

THE MAKING OF UPPINGHAM as illustrated in its topography and buildings



ALAN ROGERS
2003

THE MAKING OF UPPINGHAM

This booklet contains the text of the Annual Bryan Matthews Lecture which Professor Alan Rogers delivered in Uppingham in March 2003. In this booklet, the origins and growth of the market town of Uppingham (Rutland) is explored, mainly through maps and its buildings. The town seems to have commenced its life as an offshoot from a main manor (Ridlington), an Anglo-Saxon multiple estate, although there may have been an earlier settlement on this site. Although not mentioned in Domesday Book, it grew significantly enough to cause the road systems in the area to diverge into the town. Its layout along the east-west road from Stamford to Leicester was changed in the thirteenth century by the addition of a planned market place. It rivalled Oakham (the county town) in the sixteenth century, was substantially altered in the seventeenth century and became a small town of Georgian fashion in the eighteenth century. The nineteenth century saw the town become a regional centre through the Poor Law Union which stretched from near Stamford to Tugby, from Gunthorpe in the north to Rockingham in the south, while at the same time the Free School became a major public school for out-of-town boys which changed the face of the south-western quarter. The twentieth century saw the railway come and go without leaving much of a mark on the face of this small market town which until the local government disaster of 1974 housed the Rural District Council offices for a somewhat smaller area. Today the town retains examples of building from the fourteenth century church, and its street layout, although in part destroyed by changes in the last forty or so years, still retains its essentially historical character.

Professor Alan Rogers, FRHistS, FSA, FRSA, was a resident of Uppingham for several years and has studied both the documentary and topographical/architectural history of the town along with members of the Uppingham Local History Study Group. He is well known for his publications in local history, especially on the history of Stamford nearby.

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Fig 1: High Georgian in High Street East

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THE MAKING OF UPPINGHAM

I am very honoured to be invited to give the Bryan Matthews lecture this year for the Society to which he devoted so much time and energy. I did meet Bryan once many years ago and I greatly respect his scholarship and local concern. I am also mindful of others at Uppingham School who have helped advance Rutland's history, such as J C Jennings, Arthur Hawley and Geoffrey Frowde. I have drawn on their work as well. It would be very good if a new generation of Uppingham School staff would find it possible, despite the pressures on them, to continue this tradition.

I am particularly pleased to be able to make this presentation in order to draw together most of the different themes that I have been working on in connection with the town's history. I am only too conscious (as I am frequently reminded) that I am a newcomer, an outsider, and during my talk I will make one or two appeals for information which I lack. However, I think that my outsidership (if there is such a word) can be an advantage, for I look at the town with a dispassionate view and a wide range of experience of other towns.

I have of course drawn heavily on the work of those who have been here for many years, notably Peter Tomalin, Elaine Jones and Peter Lane; and I have had the great advantage of the advice of a member of the Royal Commission for Historical Monuments (now English Heritage) who looked round the town and several buildings with me. But what I shall put forward is my own interpretation, applying to Uppingham many years of local topographical studies, and I do not expect others to agree with everything I say. After all history is **his**-tory; that is, it is what one person makes of the past, and that is likely to be different from what others make of the past. It is provisional and personal, and my talk is not likely to produce anything new to some people. It may however provoke others into disagreement and raise a number of questions requiring further study which others will I hope pursue.

ORIGINS

Let me first get rid of one myth - that Uppingham is not rightly a town but is a 'settlement'. Now, all places of residence are a settlement, whether town, village or farmstead. This suggestion I gather is based on the fact that Uppingham does not appear in Domesday Book. But lots of places are not mentioned in Domesday Book but clearly existed in their own right at the time. Uppingham was a settlement in exactly the same sense as were Preston, Ridlington, Wing, Glaston or Oakham, Stamford or even Leicester for that matter - it was not something special.

For, despite the absence of it by name in Domesday book, Uppingham, as its placename demonstrates, existed in the late fifth or early sixth century (there are a few signs of earlier occupation in prehistoric times, but whether these show a settlement on this site is not yet certain). Whenever it started, it almost certainly began as a farmstead. I have looked hard to see if I could identify where that very early farm was; and *if* any remains exist at all in the street plan of the town, I suggest it may be somewhere near where the Crown is today. I will come back to reasons for that later.

So Uppingham existed well before Domesday times, almost certainly as one of the components of Ridlington manor. What we are dealing with here is a well-known feature of Anglo-Saxon society, what is called a *multiple estate*, an estate made up of several components but taking the name of one of them (not always the largest). "... placename elements like *wic*, *ham* and *ingaham* bear a significant relationship to ancient units of lordship...; topographic names [like Uppingham] ... are often older than habitative names" (Dodgshon and Butlin 1978:67).

So Uppingham (or at least its current name) came into being no later than the late fifth or early sixth century - and possibly earlier. In the five or six hundred years between this point and Domesday Book, it would have grown, as would Preston, Ayston, Wing, Ridlington etc - probably into a sizeable village by 1086. All of these stood on the top of hills - a particular feature of many settlements in this part of the country.

A cross-roads town

A second myth is that Uppingham in origins is a crossroads town. It wasn't - although it is a cross-roads town now! We only have to look at the early street layout of the town to see that (like Stamford) it is an east-west town. All the east-west routes are wide; the north-south streets are relatively narrow (except Queen Street which I will deal with later). If anything, Uppingham is a one-street town - built up along an east-west street.

The east-west route

But let us look at the street which it would seem Uppingham was built along. It was clearly the Leicester to Stamford route (Peterborough was a minor concern; Wansford was more important as a link to the Great North Road). Now, early long-distance routes usually consisted of a corridor, not one road, to be used according to different weather conditions and different goods being carried. There are at least three such routes from Stamford to Leicester - one through Manton and Martinthorpe; one through Wing and Preston and Ridlington; and one close to Uppingham. All of them, as is usual, follow the watershed ridges between river valleys.

But when we look more closely at the east-west route near Uppingham, we notice that it makes a swerve. It leaves the watershed and drops down the steep valley of Gashouse Hill and up again into Uppingham. It is clear that the east-west route diverts from the early road along the watershed to come into Uppingham. In other words, **the road existed before Uppingham, lying just off the main through route, became important.** There was some kind of settlement here which, as it became a centre of gravity, caused travellers to go out of their normal way onto a more inconvenient pathway. That is unlikely simply to have been a small village.

The north-south route

Exactly the same thing happened to the north-south route. We need to divide this route into three sections - north of Uppingham, south of Uppingham, and the route *through* Uppingham.

The first north-south road

Again we need to take a wide view. The issue, believe it or not, is how to get from Nottingham to London. One can go east to Grantham and down the Great North Road; there was also an early route called Sewstern Lane which ran from Nottingham across country to Stamford and then down the Great North Road. One could go west to Derby and down Watling Street. Or one could meander through the villages to Melton Mowbray, then to Oakham and from Oakham go either to Stamford or to St Neots, both of which lay on the Great North Road. This last route is shown on several maps which - although they date from much later - clearly preserve early through routes. So, as the maps show, the early north-south route went through Glaston, not through Uppingham.



Figs 2 and 3: maps of Uppingham and Stamford compared; both are east-west towns, with wide east-west roads and narrow north-south lanes; both show signs of extension to the medieval areas again on the east and west sides rather than to north or south.

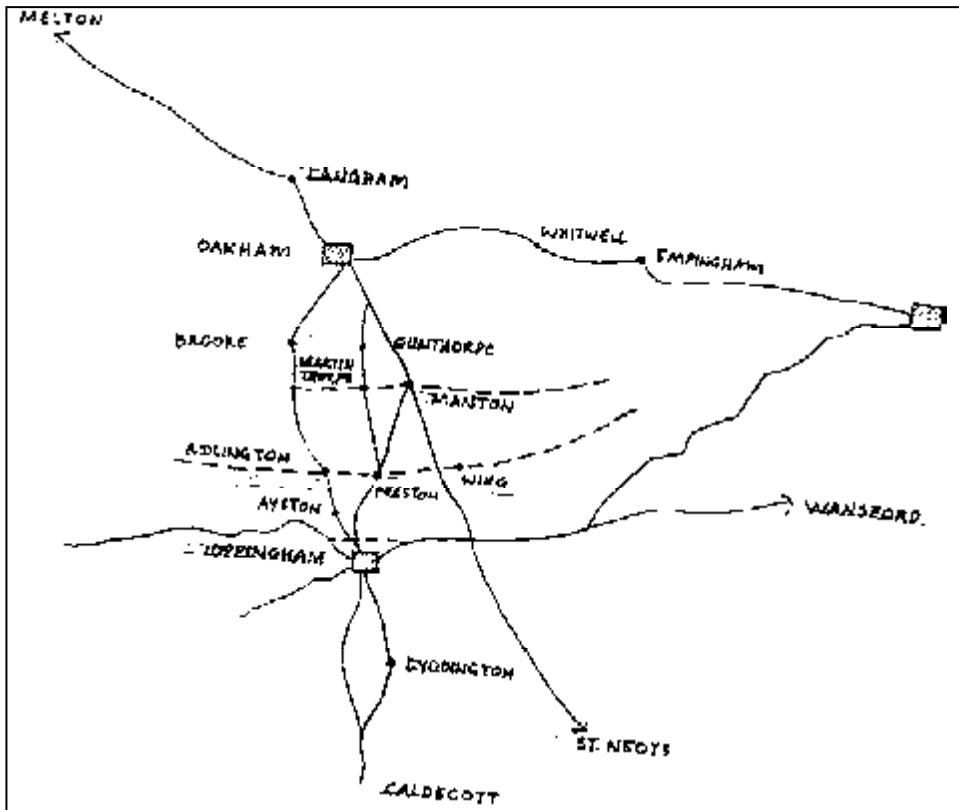


Fig 4: three possible east-west roads between Leicester and Stamford in the Uppingham area. The varied routes from Oakham to Uppingham are also shown.

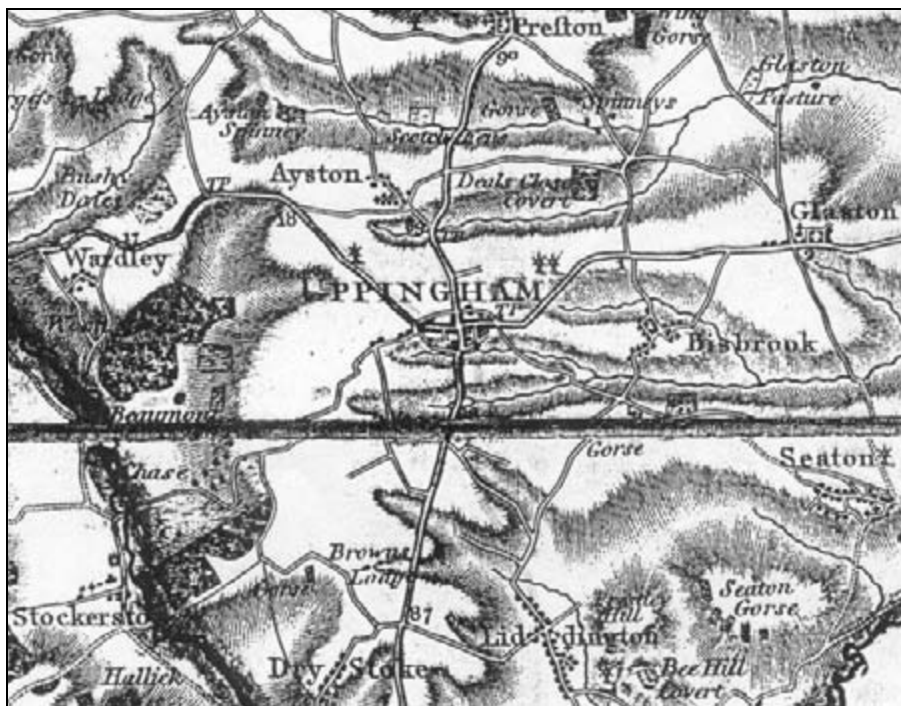


Fig 5: this map reveals the way the east-west road diverted to come to Uppingham, showing that something had grown up here significant enough to attract travellers into the settlement.



Fig 6: this interesting map (Harrison 1788) shows that some people saw the road between Uppingham and Glaston in terms of a link road to gain access to the main north-south road which ran from Oakham through Glaston to the main London Road at St Neots.



Fig 7: the roads south of Uppingham also show signs of change - originally through Lyddington and later over the high land to Caldecott (Cary 1793).

North of Uppingham

But this route too swung away to come to Uppingham. Once again there was a corridor of two or even three possible routes to Uppingham from Oakham, through Brooke and Ridlington or through Manton and Preston. We can see this divergence clearly in one of the early maps which shows a strong link from Uppingham to Glaston to join the earlier north-south road. The accuracy of these route maps is not important: what is important is the fact that they show the *perceptions* of travel at that time. People felt that Uppingham lay just off the main road, not on it.

South of Uppingham

South of Uppingham, the main road did not follow the present road but went through Lyddington. Almost every early map shows Lyddington to be the next stage after Uppingham on the way south. The present road which avoids Lyddington appears to date only from the turnpike days. The diversion away from Lyddington to the Stoke Dry route was not caused by the enclosure of Lyddington fields; rather the enclosure reflects the decline in use of that route which had already occurred.



Fig 8: one of many route maps showing road south through Lyddington.

The late use of the Stoke Dry road was of course because of the problem of how to get into Uppingham from the south. If you look at the stretch of road between the church and Uppingham Community College (really look, that is; look over the verges), you will see how it has been built up in the valleys and the tops have been shaven off the hills. So in medieval times, when those changes had not yet been made, that entry would have been much more difficult even than it now is. Coming along Gypsy Hollow (or Folly Lane) (shown on Figure 5) would have been easier but would have taken you well to the west of the town; it was perhaps a bypass to reach Ayston and beyond.

The direct road from the south into the town is often said to have come up and down over the hills and then, put off by the steep hill of the present London Road (the churchyard with its banks of steps reveals today how steep that originally was), it swung right to enter the town up Horn Lane/Queen Street, the name of the street recording the noise of the coaches' horns as they entered the town. I don't myself think that is very feasible; and it is possible to suggest an alternative. I think we have here a classic case of how to get up a steep slope, zig-zagging across the slope into the upper part of Southview to enter into the back of the Swan Inn and into the Market Place. I suggest the objective is the Market Place - and that again suggests a late road, not an early one. Going up Horn Lane does not give access to the northern route to Oakham - indeed Horn Lane ends in a sudden block at High Street East. It was clearly created *after* High Street had been laid out.



Fig 9: map of Uppingham 1804 from enclosure award; it shows the open nature of the town with large farmsteads inside the built-up area, the encroachment on the Market Place, and the north by-pass road with the tell-tale triangles of buildings on waste land at each end

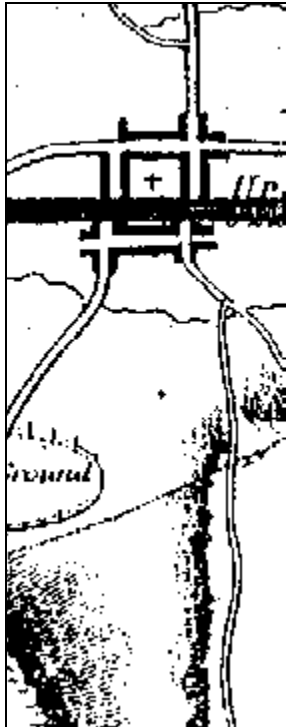


Fig 10: one of many maps showing the route from the north entering Uppingham to the east of the present Ayston Road.

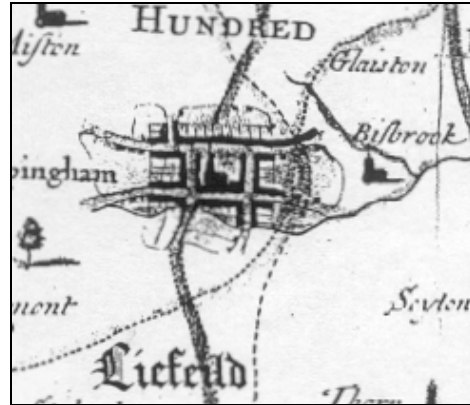


Fig 11: Morden's map of 1695 also shows the north road as distinct from the current Ayston Road.

The through route

But there is one direct route *through* the town. It is clearly very early, for it now is and was from early times very narrow.

We can see this route if we ask, where did the northern road enter the town and the southern route leave the town? The early maps are very ambiguous about this, showing various different points at which the roads into and out of Uppingham entered or left. I want to suggest that the earliest route is along the lane which passes in front of Tods Terrace and enters the Crown backyard. [The importance of the inns in Uppingham's history cannot be exaggerated; inns such as the Falcon, Unicorn, Bell, and Crown on the north side and the Swan and the George and Dragon on the south, and the White Hart and Horse and Trumpet on the west formed the starting and stopping places of all the communications Uppingham had with the region around.] This route then crosses High Street East, down Reeves Passage, and picks up the cross-country route to Lyddington. So here is the only uninterrupted route through the town.

And here is my first appeal for public information: *what is the name of that lane?* It does not seem to have a name or only late names. For the time being, I am calling it Reeves Lane but that is a very late name (about 1800). Yet it appears to me to be an important and very early through route - and it is one of the reasons I suggest the area of the Crown as the initial core of the town.



Fig 12: map showing the only uninterrupted route through Uppingham; from Tods Terrace it crosses through the Crown and down Reeves Passage. The Crown must have been a major centre for the town once (reproduced from the 1907 Ordnance Survey map)



Fig 13: back yard of Falcon Inn where many coaches entered the town.



Fig 14: map showing the inns lining the High Street with yards opening onto back lanes so that carts did not need to come into High Street except from east or west.

What then can we conclude from this? Both the east-west and the north-south routes swung from their early lines to come to Uppingham. But they did not form a cross-roads town; for something significant had already come into existence to make such deviations take place. We know that Uppingham had a market charter in 1281 (VCH); but it was very common for such charters to be given to places where a market already existed by tradition for many years before. The layout of the town suggests a planned market town; and on the basis of other such planned towns, I would date this to the early thirteenth century or even the end of the twelfth century rather than the end of the thirteenth century. In other words, a market square was laid out perhaps as much as 100 years before the charter in 1281. There are hints that the parish church originated about 1200 from fragments which were found during the restoration in the 1860s, although the earlier church may not have been on the site of the current church, and that date would in my opinion accord well with the planning of the town.

What existed in Domesday times?

But that is still a bit late for this road swing. It is probable that a significant settlement had grown up here by the time of Domesday Book. It was I think near where the Crown is; for this is where the entry into the town from both north and south come; and it is the area where the existing tenement boundaries are more disturbed than anywhere else. There is one other small piece of evidence which needs careful exploration (I have not had time to do this). Peter Lane informs me that the Rector of Uppingham received pensions from some eight local churches - and that is often an indication of a very early church. It is therefore likely that Uppingham possessed one of the three churches listed as belonging to Ridlington manor at the time of Domesday, although of course it may not have been on the site of the existing church which probably dates from the laying out of the market square. I have looked at the parish boundaries of the area to see if there are signs of a larger church area of which Uppingham church was the centre, and although there may be one or two hints of a larger grouping, nothing can be deduced clearly from these. So that this is just a guess at this stage.

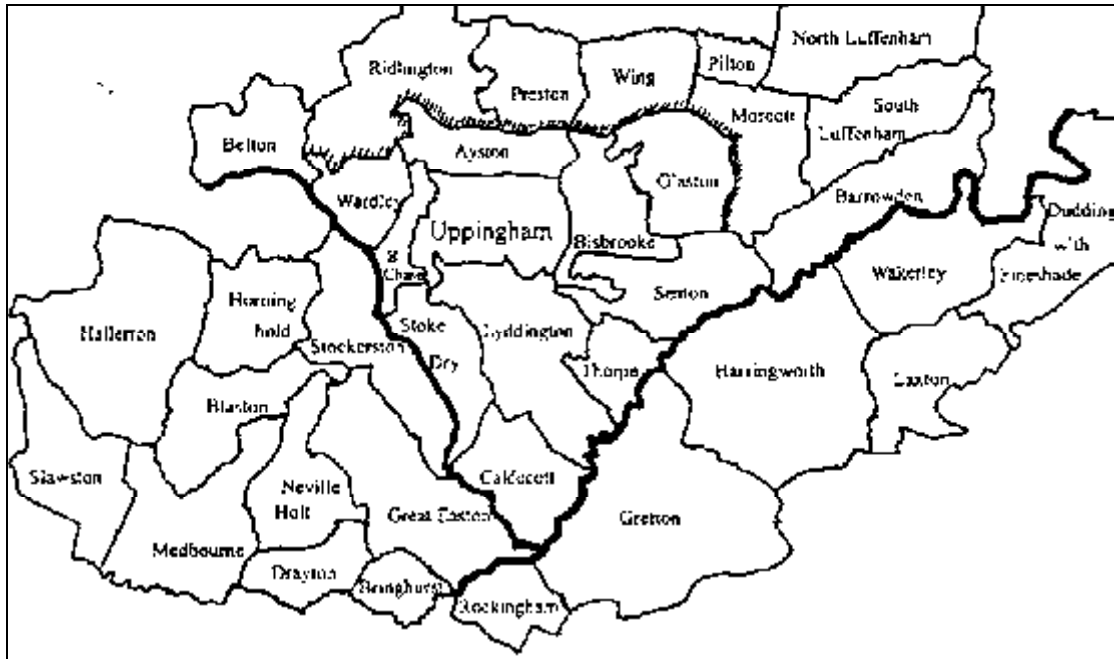


Fig 15: map of parishes around Uppingham; the only line which seems to indicate a larger area apart from the county boundary is hatched.

There is I think one other thing which suggests that Uppingham had somehow grown in importance by or soon after the time of Domesday - and that is the planned market town itself. Why did the lord of the manor in about 1200 choose to build his market at the village of Uppingham rather than on one of his other manors such as Ridlington? A look at the map would suggest that Preston would have been a prime candidate for such a planned market. Like Uppingham, it stood on top of a hill and was a sizeable settlement - and it was also on one of the east-west routes. Uppingham had more space in its 'tableland' on the top of its hill, it is true, and that may have been one reason. Another may have been proximity to the Bishop of Lincoln's township at Lyddington which also came to possess a market very early - for there was clearly rivalry between these two estates. But I don't think we can ever know why the lord of the manor chose Uppingham to lay out his market place - though it does suggest that Uppingham already had more importance than a village by that date.

The medieval planned town

But lay it out he did. Its original size can I think be guessed at. I suggest that it was bounded on the east by what is now Queen Street (Horn Lane earlier) which is I think why that road which very significantly leads nowhere is wide (it was I think once wider; there are signs of encroachment on the west side). It is bounded on the west by School Lane. It is bounded on the south by the lane which runs from what was once the bottom of School Lane (there was of course no hospital or school at the time of the planned town) along Leamington Terrace, across the churchyard (probably marking the original size of the churchyard), along Southview to the bottom of Queen Street - but not, I think, further, for it is not easy to see how a through road in use can be interrupted in the way that this one is.

The new Market Place was bigger than today. There were of course no encroachments inside it as there are today; and it is possible that the properties along the west side are also encroachments. There was however in medieval times a market hall with a town room above it in the middle of the Market Place according to one source (VCH).

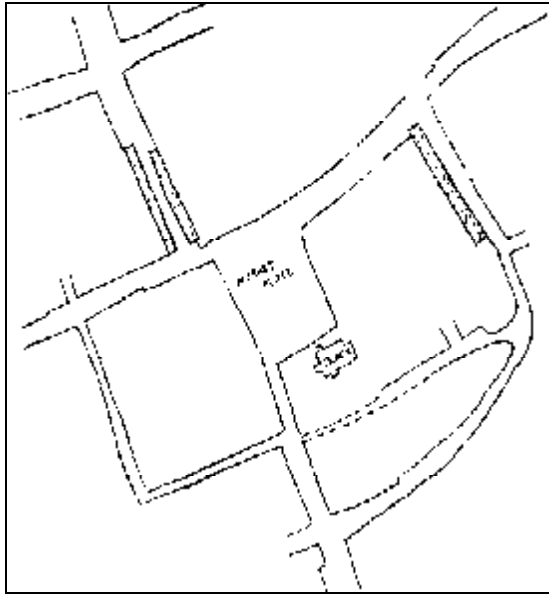


Fig 16: a market place was added to High Street, probably about 1200; the planned town stretched from School Lane in the west to Queen Street in the east.



Fig 17a: the angle of this wall in High Street West, taken with one or two adjacent walls all showing the same angle, suggests that these properties were built on what were once open field selions.



Fig 17b: a row of what are probably late medieval houses on north side of High Street East, similar to houses in St Paul's Street, Stamford.

Conclusion as to the town plan

Uppingham then is a street town, not a cross-roads town. It began life as a farmstead, then became a village which attracted the main road from Stamford to Leicester. The village spread along the street and grew into something of a small town. Onto this was added a planned market area. It later expanded both eastwards and westwards in stages, as its shape seems to indicate. Signs of encroachment on medieval selions can I think be detected in the westward expansion, and it has been suggested that such signs can be seen on the eastward expansion but I am more doubtful about that. Later there came a northern bypass route (the present North Street), a very common feature of many medieval market towns (e.g. Newark). We can tell this from the tell-tale triangles of common land which attracted incoherent settlement at each end of the town - again a feature for which there are parallels in many other towns. I am less certain about Spring Back Way as a back lane; it is more likely to be an alternative entry to the town up the steep hill instead of Horn Lane.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF UPPINGHAM

Medieval Uppingham

And that brings us to medieval Uppingham. One thing which struck me immediately in Uppingham is the row of houses which line the north side of High Street East. They are very similar to the row inside Stamford which lines the north side of St Paul's Street. Both are what are called 'internal' or 'intra-mural suburbs' - that is, they are not mainstream but nevertheless lie within the town boundaries. Humbler tradesmen's properties outside the major trading area, they are often the oldest surviving buildings in the town, for being relatively poor, they have avoided redevelopment. That is certainly true in Stamford - we have examined every house in the St Paul's Street row in detail, and most are thirteenth century of the hall and cross-wing variety. Uppingham too has its surviving medieval houses. 45 High Street East is certainly an open hall with cross wing house of a variety known very widely in most medieval towns in this country. Dating from the fifteenth or early sixteenth century, it is probably the most important domestic building in Uppingham and should be Grade 2 starred. There are possible signs of other hall and cross-wing houses, for example 66 High Street East (fourteenth century?; without internal investigation, we cannot be certain). Whether there are any surviving medieval cellars in Uppingham as in Stamford, I do not know. There are many cellars in the town and I have been in several, but so far no medieval remains can be seen, but there are other cellars I have not seen. It is likely there are - or at least that some of the surviving cellars are medieval in origin but completely rebuilt by now.



Fig 18a: 45 High Street East, a late medieval open hall and cross wing house of a type well known in the area.



Fig 18b: 45 High Street East interior showing part of the open hall bracing.



Fig 19: 66 High Street East, probably medieval house once with open hall; note the different floor levels between the two parts of the house. It needs investigation.

The Tudor town

The Tudor period of timber-framed buildings dating from the period of what Professor Hoskins was fond of calling the Great Rebuilding of England is represented in Uppingham by (what I suppose we should now call the Old) White Hart in High Street West. Because it is the last known and largely complete representative of what must have been a fairly commonplace style of building at that time (many examples still remain in Stamford, and there are almost certainly such buildings in Uppingham other than 45 High Street East, all hidden behind later fronts, such as I suspect lies inside 42-44 High Street East which originally had an open hall which seems to have survived until at least 1699, as deeds show), the Old White Hart is an important building and its rarity value in Uppingham suggests that it might be listed Grade 2 starred. It is a great pity it has been lost to the town after over 400 years as a major inn for the region.

The founding in the 1570s of a small Free School for boys from the area around in a building near the church and of a Hospital (almshouse) for 12 old persons in the south-west corner of the town as it then stood did not have an immediate major impact on the town, except that both buildings were in stone rather than timber-framed, setting the tone for the next stage in the building of Uppingham. It had of course very important implications for the future but at the time it signified Uppingham's status (and probable size) in comparison with Oakham. There is evidence that, although Oakham was the county town, Uppingham was nearly as large and had status as an important town in the county administration (the county weights and measures were kept in Uppingham rather than in Oakham, VCH). But there were few close links between these two towns - Oakham looked to Melton and Uppingham to Stamford.



Fig 20: the Old White Hart, originally Tudor timber-framed; it was one of the town's most important inns from at least 1617 until its closure in 2001.



Fig 21: one of many doorways from late sixteenth or early seventeenth century built into various walls about the town.

The seventeenth century

The late sixteenth century and early seventeenth century can be seen in a number of stone doorways and walling but some of these are not in their original position. Timber-framing gave way to what is now called Stamford vernacular style (there is a great deal of it in Stamford) - stone with bulgy bays reaching up to the eaves (RCHM). There are many excellent examples in Uppingham from the seventeenth century.



Fig 22: two examples of seventeenth century stone building sometimes known as Stamford vernacular - with 'bulgy bays' reaching through to the eaves and often ending in small street-front gables. There are other examples in Uppingham.

But apart from this extensive rebuilding, the early seventeenth century saw a number of major developments in the town of a fascinating character. I have long urged that someone should look closely at what was happening in Uppingham between 1600 and 1660, a period of great internal change; perhaps the local historians at Leicester University will take it on. What we do know is intriguing.

There was a wealthy family called Fawkener of Uppingham and Stoke Dry; they seem to have made their wealth through trade. Anthony Fawkener was called a joiner, which probably means a builder of timber-framed houses like the Old White Hart; he repaired the church roof in the 1630s (VCH). By about 1627, they joined together to buy up one of the smaller manors in Uppingham called Scarles or Scarlies manor. They then bought out the lord of the manor, the Earl of Stamford son in law of the Earls of Exeter of Burghley House who had acquired Uppingham like so many other estates in this area. In other words, what we have is something of a management buy-out - prominent local worthies buying out an absentee landlord.

Just before these two events, there were two significant building projects going on more or less on the edge of the town at it was at this time - which have a remarkable similarity. The exact chronology is uncertain, but it would seem something like this. On the west side, what is now the Thring Centre was being built. Of the four large houses involved, this seems to be the earliest, but without a detailed survey it is not possible at the moment to determine its exact date (the front doorway is very late sixteenth or very early seventeenth century but may not be in its original position). Within its grounds was built what is now called Tudor House. This is built very loosely on the traditional hall and cross-wing pattern but on a massive scale, three or even four stories high and undercroft, a pattern which can be found in other parts of this region, especially in Northamptonshire. And here is my second appeal for local information: *when was the name Tudor House given to this building? is it very recent? and why Tudor?* - for it looks to me like seventeenth century rather than Tudor.

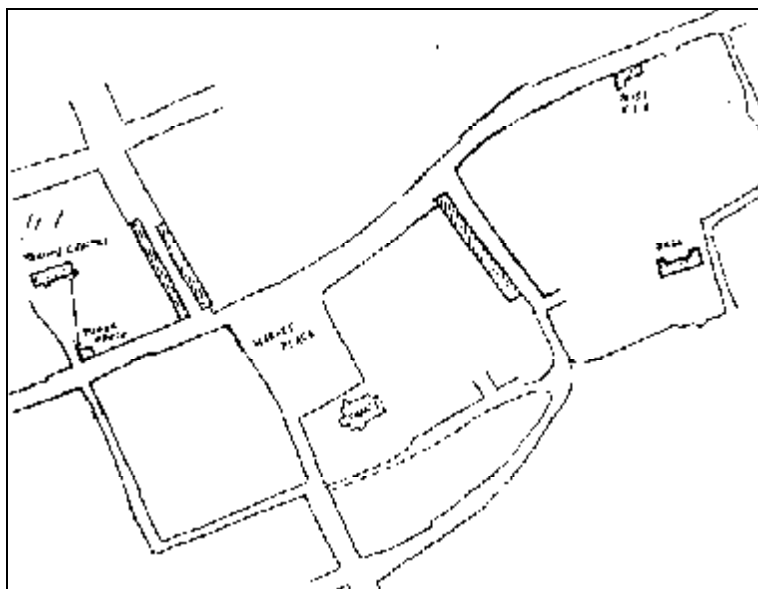


Fig 23: a map of Uppingham showing a) the building now called the Thring Centre and Tudor House to the west (probably between 1600 and 1620) and b) the Hall and 50-52 High Street East (dated to 1612 and 1616 respectively) - two large estates almost on the edge of the town as it then existed.



Fig 24: now called the Thring Centre, it is a late sixteenth or early seventeenth century building which needs detailed examination. The small windows indicate its early date (probably originally stone mullion windows); the porch is later. Who built it on such a grand scale?



Fig 25: Tudor House, built on a traditional hall and cross wing pattern but on a massive scale (the original front door was at the rear); again note the different floor levels. In what way is it related to what is now the Thring Centre nearby?

But at the same time or just a few years later on the east side of the town, the Hall was being built. Here we are on firmer ground, for it is dated to 1612 although it seems to incorporate parts of an earlier building. It is a magnificent hall building with two cross wings, probably larger than anything that Uppingham had seen so far. But like the Thring Centre, it is relatively low, mainly two stories only. Four years later, in 1616, in the same grounds there was built what is now 50-52 High Street East - like Tudor House three stories and based on an adapted form of the traditional hall and cross-wing pattern but on a large scale (now alas in divided ownership; although each part may be well cared for, it really needs loving restoration back into one property).

Who built these four major buildings? It is impossible to think that it could be someone other than the Fawkeners, for there cannot have been other families of equal or greater prominence. It is very unlikely to have been the Earl of Stamford who was lord of the manor at that time, for he lived elsewhere; and the Rectory Manor which had only recently come into existence did not need a manor house. I think it must have been members of the Fawkeners family who show signs of some rivalry at this time (one branch took another branch to court).

Now note the similarities. Both of the main houses are built on the outskirts of the town as it then was and away from the main road surrounded by extensive grounds, as though seeking privacy from the general public. Both the 'satellite buildings' are shown by later deeds to have belonged to the larger nearby house. And both of these stand beside a street opening into the property but appear to be turned away from the main road and to face towards the larger house. Peter Lane suggests these are stewards' houses, which is possible but a bit unlikely; the Fawkeners would have managed their own estates. They might perhaps have been dower houses but again they appear to be somewhat large for this. What seems to me to be a more plausible suggestion is that both started life as gatehouses to a major piece of property. 50-52 High Street East certainly contains medieval elements and is probably replacing an earlier building; and that may well be true of Tudor House also. But what now exists in both cases is clearly much grander than a gatehouse; so that whatever is going needs much more exploration. What is clear from both the buildings and the records is that from this time for more than a century, the lords of the manor of Uppingham lived in the town.



Fig 26: the Hall; a hall with two cross wings. A date stone says 1612 but it abuts against slightly earlier buildings; it has been refronted in the eighteenth century.



Fig 27: 50-52 High Street East, dated 1616; originally one house, it incorporates some medieval fragments. Smaller than Tudor House, it is however on much the same plan, hall with cross wing. The main entrance was almost certainly formerly at the rear.

Georgian elegance

The period when the town's lords were in residence was however relatively short. It may have lasted until 1747 when the manor was sold to the Earls of Gainsborough, and once again the town's lords were non-resident. Perhaps at this time, the Hall was refronted to improve its elegance; whether that was before the Fawkeners sold the manor or after again needs to be discovered. The Hall was apparently let, but the family in residence from time to time served as the leader of the town's celebrations (for instance, in 1815 after the battle of Waterloo). What is now the Thring Centre became a solicitor's house (the steward of one of the manors) and Tudor House and its next door neighbour became a doctor's residence and surgery. 50-52 High Street East became the residence of a sequence of gentry families.

During the eighteenth century, the town became (like Stamford to which it was closely tied) a trading town of some fashion. Crafts and professions including printing became more noticeable - Uppingham from the late seventeenth century had more than its fair share of stationers and booksellers. And the town was again rebuilt on this wealth (see Figure 1 on title page). Many of the older buildings in the town centre had elegant Georgian fronts put on (a few may have been completely rebuilt: but again detailed surveys by expert architectural historians will be needed before this can be determined). One of the earliest rebuildings is what is now Culpins on the corner of High Street East and Queen Street (there is a date stone of 1729 now located in the yard but that must be later than the surviving building which is turn of the century). A date on a drainpipe giving the year 1734 (10 High Street East) provides us with one indicator of the advance of gentrification along the High Street. Later buildings became more delicate as time went on. But farmsteads remained in the town, as the more rustic farmhouse of Thomas Baines in High Street West (dated 1787) and the number of eighteenth century barns several of which still survive show.



Fig 28: a very substantial early Georgian house with blocked windows (?window tax?); dates from about 1700 or earlier. It may have belonged to the Pepper family at the time of its building.



Fig 29: Georgian buildings:

- a) the Crown (early Georgian) at the very heart of the town
- b) a group of three buildings all with segmental-headed windows (one is dated 1734);
- c) and Baines' farmhouse dated 1787 in High Street West, altogether more rustic and certainly not out of a Georgian pattern book like the other buildings (it has no ornamented window surrounds or quoins).



Nineteenth century

Uppingham suffered like many other towns from growing population and limited space in which to house them - certainly until the enclosure of the town's open fields freed some space for building. Its population growth was not spectacular but was nevertheless steady - there were few serious setbacks such as plague. Dr Haviland in the late nineteenth century, looking at the outbreak of typhoid which sent the Grammar School out of town, described the town as being potentially a very healthy town with pure water supplies, good soil and drainage and good air - the disease was in this case man-made.

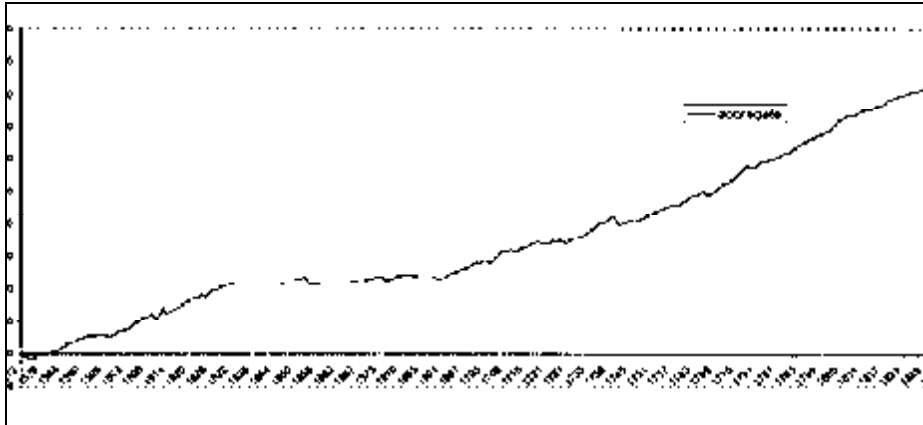


Fig 30: Population growth of Uppingham from parish registers - steady growth, not spectacular (J C Jennings, Uppingham School).

Courts and entries

But space was the problem. The first enclosure of the open fields took place in the 1770s, and the later one from 1799 to 1804. But even then building on the newly enfranchised land did not take place. Instead, the population was housed (as in many other towns) *behind* the existing streetfront houses and shops. Gardens were turned into yards as cottages were erected in small spaces - as at 26 High Street West [see note on page 26] and at 48 High Street East. Some consisted of just one or two cottages, others of more elaborate courts like Hopkins Court, Ingrams Court etc (now all gone - Stamford still has one or two preserved). The access to these was often through existing buildings or down short lanes. A few of these entries remain (one can be seen next door to 50-52 High Street East in Figure 27), but some have disappeared; those which survive ought to be preserved and utilised. I noticed recently in a small market town in Norfolk how such lanes had been carefully developed and the buildings in the yards had been turned into small intimate commercial precincts which added an atmosphere of excitement to shopping in that town. We do need to get the developers and planners looking at *openings and spaces* as well as at buildings. It was 'spaces' which gave us the Market Place, Hog Hill, Beast Market and latterly Tods Piece, etc; and the lanes, roads and entries are just as important.



Fig 31: possible cottage at rear of 26 High Street West (now removed); there were many such dwellings showing the density of buildings in nineteenth century Uppingham.

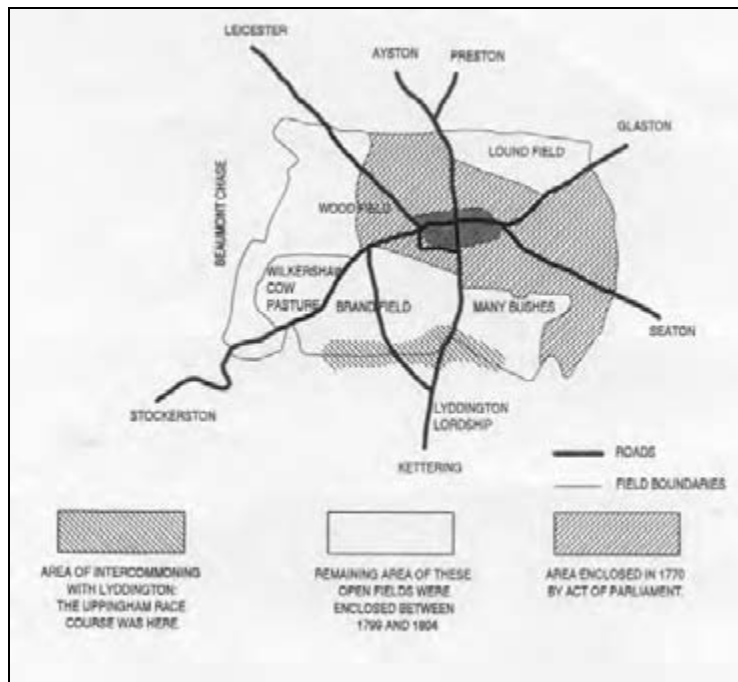


Fig 32: enclosure of Uppingham's open fields took place in the 1770s and from 1799-1804; but they were built on very slowly until the second half of the nineteenth century.

Terraces

The poor also began to spread out. The wealthy lived in what the Americans would call 'downtown' and the poor in the suburbs like Stockerston Road, what was for a time called the 'west end', and in the Adderley Street area. Gradually these areas became more acceptable (for example Thorpes Terrace, perhaps the first of the terraces), as freehold houses which carried with them the right to vote in general elections were built on empty or redeveloped land. The second half of the nineteenth century saw the clearance of some of the back garden courts, especially along the south side of High Street West as the Free School or Grammar School began its programme of expansion from the early 1850s. And then came the new terraces on the new ground - such as Deans Terrace, Wades Terrace and the like. The studies we have done so far tend to show that Uppingham provided opportunities for prosperity but it was a precarious prosperity based on mortgages and allowed relatively little for major rebuilding (1802; 1851; deeds). The railway came late and its impact on the town is as yet uncertain. So, like several others towns, Uppingham was preserved by the relative lack of wealth in the nineteenth century except where the School cleared the ground and rebuilt rather than adapted older properties. There were some new large houses in the second half of the nineteenth century such as Gilson's house in High Street West or the houses on both sides of the east end of High Street East. But these were relatively few.



Fig 33: Thorpe's Terrace, built piecemeal on newly enclosed open fields from 1810 onwards.



Fig 34: Deans Terrace, one of a number of high density buildings erected outside the town onto the enclosed fields.



Fig 35: an example of nineteenth and early twentieth century infill on former farmyards inside the town area of Uppingham.



Fig 36: Compton House, one of several buildings in Uppingham of mid-nineteenth century date, all in much the same style: a local builder?

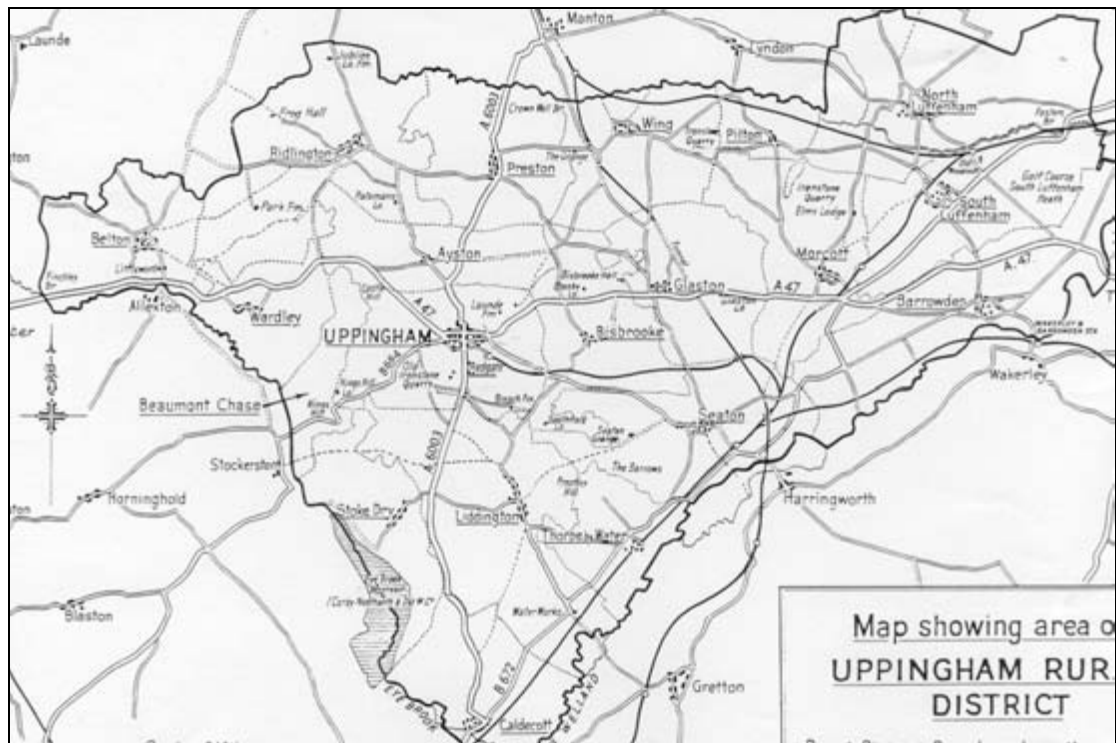


Fig 37: map showing extent of the Uppingham Rural District Council

The wider Uppingham

Perhaps the most important thing to happen to Uppingham at this time was the establishment of the Uppingham Poor Law Union in 1834. This stretched from Ridlington to Rockingham, from Duddington to Slawston (for the parishes involved, see Figure 15 above). It created a whole region with Uppingham at the heart. However, when in the 1890s this Union was turned into the Uppingham Rural District Council, it was limited to Rutland. Nevertheless, from the 1890s until the disastrous local government reorganisation of 1974 from which the country has never recovered, Uppingham was not only an economic centre but also the administrative centre of an area which stretched from North Luffenham to Wardley, from Manton to Caldecott - a cog in the local government wheel which regrettably it no longer is. Since 1974 Uppingham, like so many places such as Stamford, has been downgraded beyond what is worthy of any government.

The Free (or by now Grammar) School did not impact on the town's topography or economy until the second half of the nineteenth century. At first it held some 20 local boys, all free. From the early eighteenth century it began to attract boarders from further afield, housing them in the former hospital, while still taking some local day boys free or fee paying. It grew only to some 30 boys by the beginning of the nineteenth century. The expansion began under Henry Holden who in the 1840s opened the first boarding house apart from his own house. Thring established a deliberate policy (still continued today) of buying up and redeveloping properties and land in the town, so that all the area between School Lane and Spring Back Way was acquired and very largely rebuilt by the end of the nineteenth century. Later large houses were established on the edge of the built-up area to house the growing number of boarders, and the local free places for boys were abolished.

CONCLUSION

I must leave this brief canter through the history of Uppingham as seen through its buildings and streets at this point (where Nigel Richardson took you last year). But I would like to finish with two comments, one serious and the other rather less serious.

The first is this: apart from the establishment of a planned market place bolted onto a settlement which was almost certainly already becoming a town in the late twelfth or early thirteenth century, Uppingham has enjoyed a slow steady and entirely indigenous growth. I want to suggest quite seriously that to drop more than 120 houses into such a town *at one go* is very insensitive. Uppingham requires consideration for its history, not just its listed buildings and sites, and its contemporary facilities, and its development should be slow and measured.

My second point will be more contentious. Uppingham sorely needs a north-south bypass - as urgently as Glaston or Caldecott need theirs. It is not easy to see where that can now go. The line of Folly Lane or Gypsy Hollow (which can be seen on the map in Figure 5) might suggest an easy route but there are problems now, with such a major development standing in the way. I would however like to make one proposal. The very first main route from Oakham to the south went through Glaston, not through Uppingham. Might I in closing suggest that the north-south bypass should take up that route again, so that all our heavy lorries should go through Glaston rather than Uppingham?

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Note to page 22: the owner of 26 High Street West suggests that the extension at the back of that house may have been a dairy and bakehouse rather than a separate cottage. Both the 1804 enclosure award and map and the 1851 census indicate that several families lived in what are now 24 and 26 High Street West, and the possibility remains that this building was at some time occupied as a separate residence with access from the street up the lane between 24 and 26 High Street West - as in other yards in Uppingham at this time. But equally it may have been a dairy and bakehouse at some time before it was demolished.