

History of Hoopern Valley

We're piecing together the history of the valley from details of the surrounding area.

1225

The name 'Hoopern' can be traced back to 1225 and likely refers to a place where barrel hoops were made.

1808 - 1989: Veitch Nursery

The [Veitch Nursery](#) (approx 1808 to 1989) extended from New North Road across Howell and Velwell roads and is thought to include Hoopern Valley. However, newspaper articles cite the Hoopern Estate and Streatham Farm including Lower Hoopern in the 1920's. Also maps suggest the nursery might end at the edge of the valley. [St Bridget Nursery](#) purchased the remains of the Veitch Nursery in 1969.

- ['Hortus Veitchii', and the History of the Veitch Nurseries of Exeter & Chelsea](#)
- [The House of Veitch | Cambridge Library Collection Blog](#)
- [Hortus Veitchii: A History of the Rise and Progress of the Nurseries of Messrs James Veitch and Sons](#)

1831

"Hoopern House, originally part of the Hoopern Estate, is a mansion built before 1831 for Edmund P. Lyon, but with later 19th century alterations and an extension, and is presently used by the University of Exeter as the Institute of Population Studies." - [South West Heritage Trust](#)

1877

"An important auction sale was held at the Half Moon Hotel yesterday afternoon by Messrs, Halsey and Son for the sale of 'Hoopern House,' and other property part of the Estate of the late Mark Kennaway, Esq. The biddings for the beautiful mansion and grounds known as Hoopern House, ran up from £2,000 to £7,000, and it was eventually knocked down to Mr. C. Ware for £7,100. Two freehold fields forming part of Hoopern Estate, of about 3a. Or. 16p. and 3a. 3r. 29p., were bought in. Lot five, freehold nursery and fruit garden, with shop..." - [The Wester Times](#), Friday 28 September 1877, pg 8.

While Hoopern House isn't adjacent to the valley the inclusion of nursery lands suggests this might include part of the Veitch Nursery, "forming part of the Hoopern Estate".

1878

“For the past ten or twelve years Mr. Thornton West had resided at Streatham Hall, which he built after he had purchased the Hoopern estate, of about 300 acres, upon which it is erected.” - *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, Friday 06 December 1878.

1912

Velwell Road houses were built, adjacent to Hoopern Valley, in land that is noted as “Nursery” in Figure 1 below. These were built by the Streatham Hall Building Estate Co Ltd.

1922

“... in 1922, Alderman William Henry Reed, a former Mayor of Exeter, and a member of Devon County Council, bought Streatham Hall and its grounds, and gave them to the University College of the South-West of England. He had made it a condition for the gift that the college should buy the adjoining farm and its land. This was Streatham Farm, which had been Lower Hoopern.” - [unknown newspaper article](#).

1924

“We [University of the South-West] own the whole of the Hoopern Valley. This includes one of the noted pleasure walks of the city.” - [Western Morning News, 27 June 1924](#).

1942

Exeter bombed creates hole in the valley

1947

[Aerial photo of Hoopern Valley](#).

1955

“In 1955 the University College of the South-West became the University of Exeter. At first the college, and later, the University, went on acquiring more land, and the University has now much - but not all - of the original Hoopern Estate, although some of the university land includes part of Duryard which was once the adjoining estate to Hoopern.” - [unknown newspaper article](#).

2015

The UOE stopped leasing the valley for cattle grazing, upon advice from DWT and due to ongoing problems with the impact of cattle in the valley.

2016

UOE locked the gates to the valley to address ongoing rough sleeping and ASB in the valley.

2024

UOE unlocked the gates to the valley, improving access for the surrounding communities and working to maintain the valley as a biodiversity hub.

UOE and Devon County Council completed “Devon County Council Highways Act 1980 s25 Creation Agreement – Footpath Nos.71 & 72 Exeter” denoting new public rights of way crossing Hoopern Valley (Figure 3).

2025

The octocentenary of Hoopern Valley.

Figure 1

[Map of Hoopern Valley](#) and surrounding area including Veitch Nursery, prior to 1912.



Figure 2

[Entrance to the Veitch Nursery](#) along New North Road, next to the Clock Tower Hotel.



Figure 3

Creation of new footpaths Nos. 71 & 72 across Hoopern Valley in 2024.

