In 1906 Stonehouse Court was bought by Mr and Mrs Arthur Winterbotham. They commissioned Sir Edwin Lutyens to design a major refurbishment. (photo right)

In the early hours of 30th May 1908, while the Winterbothams were away on holiday, a fire broke out.

While delivering a letter at 6 am, the post boy, Vivian Stephens, spotted smoke coming from the roof tiles. He roused the servants who just had time to escape before the fire took hold. Despite several Fire Brigades directing water from the nearby canal the fire could not be contained. The interior of the house was seriously damaged.

The fire started in a beam above the kitchen range which may have been smouldering for days, before bursting into flames and setting the court alight. A breeze fanned the flames and the newly painted wood and gas lighting added to the inferno.

The fire caused £10,000 worth of damage and destroyed many old historical features which had been left intact by Lutyens’ sympathetic design. The Winterbothams had the house rebuilt to a similar design.

Arthur Winterbotham had intended to install a water supply throughout the house to combat fire. In the rebuild a fire hose system was put in, evidence of which still exists today.