

The Pulling House

The Churchyard Fence lists.

1570. The tenement sometimes John Brownes and now William Freemans makithe the stile toward the weste fower footte and halfe.

1678. The tenement of Richard Freeman adjoining to ye Church yard knowne by the name of ye Pulling House maketh from the said house westwards be estimation four foot and halfe.

1687. The tenement of Richard Freeman adjoining to the church yd known by the name of the Pulling House to make from the sd house westward fower foot and halfe.

1735. Freeman's - the stile. 4½ft

1843. The tenement called Pulling House, adjoining the churchyard at the south east corner, maketh and repairs 4½ feet. Henry Mickleburgh.

3.

The Well House



The origins of the Well House go back far beyond the churchyard fence list of 1570. It may well be the site of the first well in the village for the house's early inhabitants took their name from the fact that they lived at the house with the well. There was a Robert at Welle and a William at Welle on the 1319 tax return for Broomfield, one or both of them most likely living just where the Well House stands today.

The Well House is a listed building of special architectural or historic interest. It has also merited a paragraph in Morant's History of Essex. As vicar of Broomfield in the 1730s Morant would have known it at first hand. The house is also described in the report of the Royal

Commission on Historical Monuments, which attributes it to the 16th century, a common conclusion of the Royal Commission. There must have been an awful lot of building going on in the 16th century. Modern dating aids have shown that many old buildings have proved to be much older than the RCHM's conclusions and the Well House is more likely to have 15th century origins.

The old house has had many alterations made to it over the centuries, but still there are many fine features of its earlier years to be seen. Oak beams are commonly found in old stud and plaster houses and there are several examples to be found in Broomfield but none surpass those in the Well House. Here the beams are carved and moulded and there is a lot of fine old wooden panelling on the walls. There are moulded panels over the fireplaces, divided and flanked by carved pilasters and surmounted by a carved frieze. The person who had this house built not only displayed good taste but must also have had considerable wealth. But for whom was it built?

The origin of the name is attributed to a well that still exists in the cellar of the house. It was fed by a spring of pure water though it has apparently dried up in recent times. The house has another well in evidence, situated just to the rear of the house, probably fed from that same spring for it too is now dry. And so it is appropriate that the earliest recorded residents were named "at Welle" and two of that name appear on the 1319 tax list, Robert and William at Welle. Robert was assessed for 2/6¼d and William for 1/8d but whether or not they both lived at

the Well House isn't known, possibly not. It is tempting to think that a house which has been made into two separate dwellings on several occasions was split up in 1319 but this may be fanciful. At some time a John at Welle lived there, as shown on the first churchyard fence list, but as to whether he was there before, or after, Robert and or William, this too isn't known.

The 1570 fence lists shows that the house was "sometime John at Well, now Henry Gynes", so at that date the Gynes family was in possession. They could well have been there for 100 years for Andrew Gynes was one of a consortium of men in Broomfield who bought the Kings Arms, then known as Crouch House, from William Skinner in 1474. Andrew died in 1482, leaving bequests to the church for the repair of the passing bell, the provision of a light with six lamps to hang before the image of Christ crucified, and for the upkeep of the light of St Katherine the Virgin in the church.

It looks as though Andrew had only one child for he left the residue of his estate to his executors, his wife Agnes and his son Robert. Robert's name appears on another Crouch House (Kings Arms) deed of 1503, and also on the 1524 tax list. In 1553 the churchwardens accounts show that Robert Gynes supplied some timber for the church.

The next in line was probably John Gynes. In 1561 John granted 23 acres of land in Broomfield to trustees for the use of the parish; it became known as the Church Lands and the income as John Gynes Charity. Whether he actually founded it or passed it on as trustee from an earlier bequest isn't entirely clear.

Despite speculation that he was the founder it is almost certain that he was a trustee of an existing foundation because there is a record of 23 acres being granted to the church as early as 1262 and there is a reference in the churchwarden's accounts to rent being received in 1541 in respect of the church land. The land has long since been sold but the income resulting from the investment of the proceeds is still known as John Gynes charity.

By 1569 Henry Gynes was the owner of the Well House, the 1570 fence list is quite definite about that. Henry was possibly the last of the Gynes to live there, if indeed he did, for there are no more Gynes referred to in the parish registers. Like so many Broomfield families the family had previously been in Chelmsford where an earlier Gynes, Adam, was a prosperous ropemaker in the Shoprow, the bit between Tindal Street and the High Street, from the 1380s until his death in 1423, and a John Gynes was fined in Chelmsford in 1422 for selling salt by false measure.

Henry Gynes also owned property in West Hanningfield and it was there that he died in 1573 so it is likely that by then the Well House was let out to a tenant. In his will Henry left his "messuage called Well House in Broomfield" to his son Robert. The will also provided that Henry's brother Thomas was to have charge of the letting of the Well House until Robert was 21. In 1572 Henry Gynes had stood surety for an alehouse at West Hanningfield but there seems no evidence that he or his family were long standing residents there; the burial of Henry, and his wife Maude who also died in 1573, are the only Gynes entries in the West Hanningfield registers.

Robert no doubt took control of the Well House in due course and the Robert Gynes, gentleman, of Great Leighs, who was mentioned in a Quarter Sessions record of 1594 was surely he. The indications are that the house was let out during Robert's ownership and the leaseholder becomes clear in a will of 1592.

The Devenish family had long lived in Broomfield and the Walthams. There are also many records of the family name in Cressing and it is clear they were related because for some reason they also went by the name of Collett. Records in the various parishes often mention "Devenish alias Collett" or "Collett alias Devenish". An early entry in the Broomfield register records the baptism of John, the son of Henry Devenish on the 20th December 1551. In 1568 Henry Devenish was a witness to the will of Thomas Motley of Broomfield. In 1572 his name appeared in a record authorising him to keep a victualling house in Broomfield.

It was in 1572 that "Henry Davennys, alehouse keeper" was charged at the Sessions with "keeping ill rule and receiving vagabonds into his house, and men's servants and artificers playing at cards and other unlawful games at unlawful hours in the night, and his wife for being a common disturber of the peace by quareling rayling and leveing unquietly with her neibors". The records don't say where Henry Devenish was living and The Angel has been suggested, but a later record suggests that it was more likely to have been the Well House.

Henry Devenish's name cropped up in 1573 when he

again witnessed a will, and in that same year John Warren of Little Waltham, in his will, left to his son Ambrose “a table standing in Henry Devenish’s house in Broomfield”. Another son, Matthew, was left “a cupboard standing in Henry Devenish’s house in Broomfield“. We are left to guess what Warren’s furniture was doing in Devenish’s house. Henry’s wife Jane, the disturber of the peace, died in 1574 and in the following year Henry married again, his new wife was Denise Leyland.

A William Devenish, who may have been Henry’s son, married Joan Reed of Mashbury in 1575 and they had several children, including a daughter Joan, born in 1587 and a son, Robert, born in 1591. More interesting is the will of William Devenish. He died at the Well House in 1592 and in his will he bequeathed his lease of the Well House to his wife Joan on condition that she bring up his children, performed his legacies, and paid his debts. He also owned two tenements in Great Waltham, leaving one to his son Thomas and the other to his other son Robert.

In his will William Devenish also listed his outstanding affairs. “Mr Robert Gynes owes me 12 bushels of malt, 2 bushels of barley; I owe to John Choppen for one horse I bought of him, to be paid before Whitsuntide; I owe William Odden 20 shillings; I owe unto my sister Clemence Collett alias Devenish £6”. Clearly the Devenishes were at the Well House in 1592 and the malt and barley is very suggestive of an alehouse. A possible scenario is that Henry Devenish had leased the Well House from Henry Gynes, it became an alehouse by 1572, and in

due course William Devenish continued the lease under Robert Gynes. Interestingly, Gordon Eley, who had lived opposite the Well House for well over 60 years when he was interviewed in 2002, remarked without any prompting that “it was a pub at one time”. Alas he couldn’t recall where he had heard the story.

The Public Record Office holds deeds of conveyances of property going back to the 12th century. The summary at the foot of these conveyances, or fines, names the parties and the parish or parishes concerned but is rarely more specific. Back in 1595 Robert Gynes, Gent. and his wife Lucy conveyed one house and its curtilage, garden, orchard, 26 acres of arable land, 5 acres of meadow and 6 acres of pasture to John Pake. Now John Pake was the lessee of the Parsonage from 1586 to 1608 so he seems to have been adding to his property portfolio. And Robert Gynes was the owner of the Well House at around this time. So although the property isn’t named it is possible that John Pake bought the Well House from Robert Gynes in 1595 and he or his executors may have sold it in the early 1600s to Henry Bullen. None of the parties may actually have lived there.

. William Devenish was probably followed at the Well House by the shoemaker, William Howe. In 1606 Thomas Howe of Sheering was summoned to the Quarter Sessions where he was ordered to keep the peace towards James Dyer. William Howe of Broomfield, shoemaker, stood surety for him. The parish register notes that William was at the Well House when he died in 1627.

Morant, in his History of Essex, relates that the Well

House was in the Bullen and then the Burr families, and as the local vicar as well as historian he should know although he was writing 100 years after the event. Yet the sequence of ownership seems at first a little confusing. Henry Bullen was a taxpayer in Broomfield in 1636 and he may have been at the Well House. This would tie in well with a marginal note on the 1570 churchyard fence list which gives "Mr Bullen" as owner at some unspecified time but certainly before the next fence list was drawn up in 1678. Gregory Bullen, who died in 1709, certainly lived there. However, the fence list for 1678 shows Mrs Allen in possession and she was still there on the 1686 list. Just to confuse the issue the Burr family sprang from Thomas Burr who was vicar of Broomfield from 1620 to 1657 and who had bought Crouch House (Kings Arms) in 1627. And Thomas Burr's grandson, John Burr, died at the Well House in 1710!

The clue as to the descent of the Well House lies in the will of Abraham Boosey of Broomfield. Abraham came from a long-established Chignal St James family, a branch of which had been in Broomfield since at least 1570, at Scravels and at Glovers. Abraham made his will on the 21st October 1664 and it reveals that at that time he owned several properties in Broomfield including Ayletts, Wheelers and the Well House. In that same year he had also bought Crouch House and his will mentions numerous other unnamed houses as well as named properties in Chignal St James, Writtle and Felsted. The will also reveals that his wife Mary had been previously married to John Burr, son of the vicar of Broomfield (who was a previous owner of Crouch House), and his brother-in-law was Gregory Bullen. So there we have the connections.

Abraham Boosey was living in the Well House in 1664 when he made his will. He left the property to his wife Mary for life and then to his daughter, also named Mary. Should his daughter have no heirs then it was to go to Gregory Bullen, son of brother-in-law Gregory Bullen. So the likely sequence is:

William Howe was living at the Well House up to his death in 1627, probably as a tenant of Henry Bullen. The Well House was bought by Abraham Boosey who made it his residence, doubtless after 1636 when Henry Bullen was still a Broomfield taxpayer. On Abraham's death it passed to his wife Mary, a widow who was born Mary Bullen and was previously married to John Burr, the son of the Broomfield vicar. Soon after Abraham's death she married again, to John Allen, and it was as Mrs Allen that she had the house in 1678 and 1687. Her daughter Mary, by her second husband Abraham Boosey, presumably failed to produce the required heir and so the property passed to Gregory Bullen, jnr., as specified in Abraham's will. Gregory, who died in 1708, was described in the burial register as living at the Well House "with Mr Prior", whoever Mr Prior might be.

Well House Connections.

	Henry Bullen		Thos Burr		Boosey
Allen					
	<hr/>				
Henry Gregory John d1689 Allen	Mary	m(1)	John Burr	m(2)	Abraham Boosey
				m(3)	

Gregory
Mary
Bullen
Boosey

When Henry Bullen died at Writtle in 1689 he left two guineas to his brother Gregory and one guinea to his sister Mary Allen, who was by then a widow for the third time. In his will he stipulated that if they were dissatisfied with the bequests and attempted to dispute it the amount should be further reduced!

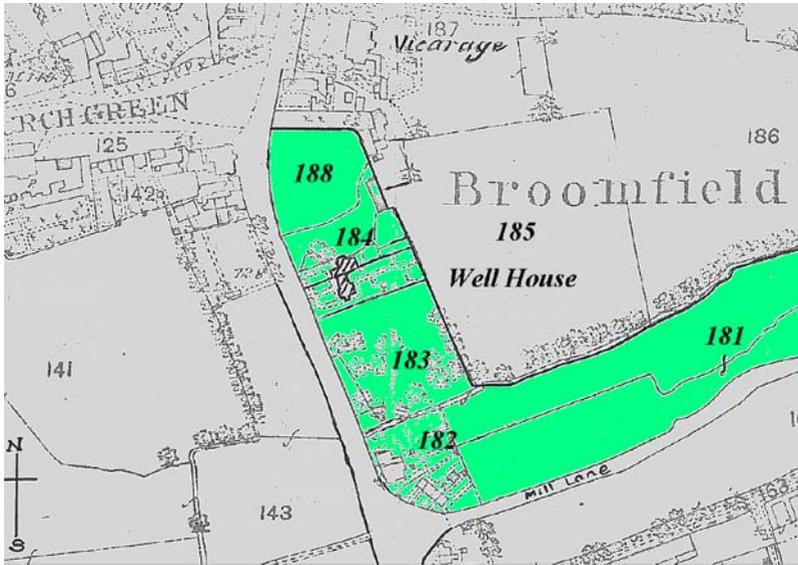
In 1715 James, the son of John Holdsworth, Gent., "living at the Well House" was baptized in Broomfield church, and five more little Holdsworths were baptized there between 1716 and 1723. It might be thought that the Holdsworths were living at the Well House throughout that period and yet the Broomfield register shows a John Higgons, Gent, of the Well House being buried in 1721. Two dwellings again?

The Burr family, descendants of Thomas Burr the vicar, were the next owners, as Morant stated. They were of course related to the Booseys, Mrs Allen, and the Bullens by virtue of various marriages. It may be that the Well House had been in the ownership of the Boosey/Bullen/Burr families since Henry Bullen and that Howe, Holdsworth and Higgons had leased it from them. Certainly John Burr died at the Well House in 1710. Mary Burr married a Mr Marsh and she was shown as the owner in 1735. From her daughter, Mrs Brown, it passed to John Olmius, Esq., the son of Herman Olmius, a wealthy Dutch merchant who had purchased much property in the area and was created the first Lord Waltham. John Olmius was also Lord of the Manor of Broomfield Hall and he in turn

became Lord Waltham. There is more about him in the chapter on Broomfield Hall.

In 1772 Thomas Dixon, a miller from Hartford End near Felsted came to live at the Well House. He was a widower and his eldest son Robert, who was also by then a widower, joined him. The two Dixons lived on in the old house until Easter 1785. Then the elder Dixon died early in the morning of Easter Tuesday, and his son followed him a few hours later. The double funeral took place at St. Mary's church on April 10th 1785. Their grave, the headstone still just decipherable, is close to the lych gate, on the east side of the path. Thomas Dixon's great-great-grandson, a Mr R W Dixon, writing in the Essex Review in 1921, told a strange story which had been passed down in his family concerning the Well House. It related to the night before the Dixons died.

'As the doctor and nurse were watching by the bedside of the dying man (Thomas Dixon) they both heard a knock at the door. The nurse opened it but found no one there. Again they heard the knocking at the door, and again the nurse opened it, but could discover no one. A third time they were startled by a knocking at the door. The nurse a third time opened the door and looked up and down the landing but could see no one nor discover anything to account for the knocking. They never found out how it arose, and let it rest, saying "It was the knocking for the dead".'



The Well House with its land as it once was.

181. Lords Mead abutted Mill Lane.
 182. The cottages on the corner of Mill Lane
 were
 built c1870
 183. This was the orchard, later the tennis
 court,
 and now more houses.
 184. The Well House and its garden. By
 1875
 the house was already divided.
 188. This land has also been built on. Immediately
 to the north was the land of Wheelers.
 185 was the vicar's glebe land, now Glebe Crescent.

Map based on the
1875 Ordnance Survey.

Among the visitors to the Well House during the Dixons residence was Thomas Day, a noted author, social reformer, and educationalist of his time. He produced numerous publications on social and political reform and his book "The History of Sandford and Merton" was long regarded as "a work of elevating quality for young people". Day had a reputation as an ascetic, and believed in a Spartan education for his daughters: apparently he would set fire to their petticoats and they weren't permitted to flinch or cry out!

After the Dixons the house passed to another milling family, that of William and Henry Marriage. They may have used the land that went with the house including Lords Mead, which, until its sale in 1921, was a field that ran along the north side of Mill Lane. The house itself doesn't seem to have been a Marriage residence and in 1841 a Mr James Wilson, a Scotsman who gave his occupation as Road Surveyor, was living at the Well House with his wife Frances and their children Alexander and John.

James and Frances Wilson both died in 1855 and were buried in St Mary's churchyard. James' age was given as 45, Frances as 50. The burial register states that they were "of Hatfield Peverel" so that may have been their home parish. In 1861 the Well House was the residence of Thomas Barker, a 36 year old curate, who lived there with his younger sister Sarah.

By 1871 the Barkers had departed. Annabel Clarence, a 47-year-old schoolmistress was there with her two sisters, and there was also Arthur Hutchison, a temporary curate, and his wife Sarah. The north end of the house had at some time been made into a separate cottage, hence the two families.

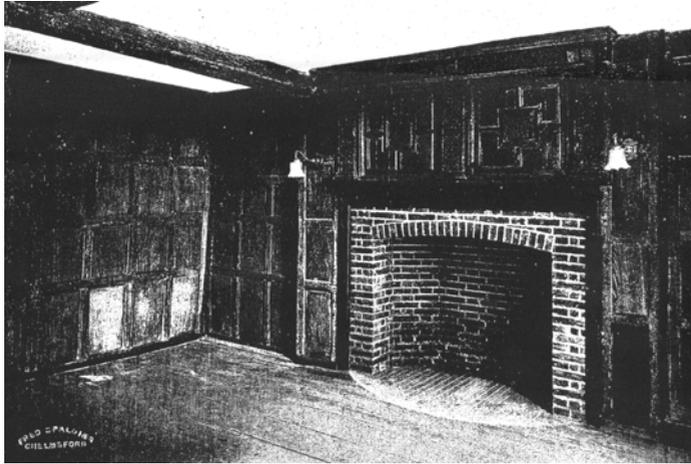
At least one of W & H Marriage's employees lived at the Well House because by 1881 Mr William Henry Bull was there. Mr Bull worked in the office at the mill, he gave his occupation as manager and cashier there, and passers-by would see him perched on his stool, his bearded features gazing out of the window. His sister who lived at the Well House with him at some time was an accomplished pianist and she provided the accompaniment at the village entertainments, making the best of a not very good piano. The 1891 census shows him, a 57-year-old widower, living there with his three children, Mary (22), Leonard (14) and Edmund (11), and he was still there on the 1915 electoral roll. It was probably still divided into two dwellings when Mr Bull was living there. The local cobbler, a Mr Guiver, was apparently living and working in the separate north wing at some time.

In 1917 the house was up for sale, together with 25 other houses in Broomfield. The sale catalogue noted that in addition to the entrance hall, two large sitting rooms (one with oak panelling and oak overmantel), small sitting room, kitchen with copper and pump from spring of water in cellar, coal cellar, wood house, three bedrooms and a box room, there were also three more rooms in the part formerly occupied as a separate cottage. Three roods of land joining the house on the south side, once the orchard, was included in the sale - at the time this

piece of land was let to a Mr Parsons. Among the other cottages in the 1917 sale was a small terrace of three dwellings known as Kirkhams cottages adjacent to the aforesaid three roads, and the row of cottages at the corner of Mill Lane which included the former Post Office.

In 1921 the house was again up for sale. By now much work had been done on the house to improve its facilities, and the north part which had been formerly a separate cottage was now once again incorporated into the main body of the house. Included in this sale was Lords Mead, the three acres of land abutting the north side of Mill Lane, which at the time of this sale was let to W & H Marriage. The house now advertised a Tradesman's entrance and a full sized croquet or tennis lawn.

The new occupants were the Gordon Dickson family who moved in from another Broomfield property, Scravels. Ashley Gordon Dickson had died of wounds in World War I and his widow Vera, with her children James and Bunty, moved to the Well House. People whose memories went back to the 1920s remembered Jim Gordon Dickson practising the bagpipes on the lawn at the Well House; presumably no-one was playing croquet or tennis at the time. Apparently, 9 O'clock on a Sunday morning was a good time for practising and the late Geoff Garner regularly heard the pipes as he walked along the road to church when he was a choirboy.



The drawing room in the Well House 1921

The Dicksons left the Well House in 1933 and after them came Mrs Constance Vaizey and her son Julian Colet de Horne Vaizey. Apparently the Vaizeys were descended on one side from a Dutch family of de Hoorn, hence the name. They were a long established family at Halstead with a strong Cambridge, the army, and public service tradition, and they were still at the Well House in 1939.

After the Vaizeys came Charles and Phyllis Livermore, Mr Livermore commuting daily to his work at Crittall's, Braintree.

The Well House once again came to the fore with the arrival of Maurice Drake, a solicitor with a keen interest in his new surroundings. A popular figure in the village, he became a Parish Councillor and later its chairman. He was also a Trustee of Woollard's charity, a vice-president of the cricket club, and a member of St Mary's church where for many years he served as churchwarden.. In addition to his many roles within the community he commuted daily to his office in London, each morning catching the bus into Chelmsford and then by train to Liverpool Street station.

Maurice Drake took a great interest in the garden at the Well House. Although he employed a gardener Mr Drake supervised the work and enjoyed the relaxation of being there, strolling quietly round the garden, gazing at the fishpond, of which he was particularly fond. Vera Eley, who worked for the Drakes, remembered that Mr Drake once grew a row of spinach, of which he very proud, in a bed alongside the tennis court. The gardener had been doing some weed killing and unthinkingly watered the spinach with the residue of the weedkiller. Mr Drake was aghast at the resulting row of corpses!

Maurice Drake was a keen freemason and regularly attended meetings of his London lodge, whilst Ann Drake played her part in local affairs by becoming a Chelmsford Rural District councillor. As time passed and the children grew up the house was deemed too large and so it was once again divided into two units. Finally, a combination of retirement and Mrs Drake's health caused them to leave Broomfield for the more congenial climate of Cyprus. And so they were succeeded by Major & Mrs Millard.



At the Cricket Club. Woodfull Millard is back left, Aileen Millard front right. Maurice and Ann Drake are back right



The Millards at home in the Well House.

Major Millard carried on his predecessor's interest in local affairs but on a rather wider scale. Sidney Woodfull Millard was born in 1895. He received a private education and afterwards went to King's College, London. In the first World War he was commissioned in the Royal Engineers and served in France, becoming a staff captain to General, later Field Marshal Lord Plumer. He also served with the Royal Engineers in World War II and was at Dunkirk. He retired from the army as a major in 1945.

In 1949 he was elected to the Essex County Council, progressing from councillor to alderman. He worked on a number of committees, including the Standing Joint Committee and the General Purposes Committee of which he was chairman. He became vice-chairman of the County Council and in 1965 was elected chairman of the Council, a post he held until 1968.

In local matters Major Millard was President of the Broomfield branch of the British Legion from 1947 to 1965 and a vice-president of the Broomfield Cricket Club. He was a member of the Chelmsford Hospital management committee and a governor of King Edward VI grammar school in Chelmsford. A Justice of the Peace, a freeman of the City of London and a liveryman of the worshipful company of farmers, he and his wife moved to the Well House from their previous home in Gutters Lane. Prior to that he had lived in Great Baddow where he was also president of that branch of the British Legion. A keen traveller, he was a fellow of the Royal Geographical Society and had travelled widely in America, India, China and Japan. With his wife, whose father Mr Gerald Ridley, was a Parish Councillor for 52 years and chairman for 38 of them, he spent the rest of his life at the Well House where he died on the

31st January 1983 at the age of 97.

Aileen Millard, nee Ridley, continued to live there until, well into her nineties, she needed to move to more suitable accommodation. She was of the old school. Her father had been President of Broomfield Cricket Club for 35 years and when he died in 1958 James Mackintosh of Scravels succeeded him. In 1977 Mr Mackintosh retired to Scotland and Cyril Finning was the popular and deserved choice to succeed him. Mrs Millard wasn't too happy with this choice; as she put it Mr Finning (the local grocer) was "Trade", not quite the background for a President. In her latter years another well-known Broomfieldian, Ken Mills, did the gardening for her. She always referred to him as "Mills the gardener" and Ken never called at the front door; he knew his place and always went to the tradesman's entrance.

The Well House land, which was substantially reduced as a result of the 1921 sale, was further reduced when two new houses were built to the south of the house. The Millards lived in the north half of the old house and Aileen Millard always regarded their part as the Well House proper although the best panelling is in the other half which, despite its features, became a rather prosaic 252a Main Road. Her part of the Well House was empty for a time after her departure before being sold to Michael and Brenda Fox. By now the house needed much attention and the garden too had fallen into some neglect, leaving the new owners to restore it to its former glory.

The '252A' half on the other hand had been well cared for by several owners during the period of Mrs Millard's occupancy of the Well House. Mrs and Mrs Hills owned the

house for a number of years until 1988, during which time it was carefully renovated in keeping with the house's unique character. It was owned briefly by a veterinary surgeon, Leslie Davidson, who used the dining room as his consultation room and had ambitions to convert his garage to an operating theatre. Local objections however resulted in planning permission being refused and the house was sold again in 1989 to the Edwards family whose children, Julia and Alastair, born since, are now Broomfield residents born and raised.

In summary, the Well House has a history going back at least to 1319. The Gynes family arrived in the 15th century and may have been responsible for much of the present house. From around 1570 to 1592, though still owned by the Gynes family, it was leased to the Devenish family and was most likely a pub during this period. From 1595 to the early 1600s John Pake would have been the owner and then it passed to the Bullen family, probably still leased out - to the Howes, Holdsworths and Higgons families.

Abraham Boosey, married to a Bullen, was the next owner and then it passed to the Burr family. John Olmuis, Lord Waltham came next and was followed by the milling families of Dixon and Marriage though the Marriage family were unlikely to have lived there. More owners followed the Marriages; Gordon Dickson, Vaisey, Livermore, Drake. The house was split into two parts; Millard, and then Fox, in the part which took the name of the Well House; and Hills, Davidson and Edwards in the other part whose character lies hidden behind the more prosaic '252A.', so bringing the story up to the present day.



**The panelling in the drawing room in the 1970s.
By then the fireplace had been blocked in.**



beside **The Well House in 2000, a picturesque oasis
a busy road with houses behind and on either**

side.

The Churchyard Fence lists.

1570. The tenement sometime John at Well and now Henrie Gines maketh from the stile towards the weste one rodd.

1678. The tenement sometime Henry Gines now of Mrs Allen maketh from Freemans towards the west by estimation one rodd.

1687. The tenement sometime John at Wells now Mrs Allens called Well House maketh from Freemans towards the west one rodd.

1735. Wells - Mrs Marsh - a rod.

1843. 2. Well House maketh from No. 1 (Pulling House) towards the west, fence and small gate. One rod. W & H Marriage.

4.

Poddinge, alias Freemans Farm, now Wood House land.



Wood House as it was in 1906. The lands of Wood House incorporated what had been Poddinge Farm..

The property called Poddinge seems at first sight a bit of a mystery. There is no building of that name in Broomfield today but the 1843 fence list allocates the maintenance of this piece of fence to the land of Wood House. Now Wood House itself is in Little Waltham but some of its land lay in Broomfield, so it is reasonable that it would be responsible for a piece of the churchyard fence.

In 1570 the fence list gave it as “the tenement sometime Poddinge nowe William Freeman” so it was in the same ownership as the Pulling House on Church Green. A note in a later hand in the margin of the 1570 list reads “Freemans Farm” so clearly William Freeman owned, in addition to the Pulling House, a farm known at some time as Poddinge. The next entry on the fence list spells it as Podinge.

The lands of Wood House are some distance from the

Pulling House on Church Green but there is no reason why the family shouldn't have owned a farm on the border with Little Waltham. Indeed, the Freeman family was closely associated with the Walthams. It may have been there that William Freeman kept his chickens which were the source of the large quantity of feathers bequeathed in his will; chickens that he probably bought from John Archer of Great Leighs. When John Archer made his will in 1563, he mentioned "such money as my son-in-law Freeman doth owe me for 14 capons and 6 pullets"

The 1570 fence list spelled it both as Poddinge and Podinge. Could Poddinge have been a corruption of Pulling? No. There is no doubt that the Freemans main property, the Pulling House, is now Bromfields and The Vineries, and Poddinge was a separate entry on the list. Poddinge must have been associated with Pudding, as in Puddings Wood and Puddings Field, two well-established and easily identifiable sites. Pudding and Poddinge sound similar and spelling was quite arbitrary in 1570. It can safely be said that William Freeman's farm of Poddinge was around the area of Puddings Field. This is nicely close to Wood House and accounts for its piece of churchyard fence being allocated to Wood House in 1843.

Wood House is curiously situated; much of its land lay within Broomfield, the house is just over the border in Little Waltham, yet for centuries it came within the manor of South House which is in Great Waltham. The Freemans were associated with both Great and Little Waltham long before 1570; in 1509 William Freeman of Boreham quitclaimed land in Great

and Little Waltham to Thomas Freeman, son of the late Edmund Freeman. The Pulling House was still Richard Freeman's in 1678 and 1687 but at those dates Poddinge was no longer shown as being in the occupation of the family. This doesn't necessarily mean that they didn't still own it and there is some reason for believing that a branch of the family owned at least a part share of it almost into the 19th century.

As to the naming of Puddings Field and Puddings Wood, it is tempting to associate them with the boggy state of the ground in the wood and the adjacent land. There are springs here and a particularly marshy piece of land not far from the wood, which for long had a cottage on it, was known by the evocative name of Sluggy Slough. The dictionary definition of slough is a quagmire or marshy place, and in 1839 it was referred to as Sluggard's Slough. It is interesting to note that the Oxford dictionary gives the derivation of pudding as the Middle English (i.e. in use before 1500) 'poding'. But the sentence in the fence list, "sometime Poddinge", could mean either that it was the name of a previous owner or that it was once known as poddinge, perhaps from the state of the soil, and was now Freeman's farm.

The 1570 fence list relates that there was then a tenement "sometime Poddinge" so it clearly had a building. Very likely a tenant occupied the tenement mentioned on the list and the land farmed for the Freeman family. By 1678, when the fence list was next revised, it may still have been in the family's ownership though the wording suggests it wasn't. Poddinge was then shown as "sometime Richard Freeman" and was occupied by Henry Nevill.

There had long been Nevills in Broomfield, and also in the Walthams. They had lived in what became Scravels before the Scraffield family arrived in the early 1500s, and a Mary Nevill was baptised at Broomfield in 1546; she appears on the very first page of the parish register. The Nevills had at one time been village blacksmiths and a George, son of George Nevill and baptised in 1602, married Jane Fordham at Broomfield in 1633. They had two sons, George, born in 1634 and Henry, born in 1640. It may have been this Henry, whose wife Ann died in 1677, who was at Poddinge in 1678. By 1686 Henry had married again for in that year his wife Mary had a son, another Henry. Henry Snr. was then the owner of Swan House, opposite the church, though he may still have been farming the Poddinges land and more besides.

More to the point, Henry Neville (or Nevill) had land from the main Chelmsford to Braintree road down to the river, probably at Blasford Hill. This would tie in with the Wood House area and Poddinge. A field opposite Puddings Field, on the north side of Wood House Lane and probably part of the same farm, was called Navels on the 1846 tithe award. But in a sale catalogue of the Wood House estate in 1906 this field was called Nevilles. Another point, Swan House in Broomfield had a malthouse and there was also one at Blasford Hill. It is very possible that this Henry Neville of Poddinge was a farmer and maltster, owning Swan House as well as land and buildings in Little Waltham

On the 1687 fence list the property occupying the Poddinge slot was shown as occupied by Matthew Bull. It looks as though the name of the occupant had at first been left blank and "chandler" had been written after the space. Then,

in a different hand, "Math. Bull" had been inserted in the space and chandler had been crossed out. This could mean that Matthew Bull wasn't the occupant in 1687, instead it may have been either someone named Chandler or someone who was a chandler and Matthew Bull came along later. However, this is unlikely. A Matthew Bull and his wife Ann had a son James baptised at Broomfield in 1689, another son, John, in 1690 and a daughter, Elizabeth, in 1696. Matthew's wife Ann died of the smallpox in 1730 and Matthew himself died in 1736. This must be the Matthew Bull of the fence list. And maybe he was a chandler.

Morant's list of 1735 is vague; he mentions Freeman's but this entry seems to refer to the Pulling House, the Poddinge line is missed out. But against his Freeman entry he has added "½ a rod, now a gate, and all the east side", seemingly lumping the Pulling House, Poddinge, and Freeman's land next to the Pulling House (which had hitherto come at the end of the fence lists) together. This may mean that Poddinge was still Freeman property even though they no longer occupied it. It could also just be that Poddinge was by then a part of the estate of Wood House in Little Waltham and Morant had simply reallocated that bit of fence to the Pulling House.

Thomas Freeman died in 1750 and in his will he left his share in Sluggy Slough to his son Thomas. Now Sluggy Slough is very close to Puddings Wood. In 1783 Sluggy Slough was in the possession of Mrs Freeman, the occupant being William Bird. Two years later William Blyth became tenant and in 1798 Sluggy Slough passed to Richard Calvert with William Blyth still the tenant. This marked the end of the Freeman connection. In 1813 William Blyth gave way to

John Blyth and by the time of the 1846 tithe award the owner was shown as Mary Walker, still with John Blyth as tenant. This is rather curious because in 1839 the executors of the estate of the Thomas Hodge of Wood House had his property valued, and amongst this property was Sluggards Slough Mead and Sluggards Slough Field. So perhaps Richard Calvert had sold it to Thomas Hodge and then, by 1846, it had passed to Mary Walker.

All this suggests that the Freeman family had held on to some land in the Poddinge area, passed down through inheritance, after they had disposed of their other property. The block of land comprising Puddings Field, Puddings Wood, Petty Croft, Shed Field and Sluggy Slough, and probably Nevilles Field, might have been the original property known as Poddinge alias Freeman's Farm. Sluggy Slough may have been separated from the rest of Poddinge and passed through different hands. Meanwhile, what was Poddinge became attached to Wood House.

In 1771 a map of the Broomfield Hall estate was drawn up for the owner, Lord Waltham. The field called Puddings was then shown as "Mr Price's land". This was very likely Richard Price, Esq., of Hayes, Middlesex who held the lease of the Parsonage and its lands in Broomfield during the 1750s. So it looks as though Poddinge had passed from the Freemans to Mr Price. But at this stage it seems that it was still distinct from Wood House for none of the other land later associated with Wood House was shown as belonging to Mr Price.

The land tax returns show that from 1780 to 1794 John Mascall was owner and occupier of land in Broomfield.

Following the tax returns through to 1832 reveals that this was undoubtedly the Wood House land that lay within Broomfield. Mascall was also in Little Waltham at the same time so he may well have been based at Wood House. His name also crops up on a list of subscriptions for the Poor in the Broomfield churchwarden's accounts for 1772 so he could have been around from that date. John Mascall died in 1794 and early in the following year his executors sold Wood House and its land to Mr Samuel Nicholson Owen. The fee book of the Manor of South House in Great Waltham records that on the 3rd January 1795 Mr Owen acknowledged tenure of lands conveyed to him by the executors of Mr Mascall. The land was copyhold of the manor and Mr Owen was obliged to pay the appropriate fee for enrolling his tenure.

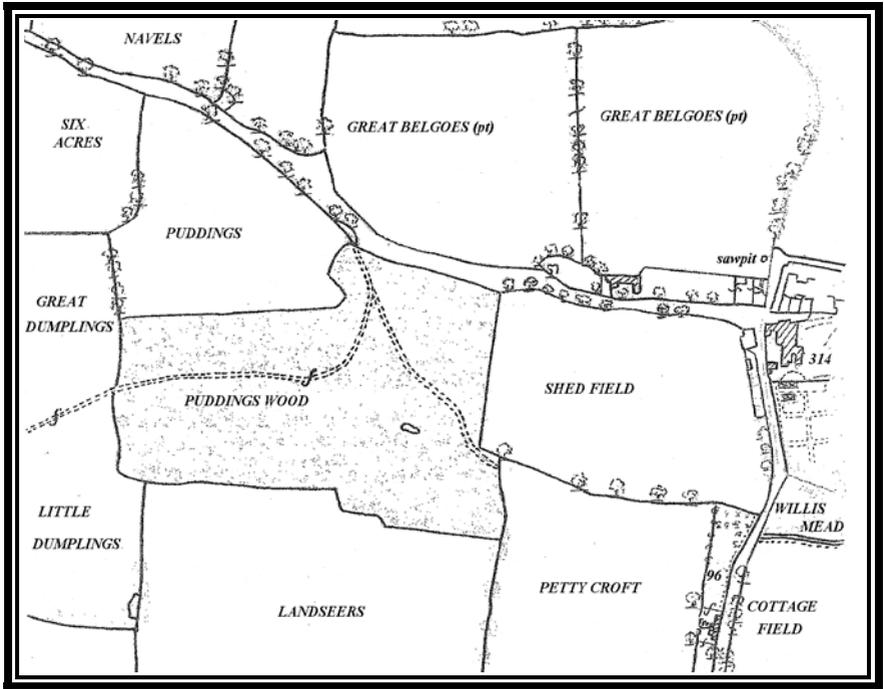
There is an interesting document in the Essex Record Office relating to Samuel Owen. Charles Skinner had been convicted of burglary at the house of Mr Owen in Little Waltham on the 14th February 1816 and stealing goods to the value of 16/-. Samuel Owen had been given a "Tyburn ticket"; this was a certificate given to a person who secured the conviction of a felon and which exempted him from parish duties in the parish where the offence was committed.

Wood House, and Poddinge, remained with Samuel Owen until 1828 when the land tax returns show that in that year the owner and occupier was a Thomas Hodges of Chelmsford. Now a Thomas Hodges had formed a partnership with Joseph Woodcock and Thomas Hawkes in Chelmsford in 1794 in a brewing, malting and farming business and their brewery was in Duke Street, Chelmsford. Hodges and Woodcock were both nonconformists and members of the Baddow Lane Chapel (later

the Congregational church in Baddow Road, since demolished). When Thomas Hodges died in 1811 he was succeeded by his eldest son, also Thomas. Joseph Woodcock's elder daughter Lydia had married William Collings Wells and his other daughter Eliza had married Isaac Perry. When Woodcock died in 1829 Wells and Perry, who were also nonconformists, became partners in the business together with Thomas Hodges. In 1837 the partnership with Thomas Hodges was dissolved and the brewery became known as Wells and Perry.

In 1840 Thomas Hodges died at the age of 67. He was then living in King Street, Chelmsford (this was later to become the upper part of Duke Street) where the family had their brewery. His executors carried out a valuation and this shows that Puddings field was indeed part of the estate. It also notes that in 1840 it was planted with beans. The nearby fields of Great and Little Belgoes, Shed Field, Sluggards Slough and Long and Short Twitches were also in the estate, but not Puddings Wood. At this stage it is useful to see how Poddinges, alias Puddings, fits in with the Wood House and other neighbouring lands.

The following sketch, based partly on the Tithe map and partly on the Ordnance Survey of 1875, shows the area in the vicinity of Puddings Field and Puddings Wood and their relationship to Wood House (314 on the sketch).



Navels, alias **Nevills Field**, at the top left of the drawing was surely part of the holding of Henry Neville, the owner of Poddinge in 1678.

Six Acres field, immediately to the west of Puddings, was owned and worked by John Marriage in 1846. It may always have been a part of Partridge Green Farm and not connected to Poddinge.

Puddings Wood was owned by Lady Stuart in 1846 and may always have been manorial land. In 1771 it had been shown as a part of the Broomfield Hall estate and it may at some time have been leased as part of the farm occupied by the Freeman family, hence its name.

Great and Little Dumplings were also part of the

Broomfield Hall estate in 1771 and in 1846 they were still in the ownership of the Lady of the Manor, Lady Stuart, but leased, as was Landseers, to John Marriage. These played no part in the Poddinge story.

Landseers was Lanzens, a separate property on the 1570 fence list and not connected with Poddinge or Wood House.

Great Belgoes, a large field to the north of Puddings Wood, on the other side of Wood House Lane, was owned by Thomas Hodges but back in 1771 it had been owned by the Lord of the Manor, Lord Waltham.

Shed Field was also owned by Thomas Hodges and it too had been owned by Lord Waltham in 1771.

Puddings was in the possession of Thomas Hodges in 1839/40. Hodges was then the owner of Wood House (numbered 314 on right of sketch

Petty Croft had been a part of the Broomfield Hall estate in 1771 but in 1846, though still in the ownership of the Lady of the Manor, was, like Lanzens and Dumplings, leased to John Marriage of Partridge Green.

Finally, **Sluggy Slough**, (the strip of land with a cottage on it, numbered 96 on the above sketch) was shown as his own land on Lord Waltham's 1771 map. By 1846 it had passed to Mary Walker.

In 1843 the churchyard fence list got back on an even keel and Poddinges spot was now positively identified as Wood House land. The Sluggy Slough portion was by then separate. A Thomas Hodges was the owner of Wood Hall with Poddinge and Joseph Wells was the occupant. This must have been the third Thomas Hodges including the founder of the brewery in Chelmsford and the second Thomas Hodges to have owned Wood House. Joseph Wells would have been connected with Hodges in a business sense as well for the census returns

show him as a brewer and farmer. Born in 1818, the 1851 census shows him living at Wood House with his wife Maria and their six children. In 1881 he was still there with his wife Maria, then 62, and their daughter Jessie, then 35. Joseph Wells must have farmed much land in addition to Wood House for he was shown as farming 350 acres and employing 19 labourers. He lived in some style at Wood House, employing two housemaids, one parlour maid, one cook and a kitchen maid.

The hitherto rather muddled situation now becomes clearer. William Freeman owned both Poddinge and the Pulling House on Church Green in 1570. The Freeman family had associations with both Great and Little Waltham and it is entirely possible that the family were already established in the Poddinge area, and may even have owned the farm called Poddinge before William bought the Pulling House from John Cottes between 1544 and 1570. By 1678 Poddinge was being farmed by Henry Neville who also had much other land in the area, just over the border in Little Waltham. In 1687 or thereabouts Matthew Bull had the Poddinge land. At some time the Freeman connection ended and it seems that by 1771 Mr Price was in possession of Puddings field.

From 1780 the Land Tax returns take up the story. John Mascall was shown as owner and occupier until 1794. He was succeeded by Samuel Nicholson Owen who in turn was succeeded by Thomas Hodges with Joseph Wells as lessee. Joseph lived his life out at Wood House and his widow continued to live there. She was still there when the census was taken in 1901. Shortly after this time, however, Puddings found another owner.



Puddings Wood.

Although part of the wood is now (2002) a car park for the hospital much of it is still as it has been for centuries.

In 1906 the Wood House estate was put up for sale. It was to be sold in ten lots. The house was described as consisting of an entrance hall, dining room, business room, morning room, drawing room, cloak room with lavatory and WC, five principal bedrooms and dressing rooms, two secondary bedrooms, five servants bedrooms, boudoir, bathroom and another WC, commodious domestic offices and cellarage. There was stabling for five horses, coach houses with grooms accommodation over, farm buildings and cottages. There was a further block of cottages, beer house and land along Blasford Hill. The land was a mixture of arable and meadow. In all

it amounted to 124 acres. The vendors were trustees for the Woodcock and Wells family so it was still connected with the brewing firm.

Wood House was lot 1. Lot 2 was the main block of farmland to the north of Partridge Green lane including Great and Little Belgoes, Nevilles, and the old farmhouse with its buildings. Puddings Field was a separate lot, all on its own.

A new estate was being created for Louisa Radcliffe, the elder daughter of Thomas Christy of Brooklands. Land was purchased from Wakefield Christie Miller, the trustees of H C Wells, and Sir Simeon Stuart (the then lord of the manor of Broomfield Hall). It included the property once known as Lanzens and no doubt some of what had once been Poddinge including Puddings Wood, and extended to 88 acres. A new house, Broomfield Court was built on Little Dumplings field adjacent to Puddings Wood. The Broomfield Court story is told in the Lanzens chapter. Suffice it to say that the Broomfield Court estate eventually passed to Broomfield Hospital. Some of Pudding Wood is now the hospital car park. Pudding Field is still arable land (in 2002) but for how long?



Pudding field.

Taken in January 2002, to the left the hospital extension
to the right more car park.

As to where the original Poddinge tenement once stood, this remains uncertain. Wood House is in Little Waltham so the tenement of Poddinge can't have been on the site of the present house. However, both the title map and the 1875 Ordnance Survey show buildings along the north side of the lane to Partridge Green, opposite Shed Field and adjoining Great Belgoes. And the 1906 sale catalogue of the Wood House estate specifically refers to a farmhouse here. Electoral rolls also show a resident of Wood House Farm as distinct from

Wood House. What is more, the farmhouse and its buildings were in Broomfield, as is the adjacent field of Great Belgoes. Wood House cottage at the bend in the lane is now on part of the site. Here at one time was a farmhouse, in Broomfield, so it is very possible that this was the farmhouse or tenement that served Freeman's farm at Poddinge.



Wood House

**Cottage
Poddinge?**

On the site of the old farmhouse of

There is a curious postscript to this story. Rosamund Bazett drew my attention to the fact that a Thomas Hodges was the Rector of Little Waltham during the period that Wood House and its land were owned by Thomas Hodges. Could it have been one and the same? The Thomas Hodges of the brewing family died in 1840 at the age of 67 and he certainly owned the Wood House estate, as is confirmed by his executors valuation. His successor, another Thomas Hodges, was still shown as the owner in 1843 and again in 1846. However, Thomas Hodges the rector died in 1842. The rector is shown in *Alumni Oxoniensis* as the son of John Hodges of St George's, Canterbury and as rector of Little Waltham from 1827 to his death in 1842. This seems a strange coincidence yet coincidence it appears to be.

* * * * *

The Churchyard Fence lists

1570. The tenement sometime Poddinge now William Freemans maketh from Gines towards the weste by estimation halfe a rodd. (In the margin against this entry is written in a later hand "Freemans Farm").

1678. The tenement sometimes Richard Freemans now in ye occupation of Henry Nevill maketh from Mrs Allen's towards the west the gate going in to ye Church yard

1687. The tenement sometime Richd Freeman & now in the occupation of Math Bull (chandler crossed through) maketh the gate going into the Church yd next to Mrs Allens fence towards the west.

1735. Not mentioned, but against Freemans (the Pulling House) Morant has added " $\frac{1}{2}$ a rod, now a gate and all the east side", seemingly giving the Pulling House responsibility for Podinges and Freemans land as well.

1843. 3. Woodhouse Land, now occupied by Joseph Wells, from no. 2 westward, maketh the large gate. Owner Thomas Hodges.

5.
Biglands, later Entwistles, then
The Limes and Brooklands.



Brooklands

Two very early entries in the Broomfield parish register refer to the burials of Thomas Bigland in 1547 and John Bigland in 1550. John was a Broomfield tax-payer in 1524 but he or his forbears may, like many others, have moved out from Chelmsford for a John Bigland was a butcher in the town in 1463 when he was up before the manor court for permitting his pigs to roam abroad in the king's highway. It may have been the same John Bigland who was there in 1492, paying 2d a year rent for a stall in the fleshmarket. That John Bigland, whose

property in the High Street was for long after known as Biglands, died in 1521 so he couldn't have been the Broomfield John Bigland of 1524 though the latter could have been his son. Incidentally, Biglands in Chelmsford High Street was pulled down in 1730 and replaced by two "gentlemen's houses", which were in turn replaced by shops. These were nos. 31-2 High Street and are now part of Debenhams store. A more definite connection with Broomfield dates from 1494 when "Thomas Biglon of Broomfield" was, with others, involved in a conveyance of land in Springfield and Little Waltham. There can be no doubt that this family was the origin of the property shown on the 1570 fence list as Biglands.

Confirmation of the whereabouts of Biglands in Broomfield appears in the deeds of The Gables, 210 Main Road, Broomfield, and of the shop at Angel Green. A lease of The Gables in 1754 describes it as "one head thereof abutting on the King's highway leading to Bishop-atte-Water (i.e. Mill Lane) on the north part, one head thereof abutting on the garden formerly of John Bigland on the south part, and one side thereof abutting on the King's highway leading from Chelmsford towards Braintree". So Biglands land, or his garden at any rate, was where Brooklands now stands.

Another deed, dated 1712 and relating to the shop at Angel Green, states that this property was bounded "on the north by the house of Mr Entwistle." This places Biglands, later Entwistles, house on the west side of the main road. So the property had land on both sides of the road, the house on the one side and much of the land on the other, and until the arrival of Thomas Christy early in the 19th century it remained as one unit.

By 1570 the Biglands had left the property and it then

belonged to Robert Wood, a prominent figure in the village and probably in Chelmsford too. The Biglands were still in Chelmsford; Edward Bigland was landlord of the Dolphin in Back Street in 1575 and in 1590 he was churchwarden at St Mary's church in the town, but they seem to have had no further connection with Broomfield beyond Edward Bigland standing surety for William Riley's application for a victualling licence in Broomfield in 1582. Riley was then living at Swan House, immediately opposite Broomfield church.

At the time of the 1570 fence list Robert Wood owned both Biglands and Butlers and as the latter was then described as a mansion house it is likely that he lived there rather than at Biglands. Robert Wood, gentleman, of the Inner Temple, bought some property in Duke Street, Chelmsford in 1549, and both he and his son, also Robert, became prominent citizens in the town. It is likely that either father or son was the Broomfield property owner. Broomfield's Robert Wood was the churchwarden who supervised the 1570 churchyard fence list and for convenience he and his family are included in the Butlers story.

The next name in the Biglands story is uncertain for there are two marginal notes against the Biglands entry, Lawrence Poole and Entwistle. If there is any significance in the fact that most of the marginal notes are on the left hand side of the 1570 fence list, and all but one (Lewgars) of the right hand notes also have a left hand note, it could indicate that the left hand entries came earlier. In which case Lawrence Poole came next. Much later the property became known as Entwistles, and was Entwistles when Thomas Christy bought it so it can safely be inferred that Poole was indeed the earlier owner.

The Poole family was prolific and well established in Broomfield. They were already farming at Partridge Green at the time of the 1570 list and so their story more properly belongs to that property. At some time they also farmed Broomfield Hall, Wood Hall, and were at Broomfield Mill. Lawrence was a family name and a Lawrence Poole was baptised at Broomfield in 1560. A Lawrence, son of Timothy, was baptised in 1630, and a Timothy son of Lawrence, was baptised in 1675. A Lawrence, son of Lawrence died in 1609, and Lawrence and Ann Poole were producing children throughout the 1630s. A Thomas, son of Timothy, was baptised in 1626 and a Thomas, son of Lawrence, was baptised in 1638. It is quite confusing to say the least!

A marginal note against the Mill House on the 1570 list shows Lawrence Poole Jr. The note looks to be the same hand as the one for Biglands so it is possible that they date from the early 1600s. If so, Lawrence Poole could well have been the Poole baptised in 1560, he most likely acquired the property from Robert Wood and he or his family was in turn succeeded by a Mr Entwistle.

There are no mentions of Entwistle in the parish register, nor does he appear as a taxpayer on the Ship Money list of 1636. A Lawrence Poole was a Broomfield ratepayer in 1595 and churchwarden in 1617, and is on the Ship Money list, so Entwistle most likely came after 1636. By 1678 the property had ceased to be called Biglands and on the fence list of that year it was described as "the tenement of Mr Entwistle in the occupation of James Goodman". This confirms that Mr Entwistle was now the owner and that James Goodman was his

tenant. Now James Goodman appears on the Hearth Tax list of 1671 and was taxed on 3 hearths. He is not on the previous list of 1662 but on that list there are two likely “three-hearth” candidates - Thomas Poole and Timothy Poole. Timothy was at Lanzens so Thomas is the favourite to have been at Biglands until the mysterious Mr Entwistle bought it.

James Goodman had been at Biglands/Entwistles at least as early as 1666 when he attended the Quarter Sessions in Chelmsford in a case of alleged assault by Robert Archer on Joseph Luckin. In 1668 the vestry meeting chose him as the parish constable. He continued to play a full part in the community and in the following year he was the overseer of the poor. He attended the vestry meetings in the 1670s and in 1679/80 was again the constable. In 1682 he was chosen to be the surveyor with responsibility for keeping the roads in good repair and he was at the vestry meeting in 1684. His was a moderately sized house with three hearths as shown on the 1671 Hearth Tax list.

James Goodman was involved in another court case at the Quarter Sessions in 1680, which showed that in addition to his lease of Entwistles he owned land at Mundon, near Maldon. The Essex marshes were well known as prime land for grazing sheep and there was once an Essex cheese made from their ewes milk. The court record reads: -

“James Goodman of Broomfield, yeoman, who saith that on Saturday last he saw his sheep that he had in his marsh at Mundon and his full number was there, but since he hath lost three of them, whereupon he did procure a warrant to search for them and upon his search found three sheep skins marked with

his own mark, and they were found in the stall of John Wade, glover, and were sold to Wade by John Frost of Purleigh, butcher, and Frost did confess to the informant that he did sell these skins to Wade.”

“Examination of John Frost who saith that on Tuesday night last he bought three sheep and one lamb of a man that was driving them on the road between Purleigh and Hazeleigh windmill, but his name he did not know nor where he dwelt, but the man told him he lived at Burnham, and this informant said he kept these sheep in his pasture until the Friday morning after, and then killed them and brought them to Chelmsford market and sold the skins unto one John Wade a glover, and that the sheep cost him lis each.”

“Indictment of John Dennison of Purleigh, farmer, at Chelmsford was required by Richard Everard Knight and Baronet, John Bramston Knight of the Bath, Alexander Prescott and William Pert Esq, to take the oath and give evidence on information before them against John Frost of Purleigh, labourer, for stealing four wether sheep of James Goodman, but he refused.“

“Indictment of John Frost stole three wether sheep worth 6s8d each of James Goodman. Witness James Goodman. Pleads not guilty. Guilty. Asks to read. Reads and is branded.“

James Goodman was still in Broomfield, and presumably still at Entwistles, in 1685 when his son Richard was baptised, but he died in that same year. Although only the lessee of Entwistles, Goodman was clearly a man of substance, owning

land at Mundon where he kept his sheep. In his will he left his wife Hannah £20 a year for life, £100 to his eldest son James to be paid to him at the age of 21, and forty shillings a year to his brother Henry Goodman for life. He gave forty shillings to Daniel Wall, the vicar of Broomfield, to buy himself a gown, desiring him that he would “preach my funeral sermon”. Twenty shillings was to be given to the poor of the parish of Broomfield. ”This and the bequest to Mr Wall to be paid within a week after my decease”.

There is no identification of his property in his will, Goodman merely gave and bequeathed to his eldest son James and his other son Richard all the rest and residue of his estate both real and personal to be equally divided between them when they attained 21 years; in the meantime the estate was to remain in the care and custody of his executors. William Attwood of the Parsonage, Broomfield, was one of his executors and John Nicoll of Danbury, Gent. was the other. They were to have the management and improvement of his estate until his children were 21, and they were also charged with putting the children, James and Richard, out as apprentices to some convenient trades at the executors discretion. It is probable that the two boys reached their majority in due course although they were then no longer in Broomfield. A James Goodman married Betty Pullen at Woodham Walter in 1705 and a Richard Goodman married Damaris Bridgeman at Writtle in 1707.

The will was witnessed by William Attwood, George More (Goodman’s near neighbour at The Angel), and John Wybrow (living at Glovers). Almost as an afterthought James Goodman added at the very end of his will “I give and bequeath unto my servant John Dun and to my kinswoman Sarah Cavell

who dwells also with me 10 shillings apiece”

Mr Entwistle, although the owner, doesn't appear to have played any part in village affairs. The notes of the vestry meetings conclude with the signatures and marks of those attending as well as those elected to the various offices of churchwarden, constable, surveyor, overseer, but Mr Entwistle's name never appears. At this point it has to be remembered that although Biglands became Entwistles, and Brooklands was built on the estate called Entwistles, it doesn't follow that the house was on the land that became Brooklands. As the deeds of the Angel Green shop show, the property also extended to the west side of the main road and it was here that Mr Entwistle's house stood. This would place it at what became The Limes, now the houses along Main Road opposite Brooklands.

The next occupant was Charles Foster whose name appears on the 1687 fence list. Again it was "the tenement of Mr Entwistle now in the occupation of Charles Foster". In the following year Foster's daughter Elizabeth, named after her mother, was baptised at Broomfield church. In 1692 Elizabeth Foster gave birth to twins, Mary and Hannah but Hannah died that same year. Another daughter, Sarah, born in 1695 also died in the same year. The first baptism gave the surname as Foster, but when the twins were baptised it was Foster or Fortescue and by 1695 it was Fortescue. A son, Charles Foster alias Fortescue was baptised and buried in 1697, and another son, John, was baptised in 1703. After that the name no longer occurred.

In the same year that he appeared on the fence list, 1687, Charles Foster was appointed constable, the post that James

Goodman had held a few years before. In 1692, as Charles Fortescue, he was overseer of the poor. In 1698 Thomas Carter, a Broomfield labourer, was in the dock accused of breaking into the house of Charles Forster (sic) and stealing 4 silver spoons worth 10/-, 1 silver currill worth 4/6d, 5 cups worth 6/8d, 5 linen caps worth 30/-, 1 pillow beere worth 11d, 20 stockings worth 2/-, a razor worth 4d, and a gold ring worth 4/-.

When Morant made his list in 1735 the property was still known as Entwistles and it was then in the occupation of Augustine Finch. Entwistle left no mark on the village other than the name of his property. The Finches were more prominent.

Augustine Finch was born around 1685 and by 1717 he was married and living in Broomfield. He and his wife Mary had at least twelve children and Augustine was 95 when he died in 1780. Two of the children died in infancy but the rest seem to have survived that perilous period. The Finches didn't appear in the parish registers before 1717 so they must have been incomers. It is tempting to associate them with the family of the Hon. Edward Finch, brother of the Earl of Winchelsea, who leased the Parsonage in Broomfield in the 1730s. The truth is that Augustine was the local butcher; his name appears several times in the parish records, sending in his account to the Overseer for meat supplied to the poor. One of the accounts for the supply of beef was dated 1773 when he was already in his 80s. Another reference shows him subscribing ten shillings and sixpence to the poor, reasonable enough since they were helping to keep him in business!

Augustine Finch's daughter Mary married George Lee in 1743. George's father Thomas had been the village grocer, his shop was at Crouch House (now the King's Arms), and in 1720 both Thomas and another son, Thomas Jnr., had died in an outbreak of smallpox. George inherited Crouch House in 1740 and in 1749 he bought another shop, which later became The Plough and is now The Gables, adjacent to his father-in-law's property of Entwistles. Mary Lee died in 1752. George was still a grocer in the village in 1763 but two years later he had become a victualler and the first landlord of The Kings Arms.

The fence list of 1843 seems at first to cloud the issue. It states that "Biglands, or Entwistle" was occupied by Susannah and Mary Finch, and owned by Robert, Susannah and Mary Finch. The Finches had owned the property from 1735 and may still have done so until Thomas Christy purchased it. However, 1843 is too late a date for the land which became Brooklands still to be in the Finch family. So Thomas Christy had bought that part of Biglands which lay on the east side of the road and the Finches retained the part, including the house, on the west side of the road.

Biglands house remained in the hands of Robert, Susannah and Mary Finch when Thomas Christy bought the land on the opposite side of the road to build his new country seat. The original house had probably been replaced by a more modern dwelling and for many years The Limes was the home of the Ridley family. Gerald Ridley, a member of the well known brewing family, had married Mabel Wells of the rival brewing family of Wells & Perry, and around 1900 had moved from Stowmarket to take an active part in his family firm. For

many years he was a prominent figure in Broomfield affairs. He joined the Parish Council in 1904 and served for 52 years, 38 of them as chairman. A keen cricketer, he became a member of Broomfield Cricket Club in 1902 and was President for 35 years. He and Mabel had four children, Vernon, Raymond, Henry and Aileen (who married Sydney Millard and lived for many years at the Well House). Gerald Ridley died in 1958 at the age of 89.

The Limes has now gone, the house and land replaced by modern houses along Main Road and School Lane. The story, however, continues with Biglands/Entwistles land on the other side of the road.

Thomas Christy, a devout Quaker, objected to financially supporting the Church of England so he was no doubt happy that the Finches house rather than Brooklands was on the 1843 fence list. All Quakers were strongly against paying tithes or church taxes and it might be thought that he would also object to paying towards the upkeep of the churchyard fence. However, the 1843 churchyard fence list shows him as both owner and occupier of Glovers, a farmhouse along School Lane. What is certain is that Christy was shown as the owner of Brooklands in a rate book of 1836 and he was certainly the owner of the land on which Brooklands now stands as early as 1827.

Thomas Christy was born in 1777, into a Quaker family. His father, Miller Christy (1748-1820), had set up business as a hatmaker at 35 Gracechurch Street, London, in 1773, and in 1804 Thomas and two brothers went into partnership with him. The family also had shops and warehouses in Bermondsey,

Gloucester, and at Stockport where Christy's still make hats. In 1813 Miller Christy bought Brownings and Gutters farms in Broomfield for his fifth son, James, and this may have been Thomas's introduction to the village.

Thomas had married Rebecca Hewlings at the Friends Meeting House in Westminster on the 20th February 1800 and Broomfield was to be Thomas Christy's country residence, convenient for London and offering scope for farming as well. In Broomfield, from around 1815, he bought Scravels, Priors, Phillips, and Glovers farms and the crop book which he maintained for those farms in the years from 1822 showed the close interest he took in this venture. This shows that Thomas Christy had been active in Broomfield for some twenty-eight years before the 1843 fence list was drawn up, but it doesn't tell when he bought Entwistles land, or when he had the present house built and named it Brooklands. At first he lived in Clapham, where he also bought property and houses for his family, and he kept his house in Clapham as a town residence until his death, but it would be surprising if many years passed before he built himself a country residence.

Priors and Scravels had substantial farmhouses but there is no evidence that Thomas Christy ever lived in either, in fact he leased them out. Glovers was a smaller house yet the 1843 fence list could read that he was then living there but this is very unlikely unless he was then in the process of having work done at Brooklands. The poor relief rate for Broomfield shows a big jump in his assessment in 1830 and although Entwistles isn't mentioned he had already acquired Priors, Scravels, Glovers, Webbs and Phillips farms by then so this is the likely answer. In 1921 when the Christy family put the house up for sale the

sale particulars stated that the house was "erected about the year 1830" so this ties in with the increased rate assessment.

Two more factors support the house having been completed by 1830. The first is a plan, which Thomas Christy had drawn up in December 1827. It was to support his application to stop up a footpath and replace it with another to the south. The objective was to remove an existing public footpath from the land where Brooklands was being, or about to be built and move it to its present site, the path now known as Sweeps Walk, which goes along the south side of the Brooklands estate. Two Justices of the Peace confirmed the order in May 1828. The drawing does not show any existing building where Brooklands was to be erected. This was doubtless because there was never a house there. Christy bought the land called Entwistles but as has been shown the house had become separated and remained with the Finch family.

The second factor came to light only recently. Brooklands has two wells, a splendid one inside the house and another outside. The outside well has a pump and on it, embossed on the lead, is the date "1827". So Thomas Christy recorded the date for posterity after all.

It was in the early 1840s that Thomas Christy was seriously disputing the payment of the church tithes. The omission of Brooklands from the 1843 fence list may have been connected with this for it was in 1843 that Christy was summoned to pay the sum of £13.15.11d to the Feoffes of Richard, Lord Rich, decd., as tithes money. He refused to pay and a court order was taken out for this sum, with 5/6d added for costs! Another demand for £10.7.6 payable to Thomas Wall

Crooks met the same response, and an order was obtained which also added 5/6 costs. Crooks was the lessee of the Parsonage and as such was entitled to the small tithes. Christy was also summoned to pay the sum of £9.7.6 tithe money to the vicar, Rev. Henry Eley. Presumably a much larger demand was forthcoming from Black Notley, where Thomas Christy owned Black Notley Hall. He endeavoured to find a way out of his dilemma by seeking some means of the tithe being paid without him having to pay it!

Thomas Christy 's wife Rebecca died in 1837 at the age of 62 and Thomas died on the 15th June 1846, aged 69. He had had a serious disagreement with his eldest son, also Thomas, who had forced his father's retirement from the family firm. Thomas Christy I retaliated by leaving Brooklands to trustees for the benefit of his son's wife and children but not Thomas Christy II. When the trustees demanded rent for the property the marriage broke down and in 1859 Thomas Christy II's wife Jane left with her children to live elsewhere. From then until his death in 1877 Thomas lived alone in Brooklands.

Thomas Christy I seems to have gone from success to success. In 1837 he bought Butlers farm and he also acquired a farm in Writtle. A larger purchase was Black Notley Hall with 395 acres. He also bought the Lordship of the Manor of Broomfield Hall, which had for centuries been associated with the fortunes of Black Notley Hall. In 1831 he had a school built for the children of Broomfield; it consisted of two rooms and scholars paid one penny a week to attend. Some forty years later Thomas Christy II tried in vain to retain it as the village school in the face of the vicar's proposal to build a new National (Church of England) school. The dispute became

acrimonious, the residents were asked to vote on it, a poll was held and the vicar won. The Christy's British school closed in 1873.

Thomas Christy II followed his father as an ardent Quaker. He was deeply concerned at the presence of a public house next to Brooklands, the Plough, and he resolved to buy it in order to close what he described as "a most demoralising place of resort for the youth of the village". In 1849 he purchased it from the brewers, Wells and Perry, and closed it down.

When Thomas Christy II died in 1877 his widow returned to live in Brooklands and there she remained until her death in 1888. She left it to her second son, Wakefield Christy. Wakefield's uncle Samuel had changed his name to Christie-Miller when he had inherited the Miller family property and when Wakefield also inherited his uncle Samuel's property in Broomfield and Black Notley he too changed his name to Christie-Miller. Wakefield lived at Brooklands for a while; the 1891 census shows him there with his wife Mary, their children, and 10 servants. He died in 1898 and left his Essex property, which included Brooklands, to his second son, Charles Wakefield Christie-Miller.

Brooklands was to remain in the Christie-Miller for some time yet but even before Charles Wakefield inherited it Brooklands had been leased, possibly from soon after the 1891 census for a directory of 1895 shows the occupant as Julian B Arnold, barrister-at-law. Julian Arnold was the son of Sir Edwin Arnold, author, poet and journalist. Sir Edwin was connected with The Daily Telegraph from 1861 to his death in

1904 and his reputation as author and poet rests largely on an epic poem in blank verse of the life of Buddha published in 1879 as *Light of Asia*. After spending time in India Edwin lived for a while at Framfield in Sussex, where Julian was born. In 1881 the family were in Kensington; young Julian, then aged 20, was a solicitor's clerk. Sir Edwin afterwards moved to Hamlet Court, Southend-on-Sea, and he may have been there when Julian was at Brooklands. It was probably in 1897 that the lease passed to Arthur Lionel Woodhouse.

Back in the year 1770 a Mr Woodhouse, a Liverpool merchant, was on a visit to the west coast of Sicily when he was struck by the resemblance, in terms of climate, situation, and soil, to the island of Madeira. This then neglected area should be ideal for growing wine-producing grapes of a similar type to those in Madeira. In 1796 the firm of Woodhouse began to produce a wine named after the nearby town, Marsala. It came to be highly favoured by Victorians and proved highly profitable for the Woodhouse family who were able to live in considerable style at Norley Hall in Cheshire, some 20 miles south east of Liverpool.

Arthur Woodhouse was born at Norley Hall in 1866, the third son of Samuel Woodhouse. After completing his education at Marlborough College Arthur returned to Cheshire where he married Isobel Leigh. It could be that the family business made it desirable for him to live closer to London; Brooklands was convenient and it meant that he could continue to live in the style to which he was accustomed.

The Brooklands estate extended down into the Chelmer valley and from the terrace of the house there was a splendid

view through parkland to a level field where Arthur could indulge his love of cricket by holding private matches, a very English diversion for his guests. And soon after his arrival at Brooklands he was invited to become a vice-president of the Broomfield Cricket Club, an astute move on the club's part, for in 1898 a crisis arose at the Cricket Club. The landlord of the Angel had put a load of manure on the cricket pitch in Angel field and refused to clear it, so another site had to be found. Arthur Woodhouse offered the field at the back of Brooklands, on the condition that he could also use it for his private matches. The cricket club was to be responsible for keeping the pitch in order. Everyone was happy and in 1899 Arthur was elected captain of the cricket team. At his suggestion the club adopted colours of red and black, and so they have remained. He also donated a bat to be given to the player with the best batting average. At the end of the season the winner was himself!

In 1905 Arthur Woodhouse left Brooklands and also ended his connection with the cricket club. He and his family moved to Tofts in Little Baddow and the next lessee of Brooklands was Owen Parry, a wealthy businessman who back in the 1880s had started an oil cake manufacturing firm with his brother Nicholas. Their business prospered and soon they were established at Mark Lane in London, Perry Street in Millwall, at Ipswich, and at Colchester. The firm later became Owen Parry Ltd., and the large oil seed crushing mill at the Hythe in Colchester was a landmark by the river Colne. Owen came to Brooklands from Margaretting but he never became fully involved in the life of Broomfield though he did accept the invitation to be a vice-president of the cricket club and like his predecessor he allowed the club free use of the

cricket ground. He eventually retired to Tunbridge Wells.



Brooklands c1920

In 1921 the Christy connection came to an end when Charles Wakefield Christie-Miller put the property up for sale by auction together with the Lordship of the Manor of Broomfield Hall. The sale particulars give a good description of the property:

The house had 14 bedrooms and dressing rooms (including 5 maids bedrooms), 2 nurseries, 2 bathrooms, drawing room, dining room, morning room, study, vestibule, inner hall, garden hall, linen room, box room, billiard room,

kitchen, scullery, pantries, photographic dark room, work room, strong room, butler's room, brush room, dairy and coal cellar. It was the house as Thomas Christy I had had constructed around 1830 with later additions from designs by Sir Alfred Waterhouse, R.A..

Outside there were pleasure gardens and grounds "of rare beauty", a water and rock garden with island, rose garden, old English garden, orchard, vegetable gardens, pasture and park lands, two summer houses and a conservatory measuring 37'6" by 15'3". There was stabling and numerous outbuildings, together with a lodge and two cottages. The cricket ground was a part of the estate, which in all amounted to some 60 acres. Altogether an imposing, well arranged and admirably equipped family residence (with central heating), as the sale particulars described it.

Brooklands was bought by Joseph Duffy. He was a tall, white-haired English gentleman and a canny and very successful businessman who owned the Acme Flooring and Paving Company in Barkingside. It specialised in parquet flooring and in due course much of Brooklands was parquet floored. Mr Duffy employed several servants; maids, gardeners, chauffeur; stockman, etc. and he had further enhancements made to the property, both to the house and its outbuildings, and also to the gardens. His bailiff and head gardener, John Lisle, was responsible for creating the lake in the grounds. Joseph Duffy's wife Jessie was a keen painter and one of her favourite recreations was to paint whilst sitting in a punt on the lake.

Brooklands was Mr Duffy's country house but he still

kept a close watch on his business. He would commute to Barkingside in one of his cars, the Sunbeam or the Austin, driven by his chauffeur Mr Roach. There was no need to stop for petrol; he had a petrol pump installed at Brooklands. He provided housing for his staff and had a pair of cottages built at the far end of his estate, immediately opposite the Mill House - a situation not greatly to the liking of the Marriage family who were living at the Mill House. The dwellings, known as Lady Hope cottages after a nearby field name, have in recent years been converted to a single house.

A keen breeder of livestock, Mr Duffy kept a herd of pedigree dairy shorthorn cattle, cared for by his stockman Eric Thomas. Amongst his prizewinners was "Brooklands Duke" which won 1st prize at the Essex County Milk Recording Society's show in 1936. Another carried the splendid name of "Bartlow Baron Waterloo 8th".

A devout Roman Catholic, in a community which had no Roman Catholic church, Duffy turned one of the basement rooms into a chapel to which Catholic residents in the village were welcome to attend. The Registers of Electors throughout the 1920s and 1930s show Joseph and Jessie Duffy in residence at Brooklands, but in 1939 Jessie died. In that year the lights were going out all over Europe and Mrs Duffy was supervising the hanging of blackout curtains in Brooklands. Standing on the staircase she stepped back and fell down the stairs, hitting her head. The fact that she was a diabetic probably didn't help and she died a few days later.



Mr Duffy pats his dog, Mrs Duffy is next to him.

The Duffys had no children and when Joseph Duffy died in 1942, having no living family to inherit Brooklands, he left the property to the Roman Catholic Church. There were bequests to staff, John Lisle was left £100, and to his wife's sisters, but the bulk of the estate went to the Church. The Lordship of the Manor of Broomfield Hall wasn't mentioned in his will so, as residuary legatee, this too passed to the Roman Catholic Church. The Catholic Bishop of Northampton is now the Lord of the Manor. As to the Duffy's, Joseph and Jessie were buried at Barkingside. For a while some of the staff stayed on in their accommodation and Joseph Duffy's executor, the local priest Canon Wilson, would call to see that all was well, but soon the estate was sold again.

Duffy's trustees sold the Kitchen Field (the cricket

ground) to William Wood of Roselawn Farm who wanted to make a profit by developing it. He turned down an offer from the cricket club to buy it but an attempt to get permission to develop was refused, as were two appeals so he then offered it to the cricket club for £1,000. They cannily declined to buy at that price and so he reduced it to £750 and the sale went through.

The church had no use for Brooklands which, after Duffy's death had been occupied by the Essex War Agricultural Committee for offices, and sold all but a small parcel of land (reserved for a possible future Catholic church) to the Essex County Council who at first used it as offices for the Education Department and later as a residential centre for educational visits. Part of the land had been transferred to another department to build a centre for the mentally handicapped (Bridgemarsh). Outbuildings were used for Further Education activities and the greenhouses and kitchen garden was used for horticultural training. In 1998 the County Council, having no further use for the property, decided to sell it.

The present building dates from 1827-30. Considerable additions were later made from designs by Sir Alfred Waterhouse. A leading architect of his day, Waterhouse designed Eaton Hall, the seat of the Dukes of Westminster, the Natural History Museum in London, Girton College, Cambridge, and University College, Liverpool, amongst many other important commissions. Waterhouse moved from Manchester to London in 1865 and died in 1905. A Christy may have known Waterhouse from the latter's Manchester days since the Christy factory was in Stockport. The addition of the north part is thought to be c1850 or at any rate before 1874.

Was there ever a house on the land before Brooklands was built? Perhaps not, and yet in Duffy's Barn (known for a time as Sillett Barn), just to the north of the main house, there is evidence of much alteration. The brickwork, though of different dates, is not old, but a section of one wall along the north side is not of brick but of flint and mortar. It is obviously older because it is below the courses of bricks, but how much older?

The story of Biglands/Entwistles/Brooklands is far from straightforward. The fence lists confirm that Biglands became Entwistles. The estate was on both sides of the main road. Thomas Christy bought at least some of Entwistles land on which to build Brooklands, and it was with the arrival of Christy that the story of Biglands and Entwistles went two separate ways. One part, on the west side of the road, became The Limes and the other Brooklands. The Limes has gone but Brooklands lives on.

During the last two decades of the 20th century Brooklands fell progressively into disuse and disrepair. In 1999, after much public debate, it was sold by Essex County Council and returned to private ownership. The present occupants, Michael and Susan Holmes are in the process of restoring the neglected house and grounds and, together with their four sons, Garth, Dirk, Tor and Brock, are returning the property to the lively home it once was.



Half-hidden in the shrubbery, the pump displays
the crucial date “1827”



The view along Main Road when The Limes, on the left, was the home of the Ridley family.



The lake at Brooklands. Mrs Duffy enjoyed painting while sitting in the punt.

The Churchyard Fence lists

1570. The tenement sometime old Biglands and now Robert Wood maketh from Podinge towards the west one rodd

1678. The tenement of Mr Entwizell in the occupation of Mr James Goodman maketh from the gate towards the west by estimation one rodd.

1687. The tenement of Mr Entwistle now in the occupation of Charles Foster maketh from the gate towards the west one rod.

1735. Entwistles - Aug. Finch - A rod.

1843. 4. Biglands or Entwistle, occupied by S & M Finch maketh from No. 3 westward one rod. Owner Robt, Susan & Mary Finch.