

EVICTED FROM SOUTHWICK HOUSE



In the 1930s, the Colonel and some close family lived at Southwick House. They were looked after by a modest retinue of servants which took in a coachman, chauffeur, a head gardener and his team, a head gamekeeper and his lads, a head housemaid and her help, a housekeeper, two butlers, a stable boy and an odd job man. These were in addition to the Estate staff, comprising an agent, bailiff, clerk, foreman and foresters, and the Vicar.

Originally renting from his nephew, Arthur Donald Claude Thistlethwayte, Colonel Evelyn purchased the whole estate from him in about 1931 when there had been a threat of it being sold off.

By September 1941, due to the continued bombing of Portsmouth Dockyard, the Royal Navigation School was moved, lock stock and barrel, to Southwick House!

The poor Colonel was simply staggered! He was being unceremoniously bundled out of the family home by the Navy!

Not that he gave in easily. Prior to this eviction, the Colonel and his retinue of servants lurked around the perimeter of the Mansion and its cellars. The naval personnel lived in a state of uneasy truce with the Squire and his employees.

Inevitably, after the Mansion and Park were officially requisitioned, in 1942, they were forcibly evicted!

THE INHERITANCE CHANGES HANDS



Sadly, on 16th November 1943, Lt. Col. Evelyn Thistlethwayte passed away.

Described by Graham O'Connell in his book (Southwick, the D-Day Village that went to War) as an “anachronistic but splendidly courageous old gentleman”, the Colonel was 82 years of age and unmarried. The inheritance of the Estate passed to his sister Katherine's son, Frank Hugh Pakenham Borthwick.

The forcible requisitioning of Southwick House and the Park may well have hastened the death of the gallant Colonel.

Strange to relate, the eventual compulsory purchase and the derisory price paid for the same property in 1950, quite possibly contributed to the death of Frank, the Colonel's successor.