

# The Waterloo Room at The Elms

*'The gem of Bedhampton'*



## The Legend of The Waterloo Room

A brief history of The Elms and the people who lived there.

### The Story

Local legend tells that The Waterloo Room was built by Sir Theophilus Lee after he invited his relative, the Duke of Wellington to dine at The Elms. The Duke accepted, but as The Elms did not have a room large enough to host a formal dinner, Sir Theophilus Lee commissioned the building of a functions room which he named The Waterloo Room for this historic visit.

### The Elms and The Waterloo Room

The Elms began life as a simple farmhouse built in the 17th century. The original farmhouse shape can be best seen by viewing the house from the rear lawn. In 1632 the property was held by Matthew Stigant, a tenant of the Lord of the Manor and in 1792 the land and property called Stiggins was inherited by a John Pollington (Stiggins is most probably a name derived from the Stigant family name).

Ten years later Stiggins was sold to Portsmouth wine merchant, William Turner. Mr Turner developed the land and extended the property. By the time he offered the house for sale in 1821 there was a brew house, a wash house with a mangle room, a granary, a barn, a four stall stable, open cow ranges and a piggery, as well as coal, wood and pigeon houses. The land had a kitchen garden, a melon ground planted with fruit trees and a greenhouse.

The details of sale includes .....“a charming vista of full grown elms, which afford a pleasing walk with the pleasure grounds to shade a retirement, surrounded by nearly twenty acres of good meadow land.” The estate also included a couple of labourers’ cottages and a second substantial residence.



*Front elevation of The Elms at Bedhampton*

### **Sir John Theophilus Lee (1787 - 1843)**

For a while the house was rented until it was purchased by Sir John Theophilus Lee in 1828.

John Theophilus Lee had joined the British Navy at the tender age of nine. At aged ten he was with the frigate HMS Eurydice and was present at the Battle of Cape St.Vincent (1797). Only one year later, he found himself with the crew of HMS Swiftsure, at the Battle of the Nile. He eventually attained the rank of Lieutenant, but later resigned from the navy taking up an important civilian post with the Admiralty as Head of Personnel.

Sir John Theophilus Lee was the cousin of Charles Culling Smith MP, the husband of Lady Anne Wellesley, the Duke of Wellington’s sister.

Sadly, no proof of the dinner visit to The Elms has ever been found. However, Sir John Theophilus Lee did record that The Duke made him a Hampshire Magistrate, and one His Grace’s Deputy Lieutenants of Hampshire.

The Waterloo Room was built by Sir John Theophilus Lee simply to entertain and The Waterloo Room name choice would have been both fashionable and popular at that time.

Sir John loved the house which by this time was named The Elms. In his memoirs published in 1836 he concludes with .....

*‘He now lives happy in the enjoyment of every blessing with his dear - his beloved family at the Elms... where he hopes to spend the remainder of his days in peace and good-will with all the world.’*

Sir John Theophilus Lee did not see out his days at The Elms as by 1841 he had moved to a new home, Lauristons (later called Lauriston Hall), at Torquay and The Elms estate changed hands once again, being bought by James Openshaw Kay.

## **James Openshaw Kay (1807 - 1857) and Amelia Kay (1811- 1899)**

James Openshaw Kay was part of an important cotton industry family from Lancashire. James Kay moved to The Elms with his wife Amelia and their three children: James, Henry and Alfred.

Once at The Elms the family continued to grow with the births of Albert, Thomas, Charles, Amelia and Alice. The Kays employed a staff of six servants, a footman, coachman, nurse, cook, housemaid and an under-nurse. Their son, Albert, was born in the year that they moved to The Elms and once again the 'Elms effect' prompted the Kays to give their son the middle name 'Elms'. He joined the British Navy and rose to the rank of Commander Albert Elms Kay.

James died at The Elms in 1857, but Amelia and her sons continued to live there. By the 1891 census the large staff had been pared down to a parlour maid and a cook and Amelia was still living there with two of her sons; Henry a merchant and Alfred, Lieutenant Colonel, retired. Amelia passed away in 1899 (aged 88) and The Elms was sold to Frederick Richard Ballard.

## **Frederick Richard Ballard (1868 - 1930)**

Frederick Ballard was a wealthy draper from Godalming, and in the 1911 Census he was aged thirty-two and a widower. He bought The Elms in 1899, but was only a resident for a short time. In the 'details of sale' The Elms was described by the estate agent as 'A quaint old residence in the castellated style'. The Elms was next bought by Lionel Fawkes.

## **Colonel Lionel Grimston Fawkes (1849 - 1931)**

### **and Lady Constance Fawkes (1855 - 1946)**

Lady Constance Fawkes was the daughter of the 6th Marquis of Ailsa. She married Colonel Lionel Fawkes, who had been the Senior Gunner based in Portsmouth, where they had lived in Clarence Barracks (now Portsmouth City Museum). They moved into The Elms c.1905 with their two daughters Lois and Monica. Colonel Fawkes was related to the infamous Guy Fawkes; a connection he spent most of his life playing down.

His family had been long-time and Lady Constance Fawkes (1855 - 1946) supporters of the arts which they collected to adorn the walls of the imposing family pile of Farnley Hall in North Yorkshire. His grandfather had been a good friend and patron of J.M.W. Turner.

Colonel Fawkes was a very accomplished artist and illustrator. His water-colours are held in collections around the world. Lady Constance would regularly take long afternoon drives with her two daughters in their pony cart and was often seen taking her pet goat with her on evening walks. On one occasion she stopped at the gate to speak to a friend and let the animal into the garden; the goat walked into the hall through an open door and feasted on two envelopes containing high value bank bonds that were waiting to be posted.

Their stay at The Elms was tinged with sadness as their married daughter, Lois died in 1919 leaving a one year old son Lawrence. Tragedy struck the Fawkes family again in 1921, when their other daughter, Monica, also died. This was all too much for the Colonel and Lady Constance and in 1924 they emigrated to Mayne Island, British Columbia with their son-in-law and grandson.

Stirling James Stent of the Havant glove making firm acquired The Elms, but his real interest was in the wealth of land that formed the estate. He increased the plot of land on which he had built his own house on the corner of Maple Wood and left The Elms with the small garden that you see

today. He also built the small bungalow next door for his chauffer. This bungalow now forms the front end of The Lodge.

### **Betweenways School (1946 - 1960s)**

Over the next few years The Elms changed hands several times until it was sold in 1936 to Beryl Byerley, an accountant and a member of an important Portsmouth business family. Beryl lived in The Elms until 1946 when she sold the house to her sister Marjorie who opened it as a Nursery School and Kindergarten. She named the school Betweenways - the name she had taken from her previous house in Emsworth Road, Havant. Marjorie died in 1952 when the ownership of the house reverted back to her sister Beryl and the school continued under the headship of Phylis M. Warrington.

### **The Manor Trust, Bedhampton**

The school finally closed in the early 1960s and the house was converted into flats. In the late 1960s the house and land was offered for redevelopment but following a local outcry, The Manor Trust; who by that time already owned and managed The Manor House, Old Bedhampton; stepped in and bought The Elms in 1970 as retirement flats; helping to save The Elms with its distinctive character and unique history for future generations to enjoy.

The Manor Trust owns The Elms and the Waterloo Room to this day. The Elms is a private residential home, but visits to the Waterloo Room and The Bedhampton Historical Collection can be arranged by contacting:- The Administrator, The Trust Office, The Elms, 2 Lower Road, Bedhampton, Havant, PO9 3LH Tel: 023 9245 4444 Email: [administrator@manortrust.org.uk](mailto:administrator@manortrust.org.uk) [www.manortrust.org.uk](http://www.manortrust.org.uk)

### **The Bedhampton Historical Collection (BHC)**

This is a collection of photographs, maps, books and other ephemera related to the history of Bedhampton and the surrounding area. The collection, born from the Cynthia Hoy Bequest, is managed and operated by volunteers who meet at The Elms every Wednesday morning. For access to the collection, please contact the administrator (above).

Ω

Disclaimer:

Information in this document is believed by the BHC to be correct at the time of printing, but research into the history of The Elms, The Waterloo Room and the people associated with it, is ongoing.