

**FROM  
LEIGHFIELD SCHOOL  
TO  
GRAMMAR SCHOOL**

**A Walk Through 400 Years of  
Uppingham History**

*Uppingham's like an octopus  
Whose body is the town;  
Its tentacles are the hilly roads  
Which switchback up and down.  
The North road leads to Ayston,  
The East road leads to Glaston,  
The West road leads to Blaston  
And the South to London Town.*

*( R Sterndale Bennett )*

**A Mini – History**

**Uppingham Local History Group**

**MH No. 4.**

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## **PREFACE**

Leighfield Primary School was built by Rutland County Council in 1969 whereas Archdeacon Robert Johnson's Grammar School was founded in 1584. Both were to provide free schooling for children from Uppingham and nearby, but what a difference of education – the Classics as compared with the modern curriculum.

To walk from the one to the other though barely a mile apart is a journey of nearly 400 years. On the way we pass many interesting places; some quite recent but as we get closer to the centre of town others have been there for a half millennium or longer. Almost at the end we find another that has been the heart of our community for more than a 1,000 years – the Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul facing north to the market and to the south looking out over farms and fields – mirroring the two aspects of life on which Uppingham has been built.

But there is one other even older, and that is Uppingham itself. Here, some 1,600 years ago, an immigrant Saxon farmer and his family settled on a ridge of land near to the place we now call The Crown Hotel. He found land for cultivation, a spring for water, grazing for his animals and wood for building and burning. The place was isolated, yet with long views he could see who might be coming to visit. And if he disliked the look of them, it is always quicker to escape down the slope than it is for the strangers to run uphill. It would surprise our first family if they could see what they started.

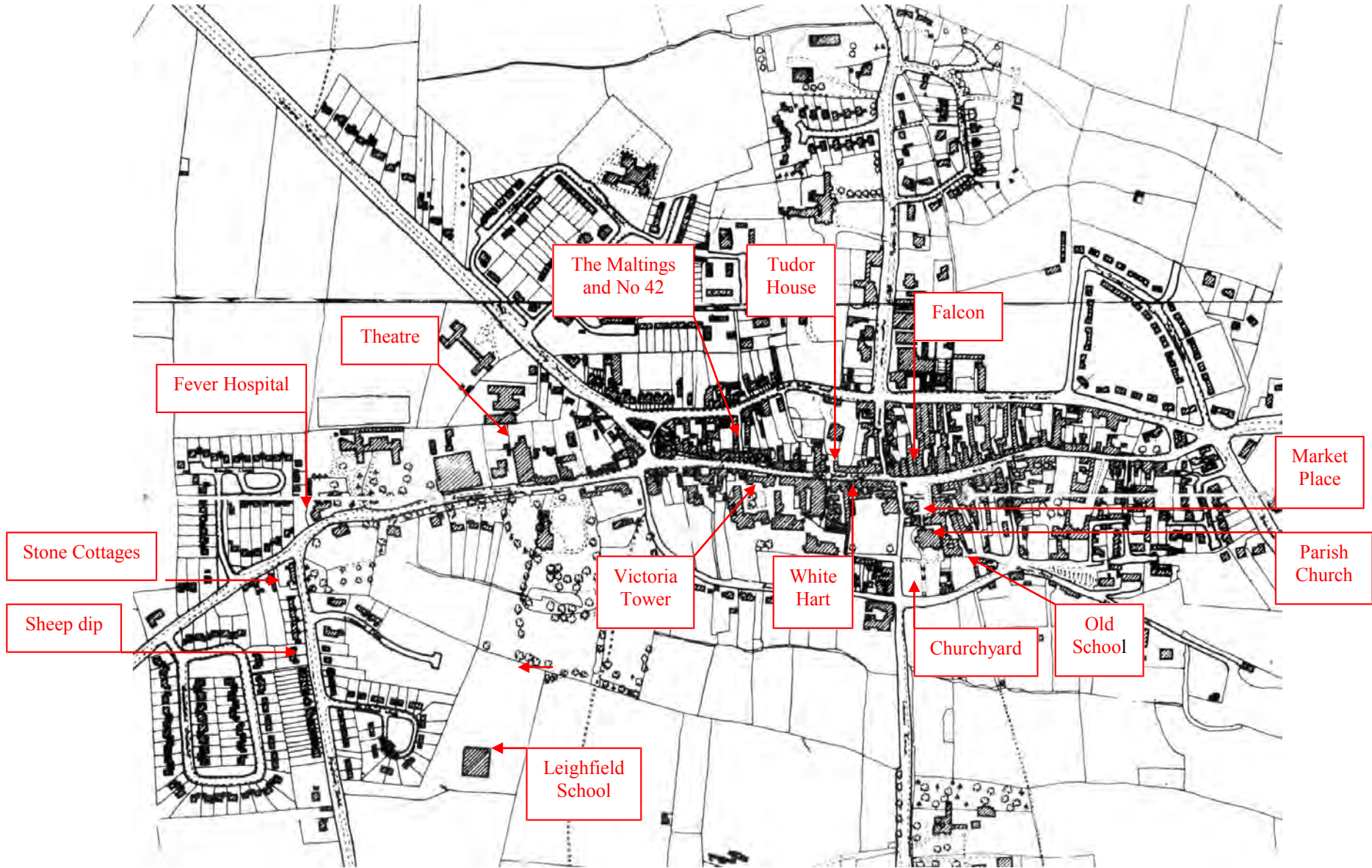
Before setting out on our walk from Leighfield, let us think a little about this Saxon farmer and the organisation of the town that grew up where he decided he would like to live.

P. N. Lane.

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May 2009.



**The Church seen from near the future Leighfield School c1875**



**Uppingham**  
[ Places mentioned in the Walk ]

## How Uppingham is Organised

Uppingham means the settlement of the people who live on the hill, though some say that it should be the settlement of Yppa's people. The **name** comes from the Old Saxon language and reveals that the Saxon invaders settled here about 1,600 years ago in the late 4<sup>th</sup> or early 5<sup>th</sup> centuries. We think the first buildings were a homestead near the site of the Crown Hotel where the footpath through Crown Passage and Reeves Yard crosses the High Street.

The town's **layout** is typically one long main street at different times called the High Street, Main Street or Town Street with parallel north and south backways – on the north side called North Street and on the south known as South View and Spring Back Way. In medieval times plots were larger than they are today, beginning at the High Street and extending back to meet the back way. One such plot comprised Nos 16 (The Lake Isle), 18 (Murray's) & 20 (empty shop), taking in all of Reeves Yard and extending down to include No 26 South View (Mrs Mary Holmes, formerly the Malsters Arms). Each of these plots (called a messuage) contained one or more dwellings, with a yard, stables, outhouses, barns, a place to keep chickens, a sty for a pig being fattened for slaughter and a byre with a cow and calf for the milk. There would be space for a few fruit trees and a patch to grow vegetables. The yard would have access to the High Street and at the other end leading on to the back way which was the access for carts bringing firewood, straw, feed for the animals as well as taking away household refuse, muck and dung from the stables.

As more and more people came to live in the town, these **yards** filled with houses, either newly erected in front of the original farmhouse as was Small's built in front of The Little Crooked House in Hopes Yard, or by conversion of barns and stables. This process continues today, seen in the recently built house in Reeves Yard and the flats behind Nelson's Butchers. Surviving examples are Sheilds Yard, Printers Yard, Reeves Yard, Crown Yard, Hopes Yard and Southwells Yard (otherwise Puzzle Corner). All families living in a messuage used the same well with its pump (Sheilds and Crown Yards) and shared the same latrine in the yard. Sanitation was rudimentary and many children died before they reached 15 years. Despite this, tombstones in the churchyard show some people lived into their 70s and 80s.

Though people never stopped building in Uppingham there were three major phases of **building** and rebuilding. The first was late Elizabethan (16<sup>th</sup> century) when stone became commonly used – examples are the Old Grammar School, Tudor House 1 at 8 High Street West, at 50 High Street East, as also the doorways in Unicorn Passage and to the former White Hart. There followed another about 120 years later that gave us such Georgian buildings as Culpin's, Martin's and The Crown, but also the fronts of many shops in the High Street. In those days the High Street must have been wider to allow room to erect new frontages or front buildings that give the town its Georgian appearance, although behind there remain parts of much older construction. Thirdly came the Victorian revival the result of the School's expansion under the Rev'd Edward Thring. Most of these buildings are the School boarding houses but also the fine town houses in High Street West opposite Lorne House.

And what of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? In the last 100 years only two new dwellings have been built in the High Street; both at its East end. This generation's contribution to Uppingham's townscape is confined to inserting shop windows – some not at all beautiful. But we have tidied up the buildings, planted trees, cut the grass and hung flower baskets, besides putting in pavements and cleaning the streets. Uppingham looks the better for it.

## Features of Uppingham's Layout



Hopes Yard c1950



Uppingham Market Place

Between the High Street and the Church is the **Market Place** where for over 800 years people have bartered, bought and sold meat, foods, shoes, clothes and where they obtained cloth, salt, or some luxuries from itinerant traders. Buildings such as Ashdale's, the Post Office, The Vaults started as market stalls and were allowed to stay so that they became permanent. The island shop is said to be the location of the town's medieval market office and lock-up. Beyond the Church there was also a Beast Market for selling animals and a Hog Market where pigs were sold.

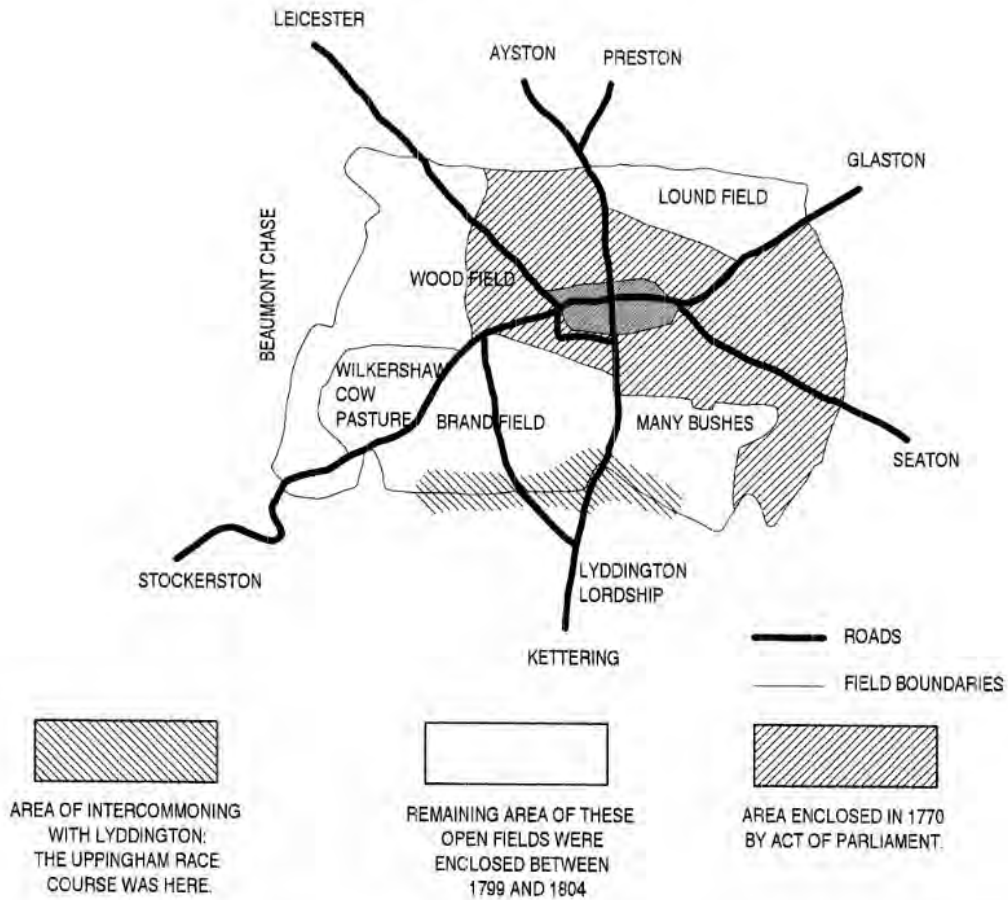
The market was established by Royal Charter of Edward I in 1281 that also gave the Lord of the Manor permission to hold two annual fairs – the origins of the town's annual **Lent Fair** and Fat Stock Show. These were lively and boisterous occasions with traders coming from all over eastern England to sell their wares. Those that sold cloth and clothes used to spread them out on the churchyard wall and over tombstones – to the scandal of the Churchwardens. There was much drinking and in about 1580 a celebrated murder when two of the peddlers quarrelled. In later years it was the custom to pen sheep and livestock along the High Street (similar to what happens nowadays at the annual Fat Stock Show). Rings for tethering these beasts, and also horses at other times of the year, can still be found on the fronts of The Bookshop and of No 8 High Street West. In nearby Orange Street, traders sold oranges to the townsfolk at Fair time – hence the name.

Later, in 1751, the **Turnpike Roads** had an equal effect on the layout of the town. Two of these passed through Uppingham; the first from Leicester to Wansford where it joined the Great North Road and a second from Northampton to Nottingham. As a result for the first time it became possible for mail and passengers to reach London in a day. The crookedness of the crossroads where High Street and Orange Street meet meant that High Street was no longer used as the east/west through route. Instead the Leicester/Wansford turnpike road ran along North Street – the milestone can be seen in North Street West - with the result that this part of the town became more important. And by 1779 the number of **inns and alehouses** in Uppingham had increased to 27; the inns where coach passengers stayed and the alehouses where the carters and their servants drank alongside the inhabitants of the town. It is at this period that The Falcon became the most important inn, where all the mail coaches stopped. Due to the steepness of Church Lane (London Road) coaches coming from the south turned along South View and up Queen Street, then called Horn Lane because it was here the postillion blew his horn announcing the arrival of the coach, then turning along High Street East and into The Falcon through the arch now filled by the glass front doors, to reach the yard behind.

A hundred years later in 1894 the London North Western Railway built a branch **railway** line from Uppingham to connect with their main line at Seaton. Goods and passengers now used this in place of the horse drawn coaches and carts. A new road called Station Road was built and many of the children of the town earned pocket money carrying bags and cases for pupils of Uppingham School to and from the boarding houses.

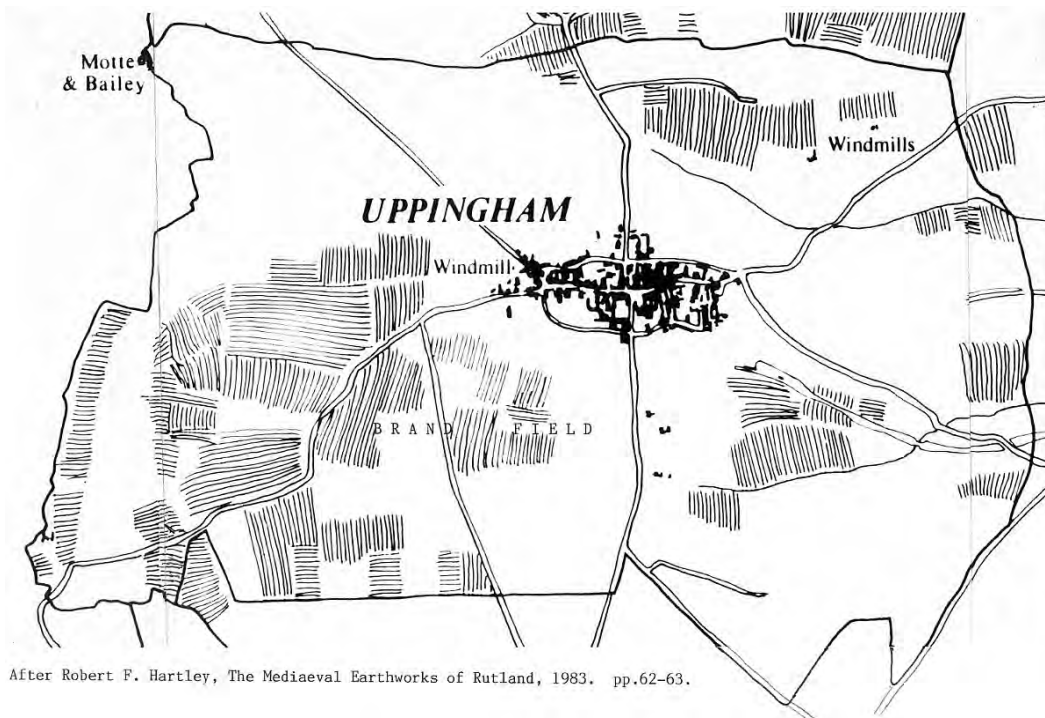
After the First World War **motor vehicles**, cars and lorries took over from the trains. The railway station was finally closed in June 1964, though British Rail still carried out a total redecoration two years afterwards – because it was due ! Once more roads were the most important means of communication, leading to such an increase in numbers of vehicles that buildings in parts of the centre of the town were cleared to make car parks. Last of all a new bypass was built north of the town to remove east/west through traffic not just from the High Street, but out of the town altogether.

## The Common Fields



( Norman Tomson, ULHSG )

## Ridge and Furrow



## From Leighfield to the Grammar School

*As the history and buildings of Uppingham School is well documented, these notes concentrate on some of the many other interesting buildings to be seen but are less well known.*

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In medieval times Uppingham was surrounded by three great open fields named the Lound Field, Wood Field and Brand Field, together with three areas of common pasture called Wilkershaw Cow Pasture, The Brand (shared with Lyddington) and Many Bushes. Until late into the 18<sup>th</sup> century the open fields were divided into pieces called selions and furlongs made up of strips of land and were not separated by hedges. This was changed by the Enclosures of 1771 and 1804 when the land was shared out amongst the inhabitants of the town into fields bounded by hedges. This is the position we see today.

**Leighfield** is the name of a part of the ancient Royal Forest of Rutland lying between Belton and Braunston. It means a clearing in the woods. Leighfield School is built in the open field once called the Brand Field. When this area was inclosed in 1804 the strips disappeared and instead there was created a field owned by John Bullock, a butcher who also owned the Royal Oak Inn in Queen Street. Eventually the land was bought by Uppingham School in 1916, levelled and became part of the Middle Field. They sold a portion in 1969 to Rutland County Council to build a second Primary School in Uppingham to take children from surrounding villages when their schools were closed.

Proceeding from Leighfield down Newtown Road on the left the gardens in front of Nos 14 & 16 used to be the **sheep dip** owned by Cornelius Bayley, the pharmacist before Boots who sold numerous patent medicines and ointments used by farmers to treat their livestock.







**Stone Cottages 1995**



**Uppingham Theatre and No 28 Stockerston Road**



**The Maltings No 46 High Street West**

The original name for the two old cottages at the corner of Stockerston Road is **Stone Cottages**. They were built about 1810-20 by the Drake family of stonemasons for the foreman and deputy foreman in charge of digging stone from the quarries at this end of town bordering Folly Lane and at Bailey Close, which is why this area is called **The Pitts**.

Along Stockerston Road at No 48 was built as the town's **fever hospital** but never used. Instead, years later an isolation hospital was built beyond the two windmills on the Glaston Road where is now the commercial rose nursery. There was another **windmill** at the site of the Science School, commemorated in the name of the private school called Windmill House. A fourth and oldest was in the field next the Leicester Road near Castle Rise.

Nearby is the **School Theatre** built in 1904 as a combined theatre and gymnasium to commemorate the 215 OUs, including 8 killed, who fought in the Anglo-Boer War of 1899-1902. The building was opened by Field Marshal Lord Roberts of Kandahar. Look at the **cottage** (No 28) standing next the path alongside the Theatre. The fine dressed stone front is deceptive because this was once a stable or barn for animals, shown by the blocked up ventilation slit window set in the side wall behind the ceonothus bush. The shape of the single storey structure with pointed roof can be seen in the mortar and more clearly at the other end by the entrance to Windmill House. These three dwellings (Nos 24/26/28) were once a hovel with attached cattle shed – the family living in the part nearer the town and the animals at the other end next the Theatre. In Victorian times a family of poachers called Andrews lived in one of the cottages; so fleet of foot they could run down a deer.

The road junction may once have been a **village green**. See how Nos 58 & 60 are built into the open space far forward of their neighbour Gamble Cottage No 56. Sundial Cottage and the Frog Island houses are similar encroachments into the highway.

The cottage at No 46 High Street West called **The Maltings** with its thatch roof is a yeoman farmer's house built within the town as was usual in Uppingham, instead of in the midst of its farmland. Behind there was a yard leading into North Street West, barns, storehouses, slaughterhouses, a maltings (for making beer) and anything else a farmer needed. The dairy used to be the other side of North Street (at No 34 North Street West) where the late Tom Tabram before World War Two would drive his cattle down the Leicester Road twice a day for milking. The butter-churn that used to be outside the Leighfield School Secretary's office was lent by Mr John Tabram; in it his mother Olive used to make butter for the family and to sell in the market. Notice the little square window or squint to the right of the front door. In the old days all houses had to have these (there is another at No 38 besides the passage entrance to Sheilds Yard) so that the night watchman going his rounds could check householders had properly drawn down their fires before going to bed. When all houses were thatched like this one, fires could be very dangerous. In 1777 one third of Belton village was destroyed by a fire started by a servant girl carelessly emptying an ash pan.

Nearby at No 42 the **fluted columns** holding the portico above the front door are said to have come from the grandstand of the old Uppingham racecourse located near the Community College. The carved stone eagle that marked the finishing post used to sit above the portico, but has been removed to the top of the wall in the garden behind and though hidden by ivy can be seen from Sheilds Yard. This grand house with its neighbour No 40 was built by a solicitor William Gilson soon after 1851 when he changed his name to Sheild – hence Sheilds Yard. He and his family lived at No 40 Wenlock but his office with its grand entrance was at No 42. His clerks worked at No 38 where still survives the Victorian iron safe as big as an Aga cooker, let into the wall. All the old hovels in **Sheilds Yard** have been cleared but the pump dated 1802 and initials WG (for William Gamble not Gilson), remains.



**Tudor House 1, No 8 High Street West**



**The Market Lock-Up Office c1820**



**The Falcon Hotel and Jubilee Fountain**

On the other side of High Street West between Spring Back Way and School Lane all the old buildings were replaced in the 19<sup>th</sup> century by Uppingham School classrooms and boarding houses. On the front of the **Victoria Tower** (1898) above the entrance is a statue of Archdeacon Robert Johnson, the School's founder. The School badge is best seen at the front of the Theatre or above the entrance to the School Library.

The building at Nos 32 (the One Stop Shop) and 34 (School Porter's Lodge), once **Love's Bakery** and Cake Shop is remarkable because it, and the Rutland Bookshop at No 13 High Street West together with the new houses at the East End, are the only buildings using bricks in the whole length of the High Street East and West.

At the bottom of School Lane can be seen the **Masonic Gate**. Next, No 15 until a few years ago **The White Hart** public house, is owned by the School. The earliest mention of this building is in 1634 but we know it must be older because of its Tudor front doorway. It has had several other names amongst them the Cross Keys. Old records said that a certain widow was given permission to live in the cellar as long as she liked for 6d a year rent, but as this is a hall-house they probably meant the room at the left of the front door used as a store for salt and other preservatives. John Beaver, whose gravestone near the Church's south door commemorates "That Honest Man which stood up for the Common of Uppingham" once owned this inn. Two of the landlords met with misfortune. In 1774 John Laxton died from the bite of a mad dog and in 1876 Joseph Askew going to examine the sewer trench where the previous night a cart had fallen in, slipped and himself falling in, broke his leg.

On the opposite side of the High Street, No 8 or **Tudor House 1** is one of the oldest dwellings in Uppingham, perhaps older than the Grammar School. When it was built – we now think about 1600 AD – the front door was at the back on the side away from the street. Look at the foot scraper (curiously these useful pieces of ironwork seem to appear mostly on the north side of streets in Uppingham) and the rings fixed into the stone either side of the front door for people to tie the reins of their horses when they called at the house. Behind is the **Thring Centre**, once called the Manor House that was built in the 17<sup>th</sup> century when one branch of the Falkner family decided Tudor House was too old fashioned and inconvenient to live in any longer. Within the arms of the older house is another built by the solicitor William Henry Brown for his daughter who marrying the son of the Rector of Ridlington ever after refused to leave her parental home !

At the corner of the **Market Place** stands isolated a small shop that until recently and for a long time was a greengrocers. It is said that in the time of the first Queen Elizabeth this was the market office and town lock-up. Before the Second World War it was known as Stilton House because of the cheeses made in its cellar. In the cellar wall is a blocked up entrance that is the basis of a story there used to be a passage under the High Street connecting to the cellars under Beans the coffee shop at No 3 High Street East but it is more likely it was an extension now filled in of the cellar under the pavement, the same as exists at No 4 Nortons.

Once there were nine inns surrounding the Market Place. Today the Vaults (its old name was The Duke of Wellington) and the Falcon are all that are left. **The Falcon** has been known by this same name for the last 400 years. In about 1870 a new top floor was added and in the 1960s the old coach entrance was glassed in and now used as reception, sitting room and snack bar. In former times stage coaches from the south drove right in through this space to the yard and stables behind. There is an old well under the floor near the bar. It is said the ghost of a highwayman returns to look for the bag of stolen money he threw in there as he galloped through on his horse when he was being chased after robbing a coach on Galley Hill. He was caught and hanged for his crimes before he could recover his loot.



**Uppingham Post Office, Market Place**



**Parish Church of St Peter and St Paul**



**John Beaver's headstone**

At the other side of the High Street on the corner is **Norton's** at No 4. This has been an ironmongers shop for the past 200 years. In the time of Elizabeth I it was called Gibsons Shops, but nobody now remembers who Gibson was. The shop has cellars which run beneath the pavement and out under the Market Place – similar ones under the High Street were filled in some seventy years ago in case they collapsed under the weight of delivery lorries. Above the shop entrance is a plough which is thought to be an example of what was called a Rutland Plough introduced about 170 years ago. The plough has been there for nearly as long. The shop once belonged to a wealthy widow Rachel Pepper who owned many properties in the town. In her Will she left half to her niece, half to her nephew and £5 to her daughter to buy mourning clothes to wear at her mother's funeral. What did she do to so upset her mother ?

In the centre of the Market Place is the **Victoria Jubilee Fountain** to provide people with drinking water commemorating the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Queen Victoria's reign in June 1887. It was (we think, but nobody is quite sure) designed by Thomas Jackson the famous architect responsible for the School's Tercentenary Block and built by one of the Thorpe family of Uppingham stonemasons. It replaced a column holding three gas lamps and before 1800 there was pillar with a plinth but nothing on top remnants perhaps of the old market cross.

In the years 1790 to 1810, the buildings now the Post Office, Ashdale Pharmacy, The Vaults, the Chinese Takeaway and No 6 were owned by a wealthy wine merchant and banker called James Hill. All these were old properties when he bought them, but he gave each a face-lift using large blocks of fine white Clipsham stone. The **Post Office** has been here only since 1896 when it moved from the present Garden Hotel in High Street West. After Hill died in 1810, the building was owned by Leonard Bell also a wine merchant, then Miss Jemima Adams who ran a girls' school, to be followed by a doctor's family called Brown who had their surgery here. In 1896 it became the Post Office and from 1917 was leased by the Post Master General until purchased by the late Mr Keith Toon, Post Master.

From the Market Place it is only a few yards to the **Parish Church**. This is by far the oldest building in Uppingham, dating from the 12<sup>th</sup> century though many people think the carved heads of saints set in the walls either side of the north door and in the Lady Chapel are left over from an earlier Saxon building. Surprisingly the Church received its present dedication to St Peter and St Paul only in the 16<sup>th</sup> century and we have no idea by what name or names it was known before. There are several excellent little pamphlets on sale in the Church about the structure, its history, Rectors, organs and churchyard. One should go into the church to look at the medieval font said to have been found buried in the churchyard and Jeremy Taylor's pulpit, a truly exceptional example of Jacobean carved woodwork.

Leaving by the Church door turn left and follow the footpath round the west end of the building to better see the view to the south. At the right of the path leading from the south porch is a single low gravestone commemorating John Beaver (d. 1632), once owner of the White Hart Inn in High Street West –

*That honest man which stood up for the Common of Uppingham*

More precisely, he prevented the take-over of the common pasture called The Brand by the people of Lyddington. The gravestone is the oldest in the **churchyard**. There are many others carved in different and interesting shapes using materials such as stone, slate and marble. Some of the names can still be read, recalling well known Uppingham families - Ingrams, Thorpes, Freemans, Freers, etc. Lower down the slope is the War Memorial to men from Uppingham who fought and died in the two World Wars and near it the tall carved cross that marks the grave of Rev'd Edward Thring the second founder of Uppingham School.

**Archdeacon Johnson's Grammar Schoolroom 1584**



**The Old Schoolroom c1935**



**View from Beast Hill 1994**

The lime trees shading the E-W path were planted in 1784. For over 400 years boys hurried this way to and from lessons, between Archdeacon Johnson's School and the Hospital of Christ Almshouse, now the School's Library. The **Grammar School** was built in 1584 to provide free grammar education for local boys; the forerunner of Uppingham School. There was a Master and an Usher each taking a class at opposite ends of the single room. At the peak above the entrance are inscribed three Biblical Quotations in Latin, Greek and Hebrew, the languages the boys were taught at the time -

<i>Train a child in the way he should go.</i>	<i>Proverbs 22.6</i>	<i>(Hebrew)</i>
<i>Suffer the little children to come unto me.</i>	<i>Matthew 19.14</i>	<i>(Greek)</i>
<i>Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth.</i>	<i>Ecclesiastes 12.1</i>	<i>(Latin)</i>

And above the door -

*Let nothing unseemly spoken or seen touch these wall wherein are boys.* (Latin)

The older of the two photographs opposite shows some of the iron railings that were taken for salvage during the Second World War – the Church's PCC was paid £5. 11s. 2d. Also the sundial standing on top of the south wall that had to be taken down because its weight was making the wall bow outwards dangerously.

This is the where our walk ends. There are many more interesting places to see and explore in the town – old buildings, stories of ghosts, passages and yards. For those who are interested to know more about the Parish Church, in the rack inside there is a leaflet about its history and another that describes what to look for on a walk around the churchyard listing the many types of trees and flowers growing there.

A **list of books** in the Uppingham Library that tell much more about the town and its past -

Alan Rogers	The Making of Uppingham	ULHSG 2003.
[Members]	Uppingham in 1851	ULHSG 2001.
[Members]	Uppingham in 1802	ULHSG 2002.
[Members]	In Living Memory Series – Pt 1 Uppingham at War	ULHSG 2005.
[Members]	Pt 2 Uppingham in Peacetime	ULHSG 2007.
A Traylen	Uppingham in Rutland, Vol 7 In Rutland Series	Spiegel 1982.



**A drawing of the Uppingham Fat Stock Show 2004**



## UPPINGHAM LOCAL HISTORY GROUP RESEARCH STUDIES

### The Court Rolls of the Manor of Preston with Uppingham

- Part 1. Introduction, Indenture Tripartite of 1656 and the 1664 Uppingham Hearth Tax.  
2. The Latin Volume 1658 – 1684.  
3. The British Library Roll 1735 – 1736 and Northampton Record Office fragment (n.d).  
4. Volume A 1737 – 1767.  
5. Volume B 1769 – 1789.  
6. *Volume C 1790 – 1808.*

### The Court Rolls of the Rectory Manor of Uppingham

- Vols IV - VII Court Rolls 1738 – 1858.*  
VIII Court Rolls 1858 – 1880.  
IX Court Rolls 1880 – 1936.  
X Court Minute Book 1791 – 1821.

### Property Studies

- ULHG 1. Stocks of Uppingham (formerly Ovens). [ No. 17 High Street East ]  
3. Uppingham School Bookshop, Parts 1 & 2. [ No. 9 High Street East ]  
4. James Smith's Messuage. [ Reeves Yard, High Street East ]  
5. The Lake Isle Town House & Restaurant. [ No. 16 High Street East ]  
10. The Beast Hill Messuage. [ Nos 1 to 13 South View ]  
11. *Hopes Yard : An Overview* [ *Nos 1-15 Hopes Yard, HSE & NSE* ]  
19. The Congregational Church and Manse. [ Nos 1 & 3 Adderley Street ]  
20. Meadhurst School Boarding House. [ No. Ayston Road ]  
21. Stone Cottages. [ Nos 2 & 4 New Town Road ]  
22. The Hollies, Colbridge House & Craigella. [ Nos 58-62 High Street East ]  
23. Seacy Villa [ No 4 Stockerston Road ]  
31. The Woodfield Windmill. [ Field OS 7937, Leicester Road ]

### Mini-Histories

- ULHG(MH) 1. Bennett's, Gambles or Sheild's Yard. [ No 36 High Street West ]  
2. *Hotchpotch Cottage* [ *Nos 4 – 16 North Street West* ].  
3. Newell House. [ No 26 High Street West ]  
4. Leighfield to Grammar School [ Stockerston Rd & High St West ]

### Other Titles

- Godfrey's Terrier 1619 : Belton-in-Rutland.  
Indenture Quadripartite : dated 16 March 1687.  
Agreement and Settlement on the marriage between Edward Fawkener of Uppingham to Susan Waite of London,  
[Terrier of Preston with Uppingham and Scarlies Manor properties].  
"Notes" on the History of Uppingham : Canon Aldred & Rev E A Irons (edited).  
*"Further Notes" on the History of Uppingham : Canon Aldred (edited).*

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Titles in italics are in preparation.