

Little Baddow
The History of an Essex Village

Part II

Sheila V Rowley

CONTENTS:

Introduction

Chapter I *Homes and Families*

Chapter 2 *Church and Chapel*

Chapter 3 *Work*

Chapter 4 *Government, Law and Order*

Maps

This booklet continues the history of the village of Little Baddow which was begun in Part I with an account of the origins of the parish, the story of the manors and their lords, and of the land and the houses, before about 1840. The tenants of the manors re-appear in Part II as villagers in their homes, at church, at work and as members of a partially self-governing community, again until about 1840. Part III will deal with poverty, education, the Victorian village and finally will bring the story up-to-date.

The history is compiled from many and various documents at the Essex Record Office, extracts from some of which are reproduced by permission of the County Archivist. The drawing of the church is by Mrs Alice Kettelhack of Long Island, New York.

Three sketch maps, to help identification of houses etc. mentioned in the text, are provided; about eighteen detailed sketch maps were incorporated in Part I, to which reference may be made.

Money is given in sterling and not translated into the modern decimal equivalents.

I am grateful for the help and encouragement give me by the Parish Council and their Clerk and for the interest shown by many villagers.

© Sheila V Rowley, Little Baddow 1979

INTRODUCTION

The first people who, two thousand and more years ago, inhabited the settlement later to become the village of Little Baddow have left no records by which we can catch glimpses of them; they are dim shadows and nothing more. Some later people may have played their small parts in national events, like the rising of the Iceni under Boudicca against the Romans. Perhaps the menfolk were among the Saxon fyrd who fought the invading Danes so heroically at the Battle of Maldon in 991 and were defeated; their great-grandsons may have fought at Stamford Bridge or at Hastings under their Saxon King Harold. Domesday Book, drawn up by the Norman conquerors nine hundred years ago, tells us there were so many freemen, so many villeins, bordars and serfs, and that they had horses, cows, sheep, swine, a mill, but nothing of what sort of people they were. During the Middle Ages a few names emerge from the obscurity and we can assume that Hugh atte Ford lived by one of the village fords, Adam atte Ree by a stream; that John le Taillur pursued the occupation of a tailor, Geoffrey le Hierde that of a herdsman; that Richard le Petyt was small and Richard Picard had come from France. We do not know whether any villagers joined in the Peasants' Revolt; nor how many accompanied their lords to fight in France during the Hundred Years' War; nor how they were affected by the Black Death.

Towards the end of the Middle Ages a few documents have survived to shed some light on individuals and on parish affairs, while during the following centuries more fragments of village concerns are spotlighted. The rest is lost for ever. Few documents give sufficient details to show us individuals in three-dimensional form; little but their names appear in most written records, such as in the parish register when they were born, married and died; in the manor court rolls when they entered or left tenements; in the Quarter Sessions rolls if the committed crimes; in the accounts of the overseers of the poor if the were paupers or if they performed services for the poor; in the census returns of the nineteenth century. Nor do the records tell us much of how national events – like the Reformation, the Spanish Armada, the Civil Wars and the Commonwealth, the Plague, the Industrial Revolution – affected the lives of the ordinary villagers. A very few aspects of village life are comparatively well-documented, such as eighteenth century poor relief and the late nineteenth century school, while so many others are blank. No record remains, for instance, of a constable calling the “hue and cry” after a criminal, of a church ale, or of customs of harvest, May Day, or other events of the farming year.

Although the records may afford the impression of a somewhat claustrophobic unchanging farming community, isolated from the world outside, not on a highway, this would not present the whole picture. There were contacts with people like justices of the peace and lords of the manors who were also Members of Parliament or persons of consequence; communication with pedlars and other travellers; visits to fairs and markets; perhaps more than anything, the migration of families and single persons so that there were always newcomers from other places (admittedly usually within a day's walking distance) to bring new ideas.

My primary aim in Parts II and III of this history has been to endeavour to recreate the lives of the ordinary villagers of past centuries and only incidentally those of the lords and gentry, whose way of life is generally well-known from the writings and possessions left behind by so many of them throughout England.

The complete history of Little Baddow can never be written. The local historian can do no more than try to interpret the life of the past village from the surviving documents, forced to leave many and large lacunae, and cannot help but misunderstand matters that would have been so obvious to contemporaries. I hope, however to refute what Pigot's Directory of 1839 said of Little Baddow – “It is a place of but little note...presents no claims upon the attention of the stranger”.

(Photo of Bowling Alley House and Belmers with caption)

CHAPTER I

HOMES AND FAMILIES

(facsimile of original will)

Perhaps most illuminating among the surviving muniments are the one hundred and forty-three wills made by villagers (one hundred and thirteen men and thirty women) between 1480 and 1715, which more than any other records seem to bring to life some of the people of Tudor and Stuart Little Baddow. Reading their wills one can almost hear the men and women speaking across three or four centuries. As, lying on their death beds, they state, however stereotyped the phrases, their name and the date, their “sycknes of bodye” but “perfecte mynde and good remembrance”, their belief in the soul’s salvation and the mercy of God and consign their “bodye to the earthe from whence it was taken”, and then proceed to dispose of their “temperall and worldly goodes”, they seem as close as the people we know today. The vicar, or whoever had been writing down the will (probably any literate villager willing to do this last service for his dying neighbour), then obtained the signatures or marks of some of the relatives or friends gathered at the bedside, as witnesses to the dying person’s wishes. Sometimes a man “did declare his mind and make his will nuncupative or by word of mouth” and the witnesses later wrote down and signed what they remembered him to have said. Occasionally a will was made before the last illness as when John Hawes “finding my selfe not well in my bodie... And knowing the Mortaliety of all mankind” went to William Dodd of Maldon, scrivener, and requested him to draw up his will. He died some eighteen months later in 1628. The male villagers who made wills (apart from the gentry) were the yeomen, the craftsmen, the tradesmen, the husbandmen and a few who described themselves as servants or labouring men. The women who could make wills were widows who had received property from their husbands which they were able to dispose of as they wished, and an occasional spinster. The poor man had little, and the married woman nothing, to leave. The Church urged the making of wills which had to be proved in Church courts.

As soon as possible after the death of a testator two or more “honest persons” were required to tramp around his house, outbuildings and land, drawing up a “true and perfect” inventory of all the goods and chattels and their values. The executor needed this to obtain probate of the will. It is unfortunate that Essex inventories are lost, but fortunate that most bequests made in wills took the form of tenancies of houses and lands, household furnishings, clothes, tools, animals and crops. Lacking inventories, the sole, very inadequate, guide to values of goods is the assessment (often low) made at the Assizes or Quarter Sessions of the value of stolen goods.

When John Oughan made his will in 1480 he transmitted to his son his tenement “called Robert Myllers” which consisted of three cottages on a small piece of land. If they were typical late mediaeval cottages they would have been built, probably by their tenants, as one-room homes. They would have had frail timber frames filled in with wattle and daub, leaving a few small holes to serve as windows, and the roofs probably thatched or turfed. The interiors would have been dark and draughty, with a fire in the centre of the earth floor, whose smoke escaped through a hole in the roof. Perhaps part of the roof space was boarded over, reached by a ladder and used for storage and sleeping. Such mediaeval cottages were rebuilt nearly every generation.

The house in which John Oughan himself lived (which he called Rolfs and which cannot be identified), would no doubt have been more strongly built of good timber by the village carpenter. He would have had a hall (the living room for his whole household) with perhaps a wing at each end, one containing a parlour in which he and his family could have had some privacy and where he and his wife would have had their bed. There might have been a room

over the parlour, called the chamber, and used for storage and sleeping. The other wing would have held the rooms where food was prepared and stored and perhaps brewing or dairying done.

During the Tudor period housing standards throughout the country improved and the “great rebuilding” of about 1570-1640 saw the enlargement of many of Little Baddow’s mediaeval homes as well as the building of some new ones like Belmers, Bowling Alley house and Lees. All the other mediaeval houses in the village were demolished or rebuilt during the following centuries, so that now none remains, although mediaeval timbers are incorporated in some houses, for they were too valuable to be cast aside. One of the most important changes after the Middle Ages was the addition or incorporation of a chimneystack, usually of brick so that the fire could be placed against a wall. The Elizabethan Rector of Radwinter in the county remarked on “the multitude of chimneys lately erected”. The new houses often had an upper storey, with one or more chambers, reached by a staircase instead of a ladder. Cottages received few improvements.

In Charles II’s reign a hearth tax was imposed and the lists for 1662 and 1671/2 survive for Little Baddow. These show that, apart from the manor houses, there were about seventy-four homes in the village, and of these in 1671/2 thirty-six had one hearth. Twenty-one of the occupiers of the latter were exonerated by poverty from paying the tax, perhaps some of them elderly persons occupying one room with a hearth in the house of a relative, and not living in a separate cottage. There were fifteen homes with two hearths, six with three, five with four, five with five, one with eight and one with nine. In addition there were five people, exempted because they were in receipt of poor relief who presumably had one hearth each.

The exterior and interior walls of the houses, showing the timber and plaster, were usually lime-washed, partly as a fire precaution. Inside the better houses, some walls may have been painted with patterns or pictures; others were hung with cloths, often painted or stained to resemble tapestries. A few wills mention these, such as “a grene Wall Cloth”, “a paynted Cloth for the hall” and the “lowermost painted Cloth in the hall”. Soon after 1600 these ceased to be used, perhaps because there was more wainscot. Floors, sometimes of tile or brick, were still often earthen; a well-made floor of ash, clay and oxblood gave a hard, polished surface. They might be covered with rushes for warmth, or, in Stuart times, with rush mats. Only if there was a chamber above was there a ceiling to a room; otherwise it was open to the roof. Windows were small, and leaded glass panes were not in poorer homes until late in the seventeenth century. Oiled cloth or horn were sometimes used instead, but often a wooden shutter was the only means of keeping out the weather.

Some testators indicated the rooms in which the items bequeathed could be found – the hall, the parlour and the chamber over the parlour being the most common. John Gowers’ will in 1621 showed that at Whitwells there was a new parlour, new solar and new chamber, as well as the old ones. No doubt these new rooms had fireplaces. The solars were bed-chambers, each containing one bedstead. Two people mentioned kitchens (for food preparation), one of which held tubs, a table and cheese-making equipment and the other a quern, a bread box and even bed-hangings. Cheese chambers (for the storage of cheeses) appeared in three wills, one of them containing a bedstead and a great chest. Whitwells had a “milkhowse” (dairy) containing a form, two pails, a little bowl and two kellers (tubs for butter-making). Adjoining the houses were workshops, stables, barns and other outhouses for a population who were all in some way connected with agriculture.

(sketch of fireplace)

The heart of every home was the fire in the hall, providing warmth, heat for cooking and some light. If it were set in a great chimney recess, such as were built during the Tudor and Stuart centuries, there might have been a deep oven in the brickwork and also a small niche to

take the “salte Trove”, the box of salt which had to be kept dry. Often women who had an oven would bake for their neighbours. The logs, burning on an iron plate on the floor, were supported on two andirons which also held spits. The spits on which meat for roasting was skewered were turned in front of the fire either by hand or, in Stuart times, by one of several kinds of jack. When not in use they were placed on spit racks above the fireplace. Margerie Tabor in 1595 left her son “a spit with an Andiron whereof he shall take his choise”; in 1626 a bequest was made of “one Anderne one Cobiron one Spitt” and in 1649 of “One payer of great Cobirons”. A pair of cobirons, standing like easels over the fire, could be used as an alternative to andirons to hold the spits. Other wills included fire-pan, tongs and fire shovel.

(Sketch of skillet)

An iron bar was fixed across the chimney above the fire from which pots and kettles when in use were suspended by chains and pothooks or trammels. Cecily Gatton in 1504 left various cooking pots, including her best brass pot, a little black pot and “a Cawdron that hangeth in the furnesse and that Cawdron to be an eyr lowme to the howse as long as it wull last”. Similarly William Carter of Pickards in 1559 willed that “my great troffe shall always remayne in my howse for the heires”. Iron pots and pans, for everyday use, were seldom mentioned in wills; the contrary is true of skillets and posnets, pans with three little legs and long handles on which were sometimes the maker’s name or a motto. William Carter’s widow in 1560 bestowed on one daughter “my best Brasse pott and my best posnett and my Seconde ketell and ii Cetells more and another posnett”. Kettles at this time were pots; in 1709 a man left one copper kettle and another which held a bushel. Gridirons, suspended by pothooks, and frying pans with long handles were used for grilling and frying over the fire.

Other articles connected with food were “one great powderinge Troffe” (for salting meat), “one Grindstone”, “my querne” (for grinding grain or malt), “my Bread hutche” (box), “my best latten mortar”, “a brasen mortar with the pestle”, “a Crab pot” (for making verjuice from crab apples), “one boultng tonn” (sifting funnel), “ii of my best tubes”, “kneding troffe” (for bread making), “A brassen chafeing dishe” (in which food was heated over a charcoal fire in the bottom) and “A cheese layer” (for cheese-making).

Food was rarely included in wills but Richard Reade, possibly living at Pickards, in 1616 gave his son Clement “all such butter and cheese as remaineth in the howse after my decease”. Arthur Draper in 1608 assigned to his wife the “Provisyon of Corne and other victual” in the house at his death. In 1603 Nicholas Warren bequeathed “4 leades of Cheese and 4 pottes of good butter everye pott conteyninge eight dishes”. A lead was 56 lb. of cheese, a pot probably 14 lb. of butter and a dish therefore about 1 and three quarter lb. In 1590 a case concerning the theft of a pot of butter and eleven cheeses was before Quarter Sessions and they were valued at 12d. and 12s. respectively, while in 1610 twenty cheeses were said to be worth £3.6.8.

Household furniture was very often disposed of by will. Tables appeared mainly between 1594 and 1618; perhaps before that they had been boards laid on trestles (such as “one Planck Table with tressels”) and more valuable framed tables only recently acquired. By 1594 however a labourer could own “the greate Table in the hall” and also two little tables. The next year a bequest was made of “a table in the parlor with two leaves”. Benches against the wall, forms and stools were the usual seating, some of the “ioyn” or joiner-made. Examples of these were “owne ioyn table two ioyn formes standing in the hall with a bench their unto belonging”, “the rounde Table and stooles apertaining to it in the parlor”, “A pair of ioyne formes the benche and A benche borde” (perhaps the bench back). Chairs were rare and one only was mentioned in the sixteenth century, but later there were a few, such as “A Chyer yoyne in the soler”, “owne little Chayer”, “one wicker chayer”, “rush chaires”, “one chayer covered with red” and, in 1709, “three Cloth chairs”. Cushions to make the seating more comfortable, although probably numerous, were only occasionally bequeathed.

When mealtimes came the table linen was brought out, like “the best dyaper tabyll cloth”, “one tabell cloth of the longer sorte”, “one Table Cloath and halfe a Dozen of Fine Naptkins”, “six flaxen Napkins”. In 1610 a green kersey table cloth, 3 yards long, was stolen and valued at 4s. Knives (carried about hanging from the belt) and spoons were used at table (there were no forks), necessitating basins of water for rinsing fingers, such as Cecily Gatton’s “basyn and laver of pewter”. The few towels mentioned in the wills were probably used at table, among them “a Towell of Dyaper next the best” and “my towel that is woven with blewe”. Pewter tableware was generally in use by Tudor times, but in 1602 Elizabeth Hawkes left “to be devided Among my fower dawghters...all my wodden dishes...all my trenchers and pewter and spones”. Probably many other people were still using wood and horn articles. Pottery is never mentioned. Among pewterware were platters, plates, dishes, porringers and beakers, while some people made bequests like “halfe a dozen of pewter some of the best and some of the worst” and “fower midelling peeces of pewter”. Other objects that were probably of pewter were salt cellars, saucers (sauce bowls) and “candlesticks of the best sorte”. Some candlesticks were of brass. Joan Radley in 1518 left four sliver spoons, John Gowers three, another woman two and another a silver bowl. John Newton, vicar, in 1632 suffered the theft from the vicarage of a pewter flagon valued at 2s., a pewter plate at 3s., ten pewter dishes at 15s and a silver spoon at 4s.

To store these articles there were various kinds of cupboards (originally open shelves or boards to display cups and other plate), examples being “my Best Cowbard standinge in my hawle”, “table Cubbord in the parlor”, “highe cupborde in the parlor” and “one ioyrn livirre cubbard” (a food cupboard). In the new parlour at Whitwells was “the lowest Court Cupberd one huch with a Boxe standing now under the high court cubberd”. Court cupboards were often elaborately carved and usually consisted of large cupboards below with smaller, recessed ones above. Thomas Wattes in 1630 bequeathed “owne of my great shipp chestes that my pewter lyeth in”.

Bedsteads and their furnishings were highly valued possessions and very often bequeathed by will. The best bedstead (often of the type later called a four-poster, but then called joined, standing or high) was usually in the parlour. Ede Carter in 1560 left “the Bedd I now lye in complet with all that belongeth thereunto” and her descendant in 1616 “the highe bedstead that I lie in myself”. John Hawes in 1626 specified that one daughter was to have “one joyrned bedsted...as the same is now standing in the west End of the Chamber of the parlor of my nowe dwelling howse” (Great Salthouse). Another daughter was to have a similar bedstead “in the Est end of the said Chamber” and the youngest daughter the one in the parlour. Other wills included half-headed bedsteads with short posts at the corners, and trundle bedsteads, with castors often for children or servants, which could be stored away, perhaps under the standing bed, during the day.

Cord or leather-thonging was threaded across the frame of the bedstead, a rush mat laid on that and then the feather or flock bed. Alice Nevell’s will of 1649 is the only one to include the mats with the list of furnishings she bestowed on her grandchildren, one of whom was to receive “one boarded Beadsteadle one strawe Matt my least feather bed my best feather bolster twoe feather Pillowes”. The boarded bedstead probably had planks instead of cord. Feather and flock beds and feather pillows and bolsters appeared in many wills; no doubt they had been made of feather and flock from the possessors’ own poultry and sheep. Margerie Tabor in 1595 left her “fether bed and bolster with the Lace about them” (some sort of edging). In 1490 Thomas Oughan left “a Coverlyghte A peyre blankets and a peyre schetes” and these are common items in wills. Shetes and pillow beres (cases) were of different qualities – “flaxen sheetes”, “Canvish sheetes”, “a paire of sheetes whereof one flaxen and one towen”, “halfe a dozen pillow Beeres two Hallon ones two flaxen ones and two corse ones”. Canvas and towen were coarse linen, and “Hallon” meant Holland, a fine linen. Elizabeth Hawes gave her son “A peace of new Whit Cloath for to make hime a

blanket withal". Coverlets completed the bed furnishings, such as the "coverlett next the best", "on old Coverlett", "a grete Cufferlit", "A long Cufferlit" and "my blewishe Coverlett". Curtains for the bed were mentioned twice only, in 1649 and in 1665. Thomas Gowers in the latter year assigned to his daughter "the bedd... with the Curtaines and with all that thereunto belongs as it stands now Compleat in the parlour". In 1768 Abraham Cass, the church clerk, died and an inventory shows that his bedstead had "blue cuttains Vallents teaster and Rods". This is the sole mention of the tester (canopy) and one of two references to the rods on which the curtains and valance were hung. As late as 1807 Benjamin Campion bequeathed the "Bed and furniture on which I now lie by the name of the blue Bed".

Robert Poole in 1616 confirmed to his daughter "all the childbed lynyn which her mother did give unto her at the tyme of her death as it is now set out in a box by it selfe". Two cradles only were mentioned, one of them by John Gowers in 1621.

In the parlours and chambers were storage chests for clothes, bed linen and valuables, for example "my best Cheste standing in my Chamber", "my cheste standing att my beds foot". Other people possessed "a huche that is paynted", "the browne hutche", "an old hutche", "lytle Coffe", "one Box to lay Lynnen" and "one Cheste where my Lynnen lyeth". The "one presse Cupboard standing in the parlor" and belonging to John Tanner in 1641 was probably for hanging clothes instead of laying them in chests. Later in the seventeenth century came the "trunk which hath my name upon it" and "one Trunk marked with the Letters E H", both of which must have been used when travelling. In the eighteenth century there were two chests-of-drawers, a development from the medieval chest.

Especially in the early period, clothes figured in many wills. Joan Radley in 1518 endowed her eldest son with "hys faders best gowne and best kotte" (coat) and another son with "Hys fadrys gowne and kotte next the best". One man left a green coat; another tawney, black, new black and two other coats, besides a worsted jerkin. In the early seventeenth century a yeoman bequeathed his "best seut of Aparell" together with "one cloke layd with buttons" and "one Clocke laied Afooer with A gren bace" (probably green baize). Edward Gipps gave to his eldest son "my gurkin my dublet and my briches" and Richard Pryce left to his nephew "my greene cassock (loose over-coat) and breeches". William Carter in 1559 bequeathed his "longest buskins" (leggings), but shoes and boots are missing from wills. All men's clothes disappear from wills after 1626, but in 1768 Abraham Cass's inventory showed him to possess five coats, two waistcoats, two pair of breeches, three shirts, six pair of stockings, one pair of shoes and one hat. In 1608 a pair of boots was stolen and valued at Quarter Sessions at 8s.; in 1610 three "falling bands" (collars) were valued at 2s. and in 1649 three pairs of breeches and three doublets at 30s.

Frances Jyggyns carefully specified the disposal of her apparel – her sister was to have "hyr Fryste (woollen) gowne and hyr worst red Peticot", one of her nieces "hyr russet (homespun) gowne" and the other "hyr best gowne and bes red peticot and hyr worsted Apron and silver huckles" (clasps). Two other women were to have her "best russet peticot" and her "two best neckekercheives" (scarves). Cecily Gatton bequeathed "a sangwyne kyrtell" (petticoat) and "iiii yards of Russett cloth" to her daughter-in-law. Myles Bowen committed to his daughter all the wearing apparel "as well lynyen as woollen which my late wyfe deceased did usually ware or use" and John Harris als. Butcher left to his sister-in-law "the best coate that my wife had". Another man left to his servant "a kirtill to make her a cote withall". Joan Evered divided her clothes between her daughters, including a "kercher and a nekecher and a crosecloth" (scarves and a head cloth) and Elizabeth Hawkes did the same with hers, which included a "Russett gowne that is not made", a "Wastecoote in cloth" and "all the Rest of my smale linnen". Margaret Hawes in 1664 bequeathed "my best hatt and my serge coate", "my blue Linsey Woollsey Coate and my Green Cloath Wastecoate". Linsey-woolsey was a linen and wool mixture. Another bequest was "one face kercher...one fine wrought Hankercher" (for wearing round the shoulders). In 1593 a stolen cloth gown was valued at 10s., a petticoat

at 5s., a kersey petticoat at 13s., a holland apron at 3s. and a hat at 2s. In 1695 Susan Cooke had stolen from her two hankerchers worth 8d. and a pair of stockings worth 6d.

Jewels were rarely mentioned, but a few people bestowed money on friends and relatives to buy rings. One of these was the minister, Richard Rand, in 1689, who gave to his wife, two sons and their wives, and two daughters and their husbands, £20 each “to buy them rings to wear in remembrance of me”. Another man in 1597 entrusted to a friend “the Breuch which I used to were in my hatt”. Thomas Lorkyn in 1574 bequeathed “one Old Angel beyinge worth ten shil. of lawful Englyshe moneye”. This was a gold coin bearing the figure of an angel. In 1626 Richard Pryce left “Thre twentie shilling peeces of gold” and in 1692 Robert Hungerford a broad piece of gold (an early Stuart gold coin). Amongst some testators’ effects were “reddy mony” or “money in purse”.

A few people owned books. Richard Payton in 1611 devised “unto my maister Mr. Anthony Penninge one truncke and a Chest with Certayne bookes in the same”. Richard Rand, the minister, stated “I give all my bookes in my study to my son John he paying to my Executors 20 markes for them” (£13.6.8.) Robert Hungerford, gent., left “my two great bookes of the Exposition upon the Bible” and John Cooke (who may have been church clerk) in 1649 left a Bible. In 1695 Susan Cooke was robbed of a “Brasse inkhorne” worth 6d. With his Bible, John Cooke bequeathed a halberd and in 1576 John Peverill had left “my bowe and my shaftes”. No one else alluded to weapons although every man was supposed to own a bow and arrows and gentlemen carried swords.

During the sixteenth century farm equipment sometimes, and animals often, were the subjects of bequests, but after 1603 no bullocks were mentioned and after 1660 no animals at all. John Read in 1635 left “all Stocke of Cattell Horses Sheepe and Hoggs Corne and Hay... Implements of Houshold and Husbandrie within door and without”. The first plough and cart specifically referred to belonged to a woman, Margerie Tabor, in 1595. A few years later Arthur Draper left “my cart and plough and all the harness Irons and implements thereunto belonging”. Among the horses were “my litill blake nagge”, “anamblyng mere”, “my browne mare with a whyght strike on the face”, “one yong gray mare with a colt”, “my gray two yere old mare colt”, “my old rondel coloured horse” and “my Bay mare”. John Gowers bequeathed to his wife “a pillain and a pillion cloth”. Francis Stanes in 1603 left a two-year-old “pyed” bullock, a brown bullock and a three-year-old black bullock. One will specified one of the best bullocks in Blakes wood and another “a bolocke of ii yearesould..this Bolock geven to Jhon my sonn is to be delivered at mykaelmas next In consedaracion of the payment of xxs. that I doo ow unto him”. Joan Bastwick in 1490 left to four people a “cough” each and John Bocher in 1504 devised to “eche of my Children a Cowe...when thei be abull to governe ther Cowe”. Four “milche kyne” in 1603 were valued by the testator at £6.13.4. One man bequeathed “one red calfe of a yere old” which his wife was to keep for his daughter until it was three years old. Another legacy was of “A blacke Cowe with A whit stare in the forehead”. John Wheler in 1537 owned a number of sheep, of which he bestowed on a friend “a lambe of the last yeres, yf she be with lambe to have bothe the dame and the lambe”. In 1584 a man gave to “my dawghters childe a lambe to be delivered unto her father to her use”. Another man bequeathed to his servant “one of the blacke sheepe and the three Lambes”. Pigs made infrequent legacies but a 1560 will referred to “my white sowe” and “ii sowes”. John Gowers left to his wife two “skepes of Bees which were her fathers”, and Elizabeth Hawkes in 1602 bequeathed “A heive of Bees” to two of her daughters and “A swarme of Bees that bee at father drivers” to another. The sole reference to poultry was in Arthur Draper’s will of 1608 leaving to his wife “all my Pultrye”. Hens and other birds however must have been pecking around many cottages.

In 1581 one ewe sheep worth 3s.4d. and one wether sheep worth 5s.8d. were stolen and in 1615 four white ewes and two white wethers were valued at Quarter Sessions at 7s. each.

One “shote hogge” (young hog) and a pig were valued, when stolen in 1598, at 6s. each. A lamb in 1631 was worth 4s. and four geese in 1622 6d. each.

Finally various grain was bequeathed, such as “mescelyn” (mixed), a “Seme of whete” (a horseload or about 8 bushels), a “seame of Rye”, “ii seame of Barly”, “ii bushcelles qwhete”, “x busshells of Rye”, “halfe an aker of wheat” and also “my hay Lyinge in the Barne”. Arthur Draper, of Gibbs, gave his son “all the Corne and graine and hay...on the said groundes or in the Barnes”.

Inventories made of the goods of nine people who were in receipt of poor relief in 1766 list items, most of which must have been in many village homes during the Tudor and Stuart periods also, no doubt included in the last bequest of most wills – “the residwe of all my goodes chatels and howsold stufe”. Such articles were bellows, warming pans, lanterns, spinning wheels, reels for winding yarn, box irons, a “belmettemorter”, a “Sasspan”, two glasses, wooden bottles, a balance, a trivet, a fender, a corner cupboard and a “nest of Drawers”. The same applies to household implements like coppers and boilers (for washing and brewing), tubs and washtubs, pails and two half hogsheads (of 27 gallon capacity), and also to tools like mattocks, spades, forks, bills, broomhooks, hammers and a “logbettle” (mallet). The “Teacattle” (kettle) means that tea had arrived in village homes before 1766 and the “colegrate” in two homes shows that coal was being used as fuel in addition to wood. The one clock in the inventories would have been a rarer article.

Nearly a hundred years passes before any further information regarding homes is forthcoming, until in 1838 General Strutt had a pair of cottages built on land adjoining Bowling Alley house, for which the detailed plans, elevations and specifications have survived. Each cottage was to have a sitting room and a back room, both with fireplaces, and to share a bakehouse supplied with a large brick oven. Above each sitting room there was to be the one bedroom with a fireplace and two closets (cupboard).

The General asked for estimates from Richard Saward, bricklayer, and from another of the Saward family for the carpentry work; these estimates were £98.3.10. and £83.8.6 and a half pennies respectively. The bricklayer was “To work up all the old Bricks and bats in the foundation and oven and chimney as far as they will go – new bricks afterwards”. It was estimated that 4,125 red bricks, 2,350 white bricks, 400 plain tiles and 30 ridge tiles would be required. He was to pave the lower rooms, the closets in the sitting room and the pantries; build the fireplaces, oven and chimneys; do all iron work and plaster the walls and ceilings. The back rooms and bakehouse were to be whitewashed and the other rooms coloured. The carpenter was to construct the “body” of the building and to install the timbers of the roof and walls, the floor and ceiling joists, the staircases and the weatherboarding on the outside. He was to provide doors, skirtings, chimneypieces and shelves for all the closets and the pantries. The window frames were his responsibility and they were to be sash frames, half to slide, with some leaded lights, while the pantries were to have lattices with shutters inside. He was to supply all window fastenings, hinges, locks to the outside doors, bolts, thumb latches and knobs. These two cottages were undoubtedly better built than most labourers’ homes and their tenants therefore fortunate.

(original script of will)

The collection of Tudor and Stuart wills, in addition to providing information about homes, illustrates the close community of families and friends in the small village where everyone must have known everyone else and many were related.

Generally the last clause in a will was the appointment of an executor or executors and sometimes in addition a supervisor or overseer. The executor’s first duty was to obtain probate, usually granted within a few days by the commissary court, after which he or she

could start to fulfil the desires of the testator. The duty could seldom have been a sinecure. In most cases a man nominated his wife as executrix, or failing her, a son or brother. Thomas Oughan for example in 1490 said “the resedew of all my goodes not bequeathed I gif to Thomas Oughane my son the which Thomas I ordeyn and make meyn executor that he dispose for my sowle as it pleasith god and him and John Oughane of muche Badew my brother overseer that my will be performed and he to have for his labor iiis. iiiid.” John Radley’s supervisor in 1518 was “to have for hys trew dylygence and labor xiis. iiiid.” The payment of legacies was made before witnesses, to safeguard the executor, as is shown by a deposition at the consistory court in 1584. John Bilt, blacksmith, formerly of Great Baddow, deposed as to being summoned to the house of his new neighbour in Little Baddow to be a witness to the payment of a legacy to John Petchie, younger, by the will of John Petchie, elder. In 1602 Elizabeth Hawkes stipulated that the money she left to her four children was “to be payd on lammasse daye next In little Baddowe churchporche”, thereby ensuring a number of witnesses.

Amongst the interdependent villagers small debts were incurred for goods and services. Thomas Grome in 1537 bequeathed “my greatest caldrone to my executors to be sold to help to pay my dettes”. At the end of the will of William Gowers of 1573 was written a list of debts owing to the testator (which the executor would have had to try to collect) – “Item the said Brodesheaf the carpenter doth ow to William Gowers for to be received at thannunciacion of our blessed ladye next cumming xiiiis. Item Thomas Gowers of Pretwell oweth to William Gowers to be payd at Ester next cumming xiiiis. Also William Gowers of Pretwell doth owe to the said William Gowers xxd..” Anne Tilbury added a codicil to her will leaving to Ede Stanes, her kinswoman, 40s. to be paid within two months of her death “which forty shillings Samewell Gignes of litel badowe oweth me”. She was also owed £20 upon bond by a cousin.

The wife of the testator, if she were still living, was generally the first person to be provided for in a man’s will. William Serridge in 1588 left everything to his wife saying “he was sorie that he had no more to Leve her”. On the other hand John Stacey in 1715 sounds somewhat reluctant when he states “I am obliged by Bond upon Marriage to my now wife Mary in Consideration of her Marriage porcion to leave and pay my said wife the just summe of Three hundred pounds”. A few men holding freehold land mentioned the third part of his estate to which his widow by law, was entitled. In 1639 for instance Abraham Pond left to his wife her dower or “thirds” to be “sett out...to her by discrete men of the neighborhood without any suite by law”, as well as the residue “to dispose att her pleasure.” Thomas Oughan in 1490 stated “I wil that Sibill my wife have all her goodes that she hadde that day that I maryed hyr bothe quyke and ded as sufficient as they were and better”. Thomas Hikson (1625) seems to have distrusted his wife when he instructed that she was not to “alter the property of any of my goods within the house or withought”, sell or give away goods, or marry, without the consent of the vicar and another man, who were to pay her sums of money as she needed it for bringing up the children. In some cases many of the household goods (including the best bed) were left to children, so that a few widows must have found themselves with little remaining in their home. Thomas Bastwick in 1644 made a curious will leaving his wife 5s. stating that if she should be with child and the child were male he was to have £20, or if female £15. Three of his half-sisters were left 30s.each and another 50s. while his brother was to have his house and land and was appointed executor. The widow appears to have been unprovided for.

Normally however a man left a house to his widow for life, as long as she did not re-marry, or else provided that she was to live with one of their children. Richard Bridge, for instance, in 1697 left most of his goods to his wife for “her Comfortable subsistence” and said that she was to have her dwelling in the house “that I now life in one halfe year next after my decease with my son Richard Bridge without paying anything”. Arthur Draper’s wife in 1608 was to have the “use and occupacion of my best upper Chamber in my said dwelling howse with free

access and recourse unto and from the fire in the hall for and about her necessary business yerely during the Terme of her life if she so longe kepe herselfe sole and unmaryd and not otherwise". This was at Gibbs. Edmund Bastwick had made a similar condition in 1572 when he provided that "yf it soo fortune that my wife doe marye after my deathe" she was to have a house at Boreham "and half my household stuff and soo to departe havynge no further adoe with the rest of my goods". The Hearth Tax returns of 1662 and 1671/2 both show twelve householders who were widows, out of totals of sixty-seven and seventy-four.

Parents were anxious to provide fairly and equally for their children. When a man had more than one tenement he usually divided them between his children, especially the sons, but where he had one house only it normally went to the eldest son. Many legacies in money or kind were directed to be paid within a week or so of the testator's (or his wife's) death, or in the case of girls at the age of eighteen or the day of marriage, whichever came first, and at twenty-one or twenty-four in the case of boys. John Buschep in 1532 expressed the latter stipulation as "qwhen he cumet to the yeres of dyscrecione or sufficient age". A few men like Thomas Bastwick made provision for an unborn child. Robert Almon in 1537 said "whereas Syble my wyfe ys with chylde when yt shall please god for to sende yt into thys worlde; yf yt doe lyve I doo gyve and bequethe unto yt iii li. iiis. viiid." of a "man chylde" at the age of twenty-one and if a "woman chylde" at eighteen. There was often a clause stating that, if one child should die, "one shalbe the others hyer" (heir). Some daughters who seem to have been almost overlooked in a will, had in fact already received their portion at marriage. Thomas Gowers, for instance, in 1665 bequeathed to one daughter £5 and another £10, being the remainder of their marriage portions. Amongst other testators, Arthur Draper "very aged and stricken in yeres" left most of his children 12d. a piece as he had already provided for them.

When children were young and the man a widower he might leave his goods to "trusty and welbeloved friends", as did Miles Bowen in 1601, who stated "I appinte the said Thomas Vessy and Richard Sea to have the care custodie and usage" of his goods and chattels "to the benefitte of my said sonnes during thear Mynorities". In most cases however there was a widow to be entrusted with the "Bringing up and Educatinge of my Children". George Stanes for instance in 1588 charged his wife to see "my children decently browght up in loving and in the feare of god". A few years later John Bridges hoped that "Phillipp my loving wife...will be a kind mother unto my said Children and much better their legasies yf she shall fynd them to be dutyfull to her as nature byndeth them to be". In 1561 Thomas Anson arranged that, if his wife died while his son was still young, then "my mother Tenderinge to have the governance of him till he come to age" (his mother-in-law). Joan Radley, widow, entrusted the "kapyng of my children" to her executors until the men children came "to the age that they cane herne ther levying" and the women children married.

A few testators made provision for the schooling or apprenticing of boys and girls. John Buschep (1532) left to his brother's "child which ys brent (burnt) and marred in his one hand vi s. to fynde hym to scole with". John Harris (1578) desired his executors to arrange that his "youngest children shalbe sufficiently kept and provided for with these my goodes until suche tyme they maye be conveniently placed". William Westwood (1635) instructed that part of his property should be used by his wife. "until any of my sayd children shalbe placed out to be apprentices or be out of hur charge". Richard Wyer (1620) left his tools and other articles to his son "within one yeare next after that his tym shall come forth and be expiered of his apprenticeship". Much later, in 1791, John Campion left to one grandson £10 for clothing during the remainder of his apprenticeship and another was to be apprenticed to "some proper Business" at the age of fourteen at a fee not exceeding £15.

In 1621 John Gowers arranged that his elder son by his first wife, Thomas, was to pay to his second wife £5 a year towards the bringing up of her three young children. Thomas's full

brother was to live with him (probably at Whitwells) for two years and “longer as they can agree”, and his full sister was to live with him “att his charge and maintenance doinge him what service she is able for the space of two yeares except my son and the overseer of the will can provide her a convenient service and when she shall depart from my son Thomas he to see that she be well appparelled”. A few years later Judith Wood instructed her eldest son to “mayntayne and keepe his brother Frances Whitlocke with meate drinke and aparill and all other thinges needful and nessecary”. John Greene in 1606 left a message (possibly Hammonds) to his daughter for four years, during which time his son Robert was to have “to his owne use and behoof that Chamber in the sayd message over the Parlor with the bedde and furniture to yt belonging whereon now I lye”, and to have the “kepeinge of one horse upon the premisses with grasse in the sommer and haye in the winter”.

John Hurrell (1709) perhaps had a mentally or physically defective daughter for he desired his wife to “take care of my Daughter Martha as long as she liveth”. John Bruce’s wife was left the residue of his goods in 1727 “in order to take care of my Son Robert Bruce that is now a Lunatick in Bethlehem Hospital and to assist my other Children in any exigencies that may happen amongst them”.

Widow Tilbury (1626) whose “only and loving Sonne George Bigges is in the kinges Maiesties service beyond the seas and his return uncertain”, made him the residuary legatee, but if he never returned the executor was to dispose of the goods at his discretion. Jacob, the son of Elias Pledger, was in “Middletown in North America” in 1799 and was given £1.10.0. “he having received of me his portion”.

His parents were remembered by Christopher Burholme, a single man, when he died in 1684, leaving them money and desiring “that care may be taken to send downe the said mony... to my father and mother living in the county of Cumberland”. John Bocher in 1504 directed that his mother was to have the house in which she was dwelling for the “terme of hyr lyffe”. In 1640 Robert Hakinges left to his “brother Anddruee Hakinges the five pounds that he woos me” and twelve pence each to his other brothers and his sister. Thomas Bastwick in 1644 left his tenement, Loves, to his “welbeloved Brother” and four years later John Whetlocke left his dwelling house (which he did not name) to his brother. Others left legacies to “Jone my syster”, “my cousen Lamb”, “cousen Lambes children”, “Coz John Fuller”, “my Loveinge kinsman”, “my unckle” and to “loving frends” and neighbours. Some people remembered “every of my god children” with gifts of a few pence or, in one case, a lamb each.

Annuities were not uncommon. In 1574 for instance Thomas Lorkyn provided for the payment of £6 a year for fifty-two years to his daughter Joan, which was to revert to his son-in-law, John Harris als. Butcher, on her death. John Harris died four years later leaving to one of his own daughters “an Annuytie of vi li. By the yere dewe to me... after the decease of Johan Larkyn my sister in lawe”. He bequeathed a bed to Joan. The son of Susan Bridge in 1638 was left the “rest of the farme of years yet to Com in my anewety dewe to me from my brother John Langdall”. John Read (1659) bequeathed to his cousin of the same name the “summe of forty shillings yearely and every yeare during his naturall life of lawfull English money at the twoe usual Feasts or Termes in the yeare” (Lady Day and Michaelmas). In a few cases where the testators apparently did not entirely trust a relative they tried to anticipate trouble. Perhaps this did not apply to Walter when Joan Bastwick in 1490 said “I will and desyre yew Walter Molton my son in lawe that ye cheishe my doughter youre wife”, for she went on to say “if ever my son John Bastwyke Cleyme or do to be cleymed this place that I dwelle in called Bubbs”, which she left to Walter, then the latter was to have property (presumably John’s) in Hatfield Peverel. She appointed them joint executors. Clemens Lea in 1619 left to her son, William, “one Grindstone and a boarded bedstede which was late his Fathers desiring him on my blessing to be content therewith and I doe forgive him moreover

all debtes which he doth owe unto me". She finally entreated the overseer of her will to be "a meanes that this my last will may be truly performed without wrong to my said daughters either by my said sonne William or any other". Thomas Wattes in 1630 assigned a tenement to his son-in-law with the injunction that he was to pay 40s. to his son, and said "Butt yf my son in lawe doe Refwes and do not pay the said moonyes" then the son was to have the tenement. Daniels Freeman in 1634 left £20 to his grandson, on condition that if he "Contend and strive" he should have only 12d. John Hawes instructed one daughter, Winnifrid, to pay to her married sister 20s. a year, but if the husband took it, then Winnifred was to buy apparel or other things for her sister.

Servants seem sometimes to have been treated almost as members of the family, as indeed they were when they lived in the house. John Radley for instance left to one servant 26s.8d. and a cow and to the other 20s., while to his sister he left only a cow and to his godchildren 8d. each. His widow bequeathed 10s. and 6s.4d. to her two servants. John Harris left to his maid-servant and his "two prentises" 3s.4d. a year, not specifying for how many years. John Peverill's servant received axes and a handsaw and Margerie Tabor's late servant a pair of sheets. Richard Saxum in 1612 left to "John Bugbie my sarvant all my wearinge apparill over and besides his wages yf so be that he dwell with my sayed wife as her sarvant another yeare taking for that yeare xliiis. Iiiid." (43s.4d.) In 1579, thirty-three years earlier, John Tybboule of Little Baddow had been indicted before the Queens Bench for paying excess wages, that is 53s.4d., to his man-servant, so perhaps Richard Saxum was not being too generous. He also gave one of his maid-servants "for her paynes taking with me ovar and besides her wages one lame to be taken att her choyse amonge my lames". Robert Poole, who died in 1616, had four men-servants and three "mayden" servants to whom he left 5s. each, while ten years later Richard Pryce gave one maid-servant 40s., but the other £10 and said in addition "she shall have all sortes of my hushold stuff some part according to the discretion of my said wyef". On the other hand, in June 1566 the vicar buried Richard, a servant "whose sirname was unknowne".

Christopher Burtholme made his nuncupative will in 1684 saying "I do give and desire that all my fellow servants and to them that watched with me in the time of my sickness and to those that shall help carry me to the grave should have gloves...I give and bequeath unto Elizabeth Maulle one of my fellow servants the summe of ten pounds". Nearly three years later John Eagle from Suffolk, who called Henry Mildmay his master, though he left land and over £250 in cash, bequeathed "to all the servants" 2s. each to buy gloves. Perhaps he was steward at Graces.

CHURCH AND CHAPEL

CHAPTER TWO.

(Sketch of St. Marys Church.)

The Church in the Middle Ages participated in almost every aspect of village life and regulated everyone's activities from Birth to death, but unfortunately there are no mediaeval documents to give instances of this in Little Baddow. It is known that the building of a church by the lord of Little Baddow manor, on the site next to his house probably previously occupied by a Saxon church, was started twenty or thirty years after the Norman Conquest. It became the parish church which was repaired, enlarged and embellished by the villagers and their lords throughout the Middle Ages, especially in the fourteenth and early fifteenth centuries. There was in addition a chapel belonging to the lords of Graces manor, presumably at their house, but it has left no records.

The rectory, to which the lord of Little Baddow manor had the presentation, was a sinecure. The parsonage farm belonged to the rectory, but was normally leased to a farmer and no doubt the rector rarely, if ever, visited the village. He appointed a vicar to perform the pastoral duties. Tithes, the tenth part of the produce of everyone's land, stock and labour, were divided between rector and vicar. The only pre-Reformation vicar who is more than a name is William Colt, who in January 1497 was accused at the court of the Hall manor of an illicit relationship with Margaret, wife of John Felsted. She was ordered to leave the village by Whitsun and her landlord instructed to remove her from his house. The vicar was further accused of entering the belfry and taking away (presumably from the parish chest) various bonds into which he had entered. He was ordered to speak with the lord of the manor – no doubt he had to speak also with his bishop. He remained vicar, however, until at least 1505. The vicars were as much involved with agriculture as any of their parishioners, although they had but five acres of land attached to the vicarage and although we hear nothing of their activities.

The Middle Ages may be barren of ecclesiastical documents, but the thirteen surviving wills made by parishioners before the Reformation (between 1480 and 1538) must reflect the common attitudes of the preceding centuries. All but two of the wills were witnessed, and probably written (possibly influenced) by the vicar – John Bonaventer in 1480, William Colt between 1490 and 1505, Thomas Cale in 1518 and 1521 and William Knyghtbregre in 1538. One will of 1532 was written by a priest who was not the vicar. The wills were proved in the Bishop of London's Commissary Court. Typical of all was the preamble to the will of Joan Bastwick made on 28th July 1490 – “In dei nomine Amen the xxviiith day of the monethe of July in the yere of owre lord god A ml.iiiic.Lxxxx I Johanna Bastwyk of litel Badwe in the countie of Essex in the diocese of London with a pure mynde and hole memory maketh this present testament in the which is conteyned my full last will. First I bequethe my sowle to all myght god the blessed virgen cristes mother and to all the holy company of heven my body to be buried in the church yerd of seynt mary of litell Badwe...”

The earliest will of all, that of John Oughan of 1480, gives 2s. as an offering to the altar at Little Baddow church, and of the other twelve wills all except one have as their first bequest a few pence or shillings (or in one case “ii of my best Shepe”) to the “hie aultar”. Thomas Oughan (1490) left his 12d. to the high altar for his tithes “not trewly tithed”; Joan Bastwick's 4s.8d. was “for tythes for goten” and John Radley's 10s. “for my Tythes and offryngs neclygently Forgotten and withholden”. Gifts were also made for the upkeep and decoration of the church and for the tapers burning there (a reminder of the colour and light in the mediaeval church). Among these were 3s.4d. “towards the payntyng of the Canapie of the hie aultar”, the same “to the payntyng of the Image of our lady in the Chancell”, 20d. to the “reparacione” of the church, 40s. “unto the Brokyn Bell ther”, “A towell to the use of the High Awter”, “to the Taper called oure lady taper too yeres after my decease yerely iis”. “to the light of seynt Margaret in litel Badwe vid.” for a taper burning afore the Rood on the Rood loft Cow”, “I gyff a cow to maynteyne with a tabur in our Lady Chancell for evermore” and also “a Torche” (a large candle). The cows would be rented out, or perhaps sold, and the money used for the tapers.

It was customary to provide for memorial services to be held for the testator as well as for relatives and friends. Joan Bastwick said “I will that my husbondes obite and meyner to be kept in the church of litel Badwe according to my husbondes will...I bequethe to every priest being at my dirige and masse vid. And to every seculer clerk iiid. Item I will that the vicary of litel Badwe that is to seye Sir William Colt saye for my sowle and all christen sowles A trentall of masses the first yere after my decease and he to have for his labor xs. And it for to be don in litel Badwe”. An obit was an anniversary service, a dirige a funeral service and a trentall a series of thirty masses. Cecily Gatton (1504) asked that “after my decesse a trentall be song in littil Badow Chirch for my soule” for which she allocated 10s. Roger Hammond (1512) required his executors to pay “an honest priest for to singe in Lytyll Badowe church

the space of a yere and he to have over to his wages x marks for that yere” (£6.13.4.) John Radley (1518) left the same amount to Sir Thomas Water “for to Syng and prey for me and my frends in the same church of litell Badow aforesaid the space of one whole yere”. Thomas Water (“Sir” was a courtesy title given to clergy) may have been a chantry priest attached to Little Baddow church. Radley in addition bestowed four kine (cows) on his parish church “to thentent ther to kepe an yerly obbyt with the same kene for me and my Frendes and all Chysten soulys for evermore”. He could not know that “evermore” would last so short a time. John Buschep (1532) left five kine for the same purpose and instructed that “the sayd keyne shall remeane within the towne”. Thomas Grome (1538) provided money for the “charges of my burial, monthes day and yeres day” (masses to be said a month and a year after his death). John Radley was the only person to dedicate one of his sheep as a fore drove an animal driven before the funeral procession and given to the church. A few people made a small donation to the “mother church of Poulls”, “the Cathedral church of St. Powle in London” or to “Powlis pardon” (probably a chapel in St. Pauls Cathedral), and one man gave 3s. to the “freers of Chelmissford” (friars). There are no documents to inform us of the opinions of the villagers concerning Henry VIII’s ecclesiastical changes and there is not even a will between 1538 and 1557. In the two wills of 1557, during Catholic Queen Mary’s reign, no bequest was made to the church, but otherwise they followed the pattern of the earlier ones and were witnessed by William Miller, the vicar. The next wills from 1560 show the effect of the Elizabethan religious settlement, for Protestant influence was apparent in wording like – “First I Bequithe my soule into the handes of Almyghtie god my maker and my bodye I commende into the earthe in sure and certayne hope of resurrection unto eternall lyfe through the meryttes of Jesus Christ myn onely Savyor and redeemer”. In the next century Puritanism may be inferred from words such as those in the will of John Hawes in 1626 (drawn up by a scrivener but no doubt expressing the testator’s sentiments) “I commend my selfe and my soule unto allmightie god my Creator and maker and to his onelie Sonne Jesus Christ my Saviour and redeemer by whose bitter death and passion suffered for me and all mankind I Trust and doe believe to be saved and to be accompted amongst the number of his Faithfull and elect Children at the daie of Judgment”. No bequests were made in these later wills to the church, but there were very occasional ones to the minister, who was rarely a witness. Thomas Lorkyn in 1574 left 6s4d. to Henry Steare, vicar, and three people remembered “my loving minister Mr. Newton” between 1621 and 1638. Richard Reade alias Carter in 1616 said “I am verie wilinge to give vi s. to som godly honest preacher to bestowe a portion of his labor att my buryall”.

While many testators desired to be buried in the churchyard of Little Baddow, some were more specific, such as Thomas Vessey who in 1626 asked for his “bodye to be buried in the southe porch of the parishe Church of Badowe aforesaide where divers of my Ancestors have heretofore bene buried”. Henry Lynsell, his relative, in 1682 wished to be buried in the church porch “in the same grave where my mother was formerly buried and that the gravestone that now lyeth in the said Church porch and that must be taken up for the making my grave may be in the same manner laid downe again”. Thomas French asked that his wife should “se him Reverently browght to the yearth”; Margerie Tabor (amongst others) instructed that her body was to be “committed to the earth according to the order of Christian Buriall” and John Read, “ill and Crasie of Body” was one of those who wished to be “decently buried”. Richard Payton in 1611 provided 30s. for his funeral dinner and Christopher Burtholme left gloves to all who should help to carry him to the grave.

The church and churchyard were kept in repair and the finances of the church administered by the two churchwardens, one appointed by the vicar and the other elected at the annual Easter vestry meeting. This office went back to the Middle Ages, but the earliest references to the wardens are in Elizabethan times. They were chosen from among the prosperous parishioners – in the 1570s and 1580s from men like John Radley, tanner, Edmund Bastwick, husbandman, John Hawes, miller and Thomas Gowers, yeoman. The churchwardens obtained the money to carry out their duties from fees, gifts and a few rents, but mainly from

a church rate, levied on all villagers (apart from the poorest) assessed according to the amount of rent they paid. The wardens received no remuneration. They were expected to attend the Archdeacon's courts, held at more or less monthly intervals, in order to "present" or report any misdemeanours in the parish. The records of the Archidiaconal courts, with cases concerning Little Baddow villagers from 1572 until 1666, show the many aspects of life with which the Church concerned itself. The court to which local wrongdoers usually had to travel was held in Great Baddow church.

The wardens sometimes had difficulty in collecting the rates and other dues, as in 1596 when they reported to the court that Mr. Bristowe had refused to pay 12d. for his lands in the parish. Mr. Bristowe was also accused of withholding 6s.8d. due when he broke up the ground in the church to bury his wife. In 1589 Hugh Gill and John Bastwick refused to pay towards the bread and wine, while a few years later John Johnson would not pay his part towards the repairs of the church "which he was rated at by Sir John Smythe and others". Another time Richard /Sea was the culprit for not paying certain rent to the churchwardens; he asserted that he was ready to pay but that there was no lawful churchwarden to receive it. In 1680 several people refused to pay the rate, including Edmund Butler who said irritably that he was taxed illegally and also that there were church rents enough without the rate. He was of the non-conforming congregation.

The parishioners seem to have accepted the Elizabethan settlement, although one of the most frequent presentments by the churchwardens concerned absence from church services on Sundays and holy days and from communion. Excuses for this were various – "He had other affairs", "for fear of arresting" and "he hath had a great distemper". Hugh Gill in 1587 made the somewhat contradictory statement "that by reason he hathe bene visited by the hand of God with great paine in one of his knees that he could not sturr for the past viii or ix weeks and also for that he hathe bene in suit in lawe and hathe bene thereby much from home colde not come to divine service". In 1665 the churchwardens themselves were censured for "not coming to the Communion at Christmas nor at Easter nor yet for presenting any others though there were a general default". Of one man it was reported "The parson thinketh that he is not fit to receive the Communion".

A few people refused to attend church because they were Catholics, the most persistent of these "popish recusants" around 1600 being Dorothy, wife of Giles Blake of Bassetts, and also her sisters of the Tweedy family. They were all many times presented at Quarter Sessions, as well as the church courts, for the offence, together with a few other people like Eleanor Long, gentlewoman, Thomas Emery of Riffhams and Mary Smythe who was "fleeinge" and lodged with Richard Carter until he was reprimanded. Later, in 1679, William Spencer of Riffhams was indicted at the Assizes because he kept Elizabeth Cooke in his service, knowing she did not go to church. She may have been a Puritan, not a Catholic.

Some people performed actions on Sundays for which they were presented at the Archdeacon's court. One man had "tedded grass the Sondag before St. Peters Day", another "mendeth shoes on the Lords Day" and another "boasts to persons on the Saboth Day – mis-spending their time vainly". In the alehouse kept by Richard Sea there was "dauncing in service time". One Sunday in 1637 the parish officers found Thomas Vessey, tanner, in his barn at service time and they suspected that he was shaving bark. He took an oath that he was sick and could not go to church so that the court discharged him on his paying the fees of 2s.8d., but noted that he was "a man of great estate and an evill example".

Drunkenness and swearing resulted in a number of people making the journey to court. In 1613, for instance, Thomas Vessey, when he was "disguised with drink about the latter end of May did greatly misuse John Hawes one of the Wardens". John Vessey in 1636 "was druncke on the Saboth Day ... and did then come into Mr. Newton's yard and did spue and tumble there". (Mr. Newton was the vicar). He confessed that he had been "overseen with

drink” and was ordered to pay the court fees. Once John Sargeant had been found asleep in church, it was supposed because of overmuch drink. Another time the churchwardens reported that Goodwife Gyppes “was drunk and had to lead her home and Goodwife Sewell was in a like case”. In 1608 they had to present Nicholas Nevell as a common swearer and blasphemer of the name of God. He admitted “that at some times when he is offended and provoked he doth forget himself by swearing”.

The archidiaconal court attempted to safeguard sexual morals the most common presentment being for “incontinence before marriage”. When William and Sarah Whitbread were taken to court on this charge they said that she had been punished for it in the House of Correction in Chelmsford.

Page 19

Henry Tabor in 1608 was accused of “withholding one Briggs wife for xii weeks suspiciously against her husbands mynd”. He declared that he received her with her husband’s consent. In 1636 John Vessey was suspected of fornication with the wife of Thomas Turnishe, Elizabeth, who on one occasion with Frances Silvester, went to his chamber, pulled him out of bed and endeavoured to sew him up in a sheet. He was fined 20d.

The minister himself sometimes had to appear before the court, such as in 1572 when the vicarage was out of repair, though Henry Steare, the vicar, declared that he had bestowed the fifth part of his benefice upon the repairs and would continue to do so. Mr. Steare was elsewhere described as “a gamester, sometime a tailor”. The vicar in 1597, James Whelehowse, was accused of being drunk and said in mitigation “that he being in company with Divers of his friends, they violently urged him to drink more than was fit”. In 1603 it was reported of the rector “that he doth not distribute the 40th part of his lyvinge to the poor according to the Statute”. Nearly eighty years later Mr. Shoard, vicar, was reprimanded for “not catechising the youth he coming to his cure but once a fortnight”. In 1665 when Robert Howse, vicar, was in dispute with the parish over the payment of certain money, he claimed that “the parish have been very unreasonable in their usage and demand of him”. At the same court Edmund Butler, reported for burying children without Christian burial and not churching his wife, asserted that “this presentment was made out of meer malice by Mr. House or his procurement”.

John Newton, vicar from at least 1621 until his death in January 1647, had troublesome parishioners in John Cooke (who may have been his church clerk) and his wife, Susan. In 1627 John Cooke was accused of “slandering and abusing our minister” and admitted “that he had done Mr. Newton wrong in speeches and was sorry for it”. His wife alleged that Mr. Newton “taught well but that he did not live accordingly for that he did bear malice etc.” Susan, being a Puritan, did not approve of him wearing a surplice and in 1635 was presented at court “for hanging her linnen in the church to dry and when the Minister Mr Newton told her of it she said she might hang her rags there as well as the surplice and bad him do his worst”. Her daughter had added that “it were a good turn if he were hung up there”. According to their testimony, Mr. Newton thereupon “beate and stroke” Susan and “did strike her over the shoulders with a stick”. She was absolved at a later court on payment of 5s.

Otherwise Mr. Newton seems to have been well regarded, was remembered in the wills of a few of his parishioners and appointed executor or overseer by others. He had Puritan leanings and supported two suspended ministers who started a school in the parish. At a

conference at Terling in 1644 Mr. Newton spoke, with two other Essex clergymen, upholding infant baptism, against two London Baptists (a physician and a “sope boyler”).

The churchwardens meantime were keeping the church fabric and furnishings in good condition. Their earliest recorded action was in 1567 when they gave Chelmsford churchwardens a “fayre antifone” (book of sacred songs) and received in exchange three old vestments of blue damask. Early in 1589 the wardens were presented at the archidiaconal court because “Their church is in decay by reason of the last Wynds” – perhaps the gales which had scattered the Spanish Armada in August and September 1588. Thomas Gowers, one of the wardens, promised to repair the damage by Easter. They were censured in 1608 for not providing a bible nor a cloth for the communion table. They replied that they “went to London to buy a Byble but could not get any for money” so that they had “borrowed a Byble such a one as is authorised which continueth in the church until they can be provided”. At one court the wardens reported that there was a grave in the church uncovered which Mr. Blake ought to attend to, and at another they presented Thomas Vessey for “not mending his father’s grave whereby the water runs into the church”. There survive two reports made after visitations by the Archdeacon to inspect the condition of the church. The first, made in the time of Archbishop Laud in 1638, found a number of matters requiring attention by the churchwardens. In the chancel, the walls were to be wainscoted, a ceiling made and a chest and seat removed. A rail with a door in the centre was to be put across in front of the altar. This would not have pleased the Puritans who thought Laud was leading the country back to Catholicism. The top of the pew in the chancel belonging to Matthew Rudd was to be taken down so as to lower it one and a half ft. A “fair cover” was required for the font. The pulpit was to be provided with a cloth and the cushion to be covered with the same cloth. The pavement of the aisle was to be replaced and the windows were to be glazed. The churchwardens were to provide a table of the degrees of marriage on the wall, a poor box, a flagon for wine and a surplice and hood for the minister. Outside, the wall and the buttresses of the chancel were to be repaired.

At the 1686 Visitation it was noted approvingly that there was a “silver Cupp with a Cover to it which serves to administer the bread upon”, a pewter flagon, a surplice, a linen cloth for the communion table, a table of the degrees of marriage, a “booke of Homilys and a Booke of Cannons”. There followed however a list of items which required amendment before the Michaelmas visitation. The chest standing under the east window was to be removed and communion table placed before the east window with the old rails, or new ones, set up in front of the table. The paving of the chancel was to be made even, the pews on the north side to be paved and the one on the south side repaired, several other pews required repair and all needed bases on which the people could kneel. The pew belonging to Dr. Bramston (of Bassetts) and the corner one belonging to Col. Mildmay (of Graces) wanted boarding. A partition was to be made with deal boards between the church and the belfry. The nave and chancel were to be whitewashed and the commandments and sentences of scripture renewed. A chest with two locks and keys was needed in which to keep the register, or else another lock was to be fitted to the old chest. The bible needed re-binding. The bushes in the churchyard were to be cut and the rubbish carried away.

In 1633 the churchwardens received an appeal from two justices of the peace “By vertue of his Majesties Commission under the great seale of England to us and other directed for the desiringe and requestinge of the ayde and helpe and benovolence of all his lovinge subjects within his Realme of England for and towards the repayringe of the decayes and preventing of the Further Ruines of the Cathedrall Church of St. Paules in London famous for the magnificent structure an ornament for that cittye and the mother Church of this diocesse...” The Churchwardens and the minister were asked to collect the money which the inhabitants “shall willingly Confer and bestowe towards that soe good and pious worke”. This was of course the mediaeval cathedral, later destroyed in the Fire of London. It is not recorded how

much the villagers willingly bestowed. The wardens were to receive many more such "briefs", usually appealing for help for small village churches.

The everyday work of the churchwardens in later times is illustrated by their accounts commencing in the year 1742. Among the wardens during this century were John Bruce of Little Baddow Hall (1728-1730), Isaac Pledger (1755-64), Richard Sorrell of Tofts (1764-70), Thompson Stoneham, J.P. of Whitwells (1770-81), William Johnson (1781-9) and his nephew Johnson Clark (1789-1812) both of Little Baddow mill. Some of them found writing difficult, but they entered in the books all their expenditure and the amount of the rate collected. This was followed by a note to say "Account setelld. And paid by the Concent of the parish" either yearly or at the end of the warden's term of office, such as in 1745 when the warden "Setteled 3 years accounts Last Past". The comparative stability of prices until the 1790s, and then the rise during the French Wars and their aftermath, are confirmed by the amount of the churchwardens' annual expenditure. For many years after 1742 they spent between £3 and £4 but after 1810 it was between £10 and £15. Among the regular items in the accounts were the expenses for the churchwardens' attendances at archidiaconal visitations (in Chelmsford, Maldon or Danbury), such as in 1743:

Ap. 30 paid at the Vistesion at Moldan	5. 0.
paid the Paretor (Apparitor, a court official)	1. 0.
My expence	2. 6.

At the first visitation after their election they had to take an oath for which they were charged 1s.

Half page of original script accounts.

The church clerk was paid his small wage by the wardens. In the case of Abraham Cass, in office from before 1729 until 1760, and succeeded by his son of the same name, the wage was 12s. every year, besides the fees. William Bruster was clerk from 1768 until 1788, followed by Lazarus Blanks, who was receiving £1 annually in the 1790s, and was in office until 1839.

In most years there were payments for repairs to the church building, like 1743 when the bricklayer was paid 6s.10d., the blacksmith 1s. and the carpenter £1.8.0. In the same year one and a half bushels of lime were purchased for 1s., 100 laths for 2s., 50 bricks for 9d. and 2s.6d. was paid for fetching a load of clay and mulch. In later years typical disbursements were:-

Paid for Briks and Work	1. 7.
Paid Shaklton for Menden the Church window	1. 0.
For Work Menship and Nals	1. 8.
Paid to the Glaser for Manden the Church Winders	4. 4.
Paid for Tyles and Worck Done to the Church	2. 0.
To Mr. Nichols 300 of Tiles 1 Bush. of Lime and Carting	7. 2.

In 1749 more work than usual was undertaken and a bill was received from Thomas Belcher for carpenter's work done at the church:-

Page 23

Two New Windows	£8. 4. 10.
To petitioning bellfrey from the Church	£8. 19.
To Making new Church Door Repairing the Church yard pales	£4. 3. 6.
William Cramner was paid at the same time:-	
For plaster wark dun at Little Baddow Church	

A found All Materials	£8. 0. 0.
For Plaistering About the New door and putting Out St. Christifer	3. 0.

The last item was the white-washing, not for the first time, of the wall-painting of St. Christopher which remained hidden until its discovery in 1922.

Another busy year was 1760, when 1,800 tiles, 7 bushels of lime and some clay were used at the church, while the vestry was repaired with weather-boards. In 1790 the vestry meeting voted £50 towards repairs to the church and four years later they agreed to allow a penny rate towards "Building a singing pew". The meeting in 1770 agreed that the paling round the churchyard should be repaired, half at the expense of the parish and half at that of the minister, and when Thomas Saward had completed the work he was paid £1.15.2. by the churchwardens, being their portion of the cost. Other expenses were incurred for the churchyard, such as 1s.6d. "To Stephen Sullings for spreading greavel in the Churchyard", 1s.3d. to "Old Graffes for mouen the Charch Yard" and 1s. "To Stub the Walk from the Little Gate to the Church door". In 1791 "5 days work of a man levelling the churchyard" cost 7s.6d. and in 1825 "cleaning and laying the gravel walks" cost 5s.

In 1742 "a new Sete Bell Roaps waid 30 pound and a half" was bought for £1.0.4.; seven years later "niu Bals Rops" were 17s.3d. and in 1753 "A New Sate Bell Ropas" cost 15s.6d. During the previous year 3s. had been charged for "Mending the Beil Weiles" and two years later 1s. was spent on "two trundles for the Bail weils". The ringers were paid 4s. each 5th November and extra on special occasions such as "the Thenkes Geven Day" and the "Crownashon" (Coronation of George 111).

In 1743 5yd. Of matting together with nails and tape were purchased for 5s.6d. and later another piece of matting for the chancel for 6s. and "Hocke to hang Matten one" for 8d. One year 2d. was spent on "won Stepel for Pulpet dor". A lantern was bought for 1s. 6d. and then seven years later "A Glais lantorn" for 7s.6d. In other years a pound of candles cost 6d. half a pint of oil 6d., a lock 4s10d. and mending the church key 8d. In 1764 was purchased an almanac for 6d. and "a mop to Clean the church" for 8d. The churchwarden expended 8s on six hassocks in 1786 and 4s.6d. for a "Booch for the Singer". In 1750 2s. was paid for cloth and mending the parson's surplice, but five years later Mrs. Perry was paid 7s. for making a new one. Later 12s. was given for washing the surplice and in 1781 £3.2.0. was the charge "for the Cirpluss and Making". In 1754 "A ragirster Book" was purchased for £1.1.0.

During some years one or two shillings had to be spent on "a Form of Prayer for the fast day" or for "a Procklamation for the fast day" or form of prayer "for beging Success to our Arms in time of Warr". In happier years the expenditure was for a form of prayer for thanksgiving for "taking of Quebec" "the Suckcess by Admiral Hawkes at Sea" and "her Majestys Delivery". One shilling was paid in 1779 "for the Bishops Letter for the propogation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts".

Under Statutes of 1566 and later, churchwardens were enabled to pay for vermin destroyed, which in Little Baddow meant foxes and badgers. In 1742 for instance the warrener at Graces was given 8s. for eight foxes. Joseph Flack in 1755 had 5s. "For Catching five Foxes" and Isaac Barker 1s. "for a Bagett". In 1758 there was much slaughter – twelve foxes and ten badgers. By 1770s the rate had been increased so that a bitch fox (one was caught in Black grove) cost the parish 62.8d., a dog fox 3s4d. and a cub 1s. From 1817 to 1819 the wardens spent £573.5.0d and a halfpenny, most of this being for the rebuilding of the vestry and the erection of the West gallery (though nowhere in the accounts is this stated. Samuel Saward, the carpenter, was paid over £270; Richard Saward, the bricklayer, £204; Lazarus Blanks, the blacksmith, £15; and Russell, the glazier, nearly £10. Since 1812 the wardens had bought for the vestry a writing desk with pen, ink and paper, an iron bookcase, chairs and

a stove with fender, fire-irons and sifter. In 1829 £10 was paid for "Church stove and Putting up". Twice every winter a quarter caldron of coals was purchased from the wharf on the canal. One year "2 Branch Pulpit Lights" were bought and installed in the church for £1.5.0. The Cup was repaired and new Communion plate and a font basin bought. Mrs. Foster was paid 2s. 4d. for mending hassocks in 1821 and Shipman supplied hassocks every few years at under 2s. each. A prayer book was provided for the church clerk in 1827, who the following year, in his capacity as blacksmith, did some work on the church steeple. The registers were kept in an iron chest, which in 1833 was exchanged for a larger one at a cost of £2.2.0.

A few draft notes exist, dated 1826, which must have been written by a churchwarden, stating that the church, its furnishings and the churchyard were all in good order and repair. The chancel was maintained by Col. J.H. Strutt. The registers were regularly kept and housed in a well-painted iron chest. He added that "Decent and orderly behaviour has ever been observed and no disturbance ever happened in my time...Our Minister has resided in the parish continually and was never absent, regularly performing his own duty – visiting the sick and administering the sacrament – Baptisms, Marriages and Burials." The latter remarks referred to Arthur Johnson, vicar from 1789, when he succeeded John Steffe, until his death in 1842 at the age of 95.

(Picture of L.B. Meeting House)

Dissent was prevalent in East Anglia, although the reasons for strong Puritanism in Little Baddow in particular are unclear. It seems to have taken hold in late Elizabethan times with families like the Bundock als. Saffolds, Drapers, Hawes, Ponds and Wattes. It may be that George Withers, Rector of Danbury from 1572, who had been in exile in Switzerland during Queen Mary's reign and had met there many leaders of the Reformation, influenced inhabitants of the neighbouring parish. Perhaps the continuing growth of dissent in the early seventeenth century had some relation to the strong influence of Sir John Smythe lasting until 1607, followed by ineffective leadership from the manors. Perhaps the brief sojourn of Thomas Hooker and John Eliot in 1630/1 had an effect; probably the ministry of John Newton helped. It was however likely to have been due to factors of which no knowledge now remains. What is certain is that by 1640 leaders of dissent had emerged in the persons of Matthew Rudd (lessee of the Parsonage and other farms), John Levet (tenant of Cuckoos and Filiols) and Jacob Maldon, the latter two becoming elders of the Chelmsford Classis, an area organised under the Presbyterian system. About 1640 Henry Mildmay, lord of Graces and of Puritan education, came of age, while new non-conforming families like the Puttos and the Pledgers settled in the village. Sir Gobert Barrington, of Puritan sympathies, bought the Hall and Tofts manors and lived at the latter house from the mid-1650s. Finally in 1662 Thomas Gilson, vicar since 1651, resigned his living rather than conform to the established church, and, with some of the parishioners, formed a separate congregation. They are believed first to have met at Tofts and then in 1672 John Oakes, their next minister, licensed his house (Watts) as the meeting place. Later, according to tradition, Cuckoos was used, being occupied by Isaac Putto, son-in-law of Richard Rand, minister from 1679.

In 1708 Francis Barrington, son of Sir Gobert, conveyed Bridge croft to the minister, Thomas Leavesley, together with Edmund Butler and three other gentlemen of London and Springfield, for a building to be erected there and used as a "Meeting house for the public worship of God by the dissenting congregation of Protestants in and about Little Baddow aforesaid whereof the said Thomas Loewesley is now Minister or Parson". On 11th January 1709 was granted "A Lycence for a New Erected Brick building in the parish of Little Baddow...For a Meeting House for the Worship and Service of God according to Act of parliament. Presbeterians." Mr. Leavesley is reputed to have had a congregation of about three hundred persons. Francis Barrington gave £200 in addition to trustees for the use of the chapel, part of which is said to have been expended in 1794 for the erection of the manse. His mother also gave £200. A parishioner, Margaret Griggs, in 1709 left 40s. in her will to

Mr. Leavesley and gave £5 “to be put out at Interest for the use of Mr. Leavesly present minister and pastor of the Congregation”, the interest to be paid half-yearly to him and to his successors.

In 1706 Elizabeth Pettit licensed her house (un-named) in Little Baddow as a place of “meeting for the People called Quakers”, but there is no further record of this.

No documents concerning the meeting house and congregation survive from the eighteenth century, and in 1883 Miss Nancy Barnard, aged ninety, said she remembered hearing of a fire which destroyed old documents. Throughout that century however many leading villagers had been dissenters, such as the Pledger family, the Hodges of the Papermill and Coleraines, the Taylors of Little Baddow hall and the Harts of Hammonds. In 1758 the minister, John Steffe, followed his patron, Lord Barrington, into the Church of England and became vicar of the parish. Evan Jones was minister between 1764 and 1780; his daughter married William Hart, farmer. In the time of William Parry, minister from 1780 until 1799, some members are said to have emigrated to America, apparently among them Jacob Pledger, whose father, Elias, when making his will in 1799, said he was in “Middletown in North America”. As a result the congregation was depleted when the Rev. Stephen Morell became minister in 1799, but during his long pastorate many new members were received. In about 1829 he wrote that “Our place of worship will accommodate about 450 persons but as many individuals who frequently attend...are not themselves Dissenters I conclude that we may calculate our real number upon a fair average at 350 persons.”. Some of these came from neighbouring villages.

A by-product of Puritanism in the village was a number of biblical names given to their children by nonconformists during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, such as Abraham, Benjamin, Boas, Daniel, Elias, Isaac, Joseph, Jeremiah, Samuel, Hannah, Judith, Rebecca, Ruth and Sarah.

Chapter III

WORK

Before 1066 the few inhabitants of the small village of scattered farmsteads that was Little Baddow must all have been engaged in agriculture either as masters or servants. Any specialised task that was beyond the wide-ranging skills of the majority of villagers – such as iron or wood, would have been done by travelling craftsmen or at the local towns. The exception to this must have been milling, as Little Baddow watermill was operating by 1086 and probably had its origins in Saxon times. The lack of documents covering the early Middle Ages means that nothing can be certain about the development of the village at that time, but it may be supposed that as the village population slowly increased after the Norman Conquest there would have been need of, for instance, a resident blacksmith or carpenter. Such services could not have been undertaken by the free tenants, nor by the unfree tenants holding fair-sized tenements which provided employment for themselves and their families and which carried the obligation to perform a number of work services for their lord. The “cottars” or unfree tenants of a cottage and small croft or garden entailing few “daywerkes” and with insufficient land to keep them fully occupied or their families fed, would have been glad to undertake paid work for the larger tenants or for the lord himself. Some would have

become herdsmen or carters or gained proficiency in a craft or trade to become the , wood, iron, cloth and leather workers of the village. Over the centuries many of these flourished and, in their turn, employed workmen and acquired tenements and land to leave to their sons.

The earliest extant documents show that Roger le Herd and John le Taillur were living in Little Baddow around 1300 and no doubt following the occupations of herdsman and tailor. It was about this time that surnames were becoming widely used and hereditary among the common people, so that John Hierde of 1369 must have been descended from a herdsman but may not have been one himself. His fellow-villager, John Harris alias dicti Bocher, is an example of a man who had a surname but was also named for his trade – perhaps to distinguish him from another branch of his family. Whatever the reason, the family used the double surname for over two hundred years and descendants of the original man, like John Herry otherwise called Bocher of 1451, may still have been following the family trade. John Harris als. Butcher however, who died in 1578, had become a tanner. Between 1400 and 1500 there were living in the village men named Henry Carpenter, John Cokke (cook), John Fuller, Henry Glover, John Hosier, John Miller, John Sawyer, Thomas Skinner, John Smyth and John Tanner whose ancestors of a century or two earlier must have pursued those occupations, possible in Little Baddow itself – unless indeed they were so engaged themselves, for surnames were still not universal nor unalterable. As late as 1383, for instance, a man could be called simply Roger son of Andrew, while Robert Baloyne, herdsman in the years around 1407, was sometimes called Robert Herde, and his descendants might have taken either name.

The documents give little help in illuminating the working lives of the people of Little Baddow. It is certain however that, century after century, agriculture was the main concern of everyone and their lives were governed by the seasons. This must have been a bond drawing all together whatever their status in the village hierarchy. At the top of the social scale in Tudor, Stuart and Hanoverian Little Baddow (apart from the gentry and the vicar) were the yeomen, an appellation signifying their status next below that of gentleman. They were usually farmers, descended from the freemen of the Middle Ages, holding freehold farms, such as Filiols, Cuckoos, Holybreds or Hammonds, but could be in addition (superior tradesmen, such as tanners, millers, or maltsters. The smaller farmers (who also could have a trade) were the husbandmen, descended from the unfree tenants (the villeins) of the Middle Ages and usually holding copyhold farms, such as Gibbs, Eastmans, and Loves. The word “farmer” was not used until late in the eighteenth century.

Elias Pledger was called a farmer in 1774 but when he made his will in 1799 he named himself a yeoman. Henry Foot in 1735 called himself a yeoman and his son in 1779 was a farmer. The Harts, father and son, of Hammonds, dying within eight years of each other, described themselves as gentleman and farmer respectively. The term husbandman died out in the eighteenth century and yeoman early in the nineteenth century.

The land-workers who served the yeomen and husbandmen down the centuries left few records behind them. The mediaeval peasant and the Georgian labourer must have led very similar lives of never-ending toil on the land, housed in poor cottages, existing on inadequate, monotonous diets and sometimes ending their lives on charity. The men who had a skill, like carters, shepherds or warreners, had better conditions. The family of Reade alias Carter, in which son may have followed father as horsemen from before 1500 until the death of Clemance Read als. Carter in 1619, held several tenements and owned a sufficiency of goods and chattels. The many men called Herde were similarly well placed. Daniel Spradburrow, the warrener employed by Sir Henry Mildmay at Graces manor, lived in the “Warraine house”, with a barn and stable and land around it called New Lodge.

The artisans, forming the middle group in the population, normally served an apprenticeship to their craft or trade. The earliest extant local apprenticeship indenture was drawn up in 1625 when Jeffery Melborne, the miller at Huskards mill, took as his apprentice Phillipp Somes (age not stated), son of Edward Somes of Little Baddow. Phillipp “put himself apprentice . . . unto millinge and Fullinge of Cloth to be learned the same” until he was twenty-four years old. The miller was “well and truly to teach and instructe according to his witt and capacite and in due manner him to chastise and to give find and allow . . . sufficient and wholesome meate drinke logeing and aparrell and all other things for him . . . and at the end thereof to give and deliver or cause to be given and delivered unto the said apprentice twoe new sutes of aparrell meete and convenient for him to weare”.

Later apprentices were normally bound for five to seven years, usually between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one. The apprentice was instructed to obey and gladly perform the commands of his master, not to waste his master’s goods, not to frequent ale-houses or gaming-houses and not to marry without his master’s consent, while the master on his side was to see that his apprentice attended public worship on the Sabbath day and to treat him with all due care, tenderness and humanity. Many lads who were apprenticed had had some education, coming, as they did, from more prosperous homes, since a premium had to be paid. Some however were poor boys apprenticed at the expense of the parish and had generally little or no education. Apprentices who completed their term became journeymen, qualified to take work in their craft or trade, until the fortunate ones were able to set themselves up as masters.

Although the oldest trade in the village must have been that of milling, the first miller whose name is known was Richard Ulting in 1496. In 1509 Roger Symson was accused at the manor court of taking excessive toll from people who brought their corn to him to be ground – a common complaint about millers everywhere. John Hawes ran both Little Baddow and Huskards mills in Elizabeth’s reign, when he was fined 2s. by Quarter Sessions in 1573 because he “by penning of his waters above his mark hath and doth damage to all the Queen’s tenants and farmers of the honour of Bewleigh in drowning the meadows and low grounds and for not drawing up his gates upon rage of waters in the hay time and also hath marred a certain highway or lane leading from Baddow bridge unto the mill called Huskardes mill which the said miller is to repair and amend for the avoidance of further inconvenience”.

During the eighteenth century Little Baddow mill was called Johnson’s mill as it was tenanted by Robert Johnson, who died in 1730, his son, William, and then his grandson, Johnson Clark, who retired in about 1813. By this time a lucrative canal wharf was attached to the mill. There were two short-lived windmills on top of the hill, one built about 1702 and lasting perhaps sixty years, the other about 1803 lasting most into the early 1830s.

Huskards mill, originally just within the boundary of Hatfield Peverel parish, was from the Middle Ages both a corn mill and a mill for the fulling of cloth. There does not seem to have been, at any time, a cloth trade in Little Baddow associated with the fulling mill, but there were several Essex cloth towns (like Braintree or Coggelshall) to which it could have been linked. No doubt many cottage women carded wool and spun yarn with hand distaff or spinning wheel long before the eighteenth century when such occupations are first recorded.

Late in the seventeenth century Huskards mill became perhaps the first Essex paper mill. It was run by Thomas Hodges from the 1750s and by Benjamin Livermore around 1800, employing three or more men. William Calcraft, a journeyman papermaker, came from Lincolnshire in 1759 to obtain employment there, and his son, born in Little Baddow, followed the same trade. Two other papermakers came from Kent and Hampshire. A local lad, Joseph Baker, was apprenticed for seven years in about 1780 to Thomas Hodges and worked for him for a further four or five years. The mill reverted to flour milling a little

before 1820. The increased acreage of arable land in the parish following the enclosure of the commons in 1811, and the corn landed at the canal wharf, obviously provided enough grain to keep three mills operating until the windmill closed.

Butchers must have been among the earliest tradesmen and there may have been many before the Harris family appeared on the village scene in the fourteenth century. In 1509 Thomas Grome, butcher, was accused at Little Baddow manor court of selling meat at excessive prices. Few butchers are recorded until Samuel Orton was practising his trade at least by 1708 and his descendants remained in the village until John Orton moved to Springfield in the 1820s. One of the latter's sons said in 1833 that he had never been apprenticed but learned the trade from his father; no doubt it had passed in that way from father to son for a very long time. In the early nineteenth century Thomas Dennis set up a butchery business at Coleraines (renting an adjoining field as grazing land), which was carried on by his widow and sons until the 1860s.

The butchers may have sold the hides and skins arising from their work to the tanners who flourished in the village, perhaps in the Middle Ages, but certainly in the sixteenth century and the first part of the seventeenth. The easy access to supplies of bark was perhaps an incentive to the trade. The Radley family were the earliest tanners of whom there is a record; John Radley in 1518 left "the howse that I dwell in" to his eldest son, but did not give its name. Towards the end of the century the family were tenants of Pilcherines so perhaps that was a tannery. The Vessey family were tanners in Elizabethan times and Thomas Vessey (of Woodham Walter and Little Baddow) who died in 1596 left to his son, Francis, the house called "Balsums wherein my sonne Francis now dwelleth...and the use and comodytie of such waterynge and other necessities as he now commonly occupieth for his trade or occupacion of a Tanner". In 1600 a tanner of Langford stole four tanned cowhides worth 40s. and eleven calf skins worth 10s. from Francis Vessey. About this time, and perhaps long before, the Oughan family were pursuing the same occupation; although they are recorded as holding the tenement called Watts, that may not have been their tannery. The tenements on the road between Coldham End and Woodham Walter (such as Balsams) were favoured as tanneries in both villages. It must have been an especially malodorous locality.

Another tanner, John Harris als. Butcher, told Quarter Sessions that when he was at Chelmsford market one day in 1575 a Danbury man, who was under-purveyor for fruit for the Queen's household, took his horse "under colour to serve the Queen" and released it only on receipt of 12d. Harris made his will in 1578 leaving substantial legacies to his children. Twenty years later Quarter Sessions heard that his eldest son "having a wife and many small children, was heretofore a man of good living left him by his father and by occupation a tanner and married to the daughter of one Byckner of Ulting, a wealthy yeoman, who gave a good portion in marriage, and that the said Harrys by his unthriftiness is now become very poor and nothing worth and has left many small children upon the relief of the parish; and further that the said Byckner by his will bequeathed £300 towards the bringing up of the children...which said money being so received by the said Harrys he unthriftily consumed the same.

After about 1640 the industry for some reason unknown died out in the village. It is impossible to estimate how many workers had been employed in the tanneries.

The tanners perhaps sold their skins in local markets like Maldon; in any case a leather industry did not grow up in the village to use the products of the tanneries. Shoemakers and glovers are not recorded until the seventeenth century. A cobbler, Samuel Bickner, died in 1619 and a little later John Vessey was a cordwainer, a superior shoemaker. Joseph Hall, shoemaker, was ordered at Quarter Sessions in 1645 to keep the peace towards Peter Foster, tailor. The latter was carrying on the tailoring business at the Cock previously run by

Richard Sea and his son, William and they must have used much leather for breeches, jackets and other articles. Arthur Draper and John Hawes also were tailors at this time, both living on the Woodham Walter road near the tanneries. Thomas Bastwick, who died in 1644, was a glover, and so were John Holmsted in 1665 and Daniel Cornwell (possibly at the House in the Bush) around 1700, who was a contemporary of Joseph Pledger, cordwainer. A little later Joseph Spilman and John White were cordwainers and John Peacock and others were shoemakers and repairers. At the beginning of the nineteenth century there were several shoemakers.

These tradesmen would have made and sold their goods in their workshops (usually called shops) at their homes, unless they employed workmen and made enough articles to take into one of the nearby markets. Thomas Thorton, of unknown occupation, dying in 1556, left to one son "all my workynge tooles and also I will that he shall have my shoppe for hym self to worke in". There must have been many of these shops about the village – some noisier and smellier than others.

Workers in wood must have been early and important craftsmen, for there were ploughs and carts to be made and repaired, houses to be built and altered, furniture and household equipment to be fashioned. Wood was easily obtainable in the parish. The first sawyer in the records is Thomas Heath who leased Bowling Alley house in 1593, but there must have been many other. There were at least two Sawpitt fields in the parish. In 1722 John Adams was presented at the manor court for "digging a Sawpitt" on the waste "to the great damage of the Copyholders" and he was ordered to amend it or pay 5s. John Foster in 1826 was described as a sawyer.

Apart from the possible exception of Henry and Thomas Carpenter in the fifteenth century, the first known man likely to have been a carpenter is Andrew Hawes who died in February 1588, leaving timber to his wife and also stating "I wyll that my brother John Hawes shall have suffyciente Tymber allowed hym to length out thend of his house unto the streete pale between this and mydsommer next commynge". Another woodworker must have been John Peverill who died in 1576, for he made bequests of "my best ax", "axes and one handsaw", "two sawes and an anelogg" and "my longest ladder". Roger Hawes in his will of 1604 described himself as a lath cleaver and left to his son "all my tools for to cleve and paele a lath withall". He would have used the laths for making fences and for the walls of houses and barns. Richard Wyer in 1620 left to his son, an apprentice, "two hand sawes and seaven wedges and all my other toolles the which I doe use for to worke withal whatsoever". John Cooke's will of 1643 named him as a carpenter and he was probably church clerk as well, living in the cottage beside the churchyard. James Meagle, the sole cooper recorded, had his shop at Wickhay cottage. In 1762 he took as his apprentice Clayton Grimstone, whose mother paid £10 premium and agreed to provide his clothing during the seven years.

From the late seventeenth century Samuel Saward, master carpenter, was living in the village until he died in 1743 leaving his house, Gibbs, and property in other villages, to his only son, Thomas, also a carpenter. Thomas and the eldest of his four sons, another Thomas, did a great deal of woodwork of all sorts, from Coffin-making to house-building. The younger Thomas died in 1782, leaving five sons, and in the 1820s there were at least three members of the family working as carpenters in the village.

Another Saward, Richard, apprenticed to a bricklayer in Hatfield Peverel, came back to Little Baddow to build himself Well cottage at Coldham End in 1817 and to spend nearly fifty years plying his trade in the village. He was not the first bricklayer, having been preceded by others like Christopher Spilman, who died in 1729 and probably lived at Monks garden, Thomas Stevens, who built a cottage in 1658 without the statutory four acres of ground, and

Robert Lea in 1598. Edward Gipps, brickmaker, who died in 1623, must have made the bricks for the foundations and the chimneystacks, and tiles for the roofs, of many of the houses which were rebuilt or altered during his lifetime, by men like Robert Lea and Richard Hammond als. Tyler. Another brickmaker, Thomas Barnard, in 1632 had dug clay, leaving holes, on the common near his brick kiln, and the manor court found that the lord and tenants were in peril of injury to their cattle pasturing there. He was ordered to fill in the holes on penalty of 20s. fine. There were brickmakers in Danbury, one of whom in 1698 “erected a brick kiln on the highway between Danbury and Little Baddow and fired great quantities of bricks which made it unhealthy for the neighbourhood”. When Graces house was built in Henry VIII’s reign it must have strained the local resources and perhaps bricks were bought elsewhere. For smaller houses, however, bricks always would have been made locally, as in 1817 when General Strutt wrote to his brother “We have begun digging for the Brickearth...and have also begun cutting wood for the purpose of Brickmaking...there is a piece about an Acre...which is 7 years growth...and is now good Brick-kiln wares...The hedge...might be stubbed, it will afford some stacks of wood towards the burning of the Bricks”. Clay would have been used for wattle-and-daub walls as well as well as for bricks, but there is no record of any pottery-making in the village. When “Old Young” died in 1766 he was in possession of some rushes, so perhaps he had been a thatcher, but may have been doing some mat or basket making in his old age.

Wickhay green seems to have been the locality in which stood the village smithies. Powleas might have been one of these during Queen Elizabeth’s reign, when first Nicholas Nevell, blacksmith, was tenant, and later Thomas Sach, who might have been a smith. Certainly Matthews and Lees were smithies from the mid-seventeenth century, when William Ram was working there, through the eighteenth century, when the Maldon and Perry families were tenants, and into the nineteenth century with the Maddocks family. Thomas Maldon in his will of 1723 left Matthews, the house in which he lived, and the smiths shop and forge there, to his wife during her lifetime and then to his nephew, Nathaniel Perry. His wife was also to have his stock in trade, tools, implements and utensils and the debts which were owed to him. Richard Bridge, another smith, died in 1698, leaving most of his possessions to his wife on condition that she sold all the goods belonging to his shop for 5s. to his son, who was to have the house in which they lived. This might have been either Gunbies or Heards on Wickhay green, to both of which Richard Bridge had been admitted tenant. Joseph Matthews was a wheelwright in 1748 working at Hulltree house as a sub-tenant of the Perrys. John Reynolds, an edge tool maker, when he died in 1662 left to his son-in-law either 20s. “or three Dozen of Shovell and spade trees”. They must have obtained their iron from ironmongers in places like Chelmsford and Maldon.

The brewers, alehouse keepers and victuallers are better documented than any other group of workers, although for most of them it was a sideline. In the earliest extant court rolls of Little Baddow manor we find that Alice Lee was a brewer of ale and had broken the Assize of Ale which fixed the price at which it should be sold. Alice would have brewed at her home, sold the ale to her neighbours at slightly above the fixed price and paid her fine out of her profit. She was fined at most of the courts between 1406 and 1411. Around 1500 Thomas Hierde, Henry and Thomas Carpenter, the wives of both, the wives of Richard Glover and Richard Ulyng, John Elyett, Joan Cornwell, Henry Grome and John Mitton and his wife were brewers of ale, and some of them bakers of bread in addition. They all broke the Assizes of Bread and Ale. The regulation of alehouses was taken over by Quarter Sessions from 1552 but this did not diminish their number. In 1572 Thomas Johnson and Thomas Heath, both licensed alehouse keepers, were accused of keeping tippling houses in which there was ill-rule and playing at cards and unlawful games “and pore men do resorte thether and often tymes spende and waste ther mony when they had more need to do at there dayly labor”. Two years later William Sanders, cook, was licensed by Quarter Sessions to keep a common victualling house in Little Baddow. When he was dying in 1578 his will was witnessed by

“Thomas Stane the waiter”. In 1608 Richard Sea, tailor, of the Cock was fined for keeping a common alehouse without licence; in 1614 he was accused of receiving suspected persons and permitting ill-rule, evil conversation and unlawful games. He died the same year, his will showing that he had a malthouse, which was still there at least fifty years (and probably one hundred and fifty years) later. Quarter Sessions received a certificate from Ten villagers that his widow had kept a victualling house during his lifetime, which was a most convenient place for an alehouse, and that she was a woman of honest behaviour. She was allowed an alehouse licence. Meanwhile Isaac Saffold als. Bundock, described once as a grocer and another time as a haberdasher, William Jolly, husbandman, Robert Green, yeoman, and Elias Odden were keeping other alehouses, often without licence. In 1601 the latter was accused at Quarter Sessions of permitting “diverse persons to plaie at unlawful games (videlicet at Tables) within his howse”. “Tables” was backgammon. A man in his will of 1611 said “I doe geive thirty shillings to be spent in my funeral dinner at Elias Oddings”. Edward Solme, husbandman, who kept another “common Alehouse or Tiplinge house”, was taken to Quarter Sessions in 1614 for victualling without licence and keeping great disorder in his house, himself being a very disordered person. Another man, a butcher, was accused in 1641, on the information of Thomas Gowers, of keeping an alehouse without licence; he pleaded not guilty and a few months later broke into the close of Thomas Gowers, taking away a gelding worth 26s.8d. At the same time two tailors, Peter Foster and William Sea (son of Richard), and Samuel Jeggons, husbandman, were keeping victualling houses. There followed an undocumented century, then by at least 1764 James Jordan was the inn holder at the Warren house at Coldham End (later re-named the Rodney – perhaps the first inn (providing accommodation as well as food and drink) in the village. When the annual “Return of Waits and Mesuers” was made in 1768 his weights were found to be good.

There is little record of maltsters or malthouses. Henry Bastwick described himself as a maltster in 1620; the Fosters had a malthouse at The Cock and in the 1830s Benjamin Lewin had adapted the disused potash-making site for malting. No doubt they all used locally grown barley.

In the 1620s John Ingham, who held Millers with some land and was called in his will a yeoman, was an oatmeal maker and Francis Stane was an “oatmeal man”. The first bakers to be recorded since the Middle Ages worked in the early nineteenth century. In 1821 William Wilson, at his bake house and shop on the Endway, was fined £5 for using alum to adulterate his bread. Two pounds of alum was found by the inspectors, which Wilson’s wife had attempted to destroy. Eleven years later he was found to have two defective weights and no standard quart and was fined 15s. Another baker, Charles Smith, probably at the house on the Endway which later became the new Rodney, was fined £1.5.0. in 1832 for having five defective weights.

Shopkeepers, as retailers of goods made by other men, make a late appearance. No doubt local markets and fairs, besides pedlars, supplied most needs before the eighteenth century. Apart from a man described as a grocer and haberdasher in the early seventeenth century, the first shopkeeper in the records was Samuel Saward in 1768, whose weights were inspected and found to be good in that year. In 1777 the weights of two more shopkeepers, John Burrell and Thomas Hodges, were good. Thomas Hodges (who lived at Coleraines and ran the Papermill) is shown from other records to have been a draper, selling cloth, clothes, sheets, stockings and shoes, and he was probably a grocer as well.

Examples of men in a few other occupations occur through the centuries, such as in Elizabeth’s reign, Thomas Sweeting, described as a saltweller (which must have been at Maldon), Robert Stafford, a mariner and Edmund Stevens, a soldier and “servant of the Queen in Ireland”. Other men must have become soldiers or sailors either temporarily, as at Armada time or during the Civil Wars, or to make a career of it. One such was George Bigges, at his mother’s death in 1626 “in the kinges maiesties service beyond the Seas”.

Typical of the fate of some of these men may have been that of a shepherd from Cambridgeshire (husband of a descendant of James Meagle, cooper) who joined the 30th Regiment of Foot, and, as his daughter wrote in 1842, “He left England for Foreign Service in the year 1807, my mother nor me never saw him after this time”. The last word from his regiment had been that he was sick in hospital in the East Indies in 1808. The Napoleonic Wars, a time of difficulty for the poor, may have led men from Little Baddow to take a similar way out, but the records do not enlighten us.

In another rarely recorded occupation were two horse dealers – Benjamin Champion (died 1808.) at Bowling Alley house and James Moss from about 1820 at what later became known as Ann’s cottage. Contemporary with Champion was John Polley, potash-maker at the Potash, where he burned wood and other material to make potash for soap, bleach and dyes.

A surgeon makes a brief appearance in 1624, and Maurice Pugh of Chelmsford, surgeon, married a Little Baddow girl who was buried in the churchyard in 1769. No doctor seems to have lived in the parish however, and villagers had to send for one from elsewhere on the rare occasions when neighbours were unable to manage. A number of village women, especially the poor, elderly and widowed, became capable nurses and midwives, while many women and men, of necessity, were amateur doctors. In 1787 notices appeared in Chelmsford Chronicle, the first stating “I Peter Reid, Stone-Mason, at Chelmsford, having been afflicted about twenty years with sore leg, and having applied to several Doctors in Town without finding any cure, am now perfectly cured by William Calcraft, at Little Baddow near Chelmsford.” He added that “several more have been cured by the said William Calcraft”. The second notice was from Elizabeth Moor of Little Baddow, aged near sixty, who having had a sore leg for seven years, was cured by William Calcraft and had “continued well of my leg for these 12 months last past”. (William Calcraft was a paper-maker.

The Chelmer Navigation Company must have provided work for labourers when the canal was under construction in the 1790s, and after its completion a few jobs were available. Thomas Pearson, from Norfolk, who worked on the barges, was granted a piece of land in Little Baddow by the Company upon which he built two small cottages that cost him “upwards of Twenty pounds”. John Balls, from Suffolk, was the Little Baddow lockgate keeper, and so was one of his sons in later years. Another son, John, served a year with a bargemaster at Ulting, then went to Springfield and was engaged by Thomas Burne, bargemaster, for sixteen months at 12s. a week. He lodged at the foreman’s house on Springfield Wharf, except when he slept on board the barge, which upon average was two nights in a week from Christmas to Marsh. When the barge was laid up at Springfield he did “such work as Mr. Burne thought fit to set me about”. Joseph Balls was a master bargeman at Springfield in 1825 when John Sampson, of Little Baddow, aged fifteen, worked for him for one year for his clothes, victuals and lodging. They took the barge between Springfield and Maldon. After a year Mr. Balls said to the boy that “as he had taken me so young I ought to stop another year – my father said he ought to give me more for it”. They agreed on 1s.6d. a week, with board and lodging as before. The wharf beside Little Baddow mill, at which was handled a great quantity of goods, would have provided work, which might have been a welcome alternative to village labourers.

In the early nineteenth century a number of villagers who were unable to support themselves were examined by justices of the peace to determine their circumstances. In giving details of their work they sometimes described how they had learnt their craft or had started in work and said a little about wages and conditions.

John Morrell, for instance, said that in 1797, at the age of twenty-seven, being out of work as a farm labourer, he entered into a written agreement with a carpenter in Runwell to be taught the craft for three years at the weekly wage of 12s, with “small Beer and Lodging” in his master’s house. His master “ran the hazard” of wet weather; had he run the hazard he would

have been paid 13s. He started at "Old Christmas" (6th January after 1752 when the calendar was altered) and "when he was ill which happened once to be for 7 weeks he received no wages at all". Another man had "learnt his business of a Carpenter with his relations but was never apprenticed". Another had been bound apprentice to a carpenter at the usual age of fourteen and "after he had served about 5 years he ran away and his father afterwards compromised with his master for the remainder of his time". One apprentice was told by his Maldon master, a sawyer who failed in business, to "go and shift for himself". He "hawked about the country with earthen ware" until he was employed by a potman "in the Hawking business" at eight guineas a year and "his board and lodging where ever he went". Before the end of the year "being slack in business" his master let him go, but paid him the whole of his year's wages.

John Bibby became an apprentice to a shoemaker in Chelmsford and "Indentures of Apprenticeship" were signed. He boarded and lodged with his master, and had served for nearly two years when his master became dissatisfied with him and they agreed to part. The boy's father was sent for and, after speaking with the master, took his son away. They asked for the indentures back, giving the master a couple of fowls in lieu of money, but never received them. A lad who did complete his seven years was John Gibson, apprenticed to a Braintree tailor at the age of fifteen.

Most boys however started work without apprenticeships. The father of one made a verbal agreement with a Danbury shoemaker that his son should work one year "if they could agree but not otherwise". He was to work for nothing for the first half year, his father boarding him, but for the rest of the time he was to be paid 4s. a week and to lodge with his master "when he pleased". Another boy at eleven years of age was placed by his father with a shopkeeper at Danbury "to do whatever he was set about...to go a month upon liking". He served about two years without wages, but his master provided him with clothes and occasionally gave him a shilling or two pocket money. A sixteen-year-old boy became footman from Old Michaelmas (11th October) to the Rev. Arthur Johnson at £3 a year (with board and lodging) and was provided with livery. He served until within three or four days of the full year, when his master turned him away and made a deduction from his wages for those days.

Another master told his young labourer that he could have the three days before his service ended at Michaelmas to find himself another place, and that he would deduct 1s. from his year's wage of £4 for the three days. This was to prevent the lads becoming the parish's responsibility, under the provisions of the Poor Law, if they did not find work..

Although agreement might be made for a weekly wage, it was not normally paid weekly. Farmers paid at the end of the year's hiring, at Michaelmas after harvest, when they themselves had money in hand. Other masters made similar arrangements. James Dowsett worked for a butcher at Stratford for 3s. a week to be paid quarterly. Before that he had worked for Thomas Smith, butcher, of Ramsden Belhouse, for 2s. a week with board and lodging. At the end of his time he was paid £5, having had the other part (4s.) previously. A few years later when the justices were enquiring into James Dowsett's circumstances, Jeremiah Pledger told them that Dowsett had occasionally worked for him, with his father who was one of his "constant" workmen. Mr. Pledger had spoken to Thomas Smith and asked him to take the lad for a year, as he "had an inclination to be a butcher". He referred Mr. Smith to Dowsett's father who was at work in one of his fields. The father first asked £6 a year wages for his son, but then said, "well as you mean to learn him your business I shall be satisfied with less."

A few lads told the magistrates how injury or illness had prevented them from working. John Sampson said that at the age of twelve in 1822 he had been let by his father for a year to a

farmer “to do what he set me about”, the master to provide board, lodging, clothes and other necessaries. His master moved to Middlesex and took the boy with him. After about two years he was “seized with lameness in my knee” and unable to work. His father went and brought him back to Little Baddow, where, he told the justices, he had been incapacitated for a year. Another boy had been apprenticed to George Wilson, shoemaker, and boarded and lodged in his house in Little Baddow. After three or four years “because unable to work at his business on account of a weakness to his eyes” his master let him go.

Sometimes there was trouble between master and servant, such as in 1637 when Edward Bourne was before Quarter Sessions for tuning out his service Ann Wilson before her time expired, without showing lawful cause, and contemptuously refusing to take her into service again. In the early nineteenth century William Baker must have been a difficult master, for he appeared before Petty Sessions on several occasions. In 1802 he charged tow of his servants with misbehaviour and he and another manservant “requested to be parted from each other”. Later he was in dispute about wages with yet another manservant. Petty Sessions in 1806 granted a warrant to apprehend John Simmons’ manservant for “absconding his service”. Another master complained about his employee neglecting harvest work, but the magistrates decided there was “fault on both sides”. An example of kindness by a master was told by a lad who moved away with George Simmons, farmer, to South Weald, and was allowed a week’s absence to go to Danbury Fair, with no deduction in the wage.

Men did not state their working hours, but for labourers these were likely to have been from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. in winter and 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. in summer, and till dark at harvest, haymaking and other busy times, for six days a week.

Wage rates are difficult to ascertain, but as most of the men examined by the magistrates in the years around 1800 were farm labourers, an idea of their wages can be gained. One labourer worked for five years at the wage of 12s. a week in winter and 15s. in summer and then in 1802 his master agreed to give him 15s. all the year. At about the same time several farmers were paying their “servants in husbandry” 10 guineas a year (about 4s. a week), with board and lodging, and this seems to have been the rate for at least the previous twenty years as well. In 1816 a labourer was being paid 12s. a week (or £31.4.0. a year) by Jeremiah Pledger, who gave him a cottage rent free – and permitted him to take his wife there when he married. Boys from at least 1780 seem to have been paid about £3 or £4 a year, with board and lodging, according to age. In 1814 a boy of seventeen was receiving £6.6.0., raised the following two years to £7.7.0. and £9.9.0., but in 1825 (when wages had dropped) another boy of seventeen was paid only £4. In 1808 a twenty-year-old labourer was paid £8 from “Barley Seed time” until Old Michaelmas, and then £13 for the next full year. He did not say whether he received board and lodging. Any single unemployed man who was given work by the parish, using his own tools, was entitled to 6s.6d. a week in 1816, by order of Quarter Sessions.

As a contrast, William Orton (of the family of butchers), when he was twenty-four in 1815, was bound apprentice to a ship-owner at Maldon to serve for three years as a mariner at £15 for the first years and £30 for the third year. He boarded in the vessel for the whole time. Before that he had worked for one year at £3 for Johnson Clark, miller. John Wiltshire left the village to become an ostler and in 1830, when working at Fryerning inn, his master gave him £5 a year “besides what I obtained from his Customers”.

These wage rates should be seen against the fact that between 1790 and 1810 food prices almost doubled and continued rising after that. The price of two pecks of flour rose from about 3s. in 1790 to about 5s.4d. in 1810. Two pounds of beef in 1790 was 8d. and in 1810 1s.3d.; cheese rose from 7d. to 1s.4d. for 2lb. In 1730 the same food had cost about 2s.1d. for flour and 5d. for beef and cheese. Rents on cottages generally were stable at between £1 and £2 a year. Meanwhile wages barely doubled between 1730 and 1810.

Girls had little choice of work other than domestic service, often having to go some way from home – which was not without its hazards. When they were obliged to ask for parish relief it was usually because they were “with child and unmarried” – though this was not always the result of their domestic service. There is no record of a girl being apprenticed.

A girl aged fifteen who started work in Terling at New Michaelmas 1804 at £4 a year, “a months wages or a months warning”, was taken ill at Christmas and absent from her service for about a fortnight for which her mistress made deduction out of her wages. When her mistress two years later went to London she left her child with the girl who took it to her mother’s house in Little Baddow until her mistress returned. Another girl let herself to Widow Askew of Maldon “without any wages – but boarded and lodged in the House”. When her hiring was renewed after nine months it was at a wage of 1s. a week. Mrs. Askew in 1814 hired another Little Baddow girl as “servant of all works” at 15d. a week, at a week’s notice. She left on account of illness, duly giving a week’s notice and receiving her wages. One girl who served a year received her wages of £3 less about 5s. “which her mistress deducted because she left her place suddenly and without giving her any notice of it”. Another servant of all works at Great Dunmow was paid £5.5.0. for a year in 1823, but a twenty-year-old housemaid in Chelmsford ironmonger’s house received £7 in 1817. A servant of all works, who had been “put out as a parish girl” at the age of thirteen in 1829, was earning 1s. a week at fifteen. A young woman who was “deaf and dumb but competent to read and write” served as a housemaid to the Governor of the Deaf and Dumb Asylum in Surrey. He gave her money for clothes “and when I came away my Coach hire, money for a pair of shoes and two shillings”. When she was interrogated in 1828 she said she was with child and unmarried and would be unable to maintain the child when it was born. Two years later she married John Sampson (the man who had worked on a barge) and her child was not with her in 1839 so it may have died.

A twenty-five-year-old woman, Mary Ann Foster, let herself as a servant of all works in Maldon in 1830, on a month’s trial, and if she liked the place and she suited her mistress she was to have £5 a year.

(Indenture of Phillipp Somes)

She stayed more than a year until her mother died and she left to return home to keep house for her father, John Foster. She said “When I got home I had some conversation with him and observed that he should make some bargain as to what I was to have”. He therefore engaged her as a housekeeper for one year at 15d. a week with board and lodging. Another woman, a widow aged sixty-one in 1805, let herself as a housekeeper at eight guineas a year.

Some women when they married, or more often when they were widowed, set up as dressmakers or laundresses and others became nurses, waiting to be called on in illness or childbirth. Probably most women went into the fields at least at harvest time, and certainly they gleaned after harvest.

Part of Apprenticeship Indenture of Phillip Somes, 1625. (Page 26)

Chapter IV

GOVERNMENT, LAW AND ORDER.

The administration of the parish and the maintenance of law and order during the Middle Ages was largely in the hands of the lords of the manors, acting through their stewards and bailiffs, the elected manorial officers and the manor courts. (The Church took a not insignificant role as Chapter II shows). Little Baddow and Tofts manors operated the ancient system of frankpledge by which every man belonged to a pledge or tithing (originally composed of ten families) all of whose members were responsible for the others' misdeeds. Every boy reaching the age of twelve and every man who had lived in the village for a year and a day were required to attend the manor court to be sworn into a tithing as a true liegeman of the King and Crown of England. For those who neglected this duty there was a fine of 3d. The chief tithing men, of whom there seemed to be four in Little Baddow manor around 1369, had to attend every court and present any misdemeanours in their tithing on pain of a fine of 3s.3d.

Few villagers would ever have attended the court of the Hundred or the Sheriff's court and fewer still would have had any direct contact with the royal government. When necessary, taxes were raised by the sovereign, generally for wars, and it was the Poll Tax of 1381 which was the immediate cause of the Peasants' Revolt in Essex. A few Little Baddow men might have joined in that and a few might have fought in wars, but for most of them king and country could have meant little.

By the Tudor period the manorial system was breaking down and administrative problems were becoming more complex. While the manor courts (by then meeting at most only twice a year) were dealing mainly with tenancies and infringements of manorial (mostly agricultural) regulations, the national government was laying more and more duties upon the justices of the peace for the county and on the officers of the parish.

Justices of the Peace (unpaid magistrates chosen chiefly from the landowning gentry) took a large share in the administration of the parishes and in the maintenance of law and order, supervising the work of the (also unpaid) parish officers and, either sitting alone or in Petty or Quarter Sessions, dealing with all crimes, except serious or difficult cases which were sent to the Assizes, at which they also assisted. Some of the lords of the manors in Little Baddow were justices, such as Sir John Smythe, Sir Gobert Barrington, Sir Moundeford Bramston and later the Strutt family. A few local yeomen were on rare occasions on the jury at Quarter Sessions or Assizes. Records of Essex Quarter Sessions and Assizes, surviving from the mid-sixteenth century, and Petty Sessions for the early nineteenth century, show the close relationship between the justices and the parish officers to ensure the smooth-running of the parish administration and the prompt detection of wrongdoing.

The hierarchy of parish officials was headed by the two Church wardens, who, in addition to their ecclesiastical duties, acquired from Tudor times some civil functions, notably in connection with the Poor Law. The Overseers of the Poor, appointed from Elizabeth's reign, collected the Poor Rate from those able to pay and administered it for the benefit of the poorest inhabitants. The office of Surveyor of the Highways carried the duty of maintaining the parish roads. Finally came the Constables who were the instruments of the law in the village.

The parish had some control over their officers, for the Easter Vestry Meeting (in theory comprising all the inhabitants "in vestry assembled", presided over by the vicar, but in practice composed of the most substantial inhabitants) elected one or both of the churchwardens for the succeeding year and put forward suggested names for the other offices

for consideration by the justices. The parishioners – those who could read – had the right to inspect the accounts of the officers. In addition of course the results of the officer's work – or lack of work – was plain for all to see. The burden of the Rates – Church Rate, Poor Rate, Highway Rate, Constables Rate, besides the County Rate – fell upon all the inhabitants (except the poorest) according to their means.

The parish officers, with the members of more or less monthly vestry meeting, attended an Easter dinner every year, which in the second half of the eighteenth century was held at the "Warren", later renamed the "Rodney". In 1771 there is an entry in the vestry minute book stating "We whose names are hereunder written do agree to pay unto James Jordon one shilling in case we do not attend at the Easter Dinner". There are sixteen names, all those of leading parishioners like Thompson Stoneham, J.P., of Whitwells, William Gladwyn of Bassetts, Thomas Taylor of the Hall, Richard Sorrell of Tofts, Thomas Hodges and his son of the Papermill, William Johnson of Little Baddow mill, Jeremiah and Joseph Pledger, Doctor Raven, the parish doctor, and James Jordan himself, the innkeeper at the "Warren". The dinner was financed from the Poor Rate and during the eighteenth century it never cost more than £1.10.0., while even after 1800, with ever-increasing inflation of prices, it never exceeded £2.2.0. – a modest enough recompense for a body of hard-working, public-spirited men.

The Highways(in original script)

The upkeep of the roads was one of the manorial functions which was transferred to the parish by Tudor legislation. Previously a few people had left money in their wills for highway repairs, amongst them Cecily Gatton in 1504 who said "I gyff to the making of the hye way a fore John Elyottes gate" 65.8d., and John Wheler and Thomas Grome, both of whom in 1538 provided for "the emending of the high waye to the churche from Wycky grene". From 1555 however the parish must have observed the Statute which required every villager once a year to send his cart, horses and men, or go in person, to labour for four days (later six days) on the parish roads. The work was done under the instructions of a Surveyor of the Highways appointed buy the justices from among the "most sufficient inhabitants".

The Surveyors have left few traces of their activities, except that in 1665 a default in working on the highways was presented at Quarter Sessions and in 1669 Robert Clay appealed to the Sessions for reimbursement of £4.12.6. he had paid out for timber and carpenters' work to repair highways and bridges. Presumably he wished the justices to authorise the levy of a Highway Rate. For a further glimpse of their work it is necessary to wait until the twenty years before the Act was repealed in 1835, for which years (1814-1834) the Surveyors' account book survives.

This book shows that the Surveyors (two for each year) were chosen from among the most highly-rated inhabitants, who paid "Composition Money" at 1d. in the £1 of their annual rent instead of sending their teams to work on the roads. Among these were Jeremiah Pledger who paid rates on an annual rent of £221, Thomas Baker £165, John Simmons £85, Mark Whitehead £120, Isaac Barnard £75 and William Lee £55. The accounts show the Surveyors paying 6s. for "Instructions" and 2s. for "Swairing and affirming to the state of the Roads" before a justice of the peace on the commencement of their year of office. At the end of each year the accounts were examined and allowed by a justice. The annual expenditure was about £24 in the years following 1814, of which about £18 was collected in composition money and the remainder from a Highway Rate allowed by the vestry meeting and the justices. In 1818 General Strutt had the road moved away from his rebuilt house, Tofts, and the parish had to pay an extra £25 for "making a new road". This was the same year in which the churchwardens were undertaking major works at the church.

Normal annual expenditure was for workmen and materials. Gravel had to be obtained, so the "Paid for work in the Pitt" was a common item.

In 1815 the surveyor paid "Elensor for Stubin Gravel" (i.e. digging), "Jo. Mills for two days in pitt", "Bickmore and boy three quarters of a day", "Willsheres Boy 1 day" and he paid 12s. to Thomas Pudney for his week's work, plus 1s.6d. for his beer. Stones were obtained (having been picked off the local fields) and paid for at 6d. or 8d. a load, while one year £3.9.4. was paid to "Turner and Gowlett for sifting 104 load of stones at 8d. per load". Mr. Joice charged 5s. for supplying a sieve. Tradesmen presented their bills, such as, in 1815, "Josh. Goodsons bill for Slabbs" 2s., "Rd. Sawards bill for Arch" £3.8.6. and "Saml. Sawards Bill, carpenter" £3.8.9. Mr. Blanks, the blacksmith, supplied a pickaxe, sharpened and repaired tools and mended a barrow, while Mr. Wood provided two shovels. Richard Saward charged for making "Two Holves in the Roads" (Culverts) "Gutter Brick" and "Drain Bricks" were obtained and "Wood for a Trunk in the Roads". Payments were made for men and horses to cart earth, bushes for drains, bricks, loam and other materials. Most of the labourers were unemployed workmen whom the parish had to support from the Poor Rate. The accounts do not of course show the free labour due from every occupier of house or cottage who did not pay composition money, but we must presume that it was indeed exacted.

(original script)

Constables were originally elected by the manor courts, the first record of this being in 1498 when Walter Multon succeeded Robert Gatton as Little Baddow manor's constable. Although occasionally still elected at manor courts until late in the eighteenth century, they had become parish constables by at least 1700, appointed by the vestry meeting and confirmed by the justices. Usually there was one constable but sometimes he had an assistant, who may have been appointed for the Middlemead portion of the parish. Whether constables of manor or parish, they were always unpaid officials, who swore on appointment well and faithfully to carry out the duties of the office. The parish constables were subordinate to the High Constable of the Chelmsford Hundred as well as to the justices, and were expected to attend Quarter Sessions at Chelmsford. They were charged with making presentments of misdemeanours to the justices, executing the justices' warrants and arresting wrongdoers. The manor constables had been expected to see that the able-bodied men practised their archery and attended the periodic musters; the parish constables had to draw up lists of men liable to be called to the local militia. For the latter duty the parish constable in March 1764 claimed 2s.6d. "for my Day Work for getting the names of the Militia Men". They had much to do also with the operation of the Poor Law under the instructions of the overseers of the poor. Another duty was the collection of Little Baddow's portion of the County Rate (which paid for the County Gaol, House of Correction, Coroners' fees, transportation of felons etc.) and its transmission to the High Constable. During the French Wars they were asked to make returns of any aliens residing in the parish; were concerned in the operation of the plans to be carried out in case of invasion and in "taking up stragglers Sailors and Seafaring Men". They were required to report any "dangerous lunatics" in their parish. In pursuance of these duties they had occasionally to make "privy searches" at night, ostensibly to arrest any rogues and vagabonds who might be lurking in the parish, but also to uncover any other illegal acts that might be taking place, for instance in the alehouses. The constables' expenses normally were paid by the overseers of the poor half-yearly, but at least in 1731 he was allowed a rate of 1d. in the £ for the previous half year's expenditure. In 1795, apparently uniquely, when there were two constables, each was paid a fee of £2.2.0. No compensation was paid for the amount of time they had to spend away from their sources of livelihood, although they usually charged 2s.6d. whenever they had to spend a day at

Chelmsford, which was not infrequently. In 1798, when John Orton was constable, his staff of office was painted at a cost of 7s.6d. , and four years later 16s. was spent on it for an unspecified purpose.

The constables, of manor or of parish, were normally chosen from among the ranks of the artisans and small farmers in the village – men such as Edward Borne and John Orton, butchers; John Whitlock and Richard Cockley, husbandmen; John Spilman and Thomas Saward, carpenters; Richard Hunwick, journeyman miller, and Nathaniel Perry, blacksmith. No doubt it was helpful if they could read and write, but above all if they were fit and strong. The constable of 1775, with two assistants, was set upon by five men, while Joseph Maddocks, blacksmith, took a man to Petty Sessions in 1832 “for assaulting him as Constable of Little Baddow”. A fortnight later Maddocks himself was taken to Petty Sessions “for misbehaviour in his office. Entering a private room where the parish officers had retired to at Rodney to turn them out etc., this being proved his dismissal by the parish was confirmed and Richard Saward sworn in his stead”. Apart from a few such incidents, little has come down to us regarding these important officers.

There is no record of a “cage” or “lock-up” and in the early nineteenth century prisoners were sometimes kept “in hold” at the Rodney inn. Neither is there record of a whipping post, but in April 1601 the stocks to punish malefactors in Tofts manor were ordered to be repaired by the inhabitants of the Leet before Whitsun on penalty of 10s. The churchwardens in 1784 had the parish stocks repaired by the blacksmith at a cost of 1s.

The surviving mediaeval court rolls of Little Baddow manor, commencing in 1402, provide examples of the kind of minor misdemeanours, all producing fines for the lords’ coffers, which for the next couple of centuries keep appearing in the rolls of each of the manors. The majority of these were concerned with agriculture, alike preserving the lords’ rights and the community’s interests when threatened by anti-social behaviour. Such were the numerous occasions when ditches required scouring. As an example, in 1665 the court threatened Thomas Casse with a ten shilling fine if he did not scour his ditches on both sides of the road leading from his house to Haggate street, because they were full of mud to the deterioration of the way and the annoyance of all liege subjects of the King crossing the way. Tofts manor court in 1595 made an order that any person who broke a hedge of his neighbour without licence should forfeit 12d. to the lord. The same court instructed that the boundary marks which were “ruinous” should be repaired; Little Baddow court made a similar order in 1632, instructing the constables to repair them. Henry Bastwick was presented at Tofts court in 1599 for stopping up and turning from its course the footway by his land called Loves, to the grave harm of the neighbours, and was ordered to replace it or pay a fine of 10s. Among many examples of encroachments on the common land, Richard Abell was ordered to demolish a shop he had built on Wickhay green and James Rowland a hovel or cartlodge. On occasion the lord himself was at fault for not having his ditches scoured, footpaths cleared or footbridges repaired.

In the earliest extant court roll of Tofts manor (1573) three men were accused of trespassing on the common and cutting and lopping trees there. The court found they were paupers and had no goods with which to indemnify the lord for the loss he had sustained, and so the constable was ordered to punish them by putting them in the stocks for two hours on the following Sunday. Another man who cut down and carried away from the common two oak trees and two birch trees, said he wanted the timber and would have it and then spoke insolently about Sir John Smythe, lord of the manor. He was fined 2s4d. Many years later in 1774 Cornelius Limner felled an elm on his copyhold tenement and took it to Danbury to sell, the punishment for which was “Forfeiture of the said Copyhold Estate”. At the next court he paid 5s., “acknowledges the offence and said he would do so no more”, on which the

forfeiture was reversed. John Shoryer in 1699 was fined 5s. for burning great quantities of wood from Tofts common to Bassetts manor, a man had to pay 2s., the court deploring the grave damage and loss sustained by the lord and the tenants by "Forraigners" living outside the manor digging great quantities of clay from the waste and carrying it away.

A number of presentments at the manor courts concerned animals. At the 1491 court of the Hall manor it was reported that Thomas Oughan, not a tenant of the manor, had entered the common with his pigs and shaken acorns from the trees for them to feed on, contrary to the custom of the manor. A few years later John Harre was ordered on pain of a fine of 3s.4d. to ring his pigs because they were digging up the soil of the common, while the pigs of John Hawes of Wikheygrene and of John Mitton had trespassed on the lord's pasture and damaged the ground. Tofts court in 1592 re-iterated a previous order concerning the ringing of pigs and appointed Henry Loveday and Nicholas Steven to see that it was obeyed. In 1599 they ordered that any pigs pastured in Huskards mead "unring'd and unyoakt" would make their owners liable to a fine of 4d. for every pig and for every time offending. Another order threatened the owners of cattle found trespassing in Huskards mead with a fine of 2s. per head of cattle, 1s. to go to the lord and 1s. to the person finding the cattle. One man without licence put his sheep on the waste and was fined 5s.

In 1406, a lamb came as an "estrays" into Little Baddow manor and the herdsman, Robert Baloyne, was charged to look after it. It died and he was ordered to compensate the lord for it. Soon after that a black cow priced at 6s.8d. strayed into the manor and Robert Baloyne looked after it for a year and a day, when it automatically became the property of the lord. A dog was found in 1410 and was proclaimed in court, on which John Lee claimed it as his. In 1582 Elias Oden, Bailiff of Bassetts manor, informed the court that three sheep, of which two were white and the other black, or "a russet", had strayed into the manor about two months previously. He was ordered to make three proclamations at the nearest fairs and markets, according to the law of England. A boar, valued by the tenants at 4s., entered Tofts manor in 1573, and the bailiff was ordered to make the proclamations while Richard Pease looked after the animal.

Other animals were protected as the lords' game. In 1497 \Little Baddow manor court found that John Tenderyng of Boreham, with others, had hunted and fished within the manor, for which he was to speak with the lord. Sir John Smythe hunted over the Warren and once he prosecuted at Quarter Sessions a mariner who stole his conies.

Commencement of Court Roll of Tofts 1601 in original script p.41.

His tenant of Bowling Alley house was instructed to preserve his game and to have always in readiness bow and arrows, and sword and dagger, to use at Sir John's lawful commandment. A case at Quarter Sessions in 1615 shows the qualifications required for killing game under a Statute of James I. Richard Wyer, labourer, not having manor, tenements nor hereditaments to the value of £40, nor goods and chattels worth £200, was convicted of having in his possession twelve nets called "pursenetts" contrary to the Statute. Another man, unqualified, shot at rabbits with "a handgune charged with powder and hayleshott". A later instance was in 1689 when William Johnson shot pheasants contrary to the Statute.

The mediaeval manor courts received many presentments concerning the breaking of the Assizes of Bread and Ale, but it is not until 1488 that there comes the first mention of an ale-taster, the court official who tested the quality of the ale brewed and checked the price at which it was sold. Tasters of bread and ale were still being elected in 1573 in Tofts manor but that is their last appearance.

“Assaults and affrays” (aggravated by the fact that people habitually carried a knife or dagger) took place with great regularity, some examples appearing in the early rolls of Little Baddow manor court. In 1405 for instance Robert Botere assaulted and struck John Ferthyng and the latter retaliated; in 1432 Margaret, wife of William Bencelyn, and their daughter, Johanna, assaulted Robert Boters and drew blood from him. After John Fanner had assaulted Walter Multon on the Sunday before the Feast of St. Anne in 1496 he was fined 6d. In the next century Henry Draper drew blood from Richard Franke and paid a fine of 3s.4d. at the 1573 Tofts manor court, but this marked the end of the manor courts’ interest in such matters.

Parliamentary Statutes were enforced by the manor courts when appropriate, such as those ordering no cottage to be built without four acres of land and that only one family should inhabit any house or cottage. At Tofts manor court in 1595 the homage reported that the inhabitants of the manor had offended against a Statute of 1571 in not wearing their woollen caps on Sundays and festivals (an attempt to protect the wool trade), as well as against another Statute in not practising with their bows and arrows (every man might be needed in emergency for the defence of the realm.) They were fined 2s.6d.

Some types of misdeed which were perpetrated in Little Baddow over the centuries, however, resulted in village men and women making the journey to Chelmsford or elsewhere, escorted by the constable, to appear before the Justices of the Peace in Quarter Sessions, or sometimes before the Judges at the Assizes. In 1771 it was written that, when the Assizes were being held in Chelmsford, prisoners were brought from the gaol (in Moulsham, just over the Stone Bridge) to the court house (the Shire Hall) “upon a chain through the heart of the town, where numbers of country people flock to see them, and attend them from the gaol up to the court-house.” Arrived there “they are together put into a small box, and kept till dinner time, unless they take their trials before.” If few Little Baddow people were ever in “small box” no doubt many were numbered among the “country people”.

Many cases of assault reached Quarter Sessions, resulting in the opponents being bound over to keep the peace. A few cases, however, ended in death, such as when in 1601 Edward Emery, yeoman, assaulted Thomas Radley with a dagger worth 12d. and gave him a mortal wound under the left arm, one inch wide and two inches deep, of which he instantly died. After the coroner’s inquest Emery was sent to the Assizes where he was found guilty of manslaughter in self-defence, for which he was entitled to a pardon. Other men were less fortunate, one being “hanged by the neck” for homicide (again with a dagger) and another dying in prison in Colchester castle before his trial. The latter had maliciously struck his victim on the nape of the neck with a “swingell of hull” (part of a flail made of holly wood).

One of the most frequent crimes was theft, and the details of one burglary survive from 1581. A husbandman from Hatfield Peverel broke into the house of Bridget Wood in Little Baddow. The Sessions heard how he “did break a hole in a wall of the house of the said Bridget in the night time and so put in his hand into the house the said Bridget being in the same house and so took hold of the purse being about the said Bridget and thereby the said John pulled the said Bridget with the hold he had of the said purse unto the same wall so by him broken and by violence took away her purse from her and the 7d. in money”. Bridget “despaired of her life”. He was still a prisoner in Colchester castle in 1585, after which nothing more is heard of him.

Thefts of goods valued at under 1s. were classified as petty larceny, which did not carry the death penalty. Often therefore goods were undervalued by the court judging the offence in order that the thief should not hang. This may have happened in 1594 when Anne Cooke, who had stolen an apron, crosscloth and divers other parcels of linen, valued by the court at 10d., was in prison at Colchester castle until judged at the Assizes to be guilty of petty larceny, sentenced to be whipped and afterwards set free – “flogged and delivered”.

Elizabeth Thornton and Mary Anderson, however, in 1607 entered a house in daytime and stole two gowns, a petticoat and a hat, valued at £1.7.0. They were found guilty, were not pregnant, and so were hanged. The same fate awaited Richard Fisher, husbandman, in 1610 after he broke into the house of Richard Price and stole twenty cheeses, three sacks and a sheet, worth together £3.12.10. Thomas Pryor too was hanged after breaking into the house of John Newton, vicar, at 11 p.m. and stealing a pewter flagon, plate and dishes and a silver spoon, valued at £1.4.0. Edward Sache, blacksmith, was more fortunate after stealing four white ewes and two white wethers, worth 7s. each. He was found guilty, but claimed benefit of clergy, for he could read, and was therefore branded on the thumb and set at liberty. If he repeated the offence he would be hanged. Morgan Harryes, labourer, broke into Tofts, the house of Sir John Smythe, at night and took two kettles worth 20s. He was found guilty, not of burglary for which he could not have claimed benefit of the clergy, but of felony for which he could and did, and was accordingly branded. In one case of thefts from two houses by three men, a labourer convicted of abetting them before the felony was hanged with all of them (except the one who “read as a clerk”), while Francis Vessey, accused of receiving and harbouring them, knowing of the felony, was acquitted and delivered. Another type of theft was perpetrated by John Tabor, who, with some Writtle men, entered into the dovecote at Little Baddow belonging to Thomas Brett of Broomfield “disseizing him therefrom”.

In 1605 a jury was appointed by Quarter Sessions to enquire into certain “unlawful assemblies and riots lately committed at Little Baddow”. They found that all that had happened was that “Sir John Smythe with the number of twelve or thirteen persons did go to the house of Brygges in Little Baddow standing on the common with pikestaves and cases of pistols but no pistols seen nor drawn and did go into the said cottage and did carry certain household stuff out of the said cottage and there without doors did leave it and two carts with horses which also did come to the said cottage did depart away again empty and the said Sir John Smythe with the said company did depart without any further act done”.

“Brygges” may have been the same man who, at his examination in 1621 by two Justices of the Peace said “...that upon Mundayworkeinge at Mistress Sheltons in the parishe where he dwelleth went from his worke about one of the Clocke in the afternoone unto his owne howse, thinkinge to have gone therinto, but findinge the doares thereof Locked and one Fortune Dellawaye his wife's sister in his howse he willed her to open the doare that he might come therein who refusing so to doe he rune theratt and broke it open and put the said Fortune Dellawaye out of his howse and lockinge the doare went presently unto one Harryes a neighbours howse and forthwith returned unto his howse again, and found the forsayd Fortune Dellawaye in his said howse having broken it open, and the said Briggs entringe therein turned the said Fortune Dellawaye out againe, and presently after his wife cominge to his doare (it being locked) She took a longe pale and striveinge therwith to open the doare her hould thereof slippinge she fell downe upon her side and presently said she was murdered, and more he cannot say.” In 1630 probably the same Thomas Briggs, labourer, was accused by two witnesses of being a “common barrator” or disturber of the peace.

In 1568/9 there appeared in Little Baddow the unusual phenomenon of witchcraft. An unfortunate woman called Alice Swallow, a spinster but her age not given, was accused of bewitching Alice Bastwick and Elizabeth Gowers so that they died, John Dagnet, husbandman, so that his life was despaired of, and also four horses (worth twenty marks) belonging to John Franke so that they died. She pleaded not guilty to each charge at the Assizes in 1570, was found guilty of all and hanged. Alice Bainbrick, also a spinster, was charged with bewitching Richard Hawkes, an infant seven days old, so that he languished for nearly a year before he died. She pleaded, and was found, not guilty. A widow called Alice Bainbrick, perhaps her mother, was buried in Little Baddow churchyard in August 1570.

In later centuries other crimes and punishments are recorded. In 1734 John Spilman, carpenter, was sent to Chelmsford House of Correction (next to the gaol in Moulsham) for

“threatening to fire several houses” in Little Baddow. The Mistress complained that he and another prisoner were “Idle and Lazy persons and would not work” whereupon Quarter Sessions ordered that they be duly corrected by her. In 1744 Mary Symmonds of Danbury deposed upon oath before a justice that she “lost from off the hedge before her house a Dowlas Linnen Shift” (a reminder of the method of drying washing). A search was made and the shift found upon the premises of Joseph Cowland in Little Baddow. He was sentenced “To be transported with the advice of his privy council shall declare and appoint”, which was probably America. In 1819 a flannel waistcoat valued at 4s., which John Clench, working in a field, had left on a bank was stolen. Suspicion fell on William Grubb, already in custody on charges of theft in the parish. General Strutt ordered Benjamin Lewin to take the prisoner’s clothes off, whereupon John Clench identified the waistcoat as his. William Grubb was given two calendar months’ hard labour at the House of Correction.

Petty Sessions, held at the Shire Hall, whose records survive for 1802 to 1832, dealt with a number of minor offences. Among them was a complaint against a man “for carelessly driving his wagon against complainant”. One man accused another of obtaining a pig from him by false pretences; the Clerk to the Justices wrote “The parties finding this was nearly a pig in a poke asked leave to compromise”. There were several summonses for non-payment of tithe or Poor Rate. In one case of assault the Bench considered that “there appeared some doubt whether the assault was not justified”. One woman was assaulted by three men after service on Sunday and they were fined 10s. or 5s. each. Another woman accused a man, whose “turbulent character” was not unknown by the Bench of “Threatening to split her nose etc.,”

Following a fight between two men the Justices decided there was fault on both sides, but one was convicted and fined for being drunk. When a boy was convicted of stealing a rabbit the Clerk wrote “The Deft. Being very young and shows contrition – his father was allowed to compromise”. A few months later he was caught stealing turnips but no note was made of his fate. A case was brought against a man for “wantonly wasting water on Chelmer Navigation”; he was acquitted on paying charges. The Strutts accused two men of stealing wood. One of them who did not pay his fine was imprisoned for a month, and on committing a second offence and refusing to appear before the Bench, was fined 40s. with cost of 6s. and committed to prison for another month, there to be once whipped. Joseph White attended Petty Sessions to state that he had been paid for a horse in stolen £10 and £5 bank notes and the man had absconded. The outcome of this is not recorded. Another man was charged with “a malicious injury in taking an illegal distress for rent” and locking the occupants out of their house. He admitted he had acted wrongly, but said it was “under the advise of his auctioneer” therefore he voluntarily remitted the debt. In 1818 Mary Ann Dennett was accused of obtaining money by false pretences. She had pretended to be a wealthy woman and obtained board and lodging with Mary Scotchman at Fairstead. She then several times visited Mrs. Scotchman’s daughter, Mary Wood, at Little Baddow, saying she was to marry Mrs. Wood’s brother, borrowing money each time and giving her presents of aprons, caps, ribbons etc., which she had stolen from Mrs. Scotchman. She was sentenced to one calendar month in Chelmsford House of Correction. One woman appealed against her husband for ill-treatment, but when he was apprehended and brought before the magistrates “the offence was pardoned by her”. Another woman accused her husband of assault and the Clerk wrote that “this man and woman agreed to live separate – and the husband to allow her 3s. a week”.

William Blanks, blacksmith, was fined £10 in 1802 for shooting with a gun and using dogs to kill game on a Sunday. In 1821 “a sly and quiet old Poacher was this time well detected and on searching his house Rabbit nets were found” – which cost him a fine of £5. The following year two men were convicted of using snares for the destruction of game; they pleaded guilty and were fined £5. Two others, Samuel Edwards and John Hinton, were accused of “using

nets and Ferrets in ...Long wood...for destroying Hares and conies not being qualified – not having leave – and not having obtained a certificate ...Edwards an old thorooped Poacher keeps the Deft. Hinton for that purpose”. Both were convicted and fined £20. At this time James Peacock was the first recorded gamekeeper in the village.

Hearth Tax List 1662 in original script

Although the villagers for centuries to a large extent governed themselves, they were made aware of the national government by the Statutes emanating from Parliament and by the taxes they had to pay. In mediaeval times taxes were usually for the defence of the realm. In 1237/8 Little Baddow paid 33s.4d. as compared with Danbury's 70s.2d., Boreham's 7s.3d. and Hatfield Peverel's 93s.3d. In 1327 ten men in the township of Little Baddow paid a total of 31s.4 and a quarter pennies Richer de Refham paying most at 6s. eight and three quarters pennies. Eight people in Middlemead hamlet were taxed, ranging from Henry Basset at 23d. to John Lof at 8 and a half pennies, the total amounting to 9s.2 and a quarter pennies. Fifty-four names appeared on the Poll Tax list of 1381. One of Henry VIII's subsidies, necessitated by Wolsey's policies and granted by Parliament in 1524, raised £4.8.6. from Middlemead, over half of it from William Solme, who seems however to have been resident only briefly. In the 1540s subsidies to pay for the war with France and Scotland produced sums ranging from 8s. to 2d. from about thirty-six people.

An extant return to the Privy Council of 1569 shows that the parish raised £6.17.2. with which they purchased, towards the parish armoury, one “saquebutt furnysshed” (trumpet), a caliver (musket) “full furnysshed”, three “Cassockes for soldyers”, two “Almayn Ryvettes” (armour) and powder and shot. There remained of the money eleven shillings. Around 1600 Thomas Emery, gent., provided light horses for the militia and in 1602 sent to the muster a black gelding ridden by Richard Tabor. Matthew Rudd, gent., Steward to Sir John Smythe, was also considered of sufficient means to provide light horses, but in 1602 he was absent from the muster because, as a note stated, he was attending on the Lord Treasurer.

Many other national taxes were imposed at times when the government was in need of money, like the Hearth Tax of Charles II's reign, land tax from 1692, window tax from 1696, and taxes on income, servants, hair-powder, dogs, horses and other possessions in the late eighteenth century, during the reign of George III.

Once in a lifetime a few villagers might have caught a glimpse of their monarch or the royal family, such as when Henry VIII or Elizabeth stayed at New Hall, Boreham or the occasions when the Hanoverians journeyed to Harwich to take ship for the continent.

A few names from the poll book 1710 in original script

A few villagers had the privilege of voting for the two members of Parliament for the county, or for the two members for Maldon, if they were freemen of that borough, as some were. The freedom could be acquired in various ways. In the early nineteenth century Henry Sweeting probably gained his by marrying the daughter of a freeman; James Harvey, blacksmith, by being apprenticed to a freeman; John Turner, labourer, through his mother. At the time of the 1826 election there were at least twenty-three such freemen living in Little Baddow, who included Jeremiah Pledger, George Taylor and two Barnards (all farmers), Mark Lay Bygrave (gent.), three Maddockses (a carpenter and two blacksmiths), James Peacock (gamekeeper), Samuel Raven (ostler), three Scotchmans (two labourers and a bargeman) and Thomas Balls (labourer). They were each entitled to two votes which they went to Maldon to cast. Seventeen votes were given to the Tory candidate (supported by the Strutt family, landlords of many of the voters – there was no secret ballot), twelve for the Whig and nine for the Independent (who was actually Tory). There were eight “plumpers”, who voted for one man only, five of them for the Whig and three for the Tory.

The county elections affected even fewer villagers, for not many were of sufficient means to qualify as voters (holders of freehold land worth 40s. or more a year). In 1710 there were fourteen, who included Edmund Waterson of Graces, Thomas Barrington of Tofts, the vicar and one or two men who were non-resident. Among them were five “plumpers” (all for the Whig) and sixteen votes were cast between the two Tory candidates. Boreham in the same year had twenty-eight voters and Danbury had thirty-one. By 1832 Little Baddow’s list of voters had increased to eighteen. Of these one lived in Maldon; John Piggot, of the mill, lived in Ulting; Joseph Pledger farmed in Hatfield Peverel and J.H. Strutt, lord of Little Baddow manor, resided at Terling Place. W.G. Strutt who lived at Tofts, voted in right of his tenure of Andanburies. The Rev. Johnson, vicar, and the Rev. Morell, minister of the chapel, were entitled to vote. Other voters included the bigger farmers – Elias Barnard of Cuckoos, Jeremiah Pledger of Hammonds and his son, John Raven of Whitwells, George Simmons of New Lodge, J.P. Simmons of Graces, John Simmons of Little Graces and James Taylor of the Hall.

(lines of print)

During the Napoleonic Wars preparations were made in case of a French invasion. Between 1798 and 1805 the Lord Lieutenant instructed the constable to make returns regarding his parish. The order of September 1803 which survives said that he was to enlist the assistance of the Churchwardens and Overseers and “other intelligent Inhabitants” to gather the information necessary to complete the return. This was to include first an account of each person’s live and dead stock, and secondly the names of persons who were 1) appointed for the removal from the area of animals and stock and of infants, the aged and infirm, whose names were to be supplied; 2) aged between fifteen and sixty and willing to serve as pioneers or labourers, with their own tools if possible; 3) willing to serve with swords, pistols or firelocks; 4) willing to act as guides on horseback, being well acquainted with roads, rivers, fording places etc., and 6) willing to furnish wagons or carts, horses and drivers, supplied with hay, oats and food for one day. The instructions ended with the warning that no indemnification would be allowed for the property of any person whose name was not on these Rolls of the parish.

The French wars must have impinged upon the lives of the ordinary villagers more than any previous war, apart from the Civil Wars, for which however there is no local documentation. Taxes and local rates were constantly increasing during the wars with France. Men were continually needed for service in the militia and the army and navy, from which some must have returned maimed while others never returned. There was the occasional sight of sailors or soldiers and their families journeying along the roads. The activities around the large army camp at Danbury (and the projected one in Little Baddow) would have kept the war in the minds of the villagers. No one can say whether in Little Baddow mothers threatened their children with the ogre “Boney”. Apart from the fear, over a comparatively short period, of imminent invasion and the death and destruction that would bring, there was the unending reality of ever-rising prices and shortages. The aspect of the village was being changed as more land was ploughed up (including the commons after their enclosure in 1811) to grow arable crops to alleviate grain shortages. Although the previous century had ended with bad harvests, the war, bringing the French blockade and falling imports, was more to blame for the high price of food. This, coupled with the refusal or inability of farmers to raise wages correspondingly, brought abject poverty, to a degree that their ancestors had never known, to many of the labouring population. In parts of Essex this fomented riots and destruction of property, but there is no record that this ever happened in Little Baddow.

2 pages of maps

INDEX

Agriculture	25,26.
Alehouses	30
Ale-tasters	42
Animals	9, 16, 40.
Apprenticeship	13, 26, 32.
Archdeacons' court	17.
Armoury	46.
Assaults	42, 43.
Assizes	42.
Bakers	30.
Beds	7.
Books	9.
Brewers	30.
Bricks	10,29
Burial	17
Butchers	27.
Canal	31.
Carpenters	28.
Chapel	24.
Chests	8.
Children	12.
Church Clerk	21.
Churchwardens	17, 19, 20, 36.
Clothes	8.
Constables	38, 47
Cooking utensils	5.
Cottages	4, 10.
Crafts	25.
Debts	11.
Doctors	31.
Drunkenness etc.,	18.
Elections	46.
Executors	11.
Food	6.
Furniture	6, 10.
Game	41, 45.
Grain	9.
Hearths	5.
Hearth Tax	4, 45.
Highways	36, 37.
Houses	4.
Husbandmen	25.
Inventories	4, 10.
Justices of the Peace	36.
Maltsters	30

Manor courts	36, 39.
Millers	26.
Money	8, 13.
Napoleonic wars	47.
Overseers of the Poor	36.
Papermaking	27.
Petty Sessions	44.
Protestantism	17.
Puritanism	17, 19, 23.
Quakers	24.
Quarter Sessions	42.
Recusants	18.
Relatives	13.
St. Pauls Cathedral	20.
Servants	14, 32, 34.
Sexual morals	18.
Shoemakers	28.
Shopkeepers	31
Smiths	29.
Sunday observance	18
Surnames	25.
Tableware	6.
Tailors	28.
Tanners	27.
Taxes	45.
Theft	43
Tools	10.
Trades	25
Trees	40.
Vermin	22.
Vestry meeting	36.
Vicars	15, 17, 19, 23.
Victuallers	30.
Visitations	20, 21.
Wages	33
Wills	3, 15.
Witchcraft	44
Wives and widows	11, 12.
Workshops	28.
Yeomen	25.

