

### The Little Parlour

A smaller and cosier private family room.

### The Newel Stairs

The stairs at Blakesley Hall spiral around a centre post (the newel post).

### The Painted Chamber

At the top of the stairs on the left, this was Richard Smalbroke's bedchamber. The walls were painted by craftsmen who would have used a pattern book to copy a design chosen by Richard. He and his wife, Elizabeth, have their initials displayed in a painted shield.

### The Long Gallery

This was a useful space for indoor recreation and leisure pursuits. It also gave easy access to bedchambers.

### The Second Chamber

A family bedchamber which also had expensive wall paintings.

### The Children's Chamber

Blakesley Hall was a family home. Several children may have shared this bedchamber. The wall covering is a painted cloth, a cheaper option than wall painting!

### The Passage and Lavatory Chute

The lavatory chute was constructed at the end of a narrow corridor between Richard's and the second bedchamber on the back wall of the original house. A trapdoor now covers the opening of the brick shaft which descends to below ground level into a sump. It had to be cleared out from time to time!

### The Kitchen

A later extension to the original house, and built in brick. The Tudor kitchen was probably on the same site but not linked to the house, as it would have been built of wood and therefore a fire hazard.

### The Service Rooms

A **buttery** for making and storing drinks (ale was kept in large barrels called butts which is where the name originates); a **boulting house**, for flour preparation and bread making and storage (boulting is another word for sifting); and a **still house** where medicines, perfumes, soaps, etc would be prepared by the mistress of the house. The **still** was the pot used for distilling and was placed on top of a small brick oven.

### The Attics

Above the first floor, the two long attics were used as servants' sleeping quarters and for food storage.



# AN INTRODUCTION TO Blakesley Hall

**R**ICHARD SMALBROKE ordered the building of Blakesley Hall during the last quarter of the sixteenth century. He and his younger brother, Thomas, were members of an increasingly wealthy group of Birmingham businessmen, including the Colmores and the Shiltons, who were influential in the governing of the town. Having successfully developed their business from their original trade of ironmongery to dealing in luxury goods—spices and fine cloths—Richard, as the elder son, wanted to build a house appropriate to his wealth and status. He chose to have it built on land already owned by the Smalbroke family in the Worcestershire village of Yardley. The new Hall was completed in 1590, and Richard moved in with his family and adopted the lifestyle of a country gentleman.



# Inside Blakesley Hall

**T**HE HALL is a three-storey, timber-framed building, its two wings forming an 'L' shape. On the ground floor the main 'wing' contained the hall, cross passage and service rooms. The little parlour and the great parlour formed the 'cross wing'. Upstairs were the bedchambers, long gallery and store rooms.

Blakesley Hall  
Ground Floor Plan



## ROOM TRAIL

### The Cross Passage

The front door opens into a passageway between the great hall and the service rooms.

### The Great Hall

The focal point of many Tudor houses and usually the largest room. Family and servants could meet there for morning prayers and eat their meals together at a long table. Visitors were received there and any business matters dealt with.

### The Great Parlour

A room leading off from the great hall where the family could sit or eat, privately, or with guests.

Blakesley Hall  
First Floor Plan

