

## **HISTORY OF STUDLEY**

Studley is a parish in Stratford on Avon District and one of the largest villages in Warwickshire with a population of around 6,500. It lies to the far west of the county just beyond the outskirts of Redditch.

The manor of Studley was recorded in the Domesday Book, mostly as part of the lands of William son of Courbucion who was appointed Sheriff of Warwick soon after in 1086.

### **Studley Priory**

Peter de Studley (Corbizum) founded his priory at Studley on the western bank of the River Arrow in about 1150. Home to the brotherhood of Augustinian friars, it survived until the Dissolution of the Monasteries by Henry V in 1538 when it was sold to Sir Edmund Knightly. All that remains of the priory today are fragments of a 14<sup>th</sup> Century window into which is set a chimney bearing the date 1539 in the gable of the farmhouse which was built within the ruined hall. A finely carved floriated stone coffin lid commemorating a 13<sup>th</sup> Century prior was discovered on the site in the 1930's and this now rests in the chancel of the Parish Church.

### **Studley Castles**

The earlier of the castles lays on a mound just north of the Parish Church. Mediaeval in origin it is believed to have been built in the late 11<sup>th</sup> century by William Courbucion (cf Corbizum), though nothing now remains other than a length of ditch.

Now standing on the site is an early 16<sup>th</sup> century timber framed building which remains in private hands and referred to as the Old Castle Manor.

Studley's 'new' castle stands on a rise ¼ mile north of its old one. The castle was built in 1834 by the wealthy baronet Francis Lyttleton Holyoake Goodricke. It possesses a central round, a stone keep in the Norman style, the remainder is gothic in appearance.

From 1901 it housed Studley Agricultural College for Women, an institution founded by Lady Warwick for daughters of the gentry. It was then part of the Rover Group when the castle became a management development college. Latterly it has become a conference centre of some repute famed for its excellent cuisine. It is now a hotel part of the Best Western group.

### **Needle Industry**

The growth of Studley to its present size was based on the development of the needle industry which flourished in the area from the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. The earliest reference is to a William Lea in 1695. From a cottage industry the trade grew rapidly. During the 19<sup>th</sup> Century steam powered mills were built to produce needles, fishing hooks and fishing tackle which contributed much to the prosperity of the village during the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. Hall, Morrall, Milward were all names to be reckoned with in the industry. Of Michael Morralls needle works all that remains today in the building known as the Griffin Inn. William Halls factory between Marble Alley and the Alcester Road was demolished in 1980 and has been replaced by a supermarket. Its external

steel structure and primary colours was disliked by many people, this was again replaced in 2003 by another supermarket of a more pleasing appearance.

Today there is but a vestige of the trade in Studley but its heritage survives.

### **Studley Today**

The A435 runs through the heart of the village. Traffic problems have long been acknowledged and plans for a bypass were drawn up. However the scheme was no longer identified both with the national and county's capital programme for implementation, therefore plans for a bypass were withdrawn. Residents are still bitterly disappointed by the decision to cancel the bypass scheme and the traffic still thunders through the village.

Studley has a reasonable range of retail services for its size including two supermarkets, post office and butchers. It has primary and secondary schools, churches of different denominations, a well equipped village hall, doctors, vets and dentists. It was a huge blow when we heard the fire station is to close in 2013 after a hard fought campaign to keep the service. The library is also in jeopardy, but hopefully a home may be found in the Village Hall to keep the service going. It also has several active sports clubs and facilities together with a skate park.

There are a number of industrial estates in and around the boundaries of Studley which continues to provide employment opportunities.

In the current economic climate a number of retail outlets have closed and there is a concern that the village centre is deteriorating but it is hoped in future years new businesses will continue to be attracted to Studley and economic growth will increase which in turn will benefit each and everyone.