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TREGONWELL

TREGONWELL - Charlotte's schoolfriend, indeed lifelong friend, Helen Tregonwell (1784-1866), married Captain John Duff MARKLAND. The couple lived at Farnham, south of Tollard Royal. After her husband's death, Helen rented Handley House at Sixpenny Handley, where she is buried with other members of her family. Helen was the daughter of Lewis Dimoke Grosvenor Tregonwell and his first wife, sole heiress Katherine SYDENHAM (he later became associated with another wealthy family when he married Henrietta PORTMAN of Brianston).

Tregonwell is regarded as the founder of Bournemouth, for it was he who built the very first house there in around 1810 (see Harriet GROVE diary entries and early Charlotte Grove entries). He had earlier been a Captain of the Dorset Rangers and there are theories that although part of his role was to protect against smuggling, he was in fact complicit in it. There are close connections to Cranborne and Cranborne Chase, notorious for its smuggling activity during the period in question. Tregonwell was born at Anderson, near Cranborne, in 1758 and died there in 1832. He was later interred at St Peter's, Bournemouth.

A son by the first marriage and an older brother to Helen, St Barbe Tregonwell, named after his maternal Sydenham grandfather, was almost certainly mentally handicapped, and this is borne out among several references Charlotte makes to him in her earlier diaries.