

## Ufford Heritage Trail

### 12. Ufford Place House

#### **History of the house and its ownership**

In medieval times, there were six manor houses in and around the village of Ufford. Although Ufford Place was probably built on the site of one of these medieval manor houses, the first recorded house here was built by Thomas Ballett. The Ballett family had a long history in Ufford; Richard Ballett is remembered through a well preserved brass in St Mary's Church. Upon his death in 1627, Thomas Ballett's widow sold the house for 1000 guineas to the Hammond family.



*Ufford Place around 1880*

The house was rebuilt by William Hammond, who was recorded as having a house with six hearths in 1674. From around 1740, it was owned by Samuel Thompson, who married Anne, a daughter of Sir Charles Blois, First Baronet, who had estates in Grundisburgh. Sir Charles had married Martha Brooke, the daughter of Sir Robert Brooke, from another prominent Suffolk family. Ufford Place descended to their daughter, also Anne,

who married Francis Brooke. Their son, Reverend Charles Brooke, inherited the title and married Charlotte Capper who was from a wealthy family in Woodbridge. During his time, Reverend Charles Brooke, in the early 1800s, found bones, a shield's iron boss, a spear and a bronze ornament, all of Anglo-Saxon origin and indicating the site of an Anglo-Saxon cemetery here.

Ufford Place was to remain in the ownership of the Brooke and Blois families until the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, although its descent in those families was somewhat complex. Charles and Charlotte Brooke's son, Francis Capper Brooke, was born in Ufford in 1810 and died in 1886. He and Edward, one of his sons (by his second marriage), owned the estate for over eighty years, and it was during their tenure that Ufford Place was considerably enlarged.

Francis Capper Brooke was clearly concerned that his estate should eventually pass to male members of his family. On his son Edward's death the estate passed to his sister Constance. Thereafter (if there were no male descendants) it would be inherited by the male heir of Sir Thomas Brooke, who had died in 1418, or failing that, to the second and succeeding sons of Sir John Blois, eighth baronet of Cockfield.

This last provision took effect, and the estate passed in 1930 to Eustace Steuart Blois, who took the name of Brooke on inheriting Ufford.

### **Ufford Place: The house and grounds**

A complete account of the accommodation seems not to exist, but the 1930 sale catalogue lists a large number of rooms. On the ground floor these included entrance, inner and staircase halls, a dining room, library, the 'long room' and domestic offices, and on the first floor a music room and a china room, eight bedrooms, three dressing rooms and a nursery. On the second floor there were five further bedrooms. Additionally the house had five maids' bedrooms and three men's bedrooms. There must have been other rooms from which furniture and effects were not included in this sale.

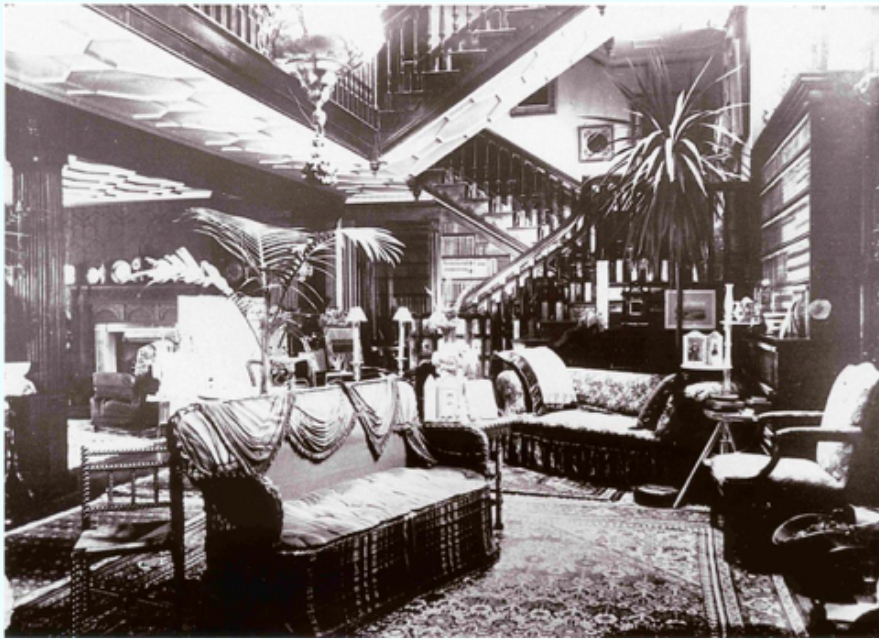
The 19<sup>th</sup> century had seen the expansion of the Ufford Place estate with the purchase of further land, particularly in the 1860s. As with other Suffolk estates, the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw a substantial reduction in its size. In 1921, following the death of Edward Brooke, 800 acres in Ufford and neighbouring parishes were put on the market. His sister Constance Brooke's death in 1930 was followed by the sale in over 1,500 lots of the Brooke family's furniture and effects: presumably Eustace Brooke (Blois) imported his own.



*Ufford Place (north front) in the 1890s after alterations and encasement : you can see the orangery, the only remaining part of the house, on the far left hand side*

During World War II the house was occupied by the Army, and is said to have been left in such a dreadful state that after the war the family was unable to restore it.

Eustace Brooke died in December 1955, and six months later the contents of the house were put up for sale in 700 lots. A report of the sale at the time stated that the library, reputed to have been one of the most valuable collections in the country, had already been sold to London dealers: in 1908 Edward Brooke's library had been said to contain over 36,000 volumes.



*Interior of Ufford Place about 1910*

Photographs taken in the early 1950s show a house that looks uncared for, with its gardens unkempt. The statement in the sale report that it was to be demolished proved correct and in late 1956 it was pulled down.

The orangery survived, converted into a house designed by John Penn (1921 – 2007), one of Britain's greatest modern architects. The coach house also survives as a residence. Through the wrought iron gates, originally the back entrance to the grounds, there is a housing development built in 1960s and 70s.

*Copy adapted from Lost Country Houses of Suffolk by W M Roberts*

*Note - some historical information on the Brooke family has been updated based on Ancestry and other research*