned in 1866 by Captain Mark Huish, a lifelong railway man. Born in Nottingham on March 9th 1808, he was the elder son of a hosier who, for many years, was deputy Lieutenant of Nottinghamshire. The family were strict non-conformists, a belief that remained with him throughout his life, and inspired his support for The London City Mission, whose work centred on the poor and destitute, and in a wide range of charitable help for working people.

In 1823 Huish became a cadet in the army of the East India Company, returning to England in 1834 with the rank of Captain. He left the army to pursue a career with one of the new railway companies, the Glasgow, Paisley & Greenock Railway, taking on the job of Secretary, responsible for getting the railway ready for traffic. He obviously did a good job because, in May 1841 he was approached by the London & North Western Railway to become their General Manager, reputedly on one of the highest salaries paid to anyone in the industry at the time. However, his man-management skills left a lot to be desired and eventually relations became so strained he resigned on 11 September 1858, retiring with his wife Margaret to *Combe Wood* in Bonchurch (formerly named *Uppermount* and later known as *Peacock Vane*).



Captain Huish remained active in railway affairs, and arbitrated on behalf of the Board of Trade in several disputes. He gave evidence before Parliamentary Commissions in London, including, in 1860, making the case for a railway on the Isle of Wight, stating that, having travelled to London over 75 times since his retirement, *due to the poor roads it took longer to get from Bonchurch to Portsmouth than it did from Portsmouth to London!* An Act of Parliament was granted and Huish was invited to the first Board meeting to advise on the problems of financing and constructing the railway, drawing on his experience from his work on the Glasgow railway 25 years earlier. The line from Ryde to Shanklin was completed in 1864, and extended to Ventnor in 1866.

Following the opening of Ventnor Railway Station, Mark Huish commissioned the building of *Greystones* in Mitchell Avenue (then called Newport Road) for use by the London City Mission's Clergy and their families as a holiday home. Sadly, he never saw his dream fulfilled, dying on 18 January 1867, aged 58. He is buried in Bonchurch churchyard; his will revealed a personal fortune of over £40,000, a huge sum for a salaried official at that time.

When construction of *Greystones* was complete, Margaret Huish handed the entire building to the Mission, renaming it *Huish Terrace*. A plaque on the front wall reads *This Terrace Commenced 1866 By The Late Capt. Mark Huish Was Completed By His Widow 1867*, with the original name *Greystones* visible at the top. A second plaque, now almost illegible, reads: *Presented By M. Huish of Bonchurch in Memory Of Her Late Husband Captain Huish And Of His Dear Friends In The Mission - AD 1869*.

Margaret also erected a shrine in her husband's memory in the front wall of *Combe Wood*, consisting of a drinking fountain within a small shelter. The Huish family crest can be seen above the opening with the motto *Fide et Taciturnitate* [Faithfully and in Silence]. She lived on in *Combe Wood* until her death in 1889, when the house was inherited by a nephew, Marcus Huish, who sold the property in 1893 to the Griffin family for £6,000.

