

Ufford Heritage Trail

28. Willow Farm House

Willow Farm is thought to be on the site of one of Robert de Ufford's Norman manor houses. The existing house, built in C16th and C17th is Grade II listed: it has a timber-framed structure with colour-washed render, wattle and daub and brick noggin infill, exposed where the render was removed.



Before it became a private house in the mid 1900s, Willow Farm was tenanted, and belonged to the trustees of the Thomas Mills Charity, founded in 1703. The charity was a considerable landowner in the area in the C18th and C19th and was responsible for funding the Grade II* listed Almshouses on Station Road,

Framlingham (1703), the Unitarian Meeting House on Bridge Street, Framlingham (1717) also listed at Grade II* as well as the Thomas Mills High School in Framlingham.

As an interesting detour, about 750m north of Willow Farmhouse, off Loudham Lane and just past the Sick Houses, a track leads to Upper Barn, which was owned by the Mills charity. This isolated barn is a Grade II listed building and is shown on the Ufford tithe map of 1845. A carefully executed inscription on a brick inside the porch apparently names and dates the barn precisely as BRICK BARN 1767.

Note on Thomas Mills, Suffolk Baptist and Benefactor

In the late 1600s Thomas Mills lived and worked in Framlingham. He was a trained wheelwright and timber merchant and a dissenting Baptist. A wealthy man who inherited a timber importing business in Wapping from his wife, Thomas also owned land in Dallinhoo, Dennington, Parham, Pettistree, Ufford, Wickham Market and Framlingham.

When in Framlingham he and his wife would stay in Tomb House. In secret, Thomas would meet fellow nonconformists at Lincoln's Barn, which was conveniently discreet and away from prying eyes. Thomas Mills died in 1703 and, being a dissenter, he was not offered an Anglican burial in the churchyard: instead he was buried in a tomb in his garden.