

Early history of the estate

Prior to the Norman Conquest, Hadnall was held by a Saxon called Godwin, but after 1066 it was given to Roger de Montgomery. Roger granted Hadnall to Rainhald, Sheriff of Shropshire. At the time of the Domesday Book (1086) Hadnall was held by Osmunde, tenant of Rainhald.

David Hey (author of a book about Myddle under the Tudors and Stuarts), believes that at the time of the Domesday survey, Shotton township was probably joined to all the townships in the manor of Hadnall, but somehow Shotton became split off from the parent manor but remained attached to Myddle church. This split probably occurred before the building of the Chapel of Ease at Hadnall (12th century). By the sixteenth century the manor of Shotton consisted of just one farm, although Richard Gough (author of a history of Myddle) thought that at one time Shotton and Smethcott formed a single manor.

Hadnall then passed to William Fitz Alan, son of Alan – the progenitor of the Fitz Alan Family.

In the reign of Henry II, Hadnall was held by Gilbert, son of William. It seems probable that this Gilbert was the grandson of the Osmunde who had held the land in 1086.

The Banastre Family

Gilbert's daughter Lettice married Nigel Banastre. They had two children Alice and William. This William or more likely his son is found in the Inter of Henry III (reigned 1216 – 1272) holding three hides of land in Hadenal of the fee of John Fitz Alan by the service of one knight's fee in the time of war.

The 'Testa de Nevil' which is a record of the latter part of the reign of Henry III states that 'William Banastre with his co-parceners holds half a knight's fee of John Fitz Alan in Hadenhal, Huston, Swetton [Shotton] and Smethecot.

William Banastre the Second had two sons Lawrence and William. This William is probably the same as the William recorded in the Inter of the 24th year of the reign of Edward I, (1295) holding land in Hadnall of John Fitz Alan.

In the Nomina Villarum of Edward II, (reigned 1307 – 1327) a William Banastre is shown as Lord of Little Hadenhele.

In the Guild Roll of Shrewsbury of 28* Edward III (1354) there is a William Banastre of Hadenale, a burgess of the town. It is stated that he died without male issue. * i.e. 28th year of his reign

The next known Banastre of Hadnall is Thomas who married Elizabeth Corbet. In a deed of 17 Henry VI (1438) they grant land to their cousin Ralph Lee.

The son of Thomas and Elizabeth was William Banestr who confirmed land to Haughmond Abbey in a deed of 10 Oct 11 Edward IV (1471).

The Kynaston Family

By the time of the reign of Henry VI the lands at Hadnall including Shotton, seem to have been in the possession of a John Somerton. In a deed dated at Shotton on 18 January 23 Henry VI (1444) John Kynaston (ancestor of the Kynastons of Oatley) grants to Thomas Banastur of Hadnall and Elizabeth his wife, all the lands and tenements in the town, and fields of Shetton within the hundred of Pymehull which he lately purchased of John Somurford (or Somerset).

In a deed dated at Shetton of 3 Edward IV (1463) Thomas Banastre confirms to Guido his son the reversion of all his lands at Shetton after the decease of Thomas Banastr Junior. This reversion is only for the life of Guido.

In a deed made at Shetton of 12 Edward IV (1472) this same Thomas Banastre settles the property on Philip Kynaston of Walford and Alice his wife. Alice was Thomas Banastre's daughter.

In Thomas's will dated 13 April 1473 made in the house of his son-in-law at Walford, he states that his gift of Shotten to Philip and his wife to be in consideration of their laudable keeping of his eldest son Thomas for the term of his life. This Thomas would seem to have been deemed incapable of managing the estate. It has been suggested that this was the Banaster who is believed to have betrayed the Duke of Buckingham to Richard III at Thornbury Castle in Gloucestershire This cannot be as the story is about a

Ralph Banister and the supposed betrayal took place in 1483 several years after Thomas Banistre Senior had made his will.

In 15 Edward IV (1475) William Banastre, son and heir of Thomas released his right in Shetton to Philip and Alice Kynaston.

After the death of Philip Kynaston, Alice remarried to Humphrey Titley of Stanwardine and they were in possession of Shotton in 5 Henry VII (1489) when they settled it on Thomas Kynaston her son. This was confirmed in a settlement of 12 Henry VII (1496) to Thomas Kynaston and Helen his wife.

In 7 Henry VIII (1515) Thomas Kynaston, son of Philip and Alice bought some property near Shotton from Thomas Lee of Coton, for £30.

Richard Gough says that Hugh Ridley was sometime tenant of Shotton, and this must have been about this time. 'He was a rich farmer and married a daughter to Mr Russell of Sandsaw, a person of good family and a great estate.'

Thomas, son of Philip and Alice, was constable of Shawardine Castle. He married Alicia, the daughter of Richard Harnage of Shenton. He is described as Thomas Kynaston of Schrawardyn in a deed of 16 March 31 Henry VIII (1539) when he settled his estate at Shetton, within the liberties of the town of Salop, upon his son and heir Thomas Kynaston of Wollaston and in the same year demised the Shotton estate for a term of years to a William Watkins. It would seem that this William Watkins let the main house at Shotton to Bishop Lee.

Shotton Hall in the 1530s

We must assume that by the time Bishop Lee rented Shotton Hall it was a building of some substance. It is likely to have been a half-timbered building, probably erected on stone footings. During the renovation of the Hall when it was converted into apartments, remnants of timbers were found in the walls of two of the rooms, suggesting these were the outer walls of the Tudor house. If this is correct, the house frontage would have been about 40 to 50 yards wide. This suggests a house of three or four bays. Given its size,

this building is likely to have been of 'box' rather than 'cruck' construction. The earliest building would have had a single hall internally open to the roof, but by the 1530s the open hall is likely to have had an upper floor inserted with proper fireplaces in the walls. From a fragment of stained glass from the house site, (described below) it seems probable that there was a chapel attached to the house.



The Almonry, Pershore, Worcestershire

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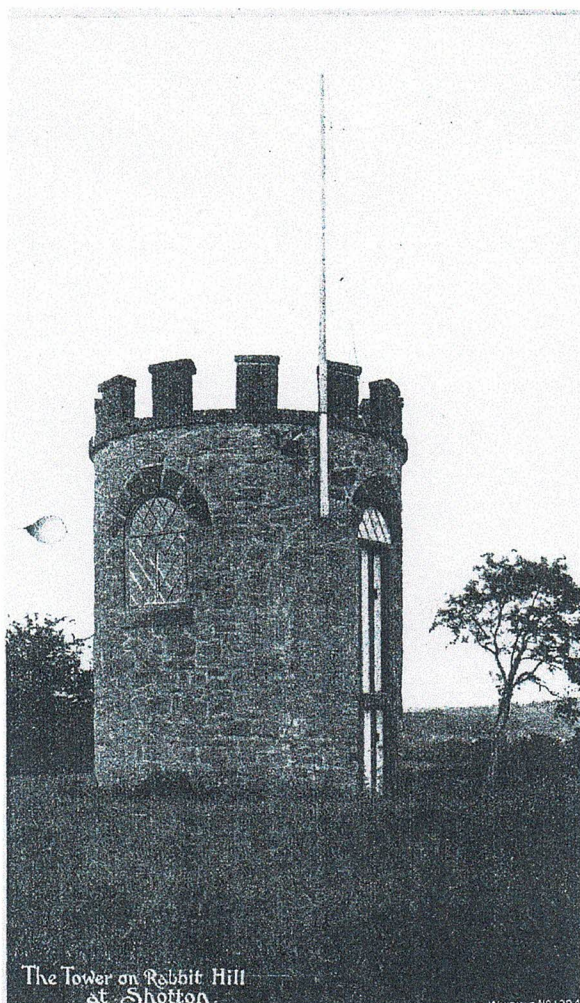
It is possible that the house at Shotton Hall in the 1530s looked something like this building

Whilst the Hall was being renovated in 2001, Mike Watson and his wife explored the cellars and discovered a well. Access to the cellars was from a staircase which was outside and behind the original house. A passageway led northwards to the cellars and the well under the front of house.

The cellar walls to the north and south define the limits of the Tudor house and at ground level now form the outer walls of the main rooms of Apartment 2. A modern staircase in the centre of Apartment 2 now gives access to the cellars, the floors of which have been lowered to provide more headroom.

Bishop Rowland Lee

In his 'History of Myddle', Richard Gough tells us that 'we have a tradition that one Bishop Rowland was some time tenant of this farm [Shotton]; that he was a Lord Marcher; and that the place of execution was on the bank between Shotton and Smethcot, which I have sometimes, though seldom, heard called the Gallows Tree Bank' [Now known as Rabbit Hill – on the right hand side of Shotton Lane beyond the present Shotton Farm. Around 1907 a small tower existed on the top of this of which nothing remained by the 1960s]



The Tower on Rabbit Hill in 1907

This photograph is one of the large series issued as postcards by the firm of Wilding's of Shrewsbury. Many examples are reproduced in a fascinating book: 'Greetings from Shropshire – Wilding's of Shrewsbury and their Postcards' Derek M Walley Squirrel Publishing Ltd 1997

This tenant was clearly Bishop Rowland Lee, born 1487 and Bishop of Coventry and Lichfield. He was appointed in 1534 as Lord President of the Council of the Marches and charged by Thomas Cromwell with the task of bringing law and order to the Welsh regions of the Marches. This Bishop Lee did by convicting and hanging as many Welshman as he could.