

# Shottery the Mother of Stratford

By J. J. BELTON

WHEN the word "Shottery" is mentioned most people think exclusively of Anne Hathaway's Cottage, yet the place has a long and interesting—if perhaps not very eventful—history quite apart from its Shakespearean associations.

As the address of the great Midland metropolis was once said to be "Birmingham, near Henley-in-Arden," so at least one local antiquary has expressed the opinion that Shottery once embraced all Stratford and that the latter was merely the word for "Scotta rith," the earliest known form of spelling (794). Other forms include—"Scotrieth" (1208), "Shoterey" (1272), "Scottrive," "Skotire" (1299), "Shottery" (1501), "Shatterey" (1554).

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The oldest part of Shottery Manor is a rectangular building of stone about 25 yards by 8 yards, and facing west. The lower part of it is of Arden sandstone ashlar and has a chamfered plinth stepped up for some reason at the north end. It is possible that this part dates from the fourteenth Century, and was a tithe barn or like building of the period when the Manor was held by Evesham Abbey, but there are no windows or doorways of this period.

There are (or were) ground and first floor windows of not earlier than 1660, in two equally spaced ranges of ten square headed, rather tall and narrow openings, with lintels and key blocks all fitted with wooden frames having transoms and middle mullions. Some have been blocked, others in the south half have been replaced by two bay windows.

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At the angles are ancient dressings all the way up. The

gabled north end has no piercing but the gable head is of old close-set studding. The south end, remodelled in the eighteenth century, has a dormer window in the west front.

The northern two-thirds of the building has a fine hammer beam roof of four 12-feet bays open to the upper story, probably of the fifteenth century, when the Manor was held by the Harewells. This room was for many years used as a chapel. Tradition has it that the betrothal ceremony of Shakespeare and Anne Hathaway took place there, though there is no direct evidence to support this. The doorway, with its old nail-studded door, now leading into the garden, was formerly the entrance into the Chapel.

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The roof, however, would be more suitable for a Great Hall than a tithe barn and the building was, therefore, clearly residential in the sixteenth century, when the central chimney stack was built and the upper floor inserted. The chimney stack has wide fire places in oak bressummers. Above the southern is a plastered overmantel, with side pilasters and rib work forming three shield-shaped panels: the outer panels enclose pendant branches of Tudor roses; the middle panel contains a shield bearing the arms of Harewell. The chamber with this fire-place, is the entrance hall, and has a panelled plaster ceiling, contemporary with the overmantel. The dining room has chamfered beams and is lined with panelling of, *circa*, 1640.

The house has been enlarged in recent times and the present owners, the Trustees of the late Edgar Flower, have done much to restore the building in keeping with its ancient structure.



Shottery Manor



### SHOTTERY AND ITS MANOR HOUSE

- 794 *AN* estate in Shottery was given to the Monastery of Worcester by Offa, son of Sighere, King of Essex.
- 1086 Shottery included in the Manor of Stratford, when the area of Shottery was just under 7 hides.
- 1182 Frethric de Bishopdon held land here and this land remained with the family as late as 1447.
- 1333 Robert de Stratford (afterwards Bishop of Chichester), the founder of the Gild of the Holy Cross at Stratford, bought or was enfeoffed of the Manor and entailed it upon John de Bishopdon and his wife, Isabel.
- 1354 First mention of Manor of Shottery, but appears to have had a separate existence as early as 1182, when Adam de Scotriva held  $1\frac{1}{2}$  hides by certain services.
- 1402 Manor was purchased in trust for John Harewell. The main branch of the family lived at Wootton Wawen, of which they were lords. In this year (1402), the Bishop of Worcester granted John Harewell a licence for a priest to celebrate in the oratory of his manor house in Shottery. The manor remained in the family until at least 1746.
- 1786 The Marquis of Hertford purchased two freehold estates in Shottery, with the tithes, for £11,000. He was the chief landholder at the enclosure of 1786. By this time the manor had been extinguished.
- 1919 The Manor House was purchased by Mr. A. D. Flower on behalf of the Trustees of the late Edgar Flower.
- 1938 It became the residence of Lt.-Col. Fordham Flower.

**Additional notes collected from customers, in the early 1980s while working at Shottery Stores & Post Office.**

In the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century (1564?) the plague claimed most of the population of Shottery. They were buried in a field called "The Close" near the pond that existed near the school in the 1980s. Flowers owned the land, and when he died the land was assumed to have been left to the village people and was used as the cricket field. There used to be a large oak tree near the old cricket field. The pavilion stood directly across from where the Hansard's bungalow is now. When it was sold for building a curse was put on the land by an unknown local lady, because it was burial land. There was reputed to be a natural spring in the pond, but the pond was drained and "landscaped" when the bungalows were built in the 1960s. A local group managed, at the time, to limit the number of houses built to 20.

The village green opposite Shottery Stores & Post Office was traditionally the site of the village bonfire. The annual bonfire was later moved to waste ground at the back of Hathaway Lane, near the plant nurseries.

There was once a row of weaver's cottages in front of the Bell pub, and a backstreet led to the pub. The name of the house opposite on the corner of Hathaway Lane is "The Web" and is allegedly so because it supplied thread and wool to the weavers. There was also a Blacksmith where the chapel is now. After of before this "The Web" was "Shottery Temperance Hotel". This used to take in "funny" children. There are three wells under the present car park of "The Bell" pub. Bob Pope used to run "The Bell" pub in a very surly manner.

The place that is now a crossroads, where Shottery Road crosses a stream. Is reputed to be (on the right-hand side) a Saxon burial ground. The whole of Shottery Road was once known as Berrin' Row because it was where the poor were buried.

Hathaway Lane was once known as Shinner's Lane. There was a barn at the corner of Tavern Lane. The Cottages in Church Lane were built in 1770.

The Orchard View houses were built in 1889, and were bought by the Brewery for £600. They are so named because there used to be an orchard behind them. There were once cottages where Mrs Mc's and the Police House now stands. Before Mrs Manseir came to the Telfers it was a bakery.

Someone once discovered a horde of Roman clay pipes in Shottery.

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