

Kings Bromley

Historians 2011



John Newton at Spettisbury House

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The Hody Family 1735-1750

In 1735 the manor of Middle Street, Spettisbury belonged to the Hody family, who were descended from a branch of an ancient family in Somerset. Spettisbury House, the Manor House of Middle Street was built in 1735 by Mr. William Hody, Esq., as a “*small but elegant seat*” on the 4.5 acre site now occupied by Priory Gardens and St. Monica’s. William Hody must have liked living here for in 1737 he was advertising in the Sherborne Mercury the sale of his land in Somerset; West Camel Farm, near Bruton



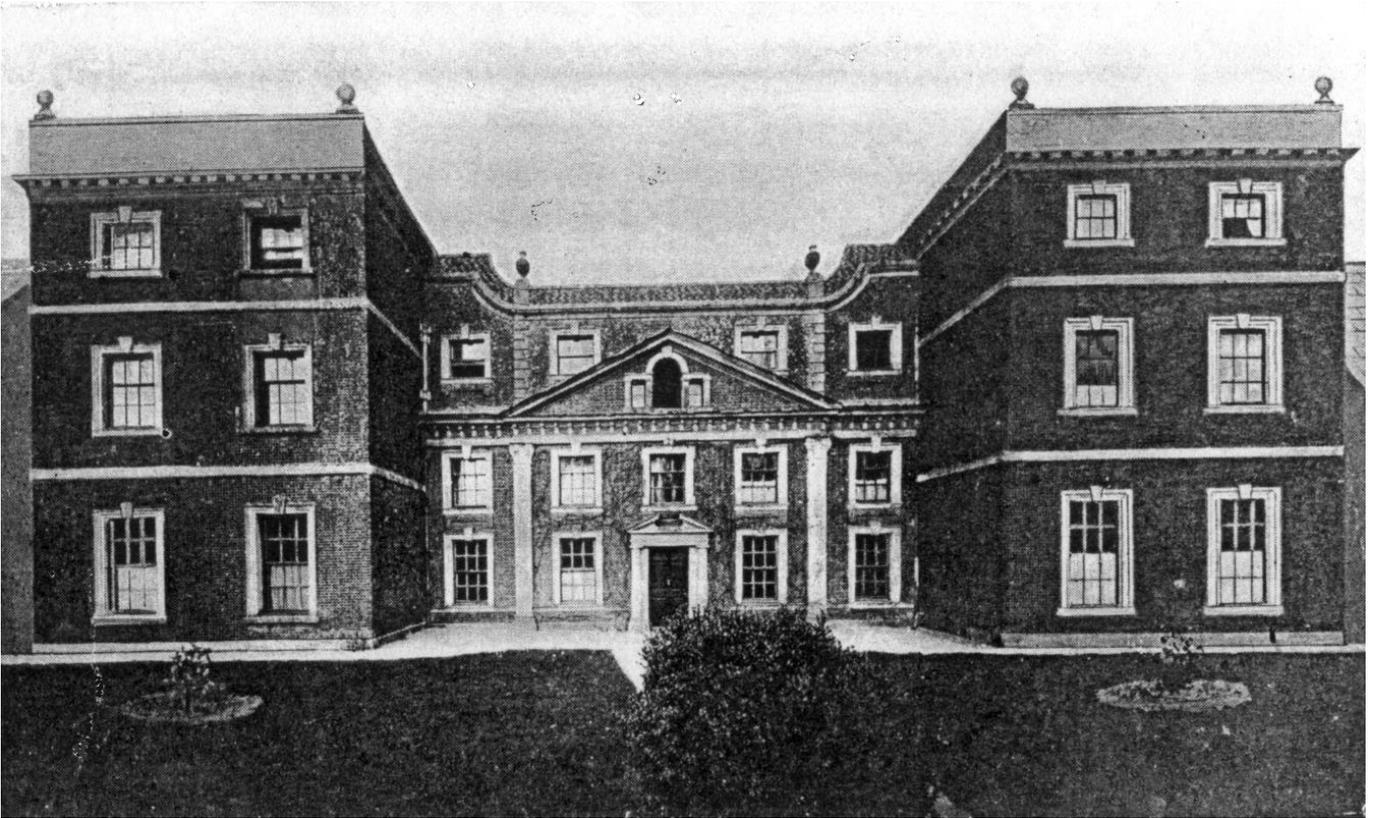
Central facade of Spettisbury House

Professor Geoffrey Webb, writing in 1925, described Spettisbury House as a fine country house built for John (not William) Hody in 1735 by the famous master-builder/architects, the brothers John and William Bastard of Blandford Forum:

“The front (of the house) appears homogenous, and should the wings be later than the centre, as the relative heights of the storeys might suggest, the transition from the low centre feature to the greater height of the wings has been effected in such a masterly way as to convince one against any evidence that this is the original intention of the design. The centre itself is a fine composition; the effect of the important attic storey and the low broad pediment containing a Venetian window, an admirable device, is particularly good. The capitals of the pilasters, and indeed the whole order with its brick frieze, is a charming variant.”

Professor Webb believed that Spettisbury House was:

“perhaps the best example we have of these two architects” but that *“the interior has been so much altered to suit the needs of the different religious bodies that have occupied it of recent years, that the original arrangements and decorations are quite irrecoverable”*.



Spettisbury House

The attribution of Spettisbury House to the Bastard brothers has no documentary evidence but it does show typical characteristics of the Bastard's architectural style. There is an idiosyncrasy about their work that is almost as good as a trademark. This is a peculiar form of capital, which can only be called the "Bastard" capital. Instead of the volutes curving outwards in the usual way, they curve inwards to give an entirely distinctive effect. At Spettisbury House the pediment is supported by pilasters which terminate in these baroque capitals with the in-turning volutes. These baroque capitals, which occur on other buildings in Dorset, are regarded as an architectural hallmark of the Bastards. And according to the Royal Commission for Historic Monuments, Spettisbury House *“appears to show affinities with the facade of Coupar House in Blandford Forum”* which is another example of the Bastard brothers' work (now the Royal British Legion building).



Pilaster with the "Bastard" capital at Spettisbury House

William Hody lived in Spettisbury House for five years until 1740 when he died without issue. He was buried in a recessed tomb in the South East Chancel of Wimborne Minster along with two other members of the Hody family from Middle Street, Spettisbury (John Hody 1710 and Arthur Hody 1717).

The property passed by William's will to his brother Edward Hody M.D., who had graduated from the University of Rheims in 1723, and was for some time a churchwarden of St. George's, Hanover Square in London. In the parish register of St. John's, Spettisbury is noted "*Burial of Elizabeth, wife of Dr. Edward Hody March 27 1746*".

Rear-Admiral Charles Holmes 1750-1761

In 1750 Edward Hody sold Spettisbury House to Rear-Admiral Holmes. Charles Holmes (1711-1761) was born in Yarmouth on the Isle of Wight, the eleventh of the sixteen children of Henry Holmes, the Governor of the Isle of Wight. He had started his career at the age of sixteen as an "ordinary seaman" but by 1734 had been made a lieutenant and in 1741 received his first command, that of a fireship. While in the West Indies, during 1747, Holmes was made captain of the 70-gun *Lennox*, one of the largest war ships in the British Navy.

Between the wars, during the years 1748-1754, Charles Holmes served in "home waters" and it was obviously during this period that he purchased Spettisbury House, although it is not clear how much time he spent in the house, if indeed, he resided there at all.



Charles Holmes, Rear Admiral of the Blue 1758

In 1759 Holmes, by now a Rear-Admiral, was in North American waters where he was to participate in the successful siege of Quebec. Acting as third in command under Major-General James Wolfe, he played a critical role in drawing French troops off and away from Quebec, as he was able to get a squadron of ships past the French guns and up river. Holmes dictated a report of this engagement, “*the most hazardous and difficult task I was ever engaged in*” for his superiors at the Admiralty, a copy of which is in the British Library.

In 1760 Holmes was appointed Commander-in-Chief at Jamaica, where he died the following year aged 50; there is a memorial to him at Westminster Abbey. Beneath a large statue of the Admiral (the last one in the Abbey to depict a military hero wearing the dress of a Roman soldier) is inscribed:

*To the memory of Charles Holmes Esq
Rear Admiral of the White. He died the XXIst
of November MDCCLXI Commander in Chief of his
Majesty's Fleet Station'd at Jamaica, aged L
Erected by his Gratefull Neeces
Mary Stanwix & Lucretia Sowle*

It is not known if Charles Holmes ever married or had children, but in 1754, when he wrote his will, he was living with a lady called Henrietta Maria Marshall and after bequests to various people including his mother, brothers and sisters, (and £6500 and his paintings to Henrietta), he left his estate to be divided between Henrietta and “*any Child or Children born of the Body of the said Henrietta Maria Marshall within Eight Lunary Months from the Day of my Death*”, and the children of his sister Lucretia, wife of Marmaduke Sowle of Blandford. This estate included “*all that Capital Messuage called Middlestreet situate and being in the Parish of Spetisbury in the County of Dorset with the Gardens Stables Buildings lands and Appurtenances.*” In 1760 he was still with Henrietta because after the death of his mother, he wrote to her from his ship then off the Isle of Wight, adding further bequests to her:

My dear Henny Marshall

This from the Back of the Isle of Wight with a fair Wind yesterday we was obliged to come to Durner? again at St Swithins it proving calm lett no opportunity slip in Writing to me don't be uneasy if you have no letters these four months from me for in all probability there will be none

unless the Vessel with the Chan... not yet arrived but I don't apprehend I shall loose it Yours of the 7th March 1760 I received after I was under Sail Condoling with me on the death of my Mother the picture of me that my Mother had I gave her only for her Life I give it to you after my decease as I do the four hundred pounds I left my Mother in my Will which Will is in your possession as she is dead before me I give you the above but only as a present for my absence and independent of what I leave you in my Will my picture I beg you would not move out of the Isle of Wight nor lett any one know its yours my Reasons I will give you if ever we have the pleasure to meet I am my dear Henny very sincerely and affectionately yours Charles Holmes Cambridge at the Back of the Isle of Wight 10th March 1760

PS What I have left you in my will I mean and intend you should have and this is only so much more for you my dear Henny Marshall Yours Chas Holmes In the Channel 10th March 1760

On 9th November 1761 while in Jamaica, Charles, now Rear-Admiral of the White and Commander in Chief of all His Majesties Ships at and about Jamaica, added a further codicil to his will, “to prevent disputes after my decease do hereby think proper to confirm and declare valid to all intents and purposes my last Will and Testament made some years ago and left with Mrs Henrietta Maria Marshall generally called Mrs Holmes.” He died 12 days later.

John Newton of Kings Bromley 1761-1777

After Admiral Holmes' death, his executors sold the farm (value £200 per annum) with the manor annexed. In an advertisement in a London newspaper in 1761 (Appendix 1) “*the entire new Farm House with necessary Outhouses*” was described as “*let to Farmer Williams at £148 per annum*”. The house itself was “*a Mansion House elegantly fronted & proper Outhouses; with a large garden, both ornamental & useful, stored with the best of Fruits of all Sorts, & bounded by the River Stour. The Mansion House is within half a Mile of the Downs, and in as fine a sporting Country as any in England.*” It was let with the furniture to Mr. Drax for £50 a year and also included “*a small Meadow by the Smith Shop containing an Acre & an half and the Slope before the House.*” The estate also included “*a Plantation containing ten Acres or thereabouts of Five years growth*” and came with “*Privilege of Hunting and Hawking, and an extensive Fishery in the River Stour.*”

John(2) Newton of Kings Bromley bought the house in 1761. After the death of his wife, the date of which we still do not know, John Newton returned to England from Barbados. His father and mother were still alive and living at Kings Bromley Hall and he had obviously decided to have his own country estate. He owned Newtons, Seawells and Mt. Alleyne estates in Barbados, and had done since his marriage in 1740. The reason for choosing to settle at Spettisbury may have to do with the Drax family. The Drax family were one of the prominent in the Barbados ‘Plantocracy’ and would have been well known to John Newton. They owned land around Spetisbury and Wimborne in Dorset, and, as has been seen above a Mr. Drax rented Spettisbury Hall directly before John Newton bought it.

During the fifteen years that John Newton was living in Spetisbury he made many additions and improvements to the house. According to Geoffrey Webb, “*the later building seems to have been at the back of the house, where there is an indescribable confusion of work of different dates, traces of the original Tudor house cropping up in places*”

Spetisbury is mentioned in John Newton's (date) letter to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Thurlow. After his marriage to Catherine Seymour in Wells Cathedral in 1776 they stayed a short while with her parents Lord and Lady Seymour but then moved to Spetisbury his “*seat ... in ye county of Dorset where [they] received the visits of their friends and acquaintances. Lady F Seymour and his Lordship payd a visit and stayed some weeks. But soon after their return home ... said wife ... showd by her conduct and behaviour that she was a woman of a loose and vicious disposition & desirous of allowing improper Liberties to other Gents and became improperly and intimately consorted with [a] Gent in ye neighbourhood*”. It was therefore at Spetisbury that Catherine, according to John, started the behaviour that continued when they

moved to Bath in December of 1776 and then to Kings Bromley Hall in April 1777, after the death of his mother.

John Newton had bought No 9, The Circus, in 1768. It was quite usual for the rich to own both a country estate and a town house. The Circus was a highly fashionable address: his neighbours included the Earl of Streatham (Pitt the elder), Thomas Gainsborough, two Ladys, a knight and a marquess. It was put up for sale in 1782. He had moved into Kings Bromley Hall in April 1777 just after his mother's death.

It appears that John Newton first tried to sell his estate at Spetisbury in 1774 since there was an advertisement in the Salisbury Journal at that time stating *"To be sold, a Capital Mansion House, with large Gardens, Stables, Coach-houses, & other Outhouses thereto adjoining, big enough for a Gentleman that has a large Family & keeps a number of Horses, together with a Farm thereunto belonging, consisting of a Farm-house, with proper Barns, Stables, Outhouses, & several Closes of Arable, Meadow, and Pasture Land thereunto belonging, of about the yearly Value of £200."* (Appendix 2)

In March 1777 he again put up the estate for auction. In an advertisement in the Salisbury Journal in March 1777 the house was described as:

"an elegant Mansion House forming a Centre and two Wings, fit for a Nobleman's Family, containing on the Ground Floor a large dining Parlour, elegantly furnished in Stucco; two other Parlours neatly fitted up; a Withdrawing Room superbly finished, and hung with crimson Damask; a spacious Hall, Housekeeper's Room, Cellars & etc. On the next Story are four Dressing Rooms, & six Bed Chambers. On the attic Story are six Bedchambers together with proper Rooms for Servants; the whole commanding a most beautiful prospect of the Country. Adjoining the House are a fine Range of Outbuildings such as spacious & convenient Kitchens, Larders, Bake-house, Brew-house, Wash-house, Laundry, Servants' Hall, Dairy, Dove-house, Poultry-house, Grainery, and Stabling for near 30 Horses, with Servants' Room over the same. The Garden around the above Premises is genteely laid out, and consists of about six acres, with Green-house, Hot-house, Summer-house, & every convenience therein. Contiguous thereto runs the River Stour, with an extensive right of Fishery; as also Hunting, Fowling, & etc over the Manor of Sturminster Marshall."

John Newton was obviously determined to make a clean sweep of things as he also sold all his household effects:

"The Mansion House, Outbuildings, Gardens & Farm will be sold in one lot. Immediately after the Sale of which will follow the Household Furniture which consists of elegant standing Beds, with Damask, Chintz, Cotton, Morine, & other Furniture, & Window Curtains of the same; fine seasoned Goose Feather beds, Mattrasses, Blankets, Quilts, & Counterpanes, rich Pier & Dressing Glasses, Mahogany Furniture in Bureaus, Drawers, Book-cases, Dining, Card, Pillar, & Pembroke Tables, Side-board Ditto, Sophas & Chairs, rich Axminster, Turkey & Wilton Carpets; eight day Clocks in Mahogany & Jappanned Cases; together with good Kitchen Furniture, Brewing Utensils, some Wines, etc." (Appendix3)

This advertisement, in fact, led to further trouble for John Newton. For some time he had been having a dispute with John Trenchard, the Lord of the Manor of Sturminster Marshall, over the sporting rights of that place. Two days after the advertisement appeared John Trenchard was writing *"I am surprised to see in the Advertisement of Mr. Newton's House & Lands in Spetisbury, a Claim of Sporting Rights over the Manor of Sturminster Marshall, and the more so as Mr. Newton cannot forget the prosecution of his pretended Game-keeper Lovell for killing a Hare there under that supposed Right, which prosecution Mr. Newton stopped by paying the damages and costs incurred thereby."* There followed a protracted legal battle from which I imagine no one benefited except the lawyers.

The house, together with the farm, was sold to John Williams Onslow Esq. of Cranley, Hampshire (1716-1779). John Williams Onslow was the second son of Sir John Williams of Tendring Hall, Stoke Nayland,

Suffolk, some time Lord Mayor of London, and his wife Dame Mary Williams, a daughter of Lord Onslow. He took the surname of Onslow. He married Charlotte Maria, the daughter of Sir Anthony Thomas Abdy of Felix Hall in Essex in 1744 and they had three sons, one of whom, Anthony Thomas Williams, died young.

The Subsequent History of Spetisbury House:

The Williams Onslow Family 1777-1783

The house, together with the farm, was sold to John Williams Onslow Esq. of Cranley, Hampshire (1716-1779). John Williams Onslow was the second son of Sir John Williams of Tendring Hall, Stoke Nayland, Suffolk, some time Lord Mayor of London, and his wife Dame Mary Williams, a daughter of Lord Onslow. He took the surname of Onslow. He married Charlotte Maria, the daughter of Sir Anthony Thomas Abdy of Felix Hall in Essex in 1744 and they had three sons, one of whom, Anthony Thomas Williams, died young.

Joseph Jekyll 1783-1800

The heirs of John Williams Onslow senior sold the mansion house and estate to Joseph Jekyll Esq. Joseph was a great nephew of the well-known Sir Joseph Jekyll (1663-1738), Master of the Rolls, who had been notorious for increasing the duty on gin. He was also a cousin of another Joseph Jekyll M.P. (1754-1837), a barrister and wit who became Solicitor-General and who was the grandfather of the famous Gertrude Jekyll. Unlike his illustrious namesakes, Joseph Jekyll of Spetisbury seemed to have lived a quiet life as a country gentleman. Some of his income came from sugar plantations in Dominica.

Joseph's wife Elizabeth died in 1797 and was buried at Spetisbury. In 1800, three years after Elizabeth's death, Joseph sold all his property in Spetisbury and moved to Bath where in 1802 he married for a third time to Lucy Sanford. Joseph died in Bath in about 1814.

Francis Fane 1800

In 1800 Joseph Jekyll sold Spettisbury House to Francis Fane Esq (1752 – 1813), Lord of the Manor of Spettisbury and M.P. for Dorchester, who lived at Spettisbury Manor, which was sited near the Church and was subsequently demolished to make way for the railway. Francis Fane did not hold on to Spetisbury House for long; he sold it again later that year to a Mrs. Tunstall for 3000 guineas. Mrs. Mary Tunstall 1800 Mrs. Tunstall, did not buy Spetisbury House for herself but for the community of Augustinian nuns with whom she was living.

“The house, formerly called the Mansion House in 1800 passed from F.Fane to Mrs. Tunstall who bought it for £3,150 for the English Augustinian Canonesses, who a few years before had returned from Louvain.”

The Augustinian Nuns - Canonesses Regular of the Windesheim Congregation 1800-1861 Spetisbury House becomes St. Monica's Priory

In 1800, when the Augustinian Canonesses arrived in Spetisbury, active discrimination against Catholicism had largely disappeared, although formal Catholic emancipation was not to come until 1829. The nuns obviously felt that England would be a safe place to live and work. The sisters of the Augustinian Order of St. Monica, also known as the Canonesses Regular of St. Augustine of the Windesheim Congregation, were a long-established order.

After 60 years of running a school in Spetisbury, in the year 1860, the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, by a Papal Rescript, was substituted for the teaching. The community purchased Abbotsleigh House at Abbotskerswell, near Newton Abbot, in Devon and asked the designer Joseph Aloysius Hansom to design a new convent and church to accommodate up to 50 nuns. They moved to Devon the following year, where they were known as St. Augustine's Priory and where they remained until 1983. The number of vocations to the priory gradually dwindled as deaths in the community outpaced the number of women with a call to the religious life. Eventually there were only four Sisters left. One Sister spent the last 14

months of her life at Syon Abbey in Devon (home of the Bridgettine nuns) and the others moved elsewhere.

The Bridgettine Nuns 1861-1887

The community, which arrived at Spettisbury under Abbess Mary Joseph Carter, consisted of eight Choir Sisters, two Choir Novices and two Lay Sisters. In many ways the buildings at Spettisbury were inconvenient for a cloistered community. They were too large (the building had 79 rooms) and too public – the road through the village ran alongside and the railway was very near. In 1885 it was resolved to leave Spettisbury and move elsewhere. Thanks to the generosity of Mr. Evan Baillie of Filleigh, near Chudleigh in Devon, who gave a site of three acres, the community transferred on 16th June 1887, after building a new Abbey on the hillside above Chudleigh. The Bridgettine nuns moved out to take possession of their new Abbey at Chudleigh and the Canons Regular of the Lateran moved into the Priory on the same day.

The Canons Regular of the Lateran 1887-1907

On March 4th 1887 the Priory of St. Monica's passed to the Canons Regular of the Lateran of Bodmin Priory. The intention was to use St. Monica's as a House of Studies. "*Spettisbury Priory was occupied by Austin Canons, who made it the house of studies for the young members of their Order in England, whither they are sent after they have passed through their noviceship at Bodmin, in Cornwall.*"

Studies for the priesthood took six years. These were done at the House of Studies or Professorium. St. Monica's at Spettisbury was the Professorium between 1887 and 1907. On 22nd June 1907 the Priory at Spettisbury was sold to a community of Ursuline nuns and the Canons were dispersed, some going to Swanage, others to Bodmin and Stroud Green.

The Ursuline Nuns 1907-1926

Mortain in Normandy was a house founded by the Ursulines of Avranches in 1820. This establishment had a community of 33 nuns when they joined the Roman Union in 1900. In 1904, new laws were passed in France forbidding religious orders to teach, and ordering them to leave the country. Mère St. Ignace Loiseau, at that time the Prioress at Avranches, had already taken precautions against the inevitable expulsion, and with the help of her Jesuit brother, Père Augustin Loiseau, and the Cistercian nuns of Staplehill, she had been able to obtain a house, Allendale, in Wimborne, to which everything not needed in Mortain was transported. Meanwhile, on 15th Oct 1906, the 27 members of the community of Ploërmel in Brittany had been expelled and Mère St. Ignace offered them this house at Wimborne where they stayed until moving to Warminster, Wiltshire in December 1906. Several months later the community at Mortain bought St. Monica's Priory. The house at Spettisbury may have been "*spacieuse et vraiment belle*" with a chapel and a large garden, but many alterations had been made in the house, and it was in such a bad state of repair when the Ursulines first arrived that they slept on the floor sheltering under open umbrellas from the rain falling in through the roof!

During their time at Spettisbury the nuns ran a boarding and day school known as the Ursuline High School, though for its pupils it was generally simply known as "St. Monica's". Children were taken from as young as three up to the age of 18 and were mostly girls, although younger boys were also admitted.

After the end of WWI, both the school and the community gradually diminished, and since the Ursulines' capital was invested in France and the franc toppled, life became very difficult. Since the anti-religious laws in France were now more relaxed, by 1924 the Sisters were contemplating returning home. In 1925-26, three Ursulines, Mère Sainte-Marie (Victorine Amand), Mère Marie-Augustin (Julie Hallé) and Mère Marie de Saint-Jean (Mlle Dorey) went to Mortain as "*institutrices libres*". They came back to Spettisbury with good memories and full of hope for a return to Mortain but an examination of the situation did not allow them to contemplate a restoration of the convent there. This was a bitter disappointment especially for the older nuns who had originally come over from Mortain in 1907. Another religious Congregation had taken over their convent at Mortain (where they still have a school)

so it was decided that the Spetisbury nuns should amalgamate with another small community at Quimperlé and in 1926 the Convent of Mortain was canonically dissolved. In 1926 the buildings of St. Monica's Priory were put on the market and the school closed for the last time. When selling the house, the Ursulines excluded from the sale the small burial ground where they had buried many of their Sisters (at least 14 of the nuns had died at Spetisbury.) When the Ursuline school at St. Monica's Priory closed for the last time in 1926, the local village children who had attended transferred to the Hall and Sloper Village School in Spetisbury.

St. Monica's Demolished

The Ursulines sold St. Monica's Priory (carefully excluding the cemetery) to a speculator from Boscombe named Mr. Walter Rigler for about £2000 and by 14th July 1926 the deeds were in his name. As a result of the auction on June 9th 1927 St. Monica's Priory passed to Thomas Oakley of 39, Shaftesbury Road, Luton, Bedfordshire and by 25th July 1927 the deeds were in his name. Thomas Oakley was described on the deeds as a metal merchant but his company, Thomas Oakley (Luton) Ltd. seems to have been a firm of demolition contractors. It appears that demolition of the main house started immediately. On July 26th 1927, the day after the property passed to Thomas Oakley, the contractors began to take off the roof, no doubt because of the value of the lead. According to Sister Margaret Mary, the roof was in very good condition as the French Nuns had spent a considerable sum on it quite a short time before they left. Eventually, the greater part of the house was demolished (the contractors presumably removing anything of value), leaving only the front wall standing (Appendix 4).

Some of the interior fittings of the house were removed and sold. An auction catalogue from New York in October 1935 mentions *"some fine interior material including a handsome English 18th century elaborately carved pine and marble mantel, and the richly-carved mid-18th century pine panels and fittings from a room at St. Monica's Priory in Spettisbury."*

Between 1920 and 1960 there was a very large movement of architectural and decorative salvages and many complete rooms, staircases, etc. were shipped across the Atlantic. The Caramoor centre for the Music and the Arts in Katonah, New York, once the private home of Walter Tower Rosen (1875-1951) lawyer, banker and musician, now contains in its reception room some Corinthian pilasters from Spetisbury House, removed when it was demolished.

The "Great Accumulator," as he was called, William Randolph Hearst, bought literally hundreds of architectural salvages from Europe for his houses in America, including the Saloon from Spettisbury House, pictured below. It was sold in 1935 when Hearst became bankrupt for \$3,600 and installed at the MCA Corporation, Madison Avenue and 57th Street, New York. Charles Roberson, the architectural salvage company, also offered three other Spettisbury rooms at the same sale.



Saloon from the 1740s at Spettisbury House, Dorset

Another room from Spettisbury House, installed in the apartment of Mr. and Mrs. Samuels in Park Avenue, New York, was intended for sale at Sotheby's in 1981 but the sale was cancelled as Imelda Marcos bought the lot pre-sale!

By the time the demolition contractors had finished their work all that remained of St. Monica's Priory were the Chapel, the Priest's House (now the Village Hall), the School House and the Kitchens (now the houses known as St. Monica's Priory) and what was described by Dorothy Gardiner in 1937 as "*the façade of Sir John Hody's mansion, gaunt and windowless, a mere screen serving no obvious purpose.*" It is not known when this façade was eventually removed. His demolition work done, Thomas Oakley then proceeded to sell what was left of the estate. The Priest's House was sold to Ernest Boughton, the School House & Kitchens were sold to Thomas Rowland, a 90ft strip of land north of the Priest's House including the Chapel was sold to a group of Spettisbury villagers, the Rev. Mr. Drury, Maurice Newton Tory, Hilda Parke and Louis Strange. The remainder of the estate was sold to Cecil A Balcomb.

Appendix 1

Advertisement Aug 1761 taken from a London newspaper:

To be sold by Auction at the Red Lyon in Blandford, on Thursday the 19th day of August Inst., between the hours of twelve and one o'clock.

An Estate at Spetisbury in the County of Dorset, of the Yearly value of about £200, with a Manor annexed. There is an entire new Farm House, & appurtenances on the Premises; a Mansion House elegantly fronted & proper Outhouses; with a large Garden, both ornamental & useful, stored with the best of Fruits of all Sorts, & bounded by the River Stour. The Mansion House is within half a Mile of the Downs, and in as fine a sporting Country as any in England.

NB The Furniture of the House will be sold immediately after the Sale of the Estate.

For further Particulars, enquire of Mr. Humfreys, Attorney at Law in Blandford, Dorset, or of Mr. Hamilton, No. 6 Holborn Row, Lincoln Inn Fields.

Copy Particulars

A Particular of an estate at Spetisbury in the County of Dorset.

A Mansion House, Outhouses & garden containing Two Acres or thereabouts, let with the Furniture at £50 p.ann.

A small Meadow by the Smith Shop containing an Acre & an half and the Slope before the House, let with the House to Mr. Drax.

A Farm with necessary Outhouses & let to Farmer Williams at £148 p.annum.

NB Of the Farm about 24th part in Leasehold & 12th part Copyhold, the rest Freehold.

Note. There is about four years unexpired of the Lease of the said Farm, but in the mean time, the Tenant is obliged to quit a large Field contiguous to the Mansion House, if required.

A Plantation containing ten Acres or thereabouts of Five years growth.

One twelfth part of a fourth of the Manor of Sturminster Marshall, with Privilege of Hunting and Hawking, and an extensive Fishery in the River Stour

Appendix 2

Advertisement from the Salisbury Journal of the 29 Aug 1774:

Spetisbury, Dorset

To be sold, a Capital Mansion House, with large Gardens, Stables, Coach-houses, & other Outhouses thereto adjoining, big enough for a Gentleman that has a large Family & keeps a number of Horses, together with a Farm thereunto belonging, consisting of a Farm-house, with proper Barns, Stables, Outhouses, & several Closes of Arable, Meadow, and Pasture Land thereunto belonging, of about the yearly Value of £200.

The Lands belonging to the Farm are mostly Freehold, but some parts thereof are held by Leases & Copies, determinable on the Deaths of two or three Persons, all situate, lying & being in the Parish of Spetisbury.

For further Particulars apply to Mr. Nicholas Humfrey, Attorney in Blandford Forum, or at the said Capital Mansion house, where a proper Person is appointed to show the Premises.

Appendix 3

Advertisement from the Salisbury Journal of the 3rd Mar 1777

Dorsetshire

To be sold by Auction by Mr. Cross on Wednesday the 19th March 1777, on the Premises (if not disposed of before by private Contract, of which timely Notice will be given).

The estate & Effects belonging to John Newton Esq. at Spetisbury within 3 Miles of Blandford, in the County of Dorset; consisting of an elegant Mansion House forming a Centre and two Wings, fit for a Nobleman's Family, containing on the Ground Floor a large dining Parlour, elegantly furnished in Stucco; two other Parlours neatly fitted up; a Withdrawing Room superbly finished, and hung with crimson Damask; a spacious Hall, Housekeeper's Room, Cellars & etc.

On the next Story are four Dressing Rooms, & six Bed Chambers. On the attic Story are six Bedchambers together with proper Rooms for Servants; the whole commanding a most beautiful prospect of the Country.

Adjoining the House are a fine Range of Outbuildings such as spacious & convenient Kitchens, Larders, Bake-house, Brew-house, Wash-house, Laundry, Servants' Hall, Dairy, Dove-house, Poultry-house, Grainery, and Stabling for near 30 Horses, with Servants' Room over the same.

The Garden around the above Premises is genteely laid out, and consists of about six acres, with Green-house, Hot-house, Summer-house, & every convenience therein. Contiguous thereto runs the River Stour, with an extensive right of Fishery; as also Hunting, Fowling, & etc over the Manor of Sturminster Marshall.

Together with a Farm of about Three hundred & Sixty Acres of Arable, Meadow, & Pasture Land, in the Centre of which is an exceedingly good Farm-house, with Barns, Grainery, Stables, etc., the yearly Value of which Farm is £200.

The Mansion House, Outbuildings, Gardens & Farm will be sold in one lot. Immediately after the Sale of which will follow the Household Furniture which consists of elegant standing Beds, with Damask, Chintz, Cotton, Morine, & other Furniture, & Window Curtains of the same; fine seasoned Goose Feather beds, Mattresses, Blankets, Quilts, & Counterpanes, rich Pier & Dressing Glasses, Mahogany Furniture in Bureaus, Drawers, Book-cases, Dining, Card, Pillar, & Pembroke Tables, Side-board Ditto, Sophas & Chairs, rich Axminster, Turkey & Wilton Carpets; eight day Clocks in Mahogany & Jappanned Cases; together with good Kitchen Furniture, Brewing Utensils, some Wines, etc.

The Premises may be viewed any day by applying at the Mansion House; or by Mr. Robt. Lovell, Spetisbury aforesaid, and the Furniture on the Monday & Tuesday preceeding the Sale.

For further Particulars, or treaty by Private Contract, apply to William Cross, Upholder & Undertaker, in Milsom Street, Bath, or Mr. John Ridout at Blandford.

Catalogues will be delivered at proper places in due time.

Appendix 4: Sale Particulars 1927

The house was described as being 3 miles from the ancient market town of Blandford, 10 from Wimborne Minster and 17 from the favourite seaside resort of Bournemouth *“a historic freehold property situate in the picturesque old-world village of Spettisbury, in the heart of the valley of the River Stour, which skirts the village and bounds the property. The Mansion fronts the Bournemouth to Blandford main road for a considerable distance and is enclosed on three sides by a high red brick wall, affording the most complete privacy. The Main Gateway gives access from the road to a spacious Forecourt with central stone paved path, having grass lawns on either side. The construction is chiefly of red brick, mellowed by age, and slated roof. Partly built about the year 1735 and enlarged in the year 1762 or thereabouts, it forms an unusually fine specimen of GEORGIAN ARCHITECTURE. The central portion is recessed within the North and South wings of the building, the façade being a very choice example of domestic work of the 18th century, with its Corinthian pilasters, stone dressings, dental cornices and stone gables surmounted by vase finials. The Entrance Doorway is of stone with side pilasters supporting an arched overdoor, and admits to the principal part of the residence.”*

The ground floor of the central portion had a *“Panelled Entrance Hall with small partitioned Enquiry Closet”* and an *“Inner Hall 19’6” x 10’10”*, with dental cornice, open fireplace, fitted with ‘The Mail Clad’ portable heating stove, stone mantel and partly wood panelled walls.” Two arches, supported by panelled square pillars gave access to the Staircase Hall *“of L-shape and measuring 12’4” x 9’6” and 14’6” x 9’*, fitted with a 9’3” pine cupboard; shelves and cupboard under staircase and cold water tap with stone sink.” A back doorway led to the gardens. Adjoining was the *“Lofty Dining Hall 30’ x 20’*, fitted with finely carved mantelpiece, having dental, floral and grapevine ornamentations; register grate; carved overdoors; carved cornice 3’4” dado; handsome leaf, rose and dental moulded cornice.” Two cupboards were fitted in two of three recesses and the height of the room was 16’. There was a Guest Chamber *“19’9” x 17’9”*, with dado 3’6” high, having carved cornice moulding; carved door architraves and overdoors; carved wood mantelpiece with floral ornamentations; plaster cast ceiling with angels in relief and moulded cornice.”

The Sacristy with *“large fitted vestment cupboard”* led to the Lofty Chapel which formed the North wing of the building. This was *“erected in 1830, measured 57’ x 24’ with high arched and rib groined ceiling of tasteful and uniform design; mullioned windows of coloured glass.”* There was an iron spiral staircase leading to the Western Gallery and a large portable heating stove. The altar had been removed. Adjoining the Chapel was an anteroom or secondary sacristy with two doors leading to the gardens. A triple arched Belfry with a cross, erected in 1896, surmounted the west gables of the chapel roof.

On the South side of the Entrance Hall were the Morning Room *“19’3” x 17’*, having plaster cast leaf and rose ornamented mullioned ceiling; carved stone Georgian mantel and hob grate”, the Library *“19’6” x 14’3”*, fitted with two cupboards; carved wood mantelpiece and hob grate” and a Sitting Room *“12’4” x 11’*, with fitted cupboards and hob grate.” A passage with a door opening to a Courtyard led to a Bathroom *“with fitted white enamelled bath (hot and cold)”* and a Pantry. At the back of the Entrance Hall were two more Sitting Rooms and a Refectory *“36’6” x 16’ with fitted pulpit.”*

The Kitchen, 21’6” x 16’9”, had a *“stone flagged floor, a 6’6” triple oven range, hot water cistern, dresser and ancient plate and dish warmer.”* The scullery had a *“large stone sink, cold water tap, baking oven and copper.”* There were two larders and a back staircase.

The first floor was reached by the Principal Staircase *“of polished beech with fine handrail and easy tread”* leading to a Main Landing. On the North side were four large rooms, three with *“fine carved wood and marble mantelpieces.”* In the centre was a large central room, 27’ x 17’11”, two small anterooms and another five rooms. On the South side were another 11 rooms, including *“a large partly panelled room 20’2” x 17’3”.”*

From the Main landing a staircase led to the second floor where there were another 12 rooms and a *“WC and closet fitted with shelving and hanging hooks.”*

The South East wing of the house consisted of two rooms *“20’12 x 12’9” and 15’ x 12’9” with dividing double doors”* each fitted with a fireplace, a separate WC, and another three rooms above.

The South wing of the mansion was formed by the Priory House (used by the priests when St. Monica’s was a convent and now the Village Hall). This had two separate entrances from the main road and on the ground floor had three sitting rooms; one 16’9” x 16’1”, the second 17’8” x 14’10” *“with fine carved wood mantel and fireplace and fitted bookshelves”* and the third 22’4” x 20’ 2” *“with fitted mantel and*

fireplace.” There was a separate WC and a kitchen with “*range, lead sink and cold water tap.*” On the first floor were four large bedrooms, 19’6” x 16’9”, 20’ x 12’2” (both with fireplaces), 19’10” x 14’2” “*with carved wood mantel and fireplace*” and 29’10” x 19’9”. There were also three smaller rooms and a separate WC. On the second floor were two attic bedrooms. The Priory House had its own “*pretty flower garden and lawn.*”

The “*commodious brick and tiled*” School House (or Lecture House) which was next to the Kitchen on the East side and faced a spacious courtyard had one large Hall (or Gymnasium) on the ground floor, 23’10” x 15’10” with fireplace, and an ante room which was the Pump House “*with tackle and gear driven by a ‘Petter Junior’ 2½ h.p. engine, with pump, cistern and piping.*” Above was a large Double Room, 47’6” x 16’ with two portable heating stoves and a fireplace. There were also seven bedrooms but most of these were over the kitchen, scullery and larders. Outside was a WC and a lean-to timber and galvanized shed. The School House had its own double gate from the main road leading to the courtyard. The Old World Gardens and Grounds of the property were mature, laid out with paths and with fine ornamental trees (beech, ash and fir), flowering shrubs, flower beds and borders, fruit trees and bushes, lawns and vegetable garden (partly walled) and a “*quaint octagonal thatched summer house with wood seating around.*” There was a paddock, a range of three brick and tiled Piggeries, a Fodder House with Copper, a Wired Fowlrun, a brick and tiled Fowlhouse, a Woodhouse and a Potting Shed. The water supply came from a well and was pumped up to tanks in the upper part of the house. The drainage discharged into cess tanks.

The property was bounded on the East side by the “*delightful winding River Stour*” where “*fishing and boating may be enjoyed.*” The extent of the property was 3 acres, 3 roods and 12 perches.

As a result of the auction on June 9th 1927 St. Monica’s Priory passed to Thomas Oakley of 39, Shaftesbury Road, Luton, Bedfordshire and by 25th July 1927 the deeds were in his name. Thomas Oakley was described on the deeds as a metal merchant but his company, Thomas Oakley (Luton) Ltd. seems to have been a firm of demolition contractors. This company no longer seems to exist but in 1947 very nearly managed to demolish Winslow Hall in Buckinghamshire, a fine Wren building, which it bought for £8000, no doubt recognising the value of the materials used by Wren. Happily, the Wren Society became aware of the threat to the building and succeeded in persuading Buckinghamshire County Council to invoke their powers under the new Town and Country Planning Act. And when in 1954 the Historic Buildings Council was unable to recommend financial aid for the preservation of Lowther Castle in Cumbria and the reluctant decision was therefore taken to sell the house for demolition, it was Thomas Oakley (Luton) Ltd who dismantled it and sold the fittings on the site in three sales in 1957.

The “Great Accumulator,” as he was called, William Randolph Hearst, bought literally hundreds of architectural salvages from Europe for his houses in America, including the Saloon from Spettisbury House. It was sold in 1935 when Hearst became bankrupt for \$3,600 and installed at the MCA Corporation, Madison Avenue and 57th Street, New York. Charles Roberson, the architectural salvage company, also offered three other Spettisbury rooms at the same sale.