

## Who was Thomas Oken?

In this house lived Warwick's most famous son, Thomas Oken, Mercer and Merchant of the ancient town of Warwick.

He was born in the early years of the sixteenth century and lived in the reigns of Henry VII, Henry VIII, Mary and Elizabeth I.

A God-fearing man of kindly disposition and industrious habits he became a much respected and important inhabitant of the town and with painstaking care and diligent attention to his business he amassed, during his lifetime, a considerable fortune.

For a number of years he was one of the principal burgesses whose counsel and advice did much to direct the conduct of the town at that time.

After a long and useful life, Thomas Oken died here in this house in 1573. Childless, he left in trust much property in Warwick and around, the income from which was to be applied to the relief of the poor people of Warwick and surrounding areas and the general maintenance of the town and St. Mary's Church.

These and many other benefactions for objects dear to him are recorded in the Black Book of Warwick, but none are more illustrative of his kindly thought than the Feast Day appointed by his will in Warwick each year. Oken's Feast is still held and the toast is to "the pious memory of Thomas Oken and his wife Joan".

Today, this house, and many of the properties he left in his will of 1570 are maintained by a charitable trust and his spirit lives on to the benefit of many generations of Warwick citizens.



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