

25.

Wheelers



This photograph of David Smith, author and broadcaster, planting the Coronation Oak on Church Green in 1953, gives a rare glimpse of Wheelers in the background.

The pair of cottages along Main Road and opposite Church Green, collectively known as Wheelers, are still (in 2005) well within living memory as the above photograph illustrates. And yet in the not too distant future they will have passed beyond recall, for a few years after the photo was taken

they were demolished. For the present the site is known, and the property appears on all five fence lists so several of the owners and/or occupiers are known. And yet, of all the properties on the fence lists none have more puzzling aspects than Wheelers.

Wheelers no doubt got its name from an early owner. Professor Reaney associated it with the family of Walter Wheeler, mentioned in a conveyance of 1360, but there were Wheelers in Broomfield before that. Richard le Wheeler was a witness to inquisitions made on the value of Broomfield church and the state of repair of its ornaments in the period 1288 to 1291. There was a Walter le Wheler on the 1319 tax list; he could have been Richard's son. In 1349 Walter le Wylere conveyed a piece of land called Shortcroft in the manor of Patching Hall to Lawrence de Pacchyng. This could have been the same Walter le Wheeler. And in 1369 Robert Wheeler of Broomfield and Walter Wheeler were plaintiffs in a fine relating to houses and land in Little Waltham.

In 1524 a Robert Wheeler appeared on the Broomfield lay subsidy return for that year. In 1539 Thomas Wheeler of Broomfield married Agnes Cornell at Chelmsford. Clearly the name had been present in Broomfield for a very long time and was still there not so very long before the fence list was ratified in 1570. But by 1570 they had gone, or at least they were no longer in occupation of any of the properties on that fence list.

In 1570 the property was described as "the tenement sometimes Wheelers and now John Pooles", confirming that the Wheelers had by then gone. At that time John Poole was living and farming at Partridge Green, so presumably Wheelers

was another acquisition by the family, who at various times owned or leased several Broomfield properties. There is no obvious connection with Partridge Green, but the Pooles were at different times associated with Biglands (Brooklands and the Limes) and Broomfield Mill, both well removed from Partridge Green. John Poole also farmed Broomfield Hall on a lease from Lord Rich. He had married Mary Bridge in 1565, and they had three sons, Thomas, Lawrence and Richard. Richard was born in 1575 but he died in the same year. John Poole died in 1609. It isn't clear as to whether he owned or leased Wheelers for at some time in the 1600s the property was owned by Sir William Luckyn, Bt.

A marginal note on the 1570 fence list gives Abraham Boosey as a subsequent owner and this is quite logical. Abraham lived next door, at the Well House, and by 1664 he had also purchased Crouch House (the Kings Arms) which stood opposite Wheelers. This made a nice block of property. Abraham also owned Ayletts, a little further along Main Road towards Braintree. He would have leased out Wheelers and another marginal note on the 1570 list gives the name Bright as the occupant responsible for Wheelers share of the churchyard fence. Bright could have been Boosey's tenant or the tenant of a subsequent owner, or both.

Abraham Boosey made his will in 1664 and in it he mentioned Wheelers. It reads:

'Then I give and devise all that my messuage or tenement with the appurtenances situate lying and being in Broomfield aforesaid called or known by the name of Wheelers and which I lately bought and purchased to me and my heirs of

Sir William Lukin, Baronett, and all the lands tenements and hereditaments hereunto belonging with the appurtenances unto John Burr, son of my loving wife Mary by her late husband John Burr deceased. To have and to hold the said messuage or tenement, lands and premises last mentioned to the said John Burr his heirs and assignes for ever‘.

It may have been from the Poole family that Sir William Luckyn bought Wheelers. Sir William Luckyn came to live at Little Waltham Hall in 1625, probably from Messing where members of the family were lords of the manor of Messing Hall. He also obtained the lordship of Little Waltham. In 1629 or thereabouts he was created a baronet. The likelihood is that he bought Wheelers as an investment, which he then leased out, perhaps in the 1630s or 40s. As a baronet, sheriff of Essex and Justice of the Peace, his name appeared regularly in the assize and quarter sessions records in the 1600s, and at some time before 1664 he sold Wheelers to Abraham Boosey.

The Bright mentioned in the marginal note on the 1570 fence must refer to a period before 1678 when the next fence list was drawn up. It was written after Abraham Boosey's name had been entered and so it is likely that the mysterious Mr Bright was a leaseholder or tenant of the owner.

John Burr succeeded to Wheelers on the death of his stepfather and he was shown as the owner on both the 1678 and 1687 fence lists. Mr Gregory Bullen was shown as the occupant. In 1735 Morant gave Mrs Marsh as the owner - he also showed her as owner of the Well House and Ayletts. Clearly the three properties were connected with the will of Abraham Boosey who had owned all three. Boosey's wife

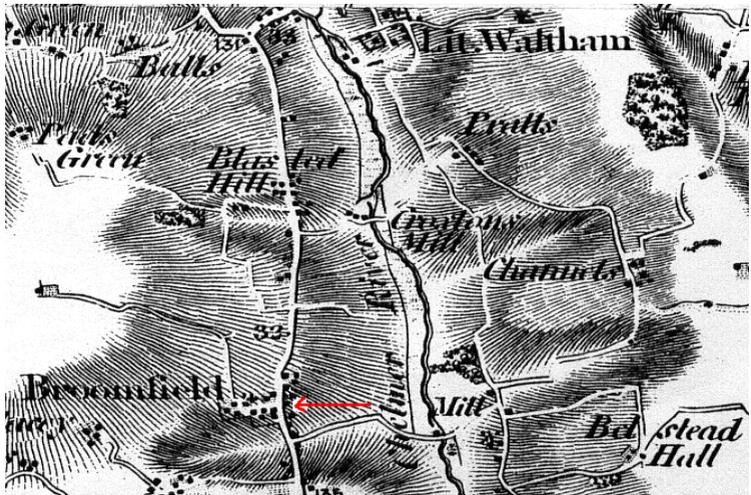
Mary (née Bullen) had married three times. Her first marriage was to John Burr, son of Broomfield's vicar, Thomas Burr. They had a son, John, to whom, as we have seen, Abraham Boosey left Wheelers.

Mary's second marriage was to Abraham Boosey and they had a daughter Mary who was to inherit the Well House which, if she had no heirs was to go to Gregory Bullen, the son of Abraham's wife's brother. John Burr died at the Well House in 1710 and in his will he left all his estate and chattels jointly to his sister Mary, who had married a Mr Marsh, and his sister's daughter, also Mary Marsh. John also enjoined them to take care of his sister Mary Boosey. In his will he left instructions that he be buried in Broomfield churchyard between the wall and his father's grave, and he left £10 to be distributed amongst the poor of Broomfield, a remarkably generous gesture for 1710.

There is a curious note in the calendar of Quarter Sessions records for 1664. Gregory Bullen was summoned for having converted a farmhouse to a cottage in Broomfield without laying four acres to it. 1664 was the year of Abraham Boosey's will and in it he made it clear that he was then occupying the Well House. Bullen was living at Wheelers in 1678 and could have been leasing it from much earlier. Could this curious case have referred to Wheelers? If so, as we shall see, he would have been hard pressed to lay four acres to Wheelers which had very little land.

By 1678 the property was shown as being occupied by Gregory Bullen. As has been shown, the owner John Burr was

the son of Abraham's widow Mary by her first husband, also a John Burr. And Gregory Bullen would have been her nephew; she was Mary Bullen before her marriage to John Burr. Nine years later Wheelers was still in the ownership of John Burr. The fence list of that year doesn't mention Gregory Bullen though he was still alive; he died in 1708 at the Well House. It looks as though Gregory had moved next door, possibly before 1691 because in that year the Parish register records that John Brown, farmer at Wheelers, was buried.



The first Ordnance Survey (above) was published in 1805. Houses are shown as black dots and the black dot opposite Church Green (arrowed) may be the earliest illustration of Wheelers!

Before moving on to the next owner there are a couple of oddities to be cleared up. In 1612 John Bonner of Writtle,

yeoman, was summoned to the Quarter Sessions to answer the charge that “he had taken into his barne called the Cocke in Broomfield Edward Cawardine alias Kemp, a shoemaker, and there hath placed him, and also opened a window into the Vicarage yard where there was none before. He was found guilty and ordered to stop up the window.

For the barn to abut the Vicarage yard it must have been either on the north side of the Vicarage, which is highly unlikely, or on the south side which was Wheelers. At the front of the Vicarage, on its west side, was the Main Road. At the rear of the Vicarage, the east side, was more of the vicar’s land. Butlers land was to the north of the Vicarage and John Bonner had nothing to do with Butlers. The tithe map, although drawn up many years later, shows that the vicarage yard would have been on the south side of the property as was the vicarage itself. All of which points to the ‘barne called The Cocke’ being on or very close to Wheelers land. In fact there was a small building between the Vicarage and Wheelers, as will shortly be shown.

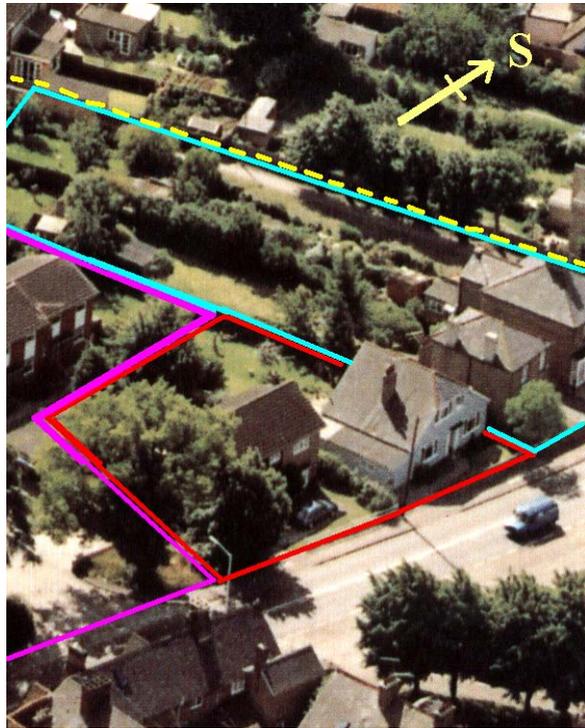
The Bonner family, although John Bonner was described as of Writtle, had long been in Broomfield. A John Bonner appeared on a Broomfield tax list in 1544 when he was a substantial taxpayer, and a John Bonner was renting the Church Acre, a parcel of land near Scravels belonging to a church charity, from 1541 to 1573. This could have been father and son. A John Bonner died in 1553 and John Bonner, son of John Bonner, died in 1574. In 1577 the parish register recorded the burial of John Bonner the elder of Writtle.

It looks as though there were three generation of John

Bonner. The Writtle connection is because they were farmers at Beaumont Otes, which was then in a detached part of Writtle and just over the border from Broomfield. The John Bonner of the 1544 tax list had a son, John, baptised in 1553 and it may have been the infant who died in that year. John the elder died in 1577, three years after his son. The third generation of John Bonners was the one who owned the barn called The Cock and he died in 1628. But why was the barn known as The Cock? Had it been a beerhouse? At all events it was squeezed in between the Vicarage and Wheelers.

In 1687 John Brown was apparently farming Wheelers, or at least he was a farmer living at Wheelers. He wasn't the owner, this was John Burr. The parish register recorded the burial of John Brown, farmer, of Wheelers, in 1691. This would be straightforward but for the fact that it suggests that Wheelers was a farm, but where was the land?

Wheelers was sandwiched between the Vicarage and The Cock to the north and the Well House to the south. The Vicarage had been there since 1300 when the Bishop of London established Broomfield's first vicar (there had previously been rectors, living at the Parsonage) and provided him with a residence and 7 acres of Glebe land adjoining it. The vicar's land abutted Wheelers on both the north and east sides. On the west side of Wheelers was the Main Road, and immediately to the south was the Well House whose land reached quite close to Wheelers house.



- **Whealers land c1900**
- **Vicarage land**
- **Well House or Wheelers?**
- - -** **Right of way from Main Road to Glebe land**

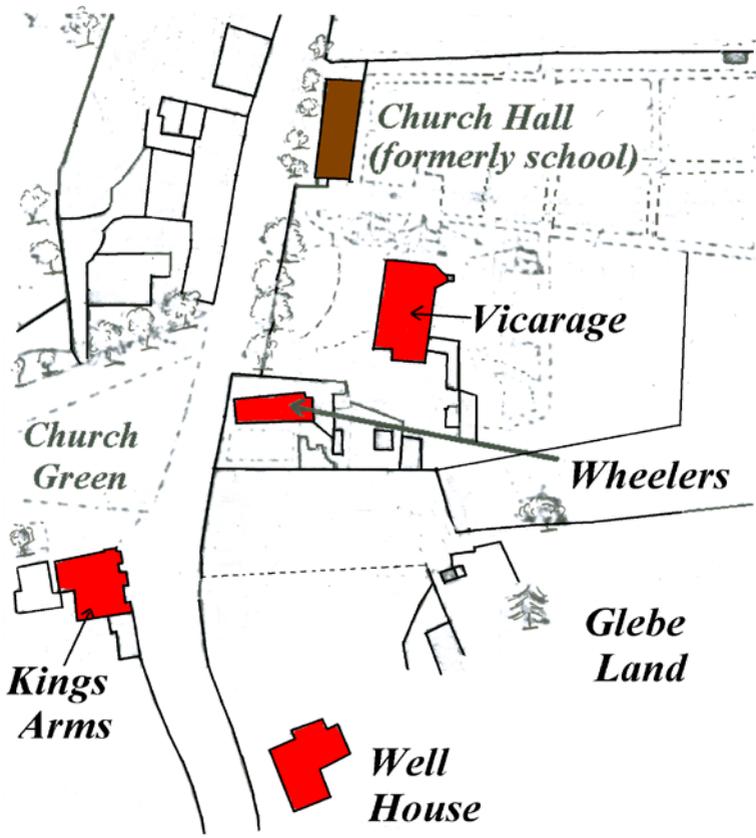
It seems that the land that went with Wheelers could never have been substantial. The piece to the south might once have belonged to Wheelers and later to the Well House..

At the time of the tithe map in 1846 Wheelers, then

converted into two cottages, occupied less than $\frac{1}{4}$ acre of land. There seems to be no direction in which it could ever have occupied enough land to form a farm! It is of course possible, even probable, that the vicar had rented out his glebe land to the occupant of Wheelers, this would have given him 7 acres to work. It would also have given access to fields that lay beyond the glebe land. And it was not uncommon for farms to have detached fields. The explanation may be here somewhere.

John Burr had left Wheelers to his sister Mary Marsh and his niece, also Mary Marsh. In 1735 Morant recorded it as belonging to Mrs Marsh and from her it passed as expected to her daughter Mary, by then Mrs brown. She sold it to John Olmius, Member of Parliament for Colchester, High Sheriff of Essex, and Lord of the Manor of Broomfield Hall. This was the situation when Edmund Tyrwhitt arrived in Broomfield.

Rev Tyrwhitt was appointed vicar of Broomfield in 1756. His tithe account book has survived and in it he recorded that in that year he received the sum of 3/- from Joseph Gage for Wheelers. This payment was repeated in the following years and then in 1759 he received £2 rent from Joseph Gage for Wheelers. Was this rent due because the vicar now owned Wheelers or was it a tithe charge? It seems he owned the property because on the 19th December 1759 the vicar noted the receipt of £80 from John Mascal "for the purchase of the house called Wheelers".



This sketch, based loosely on the tithe map of 1846, shows how Wheelers was sandwiched between the Vicarage and the Well House, with the Main Road on one side and the vicar's glebe on the other. The Well House property apparently stretched almost to Wheelers house.

In 1759 John Mascall was the farmer at Broomfield Hall,

which he leased from John Olmius. The Mascalls were a Quaker family who also farmed at Woodham Walter and Great Baddow. By 1775 John Mascall was no longer at Broomfield Hall; he then farmed Wood House, just over the border in Little Waltham, until 1794 so he was still in the area and may still have owned Wheelers.

There is now a gap until the census of 1841. However, it will be recalled that Joseph Gage had been the occupant of Wheelers when the Rev Tyrwhitt had been vicar of Broomfield. Neither Tyrwhitt nor John Mascall would have lived there and it is possible that the Gage family continued as occupants. In 1801 a William Gage was occupant of a cottage and shop in Broomfield, the record doesn't state where, and from 1805 to 1815 the property was occupied by John Gage, very likely William's son.

The 1841 census showed that in that year the occupants of Wheelers were Daniel Copeman and his wife Ann, (both aged 40), their sons William (15) and Daniel (5) and their daughter Deborah (2). Ages of adults on the 1841 census were to the nearest 5 years. Two years later the final fence list, of 1843, gave the owner of Wheelers as Mrs Christopher Day and the occupants as 'Copeman etc'. It is likely that the Day family had bought Wheelers some time before that date.

By 1851 the Day family had moved into Wheelers. In that year Thomas B Day, baker and assistant overseer, was shown as head of the household. So was Wheelers then a baker's shop, perhaps the very shop mentioned as being occupied by the Gage family forty years earlier? Thomas was aged 34. Living with him were his sisters Sarah aged 25, and

Adelaide aged 21, and a brother Alexander aged 17.

Ten years later Thomas Day was still there, now described as a rate and rent collector, living with only his sister Sarah. Perhaps the bakery hadn't prospered. It seems that the Day family came to Broomfield from Great Baddow and this ties in with Mrs Christopher Day of the 1843 fence list, for in the early part of the 19th century Christopher Day was a farmer at Great Baddow and Sandon.

In 1871 Thomas Day was still at Wheelers but now he was described as a house agent. His sister Sarah, still unmarried, was still living with him. Ten years on, and in 1881 Thomas was still there and still a house agent but now living with another sister, Caroline, a single lady of independent means. #

By 1891 things had changed. Sarah was back, now 65 and still single. Thomas had gone, and other members of the Day family had joined Sarah and her elder sister Caroline. Caroline Day, aged 75, was shown as head of the household. Also there was her brother Christopher aged 72, a bachelor and retired clothier, and Adelaide, who had been living there back in 1851.

Caroline Day died in 1898 at the age of 84. In 1901 there were just three spinster ladies living at Wheelers; Sarah, Adelaide, and yet another sister, Cordelia. All were shown as being of independent means. In 1909 Adelaide Day was at Wheelers, she died in the following year at the age of 81. Six years later, in 1915 Cordelia Day was shown as the sole occupant. Four years later, the Days had gone; George Bates

was living there as a tenant with his wife Florence. Apparently it was then owned by Christopher Andrews.

Bates was living at Wheelers through the 1920s and by 1925 Richard and Alice Holmes had moved into the adjoining cottage. The story now moves on to 1931 when Wheelers was up for sale. The sale catalogue shows that it was then two “very compact, very well placed dwelling houses known as Wheelers with yards and outbuildings, adjoining the Vicarage, opposite Church Green, let to Messrs Holmes and Bates.” The cottages were a mixture of brick, rough-cast, lath and plaster, and timber.

Cottage number 1 had on the ground floor a front sitting room measuring 16’4” by 15’6” with a fitted range, a scullery with a sink and tap, and a store cupboard. Upstairs there were two bedrooms, one measuring 15’6” by 15’2” with a hanging cupboard, and one measuring 12’ by 8’9” with a fitted stove. Outside was a paved yard with a brick built WC with a corrugated roof, a coal store and a shed. It was then let to Richard Holmes at a rent of ten shillings a week.

Cottage number 2 had a sitting room 12’3” by 12’1” with a stove, a living room 15’7” by 10’9” with a range and a cupboard, and a scullery with a sink, tap, oven stove and a copper. Upstairs were three bedrooms, two with stoves. Outside was a yard and garden, a WC and store sheds. The occupant, George Bates, also paid a rent of ten shillings a week.

By 1934 Richard and Alice Holmes, who had been there at least since 1925, had gone and Walter Hagger had taken their

place. George Bates was still there. By 1939 Frederick and Doris Simpson were living at Wheelers. After World War II the Simpson family continued at Wheelers. It was still two cottages with a Mrs Webster living in the second cottage, and so it continued until the property was sold and the cottages demolished.

The land that went with Wheelers had been reduced after the death of the Day sisters and in 1922 another house, Hollybush, was built on the south side of the cottages, between Wheelers and the Well House. The deeds of the new building provided that it should have a right of way to the well which was then situated in the garden of Wheelers.

Wheelers has been replaced with a modern detached house, equipped with the modern conveniences which the old building must have lacked. No more scullery with its copper, its outside coal store and WC. This, now number 270 Main Road, together with the Rutherfords development to its north and Hollybush on its south side, makes a very different picture to the one at the beginning of this chapter. Taken only a little over 50 years ago, the 1953 photograph seems from another age.



Looking across Church Green from where the 1953 photograph was taken. Wheelers is no more.



And the Coronation Oak is no longer the thin sapling of 1953.

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1570. The tenement sometime Wheelers and now John Pooles maketh from William Bowsses towards the north halfe a rodd. (In left margin Abraham Boosey, and Bright).

1678. The tenement sometime Sir Will. Lucking, called Wheelers now Mr Burrs in ye occupation of Mr Gregory Bullen maketh from John Booseys towards ye north half a rodd.

1687. The tenement called Wheelers now Jno. Burrs maketh from John Booseys northwards half a rod.

1735. Wheelers - Mrs Marsh - ½ a rod.

1843. 17. Wheelers, occupied by Copeman, maketh from no. 16 half a rod. Owner Mrs Christ. Day.

26.

The Parsonage



The origins of the Parsonage must go back to the earliest years of the church in Broomfield when a rectory was built for the incumbent. It was around the year 1150 when the lord of the manor, Walter de Mandeville, granted the church to the Priory of the Holy Trinity in London, an order of Austin canons. The Bishop of London confirmed the grant in 1151. In 1190 the Prior and Convent of Holy Trinity granted the church for life to Master Amicius, a well connected man for his sister Mirabila was the widow of Walter de Mandeville, and Amicius is the first recorded rector of Broomfield.

Amicius would have been succeeded at the rectory by Walter de London around 1241 and in addition to the church he also had the benefit of the village's St. Leonard's Fair. A deed of conveyance, or fine, dated 1247-48, between William de Middleton and Ralph le Champneys involved a carucate (120 acres?) of land in Broomfield and in it was noted that Walter de London, parson of Broomfield, "puts in his claim". By 1261 Thomas de Wymondham had replaced de London and in that year he was involved in the conveyance of 23 acres of land in Broomfield; the other party, Robert le Burser, renouncing his rights to the land. This could well have been the 23 acres of church land that became known as John Gynes Charity. Another conveyance between de Wymondham and Thomas Sargeant of Broomfield confirmed the ownership of 8 acres of land to the church; this became the Glebe land and is where Glebe Crescent now stands. de Wymondham was also confirmed in the benefit of St Leonard's fair.

In 1279 the next rector, Adam de Stretton, was imprisoned at London, though it isn't known why. After him, in 1283, came William de Wydihulle. William resisted the claims of Thomas de Mandeville, then the lord of the manor, to the income from St Leonard's fair, and he was still the rector when the canons of the Priory of Holy Trinity became concerned that they were getting very little benefit from the church. They complained to Richard Gravesend, Bishop of London, who ordered an enquiry. The enquiry took several years and the result was that the church was handed back to the Priory. At the same time the Bishop established a vicarage at Broomfield and reserved to himself the choice of vicar from a list to be submitted by the Prior and Convent when a vacancy occurred. However, this contravened the Statute of Mortmain and the

patronage went to the Crown.

The outcome of all this was that from 1303 Broomfield had a vicarage and a new vicar, Thomas de Wamberge. The rectory became known as the lay rectory. Another outcome of the grand enquiry was the decision that the lands of the lay rectory should yield the incumbent an annual income of 15/4d. From now on, until the reign of Henry VIII, the Priory of the Holy Trinity would own the Parsonage, deriving income from its lease, and either the Priory or the leaseholder would pay the vicar 15/4d a year.

Henry VIII's rift with the Church of Rome, his suppression of the religious houses and appropriation of their lands, brought the Parsonage and its lands to the King's gift. In 1547, when the occupant was John Courtman, Henry granted the Parsonage to William Harris for the sum of £271.1.7d. With the Parsonage and its land went the impropriate tithes. Eight years later it changed hands again. It was purchased by Richard, Lord Rich, who had also bought up the manors of Broomfield Hall and Patching Hall. Lord Rich no doubt bought it as an investment and a few years later he found a use for it. He made the Parsonage part of the endowment of his new free school and almshouses at Felsted.

On the 1st March 1565 Lord Rich leased the Parsonage to Robert Eton of Springfield. Eton was "Servant of the Pantry of our Sovereign Lady the Queen" (Elizabeth I). The lease was for 50 years at an annual rent of £18.6.10½ plus two quarters and two bushels of red or grey wheat and five bushels of barley malt. The lease was to start at Michaelmas 1565. The lessee was also required by covenant to pay to the vicar of

Broomfield a pension or annuity of 15/4d "of ancient time appointed for his better relief and advancement of living". No allowance had been made for inflation since 1289! Eton was also expected as lessee to keep the chancel of the church in good repair, an item which was quickly put to the test for in 1566 a presentment was made to the Archdeacon's Court against Mr Eton "because the chapel is not repaired".

Lord Rich died on the 12th June 1567 and was buried in Felsted church. There were four more generations of Rich but through a series of premature deaths the male line came to an end in 1673. The Rich inheritance was divided into six parts and shared amongst the co-heirs through the female line. The patronage of the Felsted Foundation passed to the Finch family who were Earls of Nottingham (from 1729 they were also Earls of Winchilsea). The Parsonage went with the Felsted Foundation and for nearly 400 years the house would be associated with Felsted School.

Robert Eton held the lease of the Parsonage from 1565 until his death in 1571. He had married Joan Sa(l)mon at Chelmsford in 1559. A wealthy man with Royal connections, his main seat was at Springfield Hall but he also held the lease of Springfield Dukes and amongst his other property was an inn in Chelmsford called the Robin Hood. In his will he left the remainder of his lease of the Parsonage, 44 years, to his son Thomas, although the duration seems to have flouted the terms of the Felsted Foundation deeds which made 21 years the limit of a tenure. In any event, Thomas didn't continue the lease beyond 21 years because by 1586 the Parsonage had another lessee, John Pake, Gentleman.

John Pake also had Chelmsford connections. He owned the White Hart in the Back Lane (Tindal Street), and also The Heath, a "capital messuage with barns, stables, and malthouses" which stood next to the White Hart and which came to him through his wife Anne Marion (These were demolished in the major redevelopment of 1969-71). Like Robert Eton John Pake soon came to the attention of the Church Court, and for a similar reason. He was requested to repair the "decayed stools" in the chancel but he disputed the liability, claiming that the stools should be repaired by the vicar. Surprisingly, he won the day, for his claim was upheld by the Court. At about the same time he ran into trouble elsewhere, this time in the civil court. He was prosecuted for engrossing grain for resale; that is, he bought the grain and stored it for resale when the price was high enough. This activity, which ceased to be an offence from 1844, was deemed illegal because it had the anti-social effect of driving the price up.

In 1598 John Pake took out another lease for a further 21 years, and in 1606 he obtained a further lease to run for 21 years from 1615. Optimistically, as things turned out for he died probably at the end of 1608. His will was dated 12 October 1608 and probate was granted 18 January 1609. John Pake left a widow, Anne, three sons and four daughters. Anne was still at the Parsonage in 1620; she lived on until 1639. Their eldest son, also John, was already married when his father died and he too had a son called John who was baptised at Broomfield in 1600. John Pake III was still living in 1638 but by then the family had long left the Parsonage.

The first John Pake's second son, Anthony, went to live at Stock; he died in 1622 and was buried at Broomfield. The

third son, Thomas, was described as a "Russia merchant"; he married Jane Lovell at Broomfield in 1620 and he too was still living in 1638. Of the four daughters, Rebecca, Sarah, Rachel and Mary, Rachel's story is of most interest to Broomfield. Born at the Parsonage in 1590, she must have married at quite an early age because she was widowed before she was 23 by which time she had two children, William and Anne. Rachel married William Huntley, Gentleman, citizen and merchant of London, who died in 1613 and was buried at Broomfield where he is commemorated by a plaque on the south wall of the church.

Rachel Huntley was just 30 when she died and her will gives a most interesting insight into the clothes and other possessions of a wealthy woman of the early 17th century. To her mother she left her best taffeta gown and her wedding gloves, purse and knives, her two wedding smocks, 2 cutwork crosscloths and a cutwork neckcloth. To her sister Mary she left her wedding petticoat of crimson taffeta. Her servant Annabel Chansey received a stitched taffeta gown and 2 petticoats and all Rachel's ordinary wearing linen. Mrs Burr (the vicar's wife) received a 'carsey' nightgown and 2 fine calico aprons and her daughter, Rachel Burr, was given a neckcloth. Good wife Smyth of Broomfield was left a holland apron, and Robert Sanders received a fine holland night cap bordered with gold and black silk. To Mrs Ell went Rachel's old gown and petticoat, while Mr Ell had Rachel's best silk garters. There were no less than 20 bequests for people to buy rings. A typical bequest of 40 shillings to buy a ring would be the equivalent of around £250 in 2005. Her small son William was to have, in addition to a half share of Rachel's goods and chattels not otherwise bequeathed, a seal ring of gold with his father's Arms thereon and his mother's best Flanders chest

covered with black leather and gilded.

In 1625 the Parsonage was leased to William Gough of High Holborn, London. The lease was initially for 9 years but in consideration of it being extended to 21 years Mr Gough covenanted to pay another £120. The Felsted Foundation needed the money - the agreement notes:

"And that the said corporation had become very poor because the price of herrings and provisions were far above raised than in former times...and also to add some assistance to the Schoolmaster and Usher of the school."

The rent for the Parsonage was shown as £18.6.10½ (the same as in 1565), plus £32 per annum. Plus of course 15/4d a year for the parson's pension (the same as in 1289).

Gough was still at the Parsonage in 1638. His lease ran until 1646 but he may not have seen it out. He was succeeded by John Attwood, a lawyer of Grays Inn, and his wife Elizabeth. Their son John was baptised at Broomfield in 1644, suggesting they may then have been at the Parsonage. They had three other children, William, Elizabeth and Sarah. The Attwoods were joined by Elizabeth's father, Patrick Young, then in retirement but formerly librarian to King James I and King Charles I, and one of the most learned men of his time. Parliament had voted him two sums of £1,000 in 1647 in recognition of his learned publications, a very large sum equivalent to nearly £200,000 today. His salary as Royal Librarian had been £50 a year. Patrick Young died at the Parsonage on the 7th September 1652 and was buried in the chancel of Broomfield church, beneath a gravestone of black marble. He had brought with him to the Parsonage a bible,

bound in crimson velvet with the Royal arms and cipher on the cover, which had been given to him by King Charles I. It was later presented to the church by his grand-daughter Sarah Attwood, and is now (except for special occasions) kept in the safe, controlled environment of the Essex Record Office.

The Attwoods were Broomfield's leading family, and John appeared frequently in the Parish records as churchwarden, etc. The family bought Glovers farm, opposite the Parsonage; their bailiff lived in Glovers farmhouse. John Attwood died in 1672 and Elizabeth died in the following year. When John died he was succeeded by his second son William (John Jnr. had died in 1670, before his father), who in 1694 sold the outstanding lease to Sir John Foch. In doing so he sparked off a dispute that lasted for years and became a landmark in the Law of Charities.

The Earl of Nottingham was trying to increase the Felsted Foundation's revenue and he refused to grant the lease to Sir John unless the rent was increased. In October 1694 Sir John Foch went in person to Felsted and demanded that the lease be renewed. The school's headmaster, Simon Lydiatt, referred him back to the Earl of Nottingham who vowed that in no circumstances would he renew the lease to Sir John Foch! Sir John, however, was in possession, and he replied by withholding the rent. The earl then applied to the Essex Assizes for Sir John's eviction.

In February 1695 Sir John obtained an injunction to stay the proceedings on the condition that the rent due up to the previous September was paid. He then brought an action against the Felsted Foundation to secure the renewal of his lease,

in the meantime paying no current rent. Three years later the Lord Keeper gave judgement against Sir John, who then obtained a re-hearing before the Lord Chancellor, with the same result. His next move was to pay no more than the old rent, arguing that if the agreement was illegally obtained then the additional rent contained in it was also illegal! So the Earl of Nottingham became plaintiff and in February 1701 was heard by the Lord Keeper and the Master of the Rolls, who awarded the Felsted Foundation the arrears of the reserved rent, the additional rent, and costs. Total victory for Felsted after a seven year dispute.

The vicar at the time was the Rev. Thomas Cox. He had been vicar since 1685 and was to remain so until his death in 1734. He was an interested party since he was entitled to 15/4d a year from the Parsonage and for seven years he hadn't received it. However, in the same month that the final judgement was given the vicar received the grand sum of £5.7.4d, being seven years at 15/4d a year. There can be little doubt whose side Thomas Cox was on; the Felsted Foundation's record of the payment added "which payed towards the board of his son". So young master Cox was a boarder at Felsted School.

An undated letter survives which Thomas Cox sent to the Earl of Nottingham's secretary, Thomas Armstrong. The last part reads as follows:

'I have done my best to retrieve my Lord's right of Patronage to my poor vicarage which needs the generosity of so pious a benefactor to the Church which tho' I expect no share of, yet if it falls upon my successors it will be satisfaction to me, if

not, I have laboured to give it the best title to his favour and if I can in anything further be serviceable to his lordship, you may assure him of my readiness who am your real friend,

T Cox.'

Although Cox wasn't talking about the Parsonage, where the title was never in doubt, the letter illustrates his support for the Earl.

Sir John Foch, distressed and defeated, died only two years later, in 1703, and in 1704 a new lease was made out to Thomas Armstrong, the Earl of Nottingham's secretary. Whether he actually lived at the Parsonage isn't clear; Morant mentions an Edward Rigby Esq. as lessee or occupant of the Parsonage at some time but his name doesn't appear in the Felsted deeds. The next lease, in 1708, was granted to John Sewell Esq. The terms, as for Armstrong, were £68.6.10d a year plus the wheat and barley malt, reflecting the increase of £18 which the Earl had gained as a result of his law suit against Sir John Foch. Of this, £10 was for the Master, £5 for the Usher, and £3 was to be "putt yearly into the Chest".

As part of his lease agreement John Sewell was to cut down two long rows of fir trees and replace them with lime trees. John Sewell had been Page of the Back Stairs to King William III and it is said that on the 8th March 1702 he was summoned to the King's chamber, where King William died in Sewell's arms. In 1714 Sewell took out another lease for a further 21 years; the renewal cost him £60, of which £50 was "putt in ye Foundation Chest". This lease too failed to run its full course and Sewell was replaced by Stewart.

John Stewart, Doctor of Medicine, may have arrived at the Parsonage by 1718 for in February of that year Martha, the daughter of Dr John Stewart and Katherine his wife, was baptised at Broomfield. Dr Stewart took out a 21-year lease in 1720 but by 1725 he too had gone. A record in Broomfield's parish register states:

"Jacoba, daughter of Sarah Drake by Jacob the Blackmoor, servant to Mr Hill at the Parsonage, was baptised on July 26th 1725"

Black servants, often dressed in colourful costumes, were a fashionable part of the great houses of London society in the early 18th century. Mr Attwood may have had one at the Parsonage, for Peter Nero, a 15 year old Blackamoor, was baptised at Broomfield in 1676.

The 1725 record serves to show that Mr Hill had arrived by that year. Morant noted that he carried out improvements to the property, suggesting that he anticipated a long stay, but yet again the lease wasn't seen out and at Michaelmas 1732 the Parsonage was leased to Richard Price of Hayes, Middlesex. The rent was unchanged and the lease reaffirmed the payment of 15/4d to the vicar - it still hadn't changed since 1289!

Thomas Cox, the venerable vicar of Broomfield, died in 1734 and was succeeded by Philip Morant, later to achieve fame as the Historian of Essex. Morant would have had first-hand knowledge of the Parsonage; he must have been a regular visitor when he was vicar. Miss Richenda Christy, writing for the Essex Review in 1907, stated "Philip Morant, the Essex

Historian once lived here (the Parsonage)... He was the last vicar to reside in the old house". Miss Christy didn't give the source of this statement. Morant certainly wasn't the lessee, and there seems no evidence in the Felsted deeds or elsewhere to support the claim that he ever lived there. As vicar Morant would presumably have lived in the Vicarage. Morant himself, in his History, noted that the Parsonage had been especially improved by Richard Price, so as to be fit for a gentleman's seat.

Richard Price's lease would have expired in 1753 but he didn't renew it. In that year another lease was taken out, this time by the Hon. Edward Finch of Sackville Street, Westminster. He was the brother of the patron of the Felsted Foundation, the Earl of Winchilsea (the Earl of Nottingham had inherited the senior earldom of Winchilsea in 1729). The Parsonage stayed in that family for a while. In 1765 the Hon. Edward Hatton took the lease - the Finch and Hatton families were closely related and for a time the Earls carried the name of Finch-Hatton. In 1783 it passed to Anne Hatton, widow, of Portman Square, London. She may have been Edward's widow.

Anne Hatton assigned the lease of the Parsonage to William Reynolds who farmed the land, apparently at a considerable profit because his lease was renewed for a further 21 years on payment of a fine "as shall be thought reasonable by two intelligent persons, one to be named by the tenant and the other by his Lordship". Money was needed for the rebuilding of the Master's house at Felsted School and the fine was agreed at £650. This gives some idea of how valuable the property had become and how out-of-date the rent and the parson's pension had become.

In 1798 the lease was granted to John Conyers of Copped Hall, who promptly assigned it to Messrs Strutt and Parker in trust for William Reynolds. There is a reference in "The Essex Foxhounds" (Ball & Gilbey. 1896) to a pack of hounds at Broomfield which were purchased by Mr Henry John Conyers of the Coldstream Guards in 1805. The Reynolds family continued as tenants and, after her husband's death, when the lease expired in 1819, Widow Reynolds through her solicitors offered Felsted £1,000 as a fine for the renewal of the lease. The offer was declined and in 1821 the Parsonage was leased to Capt. John Drummond of the Coldstream Guards and St. James Place, Westminster.

Mrs Reynolds had died by 1821 and one or both of her daughters (Mary and Anne) was living in the house. The rent was still being paid and Miss Reynolds refused to give possession to Capt. Drummond. Counsel's opinion was sought and he advised that Miss Reynolds be given immediate notice to quit. He added that as she had paid the rent there would be difficulty in fixing a higher rent. An agreement was drawn up whereby no demand would be made in respect of repairs to the property, it was said to be "much out of repairs", or to the chancel of the church, still alleged to be the responsibility of the Parsonage, and no higher rent would be charged, and that the sisters could hold the house and garden until Lady Day 1823. Capt. Drummond was to take possession of all the other lands, tithes, and premises as from Michaelmas last.

On March 18th 1823, a few days before Lady Day, Capt. Drummond let the Parsonage farm to Thomas Crooks, a butcher and farmer of Writtle Lodge, for 14 years at £210 a year. The

agreement noted that the farm was then occupied by Miss Reynolds and William Boosey and William Marriage as undertenants. At the time of the Tithe Award of 1844 Thomas Crooks occupied the house and farmed the land. "Tommy" Crooks kept a pack of staghounds at the Parsonage and there is a rather nice story about him in *The Essex Foxhounds*:

"They were partial to Hunt dinners in those days, and on one occasion, after dinner, Tommy ordered his favourite deer, "Red Rover", to be brought into the room to be shown to his friends but "Red Rover" seems to have found it too hot for him, for, making his escape by jumping through the window, it took his followers over a week to retake him, he giving them a run every day, and finishing up somewhere in the Midlands."

It was during Tommy Crooks tenancy that the Parsonage acquired another use. The census of 1851 shows that in that year there was a school at the Parsonage. George Marson, a 41 year old Londoner, was the schoolmaster and he had a Charles Flexman assisting him as teacher of French and Latin. There were 33 pupils at the school on the day of the census, mostly from London. Ten years later it was still a school. William Marson, aged 34 and presumably George's son, was now in charge with George (25) and Jane (20) assisting him. Flexman had gone and the number of pupils had fallen to 18.

Thomas Crooks was still at the Parsonage in 1855 but by 1867 Henry Marriage Jnr. was the occupant and the school had

gone. Henry had recently married Sophia Clayton and this may have been their first home. In 1871 the Parsonage farm was formally incorporated into the Marriage family business, although it was still subject to the renewal of the lease with the Felsted Foundation. Sampson Marriage, Henry's cousin, went to live there, remaining until his death in 1915. His widow Sarah stayed on for a while and in 1921 Miss Helen Marriage was shown as the occupant.



Tea on the lawn at the Parsonage.



**Sampson and Sarah Marriage at the Parsonage,
with Helen and Percy. Taken about 1891.**

In May 1921 Llewellyn Marriage, son of the Henry Marriage who had lived at the Parsonage in the 1860s, married Norah Warner and the couple set up home at the Parsonage. At about the time of Llewellyn's arrival at the Parsonage the lease expired again. The Felsted Foundation needed money to build a fresh boarding house at Felsted and so, through the good offices of Charles Ernest Ridley, Llewellyn was able to purchase the farm, ending its centuries long association with Felsted School.

Llewellyn Marriage will be remembered in Broomfield not only as a farmer but also as a very keen cricketer. He was also a hunting and shooting man, still riding when into his seventies, but his enthusiasm for cricket lives on in the photographs that adorn the wall of the Broomfield Cricket Club pavilion. As player from the club's earliest days, the present club was re-formed in 1895, and as captain for some 25 years, he turned up every week with the working party to mow and roll the pitch. Llewellyn died in 1960 and his widow Norah lived on at the Parsonage until her death in 1976.

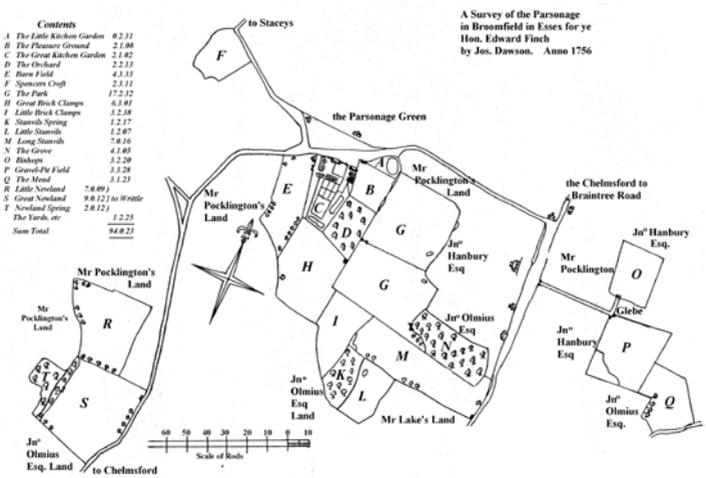
Llewellyn and Norah Marriage had three children, Henry, John and Rosemary, all born at the Parsonage. John Marriage rose to prominence in the legal profession and became an eminent barrister. He died in 1984 at the age of 54. Henry continued in the farming side of the family business, at the Parsonage farm and at Golden Wells, Good Easter.

As to the Parsonage itself, Morant, writing in 1760, described it as "fit for a gentleman's seat". The Hearth Tax returns of 1662, when John Attwood lived there, showed that he paid tax on 18 hearths, many more than anyone else in Broomfield. This would have included Glovers but it still indicated a very large house. Wright, in his History of Essex, published in 1834, wrote that it was "a very elegant and commodious gentleman's seat". Shortly after those words were written the Parsonage was burned down.

Richenda Christy, writing in 1907, described it as "a fine old Elizabethan house, one room in which was called the Queen's Room and had the Royal Arms finely executed in stucco occupying the entire space from mantelpiece to ceiling.

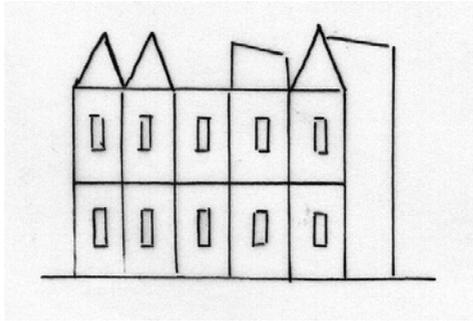
The Devereaux arms were also carved in stone on one of the chimneys". She added that it was still standing "within living memory (my father's), of which not a trace remains". The plan of the house on the 1844 tithe map is the present building; this would place the fire at between 1834 and 1844.

An estate map of the Parsonage and its lands was drawn up in 1756 by Joseph Dawson for the then lessee, the Hon. Edward Finch. It shows quite clearly that the old house stood just where the present house stands. The map also shows the house in the old mapmakers' style, in elevation, giving some idea, however rough, of what the Parsonage once looked like. It was certainly a grander house than its successor, which Miss Christy labelled a "modern square house, in box of bricks style of architecture".

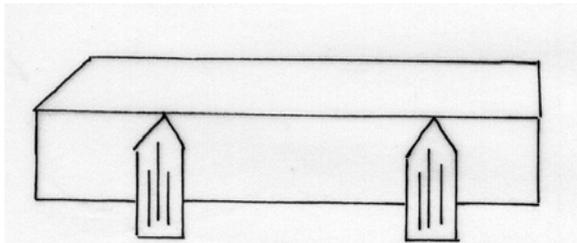


This drawing, copied from Joseph Dawson's survey of 1756, shows the Parsonage estate as it then was, and as it had most likely been for centuries.

The great tithe barn, a listed building thought to date from c1670, is at once recognizable on the 1756 map, with its large gabled doors. Other buildings around the farmyard also predate the present house; one of them, with a loft over, was at one time used as a schoolroom. This would have been the school mentioned in the 1851 and 1861 census returns. All the present farm buildings are in the same position as on the 1756 map.



The Parsonage as depicted on Dawson's map of 1756..



The great tithe barn on the 1756 map.

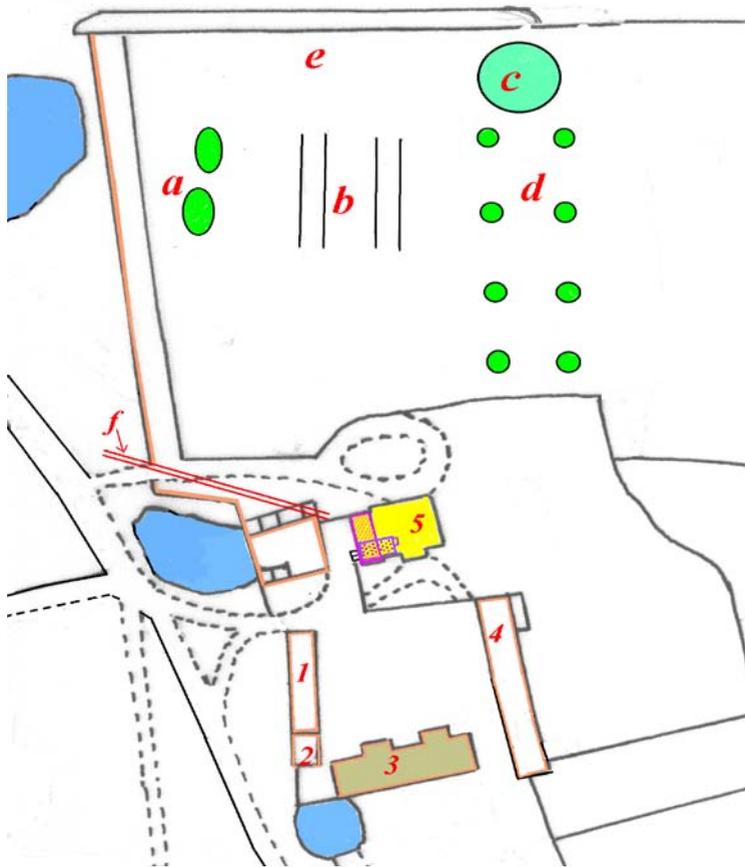
The north wing of the present Parsonage is older than the rest of the building, and beneath this wing, extending below the "new" house, are two cellars. By the south wall of the cellars are the remains of an old staircase. Clearly these are the remnants of the previous house, which was on the same site and, as can be seen from the 1756 map, facing in the same direction. If only the fire had taken place a few years later there might just have been a photographic record.

In a corner of the meadow adjacent to the house is a curious mound. Mrs Norah Marriage had been told that this was the site of the original Parsonage, but it seems highly unlikely that this could have been so. It doesn't seem large enough unless of course it was the site of an original Parsonage, which predated the grand house shown on the 1756 map. Could it have been a spoil heap, created from the rubble of the old house after the fire, or the excavated soil from the building of the cellars, perhaps turned into a feature? There was once a double line of trees in this meadow, long since felled, and the mound would have been at the end of this avenue. In 1756 this area was called the Pleasure Garden so perhaps the mound was some sort of folly.

Other features of the Pleasure Garden include two more low mounds on the north side, some curious crop marks in the centre, and the remains of a brick faced ha-ha along the eastern side. In very dry summers in two lines near the centre of this area the grass dries up and nearly dies, denoting the foundations of some construction, but what? Ha-has became a feature of 18th century gardens, giving the illusion that the parkland with its animals was a pastoral extension of the formal garden, whilst

its ditch and brick retaining wall actually prevented the stock from encroaching.

The Parsonage ha-ha was probably the work of one of those improvers of the 1720s and 1730s, Mr Hill or Mr Price. The origin of this unusual word is not certain; in the *Theory and Practice of Gardening* (John James 1712) it states "which the French call a *Claire-voie*, or an *Ah-ah*, with a dry ditch at the foot of it". Horace Walpole said that the common people called them *Ha! Ha's!* "to express their surprise at finding a sudden and unperceived check to their walk".



This sketch, based on information provided by Mr Henry Marriage, shows some of the features of the Parsonage.

1. The stables. An important feature of the estate when the occupants were keen huntsmen. Thomas Crooks kept a pack of staghounds at the Parsonage
2. The boiler house. The late Percy Marriage of Broomfield Mill related that the Boiler House was used to cook the feed for

the hounds.

3. The tithe barn. Although the Royal Commission dated this building to the 17th century, the tithes were collected here from a much earlier date. It was around the year 1294 when the Lord of the manor, Thomas de Mandeville, granted to “the rector and his successors of free ingress and egress over his fields with carts to collect their tithes”.

4. The old school building. Certainly in use as such from 1851 to 1861 and possibly for longer.

5 The Parsonage house. The oldest part is the rectangular piece on the left (north) side. The cellars have an outside access on the north side and there are the remains of an old staircase to the cellar inside the house.

a. Two low mounds. There seems no obvious explanation for these features.

b. Scorch marks. In very dry summers the grass here dries up and nearly dies, denoting the presence of some sort of foundations.

c. Large mound. Site of a building or folly, or just a very large spoil heap?

d. Former avenue of very large elm trees, killed by Dutch Elm disease in the 1940s. It is curiously offset from the present house, and from its predecessor, though in line with the equally curious mound.

e. The ha-ha.

f. A barrel drain, some 2’6” high and 2’ wide. Part of a medieval sewage system?



The Great Tithe Barn at the Parsonage



The lands of the Parsonage changed very little over the centuries. The Felsted deeds make no particular mention of any land acquisitions so they were probably as shown on the 1756 map as far back as the mid-16th century and perhaps much earlier. There are several records of the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries referring to land given to the church or to a priory; perhaps, as Henry Marriage put it, "Either well wishers seeking a gate to heaven or ill doers unable to pay their dues". This may explain why the fields are spread about rather than one coherent unit. Comparing the 1756 map, the tithe award map of 1844, and the Ordnance Survey maps of 1875 and 1965, there have been minor changes, e.g. part of Little Paddock was incorporated in Long Stanvils which then became Great Stanvils, but generally the lands of the Parsonage are still very recognizable.

The field names are largely self-explanatory. Spencers Croft, one of the detached parts of the farm, may have got its name from John le Despenser who was living in Broomfield around 1290. Stanvils could be a corruption of Stony Fields though this could no doubt apply to a good many of Broomfield's fields! Bishops is likely to have been associated with the family of John Bishop who owned fields by the river in 1351. Great and Little Newland, and Newland Spring, were also detached parts of the farm and could well have been a new addition to the estate, perhaps given by some benefactor in the hope of heavenly reward.

As to the duties attached to the Parsonage lease, Henry Marriage recalled that until about 1961 provision was made

every year for the payment of the Parson's Pension. It was still 15/4d and the entry was always annotated "in doubt". There is some doubt as to when it was last paid. Henry Marriage also affirmed that the owner of the Parsonage does not have the responsibility of repairing the chancel of the church. Certainly, John Pake resisted a claim in 1590, but that was for the repair of the furniture in the chancel, not the fabric. The owner of the Parsonage had one more duty. Related by Morant, who quoted from the valuation of 1289, it was to thrice strew the church with straw in winter. The vicar had to strew it twice with rushes in summer. These would make for interesting customs had they been maintained.

* * * * *

1570. The mansion house of the Parsonage maketh from John Poles towards the northe one rodd.

1678. The mansion house of ye Parsonage maketh from Wheelers toward the north one rodd

1687. The mansion house of the Parsonage maketh from Wheelers northwards one rod.

1735. The Parsonage... A rod.

1843. 25. The Rectory, now occupied by T W Crooks, maketh from no. 24 one rod. Owner Felsted Charity.