

# Trowbridge Civic Society NEWSLETTER



Autumn 2020

In this issue:  
Southwick Court  
Future of Trowbridge Town  
Centre  
Developments in Trowbridge

Member of Wiltshire Building Record, ASHTAV and BALH  
Registered Charity Number 276765 Website: [www.trowbridgecivicsociety.org.uk](http://www.trowbridgecivicsociety.org.uk)

## Southwick Court



Figure 1. The gatehouse and bridge, which are the oldest part of the house



Figure 2. 17<sup>th</sup> century carved staircase

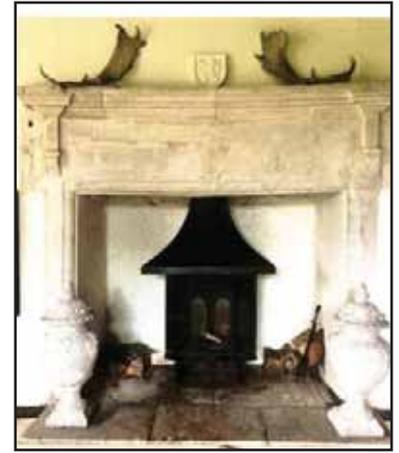


Figure 3. Flagstone hearth and fire surround



Figure 4. Bread oven positioned in the wall between two main downstairs fireplaces.



Figure 5. White Rose of York

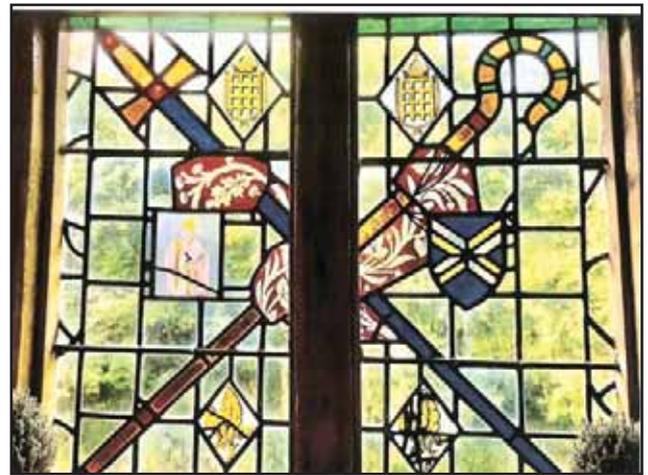


Figure 6. Stained glass window reportedly from Beckington Castle.



Figure 7. Engraved initials of Walter Bushand the date 1567 on a stone set into the new wing.



Figure 8. A close up view of another engraving

Photographs, including cover, photograph by Simon Tesler

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## EDITORIAL COMMENT

As we approach the end of a very unusual year, the Editorial team wish everyone a happy Christmas and hope that next year will eventually see a return to some kind of normality.

The Autumn issue of the newsletter is mainly given over to the history of Southwick Court. Although I knew where it was and had briefly visited once, I knew nothing about its history. Simon Tesler, the present owner, has written a fascinating account which, not only describes the Court, but also shows how its owners from the 13<sup>th</sup> century were often involved in the politics and intrigues of the day. It had me going to various sources to find out more about the Wars of the Roses and Jack Cade's rebellion amongst other things.

David Feather has written two pieces, one about the state of the town centre and its shops and one about the East Wing of County Hall. There are also some old photographs of some of the shops 100 years ago. How things have changed!

As usual, we welcome contributions from members and comments about any of the pieces.

Finally, thanks to our printer, John Lamming and Sons who make our newsletter so attractive with high quality printing.

## TROWBRIDGE CIVIC SOCIETY INFORMATION

- President: Kenneth Rogers
- Vice Presidents: Michael Marshman;  
Wende Maunder;
- Chairman: Glyn Bridges, 4 Alma Street, Trowbridge. Tel 755784
- Vice Chairman: Margaret Howard, 52 Avenue Road, Trowbridge. Tel 764691
- Hon Secretary: Celia Russell, 18 Churchlands, North Bradley. Tel 754668
- Hon Treasurer and Membership Secretary: Janet Carpenter, 2 Chepston Place, Trowbridge. Tel 752770  
janet\_carpenter@btinternet.com
- Committee members: Sue Glover; Kevin Hartley; Jonathan Hawkes; Diana Ingram
- Newsletter: Peter Collier Tel 761270  
pcollier@blueyonder.co.uk  
Sue and Kevin Eames;  
Glyn Bridges  
Mike Johnson
- Photographic Recorder: Kevin Hartley
- Web Site: Jonathan Hawkes

Subscription Rates: Single £6, Joint £10, Corporate £30 New members welcome - please contact Membership Secretary

From the Treasurer: If you haven't yet paid your subscriptions for 2020, please send them to Janet at the address above or pay directly to our bank account Lloyds 30-98-97 AC No: 46956860 using your name as a reference.

## Chairman's Notes

The Haden lamp which had been stored for many years in the stairwell of the museum fire escape has now been restored thanks to grants from the Friends of the Trowbridge Museum, Trowbridge Civic Society and the Trowbridge Historic Buildings Committee. The work was carried out by Hiscocks engineers and Mr Terry Sims has agreed to erect the lamp in St George's Works near the Haden manhole cover. It will strengthen the link with Haden and will make another point of interest in our Town Trails. Once the lamp has been installed it is hoped that there will be an unveiling ceremony.

## Glyn Bridges

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## Planning Matters

## Sue and Kevin Eames

In August permission was granted for the demolition of existing cottages at 4, Newtown (near the end of Gloucester Road) and the erection of 5 flats. (20/00304/FUL) Within the conditions attached to the permission it states that

*Prior to the demolition of the existing building, a survey to include an analysis and photographic record of the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Once approved, a copy will be forwarded onto the Wiltshire Historic Buildings Record.*

A further condition states that;  
*Prior to the demolition of the existing building a scheme for the protection and renovation of the historic feature - the NEWTOWN street name plate - Shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The name plate shall be re-mounted on the new building.*



An application (20/04782/VAR) to vary the original application regarding Ravenscroft House, to change the use of the care home to three dwelling houses and six flats, including additions and alterations to extend the bungalow to the front elevation and to form rooms within the roof space has been approved with conditions.

The planning officer's report states that the proposed alterations would cause no harm to the living conditions of neighbouring residents or harm to the amenity of future residents of the development.



An application (19/11421/FUL) to build four one-bedroomed dwellings to the rear of the Crown Hotel in Timbrell Street has been approved and the case officer's report states that:

*The proposals are in accordance with the development plan and without harm to the heritage significance of the listed building.*

A resubmission of an application regarding Clark's Mill and Mill House, Stallard Street has been approved with conditions.(19/09392/LBC) The application sought to convert the ground, first, second and third floors of Clark's Mill, with a replacement roof structure to create a new

fourth floor, totalling 18 apartments and to convert Mill House, with a first floor extension to create four dwellings.

This extract from the Heritage Statement for the revised application explains the changes from the original application.

*During the pre-application consultation the main alteration within the building façade was the roof design from that of a tiled triple-pitched roof to that of a flat-roof detail. The comments from the planning officer stated that the introduction of a flat roof element in this location would have a 'harmful impact' due to its massing and dominant impact. In order to remove this concern and retain the building's original design it has been decided to preserve the triple pitched roof detail, although with a slight alteration to make the space more accessible. A new floor has been created by adding a flat roof section across the main bulk of the roof, whilst still retaining the pitched roof details. This allows the external façade to remain mostly unchanged.*

This is of particular interest to Civic Society members because the comment submitted by the Society make particular reference to the roof. Below is the comment in full.



*While generally in agreement with the proposals in this application, the Trowbridge Civic Society objects to the treatment of Clark's Mill. The removal of the roof and its replacement by a flat-roofed top storey is, to say the least, unsympathetic, in contrast to the rest of the application. The roof is an essential part of the design, and its removal would inflict serious harm on the 'local character and distinctiveness' mentioned in the NPPF (para 131), as it would*

*contrast starkly with the rooflines of the other buildings in the ensemble - and even with the mills on the other side of the road, also by the Gane Brothers. If the roof were to be retained, we would be happy to support the proposal.*

It is nice to end on a positive note and to be assured that The Civic Society does exert influence to preserve and enhance buildings of Trowbridge.

## **The Future of Trowbridge Town Centre**

**David Feather**

What is going to be the future of Trowbridge Town Centre Shopping? What sort of shops will be left and where? The Covid-19 situations have speeded up shoppers' use of the Internet and my wife already is concerned that clothing shops have been closing. Will some of our many coffee outlets close?

With the changes that the Government is proposing, I think we will see many more shops converted into homes, but it may be very scattered and the shopping centre could be badly fragmented. I wonder how the local planners will cope with that trend - if the Government allows them control!

Members of the U3A across the Country share this concern. They propose to monitor what is happening with shops in a nationwide survey. West Wilts U3A members, including Kevin Eames and I, have been involved. We have noted the numbers and types of shops in Trowbridge Town Centre and taken photographs of them (see page 6).

This survey will be repeated in early 2021 to detect whatever changes may have taken place. If Covid allows me, I hope to analyse the Trowbridge data to give us some useful information to put into the public domain.

If you do not know what U3A is, it used to be the University of the Third Age, but the title "University" was thought to deter people from joining. It is an organisation for retired, or semi-retired, people to follow their interests and stop our brains seizing up.

### **The U3A**

Founded in 1982, the U3A is a UK-wide movement of locally-run interest groups that provide a wide range of opportunities to come together to learn for fun. Members explore new ideas, skills and activities together. There are 1,057 U3As with over 450,000 members.

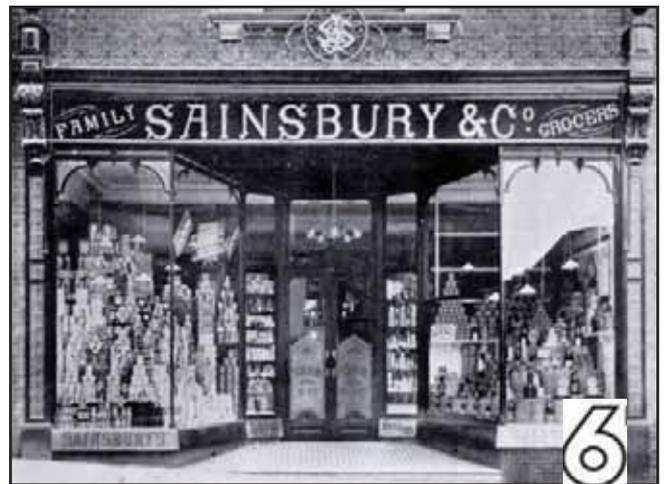
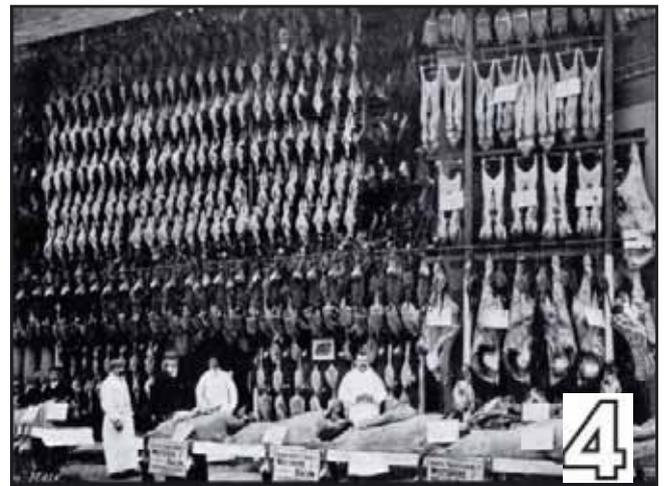
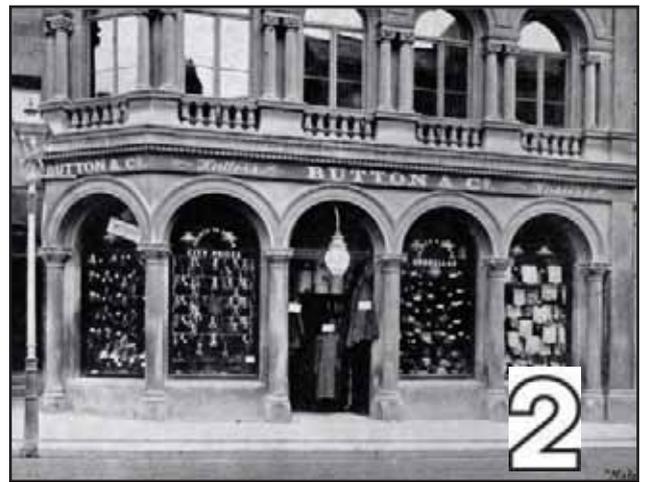
### **West Wilts U3A**

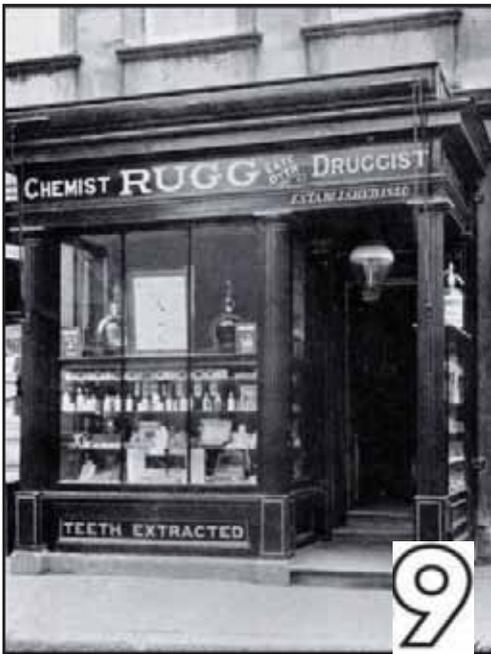
For 2019/20 the annual Subscription fee is £15.00. This includes a capitation fee of £3.50 payable to the Third Age Trust but for those who are members of another U3A we waive this fee. Group members may also pay an additional small fee per session depending upon the particular group venue in order to cover the cost of room hire and/or refreshments etc.

Members receive by post a quarterly WestWilts U3A Newsletter in March, June, September and December. Also, a National U3A News magazine "Third Age Matters", which we provide free to our members, is published five times a year and posted direct to a member's home address.

If you wish to join the WestWilts U3A, you can download an application form from their website (<http://westwiltsu3a.org.uk/>) and send it to the address shown on it.

Trowbridge shops 115 years ago





These photos are from the Flickr site, *Trowbridge Postcards and Ephemera*. This site is a treasure trove of historic photographs of the town and surrounding villages. The shops are: 1. Garlic and Sons, Fore Street 2. Button & Co, 23 Fore Street, 3. Geo W Rose, 66 Fore Street, 4. Bowyer, Philpott & Payne, Fore Street, 5. John S Rogers, The Parade, 6. J Sainsbury & Co, 4 Wicker Hill, 7. Misses Hancock, 44 Fore Street, 8. H B Pitt, Roundstone street, 9. W J Rugg, 45 Fore Street, 10. F Hilser, Church Walk

## East Wing Site off Bythesea Road

## David Feather

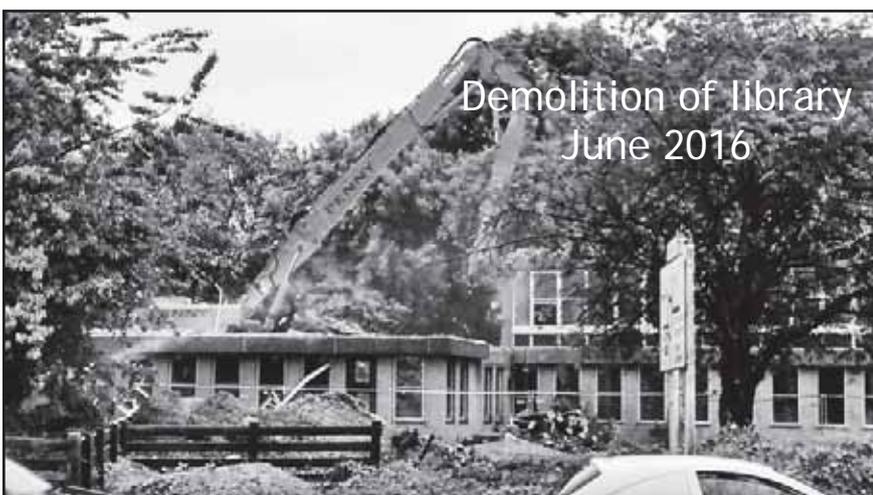
We are probably mostly pre-occupied with keeping well for so many months, but recently I have wondered what is happening about the important site opposite County Hall. So I emailed the planning Department at County Hall and one of the Planning Team kindly responded.

You may remember that an application for outline permission was made as long ago as 2017. This was for "up to 690m<sup>2</sup> of retail floor space (Classes A1, A2 and A3); up to 1,100m<sup>2</sup> of restaurant/public house floor space (Classes A4/A5/AA and including the provision of ancillary staff and/or bed & breakfast accommodation the upper floors); up to 54 residential apartments (Class C3); new health facility (Class D1) of up to 4,000m<sup>2</sup> floor space; a new leisure centre (Class D2) with up to 1,800m<sup>2</sup> leisure floor space and provision of an integral energy centre within the proposed leisure facility and various associated works."

Well, we read some months ago that the NHS had pulled the health facility which was to have been a major feature. Now the Covid situation has made shopping and restaurants a doubtful venture. Importantly, there are many problems associated with the site, including, but not limited to, additional flood risk assessment and flood plain protection, multiple sewer diversion redesign and tree and ecological impact and mitigation. A fresh conservation setting reappraisal has been done to reflect upon the significance of the nearby mills, which would be opened up to more extensive views from

across the river. In so doing, their setting and significance would be enhanced. In view of these issues, the Planning officers asked for a new master-plan to be prepared.

I suspect that the Covid affect will not be fully appreciated for a year or so. Sadly this means that Trowbridge will have to wait some more years for one of its most important town-centre sites to be dealt with. Wouldn't it be nice if Wiltshire Council could ask Trowbridge residents what they would like to see on the site?



## Southwick Court

At the beginning of 2020 housing developers submitted an outline plan for 180 homes on land between Trowbridge and Southwick.

An agent's report from Savills on behalf of the developer said: 'The site presents an excellent opportunity to provide a high-quality residential development in a sustainable location. This contemporary housing scheme will help Trowbridge meet local need and contribute to the delivery of housing across the district.'

The scheme caused much discussion, partly because of its proximity to Southwick Country Park as well as its plan to construct an access road close to historic Southwick Court.

The owner of Southwick Court, Simon Tesler, said, '*Because of its position as a sheltered, partly wooded area in the middle of 100 acres of open fields, we tend to attract a very substantial number of wild animals. We see foxes and deer virtually every week; see (and especially hear!) owls regularly, especially at the moment; bats in the summer and pheasant in the mating season.*

*'Heron are regular visitors and we have pairs of resident kingfishers and moorhens, as well as a large number of water voles living in and around the lake in the centre of our land, and we have seen otters three or four times in the past five years. They must be here quite often, though, because we regularly find freshwater clams from the lake, split open and left on the bank. I'm not sure any other animals except otters (and mink) do this..*

*'Just as damaging to biodiversity and the habitat will be the chaos that will be caused by the proposed access road leading to the development.*

*'We are very concerned, like everyone else, about the impact on our house and land from run-off from the development into the Lambrook and our lake. Not only will the development damage the biodiversity and the habitat there will be the chaos that will be caused by the proposed access road leading to the development. The plan envisages just one road in and out of an estate of 180 houses, running from Frome Road opposite the Country Park through that field and up towards the development. Imagine the impact from another 180 cars a day joining the traffic on Frome Road!'*

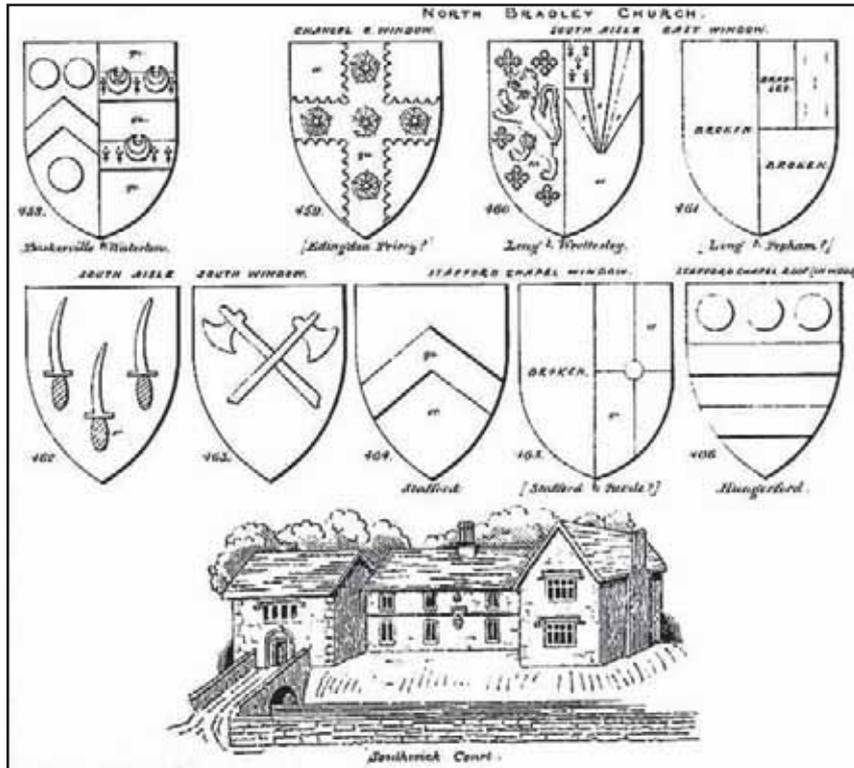
*[Editor: At the time of writing, (November) a revised plan is due to be filed.]*

The following article on the history of Southwick Court has been compiled from the Wikipedia page written by the present owner of Southwick court, [Simon Tesler](#), and an article by Montague Evans.



# The History of Southwick Court

Southwick Court and its associated gatehouse and bridge are very important heritage sites of more than special interest, as reflected in their Grade II\* listed status. The Court has remained a private residence under a succession of different owners for at least 800 years. The current house dates back to the late 16<sup>th</sup> century, but its gatehouse is late 15<sup>th</sup> century. (Fig 1, page 2) Both were built on the site of an even older manor house, dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century or before.



Engraving from Aubrey's 17th Century Topographical Survey of Wiltshire, illustrating the arms of the families associated with Southwick Court and a sketch of the house.

The architectural interest of Southwick Court is particularly outstanding because of its character as a manorial farmstead of the late 15th century, with later 16th century extensions and alterations. Also there is the added interest of the connection and relationship with the earlier, late 15th century gatehouse, and the integration of this part of the site with the residential accommodation. The L-plan form of the principal building is typical of the period in which the manor was constructed. However, the design of its north-western frontage, which incorporates the earlier gatehouse and abuts the moat, has a defensive quality, whilst the south-eastern garden elevation is more open. The late 16th and early 17th century interiors survive to a large extent and display craftsmanship of a high order, including intricate timber features

(for example a late 17<sup>th</sup> century carved staircase, Figure 2. Page 2), as well as framing and Tudor-arched stone fireplaces (Figure 3, page 2). The quality of the interior is further enhanced by the interesting plan-form and changing character of the spaces created as a result of its piecemeal extension in the 17th century.



Other remnants of the former hall house also survive, or are visible. There is a bread oven which sits within the wall between two large fireplaces on the ground floor (Figure 4, page 2), and the indication of a former garderobe (toilet), built into the external north-east wall, and connected to the moat through a channel, which is still identifiable. Another important feature is the stained glass and leaded windows, of which there are a number ranging in age and style across the main house, including ones which bear the White Rose of York (Figure 5, page 2) and may have been saved from the earlier house built on the site. Some glass (Figure 6, page 2) may have been brought from Beckington Castle (left), a nearby property built in the 17th

century by members of the Long family, who also owned Southwick Court for many years.

The earliest record of a manor house of Southwick dates to 1274 when two 'carucates' (about 240 acres) of land at Southwick, in what was then the parish of North Bradley, belonged to William de Greynville. Twenty years later, in 1294, records show a legal agreement between the Rector of North Bradley and William's son, Adam de Greynville, who had built a private chapel in the grounds of his house Southwick Court, apparently dedicated to John the Baptist. The Rector of Bradley agreed to allow services to take place in this chapel, provided that only members of the Greynville family and their guests attended. The family was also required to provide the Rector 'from time to time' with 'fit chaplains' who would 'do fealty to him'. Later, in 1369, Robert Wyville, Bishop of Salisbury, granted a licence for Mass to be said in the chapel.

Nothing remains of the original house. The chapel fell into disuse and was later reportedly used as a stable or cowshed before being demolished in 1839. However, building material from this period has been found within the moated complex, including 13th century freestone pillar bases and moulded freestone arches, and it has been suggested that some of the timber framing from the earlier manor house has been integrated into the structure of the existing Southwick Court.

At some point in around 1360, the house and its land passed in marriage into the famous Stafford family following the union of Alice, daughter of the then-owner, John de Greynville, and the first Sir Humphrey Stafford, later sheriff of Dorset and Somerset under Henry IV. Sir Humphrey and his wife lived at Southwick Court for the next several years. Sir Humphrey eventually moved to Dorset. His son, also Sir Humphrey, lived on in Southwick Court until his death in 1442. When he died his son, William, took over the house, but was killed during Jack Cade's Rebellion of 1450 against the government of Henry VI.

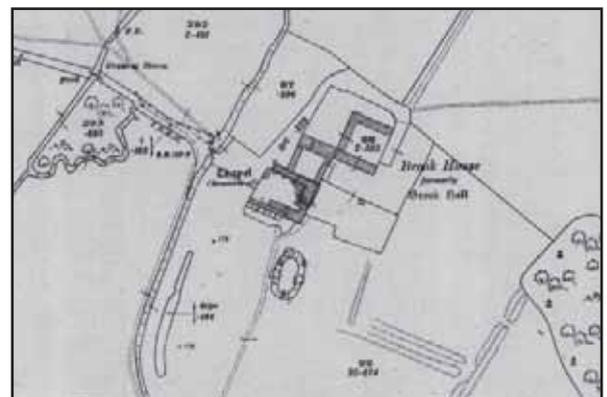
Over the following decades, Southwick Court was to become a pawn in the struggle for supremacy between the House of York and the House of Lancaster during the Wars of the Roses. Though John Stafford had been aligned with the House of Lancaster as a senior adviser to Henry VI, the main branch of the Stafford family were firm Yorkists. William Stafford left an only son, another Humphrey, born 1440, and he was created Baron of Southwick in 1461 by the newly crowned Edward IV, the first Yorkist King. After armed conflict broke out between the two sides, Edward appointed Humphrey Earl of Devon and sent him north to quell a Lancastrian rebellion led by the Earl of Warwick. Humphrey's army was defeated at the battle of Edgecote Moor, partly as a result of Humphrey's own apparent incompetence. Although he escaped the battlefield, Humphrey was captured by a Lancastrian mob and was beheaded at Bridgewater in August 1469.

After this, the Court passed to a cousin, Anne, the wife of Sir John Willoughby of the house of Willoughby of Eresby. Though Sir John Willoughby was himself killed in the Battle of Tewkesbury in 1471, the house remained in the family until the lands were seized by Richard III. However, when Richard was defeated at the Battle of Bosworth, ownership returned to Sir Robert, now a Lord, and Henry VII's Steward of the Royal Household.

By the beginning of the 16<sup>th</sup> century the family had moved to nearby Brook Hall and the house was sold in 1520. The buyer was Sir David Owen, the illegitimate son of Owen Tudor (and great-uncle of the future Henry VIII), who had been knighted by Henry VII for services rendered during the later Wars of the Roses. However, his main residence was Cowdray Estate in Sussex.

After this the land became divided. One part went to a Lord Mayor of London, another to Christopher Bayley of Stowford, a member of a family of clothiers of Trowbridge. When he died in about 1560, his wife, Maud, daughter of Thomas Horton of Iford, re-married Walter Bush of Dilton near Westbury.

It is at this point that the house as it exists today was created. It's not clear in exactly what structure the house existed before this point, but Walter Bush commissioned extensive alterations which included the addition of the L-shaped wing at the rear of the house. He left



Brook House, formerly Brook Hall, between Southwick and Brokerswood

his mark in the form of his elegantly engraved initials and the date 1567 on a stone set into the new wing. (Figure 7, page 2) He lived at Southwick Court for the rest of his life, but upon his death in around 1600, the house reverted to the family of Christopher Bayley, his wife's first husband. Another Christopher Bayley became owner at that point, and the house eventually passed to his daughter Rebecca. Her marriage to Henry Long of Whaddon conveyed Southwick Court into the Long family, where it was to remain off and on for almost 290 years.

Following Henry Long's death in around 1612, Rebecca married again to Henry Sherfield, Recorder of Salisbury and Member of Parliament for that city 1623 - 28. Upon Sherfield's death, the house reverted to Walter Long of Whaddon, his wife's eldest son by her first marriage. Walter was Sheriff of Wiltshire and MP for Bath in 1627 and later for Ludgershall. He became a vocal opponent of Cromwell's Protectorship, and after he was accused of attempting to destabilise the kingdom in 1647 he fled to France. Long returned to England upon the Restoration and was granted the title of 1<sup>st</sup> Baronet of Whaddon. Upon his death, the house passed to his eldest son, the 2<sup>nd</sup> Baronet of Whaddon. The younger Sir Walter Long made further revisions to the house in 1697, and left his own mark in the form of his engraved initials SWL. (pic) Eventually, the house was inherited by Sir Philip Parker a Morley, who also took the name of Long. When he died in 1740, the house reverted once again to the main Long family.

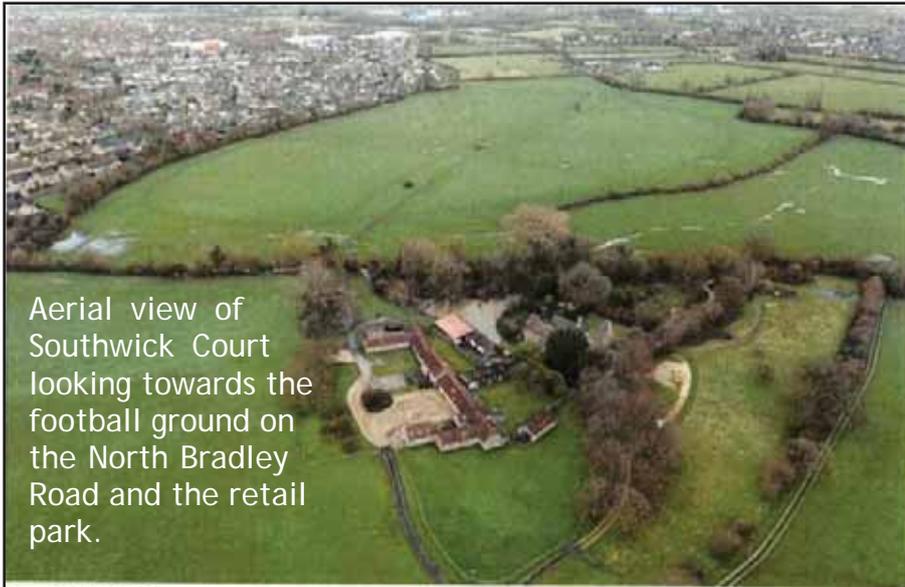
The last of the Longs to have owned the house appears to have been the Rt Hon Walter Hume Long, MP for Rood Ashton. However, though he retained ownership, he leased the house and its farm from the 1880s to Christopher William Reakes. Reakes was the occupier in 1889, and shortly afterwards was married from the house to Mary Elizabeth Kendall. In 1901, Walter Long put the house and surrounding land up for sale, and it was purchased by Reakes. According to census records, Reakes was resident in the house in 1911 along with wife Mary, and their children Victor, Doris and Norman. Reakes died in 1935 but the family continued to own the property for a few more years until it was sold to Herbert H Bell. He was living there on the night of the 1939 Register with his wife Edith, and daughters Susie and Joan.

In 1945, the house was purchased by Kenneth John Foss, who modernised it for the first time, installing electricity and a septic tank. Previously, kitchen waste and sewage had emptied directly into the Lambrok stream. A letter from Foss of that period complains that 'the absolute minimum amount of money had been spent on this very old house for a long time. The drains are most unhealthy. There is an open drain inside the kitchen and this, as in the case of the only WC drain, is almost blocked up. They are continually giving off bad odours. The outlets of the drains are into the moat which is dry in summer and any disinfectant used is likely to be injurious to the cattle.' In 1953, when the house was still owned by Foss, Southwick Court was the subject of a front cover feature article in the 22<sup>nd</sup> May edition of The Wiltshire News, described as a "gem of Wiltshire architecture".



Welcome to new member - Richard Stephens

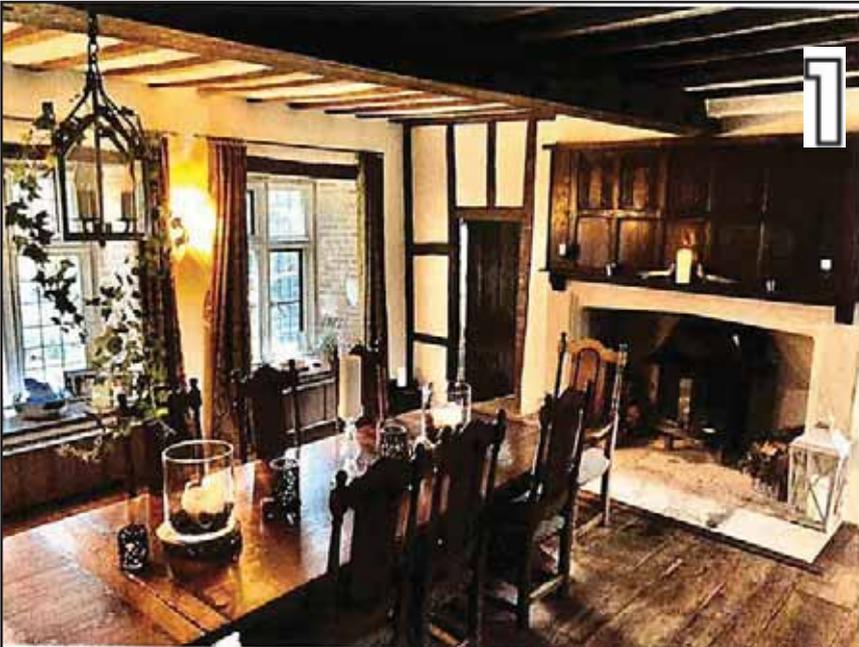
# Southwick Court



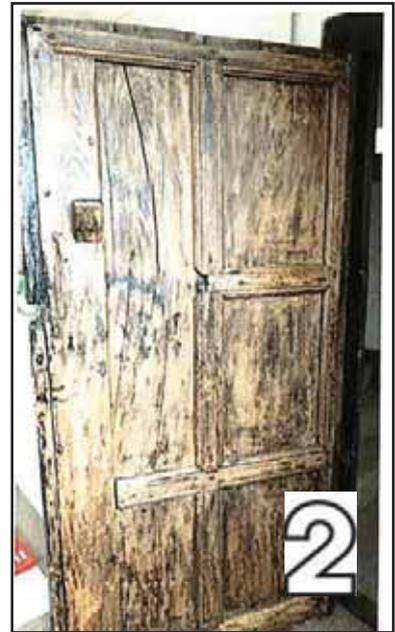
Aerial view of Southwick Court looking towards the football ground on the North Bradley Road and the retail park.

1. Dining room. The floor is formed from boards from a ship.
2. Timber door in the 'cheese room' on the first floor of the gatehouse.
3. Timber panelling and beams in the dining room.
4. Window opposite the bread oven in the original hall

Photos by Simon Teslet



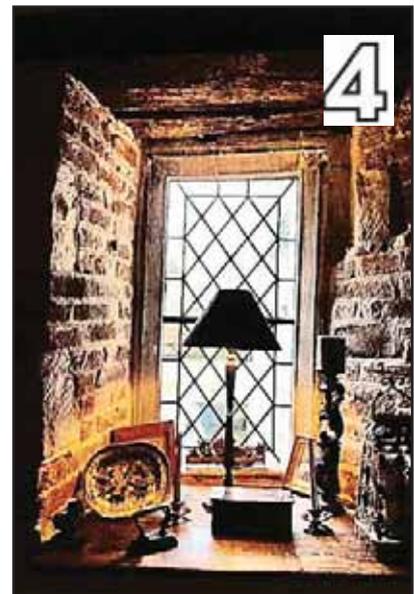
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2



3



4

Corporate Member: The Trowbridge Museum