



The Manor House, Horncastle

For thirty years, the Manor House in Horncastle was the well-loved home of Mr and Mrs Douglas Mitchell.

Words: Sarah Winstanley

Throughout their retirement and until Mrs Mitchell's death six years ago and Mr Mitchell's last November, they filled the house with many happy memories of love, laughter, family and friendship.

Now another family will have the opportunity to live there as the Grade II listed Georgian residence has been put on the market.



Mr and Mrs Mitchell's daughter Ellen Richardson, a psychologist from East Keal, near Spilsby, said: "My parents fell in love with the house from the moment they saw it. In fact my father called it his

'dream house'.

"It is a wonderful old place and full of happy memories for all the grandchildren who spent many summers there. There was always a drawer for each grandchild with

special things for the holidays and all the heights of the children are still marked on the wall in the hallway.

“My father was half-Swedish and his mother spoke of the big farming parties, baking bread and catching crayfish in her homeland. Dad grew up in Scotland and always longed to reproduce that for his own children and grandchildren.

“Now we hope a really vibrant family with young children will buy the house and fill it with noise and laughter again.”

Mr Mitchell had just retired as Director of Establishments at the Greater London Council when he and his wife decided to move to the country. At the time Mrs Mitchell’s sister Elizabeth Paterson worked as a health visitor in Horncastle and she excitedly informed them that the property had come onto the market.

The couple immediately fell in love with the house’s charming original features and despite the fact that it needed a lot of work,

they bought it and started making it their home.

Mrs Richardson recalled: “Mum loved the house and Dad was a great doer. My sister got married shortly after they moved in and while they were at her wedding, they had the house rewired and returned to find all the floorboards up!

“There was so much to do to make the house a home and they did it with enormous commitment.”

When Mr Mitchell asked local man Nip Tempest to lay some paving slabs, it was the start of a friendship which would endure over the years. Mr Tempest returned every week to work in the garden and twelve years ago, his wife Barbara became the Mitchell’s cleaner.

Mrs Richardson added: “Dad loved the garden and Nip still looks after it now. We will soon be putting the onions and seed potatoes in, the bedding plants are grown from seed and the geraniums will come out of the long barn at the right moment.

“It is all there in exactly the same pattern and rhythm as it has always been, just like a heart beat.”

Everyone involved in the house is extremely dedicated to its upkeep and fond memories of Mr and Mrs Mitchell keep them going. Mrs Tempest said: “I was the cleaner although Mr and Mrs Mitchell never described me as such – they always introduced me as their friend.

“When Mr Mitchell died I found a little card with a bottle of wine and a glass pictured on it, and inside I wrote ‘A toast to Mr Mitchell, a gentleman’ because that’s what he was. He was a gentleman and she was a lady in every sense of the word apart from title.”

Mr Mitchell and Mrs Tempest had a shared love of history and enjoyed discussing the history of the house. The house was worthy of a mention in Pesvner’s Buildings of England and an English Heritage Blue Plaque hangs on the wall by the gate, re-affirming the building’s place as important to the town’s past.



FRONT LAWN



DRAWING ROOM



MASTER BEDROOM



GUEST ROOM

The plaque states that the house was owned by the Bishops of Carlisle, Lords of the Manor and Lay Rectors from 1229 to 1856 and that it was partly rebuilt after fire damage in 1750.

The house was originally built of stone before it was damaged by fire and rebuilt, and some of this stone is believed to have been taken from the town's Roman Wall, part of which stands in the garden along with a medieval well.

After the last Bishop of Carlisle vacated the property, it was the residence of the Scott family for over forty years. John Hindley Wright Scott was the fourth and youngest child of Ann and Richard Scott and a farmer and brewer who is buried in the family vault at St Mary's Church. His mother Ann Scott lived at the Manor House before him and he had three sisters, Sarah, Mary and Elizabeth.

During his lifetime, John helped pay for the building of the town's National School which was opposite the Manor House. He never married and died in 1896 aged sixty-five.

Later, up until the Mitchell's bought the house, it was used as the town's surgery and then as a family home until Mr Mitchell passed away.

Mrs Richardson said: "When Mum died, Dad missed her terribly. He managed to live at the Manor House even though he was almost blind and very deaf.

"My father was a gentleman and liked to do things properly, although he was terribly old fashioned. He wore a deer stalker and would always walk on the outside of the pavement and open doors and lift his hat for the ladies.

"At his funeral there was a book and time and time again, people wrote that he was a gentleman and that's how he will be remembered."

So the old house keeps ticking along with the seasons, cared for by family and friends of the previous owners until its new custodians can be found.

Manor House at Horncastle is on the market with Robert Bell and Company for offers in the region of £625,000. For more information phone (01507) 522222.