

Ufford Heritage Trail

23. Crown Farmhouse

A wool merchant's home dating from the 1500s, this attractive Grade II listed house is the oldest dwelling to survive in the village today.



Built in traditional Suffolk longhouse style, it is timber-framed with colour-washed render and brick noggin infill, under a plain tile roof, but it was most probably thatched when originally built. A late C17 -18th outhouse and associated finds were identified during recent garden landscaping.

The house was once the home of Thomas Wood, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, who lived in later life in Ufford and was buried in St Mary's Church.

Thomas Wood, the third son of Thomas Wood (1565-1649), was baptised on 22 July 1607 in Saint John's Church, in then-fashionable Hackney. He was educated at Westminster School and Christ Church, Oxford. He served as chaplain to Charles I in 1635 and as rector in Durham until the Civil War intervened when, being a supporter of the defeated king, he spent considerable time overseas and in Rome. Following his return to England after Cromwell's death, he was appointed as royal chaplain by Charles II in 1660 and he served as a chaplain in Durham again. He was made a Dean in Lichfield in 1664. He made enemies at both Durham and Lichfield, partly due to his "puritanical leanings" which were out of step with the High Church stance of the



bishops during the restoration. He was also known by colleagues for "his personal meanness and avarice".

After the death of the Bishop of Lichfield in 1670, and some successful manoeuvres at court, Wood became Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry. His appointment is credited to the influence of Charles II's mistress, Barbara Villiers, whose daughter Mary was about to marry the Dean's nephew, son of Sir Henry Wood (1597-1671), a powerful Suffolk landowner and a Treasurer in the Royal Household.

Sir Henry Wood had his seat at Loudham Park and owned land and many manor houses including those in Campsey Ashe, Ufford, Eyke, Blyford, Hollesley-cum-Sutton, Elmeswell and Woolpit. All these Suffolk estates gave him considerable wealth and influence locally and at the royal court.

Thomas Wood died in 1692 at the age of 85. In spite of his reputation amongst the clergy, he was generous to his Oxford college and to the poor of London and Ufford. His will provided funds to build a small hospital in Ufford for local workers and villagers. The hospital became what are now the almshouses in Church Lane, still maintained with help from Wood's charity.