

double gate leading into the school yard. On the left of this yard was the Senior school room with an apple loft above. This loft caught fire in May 1960 causing damage to the schoolroom below. Beyond this school room was a building containing large bins of animal feed and beyond this were pigsties with a loft over them. To the right of the schoolyard gate was a two storey building with a garage below. Above was a staff flat and a large loft.

To the north of the school yard was a wooden building which served as the Junior schoolroom. Beyond this, and set back on the right was the cow shed where the cows were milked. These grazed on the field at the corner of Shotton Lane opposite the church/school. At right angles to the cow shed was the end of the sandstone wing of the house with an outside stone staircase to the first floor and what was called the 'Middle school room' below.

The drive up to the back door of the house (i.e. at the very back of the house – not the pillared entrance) was lined with store sheds. Behind these to the north was a large lawn known as the Club Lawn as on the left of the lawn was a wooden building known as 'The Club' which was used for games. Also on the Club Lawn was a wooden building known as 'Cyril's Hut'. On the east of the Club Lawn was the wall of the Flower Garden. The Club Lawn was bounded to the north by a hedge beyond which was the Chicken Run which contained trees and two hen houses.

The Flower garden was enclosed to the west, north and south by high walls and to the east by a long rockery beyond which, and bounding the front lawn were large rhododendron bushes. In the centre of the flower garden was a large fruit cage with raspberries and gooseberries. To the north east of the Flower Garden was what we called 'the Fattest Tree in Shropshire' - a massive oak tree which must have been there for hundreds of years and which still exists.

The back door of the house (i.e. at the very back of the house – not the pillared entrance) gave access to the brick built wing which linked the main house and the sandstone wing. A long passage way from the back door gave access on the left to three larders and on the right to the boiler room. Ahead was the scullery with the





kitchen off to the left. The passage way wound round the scullery and gave way to the 'Glass Passage' – a veranda, which gave access to the main house.

Entering the Main House through the door beyond the pillars you entered a small hall with staff toilets on the

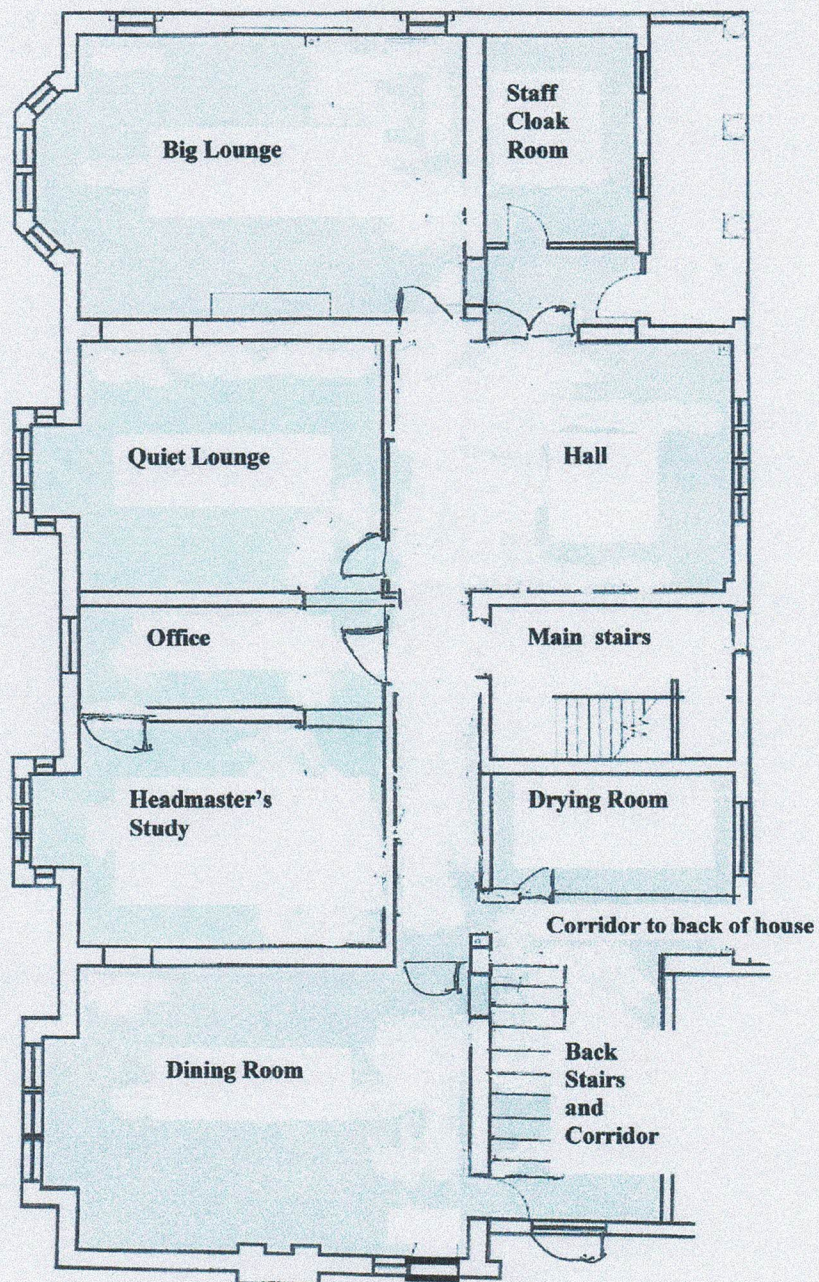
to the left was a long, wide and rather dark corridor giving access to the rooms at the front of the main house and on the left, to the main staircase.



***The 'Fattest Tree in Shropshire'***

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SHOTTON HALL IN THE 1960s  
Ground Floor

*Plan adapted from that in the Sales Brochure produced by  
Thornton Baker Homes*



At the north end of this corridor a door on the left led into the back of the house. Passing through this door, on the left was the doorway to the cellars and then 'the 'Drying Room' (formerly the Butler's Pantry' and on the right was a staircase known as the Backstairs' and a corridor leading to a side door.

Standing in the hall looking east, the first room on the right was the 'Big Lounge' which had a beautiful sprung beech floor and a plaster fireplace. In the middle of the right hand wall was a high blocked doorway which had given access in earlier times to a glass conservatory. The Hall, the staff toilets and the Big Lounge now form part of Apartment 1.

The next room was the 'Quiet Lounge'. Next came a narrow corridor-like room which led to the front door in the main façade of the house. This room was used as the school Office.

Next came the Headmaster's Study which was entered from a door in the adjacent office. This study had a very fine wooden fireplace dating back to the time of the Watkins family.

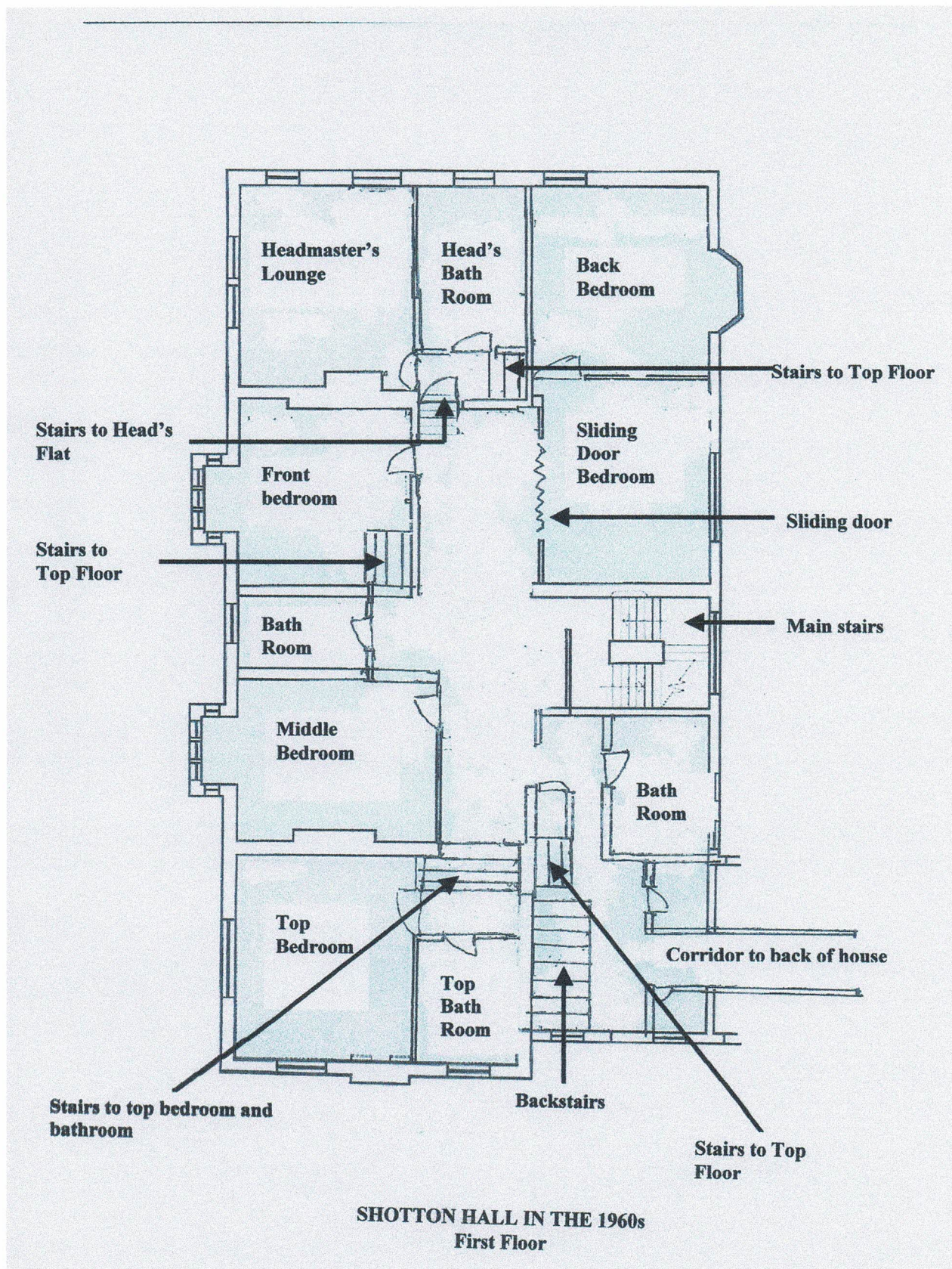
The Quiet Lounge, the Office and the Headmaster's study – these three rooms probably defining the limits of the medieval house – are now part of Apartment 2.

The last room at the front of the house was the Dining-room. The large fireplace contained original blue Delft tiles. This room is now part of Apartment 3.

Returning to the main staircase, the original hand rail of which remains in place, you ascended to a small landing and went through a large plaster moulded archway into a wide corridor. The staircase led no further, but there is now a further flight of stairs continuing to the top floor of the house.

Turning to the right at the head of the stairs and facing south, there was on the right a very large and heavy sliding door which gave access to the Sliding Door Bedroom, with another fine fireplace, and to the Back Bedroom (over the columns) beyond. These rooms now form Apartment 4.





*Plan adapted from that in the sales brochure produced by Thornton Baker Homes*



Ahead was a short flight of stairs, crossed by a partition and a door which led to the Headmaster's Flat. At the top of these stairs to the left was the Headmaster's Lounge, in front was a bathroom and to the right the stairs continued upwards to bedrooms on the left and the right. That on the left is likely to be the bedroom used by Queen Mary, whilst that on the right was used for her caged birds.

This latter room gave access to a lumber room which in turn gave access to the 'Top Corridor' which led to the Iron Balcony. The Headmaster's Lounge and bathroom now form Apartment 5 whilst the other rooms of the Headmaster's flat are now part of Apartment 8 and are approached via the new extension of the main staircase.

Running along the front of the house on the first floor were 2 bedrooms with a bathroom in between them. These are now part of Apartment 6.

Returning to the head of the stairs and turning left to face north, there was a short staircase leading up to the Top Bathroom, with the Top Bedroom on the right. These are now part of Apartment 7.

At the foot of the short staircase the corridor continued to the left past a bathroom and the start of the corridor linking the main house with the sandstone wing on this level, and continued to link up with the Back Stairs. A staircase from this corridor led to the top floor passing the Staff Bathroom and the Guest Room, before turning into the Top Corridor leading to the Iron Balcony. Off this Top Corridor were staffrooms on the left and right at the front of the building, and two lumber rooms. A fire occurred in one of these lumber rooms in 1964, but was quickly extinguished by the Fire Brigade. No other rooms were affected.

Going along the corridor leading on the first floor to the sandstone wing there were three staff rooms on the right with a large room – the 'Hostel Living Room' straight ahead at the end of the corridor. This was used by the youngest boys. A doorway onto the left led into the sandstone wing – the Hostel – where the bedrooms of the youngest boys were located together with a sewing room, a staff room and a bathroom.



In front of the main house was a lawn the same width as the house. About 50 yards from the house this lawn was split into three sections, the central section continuing on the same level, the sections on the left and right continuing on a lower level. The lawn ran down to a metal fence beyond which stood a group of isolated pine trees known as 'Five Trees'. In the 1950s, the very elderly gardener at Shotton Hall told Mr and Mrs Lennhoff that he had planted these trees when he was young (probably about 1900). These trees still exist. They were used as the badge of the school.



*The Five Trees Copyright Rhys Whatmore*

To the right of the lawn began a stretch of ornamental woodland.

There were no ghost stories associated with Shotton Hall in the 1960s so the headmaster's wife invented one for us – Ermatrude – a young girl who had committed suicide by throwing herself off the iron balcony. Needless to say, we never saw or heard her. There is, however, a strange story about the Wem road not very far from Shotton. In the Shropshire Family History Society Journal, G Mary Walton recalls that in the early part of the twentieth century two



relatives were riding a motor cycle late at night on the Wem road. They were making an urgent visit to a relative who was dying in the Royal Salop Infirmary. Suddenly one of the men clearly saw a white horse in the road. He called out to the other man who was unable to see the horse, which then disappeared. Later the men checked whether anyone else had ever seen a white horse at that spot. Whilst no-one had, a check of the field names on old maps showed that at least two of the fields at that spot were called 'White Horse Field'. Quite clearly a white horse was connected with that spot. Did the field names record the sightings there in much earlier times of a phantom white horse?

### **The renovation of Shotton Hall**

When renovation of Shotton Hall began in 2001, it was extensive but did not change the appearance of the main façade apart from the demolition of the single story dining-room to the north. The wing connecting the main building with the sandstone wing was demolished and a replacement built. The main building was converted into apartments and the sandstone wing and outbuildings were converted into cottages. The grounds were landscaped and grassed and the gravel drive behind the main house was turned into a garden. In my opinion, the renovation was very successful and the whole estate looks most attractive.



*Main Façade Copyright Mike Watson*