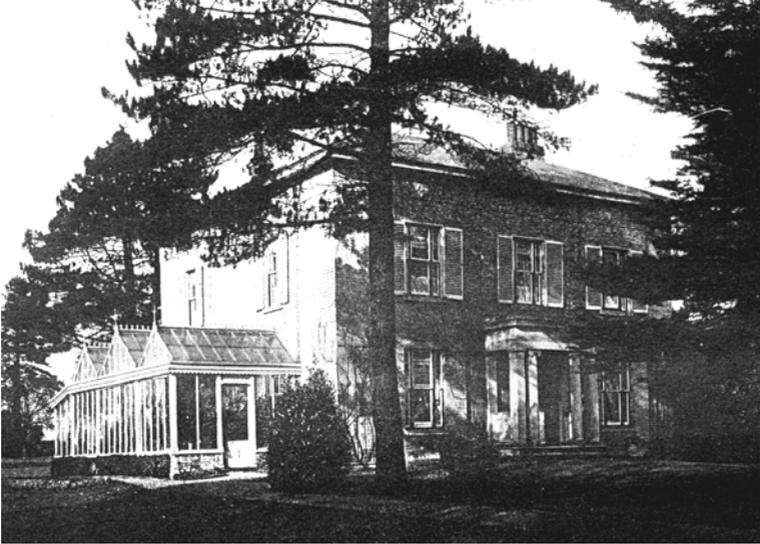


18.

Brownings.



The house called Brownings is no more; it was demolished in the 1970s and a new housing development took over the site and its surrounding land. It stood close by the main Chelmsford to Braintree road, between Patching Hall Lane and Kings Road and wouldn't even rank as a Broomfield building now since the Chelmsford boundary has moved further north. Brownings meadow was at one time a favourite site for fetes and the like. But who was Browning?

There is nobody called Browning on any of the early Broomfield tax lists, nor does the name appear in the parish registers. Being so close to Chelmsford it is quite likely that it got its name from someone in that parish and a William Browning fits the bill. He was a wax chandler in Chelmsford in the latter years of the 15th century. A prominent member of the community, he was constable on at least four occasions. In 1539 John, the son of Thomas Browning, was baptised in St Mary's church in Chelmsford and in 1558 a William Browning, very likely the son or grandson of the earlier William, was also constable. At a court in that year he openly opposed Anthony Browne, sergeant-at-law and Queen Mary's manor steward. Browning was fined 20 shillings for his insolence.

In his will, made in 1582, John Brett, the farmer at Patching Hall, whose land would have abutted Brownings, mentions a parcel of copyhold land in Broomfield called Little Byckmetche which he had bought from William Browning. Very likely the same Browning who was insolent to the Queen's man. And very likely it was his family who gave Brownings its name.

On the 1570 fence list it was referred to as Brownings Land, there was no mention of a tenement. The house came later. In 1570 the land was in the possession of Thomas Foster. The Foster family was in Broomfield before 1570 and continued to live in the parish for some years beyond that date but they don't seem to have made a lasting impression. A marginal note on the 1570 list shows that at some time before the 1678 list it had passed to John Boosey and he was still using it in 1678. It was still referred to as land, no mention of a

house, and in 1687 it was shown as Mrs Boosey's so the John Boosey must have been the owner of Scravels, who died in 1680 and whose widow, Mary Boosey, lived on until 1715. John Boosey had inherited Scravels in 1654 but whether it was he or his father who acquired Brownings isn't known. John and Mary had three children, all girls, and Mary took over Scravels and Brownings when her husband died.

Morant doesn't give an owner or occupant of Brownings land on his 1735 list, he also omits the word "land" so it may be that by then a house had been built on the land. The next fence list was in 1843 when Brownings was owned and occupied by Mr James Christy, but it is possible to go back somewhat earlier than that for Miller Christy, a hat-maker, whose eldest son Thomas was to build Brooklands, set up his fifth and youngest son James as a farmer in Broomfield. James Christy first appeared at a Broomfield vestry meeting on the 5th October 1808 so he doubtless arrived in Broomfield shortly before that date. He was to farm Patching Hall, Gutters and Brownings farms, and it seems likely that it was in 1813 that took on Brownings and Gutters farms.

James Christy had married Charlotte Fell in 1812, just a year before the purchase of Brownings, so this was a way of setting up the newly weds. They had several children who in turn farmed in the area, James Jnr at Boyton Hall, Roxwell, David at Patching Hall, and Robert who had one son at Broomwood Manor and another at Blue House, Chignal St James. Their youngest son, Fell Christy, founded the Broomfield Road Iron Works close to Brownings, which became the firms of Christy & Norris and Christy Brothers.

Although the 1843 fence list showed James Christy as owner and occupier, three years later the tithe map still showed Christy as owner but Hannah Wenden as occupant. She had been living at Brownings as early as 1841; the census on that year gives her as aged 50, a person of independent means. She was still there in 1851, when the record gave her place of birth as Newton All Saints, a village in Suffolk between Sudbury and Boxford. She was then living at Brownings with her daughter Mary and one servant. Ten years later Mary was shown as her daughter-in-law and another daughter-in-law, Sarah, was also at Brownings.

The Wenden family were butchers in Chelmsford and had been so since the late 1700s. James Wenden's house, butcher's shop, and slaughterhouse stood in Tindal Square between the Wallenger mansion and the Bell Inn. It had previously been an inn, sometime The Naked Boy and then the Golden Fleece (no connection with the Golden Fleece in Duke Street). Wallenger's had been sold by the last of that family in 1799 to Robert Marriage of Broomfield and it remained in the Marriage family until 1850. James Wenden died in 1823 and in 1855 the trustees of the Chelmsford Corn Exchange Company were looking to build a new Corn Exchange. The company acquired Wallengers and then bought the butchers shop, etc from Hannah Wenden. The properties were all demolished to make way for the new Corn Exchange. Hannah had by then been long resident at Brownings.

It may be that the old farmhouse of Brownings consisted of more than one dwelling for the 1851 census suggests that James Christy was also living there with three of his children, Caroline, Ellen and Fell, together with a cook and a housemaid.

His eldest son David had by then taken over, and was living at, Patching Hall. James Christy was shown as a farmer employing 8 men and farming 100 acres. This would have consisted of Brownings and Gutters farms. He was also shown as a brickmaker, employing a further 15 men. Ten years later he was clearly prospering. Then aged 73 he employed 10 men and 3 boys on his farms, which then amounted to 130 acres. His brickmaking was also prospering; the 15 men had become 28 men and 10 boys.

In 1874 James Christy died. He left Brownings and Gutters farms to his son Robert who continued to farm Gutters but Brownings house and 7 acres of its land was put up for sale. Much of the land had passed to James's younger son, Fell Christy. At some time during James's ownership a new Brownings house must have been built for the sale catalogue described it as a modern residence with stabling and chaise house, ornamental grounds and entrance lodge, extending to 7 acres.

Brownings was sold on the 14th August 1874, the buyer was William Ward Duffield and he bought it for £4,300. The house was described as being of white brick and slated, with a handsome portico. There was a basement containing a laundry, dairy, larder and three cellars. On the ground floor was a dining room 19' x 16', a drawing room 21' x 16', a breakfast room 15' x 13'6", a lofty entrance hall some 36' long, as well as kitchen, scullery and store room. Attached to the house was a conservatory. The first floor had 5 bedrooms, a day nursery and a night nursery, two servant's rooms, and a WC, all accessed by two staircases. Outside the house was a kitchen garden with a vinery, cucumber house, melon pit, forcing furnace and a

thatched aviary. There were two stables with two loose boxes. The lodge house was a modest dwelling with just four rooms and a cellar.

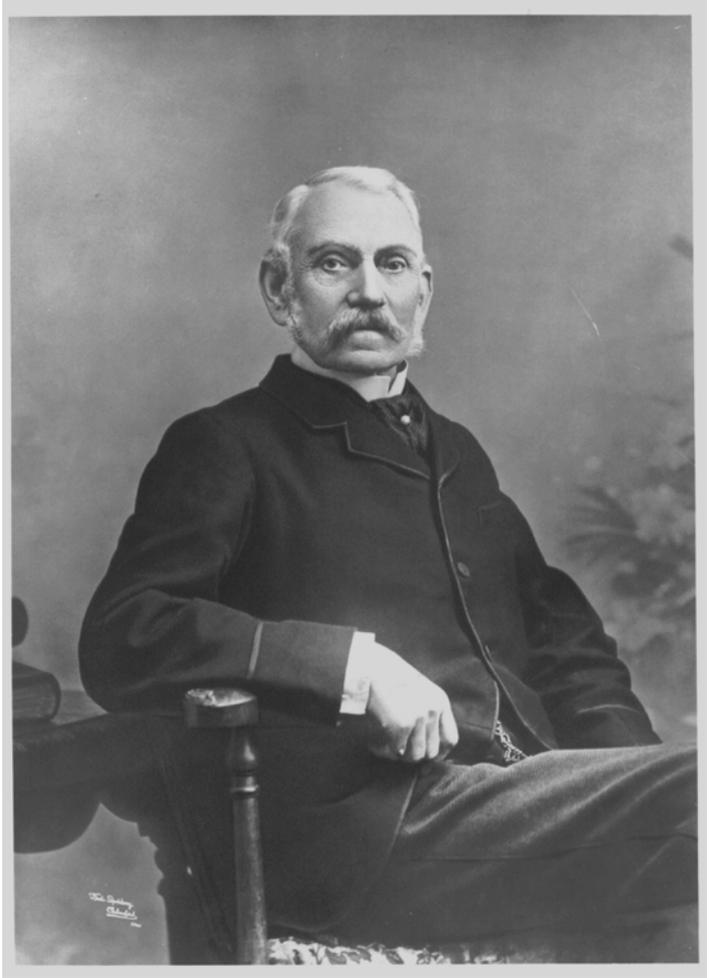
The new owner of Brownings, William Ward Duffield, was born on the 25th November 1820, the son of James Duffield of Manor Place, Great Baddow. Educated at Chelmsford Grammar School, on leaving school he became a clerk in the office of Charles Parker, a Chelmsford solicitor. In 1846 he was admitted as a solicitor and founded the firm which bore his name for more than 150 years. William married Marianne Bartleet of Brentwood and they had two sons, William and Arthur, and a daughter, Florence. The census of 1891 shows that at that date the children were still living with their parents at Brownings. William was then 30, Florence 25, and Arthur 23. By then both boys were described as solicitors.

William Ward Duffield became a respected member of Chelmsford society. In addition to his practice he was on the board of the Chelmsford Gas Company and the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation Company, and a director of Norwich Union Life Insurance. Duffield became a governor of the King Edward VI Grammar School where he had attended as a boy, and for many years he was chairman of the governors. In 1873, the year before he bought Brownings, he was appointed Clerk to the Justices, and he remained in this post for 35 years. In 1883 he was made registrar of the County Court, a post which he held until he was nearly 90.

In local government matters Duffield was also prominent. He was elected to the local Board of Health in 1856 and was re-elected no less than nine times, giving an

unbroken 30 years service to the Board. As secretary to the Chelmsford Corn Exchange Company, the body that had bought Hannah Wenden's butcher's shop and house, he was involved in finding a site for a new corn exchange to replace the cramped accommodation in the entrance hall of the Shire Hall. He was also secretary of the Chelmsford Literary Institute.

For centuries the Mildmay family, lords of the manor, had provided Chelmsford's leading citizen. In 1878 the last of the Mildmays to live in Chelmsford, Archdeacon Carew Anthony St John Mildmay died. There was a vacuum at the head of Chelmsford's affairs. After much thought and prolonged discussion the question of incorporation was put to a public meeting in 1887. A mayor and corporation would replace the local Board of Health; Chelmsford would become a borough. William Ward Duffield, long time member of the Board, was against it. He doubted if it was needed because the town was too small, having a mayor and corporation would lead to bickering and heart burning, and he strongly opposed the expense of municipal buildings. He was outvoted and Chelmsford received its charter in the following year. Despite his earlier misgivings William Ward Duffield was elected to the first borough council and immediately elevated to alderman and deputy mayor.



William Ward Duffield of Brownings
1820 - 1912

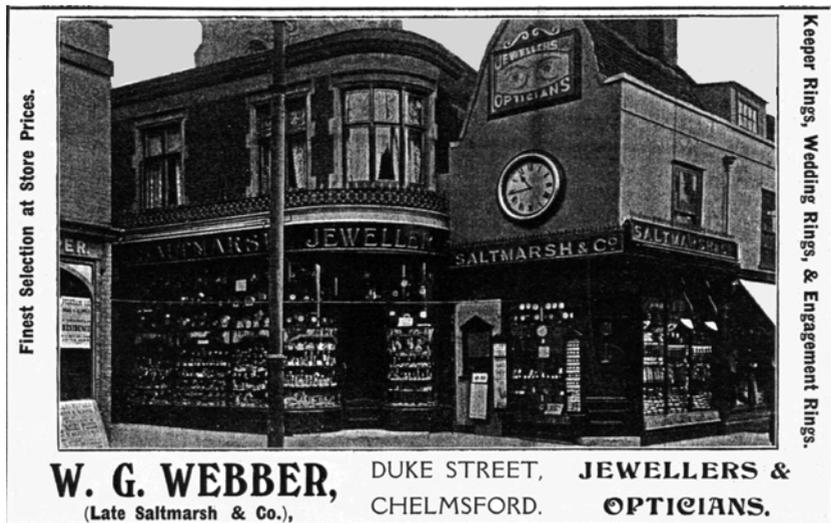
One wonders how Duffield found time from his busy

practice to serve on so many bodies. It certainly didn't shorten his life; still active when past ninety, he died in 1912 at the age of 92. His obituary described him as "fair-minded and of unflinching courtesy, he was a universal favourite". Brownings was then put up for sale. His practice in Chelmsford lived on, acquiring new partners over the years. It became in time Copland, Duffield, Ward and Baker, still at the same address in Chelmsford's High Street. The connection wasn't finally broken until 2003 - the premises have now become the Cafe Nero.

Brownings was sold in 1913. The sale catalogue revealed that by then more land had been added to the estate. Back in 1881 William Duffield had purchased an acre of back land, presumably from Fell Christy, and in 1890 he had purchased another similar acre. In 1908 three more acres, formerly copyhold land of Patching Hall, was added so that by the time of the 1913 sale the estate came to just under 12 acres. Some internal changes had been made to the house. There were now 6 bedrooms and dressing rooms and a bathroom with hot and cold water, a copper geyser and a towel airer. Two servant's bedrooms were now up in the attic. The house was fitted with electric bells throughout and was lighted by gas.

William Grose Webber had taken over a shop in Duke Street, Chelmsford early in the 20th century. Number 11 Duke Street was, at the turn of the century, occupied by Saltmarsh & Co., watchmakers, jewellers and opticians. It had previously been a blacksmith's shop. In 1906 the shop was still trading as Saltmarsh & Co but in a local advertisement in brackets below the name was added "W G Webber". So William Webber had arrived.

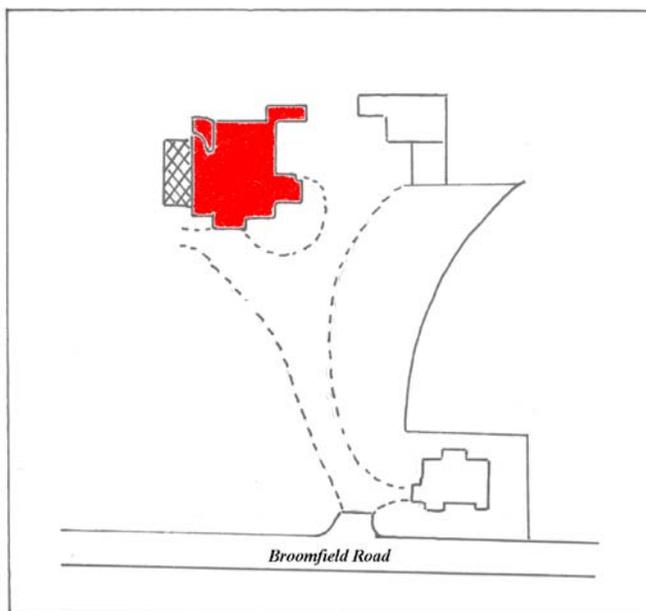
In 1908 the shop's advertisement was in the name of W G Webber, watchmaker, jeweller, diamond merchant and optician. He seemed to be moving up a class though a photograph in that year shows that the shop still had Saltmarsh & Co on its frontage. Mr Webber acknowledged in his advertisement that the business was formerly Saltmarsh & Co and he announced that he had a fine selection of goods at "store prices", and that all kinds of repairs were carried out on the premises by experienced workmen. At this time he was living at St Columb, Broomfield Road.



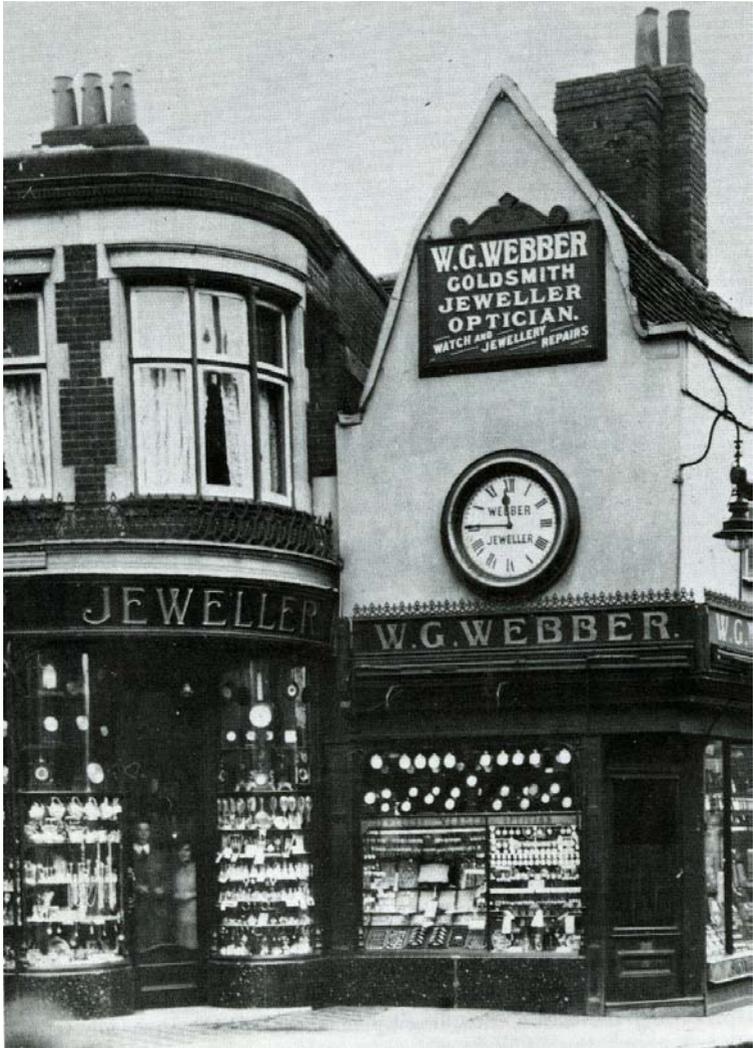
This advertisement appeared in the Chelmsford Guide for 1908

Business no doubt prospered and Mr Webber moved to a grander house, Brownings, which was then, as the 1913 sale catalogue demonstrated, a house fit for a prosperous gentleman.

His shop, which was really two shops, nos. 10 and 11 Duke Street as the photographs show, had to change in 1928 when a road widening scheme resulted in the demolition of number 10. When it was rebuilt it was set back to allow for the wider road and pavement. This then became Harrison's grocer's shop. Mr Webber continued to do business at No. 11 and he opened another branch in the town, at no. 58 High Street. Meanwhile, back at Brownings William and Ethel Webber had settled in and things continued undisturbed until World War II.

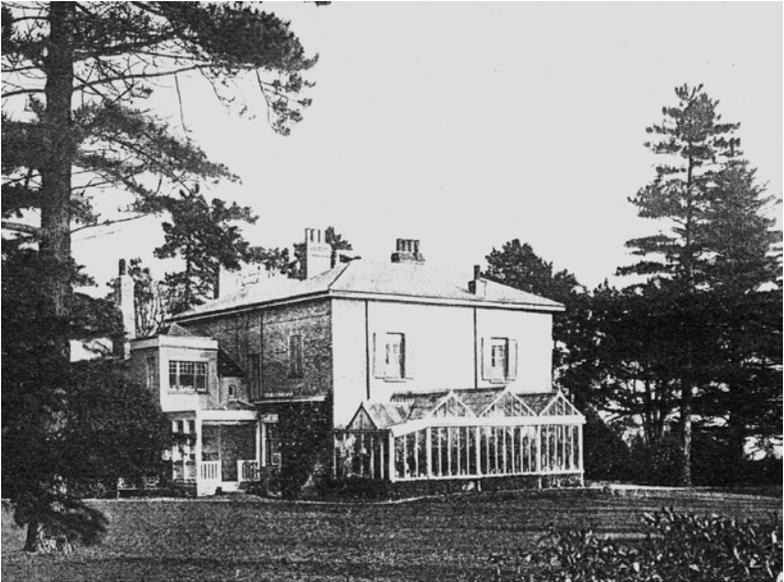


This plan of Brownings was drawn when some of its land was sold for building in 1921.



William Webber's shop in Duke Street, Chelmsford, before the part on the right was pulled down.

In February 1944 the local newspaper reported that Brownings had been taken over by the American Red Cross for use as officers' club. The organisation had bought the house and three acres of grounds for use by American officers; to be run in conjunction with the existing general club at the Saracen's Head in Chelmsford which had opened just a year earlier. The facilities for the officers included 18 beds, the provision of meals, and a billiard table in the basement. The Americans were there for around 15 months. In June 1945 it was reported that the officers' club at Brownings had closed down.



A side view of Brownings in its prime.

Webber's remained in the Duke Street shop until 1983 and the High Street branch continued in the name for much longer but now both have gone. An estate agent now occupies the Duke Street premises though it retains its distinctive appearance. And the High Street shop is still a jeweller, now part of a chain. William Webber appeared on the electoral roll at Brownings until 1964, after that date the house ceased to appear.

Brownings seems to have started off as just land and then developed into a farm in its own right. The farmhouse was doubtless replaced by the much grander dwelling built for James Christy. Then much of the land was split up, leaving a mere seven acres to go with the house. This was gradually built up to twelve acres, but again much of it was sold off and became the Brownings Avenue development. Finally the house and its remaining piece of land went.

As to Brownings, the name lives on in Brownings Avenue. This area, including Eves Crescent, was developed after the 1921 sale of much of Brownings Land. When the house itself was demolished its remaining land was also developed for more housing. Borda Close, Chestnut Walk and Town Croft now cover the site. Town Croft is most appropriate since this was the name of the field, a part of Brownings land, which was immediately to the north-west of the house.

* * * * *

1570. Brownings Land and now Thomas Fosters maketh from Lurkes towards the west halfe a rodd. (in margin John Boosey)

1678. Brownings land and now John Booseys maketh from Isaac Booseys towards ye west by estimation half a rodd.

1687. The land called Brownings land now Mrs Booseys maketh from Emsons west half a rod.

1735. Brownings - $\frac{1}{2}$ a rod

1843. 7. Brownings, occupied by Mr James Christy, maketh from no. 6 half a rod. Owner James Christy.

19.

Woollards.



Rear view of Woollards, c1900

Thomas Beadle or Bedyll is another of those shadowy figures whose name turns up on a Broomfield tax list, in this case the 1524 lay subsidy, but of whom no more is heard. Twenty years later a Margaret Bedyll appears on a 1544 tax list, very possibly the widow of Thomas. By 1570 the Bedylls had gone, there is no mention of them in the parish registers, but no doubt Thomas was the man referred to as the earlier occupant of the property that became known as Woollards and which in 1570 was occupied by the widow Wallenger. The 1570 list is more informative, the marginal notes indicate that it later had two occupants, Sergeant and Harris and, at a different time, by widow Goody.

The property stands on Church Green, next to the Kings Arms. On its western side would have been Swan House and then Broomfield Hall. On its east side was Crouch House alias the Kings Arms. It seems to have started out as a single dwelling and later became two or more cottages. Now Thomas Wallenger was shown as the occupant of Priors on the same list as Widow Wallenger was at Beadles so she can't have been his wife, nor could it have been his brother John's wife because John died in 1579, but she could have been their mother. On the other hand she could have been a more distant relative because in her will she mentions her son Henry Wallinger and he doesn't seem to tie in with the Wallenger family of Thomas of Priors and John.

Joan Wallenger died in 1574 and in her will she left to her son Henry:

the cupboard in the hall with the cloth upon it,
the table in the hall
a turned chair,
all the painted cloth in the hall,
1 deep basin,
a great pewter platter,
1 great pot of pewter,
4 of the broadest pieces of pewter,
1 featherbed and mattress, and
1 pair of blankets of linsey wolsley.

Linsey wolsley was a mixture of linen and wool, commonly used at the time.

It looks as though the tenement of Widow Wallenger

may have become two cottages after her death if it was not already the case, for the next two occupants were named Sergeant and Harris. However, the parish registers don't show a Sergeant before 1654 so there could have been other occupants in between Wallenger and Sergeant. Harris is by far the commonest name in the parish, appearing regularly in the registers from the 1550s through to the 20th century, and in considerable numbers. With one notable exception, Salter Harris Esq., the Harris family were of the labouring class and so their names didn't appear on the tax lists and there is no way of knowing when they first appeared in Broomfield. It is very likely that both Sergeant and Harris were tenants of the lessee of Broomfield Hall. A widow Harris who died in 1675 could well have been the person named on the list.

It seems quite likely that the cottages were occupied by poor widows of the parish, for the next mention of the property, in 1678, shows that it was then in the occupation of widow Goody and widow Howe. By this date Thomas Woollard was farming Broomfield Hall and he was also the owner of the cottages that were to bear his name. The two old ladies would have been his tenants. They were still there in 1687.

Thomas Woollard was born at Chignal St. James in 1614 and lived for a long period of his life in Broomfield. He returned to Chignal St. James in the last few months of his life and died there on the 23rd January 1702. He was buried on the east side of the churchyard on the 28th January and his grave is now covered with a modern slab, which contains a curious error. The neat incised lettering contains two "ofs" in the inscription, which reads as follows:

Here lies the Body of
THOMAS WOOLLARD Gent,
late of Broomfield but formerly of
of this Parish
who died on the 23rd Jan 1702
Aged 88 years.
He bequeathed a Tenement and Garden
the yearly rent of which
to be distributed to the Poor
of this Parish

The Parish in this case was Chignal St. James but he had also remembered Broomfield and in his will dated 20th February 1700 he left his cottages on Church Green to the use of the Poor of Broomfield forever.

From soon after his arrival in Broomfield Thomas Woollard was an active member of the community. He was Constable of the parish in 1670, Overseer of the Poor in 1679 and again in 1695, Surveyor of the Roads in 1681, and Churchwarden for the years 1673-1677, 1685, 1689, and 1691-1692. The Poor Relief Act of 1601 had given the Parish the burden of Poor Relief and this burden sat squarely on the shoulders of the Overseer of the Poor. The obligations on the Parish to repair the roads passing through it required the election of unpaid Surveyors to organise and supervise road repairs by the inhabitants at large. Broomfield was also held responsible for a share in the maintenance of Winckford Bridge in Little Waltham. These posts were no sinecures.

The late 17th century saw the introduction of the shameful practice of “badging the Poor”. The Broomfield Vestry minutes record that on the 13th April 1691 “It was also ordered at the meeting that all persons who receive constant collection shall wear a badge upon their right arm with this inscription “The Poor of Broomfield”, and that the Overseer do provide them. This was done to try and check the growth of the local lists of the poor who received assistance through the parish rates. Thomas Woollard was a regular attendee at the vestry meetings and must have been a party to the decision. He was also clearly a man with a concern for the poor for his will, written on the 20th February 1700 was specific; he gave “my customary messuages or tenements with the appurtenances to the use of the poor of Broomfield for ever”.

After Thomas Woollard's death the cottages were used by the Parish to accommodate the poor until 1758 and the accounts record the expenditure and the problems of these buildings. The roofs were of thatch and numerous repairs were made to the roofs and walls over the years. The accommodation that the cottages gave, and the increasing problems of the Parish poor prompted the Vestry to call a meeting on the 13th June 1749 when it was resolved that a Workhouse be set up for receiving and employing the poor of the Parish.

Woollard's cottages became the Workhouse but at another Vestry meeting, on 10th May 1757 it was;

"agreed it should be taken down and rebuilt with timber to be weatherboarded three feet from cill and above with clay walls which is taken this day by Richard Brightman to complete the whole building for three score pounds, exclusive of carting

the timber, the length of the house 42 feet width 17 feet height ten feet.

Agreed to by us whose names are underwritten.

The House to be covered with tiles and the money to be paid at three equal payments."

Richard Brightman		Builder
John Boosey		Churchwarden
Thos. Leamon		Overseer
Daniel Scratton]	
George Josling]	
John Mascall]	
Augustus Finch]	Parishioners
Matthew Bullen]	
John Farrar]	
James Gage]	

Richard Brightman, the builder who was awarded the contract for the work lived in Broomfield and was a carpenter by trade. He was also constable of the Parish between 1757 and 1763. The Overseers accounts show that in 1758 he was paid for "siting up beds" and he was also paid 5/- for "bare" (beer?) at the Workhouse. Although payment was to be in three instalments it seems to have been levied in only one Parish rate, agreed on the 6th March 1758 at eighteen pence in the pound.

Not all of the original Woollard's cottages were taken down by Brightman. A memorandum in the Overseer's accounts in 1759 records "It was agreed by all those present at the Vestry to put the Old Part of the workhouse in repair by brick walls and to build an Oven and they all surveyed it for that

purpose, viz Augustus Finch, S Hawtyn, J Mascall, Geo. Josling and John Boosey". This was the west end of the cottages, which remained a distinct part of the building. The accounts to the end of 1759 show payments for materials for this work, including the following entries:

July 14th	To 25 bushels of lime and carriage	£1.0.0.
	To Raby for 5 hundred and $\frac{3}{4}$ white bricks for the Workhouse	£1.1.0
Nov 5th	Pd Marks (Glaziers) Bill Workhouse	£1.1.0

In October 1759 it appears that all the work had been completed as the records minute that it was "Agreed to make a trial of the Workhouse and John Horsenal be appoynted to superintend it". It doesn't say what the terms of John Horsenal's appointment were but it was common practice at that time to contract out this office depending on the numbers to be fed and if they were sufficiently able-bodied to enable them to work. Early in 1760, perhaps the trial had then been completed, the vestry decided that "1/- to be taken off John Horsenal's allowance". On the 1st October 1764 the terms were more specific "From this time "John Horsenal to have 2/- a week".

The buildings were carefully maintained over the following years and the parish accounts contain many entries for materials and payments for repairs, together with the appointments of Workhouse superintendents. As early as 1762 Edward Harris was paid £1.10.6d for thatching the workhouse;

this may have been as a result of updating the old end part of the building. There were many bills paid for unspecified "work done at the workhouse". In 1769 John Sorrell was paid £1.12.8½d and John Dowsett 13/6d. Three years later Mr Martin was paid £1.55.5d for mending the pales at the workhouse. In 1788 bricks, lime, clay and dung were purchased and William Dowsett was paid £1.1.8½d for his work. And so it went on.

There were very many other entries in the parish accounts for the workhouse. In 1772 a milk bill for 183 pints came to 3/9¾d! Then there were bills for providing small beer, flour, cheese, pork, and beef (21lbs at 4d a pound). In 1773 a spinning wheel was purchased for 3/6d and another one was bought in 1784 - it was still 3/6d. James Sayer was paid £2.11.6d, a little over £200 in today's prices, for installing a pump in 1776 and there were several instances in the years that followed of small sums (4/-) being paid out to mend it.

In 1833 the Vestry agreed to let the workhouse to Henry and Mary Pitts "for one year at the rate of three shillings and sixpence per head to commence on Michaelmas Day the 29th inst and to have good wholesome bread and cheese likewise. Meat not less than 3 times a week and beer as usual and the said Mary Pitts agreed to keep an orderly house and find employment for all who are capable to work and their earnings she is entitled to. Henry Pitts is to be considered one of the number but not herself".

As a result of the new Poor Law of 1834 the Parish no longer needed the workhouse and around 1840 the trustees of Woollard's Charity, appointed by the vestry, converted it to four

separate cottages, the income from the rents being used to help the poor. This seems to have soon caused problems. In February 1845 the vestry resolved “that the Overseers for the time being be empowered in future to let the Parish cottages afresh and the Assistant Overseer to receive the rents weekly, and if not paid in a regular manner, that they the Overseers do remove the tenant so refusing immediately“.

The apparently firm line taken by the vestry seems not to have been quite that firm. In February 1846 the vestry resolved that widow Byford “do pay her rent of 1/- a week or else leave the cottage she occupies”. It looks as though the Overseer had referred the case back to the vestry. Eighteen months later Mary Byford was still in arrears and the vestry resolved to give her notice to quit. Seven years later she must still have been in residence, and still having problems with her rent for the vestry noted that she was then 60/- in arrears. It was agreed to halve the debt to 30/- and get her to pay off the rest by instalments. The same situation applied to William Gambling (18/- in arrears, reduced to 9/-) and Mary Nicholls (54/- in arrears, reduced to 27/-). In 1865 it was reported that the yearly income from the rents of Woollards cottages was £15.12.0. This assumed that the four cottages were let for the whole year and that the rents were being paid regularly.



Two views of Woollards, taken around 1900



The tenants weren't necessarily paupers; had they been there would have been very little rent collected. As an example there were three families living in the cottages in 1891; Joseph Smith, an 80-year-old pauper, and his wife Mary; George Turner and his family; and George Monk and his family. The two latter men were described as agricultural labourers.

By 1901 the cottages had quite a population. In the first cottage, nearest the Kings Arms, was Mary Scott, a widow with three sons living with her. Next to her was the Monk family, grown somewhat since 1881. There was George and Emily Monk, their four sons, George, Joseph, Steven and Arthur, and their 6-year-old daughter Minnie. In cottage number three was the Turner family, also enlarged over the previous ten years. George and Emma Turner had seven children, Charles, Fred, Alice, Nellie, Lucy, Albert and Minnie. Next to them lived John and Elizabeth Perry and their 14-year-old son John. And in the last cottage, the oldest part of the buildings, was another Monk family, Joseph and Esther and their two young children Beatrice (9) and Harold (3). They also had a lodger, John Lindsell aged 77. Twenty-eight people living in Woollards!

The trustees had discretion as to who would be accepted as worthy tenants and this remained the situation until 1978 but they were in a difficult position. The income from the rents was small, although it was supplemented by rent from other charity properties along Main Road. Maintaining Woollard's cottages in a habitable condition was increasingly likely to eat up the funds that should have been spent on helping the poor. Since the tenants were themselves among the poorer inhabitants the rents had to remain low and so the income remained low.

In February 1926 the trustees noted that the roof of the house occupied by Mrs Devenish was in a very bad state. This was the old cottage that had escaped the rebuilding of 1757. Mr James Day proposed and Mr Herbert Sewell seconded that Mr Fred Jarred's estimate of £26.5s.0d be accepted. This was evidently put in hand and the dilapidated thatch was covered with corrugated iron, a situation that remained until 1983.

By the early 1970s the cottages were again seriously in need of repair. The trustees had decided not to let the cottages as and when they became vacant but to eventually sell the property and invest the proceeds. This should produce a steady income to the charity and there would no longer be the need to maintain the property and incur the cost of expensive repairs. By then all but two of the cottages had been vacated and a working party organised by the trustees carried out temporary repairs to keep them weatherproof and in a presentable condition. Several villagers volunteered their services and over an August Bank Holiday gaps in the plaster were filled in, some tiles replaced, some repairs to the woodwork were carried out, and the whole range of buildings got a lick of paint.

There remained the problem of the remaining tenants. Despite the temporary repairs the properties were still below modern day standards and the remaining family was offered, and accepted, accommodation in a council house in Broomfield. This left just the one inhabited cottage.



Woollards cottages in 1974.

By 1978, with three of the cottages vacated, it was decided to proceed with the sale. It was a condition of the sale that the final tenant should be permitted to remain in his cottage for as long as he wished. Conveniently, this was the small cottage attached to the main block. By the winter of 1978 the cottages were again in poor shape and the new owner, Richard Boden, undertook the renovation of the main block, making it into a single residence.

Since the 1920s the Devenish family, mother and her two sons Leonard and Herbert, had been living in the smallest of Woollard's cottages. Mrs Devenish died in 1948 and Leonard took on the tenancy and he, in turn, was succeeded by Herbert who in his later years became a rather eccentric recluse. Herbert took to wearing a selection of strange ladies' hats when

he left the house. He never answered his door, even to the rent collector - especially the rent collector! - a source of some concern to the Trustees for the best part of ten years. His policy of non-cooperation thwarted attempts to help him although the other residents of Church Green tried to keep an eye on his to see that all was well. Not long after the sale of the cottages his non-appearance caused concern for his well being; an entry was forced and Herbert was found dead in his bed. He was the last tenant in a line going back for several hundreds of years.



Inside the main block of Woollards. 1979.

Richard Boden, who ran the nearby newsagents shop, was faced with quite a task. Damp had got into the bedrooms and some of the floors of the main block, walls and ceilings had badly deteriorated. It was a curious feature of the cottages that some of the rooms interlocked, the bedroom of one being over the living room of its neighbour. Fortunately, despite the problems it was possible to retain a considerable amount of the old framework and the resulting renovation, whilst making three cottages into one, kept much of the character of the old building. The three front doors inevitably became one. Whilst work was going on an old well was discovered in the garden about a foot below the present soil level - it still provided a good depth of clear water.

In 1983 Woollard's was sold again and Geoff and Susan Garwood took on the task of renovating the final cottage and amalgamating it into the main block. By then it was in a sorry state. The whole cottage only measured 30 feet by 15 feet with just two oddly shaped rooms downstairs, heavily beamed with a headroom of only 5 feet 2 inches. Upstairs were further small rooms and a dormer facing to the rear of the cottage. As Richard Boden had found with the main block in 1978, there was a great deal of damp and rotten timber. Removal of its corrugated iron roof, put there by Fred Jarred in 1926 and occasionally patched since, revealed the remains of the thatched roof, the last surviving in Broomfield! The renovation also revealed that this cottage, joined to the main block since 1759, had once been quite separate.

During this latest renovation a tiny but almost perfect

Victorian kitchen range was discovered hidden behind a conventional fireplace. The original chimney, which had been built on a foundation of broken bottles, collapsed and had to be rebuilt. The little cottage now became an integral part of the overall building. The doors (there were two!) that had for so long faced out across Church Green were no longer needed and were replaced by a single window. The previously decrepit roof was covered with peg tiles to match the main block. And so Woollards was given a new lease of life.



Woollard's - the new look.

The story of Woollard's would not be complete without telling something of the administration of the charity. In its

early years it was solely concerned with putting the cottages to the use that Thomas Woollard envisaged but Woollard's Charity had itself undergone changes over the years. For long it was administered by the vestry meetings but in 1865 three prominent Broomfield residents, Rev. John Whiting, William Impey, and Henry Marriage Snr. applied to the Charity Commissioners for a scheme to be established for the future regulation of the Charity.

The order was made in 1868 and trustees took over from the vestry with Henry Marriage as chairman. Three old thatched Alms houses along Main Road had been merged with Woollard's Charity and the new body agreed to demolish them and replace them with three good cottages with three bedrooms in each to be let at about 2s6d per week. The work was made possible by a substantial gift from Henry Marriage and the cottages were ready by the end of 1870.

Henry Marriage's gift was conditional upon £4 worth of beef being purchased from rent income and distributed to poor widows of the parish each Christmas time. This was put into effect and a further £5 was spent on buying coal for 22 needy villagers. By 1875 there were more than 140 recipients of the Charity's coal! By 1879 23½ tons of coal was being distributed to the poor of the Parish. In the 1880s the number of recipients was greatly reduced, perhaps to reflect the truly needy and of course the income to the Charity. In 1891 Mr Neild of Broomfield House (next door to Woollard's cottages) asked the trustees to consider selling the cottages to him. The trustees declined.

In 1894 parish councils were established and the new council exercised its new powers to appoint two trustees in place

of the churchwardens. By 1895 the 22 needy parishioners sharing the £4 worth of beef had risen to 25 and by 1897 it was up to 31. Either the price of beef was falling or the rations were getting smaller! In 1910 the rent of Woollard's cottages on Church Green was raised to 3s (15p) a week.

In 1912 two Broomfield residents applied to the Charity Commissioners for a new scheme to regulate the Charity. Although the existing trustees vigorously opposed it a new scheme was imposed in 1913, giving the Parish Council 4 trustees, reducing the co-opted trustees to 2, and making the vicar of Broomfield an ex officio trustee. In effect this gave the Parish Council the final say in the running of Woollard's Charity. In 1935 the Patching Hall area of Broomfield was transferred to Chelmsford but the Charity Commission ruled that the Charity would continue to cover the Ancient Parish of Broomfield, the area for which it was originally intended.

World War II caused a problem with the beef distribution. In February 1942 the trustees agreed that where beef was not procurable an order for groceries was to be substituted. After the war it became referred to as "the widows' meat" and, remarkably, Henry Marriage's £4 condition of 1868 was still being more or less observed, on the basis of approximately 20 widows at 4s each. Inflation had steadily eroded the value of the vouchers and they were increased to £4 and then in 1960 to £10. Meat and coal were no longer distributed, vouchers were issued instead, allowing recipients to use them at the local butcher's and coal merchant's. There was no more mention of the necessitous poor; the list consisted solely of widows. Vouchers became exchangeable also at the local grocer's shop.

In 1989 the chairman of Woollard's Charity retired from that office. At 65 Henry Marriage decided to hand over the reins. The great significance of this event was that there had only been three chairmen of the trustees since the vestry handed over control in 1868, and every one had been a Henry Marriage! Sadly 1989 saw the breaking of the link between the Charity and the Marriage family.

Still the Charity's work continues. The other cottages along Main Road have all been sold and the assets are now entirely held in Charity Investments. Vouchers are still distributed at Christmas time. In 1993 their value was increased to £40 and now, in 2004, it stands at £80. Distribution of benefits now includes specific grants, e.g for purchase of school uniforms, transport costs for hospital visits, or other unforeseen expenses where the family budget has no possibility of stretching. Although Thomas Woollard's cottages no longer directly serve the needs of the poor of Broomfield the spirit of his bequest goes on and the cottages on Church Green stand as a reminder.

The churchyard fence lists had been updated from time to time. Woollards was still entered on Morant's list of 1735 but he simply showed the responsibility as 'the Parish'. The last fence list, written in 1843, recognized that by that date Woollards was being rented out for the benefit of the Poor of Broomfield and it was obviously felt that it's place on the list should be taken by another building which could afford the responsibility. Broomfield Lodge had been built since the previous list had been compiled and was the logical property to take its place. It was a coincidence that the owner of

Broomfield Lodge at that time, James Beadel, became responsible for this slot on the fence list, 300 years after Thomas Bedyll had occupied the same slot.

* * * * *

1570. The tenement sometime Thomas Beadles and now Widow Wallengers maketh from Thomas Fosters towards the west half a rodd. (In margin Widow Goody / Sargeant & Harris)

1678. The tenement of ye widow Goody and ye widow How maketh from John Boosey's towards the west by estimation half a rodd.

1687. The tenement of wid. Goody and wid. Howe maketh from Brownings westward half a rod.

1735. Woollards - the Parish - ½ a rod

1843. 18. Broomfield Lodge, now occupied by Mr James Beadel, maketh from no. 17 to the corner half a rod. Owner James Beadel.

20.

Ayletts.



Ayletts is at the north end of Broomfield, close to the boundary with Little Waltham. Now a residential home for the elderly, the present house was built in the 19th century for the Marriage family. Its origins, however, are very much older.

Professor Reaney, in his book "The Place names of Essex", identified the origins of Ayletts with the family of John Aylet of Broomfield who was mentioned in a tax list of 1381. This may well be so but there is an earlier reference to the name

in Broomfield, which Reaney may not have picked up. In 1324 Stephen Aylett was witness to a quitclaim between Sewall de Broomfield and Ranulf Chopyn of a tenement and land in Broomfield. In 1334 Stephen Aylett also witnessed another quitclaim between Sewell's son Gilbert and Ralph Chopyn. So the property may date back to a person of that name some 60 years before Reaney's date, no doubt of the same family.

It is tempting to speculate on the possibility of an even earlier origin for in 1308 or 1309 there was an agreement between William de Roothing, plaintiff, and Simon le Keu and his wife Anastasia, deforcients, involving a house with 50 acres of land and 3 acres of meadow in Broomfield and Little Waltham. This suggests that the house and land was close to the parish boundary with Little Waltham but beyond that there is no further clue. The presence of some meadow might mean that some of the land was close by the river so Butlers would also be a contender. There seems to be no early record of a grant of land to the Aylett family. Some of Ayletts land was copyhold of the manor of Broomfield Hall and so the court rolls of the manor would have given much valuable information. Alas the court rolls have been destroyed so that avenue of investigation is also closed.

There is no doubt that the present house bearing Ayletts name was built on the site of its predecessor. The Ordnance survey of 1872 and the earlier Tithe map of 1846 both testify to Ayletts being on that site and it can reasonably be claimed that some dwelling had been there since the 14th century when it first acquired its name. But between 1381 and 1569, when the first fence list was drawn up, is a gap of 189 years and there is no certainty as to who was living there then. Certainly by

1524 there were no Ayletts paying taxes in Broomfield but the person shown as the owner in 1570 was probably there in 1544 and his family may well have been there for long before him.

In 1570 the property was described as "sometime Ayletts and now Thomas Wollward". And just as the Smiths at How Tye were also known as Salmon and the Devenishes were also known as Collett, so the Wollwards at Ayletts were also known as Hayward, sometimes occurring as Wollward alias Hayward, sometimes Hayward alias Wollward and sometimes one or the other. They were Hayward in 1524 when John Hayward was a Broomfield taxpayer, and the tax list for 1544 shows no less than four Haywards, Julian, Thomas, James, and Katherine. In 1541 a Robert Hayward attended a meeting of the vestry and in 1561 James Hayward was paid for sawing some wood for the church. The 1544 Thomas could have been the Thomas Wollward of the 1570 fence list, or it could have been his father.

Thomas Wollward was in Broomfield, and most likely at Ayletts, in 1561 when he witnessed the last will and testament of Robert Osborne, the farmer at Broomfield Hall. Two years later he witnessed the will of John Smyth alias Salmon of How Tye (Parsonage Green). Clearly as farmers the three men had a common bond. Thomas failed to leave a will, or at least one has not been discovered. What little is known of him can be deduced from the parish registers. His daughter Mary was baptised in 1556 and Robert, Margaret and Bennet Wollward were baptised in 1560, 1561 and 1563 respectively.

Joan, the wife of Thomas Wollward died in 1563. She may have been the wife of our Thomas and she could have died as a result of the birth of Bennet. However, a Thomas Wollward was also buried in 1563, he was very likely our Thomas's father and Joan could therefore have been Thomas Snr's wife. I suspect that the line continued with Robert Wollward alias Hayward, born 1560, who had a son Thomas baptised in 1588, but thereafter a combination of lack of detail and the haphazard use of the aliases confuses matters. What is certain is that Widow Ann Hayward was paying rates in Broomfield in 1590 and she may have been the wife of the Thomas of the 1570 fence list. In any event by the early 1600s Ayletts was to have a new owner.

The Wollwards or Haywards were still living in Broomfield into and through most of the 17th century. The above mentioned Robert Wollward, baptised in 1560, married Mary - and had several sons, Thomas Hayward alias Wollward (1588), William (1590), Leonard (1592), John (1600) and Robert (1605). Leonard became the church sexton and he was still there in 1654 when he was paid eight shillings for thatching and daubing the church. He died in 1668 at the age of 76.

Leonard apart, the family didn't play a leading role in village affairs and they had left Ayletts long before Leonard died in 1668. There was a George Hayward on the 1636 tax list though curiously there is no George Hayward or Wollward in the parish register, but there were no Haywards or Wollwards on the 1671 Hearth Tax list. Ayletts had certainly gone from the Wollwards before 1616 for in that year William Badcocke died and left his house and lands called Ayletts in Broomfield to his wife Elizabeth for life and then to his son John, except for

Sparrow Hawk Field which he left to his second son Thomas.

The Badcocke ownership seems to have been a short one. He must have moved into Broomfield from outside for there is no mention of his baptism in the parish register, or of the baptism of his first two sons. There is a clue in a Quarter Sessions record of 1602 which makes mention of a William Badcock of Great Waltham, blacksmith. This must surely be he. The few Badcocke entries in the Broomfield register tell a sad story. On the 9th January 1616 William and Elizabeth Badcock's son William was baptised. On the 26th August of that same year the child was buried. In the following February another son Thomas "aged 5 or 6 years" died. Two years later John, the eldest son of William and Elizabeth Badcock, was buried. So William Badcock's dying wishes were in vain. Both his remaining sons died before they could inherit their father's property. Elizabeth Badcock then disappears from the records.

The name of Hugh Taylor was written in the margin of the 1570 fence list so he must have been at Ayletts before the list was rewritten in 1678. He was almost certainly at Ayletts in the 1650s for in 1654 he was among those present at a Vestry meeting. There is a Taylors Field in Broomfield, west of Priors and adjacent to Hollow Lane but it is nowhere near Ayletts and probably has no connection. Hugh wasn't a common Christian name and there was a Hugh Taylor who was curate at Chelmsford church in the 1530s and vicar of Woodham Ferrers in 1559. Broomfield's Taylor might just have been a descendant but this is mere speculation.

Hugh Taylor seems like so many others to have come

from outside Broomfield and he was still at Ayletts in 1662; the Hearth Tax return for that year shows that Hugh Taylor was taxed on four hearths. This meant that either Ayletts was a substantial house or Taylor owned or leased an additional property in the village. The 1570 fence list allocated Ayletts only half a rod of fence to maintain, about eight feet, which whilst not the smallest was no more than average; ten of the properties on the list had a longer bit to look after and only four had less.

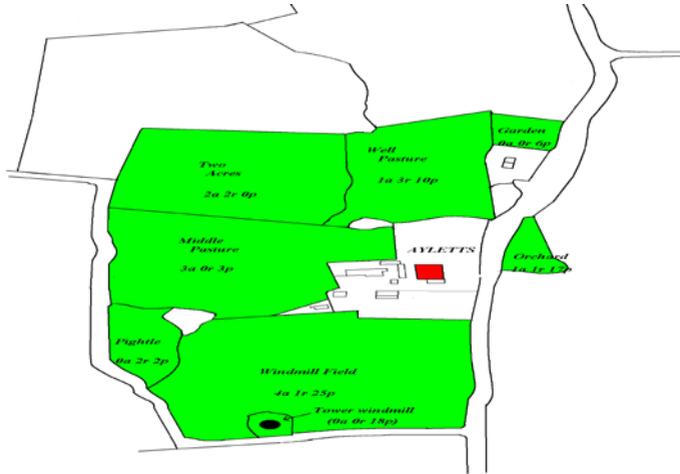
There is another clue. Thomas Poole of Partridge Green died in 1654 and in his will he left some property to his wife Joan for life. It wasn't named, though his other properties, Partridge Green, Lanzells, Hedge Hall and Howletts Hall, were. The property that he left to his wife was identified as then being in Broomfield in the occupation of Hugh Taylor! Now Joan Poole died in 1667 and eight years earlier Abraham Boosey made his will which showed that he was then the owner of Ayletts so the unnamed property couldn't have been Ayletts. Taylor must have been leasing another property as well so Ayletts might not have had four hearths.

In 1668 Hugh Taylor got a couple of mentions in the Quarter Sessions records. He was named as Hugh Taylor of Broomfield, glover, and he was accused of killing a cock pheasant valued at 20 shillings at Springfield without a licence. Found guilty he was fined, appropriately, 20 shillings. In that same year Sir Richard Evered and John Maples were indicted on a charge of assaulting Hugh Taylor. The outcome wasn't shown. It seems likely that Taylor was not averse to a little unauthorised taking of game and maybe Sir Richard was exacting his own form of punishment for poaching at Langleys.

Since it is known that Ayletts was part freehold and part copyhold it is reasonable to assume that several acres of land went with the house, giving the intriguing probability the Taylor was both farmer and glove maker with a bit of part time poaching thrown in!

By 1671 Taylor had left Ayletts and William Tanner was living there but before that date the property had changed hands. Ayletts had been bought by the acquisitive Abraham Boosey, of Well House and Crouch House, sometime before 1664 when he made his will. Boosey lived at the Well House and Ayletts was rented or leased out. Abraham left Ayletts to his wife Mary for life. Abraham was her second husband. Born Mary Bullen, she had married John Burr at Boreham in 1647.

The actual wording of Boosey's will was "All that messuage or tenement situate or being in Bromfield (sic) aforesaid commonly called or known by the name of Ayletts with the lands thereunto belonging now in the several tenures of Hugh Taylor and John Wealde or one of them or one of their assigns or undertenants. And all houses, outhouses, edifices, buildings, gardens, yards, backsides, lands, meadows, pastures, feedings and hereditaments ... unto my said loving wife and her assigns for and during the term of her natural life". After his wife's death Ayletts was to go to their daughter Mary Boosey "and the heirs of her body lawfully begotten". This reveals that Hugh Taylor was probably never the owner of Ayletts but a tenant of William Boosey.



Ayletts land as it was at the time of the tithe map of 1846. Had it always been thus?

Was Mary in fact Abraham's daughter or was she his step-daughter, his wife having been previously married to John Burr? In fact Abraham's wife had two daughters, both called Mary. Her first daughter was Mary Burr and her second, Mary Boosey, was baptised at Broomfield in 1655. She also had a son by her first marriage, named John after his father.

Abraham Boosey also provided in his will for the possibility that daughter Mary Boosey would have no heirs. He therefore added "concerning the said messuage or tenement called Ayletts and the lands as well copyhold as freehold thereunto belonging...after the decease of my said daughter Mary without heir of her body lawfully begotten as aforesaid I

give and devise the same to Henry Bullen second son of my brother-in-law Gregory Bullen and to the heirs and assigns of Henry Bullen for ever”.

Abraham Boosey's widow married for the third time, to John Allen, the vicar of Black Notley, and it was as Mary Allen that she was shown as the owner on the 1678 and 1687 fence lists although like her second husband she didn't live there. In 1678 William Tanner was living there but by 1687 he had been replaced by John and Elizabeth Eads and their son John. John Eads was a tenant farmer but his tenure was short for he died in 1690 when his only son was still a minor. In his will he left his household goods to Elizabeth for her lifetime and then to their son.

The ownership of Ayletts followed the same path as the Well House. Mary Allen, formerly Burr and then Boosey, nee Bullen, died in 1698 and the next owner was her daughter, Mary Burr, who by then had married Thomas Marsh of Chelmsford. In her will Mary Allen left bequests of 50 shillings to her servant Mary Taylor and 40 shillings to the poor of Broomfield. The residual legatee of her will was her son John Burr, who was charged with looking after her “dear daughter Mary Boosey“. Now Mary Boosey would then have been over 40 years of age. Her father, in his will, had envisaged that she would have no children, so it seems that all was not well with poor Mary.

Mrs Marsh was still shown as the owner of Ayletts on Morant's list of 1735, and she was probably followed at Ayletts by the Marriage family who by the 1700s were already well established in Broomfield, at Broomfield Hall and Partridge Green. Mrs Marsh had also inherited the Well House and that

too passed to the Marriage family. It seems very likely that Ayletts had been lived in by tenants throughout this period. The first positive record of the Marriages' connection with Ayletts came when Susannah Marriage died there in 1779 but it is likely that the family had acquired it in about 1768. Very many years later, when Henry Marriage died there in 1938, his obituary noted that the family had owned Ayletts for 170 years.

.

In 1721 William Marriage had married Ruth Woodward. They lived at Partridge Green and a daughter, Ruth, was born in 1722 and a son, also William, was born in 1725. William Jnr married Susannah and it seems that they lived first at Great Leighs and then at Springfield where William was a miller. William died in 1774, still described as "of Springfield" although by then he had in all probability bought Ayletts and it was his widow, Susannah, who died at Ayletts three years later. In his will William made no mention of Ayletts though he did mention Croxton's mill, leaving the lease of that property to his son Joseph.

The Marriage family had long been associated with milling and Ayletts was to be associated with the mill at Croxton's. Joseph may have at some time lived at Ayletts, he certainly owned it, and when he died in 1807 his will mentioned the windmill at Ayletts that "my son William hath lately erected at his own expense". William was then living at Ayletts and Joseph took this up in his will. He left Ayletts and its 14 acres of land, then in the occupation of William, to his eldest son Joseph, and if Joseph required William to leave then he was to pay his brother the sum of £800. The will specifically mentioned that Ayletts was copyhold (of the manor of

Broomfield Hall).

In his will, Joseph also left Croxton's, then being worked by William, to Joseph, adding that Joseph could rent it to another son, John, together with Ayletts, for £55 per annum. The windmill referred to in the will was a tower mill for grinding corn and it was still working in 1880 when Isaac Mead worked there as a young man; he tells of it in his book "Life Story of an Essex Lad". Apparently it was demolished shortly afterwards and no photograph of it seems to have survived.

The outcome of Joseph's will was that John went to live at Ayletts. However, it was with the descendants of his brother William, who died in 1824 at the age of 47, that the story of Ayletts continued. William and his wife Mary had a daughter, Maria, and twin sons, William and Henry. When the final churchyard fence list was drawn up in 1843 Ayletts was shown as being owned and occupied by W & H Marriage. The Tithe map and award of 1846 gives the same information. W & H were the twins William and Henry, the grandsons of Joseph and Mary, the sons of William and Mary, and the founders of the milling business that continues to this day. The 1843 fence list doesn't say who was actually living at Ayletts. In fact it was Henry Marriage who moved into Ayletts in that very year, though probably not until after the fence list was written up, for his lease of his previous dwelling didn't expire until the 29th September 1843.

Henry Marriage was born in 1807 and in 1830 he married Susannah Smith, the daughter of fellow Quakers Joseph

and Sarah Smith of Great Bardfield. The marriage took place at the Friends Meeting House in Great Bardfield and the newly-weds first took up residence at Scravels in Broomfield which Henry leased from Thomas Christy. Four of their children were born at Scravels and a fifth was on the way when the lease of Scravels expired at Michaelmas 1843. And so they moved to Ayletts where their daughter Isabella was born on the 30th October of that year.

The 1851 census shows that Henry, then aged 43, described himself as a meal merchant and farmer. He employed 25 men and worked 135 acres of land. His wife Susannah was then 40 and their five children were all at home - Jane (18), Charlotte (17), Henry (15), Mary (11) and Isabella (7). There were two servants in the household. Henry died at Ayletts on

the 24th July 1872, at the age of 64. He was succeeded at Ayletts by his son, Henry Marriage II.

Henry Marriage II was a great enthusiast - for coursing (at one time greyhounds were kept at Ayletts), horse breeding, growing grapes (he had special grape houses built at Ayletts with coal fired heating), planting fruit trees, sitting as a County Councillor, and numerous other activities. He became the senior member of the family business of W & H Marriage & Son and he was a Justice of the Peace.



**Henry II's son Eustace with the greyhounds at Ayletts
c1900**

Henry was one of the original County Councillors when the Essex County Council was formed in 1888, sitting for the Writtle division, and he was still a member at the time of his death. In 1887 he, together with fellow Broomfield resident William Ward Duffield of Brownings (both men had Chelmsford interests), opposed the petition for Chelmsford to become a Borough with mayor and corporation - they were defeated. Henry was chairman of the Corn Exchange Company and a director of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation. He was also the Lord of the Manor of Heyrons in High Easter.

Henry Marriage II married Mary Sophia Clayton and at first they lived at the Parsonage in Broomfield where their first two children, Henry III and Wilfred, were born. After his parents death Henry II moved into Ayletts and the 1881 census shows him as a miller and farmer with 2,170 acres of land. This enormous increase over the amount shown against his father on the 1851 census would have encompassed several other farms, mainly at Chignal and Good Easter, which had been acquired by the family.

Henry was shown on the census as employing 3 clerks, 4 foremen, 20 millers, 3 blacksmiths, 7 carpenters, 7 carmen, 2 coal porters, 4 bailiffs and 135 farm labourers. All of which gives some idea of the scope of the family business at that date. His household had expanded. In addition to his eldest son, Henry III, there was Wilfred, Mary Ellen, Susannah, Constance, Eustace, Montagu William, and Llewellyn. There was also a cook and a housemaid.

By 1901 Henry Marriage II was living at Ayletts with his wife and two of their children, Mary Ellen (29) and Llewellyn (21), both still unmarried. The servants had increased to a cook and two housemaids. The family's coachman and his wife lived nearby. Henry died on the 27th May 1912 at Southend, where he was staying, as his obituary put it, for the benefit of his health. An interesting choice of health resort. He was 77, and he was succeeded at Ayletts by his son, Henry Marriage III



Henry Marriage's carriage at the front of Ayletts.

Jacob Mizen was Henry's coachman and he and his wife

Ann lived in a small cottage near to Ayletts. It has been suggested that the above photograph dates from c1915; if this is so then Jacob, seated at the reins, would have been around 75 when it was taken. The children in the photograph are Maxwell and Philip Beale, grandsons of Henry Marriage II.

Henry Marriage III was educated at Epping and Scarborough and he entered the family milling business upon leaving school. He became a partner in the firm and continued farming on the same scale as his father, with some 2,000 acres of land mainly in Chignal and Good Easter. Like his father he was a man of many interests. A member of the Essex Farmers Union, he became chairman of directors of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation, chairman of the directors of the Chelmsford Corn Exchange Co. Ltd., and a keen supporter of the Essex Hunt.

Henry found time to follow his love of cricket, becoming a life member of both the Essex and Middlesex county clubs. He was a founder member of Broomfield Cricket Club when it was re-formed in 1895 and was captain for its first three years. Not a notable player, he top scored against Great Waltham in 1897. Great Waltham had made 110 and Broomfield were all out for 31, of which Henry made 12! He did it again in 1907 when Broomfield were again thrashed, this time by Great Baddow who made 191 for 4 wickets. In reply Broomfield were dismissed for 57, of which Henry made 22.

Henry had yet more interests. Politically he was a Conservative. He was one of the original members of the

Chelmsford Conservative Club. A former treasurer of the club, he was its president at the time of his death. He was a keen student of the history of Essex and, as might be expected, it's agricultural development, owning a fine collection of maps and books dealing with the county. His obituary noted that he was of a quiet and genial disposition a shrewd businessman, and a well-known figure at his firm's stand in the Chelmsford Corn Exchange.

Although Queen Victoria was long gone Henry Marriage III was known for the elegant Victorian regime he maintained at Ayletts until his death in 1938. Every year he went to Harrogate for his holiday and he always took with him his silver tea-strainer because the hotel did not provide such a refinement! Henry was a bachelor and he lived at Ayletts with his sister Nellie who remained a spinster. The circumstances of his death on Tuesday the 6th December 1938 were told in the Essex Chronicle on the following Friday:

Henry and Nellie "had luncheon as usual on Tuesday and Miss Marriage left her brother shortly after two o'clock whilst his horse was being saddled for his customary visit to Brick Barns Farm, Chignal, one of the properties he owned. Mr Marriage apparently went into the hall to get his hat when he must have collapsed, for a few moments later the parlourmaid found him lying on the floor of the hall. A doctor was summoned but he could only pronounce life extinct and that death must have been instantaneous".

What of the house and land that Henry Marriage had inherited? If there were any old maps of the Ayletts estate they do not seem to have survived. The earliest indications of the

house and the land that went with it, other than the mention of its 14 acres in the will of Joseph Marriage, are on the 1846 Tithe map and its associated schedule. The land at that dated amounted to a little over 15 acres and since the surrounding fields were a part of other established farms it is possible that this was indeed its original size.

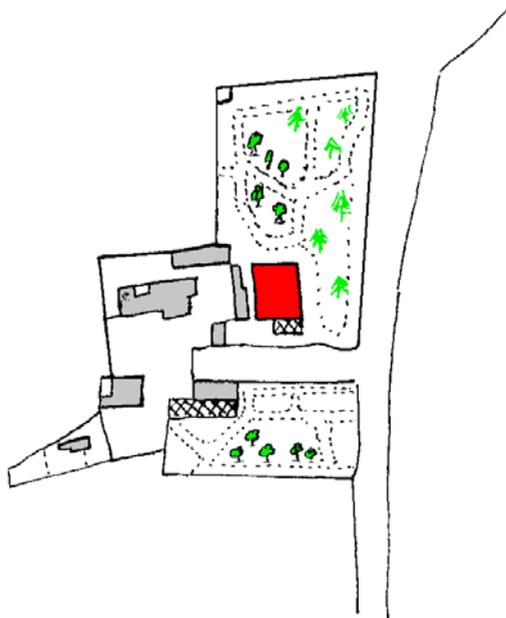
The estate in 1846 consisted of:

Windmill Field	4a	1r	25p
Windmill	0	0	18
House and garden	1	1	17
Pightle	0	2	2
Middle Pasture	3	0	3
Well Pasture	1	3	10
2 Acres	2	2	0
Garden	0	0	6
Orchard	1	1	17
Total	15a	0r	18p

The orchard was opposite the house, on the other side of the road. The area is still recognizable today though the present trees are likely to have developed from native scrub rather than fruit trees. The garden, as distinct from the garden surrounding the house, was a small area to the north of, and detached from, the house. It was partly in Broomfield and partly in Little Waltham.

As to the house, there seems little difference between the drawing in plan on the 1846 tithe map and the building as it was on the 1875 Ordnance survey, suggesting that the old house had

either have been replaced by 1846 or was replaced after 1875. Neither drawing shows the bays that are now a prominent feature of the front of the house.



Plan of Ayletts in 1875, showing the house, the formal gardens and the several outbuildings.



The Marriage initials on the facade of Ayletts

After Henry III's death Nellie continued to live at Ayletts for a while. It remained in the family's hands for a little longer before being sold to Mr & Mrs Newcombe. They carried out much renovation but plans to turn it into a country house hotel came to nothing, and for a while Mrs Newcombe ran a small plant nursery in the old garden. Most of the Ayletts lands became divorced from the house. The fields behind and to the south are now Gernon Close, Warren Close, and Mandeville Way named after Broomfield's Norman lords of the manor, appropriately so for they were once manorial land. The house itself was rebuilt in Victorian times and has been adapted internally to serve its present purpose as a residential home for the elderly. But there is still visible a reminder of its past, the W H M monogram of William and Henry Marriage on the facade.

* * * * *

1570. The tenement sometime Ayletts and now Thomas Wollward maketh from Widow Wallengers towards the north halfe a rodd.

1678. The tenement of Mrs Allen now in the occupation of William Tanner known by the name of Ayletts house maketh from ye Widow Goody's toward ye north half a rodd

1687. The tenement of Mrs Allen's in the occupation of John Eads, maketh from the widows, north, half a rod.

1735. Ayletts - Mrs Marsh - ½ a rod.

1843. 19. Ayletts, now occupied by Mr Henry Marriage, maketh from no. 18, towards the north, half a rod. Owners W & H Marriage.