
U F F O R D

- A VILLAGE FULL OF HISTORY.....

Eric Sharpe

PART 1

Firstly, I would like to say that, whilst I have an interest in local history, I am certainly no historian, and anticipate some of the points I make being challenged by those more knowledgeable. The information I have obtained from a variety of sources is at times contradictory and difficult to interpret but nevertheless gives us a fascinating look into the past of the village and its immediate surroundings.

We have to remember that half a million years ago the geography of Suffolk bore no resemblance to that of today. At that time Britain was not an island and there was no North Sea, and much of this part of the county was under water and the river Deben joined together with the river Rhine. It was mostly dry land between here and Holland and Denmark, and the North Sea coastline just 10,000 years ago was north of the Dogger Bank. It was not until around 6,000 BC that we became an island, and the coastline of Suffolk took shape.

I am obliged to friends on Ufford Place for showing me various pieces dug from their garden in recent years. Included in their large collection are a number of very interesting and quite large rocks, fossils, sea shells and round sea washed stones, all indicating that parts of, if not all of this village was once under sea. Also in their collection are items thought to be Roman glass and pottery, animal bones and teeth (fossilised) partly formed flint and stone axe heads together with some metal items which could possibly be parts of a shield, a weapon or a tool. It is easy to jump to conclusions about all these finds but that particular area of Ufford Place is said to have been a former Roman burial ground and certainly in 1819 the Rev. C. Brooke excavated various ornaments, iron spears and bronze work 150 yards in front of Ufford Place (does anyone know exactly where the front was in 1819?) He was digging in shallow sand and the findings were all of Saxon, not Roman, origin.

Next month I hope to take a long leap forward and begin to look closer at the period when we were occupied by firstly the Romans, followed by the Anglo-Saxons and the Vikings, taking us up to Domesday.

PART 2

Ufford - a village full of history

The Roman conquest began around AD 43 and East Anglia developed a network of roads and forts, for example the Ipswich/Norwich A140 previously known as Pye Street, and forts at Burgh Castle (Yarmouth) Bradwell (Essex) and Walton (Felixstowe) which, it is said, can still be seen at very low tide. There were several important Roman settlements in this area, the largest at Coddensham and Hacheston and the nearest at Bredfield.

When much later the Anglo Saxons began to invade the East Anglian Coast they set up one of their first settlements at Debenham, this was after the Romans finally withdrew in the 5th century. This part of Suffolk became a separate kingdom with the Wuffingas as their ruling family giving their name to this village. The name Ufford has changed over the years from JUFFEFORDA, OFFEWARDA, UFFEWARDA, UFFORDA, USFORD to UFFORD.

Nearby Rendlesham became a palace, and Sutton Hoo (Haugh) a burial ground. Our red brick road bridge over the Deben is the original ford of Uffa, a Scandinavian invader, this crossing was also once known as HAWKESWADE. The most distinguished King of this period was Redwald (AD 599/624).

One of my favourite quotes is from Arthur Mees' Suffolk 1941...."We walk where Roman feet have been down deep shaded lanes to this old place below which the River Deben flows. Here we then find the ford of Uffa, a Saxon Chief".

The length of this Anglo Saxon period of occupation is rather vague and may have lasted into the 7th Century. R.W.Maitland 1927, in a book of great interest which has been kindly lent to me, notes "it seems that the first settlement in Ufford of which there is any definite record was early Saxon near the rising ground in front of what is now Ufford Place where a Saxon cemetery lay". This ties in with my comments last month, and with local finds of pottery, ornaments and bones. Also in 1786 the Rev. T.Carthew of Woodbridge writes "Two or more large urns of blue clay were dug up a furlong west of Ufford Church steeple, and they contained bones and bronze clasps of Saxon origin".

The Danes began to attack East Anglia in AD 840, but more of that in Part 3.

PART 3

The first Vikings arrived in East Anglia in AD 841 commanded by Ivor the Boneless. They were savage, cruel and barbaric, and landed firstly in small groups and destroyed and looted villages, slaughtering the unfortunate inhabitants. They were professional warriors who delighted in war and dressed flamboyantly wearing huge brooches of bronze and silver. Thousands followed and swept through the country, their ships were a terrifying sight with black ravens on their square sails and carried sea monsters on their prows like war dragons. Some of the ships were 250 ft long but the average size was around 70 x 15 ft.

During this period and despite the aggression of the Vikings, Christian teaching gradually took hold and began to give some stability to the region. There was a severe setback in AD 869 when Edmund, King of East Anglia was murdered, possibly at nearby Sutton. In AD 879 Guthram, the Viking King, living near Hadleigh, shared out the land. Whilst it is difficult to pinpoint Ufford's fate during this terrible period, it does seem that we avoided the worst atrocities and began to settle down. The Vikings were eventually defeated in AD 918 when King Alfred's son, Edward the Elder, reconquered Suffolk. However in AD 991 a new wave of Viking invaders under Guthmund came back, surged up the river Orwell and plundered Ipswich. They were indeed very frightening times.

You will gather from the above notes that I have been unable to find any specific references to Ufford during this Viking period but I hope this gives you the general flavour of the times. Eventually both Danes and Angles began to live in relative peace and the whole of this area of East Suffolk has been strongly influenced by the Danish customs and law.

Next came the Normans and it was William, Duke of Normandy, who authorised publication of the Domesday Book in 1086 when we begin to get a clearer view of our village and its inhabitants, and I will move on to this in Part 4 and from then on much of interest took place here and it is all more clearly documented than earlier times.

PART 4 DOMESDAY

At Christmas 1085 King William and his wise men decided to send out teams of commissioners to all corners of England to establish information about the land, how it was divided, and with what men. Each "shire" was allocated to a group of researchers and they had to ascertain how many hundred hides were in that shire, what the King himself owned and how much his Archbishops, Bishops, Abbots and Earls owned, so that every corner of the land was documented. An enormous task at that time.

In the summer of 1086 these commissioners came to Ufford and certain villagers were chosen from here and from other neighbouring villages to give upon oath information about each area, and this was recorded in the Domesday Book. The result was that in 1086 Ufford recorded 146 Acres Arable Land, nine and a half Acres of Meadow, 14 freemen, 2 boarders (?), two and a half ploughs and 1 mill, believed to still be on the same site today. Over 1000 Acres were lying waste. There is no mention of a church in Ufford but two are recorded for nearby Bromswell and two at Bredfield. It is thought that one of the Bromeswell churches could be Ufford church although there is no Norman or Saxon work in our present church.

Important Ufford names at Domesday were Gilbert de Wishant, Almar the Saxon, and Edric. At the time of the survey another great Norman Baron is mentioned - Roger Bigot, destined to become founder of a great East Anglian family, the Earls of Norfolk. He was later to become the principal landowner and Lord of Ufford.

We now move on to the 13th century when we still find a Roger Bigot as Lord of Ufford and a new famous name appears in sub tenancy of the manor, that of Robert de Ufford. It has been proved that he was in sub tenancy of the manor from 1256, and in 1268 he was made Lord Chief Justice of Ireland. He died in 1317 and one of his four sons, another Robert succeeded to the estates. His son, Robert III, was the most well known of the distinguished de Ufford family. He was appointed Earl of Suffolk in 1338 and became the possessor of Eye castle.

It seems remarkable that such a small village as this could have such strong connections with two famous East Anglian families.

In 1359 Robert de Ufford III won great fame at the battle of Poitiers and when he died in 1370 he had directed that his body be buried at the nearby priory at Campsea Ashe.

PART 5

In Part 4 I said I would move on next to the Manor Houses of Ufford, and whilst this village had six "manors" the houses themselves, or rather the remains of them, are strangely difficult to locate. Even the site of the Ufford family manor house is vague. It is said to have stood about 2 furlongs north of the church where a farm now stands - possibly Willow Farm in East Lane? Other information obtained from Maitlands "The History of Ufford" 1927 is confusing. He states that Davy in his 1842 notes on Ufford said "I this day - 12.8.1842 - observed in the meadow, just below the farm belonging to the Mills Trust, foundations and traces of a moat". Kirby in his "Suffolk Traveller 1735" noticed on the right hand side of the road going towards Bredfield a piece of land in the form of a rectangular parallelogram about 1 1/2 acres - there was at that time a moat on which it was said a castle stood.

Maitland in 1927 also said the site could still be seen whilst "across the road (which one?) is an old brick house of the late 17th century date surrounded by what was once a park. It is so distinguished in the ordnance map of 1836 under the name Ufford Hall and previously Ufford Farm - which house is he referring to? There seems little doubt apparently that this house is connected with Soganhoe Manor. There was a discovery in the 1920's of some older foundations near these buildings and also of a moated site on the opposite side of the road which Kirby refers to. The original Ufford/Bredfield Road is now so broken up that it is difficult to trace where these earlier sites mentioned are to be found today, but I hope to make further enquiries and do some searching in the coming weeks.

Maitland also refers to the 1674 "Hearth Tax" which showed that Thomas Mills who "certainly at that time possessed the manor of Otleys" living in a house of 8 hearths, the only other house of any such size in Ufford other than the Hammonds (Ufford House). He says that this house is probably the old farm house in Upper Street (which one?) still (at that time) in the Mills Trust. As I have said in Part 1 I am no historian and I find this information difficult to interpret today - does anyone have any ideas on all this or have any of you seen these various ditches, foundations etc.....?

PART 6

In my last notes I was exploring the whereabouts of the old Manor houses and I would like to thank the people who have given me help with this. Firstly, there is a small clump of trees in a field just before coming into the village off the A12 by-pass from Saxmundham (Ufford exit). In the middle of this dense square growth is a large wooden cross about 7ft high which I take to be the site of Sogenhoe chapel. Of the Manor House there is no sign - no foundations or remains of buildings, perhaps they are well hidden. I have also been told that foundations of a large house can be seen at certain times of the year in the fields between the Church and East Lane but I have not been able to find them so I have ground to a halt.

All this was a very long time ago, but before I move on I would like to mention a delightful article from the "Suffolk Chronicle & Mercury" dated 22 July 1927 kindly loaned to me and entitled "Pocket Histories of Suffolk Parishes No 30 - Ufford". It is six pages long and I could photostat copies for any interested readers. Much of it concerns the Church - the subject of my next article - and the author "Yeoman" talks of driving through the village on the Great Yarmouth Road and passing ancient cottages, several dilapidated, and a chapel, but mainly refers to the Lower Street area of our village. "It is as snug and compact a hamlet as one could wish to see - unchanged for a hundred years or more and yet a spot where the speculative builder has yet to make his way"(!) "There are nothing but cottage homes, pinkwashed and mellowed by age, rambling old houses and a real old village hostelry, the whole gamut dropped as as it were from the sky, all higgledy piggledy forming a collection of buildings with no apparent attempt at planning or orderliness and yet charming. And in a churchyard which with its trees and shrubs is in itself a thing of beauty towers the most ancient edifice of all, the villagers place of worship the Church of St Mary the Virgin"

PART 7
UFFORD CHURCH

The following history of the Church is all taken from Maitlands 1927 book with some adjustments.

The first settlement in Ufford of which we have any definite record was in early Saxon times, near the rising ground in front of what was the original Ufford Place. The fact of the Church having been built so near to this spot would suggest a very early date for its foundation, but no traces now exist of any older building than what is contained in the present structure. Domesday tells us of no Church in Ufford in early Norman times, and it is then with the massive round pillars which confront us on entering the Church by the south porch, that we must begin our story. These pillars, by their massive-ness and squat appearance give us at first impression an idea of Norman work surmounted by arches of a later date, but the fact that pillars and arches alike are built of the same Caen stone while those further west are of a different texture, confirm us in the belief that both alike are of the early English period, viz about 1200.

About 1200 then, there must have been in Ufford a church consisting of a nave with a short south aisle, while the beautiful early English doorway on the south side of the chancel, obviously taken from some earlier building, would suggest an early English chancel to correspond with nave and aisle.

A few years later, circa 1250, the church was extended to the westward, and by circa 1320 the great western arch tells us that the nave had reached its present breadth and was joined to a tower at its western extremity. If the window in the transitional style between early English and decorated, now on the north side of the nave is in situ, then the present size of the nave was attained at a somewhat earlier date.

Thus, except for the two late decorated windows, at the east and west ends of the south aisle, the church remained untouched for more than a hundred years, when a further period of building activity commenced by the addition of the south porch about 1450, and the tower as it stands now.

To the latter half of the 15th century also we owe the chancel, the rest of the windows save the great east window which is modern, the font cover, and all the woodwork in the church which resulted in its transformation into one of the most beautiful in the county.

PART 8
UFFORD CHURCH (part 2)

In 1560 a certain William Harvey Clarence, King of Arms, visited many of the churches of Suffolk, making rough sketches of the coats of arms he found in them and adding notes as to the families they represent. His book is now in the British Museum, and inserted among them is a painting of the great east window of Ufford church, probably of early 17th century date, but also probably drawn from notes by Harvey. In any case the window was erected towards the end of the 15th century, and from the shields it contains we can suggest the donor and approximate the date.

Harvey was mainly concerned with the coats of arms, but others who saw the window tell us the shields were upheld by figures of men in armour kneeling, probably angels or archangels in armour. From these descriptions and Harvey's notes we get a very good idea of what the window looked like.

The first coat is that of John Jenney, rector of Ufford, who was instituted in 1479. His figure kneels below in gown and hood, occupying the place of honour as donor of the window. The second shield is that of Sir Christopher Willoughby, who succeeded his brother as Lord Willoughby de Earsby in 1467. He married Mary, daughter of Sir William Jenney, of Knodishall, whose arms come next. He was the brother of John Jenney, the rector, and was made a judge in 1478, and as such is depicted in the panel below his shield. The last shield is that of Edmund Jenney, son of Sir William, who married before 1467. John Jenney was succeeded here as rector by John Bishop in 1487, so we can date the window somewhere between 1480-1487.

We have seen that all the woodwork in the church is of about the same date and the wealth of carved woodwork in Ufford church is exceptional, and the reason for it doubtless lies in that close connection between squire and parson which the great east window tells the story of.

Thus the font bore the same arms as those of Sir Christopher Willoughby in the window. The great font cover, with its many points of resemblance to the screen at Bramfield and also Southwold, is undoubtedly of the same date as the font and was made for it.

PART 9
UFFORD CHURCH (part 3)

The fine chancel roof bears the same Willoughby arms, and so did the clerestory windows of the nave as noted by Davy, which was raised to its present height to carry the perpendicular roof it bears now. Tom Martin, the Norfolk antiquarian, tells us that the rood loft was of the same design as the font cover, and so only the oak benches remain to be accounted for in other ways than through the magnificence of the Willoughby family.

These benches, so rich in ornament, much of which doubtless bears allegorical or symbolic meaning, give no clue as to the donor. Probably they were a gift of various people. One of the south side bears the figure of a man in a long gown, and of his wife with the butterfly headdress of about 1470, just such figures as we find on the brass of Simon Brooke and his wives in the floor of the nave.

Another on the southside, near the tower, probably represents the mummers, in the grotesque costumes, necessitating the use of their hands for their feet. Probably they were the donors of the bench. Another again, marks its date by the chained antelope, the badge of Henry V and VI but from the style of the bench, doubtless representing Henry VII who assumed the same badge to display his Lancastrian connection.

A bench on the north side bears what seems to be a branch upon a shield, similar to the ragged staff of the Earls of Warwick. Possibly it may have some reference to Isabella Countess of Suffolk and daughter of the Earl of Warwick, but similar shields on the other side of the poppyhead, only inverted and bearing the branch in flower charged with a cross, suggest some symbolic reference to the Blessed Virgin to whom the church is dedicated.

A bench in the chancel, with the figures of St Catherine of Alexandria with the wheel and St Catherine of Siena with book and cross, and another with a priest in a cope seated, by no means exhaust the list of figures and emblems with which these benches are so richly carved.

PART 10
UFFORD CHURCH (part 4)

Now let us take stock of the church as a whole and see through the eyes of one who gives us a vivid picture of the interior, not in mediaeval days when we would expect to find churches magnificent, but in the more sober days of 1632, when the altar of St Leonard and the statue of the Virgin with the attendant light, the great crucifix and figures in the rood, together with the tabernacle and fittings of the High Altar, had all been swept away. Even then Weever is constrained to describe it "the most neatly polished little church as I have looked into within this diocese". He notes "the quire roof curiously engraven with sundry kind of works and pictures all burnished and gilt with gold, also the organ case whereupon these words, "Soli Dei Honor et Gloria" are carved and gilt over, is garnished and adorned in mostly costly manner".

Ye font and ye cover of the same is without compare, being of great height, cut and gloriously depicted with many Imageries consonant to ye representation of ye holy sacrament of baptism, as also with ye arms of ye Uffords, Earls of Suffolk".

In addition to this description we have to bear in mind the windows emblazoned with the arms of Uffords and Willoughbys with their alliances as described by Harvey and later by Tyllotson in 1594 and Parker in 1608, and the walls covered with paintings such as the great figure of St Christopher which could be seen on the north wall of the nave until recent times, and the work in tempera, a fragment of which can still be seen in the south aisle - in short, Ufford church in the first half of the 17th century as far as the fabric was concerned, remained almost unchanged from its condition in pre-Reformation days.

At what period then did the change take place which reduced the glorious interior to the barrenness it certainly possessed at the beginning of the 19th century? If such a question were to be asked of any of our Suffolk churches, the answer given would almost certainly be - Dowsing. And certainly Dowsing came to Ufford as well as to many other churches, under commission from the Earl of Manchester, to destroy "superstitious images". He came twice in fact, in 1643 and 1644, and pays more particular attention to Ufford in his curious diary than to any other church he visited.

PART 11

I am continuing this month with the history of our Church. The difficulty here is that there is so much information available that can be read elsewhere (ie the Church itself in an excellent guide, also at the Woodbridge Library (upstairs) and the Ipswich Record Office), and it is not easy to decide what to say here and what to leave out. I will restrict it to this month's article only and then move on to all the "tit-bits" I have been offered but have not followed up, then to the village inhabitants of the past and to Ufford Place.

Last month I concluded with Dowsing's visit to Ufford in 1643/1644. Apart from breaking up the organ case and distributing the wood to the villagers he destroyed the figures and monograms on the roof and the brasses from the tombs. The greater part of the stained glass was heraldic and therefore spared. We know that this was so for we find a schoolmaster from Framlingham named Leverland, as quoted in Condor's MSS of Suffolk Families, describing the great east window as still existing in his time, ie 1662. Again about 1725 we find Tom Martin, the Norfolk antiquarian, visiting Ufford church. He notes the tombstones in the tower as having been brought from some ruined church, probably Loudham, but what is of greater interest is his statement that the greater part of the old rood loft remained, "being of the same work with the font (cover) and is now a gallery", ie at the west end.

We also know that the screen existed in its entirety until 1800, when, upon the authority of the late Captain Brooke in some notes of his on the church, it was cut down by the rector because it stopped his voice! The rector at that time was the Rev George Jones Palmer, who succeeded in 1765.

There is an extraordinary story about the sad decline of the church plate between 1547 and 1553, and I will be pleased to let anyone interested have a photocopy of my notes.

The living of Ufford was never a rich one. The earliest record we have of it was in 1254, when in a valuation of the revenues of the English Church, undertaken at the request of the Pope by the Bishop of Norwich, and hence called the "Norwich Taxation", the living of Ufford is reckoned as being 7 marks or £4.13.4d. In the same return Melton is set down for £5,6,8d, Bredfield £6.13.4d, Dallighoo £13.6.8d, so Ufford was poor.

PART 12
Bits & Pieces (Part 1)

By way of a break I am introducing some assorted short notes, not in any particular order.

Bromeswell (a sad story from the Suffolk Village Book)

It may well be the sort of place where romance flourishes. A stone in the churchyard points out a sad love story that once unfolded here. The couple were Robert Manly and Mary King and the year 1822 when they joined in their final union. Mary was not strong and her health declined as the young lovers prepared for their wedding. When it became inevitable that she would die, Mary revealed her dread of grave robbers who at that time earned a grisly profit from exhuming newly buried corpses. She begged Robert to keep watch over her grave and keep it secure. This he promised to do. All through the winter he kept vigil beside the grave and took little note of anything else but this task. When the spring came Robert assembled his few possessions and gave them away. He walked down to the river Deben, took out his small boat from the reeds and rowed out along the channel. His upturned boat was found a few days later but Robert was never seen again.

From Suffolk Record Office

Ufford has always been divided into two parts, Upper Street and Lower Street. In 1881 the population was 554, there were 1144 acres land and 6 of water, mostly belonging to Francis C Brooke of Ufford Place, formerly the seat of the Hammonds. At that time the house contained a valuable library. The Lord of the Manor was Lt Col Whitbread.

Ufford Village Census 1844 included:-

James Baker (Mason) Robert Barrell (Sawyer) Mrs Beecroft (Crown Inn) Rebecca Haywood (White Lion Inn) Charles Bloomfield (Tailor) George Dale (Stonemason) Charles Dove (Bricklayer) Charles Garrett (Blacksmith) William Hayward (Broker) Edward Johnson (Day & Boarding School) Kemble Kemp (Butcher) Rev Larkin (The Rectory) John May (Merchant) James Noy (Surveyor) James Olding (Brick & Tile Maker) Henry Stephenson (Miller) Rebecca Worby (Schoolmistress) Thos Wright (Schoolmaster). Also six boot and shoe makers, eight farmers, two joiners, four other shopkeepers and three wheelwrights. How times have changed!

PART 13
Bits & Pieces (Part 2)

Continuing my ramblings from last month....

From The Suffolk Stud Book 1880

Crisp's horse No 404 of Ufford foaled in 1768 is the first member of this family of which there is any individual account. Nearly all the Suffolk Hoses in the county (1880) sprang from one horse owned by Mr Thomas Crisp of Ufford. There is an account of the Crisp family activities in the book relating to this area. All far too lengthy for this article but fascinating reading for lovers of horses and history. The above is all reflected in our village sign.

Dowsing's vandalism of Ufford Church 1643/1644

Following my comments in Parts 10 and 11, I wish to add - In the following May (1644) he (Dowsing) sent men to see that everything ordered had been carried out, but Ufford church-wardens denied them entry to the church. In August, however, they returned.... Dowsing's journal reads "We broke 12 cherubims on the roof of the chancel and nigh a hundred Jesuses and Marys in capital letters, and the steps we levelled, and then we broke down the organ cases and gave them to the poor. There is a glorious cover over the font like a Pope's triple crown with a pelican on the top, picking its breast, all gilt over the gold. Could not bring themselves to destroy "so pretty a thing". We broke 30 pictures and took down 37 more and 40 cherubims of wood. We took up 6 inscriptions in brass."

News and views (August 1934)

Rector - The Rev Herbert Drake
Churchwardens - J R Dunn, George Lankester
Sidesmen - Admiral Corbett, Messrs Fisher, Evans, Jenvey, Woby, Goldsmith, Slack, Oxborrow, Smith, Mortimer, Clark & Pizzey. Organist - Mr Saunders.
Parish Clerk - Walter Hurren.

Contents included:-

Rectory garden fete to be opened by Lord Ullswater
Whitsun farthings being collected for Diocesan Fund
Death of a Mr Banstead on the new by-pass (?)
Beautiful summer weather
Full page on Ufford's Church Bells

PART 14
Bits & Pieces (Part 3)

The Rev John Drew has kindly lent me a large pile of Ufford monthly magazines, 1892-1908, together with PCC minutes of 1922-1962 and a splendid bound book of Ufford Church & Parish News, 1894-1897. This represents hours of reading so I have just picked out some random samples.

Magazine Jan 1893 (price one penny)

Miss Steward, a very old friend of the Rector's (Hubert D Astley) is coming to take up her abode in Ufford in order to help him in his work; she hopes to be able to visit the sick in the lower part of the village, as Mrs Rowley does in Upper Street. Miss Steward will also conduct a Mothers' Meeting once a week assisted by Mrs Astley and Mrs Rowley, both of whom are always glad to help where they can, whenever they are at Ufford.

The Rector and Churchwardens hope that any bad and unseemly behaviour amongst the boys or girls in the Church will be reported. If boys do not wish to be suspected they had better not sit in the farthest corners behind the pillars!

Magazine June 1902

It has been decided that Ufford shall commemorate the Coronation of our King, by meeting, as loyal and devout people should, on the morning of June 26th in our grand old church at 9 am to offer the Lord's service to invoke God's blessing and guidance on the Royal pair solemnly anointed on that day to be the governors of the people of this great Empire which now covers nearly a quarter of the known world.

Early in the afternoon a substantial meal will be provided for the children, to be followed at 4 pm by sports for the villagers in the Park. It was hoped that all in the parish would have been able to partake of a common meal, but through the grumbling of a few who are never satisfied that plan has been given up.

Would that all people could understand that greed and selfishness like bad manners and lack of courtesy never fail to bring forth loss to those who give way to these unwholesome diseases of the character. (Harsh words 90 years ago from the Reverend Herbert Williams.)

PART 15

A considerable amount of new information about Ufford Place has recently come to light and whilst this is being "sifted", which will take some time, I will say a little about former prominent inhabitants of this village.

Heading the list is Robert de Ufford who featured in earlier notes. We also have Will de Hawkeswade, John de Sogenhoe, Will le Miller and Ricardo le Leche. In old court rolls of Ufford there is reference to a road running from Hawkeswade Bridge (now Ufford Bridge and the possible crossing of "King" Wuffingas) to Sogenhoe Chapel (on the old A12). This bridge probably gave its name to Will de Hawkeswade and Ricardo de Leche translates to Dr Ricardo. The name Leach, still found locally, probably comes from Leche.

In 1524 a further list of names includes Tovell and Peck still flourishing today. In this list is Groom, whose brass Henry Groom is, I believe, still in the floor of the nave. Another name is Symon Balhead. Balhead or Baldhead changes in time to Ballett - ie Richard Ballett in the Church. There are apparently over 20 Balletts in the church register.

In 1627 the trustees of a Joan Ballett (widow) sold to Margaret Father "all that messuage wherein Joan Ballett lived together with lands barns etc for £1010". It is thought that this is the first mention of UFFORD PLACE. It may have been a manor house and in Maitlands book referred to several times in earlier articles, he is of the view that its position certainly suggests a very important dwelling and as such is the site of UFFORD PLACE, so a house was on or near the foundations of the one pulled down in 1950's from very early times. Margaret Father's nephew, Edward Hammond, inherited the house and "rebuilt" it. In 1674 it contained thirteen hearths and was the largest house in Ufford.

The Hammond family remained in possession until 1726 when it was sold to Samuel Thompson, a clerk of Kettleburgh, for £2000. His son married Ann Blois of Grundisburgh and the house was intended for a wedding present. The marriage produced a daughter who married Francis Brooke, thus the house passed into the Brooke family. (Various tombs of the Blois family can be seen in Grundisburgh Church).

PART 16

Former inhabitants of the village (cont.)

From the hearth tax of 1674 the first name on the list for Ufford is Richard Lovekin with 4 hearths. The Rev Richard Lovekin is better known for his misfortunes rather than his deeds and he was tried as a "malignant" minister, appearing in court at Bury St Edmunds on October 17th 1643. Among the charges were that he was a common swearer, a cold preacher and objected to other ministers using his pulpit. Witnesses against him were Edward Hammond of Ufford Place, Thomas Coote blacksmith(?), Roger Smallage, George Burwood, John Martyn, John Henley, Samuel Canham and Will Brown, all presumably Ufford villagers. Lovekin's name disappeared from the registers but returned after the restoration of Charles II. He died in 1678, reputedly aged 110 years!

Jacob Chilton built the large red brick Georgian house (The Dower House) south of the church after his marriage to Sarah Hammond. Jacob came to Ufford as curate in 1715 whilst he was vicar at Mendlesham. He became rector of Ufford in 1723.

Thomas Mills lived in one of the largest houses in the parish containing 8 hearths. He became "connected" with a wealthy Ufford widow, Mrs Alice Groom, who owned the manor of Otley and land in Petteestree and Ufford. The relationship blossomed and ended in marriage, so in 1674 the hearth tax records show him living in Mrs Groom's house in Ufford. He died in 1703.

Bishop Wood built the charming almshouses in Church Lane in the late 1600's and is believed to have died in April 1692 after a controversial career following his appointment of Dean of Litchfield in 1663. The Bishop complained of "obnoxious" conduct but he became Bishop himself following intervention by the Duchess of Cleveland, but he so neglected his duties that Archbishop Sancroft suspended him in 1684 for two years.

There are many other items of interest in Maitland's "The Story of Ufford" but I feel the time has come when I should begin to start drawing this saga to a close. However, as I mentioned in my September notes, I am now putting together some information on Ufford Place. I also hope to have meetings with some village residents of long-standing to record their memories.

PART 17

During the 18 months or so spent putting together these notes I have been very conscious of the lack of information on the history of the site known to us all as Ufford Place or Ufford Park. Odd bits and pieces have filtered through to me, but the jigsaw has been incomplete. Now, thanks to Dorothy Leach who lives with her husband, Alan, close to the foundation of the old house, a considerable amount of fresh knowledge has come to light so here is a potted history of the house.

Firstly, it seems that this has always been an important landmark and an old fort originally stood on the rising mound. A substantial mansion is shown on an old map from the late 1700's and it is clear that a house stood here through mediaeval times, Tudor times and right through to the late Georgian, early Victorian era when the building was "faced" with red brick and an orangery built together with a coach house and the surrounding walls, all still standing. All the bricks for this ambitious venture almost certainly came from the Ufford Brickworks - a hollowed out site now occupied by a football pitch, tennis court and a new club house alongside The Avenue.

Last month's notes concluded with the house passing into the Brooke family when the daughter of the Thompson-Blois marriage, Ann Thompson, married Francis Brooke. Ann died in 1772 aged only 34 and her son Charles (then seven) eventually married Charlotte Capper of Earl Soham and during their life at Ufford Place Charles became Rector (1803-1836). Francis remarried to a Mary Sparrow of Kettleburgh a year after Ann's death in 1773. She died in 1817 aged 73. Three of her daughters died very young between 1786 & 1795.

Francis Capper Brooke, a son from the Brooke-Capper marriage was born in 1810 & he married Juliana Jemima Alex in 1839. She died one year later leaving a daughter Alice. Francis married again, this time to Louisa Duff (b1830). The marriage took place at St Francis, Eaton Square in London in 1852 and they lived at Ufford Place. He died in 1886, she in 1895. They had five children Reginald, Edward, Constance, Florence, and Algernon, who died in infancy.

PART 18

We left last month at the stage after the death of Francis Capper Brooke in 1886 and his wife Louisa's death in 1895. They had five children.

Reginald was born in 1854 and married the daughter of the owner of Brandeston Hall - Jane Austin - at Hanover Square London in 1879. They had two daughters Margery and Dorothy. Jane died in 1887 and was buried at Brandeston. Reginald married again in 1893, this time to an American widow Mrs Blackwell. Edward never married. He was born in 1856 and lived all his life at Ufford Place until he died in 1921. The house then passed to Constance who stayed at the house until her death in 1930. She lived at the house under the name of Constance Brooke although she had earlier married an Edward Lethbridge. It seems that she lived at Ufford Place with her brother and not with her husband of whom little trace can be found (!). As this is now becoming relatively recent history perhaps a reader can enlighten me.

In 1931 Major Eardley Blois Brooke inherited the house and lived there with his wife Violet and family until his death in 1956. At this point his family decided to sell the estate and after being sold, I believe at auction, the house was demolished leaving only the orangery, the coach house, and parts of the walls which are such a charming feature of the village.

A number of handsome architects' drawings have come to light mostly of the proposed alterations to the house and library between 1908 - 1915.

The valuable library was sold in 1930, many of the books going to the British Museum after Constance's death. They were valued at £6,500. There were also books by Edward Fitzgerald. The library itself had been built up by Francis Capper Brooke and Edward.

A sale catalogue dated 28.6.56 sets out all the guide prices of the furniture and porcelain, together with figures fetched. There was also a large coin collection.

So the long story of a fine house came to rather a sad end, as did many others about this period.

In the late 1950's/early 1960's one of the family returned to the scene and left a long letter, undated, which begins "All that is left of the old place is a heap of mouldering rubble where once, not so many years ago, stood a red brick country mansion house....."

UFFORD