

Forest House



Forest house was built between the years 1815 - 1817 the owner at the time being a Henry Lord Esq; he died on the 17th June 1819 aged 48 years leaving a widow Sarah who died in May 1833. The house cost £17,000 to build a great deal of money at the time.

The house was actually built by a Mr John Foster of Slack, Near Halifax who later married Henrys daughter Elizabeth in 1824 sadly she died at the age of 24 and was buried with her parents in St Johns churchyard Bacup in 1827. At the time of its build several persons contracted for it one of these being Thomas Atkinson and his elder brother Matthew. The brothers it seems spent quite a lot of time at the New Inn on Rochdale Road, a regular meeting place for travellers of the whole area.

The earliest mention of Forest House is in Barnes directory of 1824, which describes it as one of the seats of gentry and nobility of Lancashire. By 1845 the house was occupied by a calico and silk printer by the name of Frederick Moore. It would appear from census returns and other articles that Forest House was split into separate residences. One resident of the house was Joshua Lord and his wife Ann the daughter of James Smith, owner of Tong Mill who lived at Bankside Hall.

Joshua was born at Old Meadows in 1807 at a young age he was apprenticed to a grocer in Burnley named Mr Howorth. After marrying Ann he returned to Bacup and became a member of the firm of James Smith and Sons. In 1871 when Richard Smith retired Joshua took over the business, taking on his three sons as partners, James Smith Lord, William

Henry Lord, and Richard Lord, Joshua died at the house on 1st June 1876, followed four years later by his eldest son James .

Another resident of the house was Dr William Stewart who was living there with his wife and family in 1848. Eleven years later a John Roberts's builder and owner of New Hey Mill is living there followed over the years by several other residents. By 1874 the house had come into the ownership of Miss Emily Sarah Holt of Stubbylee a wealthy woman in her own right.

The house became home to many Bacup doctors such as Dr Samuel Tongue Brooks and his family and over the years it continued to house various families until 1948, when it was offered for sale to the Bacup and Rawtenstall Education Committee. Eventually being converted into flats the house became Bobbins Bistrottheque but following a fire the house had fallen into decay by 1977 when the owner was declared bankrupt.

Several years of argument and disputes followed in which time the house continued to decay. But in 1985 work began turning the house into a nursing home and by 1991 the work had been completed and today the house is known as the Laurels Nursing Home.

