

## 6.

### Butlers.



There are few properties in Broomfield whose origins go further back in time than those of Butlers. The name has probably been attached to it for more than 700 years. Professor Reaney, in his book “The Place Names of Essex”, associated it with the family of Geoffrey le Botiler who was mentioned in an assize roll in connection with Broomfield in 1254. Another Geoffrey le Botiler appears on a Chelmsford tax list in 1319, and in the same year and again in 1327 there was an Abel le Botiler

in Springfield. In 1500 George Botiler of Broomfield, Gentleman, was one of a consortium of local people involved in the purchase of Crouch House (the Kings Arms). And in 1509 George Botiler of Broomfield, probably the same man, appeared on a Pardon Roll of Henry VIII, though what he had done that required a pardon wasn't stated.

The present house dates from the 18th century but its predecessor must have been one of Broomfield's "big houses". The 1570 fence list, which describes Priors, Well House, Ayletts, the Mill House and others as tenements, refers to Butlers as the "mansion house". Of all the dwellings in Broomfield at that time only two others, the Parsonage and the Vicarage, both with ecclesiastical connections, were described as mansions. Butlers was referred to as "The mansion house of old Butlers", and was the only property to have the word "old", the others either had "sometime" followed by the name or else just the name followed by "and now". So was it an old house or, more likely, had it been known as Butlers since time immemorial? Certainly, 1254 would have been a long time ago.

Philip Morant, in his monumental work "The History and Antiquities of Essex", mentions Butlers as being on the same side of the road (as the Well House) a little above Broomfield Green, and adds that in 1563 it was the property of Mr Pascall. Now the Pascalls were a wealthy family, owning much land in the area. Henry VIII had granted the manor of Cuton Hall in Springfield to John Pascall - it had formerly been church land which Pascall had farmed. A John Pascall had been lord of the manors of Baddow Hall and of Sir Hughs in Great Baddow. Their rise continued into the 17th century, culminating in the

person of Sir Andrew Pascall, Kt., of Springfield, who as one of His Majesty's judges presided at the Chelmsford assizes. The Mr. Pascall of Butlers was no doubt a member of the family, perhaps a brother of the Thomas Pascall, Gent., of Great Baddow, who died in 1577. The connection of the Baddow Pascalls with Broomfield is confirmed in the will of John Pascall of Great Baddow who died in 1544 and left to John, his son and heir, four crofts in Broomfield as well as other properties elsewhere.

The Mr Pascall who was at Butlers in 1563 may not have been the first of his family to live there. Although there had been a George Boteler in Broomfield in 1500 there were no Botelers or Butlers on the tax list for 1524. But there were a couple of Pascalls, Geoffrey and Robert. Twenty years later, in 1544, another tax list doesn't show Robert but Geoffrey Pascall was still listed. So it is quite likely that the Pascalls were at Butlers as far back as 1524 and maybe for some years before that date. Morant writes that soon after 1563 Mr Pascall sold the estate to (Robert) Wood. Incidentally, Morant's notes on Butlers were copied by him, almost word for word, from the earlier notes of William Holman who between 1710 and 1730 was preparing his own history of the County.

The Wood family wasn't mentioned in the tax returns of 1524 and 1544 but a Robert Wood was baptised at Broomfield church in 1553, suggesting that the family had arrived in Broomfield by that date though not yet at Butlers. The baptism could well have been of the eldest son of the Robert Wood of Butlers. Robert Wood also owned Biglands so it is likely that the family acquired that first and moved into Butlers later. This could be the Robert Wood, Gent., of the Inner

Temple, who began buying property in Chelmsford in 1549.

Broomfield's Robert Wood had sons Robert (b1553) and Thomas (b1555), and Robert Wood Senr., Robert Wood Jnr., and Thomas Wood were prominent in Chelmsford at the right time. However, Hilda Grieve, in her history of Chelmsford, shows that the Robert Woods were very much Chelmsford parishioners, holding the key office of Churchwarden several times between 1554 and 1599, though not during the period between 1557 and 1579 when the Robert Wood at Butlers was so prominent in Broomfield although a Robert Wood the younger had his daughter Sarah baptised at Chelmsford in 1560.

To confuse the issue still further the Chelmsford parish register shows that in 1562 Robert, the son of Robert Wood the mercer was baptised and Robert Wood the draper was a witness! And what is more in 1566 we have Prudence, daughter of Robert Wood, Gent., baptised at Broomfield and Bridget, daughter of Robert Wood, baptised in the same year at Chelmsford. And Mary and Grace Wood were baptised in 1574 at Chelmsford and in the same year Charles Wood was baptised at Broomfield. Although the names never conflict there must have been two Robert Woods fathering children at the same time, but were they father and son?

Now Robert Wood Senr. was a draper and Robert Wood Jnr was a mercer so clearly at the baptism of Robert in 1562 we have three Wood generations here. The scenario could be that Robert Wood Senr, a draper, lived in Chelmsford. His son, a mercer, bought Biglands some time before 1553, when his son Robert was baptised at Broomfield. The son died before 1562 when another son, also Robert, was baptised at Chelmsford. In

that same year the Broomfield parish register recorded the burial of "Mother Wood, who died frantik"; could it have been whilst giving birth? It was shortly after this that Robert Wood bought Butlers from Mr Pascall. And both father and son continued to produce children. Certainly, none of the Roberts nor Thomas was buried at Broomfield so this was doubtless the same family.

An event which took place in 1568 suggests that Robert Wood of Butlers may have been a quick-tempered individual for in that year he was up before the Sessions on an assault charge. It was alleged in court that he "hit Andrew Hornsey violently on the back with a stick in the highway at Broomfield". The indictment referred to him as "Robert Wood of Broomfield, yeoman, otherwise gentleman" as if the authorities weren't quite sure as to his social status. He was found guilty and fined twelve pence. He may have been in trouble three years previous to this offence for in 1565 he was charged before the church court for being absent from church for two successive Sundays; his defence was that at the time he was "troubled in the law".

Robert Wood was a prominent figure in Broomfield. As churchwarden he was involved in drawing up the churchyard fence list in 1569 and it was he who represented the parish at the Archdeacon's court at Baddow when two residents appealed against their apportionment. His name cropped up at the Quarter Sessions in 1571 when it was reported that Butlers Bridge in Broomfield was "a common annoyance to the Queen's liege people". The sessions record noted that the bridge lay between Robert Wood's land and William Noke's land in the parish of Broomfield. The road from Chelmsford to Braintree took the same course as today and the only evidence of a stream

crossing it requiring a bridge is a) at the foot of Gutter's Hill, b) between Mill Lane and the Well House, and between them c) the Gooseriddle brook which could have crossed the road near Roselawn Farm. Another possibility is that Butlers Bridge crossed the River Chelmer, perhaps near where Croxton's mill now stands. The other significant bridges in Broomfield would have been in Mill Lane, at the mill and across the backwater at the foot of the hill.

William Noke's property isn't obviously identifiable. The Vicarage land was to the south of Butlers, then Wheelers, and Noke was at neither of those in 1570 though he was in Broomfield at the time. To the north, Butlers land would have stretched to the Little Waltham border. Butlers Bridge isn't now identifiable.

Robert Wood's last mention in Broomfield affairs was on the 10th May 1574 when he sold the Butlers estate to a Mr. Prowe. He may then have concentrated his interests in Chelmsford. The Prowes were another fairly local family, a John Prowe was at Great Waltham in 1558 and a Thomas Prowe was in Springfield in 1559. In 1566 a Richard Besse was accused at the Quarter Sessions of breaking into the close of William Prowe at Little Waltham and stealing 5 wethers, worth 5 shillings each. Besse pleaded not guilty and was found not guilty. The Mr Prowe mentioned by Morant as the purchaser of Butlers was doubtless that William Prowe, Gent., a wealthy man looking for a suitable property. Butlers would have been such a property, a substantial house with around 100 acres of land.

William Prowe had married Joan Eton, the daughter of

Robert Eton of Springfield, Gent., a marriage which probably further enhanced his financial standing. At the time of his purchase of Butlers Prowe was living at Priors in Broomfield, which he had rented, and he may have moved there from Little Waltham. In 1579 he bought several properties from his brother-in-law, Thomas Eton, including one in Chelmsford which had a link with another Broomfield property, Scravels. This was a property called Parkers, which had formerly belonged to Simon Scraffield (d1557), the family after which Scravels was named. Prowe also owned a pair of houses in Springfield Road, a house called Gibbes in Chelmsford, some land called Millfield in Springfield, and a capital tenement called The Robin Hood in Chelmsford High Street which by 1570 was no longer an inn.

Being of the gentry, William Prowe had his own pew in St Mary's church - it gets a mention when the church was repaired in 1587. He also appears in the church records in a rental of 1590 when he was assessed for his own land plus some that he held of the manor of Broomfield Hall. He was for many years in the 1570s and 1580s High Constable of the Chelmsford Hundred and he regularly presided at the Chelmsford Petty Sessions. It is likely that he died sometime in the 1590s, after some 20 years at Butlers, and was succeeded by his son Robert. A Robert Prowe gets several mentions in the churchwardens accounts from 1598 to 1605; an entry for 1599 mentions Robert Prowe, Gent., and contains his signature. Finally, on the 10th January 1605, Robert Prowe sold Butlers to Mr Frith.

Mr. Frith is something of a mystery. This surname occurs fairly often during this period in the Rainham,

Hornchurch, Upminster and Dagenham area of Essex. Closer to home, a Thomas Frith was at Braintree and a John Frith was at Bocking in 1624; the Butlers Frith may have been associated with one or both of them. There doesn't seem to be any mention in contemporary records of a Frith in the Broomfield area, and quite unlike his predecessors at Butlers he apparently played no part in local affairs for there is no mention of him in the parish records. Collections for the poor, listed in the churchwarden's accounts, were a regular event at this time and often identified both property and owner. The Prowes appeared from time to time up to 1605 but the 1606 collection showed only the house, Butlers, no owner. Whoever he was, Mr Frith didn't last long. Shortly after buying Butlers he sold it to Sir John Tryon.

Peter Tryon was a Dutchman who had fled the Netherlands to escape persecution by the Spanish under the Duke of Alba, taking with him a huge fortune in guilders. One of his sons, Samuel, who was knighted in 1613 and made a baronet in 1620, settled first at Layer Marney and then, in 1620, purchased the manors of Abels, Dynes Hall and Brent Hall in Halstead. Sir John Tryon was a contemporary and very likely the brother of Sir Samuel. There were several Johns and Samuels in this family; one of the Sir Samuels was succeeded by a Sir Samuel John while the Sir John of Butlers was succeeded by a Sir Samuel Tryon. A Sir Samuel Tryon was High Sheriff of Essex in 1650, and there was a Sir John Tryon at Boreham in 1724. So far as Butlers is concerned suffice it to say that Sir John Tryon bought it from Mr Frith, from Sir John it passed to his son Sir Samuel Tryon, and the latter sold it to Robert Vincent.

Six different families had owned Butlers in the space of 60 years or so. For the next 80 it was to remain in the Vincent family. The Tryons couldn't have held the property for long because it was in 1632 that Robert Vincent Senr. died (he was described in the burial register as an "ancient man") and left it to his son and heir, also Robert Vincent. At last, with Robert Vincent Junr. there was stable ownership; his name crops up regularly in the parish records over a period of more than 35 years. In 1633 Robert married Edith or Elizabeth Godsave. In 1635 he was appointed churchwarden.

In 1641 Roger Follington, a labourer from Hatfield Broad Oak, was charged at the assizes with stealing a mattock worth 6d, a spade worth 2d, a shovel worth 4d, a pair of hedging gloves worth 6d, a ewe worth 5 shillings, and two lambs worth 2 shillings each from Robert Vincent. He was found guilty and sentenced to be branded.

Vincent was one of the village's most prominent tax-payers, as evidenced by the Ship Money tax list of 1636. Another tax list gives a clue as to the relative size of Butlers during the Vincent period and before it was demolished and rebuilt in the 1780s. The Hearth Tax, a highly unpopular measure (but what tax isn't?), was introduced by Charles II to restore the Royal coffers. It was a levy of two shillings per hearth and Butlers was assessed at 11 hearths, a very large house. For comparison Mr Manwood of Priors, who also owned The Angel, paid for 10 hearths, Thomas Woollard at Broomfield Hall had 6 hearths, while Scravels and Belstead Hall each had 4 hearths.

Robert Vincent Junr. died in 1671 and in his will he left

his "capital message called Butlers or Botellers Place" to his wife for her lifetime. He had three daughters but no son and Widow Vincent lived on at Butlers for some years after her husband's death. She took an active interest in local affairs and played her part in parish duties. She was a contemporary of Mary Boosey at Scravels and they both took on the tasks of Overseer of the Poor, Surveyor, etc., an unusual situation in an age when men normally took the leading roles in local matters. In 1706 the parish register recorded the burial of Mary Sylvester, a widow living at Butlers, but nothing more is known of her. The Vincent's eldest daughter Elizabeth had married John Everley, Gent., and it was widow Everley who next sold Butlers, to a Mr George Merttins. The name was also given as Merttens and Martins on different records but except on his apprenticeship indenture I will use Merttins for consistency.

George Merttins was another outsider attracted to Broomfield. His name appears in contemporary records in the Barking and Dagenham area and he became a man of importance in the City of London. His father, John, was a London merchant and in 1680 he apprenticed young George to Dorcas Bouquett, the widow of Solomon Bouquett, a London clockmaker. The widow seems to have been in the same line of craftsmen for George was apprenticed "to learn her Art: and with her (after the manner of an Apprentice) to serve from the day of the date hereof unto the full end and term of seven years". The indenture sets out the usual terms; George was to keep her secrets and to do her lawful commandments, he was not to commit fornication nor contract matrimony within the said term of seven years, he was not to haunt taverns or play-houses, nor absent himself from his mistress' service day or night unlawfully, and much more. George duly served out his

apprenticeship.

A fully qualified clockmaker, George Merttins became a Master of the Clockmakers Company and in 1711/12 he was a member of the Common Council for the Cornhill Ward of the City of London. From 1712 to his death in 1727 he was an Alderman of the City of London and on the 15th April 1713 he was knighted. In June of that year Sir George Merttins, Kt., translated to the prestigious Skinners Company.

Sir George was Treasurer of Christ's Hospital from 1717 and in 1727, the year of his death, he was President of Christ's Hospital, the Blue Coat School which was then situated in Newgate Street in the City. In 1721 he was appointed High Sheriff of London and in 1724/5 he was Lord Mayor of London. His business and his many commitments in the City may have kept him away from Broomfield for he seems to have played no part in local affairs, and his ownership of Butlers was short-lived. He died on the 3rd November 1727 and Butlers was once again up for sale,

The will of George Merttins tells something of his family, his interests, and his considerable prosperity. He made his will on the 12th August 1725, when he was Lord Mayor and, so he says, in good health. It reveals that his wife had died before him because he wished to be buried in the south cloister of Christ's Hospital as near as may be to "my late dear wife". He had two sons, George and Michael, and three daughters, Sarah, Philadelphia, and Ann. Sir George had property in East Ham, West ham, Barking, Woodham Walter, and Plaistow, some freehold and some copyhold. He also held land in Westminster leased from the Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey. George, as his eldest son, was the main beneficiary but his other three children were also generously provided for.

His interest in Christ's Hospital was also reflected in his will. He left the sum of £150 to the Governors of the Hospital "to the intent and purpose and upon Trust that yearly upon the 6th day of February being the birth day of her late Majesty Queen Anne for ever the poor children harboured and residing within the said hospital .....may instead of their usual dinner

on that day with the aid of their usual allowance or expense thereof have legs and shoulders of veal for their dinner". I wonder what they would otherwise have had to eat on that day?

One item that did not appear in George Merttins will was Butlers. He left the rest of his estate, real and personal, to be shared equally between his son George and two of his daughters, Philadelphia and Ann, and Butlers may have been part of this residual estate. On the other hand he may have sold it prior to making his will. What is certain is that Butlers then passed to the Scratton family.

The Scratton family came to Essex from Suffolk, that part of the county which forms a peninsula between the rivers Stour and Orwell, just over the border from Essex. Part of the family had stayed behind but Daniel Scratton had moved south to Billericay where, between 1640 and 1660, he had amassed a considerable fortune, much of which he eventually left to his nephew Daniel Scratton, Gent., of Butlers, Broomfield. The family were also established at Prittlewell Priory, Southend, by the time Butlers was acquired - in 1728 Daniel Scratton of Broomfield, gentleman, leased the fishings and oyster lanes at Barling, belonging to the manor of Prittlewell Priory, to William Cripps and John Hill for 7 years at £380 a year plus 4 bushels of oysters.

This Daniel was at Butlers for 17 years; he died in 1744 leaving a widow Catherine but no will and no children to inherit the estate. This led to a furious squabble amongst his relations as to who was next of kin and therefore who would inherit Butlers. It was a valuable prize and no-one would back down. Eventually it went before the Summer Assizes in Chelmsford in

1745 for a jury to decide. Their verdict was in favour of Daniel Scratton of Harkstead, Suffolk, a nephew of the deceased, who then came to live at Butlers. He married Mary and had a son, another Daniel who, when his father died in 1760, became the third Daniel Scratton to own Butlers.

The Scratton family had acquired other interests outside Broomfield and Harkstead, most notably the manors of Milton Hall and Prittlewell Priory in what is now Southend-on Sea. The will of Daniel Scratton who died in 1760 reveals that he left the manors of Milton Hall and Prittlewell Priory to Richard Canning and Thomas Pocklington of Chelmsford in trust for 500 years for the benefit of his family. Daniel Jnr was of course the main beneficiary but his other children, Joseph, Thomas, James, Robert, Mary and Sarah received bequests of some £31,000 each, enormous sums for 1760. Amongst the Scratton family property portfolio was the Royal Terrace in Southend. And their interests in Southend continued for many more generations for in 1910 an application was made in Chancery for the acquisition of Prittlewell Priory from Edward Scratton by the trustees of Daniel Scratton. And finally in 1918 Captain Edward Scratton sold Prittlewell Priory to Southend-on-Sea Corporation for use as a public park. But back to Butlers.

On the 5th April 1765 Daniel Scratton III sold Butlers to the Revd. Jonathan White, the vicar of Wethersfield, for £2,380. With it went almost 300 acres of land. This gentleman had the old house pulled down and rebuilt in the fashionable style of the day, a Georgian residence suitable for a gentleman, a residence that despite some late 20th century vicissitudes, is much the same today. Sadly, no drawings of its predecessor seem to have survived. The estate must have put the Revd. White to

some considerable expense because in 1771 he mortgaged it to a Thomas Bridge in order to raise £1,200. Revd White had no children and so when he died the estate was left to his wife Mary, who in 1786 sold it to various parties in return for an income for life and the repayment of Thomas Bridge's loan which by then came to £1,253.11.3d. Butlers was then valued at £3,500.

After the Whites came Mr Charles Porter. He had married Elizabeth Holmes, the heiress of William Holmes, and one of those various parties who held an interest in the Butlers estate. It was Mr Porter who in 1791 commissioned a surveyor, Peter la Neve, to make a map of the estate. It isn't known what became of the final product but a draft exists; it can be found in the Essex Record Office. In addition to a plan of the house it clearly shows the fields which then made up the Butlers estate.

### *Butlers estate in 1791*

This draft map has some interesting features. Drawn by Peter le Neve in 1791 it reveals that the estate then extended to just under 100 acres (99a 3r 4¾p). All the fields are named and their acreages given. The map shows that the land abutting Butlers estate to the north, which was in Little Waltham, belonged to Mr Leapingwell, whilst to the south was Mr Wise's land. This was the vicarage; Rev. Joseph Wise was then the vicar. A tablet at the top left states "*A Rough Draught of an Estate in the Parish of Broomfield in the County of Essex belonging to M Chas Porter. N.B. This estate is Freehold and is bounded on the East by the River Chelmer and on the West by the Road from Chelmsford to Waltham*"

Another tablet at the bottom left gives the table of contents of the estate as follows:

	<i>acres</i>	<i>rods</i>	<i>perches</i>
<i>a,b,c,d,e (house, garden, etc.)</i>	2	1	4½
<i>Kitchen Field</i>	6	3	8¼

<i>Nine Acres</i>	9	3	0
<i>Seven Acres</i>	8	1	10¼
<i>Mile-stone Field</i>	6	0	29
<i>Great Senacres</i>	7	2	18½
<i>Six Acres</i>	6	1	35½
<i>Great Broom Field</i>	13	0	27¼
<i>Mill Field</i>	11	0	28
<i>Orchard Field</i>	4	1	11
<i>Grove Field</i>	7	2	26¼
<i>Five acres</i>	5	3	2½
<i>Great Mead</i>	5	1	34½
<i>Little Mead</i>	4	2	8¾
<i>Total</i>	99	2	4¼

In the bottom right corner a cartouche gives the scale “A scale of Chains per Gunter ½ an inch. Peter le Neve Land Surveyor March 7th 1791”. A Gunter’s chain is 22 yards so it was ½ an inch to 22 yards - needless to say, the above reproduction is much smaller than the original! A compass is in the top right corner.

As to the house, le Neve drew the plan of a simple rectangular structure with two projecting bays at the rear; the Revd White’s new house. It is simpler even than the plan drawn some 80 years later by Capt. Pilleau for the 1875 Ordnance Survey which showed projections on the north and south sides and a more complex bay at the rear. le Neve’s was, however a rough draft, or ‘draught’ as he spelled it.

Like many of those who were at Butlers before him Mr Porter made little impact on local affairs. He may have left a

tiny postscript in local history for a patch of deep water in the River Chelmer at the rear of Butlers, by a bend in the river, is known as Porter's Deep. It seems that he may also have owned the piece of land in Broomfield known as Sluggly Slough (see the chapter on Podinge) because the parish records show that "Mr Porter was paid a years rent for Widow Barnard at Sluggards Slough £1.15.0 but there is a dispute about it".

The Porters had six children and the estate became further sub-divided. Part of the interest in the estate must have passed to his daughter Louisa, who married a Mr Welstead, for it was she who in 1823 was involved in the sale of the property to George Cheveley of Roxwell.

The Cheveleys weren't at Butlers for long and they may not at first have lived there. They were first and foremost a Roxwell family and the Land Tax returns show that in 1824 Butlers, although owned by Cheveley, was occupied by Joseph Peckover. By 1833 George Cheveley was shown as both owner and occupier. Cheveley borrowed money on several occasions using Butlers as security; £4,000 in 1834 from Abraham Johnson of Hatfield Peverel, £700 from Thomas Speakman of Fairstead in 1835 and a further £500 in the same year from Charles Tyrell of Boreham House, and when George died in 1837 the estate was put up for auction with the several lenders seeking to recover their investment. The auction took place at the Black Boy Inn in Chelmsford on the 17th November 1837. The estate was divided up into 5 lots, four of farmland with the house and garden as the other lot. The successful bidder was Thomas Christy of Brooklands, who for around twenty years had been buying up farms in Broomfield, and the mortgagors were paid off. On this occasion Christy

was after the land rather than the house because he soon sold the house with some of the land to Eliza Seabrook.

The remainder, Butlers Farm, became part of Christy's Broomfield portfolio and immediately after his purchase he discovered that 5½ acres of the land was in Little Waltham parish. This caused a problem eighteen months later when he received notice that the tithes of Little Waltham had been set for £670 and the consequential rent charge on his bit of land was £2.7.4d. Christy noted in his dairy that this worked out at more than 8/6d per acre which "is far too high - but from my not attending any of the meetings I am told there is no redress". As a Quaker he was opposed to paying tithes to the church and it appears that at first he didn't.

On the 12th December 1840 Christy's diary noted "C G Parker called on me by direction of Hodge the Rector (of Little Waltham) to enquire in what way he could recover of me the rent charge". He told Parker that no summons or warrant was needful but the most sensible process of the claimant was to demand the amount claimed and if it wasn't paid to take goods forthwith. The outcome wasn't recorded. The farm remained divorced from the house and later passed into the Day family; to Arthur Day and then to John Day.

Eliza Seabrook was born at Springfield and baptised in All Saints church on the 19th November 1813. She was the daughter of John and Ann Seabrook of Old Lodge Farm whom by then already had several children. John farmed some 300 acres in Springfield and Boreham. Eliza moved into Butlers in 1842 and in 1846 the whole of the parish was surveyed for the Tithe Award. Eliza Seabrook was duly recorded as the owner

and occupier of Butlers. Eight years later John Blyth, the farmer at Belstead Hall, died and at an auction of his property Eliza Seabrook bought 75 acres of Belstead Hall farm. The Seabrooks were clearly a well to do family if their unmarried daughter could afford to buy first Butlers and then more farmland.

Eliza never married. Her father had died by 1851 when Eliza's brother John was the farmer at Old Lodge. Some of the Old Lodge land must have extended into Broomfield for in 1872 the Broomfield school log book recorded on the 12th September that Edward Hammond "was gleaning yesterday with his grandmother in Mr John Seabrook's fields: he is again absent this afternoon." Eliza's widowed mother Ann came to live at Butlers for a while and after she had passed on a succession of nephews and nieces came to stay. It was a modest household with just three living-in servants; a cook, a housemaid, and a gardener.

The census returns show that in 1851 Eliza's mother Ann was staying with Eliza at Butlers and she was still there ten years later having reached the grand old age of 82. By 1871 Ann had passed on and Eliza's nephew Henry Seabrook was at Butlers with Eliza. On the day of the 1871 census a visitor, John Burr, was at the house; related perhaps to the Burr family that had been associated with Broomfield church and the Well House many years before?

When the 1881 census was taken Eliza was away from home. The only inhabitants at Butlers were Emma Gowers the housemaid and Joseph Willis the gardener. Eliza was staying with her niece Rose Crabbe at Tillingham Hall together with

Harriet, described as another niece though this could have been her nephew Henry's wife. In 1891 she was at Butlers with Harriet and a great-niece, Ella. The household was still the same, a cook, housemaid, and gardener. Finally, in 1901 at the age of 87 she had Alan and Ella Seabrook staying with her. They were shown as nephew and niece but this may have meant great-nephew and great niece.

Alan Seabrook's occupation was given as merchant and importer and he was a well known figure in Broomfield although he was actually born at Boreham and lived for many years close by Butlers, along the Main Road and just over the border in Little Waltham. He was a keen cricketer and a founder member of the Broomfield Cricket Club when it was re-formed in 1895. A press cutting reporting Broomfield's Coronation festivities in 1902 noted that the grounds (Brooklands) were "tastefully decorated with flags, bunting and chinese lanterns by Mr A Seabrook".

Eliza Seabrook died in 1904 at the age of 90; the inscription on her tombstone in Broomfield churchyard added "after 62 years residence at Butlers, Broomfield". She was succeeded at Butlers by Henry Herbert Parkes Seabrook. This wasn't the nephew Henry who had been staying with her in 1871 but probably a great-nephew. Always known as Herbert, even the inscription on his grave reads "H Herbert", his first wife, Elizabeth, had died in 1899 at the early age of 28. He remarried and with his second wife, Dorothy, took up residence at Butlers. Eliza's niece Harriet lived on until 1913, dying at the age of 74. Herbert and Dorothy lived on at Butlers through the 1920s and into the 1930s.

Herbert Seabrook took an interest in village affairs. For many years he was a churchwarden at St Mary's church. Like his younger brother Alan he was a cricketer and a prominent member of the Broomfield Cricket Club, serving as President of the club from 1919 to 1921. He died in 1937 at the age of 68 and in that same year the oak shingles of the spire of Broomfield church were found to have perished and the spire was stripped and resingled with Canadian red cedar. The cost of £170 was born by Dorothy Seabrook in memory of Herbert and in recognition of his years as churchwarden there. Three years later Herbert's brother Alan died.

Herbert and Dorothy's son John Alastair Seabrook was killed in action in Egypt on the 10th July 1942. He was a Pilot Officer in the RAF Volunteer Reserve and he was buried in the military cemetery at El Alamein. Dorothy died in 1962 at the age of 72 and finally, for the Butlers story, another son, Arthur Reginald Seabrook died in 1963, aged 57. Dorothy had moved away from Butlers and Broomfield, probably to Budleigh Salterton in Devon for that is her place of residence as shown on John Alastair's memorial. The local directories show her as being at Butler up to 1943 but that may have reflected the position as at the previous year.

After the War a new owner was at Butlers. Harry Denis Keen had moved there from his previous address, Eden Lodge, Links Drive, Widford, with his wife Eunice. Just as Henry Herbert Seabrook was generally known as Herbert, so Harry Denis Keen was usually known as Denis. He was an optician with a shop in New London Road, Chelmsford. The Keens were at Butlers for more than 25 years, eventually having a new home, Broom House, built in the grounds of Butlers.

By 1971 they were in their new house and there were new owners in Butlers, Mr & Mrs Ralston Ryder.

In 1980 Butlers was again up for sale. The land that accompanied the house was now reduced to approximately one acre and the asking price for the property was £125,000, a far cry from the £2,380 that the Revd White had paid for it in 1765 when it then included 300 acres of land. Although to put it in context £2,380 in 1765 would have the purchasing power of a little over £196,000 in 2001. The 1980 sale catalogues show that the house had 7 or 8 bedrooms, depending on which catalogue the buyer referred to (one bedroom had been converted to an additional kitchen), 2 bathrooms, dining room, sitting room, 2 cloakrooms, kitchen, conservatory, utility room, wine cellar, fuel store, and boiler room. Outside were stables and two garages.

In the years that followed the house suffered some ups and downs. For a time it became a residential home for the elderly but this venture was short lived and terminated with the unfortunate residents being transferred elsewhere, some on beds or stretchers. In the late 1980s an insurance company had an office there and individual rooms were let to smaller ventures. It was then left empty for a period and the house was vandalised. A builder then came to the rescue. He purchased it and renovated it, restoring the house to its former glory, perhaps more so, and he and his wife ran the business, Jarvis Developments, from Butlers. After living in it for a while they sold it on. And so the story of Butlers continues into the 21st century.



## The Churchyard Fence lists

**1570.** The Mansion house of old Butlers and now Robert Wood maketh from old Biglands towards the west one rodd

**1678.** The mansion house of old Butlers now Mrs Vincents maketh from James Goodmans toward ye west by estimation one rodd.

**1687.** The mansion house of old Butlers now Mrs Vincents maketh from Fosters westwards one rod.

**1735.** Botelers - Mr Scratton - A rod.

**1843.** 5. Butler's mansion, occupied by Mrs Seabrook, maketh from no. 4 one rod. Owner Eliza Seabrook.

**1846 Tithe Award.** Owner & Occupant Eliza Seabrook.

277	House & garden	1.0. 2
278	7 acres	6.0.23*
280	7 acres	6.3.15*
295	4 acres	5.2.26*
296	8 acres	8.0.16*

\* farmed by Thomas Wall Crooks

## 7.

### **Lewgers, alias Gutters and Mole Hatch.**



"The two tenements of Lewgers maketh from olde Butlers towards the weste one rodde". So reads the entry on the 1570 churchyard fence list. By 1678 the name of Lewgers had been dropped from the properties occupying their place on the list and although Morant used it in 1735 he was surely referring back to the 1570 list. So Lewger was there, wherever 'there' was, in or before 1570, but who was Lewger?

The records of the Court of Augmentations, a body set up by Henry VIII to deal with the valuation and disposal of monastic land (and in so doing to augment his wealth), show that in 1548 Thomas Mildmay of Moulsham, Essex, paid more than £700 for a large amount of property formerly belonging to the monastery of Thele in Hertfordshire. These were largely, if not wholly, chantry bequests that the monastery had accumulated over the centuries. Specifically, Philip d'Aungre and his wife Alice had given property in Broomfield and Chelmsford to the monastery in c1348 for a chaplain to pray for them daily. In 1431 these lands had been transferred to the Prior of the Hospital of St Mary, Elsyngspital, in London.

Amongst the property so purchased by Mildmay was a croft in Broomfield, in the occupation of John Lewgor. Mildmay was in an excellent position to acquire these properties conveniently close to his own seat in Moulsham for he was one of the ten Auditors of the King's Court of Augmentations whose job it was to go around the country valuing the properties and goods of the religious houses, and he acquired much more property around the Chelmsford-Broomfield area, much of which had once belonged to the manor of Bishop's Hall.

Another case in the Augmentation records mentions the grant of some land in Broomfield called Church Crofte, formerly of John Holywell and now in the tenure of John Lewgor, to Thomas Golding of London, Gent., and Walter Cary, Esq. This was most likely more chantry land, hence the name Church Crofte. However, the records aren't specific as to exactly where these properties in the occupation of John Lewgor were. What is more, a croft was usually an enclosed piece of land; if there had been a house on it then 'tenement' or 'messuage' would most likely have been mentioned. Incidentally a conveyance of 1390 records that a John Holywell of Broomfield obtained a messuage, 30 acres of land and ½ acre of meadow in Broomfield from John Waltham. It was common practice to show a previous owner, sometimes one of more than a century before, to give it a sort of identification and provenance. Surely the Holywells were connected and it is tempting to connect it to Gutters, a small farm of around that size.

John Lewgor got a mention in the Chelmsford parish register in 1545 when he was a witness to the baptism of John, the son of John Putto alias Tanner, another name which features in the Broomfield property records of the time. In 1549 John

Lewgor made his will, perhaps feeling that his end was near. In the event it wasn't that near, he died in 1552 and was buried in Broomfield churchyard, so he was a Broomfield man. In his will he gave the use of his houses and land in Broomfield to his son-in-law Richard Bretton for the first year, and then to another son-in-law Thomas Paythe for the next two years. After that "the 5th year I will that Agnes Burgess my daughter do have it". But as with the Augmentation records it doesn't say where this property was.

The fence list of 1570 stated that the two tenements of Lewgers were jointly responsible for one rod of fence, but by 1678 they were shown separately, i.e. "The tenement of William Attwood Esq. now in the occupation of Richard Stebbing" and "The tenement of Finch now in the occupation of William Stoakes". But once again there is no indication as to where they were.

As the two houses shared the responsibility for just one rod of fence they may not have been amongst the largest of Broomfield's houses. However, a tax list for Broomfield dated 1544 shows that John Lewgor the elder was assessed for 13 shillings and 6 pence whilst John Lewgor the younger was assessed for 9 shillings and 6 pence. Put in context, William Scraffield (Scravels) was assessed for 17/6d, Robert Osborne (tenant of Broomfield Hall) 6/8d, Geoffrey Pascall (Butlers?) 2/6d, Philip Hayward (Ayletts?) 8/-, Lawrence Gardener (Crouch House alias Kings Arms) 2/-, John Baker (Vicarage) 6/8d. This seems to put the Lewgors up with the leaders. The biggest taxpayer on the list was Thomas Poole at 20/- but he may have been the tenant of Patching Hall at the time. The smallest tax assessment in 1544 was for 2d and there were

several of these including Elizabeth Lewgor and Walter Lewgor.

The tax list of 1544 wouldn't necessarily have reflected the size of a taxpayer's house, the value of his property would no doubt have included the land and perhaps an assessment of the contents of his property. And to confuse the issue still further an earlier tax list, dated 1524, gives John Lewgor as a relatively minor taxpayer. All of which helps very little in the placing of the Lewgors houses except perhaps to suggest that they were put together not because they were adjacent but because they were owned by the same family. Incidentally, a bill for 13/6d in 1544 would equate to a purchasing power of £231.95 in 2001 while an assessment of 2d would have been £2.86 in 2001.

The Brettons were an old Broomfield family, possibly related to Ingelbald le Breton who featured in a deed of 1294 relating to 110 acres of land in Patching Picot, part of the manor of Patching Hall. In 1546 a John Bretton was baptised in Broomfield church so they were in Broomfield before John Lewgor made his will. In 1573 John Bretton, tailor, appeared at the Quarter Sessions charged with "breaking into the close of John Reve called Gutters and expelling Nicholas Mawde, tenant of John Reve". This seems to be the first mention of a place called Gutters and it is very significant in the siting of Lewgers.

John Bretton was very likely of the same family as Richard Bretton, who was John Lewger's son-in-law. His alleged breaking into Gutters may have had a direct bearing on Lewgers, for Richard Bretton had been left Lewgers houses and land for a period in John Lewger's will. And in 1564 Richard Reve had obtained 2 messuages, 2 gardens, 2 orchards, 20 acres

of land, 3 acres of meadow and 20 acres of pasture in Broomfield from John Lewger. This must have been John Lewger the younger. And the transaction must have involved Gutters. John Bretton's attempt at the expulsion of Reve's tenant surely had something to do with the ownership or inheritance of Gutters.

Gutters can be accurately placed. It was on the east side of the main Broomfield road, at the foot of Gutters Hill and south of Gutters Lane (now Little Orchards Lane but originally Drift Way), so this was the site of at least one of the two tenements of Lewgers. In 1565 Thomas Motley, husbandman, was fined 2 shillings for "entering the message of John Lewgor, held under the will of John Lewgor, deceased" into which the said Thomas Motley had no legal entry. So this too was John Lewger the younger. And the house could have been the second Lewger tenement.

In 1575 John Bretton witnessed the will of Henry Wealde, a man with definite Broomfield connections. In 1570 Wealde was living at the Angel and had probably been in Broomfield, and possibly at the Angel, for twenty years or more because a child of Henry Wealde was baptised at Broomfield church in November 1551. In his will Henry described himself as "of Chelmsford, husbandman", and in the will he left to his wife Joan:-

"that tenement sometimes William Tyler's and 2 tenements, one adjoining called Walles and another called Wakeman's for her life, conditionally that she bring up all my children with sufficient meat, drink, and cloth. To my three sons William, Edmund and Jeremy after her decease that three tenements be equally divided, conditionally that they pay my

four daughters, Anne, Joan, Elizabeth and Mary £26.13s.4d, equally divided within seven years after my sons entrance into the tenement i.e within the first year 53s4d and thereafter £4 a year. To my wife all my movables as well real as personal conditionally that she pay my debts. I make her my executrix and Harry my eldest son Overseer. To my wife the croft bought of John Lewegoure in Broomfield and 1 acre of meadow in Chelmsford”.

Proved 13 May1575.

So here we have another connection with Lewgers, a croft in Broomfield and an acre of meadow in Chelmsford.

At this point it is important to remember that both properties of Lewgers were tenements in Broomfield otherwise they would not have appeared on the 1570 churchyard fence list. Chelmsford was of course adjacent to Broomfield, but more than that a detached part of Chelmsford was actually within the Broomfield boundary. This was the area on either side of what was then called Drift Way, later Gutters Lane and now Little Orchards Lane. It is clear from Henry Wealde’s will that the Lewger’s croft that he bought was not Tylers, Walles, or Wakemans, because they were mentioned separately. And it is also clear that the other Lewger’s tenement (Gutters being the first) could not have been any of them because Tylers, Walles and Wakemans were all in that detached part of Chelmsford.

Henry Wealde’s eldest son died in 1586. If it were he who was baptised at Broomfield in 1551 then he would have been about 35 years of age. He was unmarried and died before his mother, thus never inheriting the land. In his will he left £5 to each of his sisters Joan, Mary and Elizabeth at age 23 or upon

their marriage. He left his white mare and ten shillings to his mother, and to his brother Edmund and his sister Joan his red cow “to be equally divided between them”. I wonder which had the front and which the back? There was a bequest of 10s to his brother Jeremy and the residue went to his brother Edmund. His will was witnessed by William Windell, John Wright and Richard Bretton. The latter was surely the son-in-law of John Lewger and probably the son of the John Bretton who had witnessed the earlier Wealde will in 1575.

Early in 1599 Henry’s widow, Joan Wealde, died. She was buried in Chelmsford churchyard on the 21st February. In her will she left:- “to Jeremy my son my crofte with appurtenances and 3a in Broomfield”. Since the other three properties were in Chelmsford this must be the Lewger’s croft that her husband had left to her.

The proof that Tylers, Walles and Wakemans were in the detached part of Chelmsford and not in Broomfield is to be found in two remarkable maps which were drawn up in 1591. In that year Joan Wealde commissioned a map of her lands. The reason for this isn’t known but it may well be connected with the fact that at that very same time the distinguished cartographer John Walker was surveying the whole of the manor of Chelmsford, including the detached part where most, but not all, of her land was situated. Is it fanciful to imagine that Widow Wealde saw John Walker when he was surveying her land as part of his Chelmsford project and asked him to do a little job for her?

John Walker’s endeavours resulted in a remarkably detailed map of Chelmsford and an equally detailed survey, also

produced in 1591. To take this map and survey first, under free tenements it says that:

“Joane Wealde holdeth by deed dated the xiith October in the ixth year of King Henry VIII (1517/8) one acre of meadow lying between the meadow sometime the Lord Bouchiers and now the Lord Riches on the one parte and the customary lands sometime of John Fishe on the other parte and one close of land containing by measure 2 acres 1 roode and 14 perches lying in Broomfield between the lands late of the Earl of Essex on the one parte and the lands of John Bigland on the other parte by fealty suite of court and renteth together at feasts usual. xiid”. Incidentally the Lord Bouchiers were Earls of Essex and lords of the manor of Patching Hall and were succeeded as lords of that manor by Richard, Lord Rich of Leez.

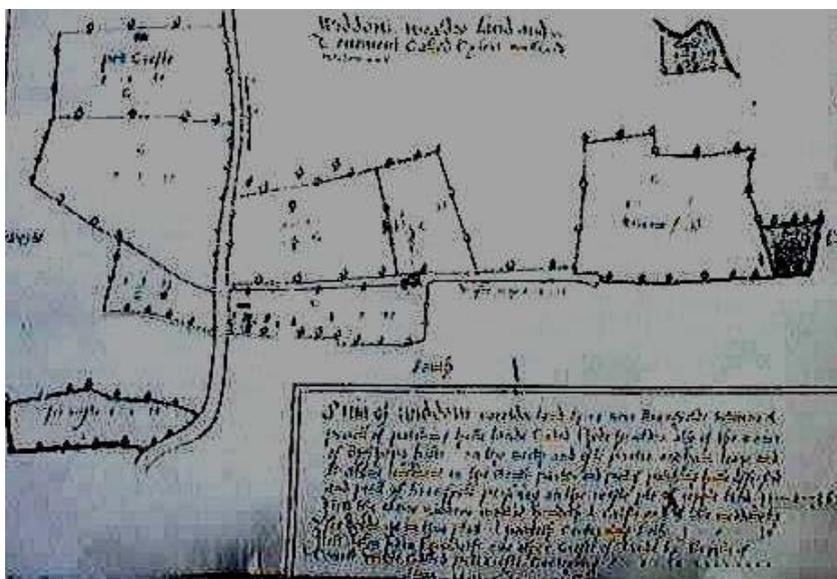
Joan had two freehold pieces of land. One was a little meadow of one acre (actually, the map that John Walker drew for Joan measured it at a fraction under one acre - 3 roods and 16 perches) and the other, in Broomfield, was a croft of 2a 1r 14p.

Walker's survey of Chelmsford goes on. Under Customary tenements, copyhold of the manor of Chelmsford:

“Joan Weald holdeth by copy a tenement customary and heriotable called Fishes sometimes John Fishes after William Tylers, one other tenement and twenty acres of land called Walles tenement sometimes John Walls after John Fishes whereof one meadow conteyning 3 roodes 15 perches lyeth between the lands of Patchyng Hall called Hide and Hidemead south and west and the mayne road west and east and one other tenement and two acres of meadow grounds customary and

heriotable called Wakemans containing in truth 3 acres and 20 perch and renteth for the premises together besides other suit and services vs 1jd. (5 shillings and two pence)”

This makes it clear that the tenements called Tylers, Walles, and Wakemans were in the detached part of Chelmsford, copyhold of the manor. They cannot therefore be Lewgers. The second map, the map that John Walker drew for Widow Wealde merely confirms all this. A tenement is clearly shown on Widow Wealde’s map, immediately to the south of Drift Way (alias Little Orchards Lane alias Gutters Lane), and the map states that her land and tenement was called Tylers, Walls and Wakemans. The map also makes it clear that the piece of land measuring 3a 2r 20p on which the tenement was drawn was part of Chelmsford manor. It also states that it was bounded on the south side by Bretton’s tenement which would have been in Broomfield. The map was endorsed in a much later hand “ancient map of Gutters, Broomfield”.



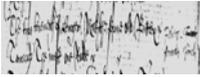
Two other relevant maps are the Broomfield Tithe map of 1846 and the Chelmsford Tithe map of 1843, which clearly show the boundaries of Broomfield parish and the detached part of Chelmsford that lay within the Broomfield boundary. This leaves no doubt as to which pieces of Widow Wealde's land were in Broomfield and which were in Chelmsford. From all this it is clear that John Lewger held land near the foot of Gutter's Hill and there can be little doubt that the croft that Henry Wealde bought from him and passed to his wife was the free croft of 2a 1r 14p shown on Widow Wealde's map and which she passed, together with another free croft of 3r16p at the end of Drift Way, to their son Jeremy. But no tenement was shown on either piece of land.

This doesn't quite end the Wealde connection. Widow

Joan left her croft and 3 acres in Broomfield to her son Jeremy. Another son, William, inherited most of the Chelmsford portion (Tylers, Walles and Wakemans) and a third son also had some of the Chelmsford land. There seems to be no further mention of the three sons but in 1622 the Chelmsford parish register recorded the burial of a child of Henry Wealde "of the 3 houses". This sounds very like Tylers Walls and Wakemans and suggests that the family was still there in 1622. However, a survey of the Mildmay lands of c1618 states that those properties had gone from Wealde to Scott to Widow Knightsbridge and then to John Lorkyns. The "3 houses" was therefore unlikely to have been Tylers, Walls and Wakemans. It was almost certainly another property nearby.

Widow Wealde's map makes it clear that in 1591 Bretton's property was immediately south of her land, i.e. at Gutters. The very place that John Bretton broke into in 1573. The then owner of Gutters, John Reeve, later became the bailiff of the manor of Bishops Hall. The sequence must be that Richard Reve obtained Gutters from John Lewger in 1564 and by 1591 it was in the Bretton family. And now it is necessary to go back in time to consider another clue. Fishers.

The 1570 fence list also contains some marginal notes which were entered much later in a different hand. No doubt they were made in order to keep the list more or less up to date. Against the two tenements of Lewgers there is written Fishers, and below Fishers is written Stonards and Finch. Finch had also been written beside Fishers but then it had been crossed out.



We can't be certain what this layout means but it could be that one of the tenements was known as Fishers and the other was associated with Stonard. The writer may have first entered Finch against Fishers, then realising that Finch was now the owner of Stonard's tenement had crossed it out and entered it below, against Stonard. The Fishers entry is of particular interest because this has cropped up before.

John Fish, or Fyssh, was a prominent Chelmsford trader around the year 1400, eventually becoming the manor bailiff. It was an age when a number of successful traders and professional men in the town were acquiring property in Broomfield (Stacey, Glover, Browning, Gynes) and Fish may have been among their number although in Fish's case it may be that most of his property was in the detached bit of Chelmsford within Broomfield. It seems that much of the Wealde family property was once Fish's; the 1591 survey stated that Widow Wealde had a tenement which was at some time John Fishes and later William Tylers, and 20 acres of land called Walls tenement which had at some time been John Walls and later John Fishes. It is very likely that land in this area, perhaps the very land referred to, became the basis of Fishers farm which will be considered later.

In 1678 the two tenements of Lewgers were shown in separate ownership; one by William Attwood, who was lessee of the Parsonage, and one by Finch. In 1673 the male line of the Rich family, owners of the Parsonage and lords of the manor of

Patching Hall, came to an end and ownership passed to the female line, the Finch family, who were Earls of Nottingham. Could this be the Finch, or was it another less elevated person of the same name? Since the first mention of a Finch in the parish registers was in 1717, the 1678 reference could well refer to an absentee property owner and the date fits in well with the then lord of the manor.

In 1687 the owners were the same as nine years before but the occupants were now William Knight and William Clarke, replacing Richard Stebbing and William Stoakes. So, if the marginal note on the 1570 list is followed, then by 1678 Fishers was owned by William Attwood and occupied by Richard Stebbing. Nine years later Stebbing had been replaced by William Knight. The second tenement, sometimes Stonard's, was owned by Finch in 1678 and occupied by William Stoakes. Stonard was most likely Joseph Stonard, an oatmeal maker, who was present at a vestry meeting in 1642, was assessed for three hearths on the 1662 and 1671 hearth tax returns (a goodly number), and who died in 1676. In 1687 Finch was still the owner but William Clarke was now the occupant. It still doesn't tell us exactly which tenement was Gutters and which was Lewgers number 2.

Another clue now presents itself; the "3 houses" of Henry Wealde. In 1703 the Broomfield parish register recorded the burial of William Knight, "farmer at the three houses". Five years later another burial was that of Thomas Goose, "dwelling at Mr Gulston's Farm, 3 houses". Now William Knight was living in one of the Lewgers tenements in 1687, most likely the one known as Fishers. But what is the relationship between Fishers and the 3 houses? Probably that

they were one and the same, or 3 and the same.

There is a marriage settlement dated 1722 in the Essex Record Office which refers to the property of a Mr Goulston, or Gulston, of Wyddial near Buntingford. It harks back to 1700 to the time of James Goulston, and it was in 1722 that his son Richard was to marry Margaret Turner. Amongst his property portfolio was Fishers Farm in Broomfield. This must be the Mr Gulston at whose farm Thomas Goose died in 1709. If this is so then the “3 houses” belonged to, or were synonymous with, Fishers Farm. And if William Knight was at the same place in 1703 as he had been in 1687 then one of the Lewgers tenements was at Fishers Farm. Either Fishers Farm was Gutters or if not it was the second Lewgers tenement. Later events will show that Fishers and Gutters were indeed separate properties. So where was Fishers Farm?

Fishers Farm contained 40½ acres in 1722, more than Widow Wealde’s land, and more than Gutters farm. The deed relates:

All that messuage or tenement called Fishers with a barn, stable, 2 hay houses, a malt house, cow house, cart house, and yard thereunto belonging formerly in the tenure or occupation of William Knight and now or late in the tenure or occupation of William Clarke his undertenants or assignes, situate and being in Bromfelde in the County of Essex, and also the 40 acres and a halfe be the same more or less of arable, meadow, and pasture ground thereunto belonging herein after particularly mentioned (that is to say):

The orchard and hop ground	2 acres
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2 meadows adjoining	5 acres
Broom Field	3 acres
Home Field	6 acres
Gaw (or Gan) Mead	7½ acres
A pigtle at the bottom of the orchard	1 acre
Larkes Field	4 acres
Barn Field	2 acres
The two fields known as Parsonage Field	10 acres

Two significant facts emerge. One, not only was William Knight, the farmer at the 3 houses, a previous occupant, but after him came William Clarke, the other occupant of Lewgers on the 1687 fence list! And two, the field names don't tie in with either Widow Wealde's land of 1591 or a plan of Gutters Farm in 1890 nor do they appear anywhere on the tithe maps of Chelmsford or Broomfield! A curious feature of the field names is the mention of the Parsonage which is a considerable distance from the Gutters area. The connection may be that it was once owned by the lessee of the Parsonage, William Attwood.

What is certain is that Fishers Farm stayed in the Goulston family until 1761. It had been subject to many mortgages and there were many interests to be paid off when it passed into the hands of a group of local businessmen - Richard Gosling, Osgood Hanbury, John Joliffe Tufnell, William Leapingwell and Thomas Pocklington, it seemingly ending up with the latter gentleman.

In 1703 a rental of the Manor of Bishops Hall recorded  
 “ - Lake formerly Joan Wealde for a tenement here called Fishes

alias Tylers, one tenement and land called Walls tenement whereof one meadow containing 3 rood 15 perch, one other tenement and 2 acres of meadow here called Wakemans. Rent 5s2d". The conclusion must be that John Fish had land in both Broomfield and in the detached part of Chelmsford and by 1703 the Chelmsford bit, once held by the Wealde's, had passed to the Lake family and had probably been incorporated into Gutters farm. The rest of Fish's Broomfield land, which became Fishers Farm, at one time occupied by William Knight and then by William Clarke was, by 1709, in the ownership of Mr Gulston.

In 1735 Morant merely notes "Lewgers - Mrs Lake". Who then was Mrs Lake? Muilman, in his history of Essex, mentions "an estate called Gutters formerly belonged to the Lake family who resided at Witham and from them by purchase to John Judd in whom it continues". This was written in 1771 so we can place the Lake ownership of Gutters/Lewgers in the first half of the 18th century. The rental of 1703 shows that they were then at the property known as Tylers Walls and Wakemans in the Chelmsford bit of Fish's and perhaps by that time it had become associated with Gutters in Broomfield. The Lake family was prominent in Witham during this time, regularly appearing in jury lists and holding offices in the administration of Witham.

It is clear that attempts were made on successive fence list for the properties to keep their original bits of fence. Indeed, since the lengths to be maintained varied from property to property any change in the order would have had a knock on effect on the responsibility of other properties on the list. So one of the Lewgers tenements on the 1570 list was indeed

Gutters and was confirmed as such on the 1843 list.

The likely scenario is that Henry Wealde, in addition to owning the Angel in 1570, had property at some time known as Tylers, Walles, and Wakemans, possibly held as dower from his wife, and much of it copyhold of the Mildmay family as lords of the manor of Bishops Hall. Some of their property had previously been leased by John Lewgar and were the properties mentioned in the Augmentation records. Henry was a Chelmsford man and he died in 1575. At his death the three properties passed to his widow for her lifetime and then to the children. It then passed out of the family, perhaps merging with Gutters homestead. In 1678 one of Lewgers properties was owned by Finch and occupied by William Stoakes; in 1687 it was occupied by William Clarke. Taking this as Gutters, by the early 1700s it was owned by the Lake family and from them, by 1771, it had passed to John Judd.

The other Lewgers tenement, Fishers, was owned by William Atwood; in 1678 Richard Stebbing was there and in 1687 it was occupied by William Knight. In 1703 the Broomfield parish register recorded the burial of William Knight, "farmer at the three houses". Five years later another burial was that of Thomas Goose, "dwelling at Mr Gulston's Farm, 3 houses. This must be Fishers Farm, alias the 3 houses. It was in the Gulston or Goulston family until 1761.

In 1716 the Marriage family, already established in Broomfield, had taken on the Chelmsford properties of Tylers Walls and Wakemans. In 1727 a Rental of that year states: "William Marriage for one tenement and one croft containing 3 acres 2 roods and 20 perch heriotable and three houses and one

croft containing 1 acre 3 roods 25 perch heriotable in the occupation of Thomas Josselin“. In 1738 William Marriage, senior, died and in his will he left “all that parcel of land cont. 8a called Laugers (Lewgers) lying in Broomfield in my own occupation and my new built tenement and croft of land lying near Mile Stile in Broomfield to Ruth my wife. All the rest and residue of my lands and tenements and estates whatsoever I give to my son William”. This would have included the Chelmsford land for on the 8th April 1738 the manorial records show that William son of William Marriage took it on when his father died

William Marriage junior died in 1775 and his Lewgers land passed to his son Joseph and then, in 1793, it went from Joseph to John Kent of Rainham, Kent. On 1 April 1812 David Pryor acquired it from Kent. David Pryor, sometime of Clifford Street, Westminster and afterwards of Old Bond Street, also of Grays Inn, had married Elizabeth Judd, the widow of John Judd of Broomfield Lodge. John Judd senior was a Chelmsford grocer who had become a man of considerable wealth and property. He lived in the Mansion House in Chelmsford High Street and amongst his many acquisitions was land in Broomfield, including Gutters Farm which he had purchased from the Lake family. So now Lewgers croft and his tenement called Gutters were all brought together. However, David Pryor’s ownership didn’t last long for in 1813 Miller Christy of whom more will be said in the Brownings chapter, bought Gutters and Brownings farms in Broomfield to be run by his 5th and youngest son, James. Together they came to 104 acres and when Miller Christy died in 1820 James inherited them subject to a mortgage of £4,000 at 5% for the benefit of his sister Anne Cruickshank and her family.

James farmed Patching Hall, Brownings and Gutters farms as one unit. He kept a detailed record of his crops and livestock and his crop books for the period 1825 to 1846 show just how varied were these crops. They included wheat, barley, oats, tares, rye grass, red clover, lucerne, hops, cabbage, cauliflower, mangold wurzel, turnips, white peas, and potatoes. The books don't tell what was grown on Gutters land but in accordance with the crop rotation practice it is likely that at some time it was planted with most if not all of the crops listed. He also kept, in rotation, a considerable amount of land fallow.

In 1854 James Christy commissioned a map of his lands, embracing the farms of Gutters and Brownings. Gutters land was where it would be expected; the land shown on Widow Wealde's map plus some land immediately to the south in Broomfield parish consisting of Gutters homestead and approximately an acre of land to the east.

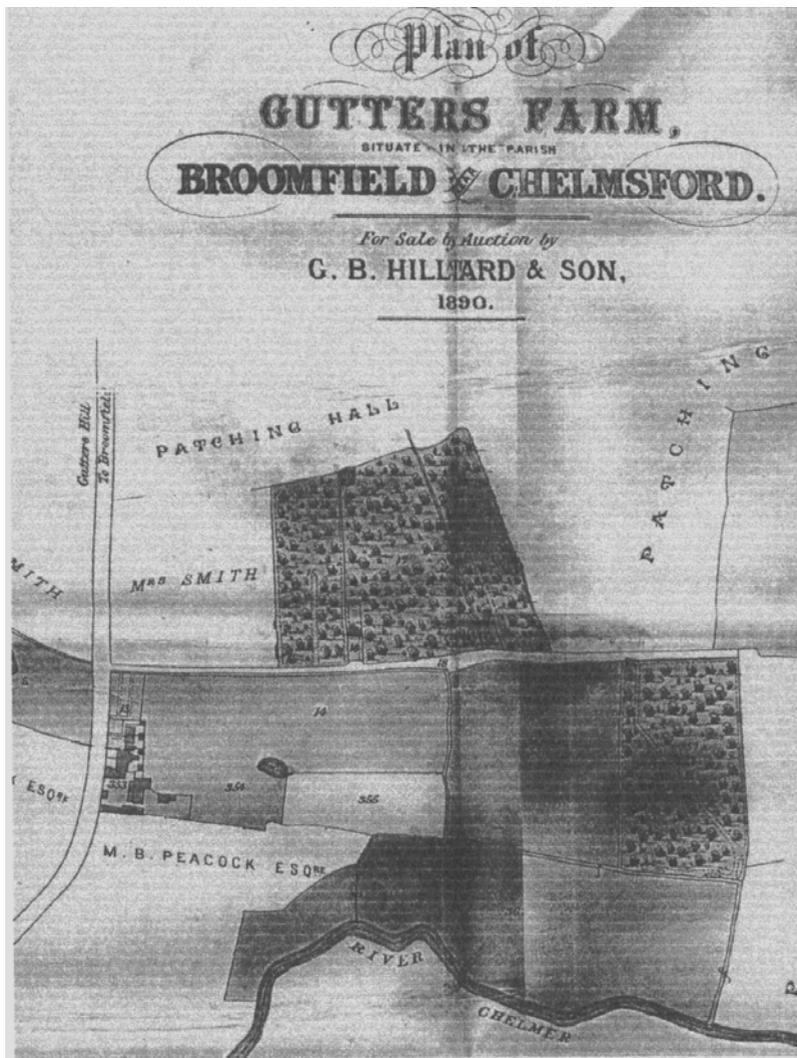
James Christy married Charlotte Fell in 1812 and among their children was Robert, who on the death of his father took on Gutters Farm. Robert Christy died on the 1st February 1888 and in 1890 his executors put Gutters Farm up for sale. It was advertised as a valuable freehold farm of 35 acres, including 4 orchards planted with choice fruit bearing trees and 16 acres of superior meadows watered by the River Chelmer. In addition to the farm buildings there was a lookers cottage and 6 other cottages. One acre of the land was copyhold of the manor of Bishop's Hall, Chelmsford

Into the 20th century and the farm buildings of Gutters were put to a variety of uses. Roland Partridge was now the

farmer at Patching Hall and his bailiff, Walter Kinsey, looked after Gutters land. Now Gutters Farm is no more. The old farm house, surely one of the Lewgers tenements, had been demolished long before the rest of the farm buildings. Three pairs of modern semi-detached houses now occupy the site.



**Walter Kinsey leans on a precarious-looking gatepost in front of the buidings of Gutters Farm**



Gutters Farm at the time of its sale in 1890.

There were two Lewgers tenements on the churchyard fence list in 1570. Their property was partly in the south of Broomfield and partly in the detached part of Chelmsford. One was Gutters but where was the other? Of the houses known to have been standing in that area at that time those in the detached part of Chelmsford can be discounted. It must have been the homestead of Fishers Farm and Fishers Farm must have been somewhere in that area. There is one other building, still standing, which dates back to that first fence list.

Mole Hatch is a cottage situated just ten yards south of what was Gutters curtilage. The Royal Commission on Historic Buildings in 1921 listed it and although the commission didn't offer a date it was clearly old enough to qualify for inclusion. Today it is a single unit but it has had a chequered history which has left it so altered as to be difficult to assess. It was probably built as a hall house with a single cross wing, perhaps as early as the 14th century, certainly long before 1570. Any wing has long since gone. There is some evidence that at one time the front of the house was jettied.

The cottage was converted into two dwellings and this caused further structural alterations. There is an early chimneystack, noted by the Royal Commission, with "a shaft rebated at the angles". Today there are two fireplaces, one at either end of the cottage, telling of its former existence as a pair of cottages. The older one is easily recognizable but this too has been altered, with the bricks on one side much older and narrower than those on the other side. The timber framework is a mixture of the very old and the relatively modern, some adzed, some sawn. And a small portion of the wattle and daub infilling is still visible near the older chimneystack.

Its reversion to a single dwelling brought about more alterations with the removal of partitions and doors and replacement of some timbers. The outside of Mole Hatch has been re-vamped and gives little idea as to what lies behind the door although its unusually pitched roof may give a clue. The name is no help because it is a very modern addition. But the house was there in 1570 so could it be the other Lewgers?

As has already been shown with Gutters, the history of this area is complicated. Part in Chelmsford and part in Broomfield, the court rolls of Bishops Hall give a good picture of the Chelmsford portion but the Lewgers houses were in Broomfield and the records of the manor of Patching hall were destroyed in World War II. Mole Hatch, it is easier to refer to it as this even though the name is recent, was owned by a London lawyer Mark Beauchamp Peacock in 1890 when neighbouring Gutters was sold. And Peacock was already the owner in 1854 when James Christy commissioned a map of his property.

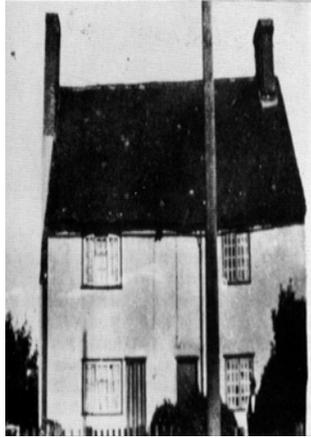
Mark Peacock bought the property from John Harris who had nurseries on both side of the Broomfield Road. The east nursery was adjacent to Mole Hatch and the Tithe map of 1846 shows that Harris also owned Mole Hatch. It was then two dwellings in the occupation of John Owers and Edward Watson who were probably labourers working for Harris in his nursery. John Harris was in the area as early as 1781 and as a landowner from 1805 but before that the story gets clouded. There are several sets of deeds in the Essex Record Office which refer to this part of Broomfield, not least to Fishers Farm. If Mole Hatch is connected with Fishers Farm it could thus be Lewgers

number 2.

Eva Garner was a Broomfield girl. In 1939 alterations were being carried out to the cottages which became Mole Hatch and the recently married Eva moved into no.1 (the cottage furthest from Chelmsford), with her husband. The rent was 8 shillings and sixpence a week and the landlord was Mr George Knowles. Eva, now Mrs Barrett (2003), recalls that the rent was taken up to Staceys farm, Broomfield, where Mr Knowles was the farmer. Now the owner in 1890 was Mr Peacock, who then also owned Stacey's Farm so it seems that it remained connected to that farm up to Mr Knowles' day.

A possible scenario is that the second Lewgers tenement had gone from Attwood to Gulston to Pocklington. It may then have passed to Pocklington's heir, Thomas Woodroofe, and from him to John Harris. From Harris it went, by 1854, to Peacock and became associated with Stacey's Farm. If this was Fishers Farm, the second Lewgers tenement could then be Mole Hatch. Perhaps one day a diligent researcher might turn up the vital clue that ties it all together.

The story of Lewgers is very old and indistinct. The photograph at the head of this chapter is also very old and indistinct. It somehow seems appropriate. On the left of the picture stand the cottages belonging to Tylers Walls and Wakemans. Once in a detached piece of Chelmsford they were transferred to Broomfield in 1889. Next to them are the buildings, probably the barn, of Gutters Farm. And in the centre of the picture is Mole Hatch, still recognizable today.



Above, a picture of Mole Hatch, taken in the early 1930s when it was clearly a pair of cottages.



And finally, Mole Hatch in 2003

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**1570.** The two tenements of Lewgors maketh from old Butlers towards the west one rodd.

**1678.** The tenement of William Attwood Esq. now in the occupation of Richard Stebbing maketh from Butlers towards the west by estimation half a rodd

The tenement of Finch now in the occupation of William Stoakes maketh from Rich. Stebbings towards the west by estimation half a rodd.

**1687.** The tenement of William Atwood Esq. now in the occupation of William Knight maketh from Butlers towards the west half a rod

The tenement of Finch now in the occupation of William Clarke maketh from Knights towards the west half a rod.

**1735.** Lewgers - Mrs Lake. A rod

**1843.** 6. Gutters, occupied by Mr James Christy, maketh from no 5 half a rod. Owner James Christy.