

Ufford Heritage Trail

21. The Ufford Crown

In 1524 The Ufford Crown was the private house of a Simon Toveld. By 1750 it was described as "the tenement called Tovells and having the sign of "The Crown". The residential development in School Lane is named Tovells after the original owner.



From around 1750, The Crown was a well-known coach stopping point close to the turnpike on the road from Colchester to Great Yarmouth. There were a series of turnpikes on the route, a toll road linking London to the East Coast.

You can read more about the toll road when you visit Ufford Cross (location 16 on the Trail).

Landlords of The Ufford Crown can be traced back to 1739, when an entry in the Ipswich Journal notes that the landlord is Francis Shaw.

In 1846, the landlady was a Mrs Beecroft. On the ground floor, the house had three parlours at the front: one at the back, a bar, a storeroom and a kitchen with beer and spirits cellars. On the first floor there were nine rooms with two staircases. At the back, there were detached stabling, a granary and a large chicken coop. There was good supply of water, needed as coaches stopped daily to and from Ipswich, Norwich and Great Yarmouth. In the 1850s, Fanny Stephenson ran The Crown for about 5 years, living there with her 3 children, a governess and a lodger, who was fishmonger.

By the late 1860s, the inn was run by the Sayer family. James Sayer was a farmer, born in Bawdsey, who ran it from 1869 until around 1891 when his son, also James, aged 35, took it over until 1901. It was during this time that there came to be a story about a gambling bet with one of the family in next door's forge. In one night the local blacksmith at the forge reputedly bet and lost his house during a game of cards with the landlord!

Woodbridge licensing records show that the Crown's licence was issued in 1904 - it was probably then that the licence was upgraded from a 'beer house' to a full licence.



The Ufford Crown from the Woodbridge Museum collection. The notice above the door shows the landlord as William L. Booth which dates it from 1904 to 1911. Cobbold clearly had a monopoly on beer supplies in Ufford at that time.

During WW1 and until the mid 1930s, the inn was run by Alfred J Reed, who was the son of a labourer living in Ipswich. There is a well recorded celebration on 27th February 1919 when the Reeds organised a sumptuous welcome home dinner and musical evening for around twenty demobilised but still serving men from the village.

Today Max and Polly, who took over in 2011, continue to welcome all, whether for a friendly drink or a delicious meal.