



The Hollies – Bathley

The Hollies is a country house tucked away in rural Nottinghamshire, believed to date from the 17th century, although it has seen many changes over the last 400 years. The Hollies has been a farm house for much of its life, with just a few local families calling it home, most prominently, gentleman farmers of the Capps family. Today, The Hollies is Grade II listed and retains many historic features, including timbers that date from the 13th century.

The early history of the house

The early history of the The Hollies is a little uncertain, with architectural clues revealing that the house could, in fact, have been built as early as the 16th century. The house was also not named (or numbered) until the 20th century, so early records are difficult to identify clearly. However, it is believed the house was originally built for Roger Srymshaw (also spelt Scrimshaw), who owned large parts of Bathley during the 17th century. In fact, the Scrimshaw family were prominent landowners in Bathley until the 19th century.

18th century ownership

The enclosure map in 1773 shows the first precise details of land ownership in Bathley and the land and today's house, The Hollies, was owned by Mr. Andrew Capps, also from a prominent family in the area. From early documents, detailing land transfers in Bathley, it appears that the land was purchased by an ancestor of Andrew Capps, another Andrew Capps, in the early 18th century. This was then passed through members of the Capps family until, in the 1770s, we find Andrew Capps with the house and extensive farming land.

The Capps family and The Hollies

From the late 18th into the early 19th century, it appears that The Hollies remained in the hands of the Capps family. Very little is known about the Capps family, but that they were landowners and residents of Bathley from the early 1700s. A will of Andrew Capps gives details of land and property that passed to his two sons, John and Thomas Capps in 1739. Later records reveal further members of the family, including another Thomas Capps, who left his estate and property to his son, John Capps in the early 1800s. The 1841 census and the 1844 Nottinghamshire directory then show the property occupied by this same John Capps and his family.

John and Mary Capps

The 1841 census shows John Capps, aged 70, in the house with his wife Mary, aged 30 and their eight month old son, Andrew. John Capps passed away in 1844, when the estate fell to his widow and infant son. The 1851 census shows that Mary had moved back in with her father, Charles Simpson in Eakring, along with Andrew and two further children, Eleanor and John. The records are not clear for the village of Bathley, but it appears Mary had let the farmhouse and land to a tenant farmer.

Andrew Capps – landowner and farmer

The 1871 census shows that Mary Capps, now aged 63, receiving an annuity had moved back into The Hollies with her son, 30 year old Andrew Capps. Also in the house was two year old Katie Stephens, Mary's granddaughter. The 1869 Nottinghamshire directory lists both Mr Andrew Capps and his mother, Mrs Mary Capps as 'Gentry'. The 1881 census also shows that Andrew's niece Katie was still in the house now aged 12 and a 'scholar'.

Changes at The Hollies

By the turn of the 20th century, life at The Hollies began to change, with Andrew Capps leasing the farm and house to tenant farmers. At the time of the 1901 census, the house was the home of farmer, Tom Andrew, his wife Mary and their two children, Mary and Bartram. By the time of the Inland Revenue land valuation in 1910 and the 1911 census, the Hollies had become the home of farmer, Alfred Shrive.

The Hollies during the early 20th century

The 1910 valuation shows that by this time, the ownership had passed to a Mr. George Gordon of Watling Street in London. The annual rent was £60 p.a. and Alfred Shrive had been a tenant since around 1907. The Hollies was described as 'old fashioned house in fair repair' and had three living rooms, two kitchens, store room, dairy and five bedrooms. The 1911 census shows that Alfred Shrive was 64 years old, living in the house with his wife, Fanny, aged 62. Alfred and Fanny had had nine children, with three of them, Daisy, Nellie and Oscar still living at home. Daisy, single and aged 26 was working as a teacher in the local school. The family also employed Horace Borshall, a waggoner working on the farm.



Hollies Farm – 1930s

Both the ownership and occupation of The Hollies changed during the post World War I period, but it appears that by the early 1930s, the house and farm were occupied by George Blore. It was only during this period that the house was first referred to as 'Hollies farm'. A tax assessment was completed in 1932 and shows the house and land was occupied by George Blore and owned by a Mrs Foster of Nottingham. The farm was described as 'very dilapidated [with] several rooms not fit to use, no repairs done and [the] place going to ruin'.

Post war Hollies farm

George Blore and his wife Annie remained at The Hollies throughout the war years, with the 1941 farm survey showing they were farming wheat, oats and potatoes, along with fowls and geese. The electoral register shows the Blore family remained at the Hollies until the early 1960s, when the farm became the home of the Walker family.

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