“Tithes Taxes and Old Southam Town”
2015 Summer Exhibition

In 2013 an archaeological excavation was carried out at Little Park in Southam, Warwickshire on behalf of Orbit Homes by Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology in advance of the construction of an Independent Living Scheme and replacement library and community facilities.


Vivian House on the corner of Market Hill May 2015

The archaeology team discovered the foundations of three sides of a substantial stone building aligned east to west. The walls, about one metre wide, are constructed of local limestone facing and limestone rubble infill. It was largely sealed by demolition rubbish, including extensive post-medieval roof tile and showed little evidence for medieval activity within the site, which is unusual considering its close proximity to the town centre.

Part of the exhibition

There was also evidence of a Roman ditch and from these finds the 2015 summer exhibition was developed and ran from 30th May until the end of September in Vivian House on Market Hill.

These foundations have since been photographed and recorded and Tithe Place built over them and the following story is how Southam developed as a town and its links to those foundations.

Early Settlement
Monument MWA 19300

An Archaeological Geophysical Survey was taken of farm land to the south of Southam between Banbury Road and Kineton Road during 2011.

A cluster of archaeological anomalies were detected on the eastern side of the site.
It is likely that these represent a roundhouse and a ditch of either early **Iron Age or Romano-British** (800 BC-409 AD)

A few other small anomalies were found which may represent kilns or concentrations of ceramic material.

Historic Environment Record (HER) Warwickshire Museum Field Services

Roman Settlement

A wide deep ditch was identified running almost parallel to but some 15m north of the tithe/great barn foundations.

It contained a coin and Romano-British pottery shards, which indicate that there was some form of Roman settlement here between 700 and 1,000 years earlier than the construction of the barn.

Roman Coin

The ditch had been overlain by another limestone wall of similar character to that of the barn, along the same alignment as the ditch, which suggests that the ditch was still visible in the landscape at the time of building the newer wall.

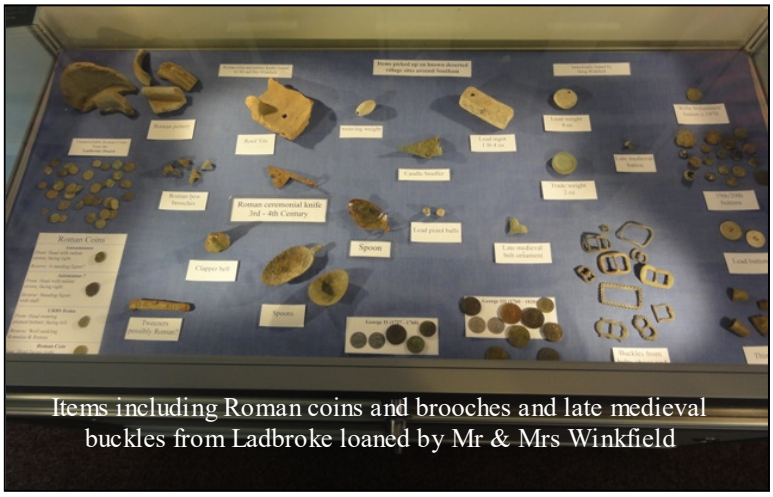
This also suggests the site was probably a very early legal boundary.
Worcestershire Archive and Archaeology Service

To date, other examples of nucleated Roman settlements not far from Southam include Bagington near Coventry, Tripontium on the Watling Street near Rugby, and Chesterton and Princethorpe on the Fosseway. More recently, archaeological excavations have been done on Roman foundations at Granslet Farm near Northend, at The National Herb Centre near Warmington and in the fields surrounding Chesterton village and church.

Towards Rugby at Ling Hall Quarry, Church Lawford, a Roman farmstead there suggests that barley was a favoured cereal crop as it grew well on the rich Dunsmore soil.

Lower status rural settlements and villas must have been numerous, but they are not very well know and few have been excavated, hence Southam may be hiding much more below its surface.

On a plateau of lighter soils above Ladbroke in 1994 was the discovery of a buried hoard of Roman coins, only one of four hoards recorded in Warwickshire. Along with much ploughed stone, grey pottery shards and an old spring that was in use until the early 20th century, they indicate a Romano-British farmstead had once been there. Of the 51 coins studied, 21 were identified and represent a rare hoard deposited in the second half of the 4th century.



Items including Roman coins and brooches and late medieval buckles from Ladbroke loaned by Mr & Mrs Winkfield

Previously in Southam, about 1850, three coins were found in Bury Orchard once part of the Manor's land to the south of the church. One Allectus (AD 293-296) and two Magnentius (AD 350-353).

Also in the 19th Century, found on the Kineton Road Industrial Estate fields, were two denarii of Vespasian (AD 69-79); one denarii of Geta (AD 198-212); one copper of Probus (AD 276-282) (Alexandrian Mint), and others. Over the years other Roman coins and pottery have been found in these fields when farming.

Found by the Sexton while digging north of the church was a brass coin of the house of Valentinian (AD 364-375) ('Securitas Rei Publicae' Siscian Mint)

In 1991 Coventry Museum metal detectorists in fields north east of Southam found pottery shards and coins. One of the coins appears to show Emperor Probus, (AD 276-282) while another shows Emperor Claudius II (AD 268-270).

Translation of Southam Charter of 998

The first part of the charter is written in flowery old Latin.
King Æthelred grants land in Southam, Ladbroke and Radbourne to Alderman Leofwine in perpetuity.

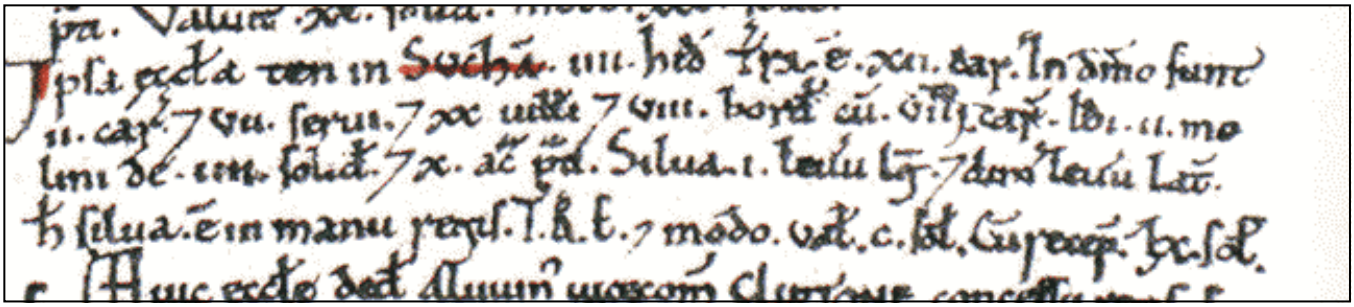
The second part of the charter gives the boundaries and is in Anglo-Saxon. Almost the same boundaries as today.

The first boundary is from Ladbroke Field on the River Itchen, along the stream to Herdwick, and up to the Elderstub and the Boundary Stone, where the streams meet.
Then along the stream to Beornwald's Law, to the pit on the Beanland, to the Cockbill and to the Yppeshelf. From there along the headland to the Haywell and along the brook and the River Itchen to Ladbroke.

The boundary between Ladbroke and Radbourne is from the ford at Wylamford (Wormleighton) along the Salt Street to the Greenway. From the Greenway along the Wylam Brook and up to the Long Thorn, and along the headland to the well at Ladbroke. Along the stream and then follow the headland to the Mere. From the Mere, to the Law on Yppeshelf, to the Green Hill, to the Cockbill and along the headland to Watergall, then Stanhamford and from the ford along to Wylamford.

Translation by H J Usher

Domesday 1086



The Domesday Book is the earliest public record of England and was ordered by William the Conqueror. It took two years to complete in 1085/86.

Warwickshire then consisted of two very different areas.
Arden in the north and west was made up of isolated farms and hamlets, and settlers were still clearing and moving into the areas of forest.

Feldon in the south and east, (where Southam is) supported compact settlements of intensive cultivation on open lands, from where most of the dense oak woods had been cleared.

Southam, written Sucha, consisted of four hides (a hide varied between 60-120 acres depending on quality) with two water mills. It contained ten acres of meadow, which was rich land for hay and pasture bordering on the river, and some woodland about a mile in length and half a mile in breadth, of which little is now left in isolated clumps. There was enough land for 12 ploughs and the Lords of the Manor, both before and after the Domesday survey, was Coventry Priory, who had 2 plough teams.

It was a good sized village with 35 households (not persons) consisting of 20 villagers, 8 smallholders and 7 slaves. The value to the Lord was £5 with a taxable value of 4 geld.

Written ***Sucha*** in the Domesday book, it is argued whether it was originally ***Sowe-ham*** and originated from a meadow in the bend of the River Stowe or Sowe, or it was originally ***South-ham*** and a southerly homestead, but if it was there is no indication of there being a North-ham.

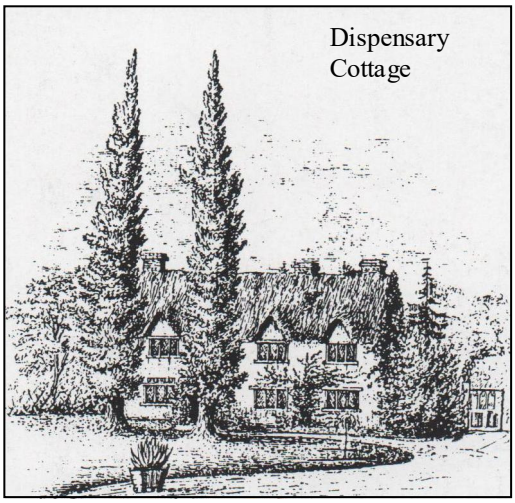
The Holy Well

The first documentation of the Holy Well (Halewellene) is in the Warwickshire Feet of Fines in 1206.


The Holy Well

According to R.White "History, Gazetteer and Directory of Warwickshire" 1874, it was the site of "a cell of Black Canons, subordinate to the Abbey at Rowcester, Staffs …" Repeated elsewhere this is now thought to be incorrect and the cell is believed to have been at Caves Inn on the Watling Street near Rugby which also has a Holy Well.

According to Arthur Mee's "Warwickshire", Southam has a "Holywell that never freezes and a street that always pleases" and although the water flow has been affected in recent years, it does still run with cold, fresh water.


Dispensary Cottage

It was believed that the water from the well could cure eye ailments as well as other ailments, but this may merely be because the fresh spring water was clean and the bathing of eyes in it was far more helpful than using the perhaps less clean water in the town, or not bathing the eyes at all and it would be similar for other ailments.

The water was so important to the town that it was not included in the Southam Enclosure of 1761 and may have prompted Henry Lilley Smith to open his Southam Dispensary in Warwick House (Stoneythorpe Hotel).

What is a Tithe Barn?

Tithes were a type of tax payable to the owner of the Manor on;
(a) all things arising from the ground and subject to annual increase. ie. corn, wood, fruit, vegetables, etc.
(b) all things nourished by the ground ie. calves, sheep, etc., and animal produce such as milk, eggs and wool.
(c) the produce of a man's labour, particularly the profits from mills and fishing.

Corn, hay and wood were considered the greatest tithes. A 10% of produce, it would have been stored in the tithe or great barn until required. In the case of Southam, before 1539 it would have been stored here until the monks required it and then transported to Coventry.

A tithe barn can be recognised by its great tall doors, often opposite and large enough to allow a fully

laden wagon to pass through. Between the doors lay the threshing floor taking advantage of the through draft, but keeping dry. It was not until 1786 that the threshing machine was invented and brought life-changing advantages to agricultural labour.

In 1761 Southam was enclosed. One object of the Enclosure Acts was to get rid of the obligation to pay tithes. This could be done by the allotment of land in lieu of tithes, or by a cash payment and at Southam it financed the building of the Charity School.

Roman evidence to the bottom of the photograph.
Tithe or Great Barn nearer to the church

Southam Tithe Barn

Tithe and Great Barns played a significant part in medieval life and the Southam barn would have been an important and prominent building in the town next to the church.

It is not known when or why the barn went out of use and was demolished, but the earliest map of Southam in 1778 for the Craven Estate shows no buildings on this part of the site.

Evidence of charred grain from the post-Medieval period was found, but there is generally very little medieval activity on or around the site, probably due to being robbed out.

Between 1043 and 1539 the Manor of Southam belonged to Coventry Priory, who would have taken the tithes. In 1542 Henry VIII granted the Manor to Sir Edmund Knightley who died later that same year and it was divided between his five nieces, making it difficult to trace the ownership of the old or new Manors and other properties and lands.
There is a sentence, extracted from copies of the church warden's account by the Reverend Murray, which states that on 16th September 1756, 2 shillings were paid for the laying out of one John Hartop, a pauper and weaver, who was killed when one of the 'tithe barn' doors blew down in high winds and broke his thigh, from which he subsequently died. Whilst we cannot be certain this accident happened at this tithe barn, it does seem likely.

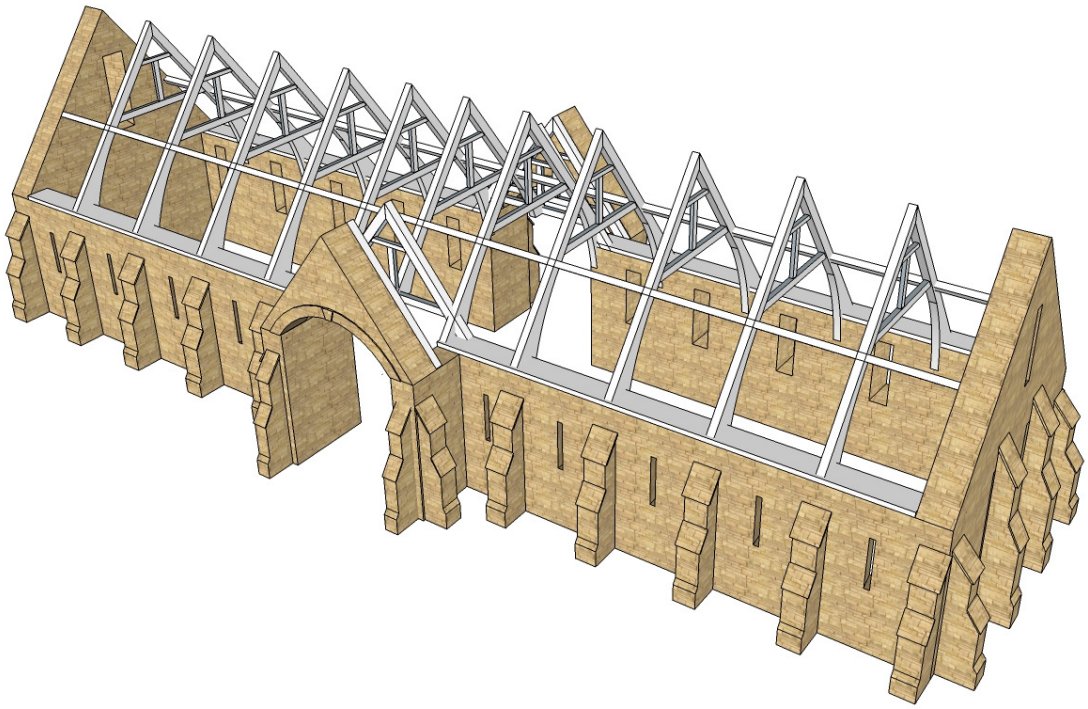
Tithe Barn Foundations

When the archaeological team uncovered the foundations, everything was recorded and photographed.

The only floor to survive is an entrance on the southern side which has a cobbled surface.

The exposed foundations were 18m long and over 10m wide, but it is thought that the barn would have originally been about 40m long.

The walls would have supported a substantial oak frame and a tiled roof. Internal posts would have formed bays within the barn and a porch at the entrance would have held large wooden doors through which the crops would have been delivered by cart.



Based on the foundations uncovered, the above diagram is a possible idea of what the Southam Tithe or Great Barn may have looked like. The roof may originally have been thatched, but appears to have been tiled in later years. Ken Bonham made and donated a model replica of what the barn may have looked like. http://www.greatbarns.org.uk/

The Priory of Coventry

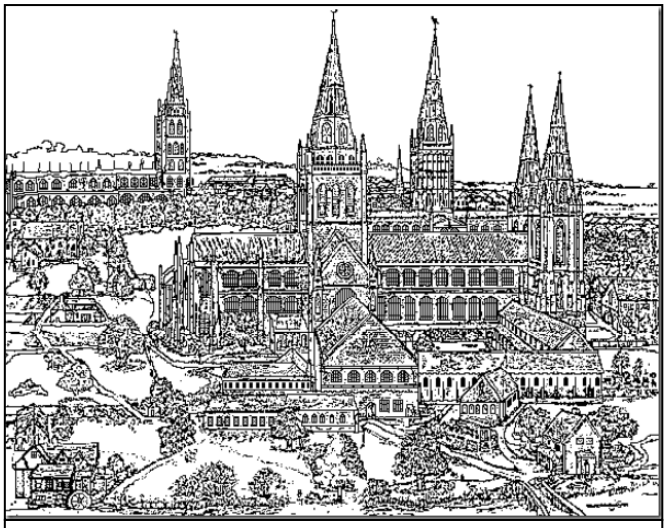
Leofric, Earl of Chester, and his wife Godiva founded the Benedictine Monastery of Coventry in 1043. It was endowed by the founder with half of Coventry in which the monastery was situated and included twenty-four manors. Fifteen were in Warwickshire and included Southam.

There were twenty-four monks at its first foundation under Leofwine, the first Abbot.

In the 12th Century, Ralph, Earl of Chester, granted them a charter confirming them in possession of Coventry's St. Michael's Church, with all tithes and rights. In his days, also, came about the founding

of the hospital of St. John Baptist, which was so closely connected with the Priory.

Earl Ralph also granted the monks leave to carry as much timber as two carts going twice daily (save on festivals) could convey from his woods for repairing buildings, for making fences and supplying fuel.



Coventry Priory & Cathedral
By Brian Hobley
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Coventry.

Ranulph Blundeville, when he was earl, gave the monks, in lieu of one of the two daily cart-loads of wood, 280 acres of waste in Eccleshall and Keresley, with liberty to enclose.

During the 13th century times became extremely difficult as the Priory tried to please both the Pope and the King. The continuing strife caused prolonged and costly litigation, which reflected heavily on Southam and tithes.

On 14 February, 1227, Henry III granted in perpetuity the Prior and monks of Coventry a weekly market on Wednesdays at their manor of Southam giving it the status of town.

On 8 March, 1239, the market day was altered to Monday.

On 30 July, 1257, the Prior of Coventry was granted a yearly Charter Fair at Southam on the Vigil Feast and morrow of St. Peter and St. Paul in June.

Henry III further helped to rehabilitate the Priory by granting them various additional privileges, such as free warren on all their manors, and the tithes of all their demesne lands, which included Southam.

Holy Trinity Church behind
the ruins of Coventry Priory

In 1517, the last royal visit was paid to the Priory by Princess Mary who came to see the Mystery Plays and stayed there two days, receiving at her departure 100 marks.

By 1538 the Priory maintained only a few Monks who were in debt by nearly £1,000. On 15th January, 1539, the Prior and twelve monks signed the surrender of the monastery to the Crown. On gaining possession of the Priory and Cathedral of St Mary an inventory of the relics were of ‘the usual nature’, the only one of any notice being the 'arme of Saynt Augustyne in sylver,' and at the end Dr London writes contemptuously:—' And among these reliques your lordships shall fynde a peece of the most holy jawe-bone of the asse that kylld Abell with dyverse like.'

Lady Godiva

Lady Godiva was the pious and charitable wife of Earl Leofric of Chester who had inherited Southam from his father Leofwine and later founded the Coventry Priory.

Early chroniclers tell of the extraordinary enrichment of the Coventry church. Indeed Godiva is said to have lavished upon it her dearest treasures, and even at her point of death gave a rich chain of precious stones to be put about the neck of the image of Our Lady.

The popular myth that she rode naked through the streets of Coventry on a white horse is probably no more than a fairy tale for many reasons; one being that it was not related until years after her death in Evesham in 1067 by a monk of St Albans.

It is said that Lady Godiva was very disturbed over the people of Coventry having to pay too much in taxes and pleaded with her husband to release them from this burden. He refused, but she was so determined that in the end he said he would do so only if she rode naked through the town.

She took him at his word and rode a white horse through the streets of Coventry with her long, loose hair covering her modesty, while the townsfolk were told to stay behind their closed windows and doors and not to peep. However, one man did peep through a hole in his shutters and his eyes were burnt out; he became known as Peeping Tom.

Southam May Day Procession

The Godiva Procession

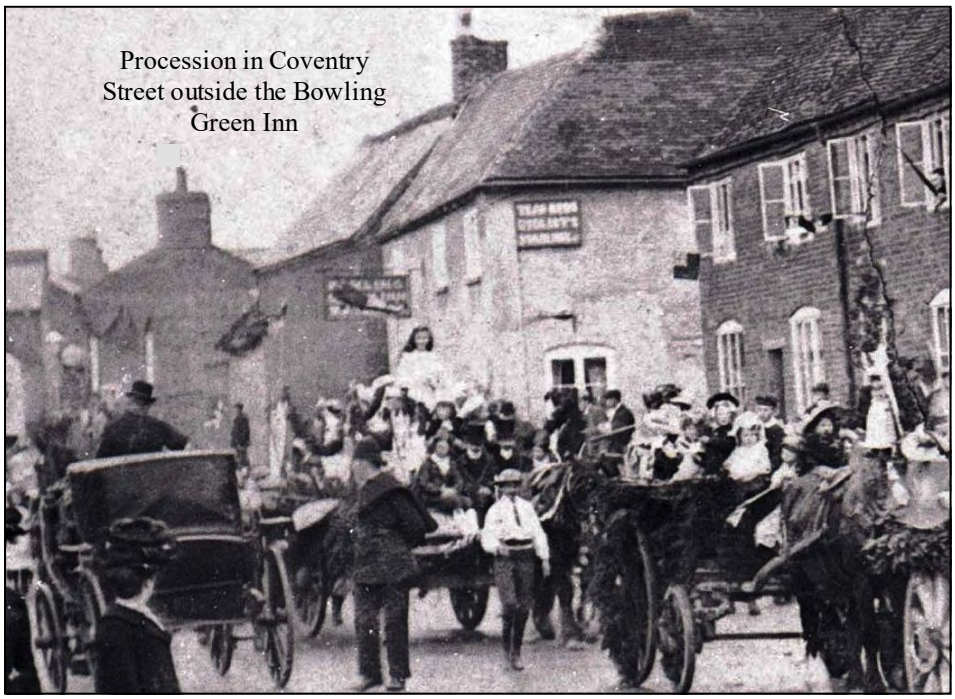
By far the most popular fair was the 'Show Fair' held on the Monday of the first week in June. This included a Lady Godiva Procession starting from the Bowling Green Inn.

The Procession was first recorded in the late 17th century, but possibly started much earlier. It was a similar festival to Coventry, but with many more pagan additions.

The origin is thought to be a pagan spring fertility rite in honour of the Love-and-Death Goddess Freya, who was worshipped under other names, including Goda (Godiva?)

Southam was led by Old Brazen Face. Was this Southam's Peeping Tom story? A busy market town at a crossroads for cattle drovers, our popular tale goes that one man got hold of a butchered bull's head and stood nonchalantly with the cattle behind a wall and watched Lady Godiva ride by!

The white Lady Godiva represented the "Matron", the black Lady Godiva the "Hag", and the two children as a Shepherd and Shepherdess carrying a lamb was introduced in the 18th Century and was perhaps originally the "Maiden".



Procession in Coventry Street outside the Bowling Green Inn

Did Christianisation introduce the Bishop Blaze - both at Coventry and Southam? Or was he a real person?

The Godiva Procession stopped in the 19th Century for several reasons, including possibly because it was said it encouraged undesirables into Southam, but other May Fairs and Carnivals still continue to this day!

The Procession Order

(During 17th to 19th Century)

Old Brazen Face
A man capering about on foot, wearing a bull's mask with horns

Lady Godiva
Veiled in white and on horseback

The Black Lady
Veiled in black and on horseback

Bishop Blaze

Peeping Tom
In a box painted to look like a house and on horseback

Shepherd and Shepherdess
Two children in a carriage, garlanded with flowers and carrying a lamb

Children on Horseback
Riding in pairs on richly decorated horses with banners

Town Tradesmen
Walking behind and carrying their trade

Digger Revolts 1607

As a market and drovers town, the open fields around Southam remained an advantage until their late enclosure in 1761. It allowed local farmers to get to the Southam and Warwick markets across country; it allowed Welsh drovers to pass nearby and still use the town and it allowed the 17th century civil war soldiers unrestricted access during war.

So the early enclosure in the late 16th century surrounding Southam resulted in riots, the Digger Revolts, when Warwickshire Diggers joined in with the national outrage and tried to bury hedges and destroy new fences. Ladbroke is famous for its part in the 1607 revolts, when farmers from the Priors, Byfield and further afield in Northamptonshire, found their ways to market blocked and took the landlords to court in Warwick.

The common fields and wastes, they argued, had yielded not only much-needed grain, but also fish, fowl and fuel, on which their lives depended and once enclosed the landlords increased rents, which in turn raised the price of food, especially butter and cheese, a commodity that the Southam area excelled in alongside wool.

By 1610, falling rates of marriage, increased infant mortality and pauper burials, suggest a creeping malnutrition and lingering deaths amongst the poor.

The New Manor House

Southam Manor House on Market Hill in 2015

In 1542 Henry VIII granted the Manor of Southam along with the Manors of Badby and Newnham to Sir Edmund Knightley and his wife Lady Ursula of nearby Fawsley Hall

Unfortunately he died later that year and Southam was divided between his five nieces. This division has made it difficult to follow the progression of land and properties over the next couple of hundred years, until we reach 1761 and Enclosure.

It is possible one of the nieces may have been responsible for building the lovely new Manor House on Market Hill. The striped stone walls and gables with moulded barge boards and tie-beams of such beautiful intricate woodwork is very elaborate for such a small market town and it is thought there may have been some Coventry influence in it, as well as plenty of financial input.

It has a large stone central chimney stack with four later brick chimneys set diagonally. The 1662 Hearth Tax is a possible indication of the family who lived there in the 17th century as a Bridget Lyndon had eleven hearths. If so, was this also the same family twenty years earlier who had put King Charles up before the civil war battle of Edgehill? We have no idea.

At some time years later, the stone and wood was coated in cement rendering which remained until 2007, when it was removed and the exterior renovated to how it is today.

Southam Landlords

Who were these nieces who divided the Manor of Southam?

Joan, was first the wife of George Lumley and later John Knottesforth. Her share went to her son John, Lord Lumley and passed to Henry Bromley in 1586.

Susan, wife of Richard Langtree, died without issue and her share was divided into further quarters and fractions.

Anne, was first the wife of George Throckmorton and later Thomas Porter. A part of her share passed through Clement Throckmorton's descendants and eventually to the Earls Craven by 1721. The rest of her share passed through her sons Fulk and Simon Porter and a Mrs Porter of Coventry was stated to hold a ¼ of the manorial rights as late as 1730.

Mary, who was first the wife of Bartholomew Hussey and later Thomas Spenser and ***Frances***, later the wife of James Duffield, were both minors at Sir Edmund Knightley's death in 1542. Their shares were in custody of John, Lord Russell who granted the rents to Robert Burgoyne of Wroxall, a commissioner in Warwickshire for the suppression of the monasteries. James Duffield and Thomas Porter later had licence to settle the shares on themselves and their heirs.

The ***Hanslap*** family gained an interest from 1597 until 1656 and probably for much longer.

A History of the County of Warwick: Volume 6, Knightlow Hundred. Originally published by Victoria County History, London, 1951

The Tax Story

12 old pence = 5 new pence = one shilling

This is by no means the whole story, but it gives it a flavour

Danegeld was originally a tax collected to buy off the Danish invaders, but eventually became a permanent land-tax. It began in earnest in 991 when Ethelred the Unready bought off the Vikings who invaded Essex, and King Canute continued to pay them off.

After the Battle of Hastings, the Norman tax was collected by local sheriffs and used by William the Conqueror to underwrite his continental wars rather than buying-off invaders and the price went up and up and up!

By 1130, Henry I was taxing danegeld annually at two shillings a hide (approx an acre).

In 1203 King John introduced an export tax on wool and in 1275 Edward I introduced the first taxes on wine.

Scutage was a ***Cowadice Tax*** paid by knights who did not want to go to war. However, King John of Robin Hood fame raised it 300% and started to charge it in years when there was no war. Hence under the Magna Carta (1215) it was forbidden, but it still remained until the 14th century.

Poll taxes in the 14th century were particularly harsh, culminating in a tax that tripled the rate of the first. Protests broke out and so began the hugely destructive Peasant's Revolt.
In 1572, a ***Poor Law*** tax was established to help the deserving poor and then changed from a local tax to a national tax in 1601.

A Card Tax began under James I requiring an insignia on the Ace of Spades as proof of payment and ended in 1960.

Excise Duty now began on beer to pay for the 17th century Civil War and remained after the Restoration of Charles II to fund the army. Charles II charged further taxes to help pay for the rebuilding of the City of London after the Great Fire 1666.

Following this, Coal Tax acts were passed in 1667 and in 1670. This tax was eventually repealed in 1889.

In 1692 Parliament introduced a national land tax, which was levied on rental values and they remained in force well into the 18th century.
Income tax was first implemented by William Pitt the Younger in 1798 to pay for weapons for the Napoleonic Wars. It began at a levy of 2 old pence in the pound on incomes over £60 *(£5,511 as 2015)*, and increased up to a maximum of 2 old shillings on incomes of over £200. It was abolished in 1816, one year after the Battle of Waterloo; but introduced again in 1842, when a funding crisis in the railways and increasing national expenditure has ensured that it has stayed with us.

Hearth Tax

In 1662 in Southam there were 73 houses taxed and 33 exempt.

Bridget Lyndon had a house with 11 hearths that was associated with Bury Orchard and near to the church; because in 1651 and 1655 she was fined for laying a dunghill in the way to church and in 1653 two Southam inhabitants were fined for breaking into Bridget's close at Bury Orchard and milking her cows. So did she live in the new or old Manor House?

The hearth tax was levied between 1662 and 1689 to provide Charles II with extra income to run the country. It was essentially a property tax on dwellings for their number of fireplaces at 2 shillings a year by the occupier, or if empty, by the owner.

Exempt from the tax were those in houses already exempt from paying local taxes to the church; the poor due to poverty or smallness of estate; those in dwellings whose rentable value was 20 shillings a year or less; or who did not use land of their own to a similar value and did not have goods worth more than ten pounds.

People started concealing chimneys and using a neighbour's chimney, causing great fires, so officials were allowed to enter and inspect all houses.

Unfortunately properties are not named and an entry including more than one hearth sometimes represented hearths in several buildings or a sub-divided one, but it does indicate persons of greater wealth and importance and possibly the size of their dwelling. Combined with what we already know of some Southam names, it may be possible to put them better within the social scale of their time.

The population of England almost doubled between 1540 and 1660, so analysis of the hearth tax has a major role for those interested in economic and social development.

Centre for Hearth Tax Research - Hearth Tax Online http://www.hearthtax.org.uk/

Daylight Robbery

First imposed in 1696, it was introduced to make up for losses caused by the clipping of coins during the reign of William III. It was repealed in 1851 when it was replaced by a house tax.

It was based on the number of windows and banded upwards starting from six windows. After the fiasco of the hearth tax and hiding fireplaces, it was also easy to collect as windows could easily be counted from outside.

Campaigners argued that it was a 'tax on health', and a 'tax on light and air', as well as being an unequal tax with the greatest burden on the middle and lower classes. Hence it was called *'daylight robbery'*.

It was soon noticed that windows were being boarded up and new houses being built with less windows, resulting in a decline in revenue despite an increase in houses. The impact of the tax was such that in 1766, when the tax was extended to include houses with seven or more windows, the number of houses with exactly seven windows reduced by nearly two-thirds.

At Ladbroke Hall, when renovations were done at the turn of the 20th century, in an upstairs bedroom they found two windows had been bricked up and bookshelves put into the alcoves and then strangely the bookshelves complete with the books had also been boarded up, sometime after 1830.

Wigs and Hair Powder

In 1535, Henry VIII, who wore a beard himself, introduced a tax on beards, varying with the wearer's social position. Then by 1580 baldness swept the land, due mainly to syphilis resulting in hair loss and long hair became a status symbol, while a bald head stained even a King's reputation.

Delousing a wig was also much easier than delousing a head of hair. You sent the dirty headpiece to a wig-maker, who would boil the wig and remove the nits. Wool wigs were even baked inside a loaf of bread to clean them.
In 1795 William Pitt the Younger was responsible for more taxes; including the introduction of a tax on hair powder. People were required to purchase an annual certificate from their local Justice of the Peace for a guinea. (£1-1shilling) The list of those paid at Southam was lodged at the Warwick Quarter Session court and a list pinned to the door of St James' parish church by the parish constable.

Wig powder was made from finely ground starch to which they added lavender, jasmine, roses and scented orange flowers to hide aromas. Poorer men sometimes wore flour. It was occasionally coloured violet, blue, pink or yellow, but was most often used as off-white.

In 1869 the Act was repealed as by that time less than 1,000 people were wearing wigs.

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Strange & Weird Taxes

Between 1784 and 1811 there was a tax on men's hats. At first it was avoided by hat-makers calling their 'hats' by other names, leading to a tax on any 'headgear' from 1804. It was supposed to be a rough way of taxing the wealthier person who was assumed to have a large number of expensive hats, compared to the poor person with possibly none at all. Heavy fines were paid by the retailer who failed to pay the tax. However, the death penalty was reserved for those who forged the hat-tax revenue stamps.

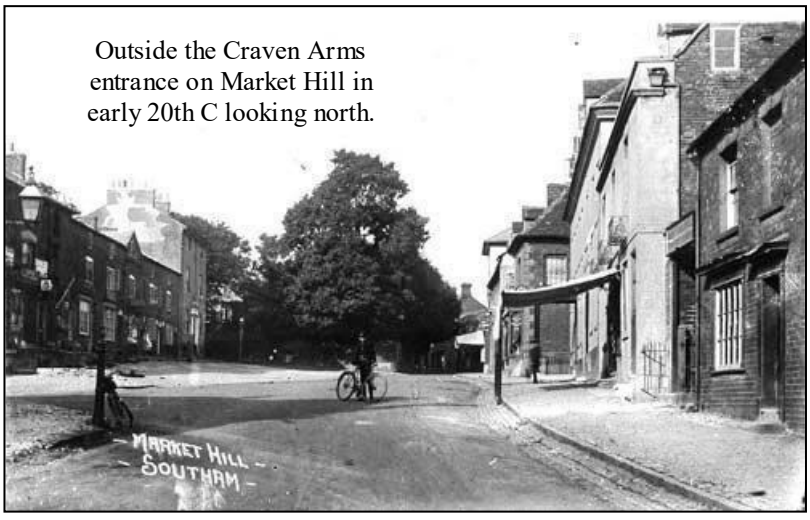
A medieval tax on soap remained in the UK until 1835.

Oliver Cromwell taxed Royalists a tenth of their property and used the money to fund his activities against them.

Builders in the 18th century soon realised that a tax on bricks was smaller to them by manufacturing larger bricks. However, the government caught on and placed a higher tax on larger bricks and this went on until 1850.

A tax on printed wallpaper in 1712 was avoided by hanging plain paper and then painting patterns on the wall.

In 1789 people were forbidden from making their own candles without a license and then paid a tax on the candles they made. This went on until 1831, after which candles once again became popular.



Outside the Craven Arms entrance on Market Hill in early 20th C looking north.

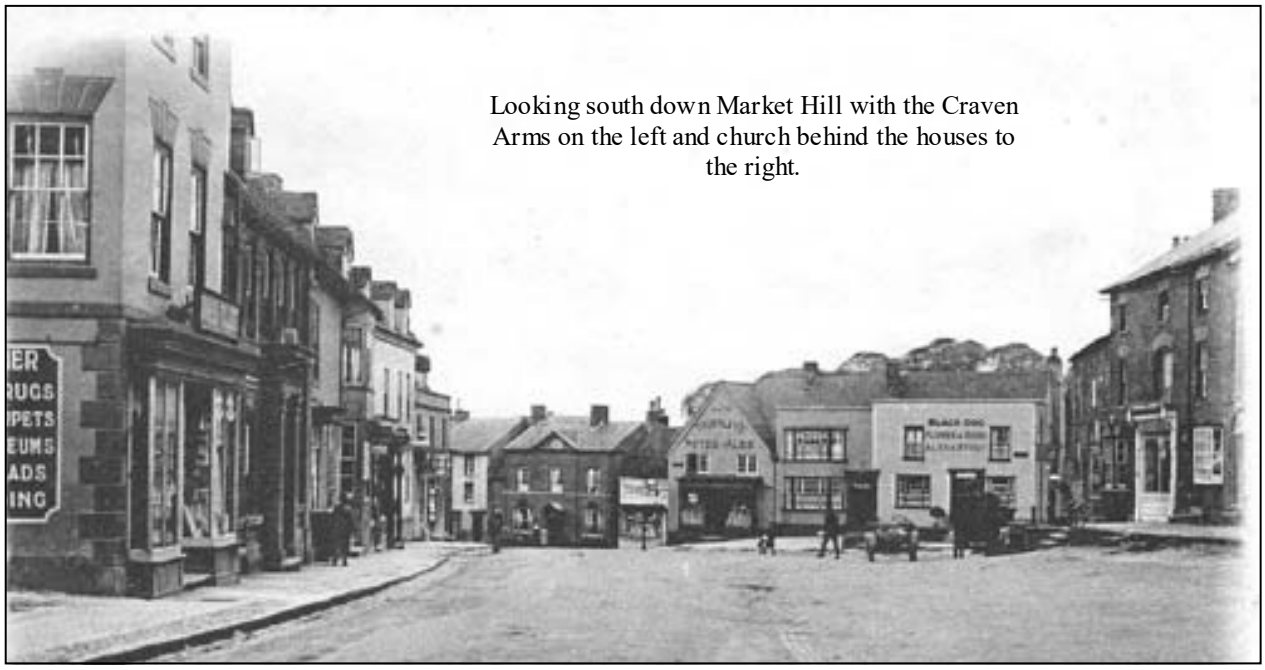
Earls of Craven

In **1730** the distribution of manorial rights in Southam was stated to be: the **Earl of Craven** 16 parts (50%), **Mrs. Porter** of Coventry 8, **Mr. Rogers** 3,

Mr. Atkins 2, and **Messrs. Jackson and Brafeild** 1, all of Southam, and **Mr Heath** of Warwick 1. By **1850** the manor was divided between **Henry Thomas Chamberlayne** of Stoney Thorpe, **Mr. Nourse** and the **Rev Thomas Lea**, Rector of Southam.

The earliest good scale map of Southam is the 1778 Craven Estate map of land owned by the Craven family, who were also associated with several Manors in and around Coventry including Whitely, Walsgrave-on-Sowe, Wyken and Combe Abbey. Indeed the Wyken Pippin apple was said to originate from a tree grown by the family on their Wyken Estate in the late 18th century. So was Southam's interest in cider also influenced by Earl Craven?

The building of the Oxford Canal considerably accelerated the importance and industrialization of Coventry and was used to move coal from pits including Earl Craven's Colliery. However, the canal got no nearer than Long Itchington to Southam, hence the later investment in the toll roads when Southam became a very important coaching stop with the Royal Mail change-over for horses at the Craven Arms Hotel on Market Hill, where up to eighty horses were stabled at the height of the coaching era.



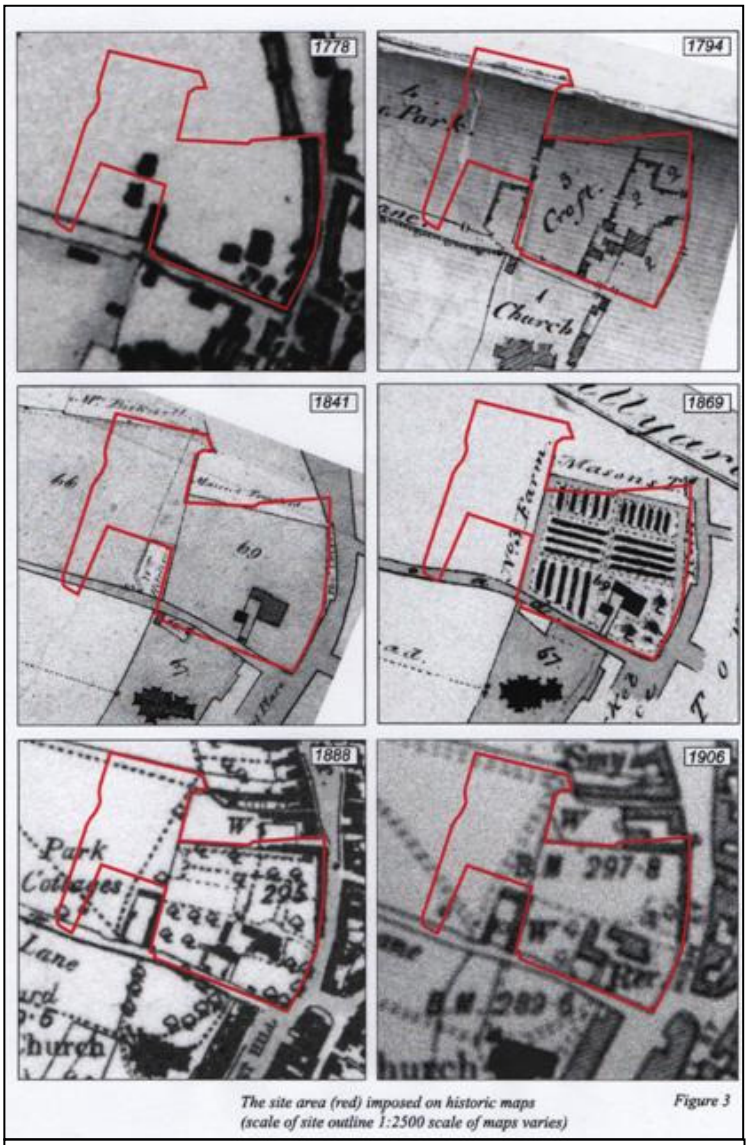
Looking south down Market Hill with the Craven Arms on the left and church behind the houses to the right.

Market Hill

The church and manor is usually the original centre of a town and Southam is no exception. Here the first manor house, of which we have no idea when it was demolished, was thought to be to the west of the church and not to the east where the fancy new manor house (now the chemist shop) was built in the 16th century after the Reformation.
Market Hill is the remnant of the old livestock and market place and where the Market Cross once stood. Hence today's wide open space and why the later buildings all butt up to the church wall. In the 16th century there is mention of stalls below the Market Cross and of a long building beside the churchyard made for the drapery. It is unclear where the drapery stood, because the 17th century Market Hill was thought to be open to the churchyard and it's a steep incline to the river on the south-west. Is this the 'tithe' barn?

In 1601 the churchwarden's accounts show a payment to John Frankton and Henry Stalworth for the repair of the church walls and the church gate grid, which was a wooden frame fitted with iron bars at a distance to prevent stray animals walking into the churchyard - a cattle grid. However, in 1622 Southam was fined three times, because the church walls surrounding the churchyard were not sufficient, especially on the side between the church and the market. ie on Market Hill.

The Rectory



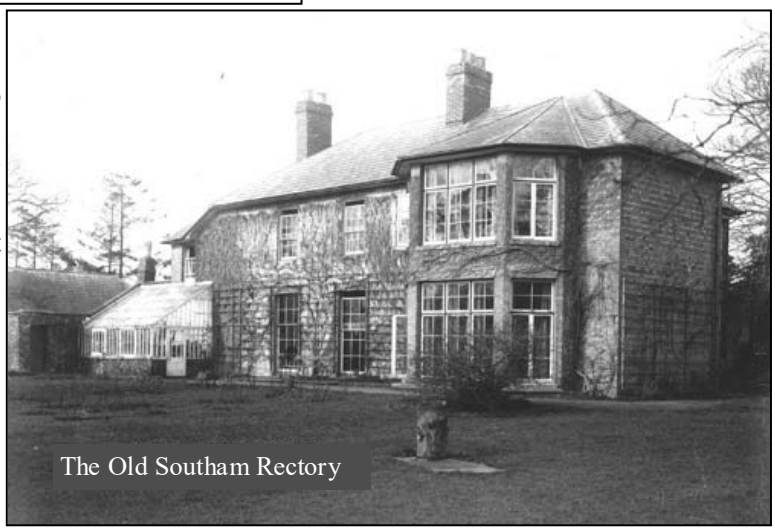
The red outlines the area excavated for the building of Tithe Lodge and Tithe Place on maps from 1778 to 1906.
The old Rectory is towards the bottom right.

The 1794 Rectorial Estate map surveyed for the Rev Sandy, Rector of Southam, shows the western end of the archaeological site formed part of a larger plot called The Park and was mainly undeveloped. The east boundary of the site was divided into an agricultural "croft" with structures towards the frontage, thought to be animal pens.

Fifty years later The Park appears unchanged, but the land to the east had heavily altered. It had been cleared of all previous structures except for one large building with a single small outbuilding and this plot in 1869 is referred to as the Rectory House, garden and premises. There remained a small strip of land on the eastern boundary in the ownership of the Coles and were possibly the remnants of the earlier frontages.

This land was now owned by the Rev Temple Hillyard and the ground surrounding the rectory has been divided into smaller plots, possibly gardens and orchards.

The 1888 map also shows more outhouses and further west, a group of buildings around a possible courtyard, which appear to be nos. 6 to 12, Park Lane which survive today. By now a narrow terrace of buildings occupied the north and eastern boundaries at the north-east corner of the site, including a post office and a public house along the High Street frontage.


The Old Southam Rectory

Worcestershire County Council
Worcestershire Archaeology

The Welsh Drovers

Southam sits on a crossroad of the Welsh drover's roads passing between Wales and London via the Midlands.

Welsh cattle and sheep were walked to the Midlands for fattening or on to London for butchering. A walk that took several weeks along well known byways that today are recognised by their extra wide grass verges and road names such as Welsh Road East and Welsh Road West, or field names such as London Fylde and Slinket to the south-east.

The markets and drovers are a reason why Southam was so well populated with Inns and why there are so many Welsh names in the parish registers. *"1778 Oct 17 Bur John Jones a Welsh Drover"* I wonder what his story is!

One interesting record is that of a Robert Lloyd, who was buried in the churchyard on 31st August 1773. He was with the drovers walking cattle to London from his farm at Dduallt in the Snowdonia National Park in Wales.


Bur. Robert Lloyd of Dduallt in the parish of Llanvrothan in the County of Merioneth in Wales ye 31st

After three weeks on the road they had reached Southam and while a couple of drovers and their dogs watched over the herd on the edge of town, Robert and the others went in to town to slake their thirst with a beer at one of the many taverns. It was a hot August day and at the King's Head (Craven Arms) he drank too much and it was the cause of his death. He was buried at St James' Church while the cattle were taken on to London and it was probably several more weeks before his death reached his family at home.

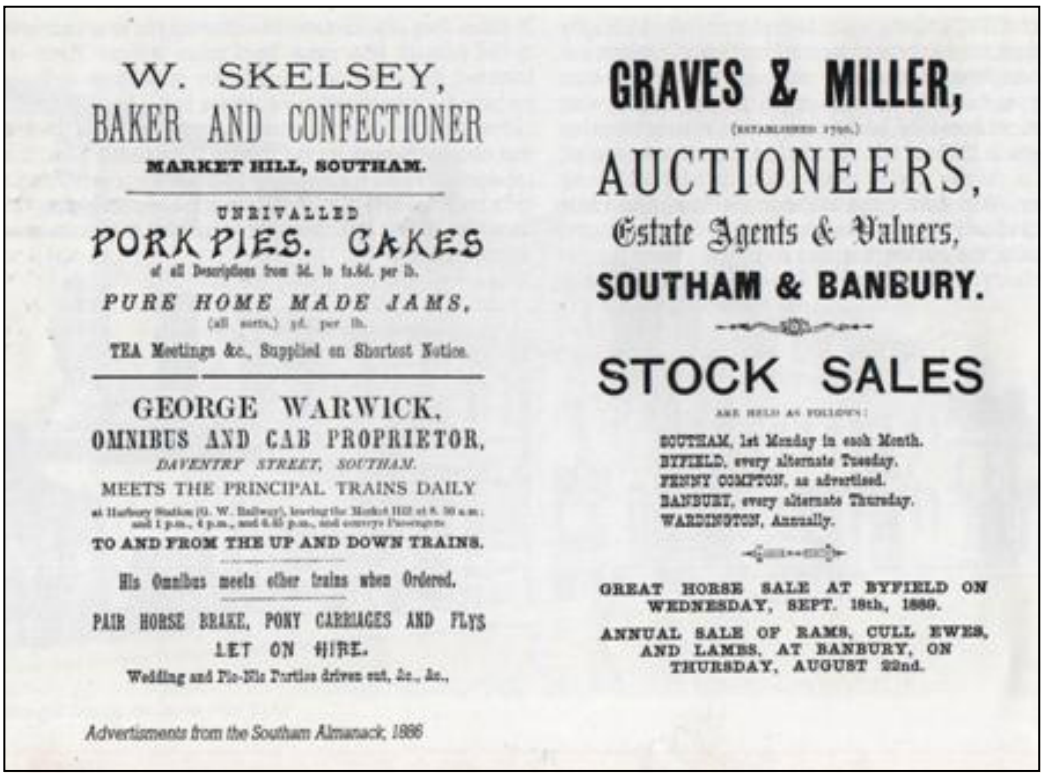
The Slinket - a long thin field near the Welsh Road thought to have been used to hold livestock on the way to market. Note the modern gate is only half way and it gets narrower nearer the road, with a dog-leg in the hedge suitable for holding stock together.

Coaching & Toll Roads

By the 18th century the Coventry to Banbury road had become so bad that coaches got bogged down in wet weather and others collided as it was too narrow.

So in the middle of the 18th century Turnpike Trusts were set up to build and improve the roads. The gentlemen of Coventry had seen trading advantages of linking up with London via Oxford and so through Southam.

One petition by Richard Parrot who owned Hawkesbury coal pit and was a principal financier stated



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MEETS THE PRINCIPAL TRAINS DAILY
at Harbury Station (G. W. Railway), leaving the Market Hill at 8.30 a.m.; and 1 p.m., 4 p.m., and 6.45 p.m., and conveys Passengers
TO AND FROM THE UP AND DOWN TRAINS.
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PAIR HORSE BRAKE, PONY CARRIAGES AND FLYS
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(ESTABLISHED 1795.)
AUCTIONEERS,
Estate Agents & Valuers,
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STOCK SALES
ARE HELD AS FOLLOWS:
SOUTHAM, 1st Monday in each Month.
BYFIELD, every alternate Tuesday.
FENNY COMPTON, as advertised.
BANBURY, every alternate Thursday.
WARDINGTON, Annually.

GREAT HORSE SALE AT BYFIELD ON WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 18th, 1889.
ANNUAL SALE OF RAMS, CULL EWES, AND LAMBS, AT BANBURY, ON THURSDAY, AUGUST 22nd.

Advertisments from the Southam Almanack, 1886

"*by reason of the ruinous condition of the roads, constant recourse cannot be had to and from the coal pits near Coventry, which greatly increases the price of coals about Southam.*"

In 1755 a parliamentary bill was passed for the section of toll road between Coventry and Banbury, with tollgates at Princethorpe and Ladbroke and another turnpike was built between Daventry and Leamington via Southam.

This substantially improved the coaching road from London to the north and Southam became a very important coaching stop for travellers and the Royal Mail.

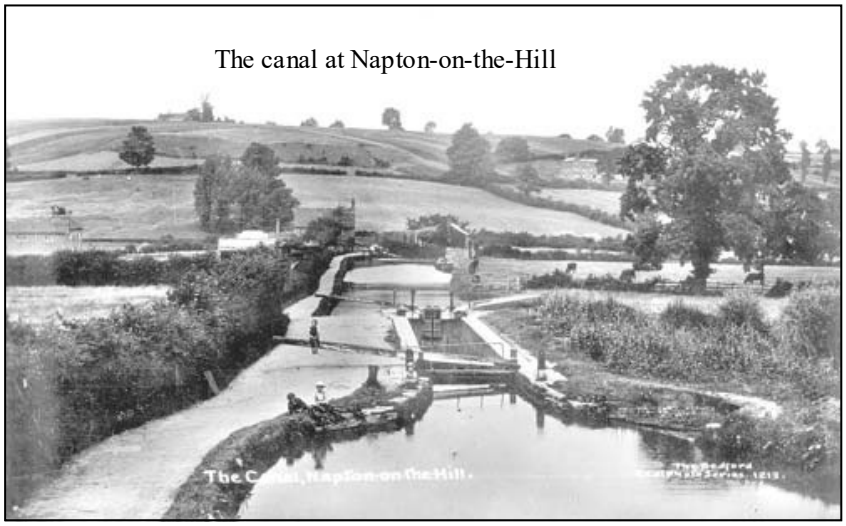
It was said that if the horn was blown at the Harp Inn near Ladbroke it could be heard in Southam and by the time they drove into the Craven Arms yard the boys had fresh horses ready to change for the steaming and tired ones in harness.

Oxford Canal

Canals throughout England eased the transportation of heavy loads. A horse could pull a load of less than half a ton on the road, but could haul a narrow boat loaded with 20 tons along a canal, hence why canals became so important for moving coal from the pits around Coventry.

The Oxford Canal reached Napton by 1774 and followed the contours of the land to bypass Southam and went on to Wormleighton and Fenny Compton and was at Banbury by 1778. The tale goes that the canal followed the contours of the land because the landowners south-east of Southam did not want the navvies and boatmen setting foot on their land.

The canal at Napton-on-the-Hill



By 1793 the faster Grand Junction Canal had been built to London. In 1800 it passed north of Southam as it went via Long Itchington to Warwick, being linked with the Oxford Canal for five miles through Braunston to Napton Junction.

In 1819 there were intentions to build a canal to connect Southam with Priors Hardwick, but this fell through, and although many of the winding contours were straightened out in the 1820s to increase speed, the Oxford Canal lost in favour of what eventually became the Grand Union Canal.

South of Southam at Fenny Compton the canal enters a long cutting which, until it was opened out in 1869, was a tunnel. This section is still referred to as 'tunnel straight' or the Fenny Compton Tunnel.

Railways

As the canals bypassed Southam, so did the railways, but with far more detriment to trade, because it eventually saw the demise of the town as a livestock market.

The coming of the railways in the middle 19th Century made dramatic changes throughout Britain, but it is another reason why Southam, once a leading market town, became a backwater while other towns grew faster and healthier.

A bill was passed in 1864 giving permission for the "Coventry Central Station and Southam Junction Railway". Bells were rung in Southam to celebrate and £10 shares issued by the Southam Railway Company, whose offices were in the Court House. Most of the shares were taken up by a Southam lawyer named Edward Poole. Unfortunately the scheme fell through due to objections from local landowners south of Southam and Poole was ruined.

When the Great Western Railway reached Fenny Compton, the building work started on the rail heading out across Chapel Ascote to go via Ladbroke to Southam. However, the tale goes that in true 'cowboy' fashion, the landowner stood his ground with a shotgun and ordered the surveyors and navvies off his land. No one dared to return!

Consequently the railway turned towards Leamington Spa and the nearest station was at Deppers Bridge near Harbury, where travellers were met by a horsed bus for Southam.

Lighting in a Victorian Home

Most houses were lit by candles and oil lamps using portable sources such as candlesticks, and by the light of the fire. Vivian House fortunately still contains the original fireplace.

Three types of candle were commonly used; ***Tallow candles*** made from animal fat were the cheapest but they burnt with a smoky flame and they stank. ***Beeswax candles*** from beehives and ***Spermaceti wax*** made from whale oil, which was harder than either beeswax or tallow and was least likely to soften in hot weather.


The Vivian House fireplace

Improvements in the design of the wicks shortly before the Victorian period commenced had eliminated guttering, and the plaited wicks introduced in the 1820s curled out of the flame as they burnt, eliminating the need for constant trimming which plagued earlier candles. By the end of the century the modern paraffin wax candle was the most commonly used, being cheap, odourless and reliable.

Oil has been burnt in lamps since the Stone Age, and the cheapest light fittings used in Victorian homes had changed little since then, with a simple wick protruding from a small container of whale oil or vegetable oil.

One of the most significant improvements of the Victorian period was the introduction of paraffin. Patented in 1850, the price of the new fuel fell dramatically following the discovery of oil in Pennsylvania, USA.

Most lamps had a larger shade around the chimney often of opaque glass to diffuse the light. The shades provided an opportunity for decoration, and a variety of shapes, colours and patterns were used.

In Town

The Union Workhouse opened in 1838 along Welsh Road West to replace the House of Industry and finally closed in the 1920s. Today the site is occupied by the Junior School.

Southam windmill, also in Welsh Road West, was destroyed by fire in 1849 and rebuilt to survive another hundred years to 1948, after which it ceased to work and was dismantled and then truncated to leave the miller's cottage standing alone.

Today only a handful of the original Inns remain, the Bowling Green, the Market Tavern (Crown), the Black Dog and the Olde Mint, while long gone are the 17th century Mercers Arms and Drapers Arms, and during the 20th century the Blue Pig, the Dun Cow, the Albion, the Buck and Bell and the Red Lion to only mention a few.

Here at Vivian House was probably the Bell and Bull kept by Issac Hobley in 1835. It was renamed Vivian House after a winning bet on a horse of that name.

The town is full of memories and if even only some of the stories are true, then there is many a ghost haunting the attics and alleyways; the cupboards and cellars and reaching far beyond the roads out of town!

The exhibition was put together using information and photographs from the Southam Heritage Collection archives by Linda Doyle.

Our grateful thanks also go to the following people and teams for kindly allowing us to use their items, photographs and articles in the exhibition and for their assistance in any further research:

Historic Environment Record (HER) Warwickshire Museum Field Services
Worcestershire County Council Archive and Archaeology Information and Advice teams
Warwickshire County Council Archaeological Information and Advice teams.
Herbert Art Gallery & Museum, Coventry
Aerial-Cam - Adam Stanford http://www.aerial-cam.co.uk/
All Things Georgian
Centre for Hearth Tax Research
Mary Williams - Southam Parish Clerk
Jennie Daniels Photography
Ken Bonham
Bruce Smith http://www.localdroveroads.co.uk/
Mr & Mrs and Douglas Winkfield
Jason Shorthouse
Alan Griffin