

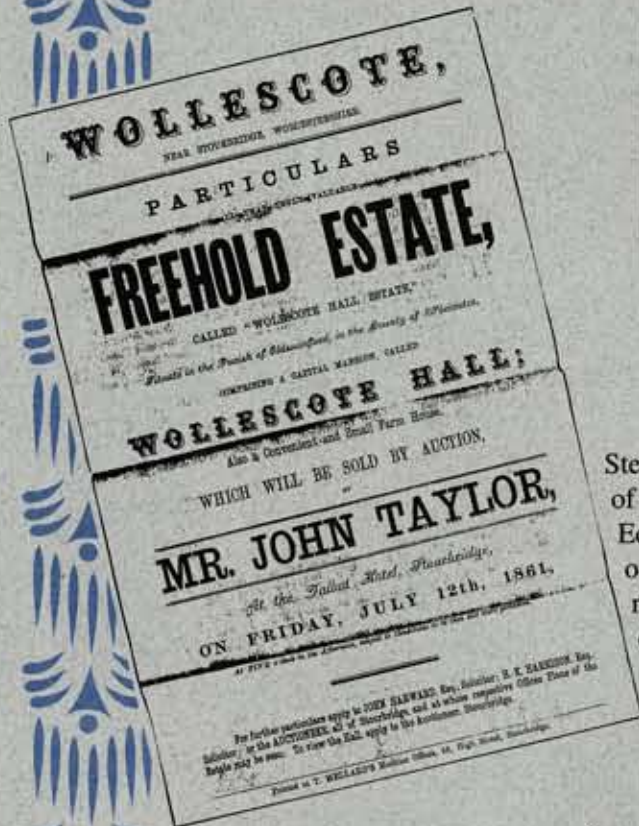
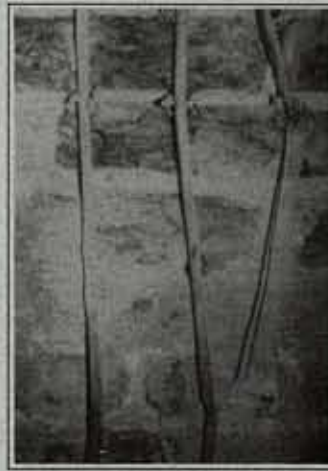
19th Century

Thomas' grandson Edward Oliver was the last of the Milward family to live in the hall. Edward was a gentleman without an income and he ran into debt. The hall was eventually sold in 1848 to Stephen Hipkins, a brewer.



Stephen had a large family. Sometime in the early 1850's he converted the attic to a second storey. The extra brickwork of the extension and part of a rafter of the earlier roof can be seen in the upper storey of the house.

According to an inventory of his household goods made on his death a bell pull system had been installed. During the recent restoration remnants of this system were found beneath the plaster work.



Stephen ran into the same sort of financial problems that Edward had and the hall was once more put up for sale. The new occupier was the widow of a coal mine owner, Elizabeth Kings.

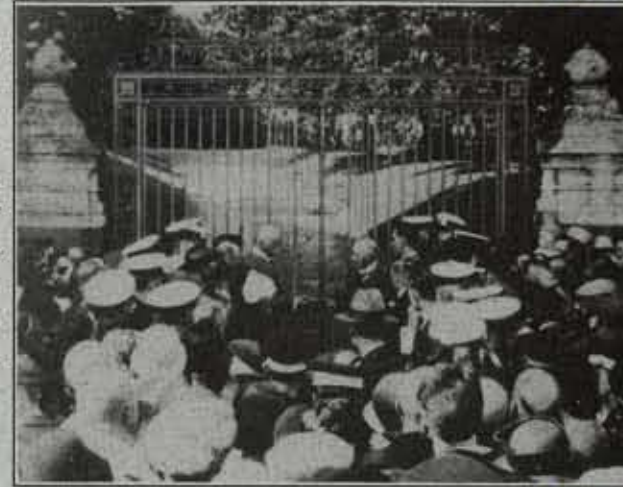
The bay windows and the elaborate decoration above them were inserted by Elizabeth. She, her family and the servants lived in the hall for the rest of the century.



20th Century

John Taylor followed the Kings in 1919. When he died in 1930 the estate was sold for £12,000 to Ernest Stevens. Ernest gave the property to the "Mayor, Aldermen and Burgesses of Stourbridge."

The park was opened to the general public in 1930. Ernest Stevens in his deed of gift expressly stated the hall was to be used for the benefit of the community with the proviso that the drinking of alcohol and the discussion of politics were prohibited.



In 1971 Stourbridge Corporation leased the hall to Worcestershire Education Department, for use as an annexe to the Art Department of Foley College of Education.

The park has continued to be used as Ernest Stevens requested 'as a place of recreation' for the area. The bowling green in front of the hall is used by the Lye/Wollescote Sons of Rest.

After the college ceased to use the hall it fell into disrepair. In 1991 a programme of renovation by the Borough commenced and another chapter in the hall's history began.

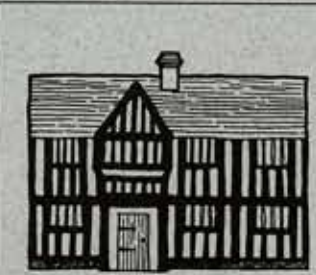


DUDLEY
Metropolitan Borough

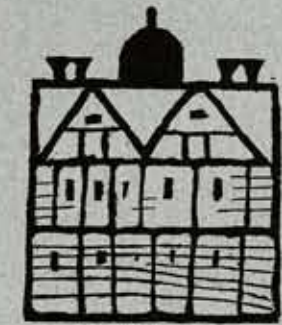
PLANNING & ARCHITECTURE DEPARTMENT

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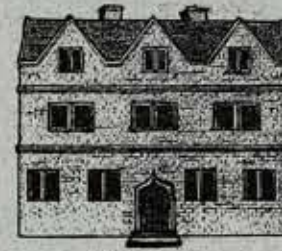
WOLLESCOTE HALL



Timber Framed



17th Century



18th Century



19th Century

Medieval

A recent excavation under a floor of the hall, by Dudley Borough archaeologists, revealed medieval pottery sherds. These were part of cooking pots and flagons used by the 12-15th century people who lived at Wollescote.

A document of circa 1282 tells us that two families lived in the hamlet: Agnes and Walter de Wlfrecote. Surnames were rare then so they were called after the place they lived in.



Medieval Pot Sherds



The faint corrugated effect in the fields north of the hall are the fossilised remains of medieval ridge and furrow.

This was the ancient ploughlands of the people who lived in the area. The reason why they are still there is because the field was subsequently turned into pasture and eventually into parkland.

16th Century



During the recent renovation of the hall, a timber jetty post was found embedded in a wall. This would have come from a timber framed structure. Possibly the farmhouse of William Milward recorded in 1508 as being a yeoman farmer.

17th Century

Thomas Milward who lived in the middle of the 17th Century was a wealthy Gentleman.

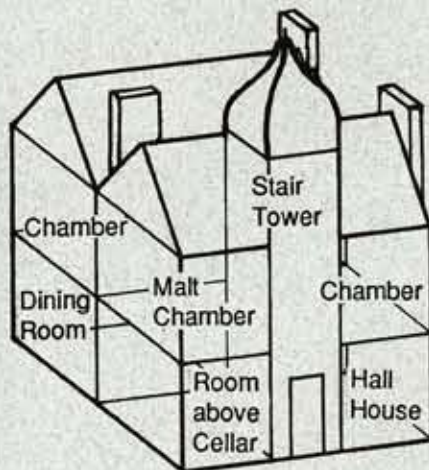
When the Civil War began Thomas supported the king. In 1643 Prince Rupert used the hall as his base. After he lost the skirmish of Stourbridge Common the Prince escaped to the Hall where Thomas hid him down an old well.



The most Illustrious and High borne PRINCE RUPERT, PRINCE ELECTOR, Second Son to FREDERICK KING of BOHEMIA, GENERALL of the HORSE of His MAJESTIES ARMY, KNIGHT of the Noble Order of the GARTER.

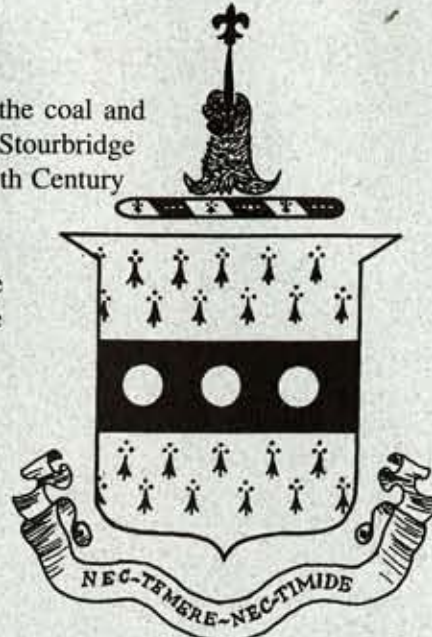
The Milward's wealth was derived from the coal and fireclay which lay beneath their land. The Stourbridge Glass Industry, which began in the late 16th Century used large quantities of these materials.

Now that they belonged to the petty gentry the family acquired their own coat-of-arms. The motto reads 'Neither too bold nor too timid'.

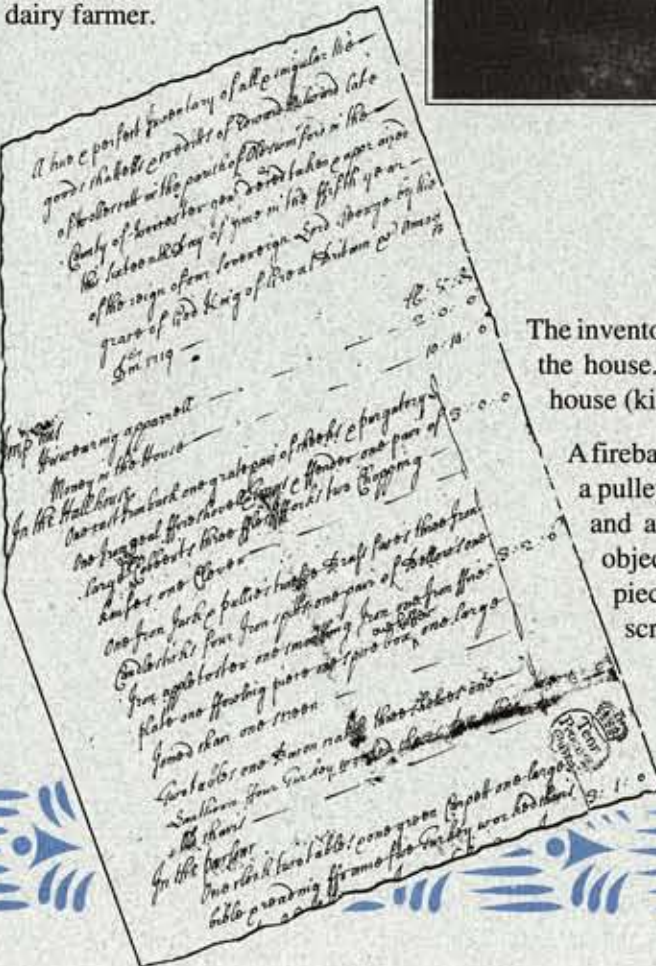


North aspect of Hall circa 1719

The earliest part of the present hall was probably built in the 1660's by Thomas' son Edward.



The windows of the original building were probably mullioned like those in the cellar. The house was a very modern design for the time, but an inventory made in 1719 on Edward's death suggested his life-style was only that of a wealthy dairy farmer.



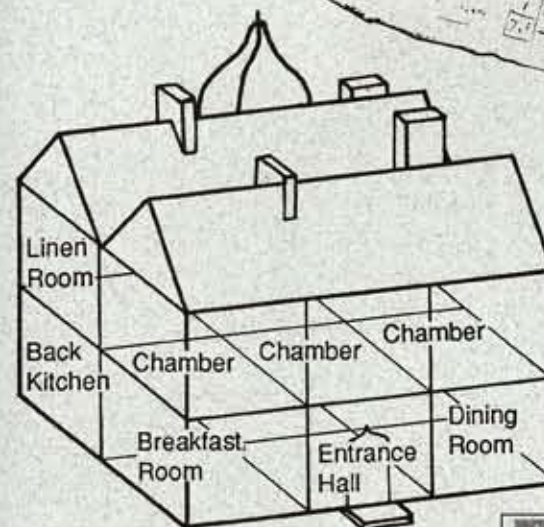
The inventory listed all the goods in the house. The items in the hall-house (kitchen) included:

A fireback, grate, shovels, tongs, a pulley system, spits, bellows, and an apple toaster. Other objects included: a fowling piece (gun), smoothing iron, screen, table and chairs.

18th Century

Edward's brother Thomas moved into the hall with his family. He was a barrister at the Inns of Court in London.

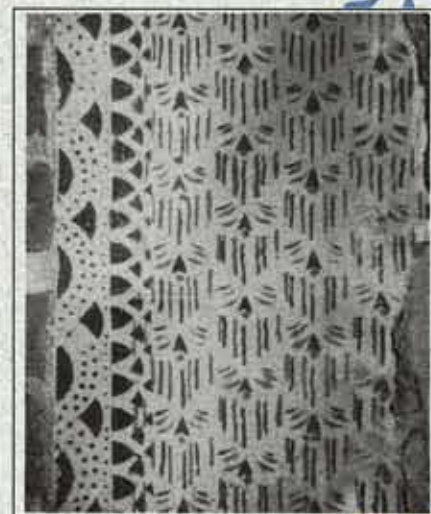
Thomas had an extensive library of 700 books which he made a list of in 1743. The books show an interest in a wide range of subjects.



South aspect of Hall circa 1760

Thomas extended the hall adding a bay on the west side.

An early form of room decoration was this stencil work. Patterns were cut out of a piece of paper and placed on top of the wall surface. The chosen colour was then dabbed through the pattern on to the wall. The stencilling survived because a later door frame was built over it.



Much of the architectural story of the Hall was discovered in the blocked up features in its walls. The old mullioned windows became unfashionable and most were converted to the wider type that can be seen today. A rear staircase was built for the servants use so this window on the west wall was blocked up.