

# Historic Tudor home is ravaged by fire

A HUGE fire ripped through an imposing 500-year-old Herefordshire home, destroying large parts of the Grade II listed Tudor building.

The blaze at Bleathwood Manor, near Tenbury Wells, began last Saturday evening and took 35 fire fighters five hours to extinguish.

The rear of the central part of the home was engulfed by flames and completely destroyed while dark smoke filled one of the manor's two wings causing further damage.

But the distraught owners have vowed to get on with the job of restoring their dream home to its former beauty.

Sarah Collings, who lives at Bleathwood with her husband Craig, said: "We are all absolutely devastated. No one was hurt or killed and we are putting things in perspective, but it is so sad to see a such a beautiful home which has stood for 500 years this way.

"We are now just hoping the insurance company will come up trumps and that we can rebuild our home with all the love and sympathy it deserves."

The couple were returning from a shopping trip in Ludlow at around 5pm when they saw smoke coming from the chimneys.

Retained fire fighters from

By Ian Morris

Tenbury Wells were soon on the scene before further help from Leominster, Kington, Ludlow and Hereford arrived.

Tenbury Wells leading fire fighter David James said crews took water from a pond within the manor's ground to fight the flames when their own supply ran out.

"It was certainly one of the biggest fires we have fought in recent times," he added.

The Collings had been restoring Bleathwood Manor since they moved in two years ago. They had put in floorboards and replaced paint from the walls with wood before the weekend's fire undid so much of their hard work.

"There are some things like clothes and photos that we will never be able to replace," added Mrs Collings.

"But we are determined to rebuild the home and although we know it will be time consuming we will be on the site working as hard as we can."

● As part of their restoration project, Mrs Collings has appealed to anyone willing to donate spare antiques, old oak panneling or iron mongery to call the *Advertiser's* sister paper the *Hereford Times* on 01432 845876.

Bleathwood Manor, a Grade II listed building near Tenbury Wells

