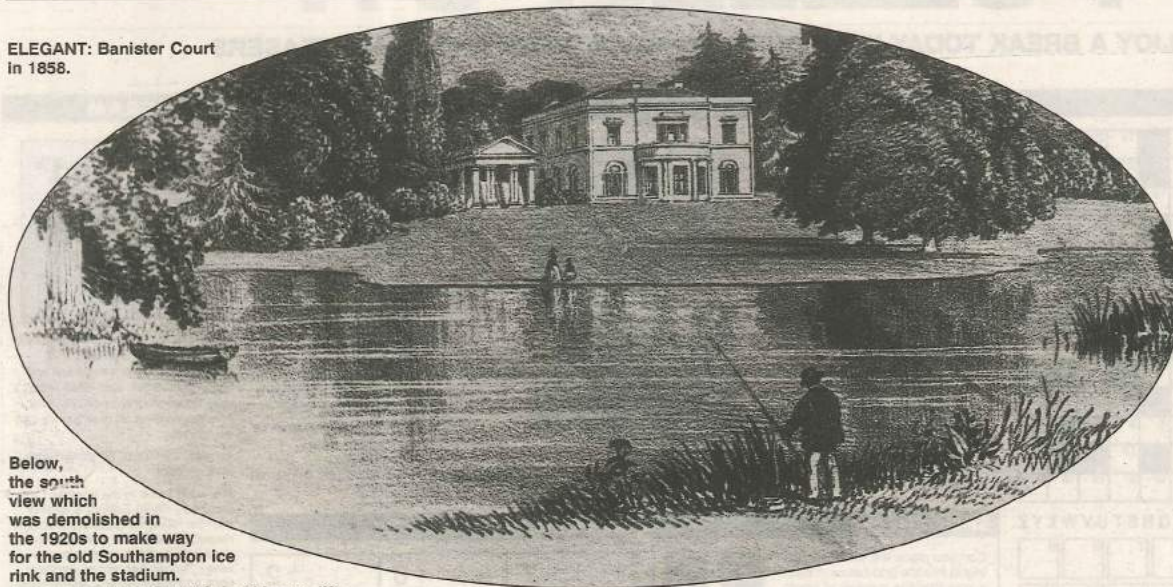


HAMPSHIRE HERITAGE



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ELEGANT: Banister Court in 1858.



Below, the south view which was demolished in the 1920s to make way for the old Southampton ice rink and the stadium.

Bottom: Banister Court School began life being used to educate sons of officers serving on P&O ships in Southampton.



Holding on to the Banister of city's history

IT is a Southampton name that has changed many times over the years but can trace its roots back over the centuries and to one of the oldest families to live locally.

As the decades came and went and so the spelling of the name changed from Banisters to Banstres, Banaster,

Bannister until finally to the style known today when it reverted to Banister.

A total of three modern day streets, Banister Road, Banister Mews and Banister Gardens, together with the area, Banister Park, are reminders of this part of Southampton's history.

It was as long ago as the 13th century that a family called Banisters moved from Tidworth to Southampton and owned a property listed as Banastres Court with extensive grounds which in those days was considered "out in the country" far from the town walls.

For many years the same family lived in the house until the end of the 18th century when it was sold to William Fitzhugh, the MP, who rebuilt the house and made it a far more elegant building. The name Fitzhugh was to be given to the area in and around Bedford Place.

Another owner, Sir Edward Westrow Hulse, took over in 1858 but he lived there just two years before selling it to Arthur Anderson, the founder and owner of the P&O Line, which had made Southampton its headquarters for carrying the Royal Mail to the East.

He had already established a school in 1862 for the sons of employees of the shipping line and so he used Banister Court to educate to educate boys of the officers of his ships.

A history book of the time said: "It was a beautiful Georgian house with the graceful proportions of so many buildings of that period; the south side overlooking lawns being particularly

delightful. The lofty drawing-room, with its wide curving bow windows, and spacious entrance hall, with its frieze of Roman figures, gave it great distinction.

"Set in grounds of some 12 acres, part of the gardens backed on to the County Cricket Ground, which was opened in 1885."

It is known that Banister Court had huge cellars that extended under the whole of the front of the building and rumours abounded that at one time there was a tunnel that ran all the way from the house out to Netley Abbey but this is thought to be just another local legend similar to many other stories of subterranean passages.

Finally Banister Court School came to the end of its life in 1920s when well known local sporting promoter and businessman, Charlie Knott, bought the house and grounds, levelled the property, filled in the gardens' two ponds and developed the site as the old ice rink and stadium which staged greyhound racing together with speedway and was the venue for many other large events.

Charlie Knott was a keen supporter of charitable causes and when Princess Margaret came to Southampton to receive contributions to the rebuilding fund of Southampton's YWCA the stadium was used for the ceremony.

Today the area is used for housing but for the name of Banister that has helped shape Southampton's history for more than 600 years lives on.

Looking back through time

The stories that hit the headlines from the archives of the Daily Echo.

100 YEARS AGO

On the Isle of Wight today the coroner has been summoned to view the body of a man found drowned of the poots with a rope around his waist tying him to an iron stay. The body had been there several days. The man has been identified as John Meader, a fish salesman from America. This style of murder has been used frequently in Chicago in the last few months.

75 YEARS AGO

A new flag given to King Edward VI School, Southampton, was unfurled for the first time on the school playing field by the chairman of the governors, Alderman S G Kimber before the start of the annual cricket match between the students and the staff. As the flag broke, three cheers were given by the boys of the school.

50 YEARS AGO

A ten-ton articulated lorry overturned in the driveway to the White Hart Inn, Stockbridge. The cab of the vehicle was extensively damaged and workmen from a nearby garage, along with passers-by rushed to rescue the driver - who fortunately walked away from the incident unharmed.

25 YEARS AGO

A Southampton couple woke up to find an articulated lorry had ploughed through their front garden and embedded itself in the porch of their house in Winchester Road.

Eva and George Stanton were woken by a loud crash just after 5am. The lorry, carrying empty gas bottles, damaged one side of the porch, a corner of a bay window and smashed a window.

We are always keen to hear your memories and see your old photographs. Please send your items and letters to either Andy Bissell or Keith Hamilton, Hampshire Heritage, Southern Daily Echo, Newspaper House, Test Lane, Redbridge, Southampton, SO15 9JX. Telephone 023 8042 4492 or e-mail andy.bissell@soton-echo.co.uk or keith.hamilton@soton-echo.co.uk