

# The Townhouse

**Did you know** The Townhouse was the first building at Avoncroft Museum and comes from right on our doorstep in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire?

This magnificent mid-15<sup>th</sup> Century Townhouse has lots to tell us about its previous inhabitants and the history of life in the Midlands.

## Where did this building come from?

The Bromsgrove House, which we refer to as The Townhouse, was originally situated on the corner of Station Street (previously Ednall Lane) and Worcester Street in Bromsgrove. Worcester Street was the main high street of Bromsgrove. It was built in a prominent position facing St. John's parish church.

Permission to demolish the house was given in 1962 and the house was dismantled and stored until it was reconstructed at Avoncroft in 1965. The reconstruction took the skilled craftsmen 2 years to complete, with the Townhouse finally being opened to the public in 1967.

The building is a timber frame construction. The frame is made from oak and then the sections in between filled with wattle and daub.



A building that has stood for over 500 years, will have undergone many additions, and housed many different occupants who would have changed the building to meet their needs and the fashions at the time.

Changes have included the wattle and daub sections being replaced with brick, the windows enlarged for a shop and at one point the building was converted into 3 cottages.

## What was this building used for and who lived in it?

Some of the earliest records indicate the Townhouse was home to cloth dyers and perhaps cloth producers. In the late eighteenth century a needle maker lived in the house. In the nineteenth century grocers lived in the house as a home but ran their business from another premises.

**Did you know?** Both needle making and cloth production were very important in Worcestershire's industrial history.

In the early twentieth century the building was divided into 3 cottages there were lots of small business run from the properties with people living in them too. Records show, florists, seedsmen, grocers and a draper all lived in the cottages at different points.

The Townhouse provides a great way for us to experience how the Tudors lived and how a traditional property that started life over 500 years ago, has evolved through time.

Living inside a timber frame house 500 or more years ago with a fire and bedrooms must have been more comfortable than some of the alternatives, but having an open fire with a covered hole in the roof must have had its impact of the occupier's health.

The Town House's rescued timbers arriving at the museum before two years of restoration work.

