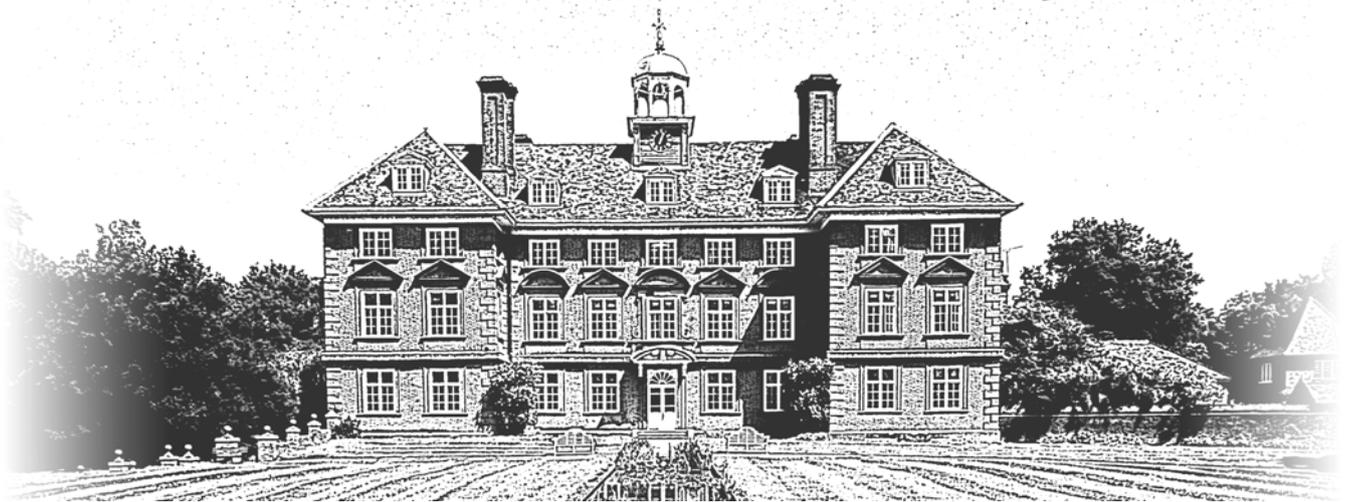


TYTTENHANGER HOUSE



A SHORT HISTORICAL SUMMARY

ORIGINS OF THE NAME

The history of Tyttenhanger should probably start with where the name came from, but unfortunately this is unknown.

From unsubstantiated sources, it has been suggested that this could have been a corruption of Tythe (the annual payment from the produce of the land) and Hanger (being an old English term for woodland), but this is probably not true. Another source has suggested that the land could have taken its name from a Nobleman who used to reside there, such as Titten's Woodland. Again this is purely conjecture.

Therefore we must move on to known records that are more easily available, and the early maps clearly show the house and gardens and refer to it as simply "Tittenhanger".

ABBOTS OF ST ALBANS

It is said that the estate of Tittenhanger was given to the Albiny family by William the Conqueror as a grant, and that Richard Albiny made donations to the Abbey of St Albans around 1119.

Around 1308 Abbot Hugo de Eversden acquired about a hundred acres of land here from John de Rammesden. The abbots continued to reside at Tittenhanger until in 1340, Abbot Michael Mentmore found that he could get no rest from travellers from the nearby London Road and demolished the house, selling the materials to pay for the relocation of the retreat to the more remote manor of Bradway. He is noted to have been the first to die from the Black Death at the Abbey, in 1349

His successors were more amenable to visitors and Abbot John de la Moot (1396–1401) built two barns at Tyttenhanger and began to rebuild the mansion house when he died in 1401. The mediaeval Tittenhanger house was completed 10 years later by his successor Abbot John de Wheathampstead.

In 1528 Henry VIII visited the house to avoid the "sweating sickness". Previously the king had always left some of his entourage behind, sick of the plagues and illnesses that he greatly feared. This constant changing of his location, may have been to keep ahead of and escape the plagues himself. However, this time there were no cases of sickness and it was reported that he was greatly comforted.

DISSOLUTION OF THE MONASTERIES

At the end of 1539, Thomas Pope was among the party that approached St Albans Abbey to receive its surrender. Later, in 1547, it was granted to him as Henry VIII was dying. Thomas Pope died without heir in 1559, during another epidemic at his house in Clerkenwell. His third wife survived him and lived at Tyttenhanger until 1593 when she also passed away. She had one child by a previous marriage, but he had died in 1591, so the house passed to her brother's son, Thomas Pope Blount, who was knighted by James I at his accession in 1603.



Thomas Blount's elder son succeeded him in 1639, and died a bachelor 15 years later, so the House then became the possession of the younger son, Sir Henry Blount. Sir Henry had become famous due to his travels, and had been knighted in 1640. When he acquired the property he retired from his travels and the house was still mediaeval in character, dating from the time it had passed from the Abbey at the Dissolution of the Monasteries. Sir Henry had visited Italy more than once, and felt that the character of the place was not unsympathetic to such a traveller. He therefore pulled down the existing house and built the present one.

Apart from the staircase, which has a remarkably fine balustrade, the other main feature of the house is the small private chapel. It is lined with Linen Fold panelling and has Jacobean panelling across the front of the pews. Over the fireplace is a very interesting Triptych consisting of the Ten Commandments, the Lord's Prayer and the Apostles Creed.

