Stonehouse Court Fire 1908

Stonehouse Court before 1906

In the Domesday Book of 1086, the name of the village was recorded as Stanhus, which can be translated as Stonehouse. It is likely that the home of the local lord of the manor had been built of stone and that it was on the site of today's Stonehouse Court Hotel which dates from the Elizabethan period.

The present Court was rebuilt in 1601 by Daniel Fowler, whose father William, together with William Sandford, had purchased the Manor of Stonehouse in 1558. There is a carving over the front entrance porch, with the initials ER 43 1601, probably commemorating the date that the house was built.

In 1906 Stonehouse Court was bought by Mr and Mrs Arthur Winterbotham. They commissioned Sir Edwin Lutyens to design a major refurbishment. *(photo right)*

In the early hours of 30th May 1908, while the Winterbothams were away on holiday, a fire broke out.

While delivering a letter at 6 am, the post boy, Vivian Stephens, spotted smoke coming from the roof tiles. He roused the servants who just had time to escape before the fire took hold. Despite

several Fire Brigades directing water from the nearby canal the fire could not be contained. The interior of the house was seriously damaged.

The fire started in a beam above the kitchen range which may have been smouldering for days, before bursting into flames and setting the court alight. A breeze fanned the flames and the newly painted wood and gas lighting added to the inferno.

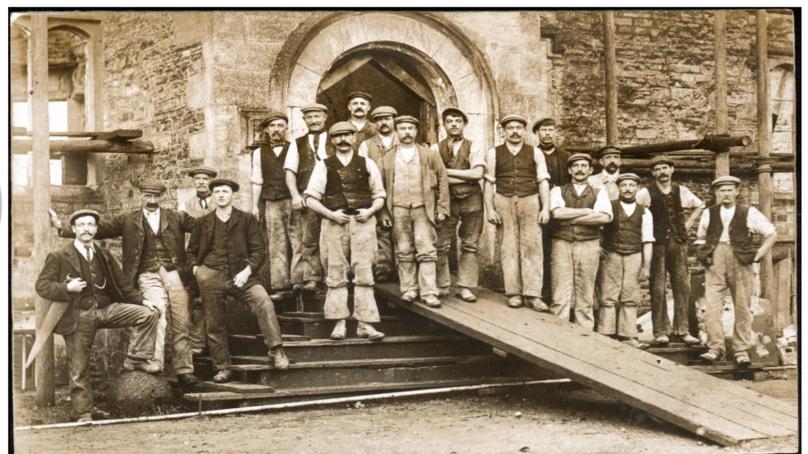*Stonehouse Court redesigned by Sir Edwin Lutyens*

The fire caused £10,000 worth of damage and destroyed many old historical features which had been left intact by Lutyens' sympathetic design. The Winterbothams had the house rebuilt to a similar design.

Stonehouse Court in 2011

Arthur Winterbotham had intended to install a water supply throughout the house to combat fire. In the rebuild a fire hose system was put in, evidence of which still exists today.

Workmen at the entrance door of the ruined Court