

A BRIEF HISTORY OF UPTON HALL

THE BEGINNING OF UPTON HALL

The earliest available records show that in 956, one hundred and ten years before the Norman Conquest, King Edwy donated the land on which Upton Hall stands to Archbishop Oscytel of York.

In 1335 Robert Bagenham had his home at Upton Hall.

Owen Oglethorpe lived at the Hall in 1620 and died at nearby Blidworth at the time of the plague at Upton. Records show that Martin Oglethorpe was the Squire at the time of the Civil War in about 1645 and a small part of Oglethorpe's Elizabethan Hall still remains in the present structure.

By 1795 the land was owned by the then Lord Carrington.

1828 – 1845 Thomas and Frances Wright

The main structure of the Hall as you see it today is by Thomas Wright (1773-1845), a member of the well known Nottingham banking family – he was also High Sheriff of Nottingham in 1811. He employed W H Donthorne of London, later a founder member of the Royal Institute of British Architects, to design the Hall in the then fashionable Neo-Greek classical style with a symmetrical south facing elevation with an imposing Greek-style portico of fluted Ionic columns in the recessed central bays and a large dome over the Main Hall.

The new Hall was the focal point of the village of Upton and in 1841 census there were 10 servants living in the house and others living in the village. For Queen Victoria's Coronation in 1838 Mr Wright placed a Union Jack on the church tower and a procession went through the village ending at Upton Hall where a feast of roast beef and plum pudding had been prepared followed by a dance and all were "furnished with an abundance of furnety".

(Furnety was a dish made of wheat boiled in milk and flavoured with spices)

1845 - Reverend Joseph Banks Wright and Sophia Wright

Mr Thomas Wright died in 1845 at the age of 72, leaving the Hall to his son the Reverend Joseph Banks Wright. There now comes a period in the history of the hall when it is uncertain what events took place. There is no record of the Reverend Wright being present in the Hall in the 1851 census, but Kelly's Directory of Nottinghamshire of 1855 indicates that he was the owner, although this source is not noted for its accuracy.

1857 – 1888 Philip Richard Faulkner and Alicia Falkner

In 1857 Mr Philip Richard Falkner, a Newark Solicitor, purchased Upton Hall. Mr Falkner was from Southwell but had lived in Newark since 1825 where he set up his own practice also holding the Office of County Coroner for about 30 years and was Mayor of Newark in 1833.

Mr Faulker lived at the Hall for nearly 30 years and during this time he had some six servants living in the Hall and others in the village. One of Mr Faulkner's daughters, Harriett Matilda, married Lucas Brodhurst who lived at the Grange in Upton another daughter married the Vicar of Upton, William Peacocks.

1888 – 1894 Mary Frances Falkner

Mr Falkner married twice and had nine children. When he died in 1888, at the age of 86, his Will stated that the Hall and land were to be sold and the proceeds to be placed into a Trust Fund for his children. So on 8th August 1888 an auction was held at Edward Bailey & Sons of Kirkgate, Newark but only 4 of the 16 lots were sold. The main lot, Upton Hall and its immediate land and cottages were not sold, and according to the Will of Mr Falkner, his daughter Mary Frances Falkner was allowed to stay on at the Hall which she did until the early 1890's. Her means must have been limited as she only had three servants living in (although there were other servants in the village). In the mid 1890's the Hall was sold and Miss Faulkner moved to South Leigh House, Market Street, Newark.

1895 – 1935 John Francis Warwick and Eliza Gertrude Warwick

John Warwick was a director of the Newark brewing firm of Warwick & Richardson in Northgate. Mr Warwick remodelled the interior and added the West Wing containing a large ballroom with a stage and a games room. Many village functions were held here over the next 40 years and with its pleasure grounds, fountains, conservatory and gardens it must have been a very desirable residence. Upton Hall as you see it today is as John Warwick left it on his death in 1935.

1936 – 1939 Sir Albert Ball (unoccupied)

Sir Albert Ball bought the property as an investment and never lived here. He was Mayor of Nottingham in 1909, a JP, and father of the WW1 fighter pilot Albert Ball VC.

1939 – 1972 Fathers of the Holy Ghost, Roman Catholic College

Although purchased by the order of the Fathers of the Holy Ghost in 1939, because of the onset of war, the Hall was requisitioned to provide a home for a school of partially-sighted children who had been evacuated from Sussex and also for Government purposes connected with the war. In 1945 the Fathers of the Holy Ghost did actually take up residency and the St Joseph's Roman Catholic Theological Church occupied the Hall.

The students spent the final six years of the eight year course at Upton Hall being trained for the priesthood. There was an average 15 students at the Hall rising at one time to over 30. Many changes took place at the Hall to accommodate the students. The Grimthorpe Room (Ballroom) was partitioned into three lecture rooms; the Library was the Chapel; the office off the Library was the Sacristary; the Bateman Room was the Dining Room; the room to the left of the front entrance of the Hall was the office of the Rector of the College; the cellars consisted of many oratories.

The grounds were maintained by the students; on the second terrace of the front lawns there was a tennis court; cows were kept in the Stable Block; pigs and over 1500 hens were kept in the paddock. The kitchen garden was both inside and outside the garden wall and maintained by the students.

The discipline of the Order was extremely strict and students were not allowed to leave the Hall. They rose early in the morning at 5am followed by a rigorous daily programme of prayers, study and physical work. They were allowed one cigarette on special occasions. They were not allowed to enter the Main Hall area or walk up/down the staircase of the Main Hall unless they were carrying out maintenance or cleaning duties.

1972 – to date British Horological Institute

The Institute bought the Hall from the Fathers of the Holy Ghost in 1972. The Hall is now a Grade 2* listed building with 72 rooms and grounds of 10 acres.

Cooks of Upton Hall

1851 – Elizabeth Scholey, aged 31 years, born in Lincolnshire

1861 – Emma Shuttlebottom, aged 31 years, born in Leicestershire

1871 – Betsy Johnson, aged 25 years, born in Boston, Lincolnshire

1881 – Elizabeth Skerit, aged 54 years, born in North Collingham

Butler of Upton Hall

William Measures was Butler at Upton Hall for over 20 years when the Falkners owned the Hall. He lived as a tenant in one of the cottages on The Green.

Ghosts of Upton Hall

Upton Hall has two ghosts, who only visit occasionally. The “White Lady” visits the Library, walking in through the doorway (which is now bricked up), and sitting down at different places in the room. When Upton Hall was a family home, this room must have been one of the principal bedrooms, but the doorway did not exist until the time of the Holy Ghost Fathers. This room is in the 1895 extension, built by John Warwick.

The other ghost is a black figure which brushes past on the back staircase, always going downstairs. This stairway is in the 1828 part of the house, and would still have been the stairs back then, but at the top of the staircase the landing would have only led to the right, with a solid wall to the left.

Sale Particulars of Upton Hall – August 1888

The Estate consists of a well maintained MANSION with pleasure grounds, stables, coach houses, cow houses, piggeries and suitable outbuildings, walled kitchen garden, vinery and conservatory; also a farm house and buildings, 10 comfortable cottages and gardens, and about 64 acres of excellent arable, meadow and pasture land.

The MANSION is a farm residence known as Upton Hall, well situated on an eminence having a picturesque view of the valley of Trent. It contains a lofty and spacious Entrance Hall with circular Picture Gallery, Dining Room, Sitting Room, Morning Room, Library, Housekeeper's Hall, Large Kitchen, Scullery and extensive Cellars. 10 Bedrooms.

The Stables have 4 stalls, 2 Coach Houses with Hay Lofts above and surrounded by gardens. Grounds tastefully laid out, walled kitchen garden, Forcing Houses. The House is in substantial repair and the stabling, cow houses and other accommodation is of excellent quality. Good feeding land.

The ESTATE is well timbered and there is a good water supply.

The village of Upton is 2 miles from the Cathedral Town of Southwell where there is a Station on the Midland Railway and is about 5 miles from the Market Town of Newark where there are Stations on the Great Northern (mail line) and Midland Railways.

The ESTATE lies within easy reach of 3 packs of Hounds.

Good fishing can be obtained in the River Greet.