

A short history of Bramfield Hall and the Rabett family.



Bramfield Hall was home to the Rabett family for some 450 years. Its appearance is of a Queen Anne façade enclosing a 16th century core.

The Rabett family originated in Dunwich where a John Rabett was Bailiff in 1453 and William Rabett was M.P in 1469. They first appear in Bramfield in manorial documents in 1478/9 when the manor belonged to Mettingham college. Thus: *Reginald Rabet holds in Bramfield one messuage and one pasture freely, lately John Rabet and before that John Terry and said pasture lies next to the pasture of the Lord called Bradmedew on the part of the East and abbutts on the brook to the South.* This is taken from a manorial extent made for the master of Mettingham College who were Lords of the manor at the time.

So, there was a timber framed, wattle and daub property of the open hall type on the site prior to the Rabetts coming to Bramfield. It places it somewhere on the site of the present house as it was usual to reuse sites for rebuilds. It was surrounded by land for which Reginald Rabett paid 58s.8½d much the largest landholder in 1478/9. Two cottages behind the bus shelter were part of the estate.

In later times land was acquired in many other parts of the parish until in 1900, when it was sold by the mortgagees to Mrs Margaret Ogilvie for £9,600 as an estate of over 780 acres.

There were - farms, 2 woods, and model farm buildings attached to Castle Farm.

Some of the land was not very productive as witnessed by the field names in an estate map of 1745- Labour in Vain and Penny pinch. All the land along the line of the A144 was a boggy stream.

Sometime in the Elizabethan period the house was made larger with cross wings where in the parlour wing to the north there is a fine Tudor fireplace and moulded ceiling timbers.

It is to be presumed that the frontage was put in place in the time of Queen Anne and made into a three- storey house in Georgian times. If you walk round the front of the house you will see that the guttering is several feet above the rainwater heads.

The tenure of the Rabett family ended in 1899 when the estate was sold and thereafter passed through several hands until 1949 when the Jebb family moved here. Sir Gladwyn Jebb (later Lord Gladwyn) was involved with the foundation of the United Nations being Acting Secretary General immediately after WW2. He died in 1996 and was succeeded by his son Miles. Bramfield Hall was sold in 2001 to the present owners Sir Simon and Lady Robey