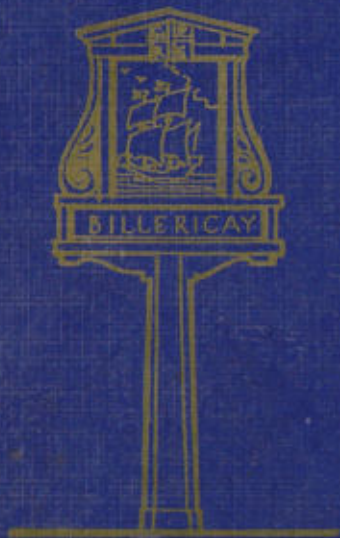




BILLERICAY
AND ITS
HIGH STREET



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INTRODUCTION

Billericay is one of the most charming and unspoilt small towns still remaining within 25 miles of London.

Not only has it a pleasant appearance, so often remarked upon by the thousands who merely pass through its High Street on their way from the great metropolis to Southend or the Essex countryside, but hidden behind its doors and windows lies a wealth of historic interest.

In 1944 the Billericay Area Group of the Council for the Preservation of Rural England produced a report published under the title of "A Plan for Billericay", setting out its views upon the preservation and future development of the district.

Since that time, however, great changes in the laws governing planning have come to pass and it is gratifying to observe that many of the suggestions and recommendations which the Committee then put forward now form part of the principles of that great new legislation, The Town and Country Planning Act, 1947. Whatever disagreements or controversies may have arisen over certain sections of that Act, it must be admitted that its general provision should benefit our Towns and Countryside by exercising stricter control over the external appearance of all types of development.

The Booklet "A Plan for Billericay" is now out of print and in response to repeated requests for further publication, the Area Group set up a Sub-Committee to study in detail one particular part of their earlier report, namely, the High Street, and to augment the recommendations set out therein.

When dealing with the **Central Area** in "A Plan for Billericay" the Committee stated:

"Medieval timber framed houses, some still retaining their original fronts, while others have been re-fronted at various periods in brick, weatherboarding or stucco, are mingling with early and mid-Georgian facades. To this has recently been added the pleasant mottled brick elevations of the Police Station and Post Office in the modern classic style and in the midst stands the interesting 16th-Century brick tower of St. Mary's Church. This is a composition of quiet charm and dignity of which residents might well be proud."

Despite the protection which should be afforded by the new legislation the Group feels that great vigilance must be exercised to see that the beauty and historic character which has been handed down to us is not lost, but is held in trust for future generations.

It is with this object in view that we now have pleasure in presenting this descriptive history and report.

For the purposes of our survey we have included some of the buildings in Chapel Street, Norsey Road and Sun Street, which fall so naturally into the general picture of the little Town.

THANKS

The Billericay Group wish to place on record their great appreciation and thanks to all who have so readily contributed information, to the owners and occupiers for completing the questionnaire which was circulated, to those who allowed our members access to documents and other records, to Mr. G. S. Amos for the Architectural Notes, but most particularly to Mr. Harry Richman, our assistant secretary, who has devoted so much time in collecting and collating the information, and preparing this report. Mr. Richman has a most interesting collection of old records, photographs and souvenirs of the Town which it is hoped will one day find a permanent home in a Billericay Museum.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

The High Street runs in an approximately north to south direction, is some 830 yards in length and for its greater part is comparatively level and approximately 315 feet above sea level, although there is a slight downward gradient at its northern end. It extends from the Railway bridge in the north as far as Sun Corner-London Road in the south and forms part of Highway B 1007.

The numbering starts at the north end, the odd numbers on the west and the even on the east side.

For most of its length the High Street is a fine broad thoroughfare, averaging 75 feet between the fronts of the buildings.

After passing Norsey Road corner, there are no side turnings which have a through way for vehicles with the exception of Chapel Street, which forks eastward at the Church and forms a triangle with Sun Street on its third side.

The buildings are mainly of two or three storeys and occupied as private houses, offices and shops of various trades and of all architectural styles extending from the Medieval Period right up to present day. Many of the buildings contain fascinating internal features such as old doors, exposed and carved beams, old world fireplaces, staircases and panelling. Several have been associated with interesting personalities of the past or have been connected with earlier and different businesses or trades. Although individually few of the properties can be said to be outstanding examples of good architecture, almost all of them possess pleasant proportions in their walls and windows, roofs and gables; so that when viewed as a whole the Town has a serenity and charm which it would be hard to equal.

CHAPTER I

At the end of the 16th Century the Town of Billericay extended across the site of the present Railway bridge into what is now Stock Road, the last of the buildings to go being Pear Tree Cottage which stood on the site of Arthur's Garage until 1935.

On the hill behind the Garage is the St. Andrew's Hospital, the oldest part of which was built in the Gothic style in 1840 and was originally the Billericay Union Workhouse. In its grounds at the north end Roman and Iron Age discoveries were made in the 19th Century.

As we approach the town from the north, the first buildings to catch our eyes are "The Crown" and "Railway" Hotels, both of which date from the coming of the railway itself in the 'eighties.

The **Railway Hotel** replaces the "Dog and Partridge", a beer-house which stood on the same side of the road where is now the railway cutting. It was a favourite halt for horse brakes from Southend, as the passengers could refresh themselves at the Inn whilst watching the local youths at their cricket matches on Gentry's Meadow opposite. This, too, has vanished to make way for the railway cutting between Stock and Norsey Roads. In 1867, Ephraim Theodbold, who was also a Marine Store Dealer, was at the "Dog and Partridge", and Juliana Theodbold in 1873. The present building was erected in 1885, the first licensee being William Bull.

Just north of the Railway Hotel Garage is a modern single-storey plain brick building erected by Mr. A. H. Collins as headquarters for the Billericay Times newspaper which he founded. It was printed here till the rights were sold to the present proprietors, since when the building has been occupied by various firms of builders.

At the rear of the Hotel and approached by a narrow passage is the **Billericay Constitutional Club**, founded about the beginning of the century at 70 High Street. It was then known as the Conservative and Liberal Unionist Association, and its headquarters as the "Blue Room" from the colour of its furnishings and decorations. At the end of the First World War the headquarters were transferred to "Norsey View" at the corner of Western Road, until the present building was erected as permanent Club Rooms. In the meantime, the name seems to have changed again, for the Citation in the rooms shows that the Billericay Constitutional Club "formerly known as the Billericay and District Conservative Unionist Club" was "duly enrolled as a member of the Association of Conservative Clubs" on June 3, 1924. The present building contains General, Games, and Billiards rooms, and other recreational facilities.

To the south and west of the club buildings is the site of "Norsey View", now a large piece of waste ground with a few crumbling relics of outbuildings once Billericay's tanyard and whose well still exists in a garden in Tanfield Drive nearby.

A tenement and land called "le Tannhouse" are mentioned on this site in 1593, and in the registers at Great Burstead church under July 1599 we find "John Cork the sonne of Samuell the tanner was baptyzed the first day". In 1867 William Offin is described as owner occupier of "House, Land, Tan Office and Premises." Mr. Black's secondhand shop is all that remains of the Tan Office.

The Tanhouse was what was later known as "Norsey View", a large square Georgian style building condemned as a dangerous structure and demolished in 1947 after years of neglect.

Dr. Thomas Waldron, b. 1873, lived here before leaving for South Africa during the Boer War. In 1947 he celebrated his 50th anniversary as an M.D. and was presented with a Papal Decoration. He was at one time Captain of the Billericay Cricket Team.

During the Waldron family's residence at "Norsey View", the house was used regularly for daily celebrations of Mass, the Roman Catholic church in Laindon Road not having then been erected.

For a few years after the First World War, "Norsey View" was a Vicarage, Rev. W. S. Smith living here till the completion of the Vicarage next to the Archer Hall.

From the mid 1930's till the house was demolished, Dr. Waldron's Waiting Room and his old Consulting Room formed the "Hiker's Halt Café", the remainder of the premises being empty and neglected except for the kitchen wing let as a separate cottage. The house was said to be haunted by a white horse which appeared inside the building, but no reason or story for its appearance is known.

The Crown Hotel carries on a licence of at least 400 years' standing in Billericay, though this is its third site. In the 16th Century the Crown Inn was in the centre of the town by the present Council Chamber, where we will meet it later on. After a long period as a flourishing coaching inn, etc., it lost caste on the coming of the railways and moved to smaller premises at 122/6 High Street as a Beerhouse, the licence later being transferred to the present building which was erected in 1889 on the site of two cottages with gardens extending to Norsey Road. It is a plain red brick building typical of the 1880's. On the first floor is the large Hall or Club Room of the Ancient Order of Foresters, Court Rubens 3095, whose present Secretary is Mr. A. W. Seagers. The Foresters had previously met in turn at the old Town Hall, the "Sun Hotel", and the old "Bull Inn" and held their first session at Crown Hotel early in 1890. The stables and outbuildings have had various uses

including a Riding School, Army Stores, etc., a Basket Factory and now partly as office accommodation in connection with Mr. Speirs's Electrical Company.

The first licensee at the present building was Mr. G. Perkins, who brought the licence from the beerhouse.

The Crown Bypass connecting High Street and Norsey Road here is shown on a 16th-Century map, but no name is given.

Behind the Crown and in the centre of the High Street-Norsey Road junction is **Great Burstead House**, usually known as "Old School House", a building of 18th-Century origin with slated roof and with red brick bays added to the front about the beginning of the present century, and a Schoolroom at the rear built about the same time. This was for about 30 years the "Great Burstead House School" of Miss A. Boughtwood, though most people knew its title without the "Great". A few years before the last war, the school removed to "Courtlands" in Norsey Road, and its old home remained empty till requisitioned by the Army in 1939/40. During the whole period of the war it formed the Headquarters of the various regiments quartered in the town, and during the Battle of Britain, several captured *Luftwaffe* pilots were brought here for questioning. At the end of the war until their removal to Rose Hall the British Legion shared the premises with the Army Cadets, and rooms on the first floor were used by the Red Cross and Billericay Society of Model Engineers. The house, now shared by the Home Guard and the Army Cadets, is in a rather dilapidated condition.

"**Claremont**" adjoining was erected by a predecessor of Mr. W. Cottis of the High Street bakery. It is a fairly modern type brick house with tiled roof, occupying the site of an old cottage. At one time it housed a tiny sweets and general shop of the type usually associated with "Village Stores", and as such can be seen in some earlier postcard views of this end of the town. A later occupier of "Claremont" was a Miss Tyrell who had a small draper's establishment where Mr. Marsh now has his sweetshop. During the recent war the house was used for Army purposes in conjunction with its neighbour, the old School.

"**Crown Cottages**" are an attractive set of three red brick cottages of about 17th-Century date with sash windows. Neglected for some years, they have recently undergone careful restoration by the present owner, Mr. Corbett and his predecessor. The chimney stacks are rather fine.

Opposite, at the corner of Crown Road, is a **Garden of Remembrance**, the gift of an anonymous lady donor and laid out by the Billericay Urban District Council to commemorate the 1951 Festival of Britain, and the seats were provided from the balance of the funds of the Billericay Festival Committee. The site of the garden was for some years a privately-owned Market, which was closed at

the outbreak of war in 1939 and remained a derelict eyesore till 1952 when the present garden was laid out. At one time the site was suggested for a British Legion Hall, but as the Rose Hall came into the market this was purchased instead.

It is of interest to note that in 1944 Our Group suggested in "A Plan for Billericay" that this Market site should be made into a public garden as it commands extensive views over the country towards the Thames Estuary.

Crown Road was developed between the two Wars. A footpath at the lower end connects it with Jackson's Lane. Roman Burials were discovered in the railway cutting behind Crown Road about 1886.

Speirs' Radio and Electrical Stores at "Market Corner" is a plain modern building erected as a lock-up fish shop by Messrs. Horsnells now in the High Street, later occupiers being a Green-grocer and a Grocer. The flat over the shop was added prior to Mr. Speirs's occupation.

The first set of weather boarded cottages next to this shop and known as **6, 7, 8 and 9 Norsey Road** were probably erected in the 18th Century and were originally plaster fronted. The same description might equally apply to the pair of cottages nearest High Street, all of them being comfortable and homely little buildings, also enjoying the wonderful views across the Thames Estuary, the waters of which can be seen on a clear day.

The central block of three cottages, **3/5 Norsey Road**, are quite definitely, however, the single "tenement" shown on the 1593 map of the town. All three have massive and numerous timbers, although some have been covered over in recent years, especially in the central one. The staircase at No. 3 is interesting and unlike those usually associated with cottages of this size. The two end cottages have small windows in the gables to admit light to the attic type bedrooms, but the middle one boasts a Dormer window at front and back. The roof is now slated but was formerly tiled which gave the building much more character than it now possesses. In the 1704 Trust Deed of the Quakers' Meeting House, a reference is made to the "Yard or Orchard late in the occupation of the Widdow Phillips deceased" who was evidently the tenant of this house before its conversion into three tenements.

Elizabeth Cottage, a red brick double fronted building now occupies the site of a "tenement and buildings . . . lately demolished and re-edified with Brick and made fit and convenient for a Meeting place for divine Worship by the people of God who are vulgarly and by way of contempt called Quakers, and hath for some years hitherto been used by the said people for that purpose and the ground thereunto for a burying place."

This was in 1704 when Richard Densey of Felsted, formerly of Great Burstead, made over the property to a number of trustees in

consideration of the sum of 5s. for the first year, and afterwards the rent of " one pepper corne if it be lawfully demanded ".

The property is described as abutting on to the " street of Billerikey towards the West and to the dwelling house of John Cole heretofore of Thomas Elliott towards the South and to the Orchard of the said John Cole towards the East and to the Yard or Orchard late in the occupacon of the Widdow Phillips deceased being near the Road and turning to the land commonly called Nossey land leading to the Wood called " Nossey Wood ".

This Deed was confirmed in 1714 between " Thomas Poole of Butsbury in y^e County of Essex, Webster, Zachariah Hunt of Great Bursted in y^e County aforesaid Webster and Benjamin Hale of y^e same Husbandman of y^e one part " and six men of Chelmsford and Great Baddow.

A third indenture dated 1715 concerns mainly the regulation and use of the building as a Quakers' Meeting House, and the garden, etc., as a Burial Ground. It is very interesting but too lengthy to record here.

The term Webster used in these deeds is another name for what is usually known as a Weaver.

In 1848 White's Directory refers to the " old Quakers' Chapel here is in a dilapidated state, there being now no members of the Society of Friends resident in the town ". In fact, it is supposed that the few who remained prior to this date amalgamated with the Strict Baptists who established their headquarters in Chapel Street.

In recent years the Society of Friends have become firmly established in Billericay and hold weekly Meetings at the Women's Institute Hall. It is to this Society that we are indebted for the extracts from the 18th-Century Deeds quoted above.

Some time after the Quakers left their old Meeting House, it became a Beerhouse called the " Royal Oak ", Thomas Cullum being here in 1873.

In 1903 the place was so greatly altered inside and out that little or nothing remains to show its old use.

The late Mr. J. McKenzie lived here for some years using it as his Headquarters for the builders' business which was later transferred to Lion Lane.

The Dairy (Mr. A. Askew, late Gordon Butchers) is a late 19th-Century red brick building with tiled roof which occupies part of the site of the Quakers' property, their Burial Ground being, by repute, at the lower end of the ground at the rear of the Dairy and **Churchill Johnson**, a modern temporary type of building.

Crossing over to the corner of Western Road, the 16th-Century "Newe Streete", we find two tiny but ancient cottages, **Nos. 17**

and 19 High Street, which by their method of construction seem to be about 300 years old. They are built mainly of timber framing with Lath and Plaster, but, like many Billericay houses now, have red brickwork superimposed on to the original front and side, and the roofs are slated.

Next is the premises of the **London Co-operative Society, Ltd.**, a pebble dashed building with slated roof and large gable, built by the Brentwood and District Provident Co-operative Society in 1911, on the site of the "Fox" Inn or Beerhouse.

The Fox sign dates from the 16th Century when a house called "Foxes" was near the present Crown Hotel. The later building was closely connected with the nearby Tanyard whose workers had their own quarters on the first floor approached by a private staircase from the street where now are the stairs to the Co-operative Hall. The last licensee was Mr. S. A. Barfield who was also the Town Crier. He was a well known character who did not believe in having Tablecloths but only Newspapers on his tables, and he is remembered also for his regular unfailing custom of playing his Piccolo down the High Street every New Year's Eve, being so punctual that it has been asserted one could tell the time by his appearance in the street. John Sudburie was Copyhold Tenant in 1593, and Phillip Mead in 1770.

Some time after 1908 "The Fox" closed its doors as an inn but is said for a brief period to have been a tea room. Prior to the present building being erected, the Brentwood and District Provident Co-operative Society carried on business at Bay Tree Cottage, now Mr. F. Gould's greengrocer's shop.

The Co-operative Hall on the first floor is used for meetings of various organisations.

The pleasant tiled buildings numbered **23-27 inclusive High Street** are of 17th-Century date, of timber framed construction, some of the ceiling beams being exposed. The fronts are more Georgian in character, formerly weatherboarded, but now, unfortunately, pebbledashed. No. 23, now the residence and office of Mr. A. W. Seagers, a Friendly Society agent, used to be the Grocers and General Shop of a Mr. Senell. There is a story of a supposed secret room at this house. No. 25 was formerly the Baker's shop of Mr. George Cox, who was an early member of the Billericay Cricket Club. He was killed in an accident when he was dragged along the ground behind his horse and cart. The old brick oven, although rather derelict still stands against the rear wall of the house. Mrs. Cox was headmistress at the Board School in Laindon Road—now the Billericay Junior School. This shop was also that of Mr. Coppin, a Pork Butcher, and the Stationers, etc., business of Mr. J. Pateman whose name appears as publisher on old postcard views of the district. Miss Grayling, a relative by marriage of the Patemans, was here for a number of years and preceded Mr. F. Mathews, the present occupier.

Nos. 29-31 are a pair of semi-detached cottages of early 18th Century date, and were formerly weatherboarded but now pebble-dashed. At the rear are two tall chimney stacks rising from the long sloping roof which is tiled. There are cellars, and the attics have gabled dormers.

Messrs. Ashley's (No. 33) and the adjoining lock-up shop occupy the ground floor of a doublefronted 18th-Century house of timber construction, with a later brick front superimposed on the original. At the rear, which is weatherboarded, is an interesting doorway with a flat hood. In the side wall, which is also weatherboarded, is another contemporary doorway of more common type. There is a good staircase, and some rooms have exposed ceiling beams, etc. Although the Deeds have not been available, the late Mr. H. Bill, who used to own the premises, stated that it is referred to in an 18th Century deed as the "White Swan".

A Mr. Aylett, owner of several properties in Billericay was the last private resident. He wore a Top Hat and Frock Coat to the end of his days, and used to drive about in a Pony Trap.

The right-hand shop soon became, after its conversion, a Green-grocers and Fruiterers and remained as such under different proprietors until just after the war when it was taken over by Ashley's, the drapers. The other shop has seen several different trades. Among them has been a Furniture and Linoleum store, a Wool Shop (Madame Florence), a Tailor and Gentleman's Outfitters, and another department of Ashley's which was removed to the main shop near the church in February this year.

Returning again to the east side we find the fine old half-timbered building **The Old Essex Home**—12 High Street—which is the south crosswing of a house of early 17th-Century date or possibly earlier. The north block was much lower than the part which remains and both it and the crosswing had early 17th-Century chimney stacks that on the latter possesses three diagonal shafts. The front of the house was plastered, the timbers being exposed during its conversion to offices for Mr. R. T. Wilkes, Estate Agent, who moved here from the old tan office across the road, and at the same time the first floor became "Bobbette's" ladies' hairdressing establishment. This still remains under a different name, but the "Essex Homes Co. Ltd." closed its doors in 1939/40.

This house is probably the "dwelling house of John Cole, heretofore of Thomas Elliot" mentioned in the Quakers' deed of 1704, repairs have recently been undertaken to preserve this quaint building.

Adjoining is Nos. 14-18, which were formerly one building of 16th-Century style, altered and added to at various dates, but originally the "Bull" or "Black Bull Inn" whose sign is referred to as far back as 1616. The building is of timber frame construction with brick additions, and a later brick front and tiled roof. There was an open Carriageway in the centre part of which remains as a side entrance to the three tenements formed from the inn premises.

The greater part, however, is now included in Speeds Café where the staircase was formerly against the south wall of this carriageway. The north end (No. 14) also seems to have been a lofty carriageway by its construction and height of shop, etc. Two rooms on the first floor over this shop have been made out of one very large chamber, which was spanned by a plain but solid looking timber arch of Tudor style, this being underbuilt by a partition. It is possible that this was the Meeting Room used by the Ancient Order of Foresters before their removal to their own Club Room at the Crown Hotel in 1890. According to reports the old Board of Guardians used to adjourn to the "Bull" for a little refreshment after their Tuesday meetings.

The building contains some exposed timbers, but the south end was so much altered and modernised in 1949 that little or nothing remains to show the antiquity of that part.

The front of the building has been altered three times since the inn closed its doors. Messrs. Wells and Perry were the last brewers to own the Bull. Other licensees were William Wright in 1770, Thomas Curtis in 1848, and from 1861 to 1874 Mrs Sarah Maria Curtis, whose two daughters were the last licensees, remembered as little old ladies with mob caps and ringlets who were, it is said, the victims of many practical jokes played on them by the local youths.

Wests No. 20 named **Bay Tree Cottage**, which was built on an L-shape plan in the 16th & 17th Centuries. Of timber frame construction, the rear is plastered but the front has a red brick front with parapets added to the original and the roof line altered. The Green-grocer's shop and the central passageway originally formed one room as can be seen by the rather fine ceiling beam with its Stopped Chamfers. The main beam supporting the Kitchen ceiling has similar chamfers, and the cross beams here are also exposed some being Ships' Timbers. An interesting old door leads from this room to what is now a bathroom. The wide Inglenook fireplace still exists but has a modern grate inserted with a cupboard at each end, the iron bar for suspending the cooking utensils remaining in the chimney, which is partly blocked by a half inch thick perforated iron plate thought to have come from a ship.

Between the kitchen and the Florist and Seedsman's shop is the former Keeping Room with exposed timbers and which was formerly lined with shelves from floor to ceiling. There was a rather worm-eaten old Beer Stand against one wall. A window in this Keeping Room opens on to the passage and was probably a Serving Hatch when this house was associated with the "Bull" Inn adjoining. On the first floor nearly all the walls have exposed timbers, some very massive, and the two front rooms have their ceilings continued into the roof, both sloping in from front and sides following the original shape of this part of the roof.

A line of outbuildings extending towards the East are reputed to have been used in former days as sleeping quarters for Ostlers and

Carters from the " Bull " Inn, there being then an open yard where is now the Lean-to entrance to Mr. F. Gould's Greengrocer's shop, which formed a way in for carts from the street to the back of the building. There is a long garden extending to the so-called Roman Moat and Wall. The deeds of " Bay Tree Cottage " date from about 1700 when the place was first sold.

The Lean-to at the S-end was once a dairy known as the " Hole in the Wall ", the proprietor being a Mr. Springett; and the adjoining shop was the original Billericay branch of the Brentwood and District Provident Co-operative Society Ltd., until the erection of its permanent premises.

It is of interest that Mr. West, himself a builder by trade, suggests that the bricks used on the front of this house and at " Hurlocks " and 43 High Street came from a brickfield on the site of Chestnut Avenue, their size as well as their texture being the same as those from that place. Others of the same size have been used in Billericay but, Mr. West says, their texture is entirely different to those from the Western Road works.

CHAPTER II

Dr. Wells' " Sheeredayes " (No. 22), mentioned in old deeds as " Cleer Hall " and " The Tann House ", was originally built in the 16th Century as a small farmhouse with one room each side of the front door, a fairly large kitchen and scullery and two bedrooms. Many additions have been added at later dates by Dr. Frederick Carter, the old kitchen being now Doctor Wells' surgery. About 1925 a further addition was made in the form of a waiting room at the north end of the house. The room to the right of the front door has also been extended towards the East at some past date, but its original length can still be clearly traced. The original house was timber framed but most of these timbers are now hidden under the later plaster and the building was encased in brickwork during the 18th Century. There is a rather fine oak staircase, and the doors are of various styles. Windows are mainly of the sash type, but one Casement window is reputed to have been designed by Grinling Gibbons. The front elevation is a very pleasing example of Georgian architecture with well proportioned sash windows, a pedimented porch supported on attached Tuscan columns and a nicely designed semicircular fanlight, an old tiled roof peeps above the parapet.

The long line of Coachhouses and Stables is of interest, one gable facing the street having some Pigeon Holes in it. The so-called " Snuggery " at the street end of these outbuildings has a very large Sash Window and may very likely have been the Schoolroom when the house was a Boys' Academy. The Drive in front of the outbuildings is believed to be the original road leading to a Roman Moat and Camp beyond which can still be traced at the lower end of this and adjoining gardens. Roman coins have been discovered here in the past.

"Sheeredays" was once a Boys' Academy, the illegitimate children of George III being among the pupils, and one, a certain George FitzGeorge, being drowned in a pond nearby. He was buried at Great Burstead where there is a memorial to him over the South door. Some of the pupils' initials are scratched in the brickwork of the north wall of the house.

Dr. Frederick Carter, brother-in-law of Major Spitty of "Hurlocks", opposite lived and practised here during the last part of the 19th Century. The doctor was the son of Doctor William Carter who also practised in Billericay from the end of the 18th Century. He owned "Sheeredays" but does not seem to have lived in it, William Gardner Payne being given as occupier in 1867.

On Dr. Frederick Carter's death in 1909, Dr. J. D. Wells, having assisted Dr. Carter for some years, became his successor.

Adjoining "Sheeredays" is "**The Hill House**", an interesting classic mid-18th Century building, the date 1753 being scratched on a beam in the roof. Most of the building is of reddish brown brickwork, but the front is of white bricks and reflects the "Grecian" style of about 1800 when this elevation was refronted and the front slope of the roof slated, but the rear is covered with old red clay tiles. Windows are all of the sash type, and the roundheaded ones of the ground floor and attics are interesting. Many of the main windows have interior folding shutters, and three rooms have attractive Georgian Cornices, one with a pattern of Grapes and Ears of Corn. The original fireplaces, said to have been Hepplewhite, were unfortunately removed by a previous owner.

An old Wine Cellar still exists in the front part of the house, and under the Kitchen floor is a well said to have a passage leading from it to an unknown destination.

In 1867 the house was the residence of Henry Collin, an Attorney and Agent for Sparrow & Co.'s Bank, whose premises were adjoining. A bricked-up door facing into the yard at the side was probably Henry Collin's private door from his residence to his office, which was next door.

"**Veres**" (Nos. 26/8) "**Old Bank House**" is another of the Billericay houses of uncertain date. It is probably 18th-Century and originally had an open carriageway to the back which has been converted into part of the living accommodation of the house in recent years. As a Bank, the public part appears to have been what is now No. 28, with the Manager's office in the front part of No. 26. From this opened the Strong Room, whose door—still in position—could be unlocked only through a small trapdoor in the room above. The bank was open for business from 12-2 p.m. on Tuesdays, which was Market Day in Billericay. Its business was transferred to the present Barclays Bank some time after 1868 when John Jefferies was appointed as Agent for Sparrow Tufnell & Co.

Mr. F. Vere has occupied the premises since 1920 when he founded his business here at what is now No. 28. The roof is now slated but was probably tiled originally. The elevations are of simple proportions with unobtrusive shop fronts.

Nos. 30 and 32, now of red brick with tiled roof, were originally thatched and of Timber frame and plaster construction, altered and faced with red brick some time in the 19th Century, as the 1832 view of this part of Billericay shows quite a different elevation. There are exposed timbers inside, and a beam in the kitchen has the date 1635 which, however, has been painted over. When one of the bedroom ceilings was rebuilt, the space between it and the attic floor was discovered to be packed with hay and chaff, an early method of insulation against heat and cold, etc. There is an extremely large and tall chimney stack with shafts wide enough for a man to climb up. An outbuilding at the rear has a brick floor, and by the frequent discoveries of animal bones it has been generally supposed that the premises may have been occupied by a Butcher and Slaughterer. The present owner is Mr. E. G. Wormald, who occupies No. 32, where there is also an Agency of the Perth Dye Works. No. 30 is the head office and residence of Mr. Collier of the Hire Car Service at the Railway Hotel Garage.

Next we find a tiny weatherboarded and timber-framed cottage with tiled roof. **No. 34** is really the North crosswing of a house which extended across the site of Gibson's Greengrocer's and Fruiterer's shop. The main block was converted into two shops about 1936, that on the north becoming a Tea Room. Owing to the removal of the huge central chimney stack, however, the building was so greatly weakened that it collapsed 1939/40, when it was roughly roofed in as at present.

Nos. 38 and 40, Bassom's & the Sweetshop is a property of great interest not only because of its age, but on account of its associations with the life of Billericay. It is of 16th Century origin, and the original East wall having a moulded beam inscribed—"THE YEAR OF OUR LORDE 1577 ELIZABETH . . .", the remainder of the wording has been hidden by a later addition. In one of the bedrooms some wall timbers are exposed, and another has a cased-in ceiling beam. Downstairs the shop has a heavy ceiling beam with stopped Chamfers and the door leading from it has brass Drop Handles to its 18th Century door.

The Kitchen Rafters are exposed, and when the plaster was stripped from the walls for renewing, a blocked-up door was found leading to the house on the South proving the truth in the old tradition that these two houses were originally one, forming the "Magpie and Horseshoeman". The main bedroom has a large Powder Closet probably a relic of these days.

Above this bedroom ceiling there is an interesting piece of carving on one of the roof timbers now unfortunately hidden. A small room on the ground floor shows a typical Georgian trend in its fittings,

and another has an 18th Century Grate, now slightly altered. A lattice pattern hand-cast brass finger plate on a door here is of the same type as those removed from Hurlocks and now in the Billericay Town Collection. It was most probably placed in position at the same time as those at Hurlocks, as the Bassoms were responsible for a great deal of building work for Major Spitty.

The front of the house, formerly plastered, is now weatherboarded and has a nicely detailed eaves and cornice; the roof is tiled. About 1930 the present shopfront was inserted in place of a genuine 18th Century doorway. There are two small bay windows.

No. 40 formed the South crosswing of the building and is of two storeys with attics, the upper floor overhanging the lower and built under by the Georgian sashed bay window which gives this part of the town so much attraction. The deeds of the properties only date from 1868 but mention that it was once part of the "Magpie and Horseshoe" Inn. It was once also known as "Jennings".

Nothing is known of the "Magpie and Horseshoe" beyond the fact that the Licensee in 1770 was a John Watson. The large two-storeyed builder's store and workshop, etc., at the lower end of the garden of No. 38 and approached by double gates from Chantry Chase, is weatherboarded and partly plastered and is probably 18th Century, and may have been part of the Inn's stabling, etc.

The Bassom family have lived here for nearly 200 years and have been in the building and decorating trade for most of that time, so that they must have taken over the premises very soon after the inn closed its doors. Their business and household Ledgers and Account Books date back to 1807; about 30 of them covering the period of almost 70 years are now deposited in the Essex Record Office, and are of particular interest as they give details of work at local buildings as the Barracks, Billericay Chapel (now Parish Church), Old and New Meetings, the Workhouse, Great Burstead Church and Toll Gate, and the entire building work at the Market House and Grammar School (now Council Chambers) in 1830 as well as many other places farther afield, particularly Thorndon Hall and other properties of the Petre family.

The firm is now represented by Mr. H. Bassom and Mrs. E. C. Bassom occupies the house No. 38.

For many years Mr. Frederick Wade, Coachman Gardener to Major Spitty, lived at No. 40 where his wife had a Provision Shop, noted for its Rice Pudding which she used to sell in "pennorths". Their daughter Clara was born here about 1881 and carried on business after her mother's death, as a dealer in Toys, Sweets, Tea, Crockery and all the other miscellaneous items usually associated with a real old-fashioned Village Store, and the window was usually surrounded by children of all ages. Miss Wade died in St. Andrew's Hospital in 1951. Mrs. Whitworth and Mrs. Hurley as a Tobacconist's and Confectioner's are the present occupiers of the shop.

Having reached this point we must cross back to the West side of the High Street and return to **Green's Stores (35)** and **Valerica Studios (37)** which are probably of 17th Century origin. Both have been considerably altered especially the former which was almost entirely remodelled during its conversion as shop premises, etc. The position of the staircase at Valerica Studios and certain other features point to the fact that these two properties were originally one house. The rear of the buildings are still mainly of plaster but the street elevations have been refronted in red brick. The windows are of the sash type and the roofs are slated. Nothing certain is known of its history, however, though it seems to have belonged to the Spitty family about 1867. The houses were occupied at one time by two sisters who it is said had a door made between the two premises so that they could exchange visits without going outside the front door. The "Valerica Photographic Studios" were opened after the last war, the present proprietor, Mr. L. B. Sindall taking over the business in 1949 when his predecessor, Mr. A. Webb, emigrated to Australia.

Next is "**Hurlocks**" (No. 39), for many years the home of the Spitty family, now, alas, derelict and, we fear, reaching the end of its long life. What now remains shows that this building was a fine example of a solid mid-18th Century elevation of red mottled brickwork with sash windows of good proportions—a projecting portico has wooden columns with the remnants of Ionic type capitals. The roof is tiled and has a large glazed lantern light.

In 1937 it was described as a 16th Century timber structure partly modernised in 18th Century style, the front being Georgian in design. Behind the Georgian portion was the Kitchen with its Tudor timber structure exposed, partly panelled with mid-late 16th Century panelling. An exterior door (now in the Billericay Town Collection) had 16th Century hinges. The ground and first floors contained examples of carved Pinewood fireplaces of Renaissance period. The rear wall of the main block was rendered in cement with bottle glass panels, this treatment being characteristic of the late 18th Century. The herringbone flooring in the Coachhouses etc. was an "interesting and noteworthy feature", the size of bricks suggesting 16th Century work. There are still some typical Georgian fireplaces, one at least, together with a Firegrate of the same period soon, it is hoped, to be added to the Billericay Town Collection, the present owners having given permission for their removal. In the room on the left of the hall was a fine carved Chair rail and Cornice, part of which, together with some of the wainscot and carved architrave from the windows of the same room, is already in the Collection. The hall has a plain wooden wainscot, and typical moulded chair rail of a pattern which exists also in other parts of the house. The Study facing the garden has a Georgian fireplace with arched recess and cupboards on either side, and this room has two doors like those to the front rooms—good examples with six moulded panels. On the attic floor the doors include some of Cromwellian and later date.

It has been supposed that it was the "White Hart" referred to but not shown on the map of the "lands of Joseph Fishpoole, Gent attached to the White Hart" in 1689, but this sign has also been claimed by the present Barclays Bank. Both buildings are shown on the map, the latter being unnamed, but "Hurlocks" having Joseph Fishpoole's name against it shows at least that this was his residence. It is of interest, too, that the Fishpoole memorial in Great Burstead Church has a border of almost exactly the same design as the unusual Chair Rail in the main room of the house. Joseph Fishpoole owned several properties in this district, including a Hop Ground in Western Road. He died in 1741 and his son of the same name in 1755. His daughter Ann Abbutt died in 1759 leaving £100 to be laid out in the purchase of land, or invested in one of the public funds, "the interest to be equally distributed between five poor widows of Great Burstead parish". It was to be called Fishpoole's Gift, and was last paid out in 1831 on behalf of a Mrs. Johnson of Bristol by her executor.

The Spittys seem to have taken possession of Hurlocks soon after Ann Abbutt's death. They were originally Cattle Drovers from Y Spitty Yotwith in Cardiganshire, who later became owners of a great amount of property—mostly land—in this corner of Essex including Canvey Island.

Major Thomas Jenner Spitty was the third generation of the family to live in Billericay. He was a Justice of the Peace, Major Commanding the Essex Rifles, and was Deputy Lieutenant of the County in 1881. His chief memorial is the well known Lake which he had constructed in the fields attached to one of his properties, Hill House Farm, during a period of depression in the district. Founder, in 1864, of the Billericay Reading Rooms, he was concerned in many other ways with the life of the Town. He is recorded as entertaining the children after the official opening of the Laindon Road Schools, and his Coach, now in the Colchester Museum, is said to have been the first vehicle to cross the newly opened Railway Bridge in Stock Road. Major Spitty was an Archaeologist and with Mr. J. A. Sparvel-Bayly of Burghstead Lodge was responsible for many Roman and Iron Age discoveries in Billericay, the collection being now in Colchester Castle.

Mrs. Spitty, called by Miss E. Sparvel-Bayly "the autocrat of the little town" was sister to Dr. F. Carter, who lived just across the road at "Sheeredays" so we can imagine many comings and goings between the two houses more so, perhaps, as the doctor was a bachelor and his sister would, no doubt, like to assist him at times with his housekeeping. Major Spitty died in 1898 and his widow early this century, her brother erecting a window to the memory of them both at Great Burstead Church. Miss May Spitty lived here for some time afterwards, and after her removal the house was taken, in 1919, by Mr. T. A. Pole, A.R.I.B.A., architect of the Archer Memorial Hall. He was also responsible for the fine reproduction Georgian staircase at "Crescent House", and was President

of the Billericay Cricket Club whose committee used to meet at "Hurlocks". Mr. Pole died early 1939, and in May of the same year a sale of the "surplus contents" was held in a Marquee on the lawn.

In 1939/40 the house was requisitioned by the army who held it until near the end of the war when it became a W.V.S. store. During this time there was an A.A. Gun in the old Major's lookout on the roof, but whereas he used to watch for invaders by land, his successors watched for them from the sky, and it has generally been acknowledged that this gun was responsible for causing the famous Land Mine of 1940 to explode over the town instead of on it.

The old house was purchased a few years ago by the London Co-operative Society Ltd. as a site "for future development", but they have given permission for fittings of interest to be moved from it to be held in trust by Mr. H. Richman as part of the Billericay Town Collection. The Society also gave an undertaking to the C.P.R.E. that should the property be demolished any new building would be in keeping with the character of the High Street.

On the South side of "Hurlocks" is "**Jasmine Cottage**" (No. 41, High Street, which has a most delightful elevation of mottled red brickwork with sash windows divided with glazing bars into nicely proportioned panes. The arch bricks are cut and moulded on the lower edge. The entrance door has a pedimental porch supported on interesting shaped brackets. It was originally built in the 17th Century, and refronted in Georgian times, when some attractive gabled and weatherboarded extensions were also added at the back over the long sloping roof, giving this side an almost Fairy Tale appearance. In the early part of this century it was the residence of Mr. F. J. Smith, a Relieving Officer who died at the early age of 43. It was later the residence and Gentlemen's Hair-dressing Saloons of Mr. Calver until 1951/2, when it became the offices of Messrs. Harvey and Collins, Solicitors. Some of the rooms have exposed timber beams.

No. 43 also has a very attractive front elevation on the Georgian character of good proportions and with a tiled roof and dormers, pointed pediment and moulded architrave to the porch. Internally are a number of features such as doors with drop handles, fireplaces, and a nice staircase, all of contemporary style.

This was the residence of Mr. Matthews, the last Master at the Bayly Grammar School at what is now the Council Chamber, etc. He has been described as a typical schoolmaster of the period, bearded and rather stern looking. The house is now the residence and consulting room and surgery of Mr. A. T. Maguire, Dentist.

Nos. 45 and 47 "**Curtises**". Little is known of No. 45 which is the main block of a house which included No. 47. The general plan and appearance of the building from the rear, point it out as late 17th or early 18th Century date. The front is of brick which

has, unfortunately, now been pebbledashed, but the back is part weatherboard part brick with casement type windows, the roofs being tiled instead of slated as in the street front. There is also, at the rear, a good exterior Chimney Stack. The rear of No. 49 may have been the stables and groom's quarters of the adjoining house, but has been shop premises for many years, mainly as a Footwear and Boot Repairers under at least three different proprietors in about 50 years or so. The firm now in occupation and for some years past, is A. J. Curtis & Sons Ltd. No. 47 has a simple shop front and No. 45 has a single door with hood carried on reeded pilasters and four-leaved capitals.

No. 49, Davies the Chemists, is a building of uncertain date, but has formerly been much more extensive. At present, the front elevation has red brick walls and sash windows to the upper part and a double fronted shopfront of simple design. It was built on an L-shape plan with wings extending to North and West, and this West wing has a rather attractive six-panelled exterior door of about 1750 style, the windows of this block being partly casement type and partly Sash.

Somewhere near this site was the shop of the Linen Draper, Thomas Wattes—"Worthee Wattee" the Martyr who was burned at Chelmsford. Before his arrest he had disposed of his goods and made over his business to his son of the same name, and this second Thomas Wattes' name appears on the 1593 map in Essex Record Office as Copyhold tenant of premises in this part of the High Street, as well as of the Windmill on Bell Hill, Grimeshill Farm, South Green, and other properties. He is mentioned as a Linen Draper in one of the Great Burstead Registers. A full account of "Worthee Wattee's" trial as well as his last speech to his family at Chelmsford may be found in Foxes Book of Martyr where two other Billericay martyrs and one from Great Burstead are mentioned. There is a legend that this house was a Beerhouse called "The Blue Boar", but although there was an old interior sign of a Blue Boar or Pig in coloured glass on the premises, no further facts have come to light on the subject. During the last half of the 19th Century this was a Butcher's and Grocer's Shop in the occupation of Joseph Sewell. At the rear of this house, but included in the Crescent House property is an old building once used as a Blacksmith's shop and approached by a Chase from Western Road.

Dr. Gunter's "Crescent House" lies well back from the road and is a charming mid-18th Century small Georgian house of mottled red brickwork with gracefully proportioned sash windows divided by glazing bars into small panes. A good tiled roof appears above a nicely shaped pediment. Formerly known as "White House", renamed "Crescent House" it retained this title until 1925 when it was changed to "Red House", a name which remained until 1945, when the existing name was revived. The deeds date from 1780, the house itself being built about 20 years previous (1760).

A wing was added at the rear in 1925. During the 19th Century the house was at one time a Girls' Academy, and in the '80s a Boys' Academy whose proprietor, Rev. F. S. Sparks, had about 20 pupils, many of them between 16-18 years of age, who used to make up a Team for an annual match against the Billericay Cricket Team. Some of the pupils lodged at the house, No. 42, north of the Chequers. Another 19th Century resident was a Miss Mead who left £500 for educational and other purposes in the town. It was vested in the Trustees of the Independent Chapel (Congregational Church) and this is no doubt the foundation of the story that Mabbs Burstead House Academy—also known as the Price's Academy—was supported out of the rents of Crescent House, since this academy was also the concern of the Independants. Beside the rather fine contemporary doorway at the rear of Crescent House there still hangs an interesting old bell remaining no doubt from the days of the old Academy. There is another of the same kind at what was the Burstead House Academy.

An old photograph of this part of the street shows iron railings and gateway which were replaced by the present brick wall earlier in the century. The interior of the house has lost some of its original features, but there is a rather fine reproduction Georgian Staircase designed by Mr. T. A. Pole, A.R.I.B.A., in 1925.

Harrington's, the Ironmongers (No. 53), has a front elevation of red brick and a simple double fronted shop. The deeds date from 1789 but it is obviously of much earlier origin. An 18th Century exterior six-panelled door has a simple unenriched frame with flat hood on curved brackets. About 30 years ago some repair work to the South wall revealed 400-year-old Wattle and Daub construction known as Pug, the hazel twigs being used as we now use laths and usually laced together with a kind of yarn, or sometimes with a twine as in the case of modern wattle hurdles. Where this occurred between the timbers, or studs of a building the daub of earth was applied by two men standing on either side of the wall so that at the word "go" they both applied the daub together to meet on the wattle.

The Harrington daub, or pug, was not left exposed as it was thought that in its state then it would not be advisable to do so. The North wall of the street block is weatherboarded but the South West wing is plastered. Roofs are tiled, and the back wing is gabled and weatherboarded. There is a faint suggestion of simple parget work on the North wall of the same wing.

The business was founded by Samuel Harrington about 1872. He was a Grocer, Tea Dealer, and General Ironmonger, though an 1874 directory calls him a Marine Store Dealer. He died in 1914 and his son Albert, who was born on the premises and educated at Price's "Burstead House Academy", carried on the business until his death in 1942. The present proprietors are his daughter, Mrs. Charles Cooper, and her husband, who have retained the family name.

Separated from Harrington's by a narrow sideway is "**North Sea House**" (No. 55), a private residence at present requisitioned and let in two parts, by the Billericay Urban District Council, to Messrs. C. Meeson and Warr. It is believed to be of Tudor origin with extensive alterations at various dates but mainly about 100 years ago. Most of the windows at the rear are metal framed casements inserted within recent years. About 1946 some carved woodwork was discovered against the South wall of the hall. It appears to be some kind of panelling of 16th Century date, but its exact details are not known as it faces inwards to the wall, and what is visible can be seen only from one point where a small section of the wall of the adjoining room has been removed for the purpose. Some of the timbers of the house are revealed, and in the South-east bedroom are two carved Tudor doorways discovered about 1940. On the attic floor are two 17th Century doors, and the stairs leading there from the first floor have Balusters worked in a Chinese Lattice pattern. There is a rather fine cupboard with doors of typical Georgian pattern. Old photographs show the front of the house to be of plaster, the present imitation timbers being a later innovation. The North end of the building is weatherboarded but the remainder of the walls are plaster or cement rendered. There are two good exterior chimney stacks at the rear, one single and one double, and the staircase is contained in a small gable wing of its own. There are cellars, and in the garden some Tudor bricks form a short path to one of the outbuildings.

About 1867 the Rev. R. C. Webb of the nearby church lived here. The Billericay Residents' Association held its inauguration meeting at "**North Sea House**" on January 17, 1945, Mr. Bert Marshall being the host of the evening.

CHAPTER III

In 1342, a Chantry Chapel with lands to support a Priest, was founded in Billericay by a member of the Sulyard family of Runwell. The Chantry was suppressed by Henry VI and granted or sold with the lands to Walter Farre who resold them to a member of the Tyrrell family of Heron Hall. The Chapel was then purchased by the inhabitants of Billericay leaving the lands in the possession of the Tyrrells who held them until the death of Sir John Tyrrell of Boreham about the end of the 19th Century when they were purchased by the Spitty family. In 1917 they once again changed hands, and a few years ago were sold to the London Co-operative Housing Society Ltd., who are at present developing the Chantry Farm as a housing estate.

The Chantry Cafe (No. 61) and **the Butcher's Shop and House** (Nos. 57 and 59) are thought to have been the Priest's house, though it must have been largely newly rebuilt at the time the Chantry was suppressed.

It was a house of the " Central Hall " type with gabled crosswings at the North and South, the hall being open to the roof. It is of timber frame construction erected about the beginning of the 16th Century and extended at the South end about the end of the 16th or early in the 17th Century. An addition to the rear of the original South crosswing in the form of a kitchen was made recently, the old kitchen in the 17th Century wing being added to the present tea room as one long room. The original central hall has had a floor inserted to form an attic type bedroom over the butcher's shop.

On the exterior of the original South crosswing are two blocked two-light windows divided by iron bars and contemporary with the building. The ground floor of the same wing is lined with 16th Century panelling with 17th Century cornice and two disused doors once leading into the Central Hall are also panelled. By the fireplace is a 16th Century panelled cupboard with segmental head and archivolt supported by fluted pillars with moulded caps. The room above has also some 16th Century panelling and 17th Century cornice and the fireplace is also of 17th Century date. The same floor possesses two battened doors and one with cockshead hinges. The main Café in the 17th Century addition as well as the room above has numerous exposed beams in walls and ceilings, some said to be re-used Ships' Timbers. The wall between the Oak Room and the butcher's shop was found recently to be of Wattle and Daub construction. The remainder of the building has a number of exposed beams especially in the room over the shop, and two fireplaces on the ground floor of the house have a common chimney. A story which has been passed down through the years is that this house was built " round a tree trunk ". The rear is mainly of lath and plaster with some brick and there is one good though comparatively modern Chimney Stack. The present proprietor of the Butcher business is Mr. R. L. Clarke, a nephew of the founder Mr. H. Smith, a native of Sible Hedingham, who was employed by a Brentwood butcher and opened his Billericay business in 1901. The side way between the shop and the house was formerly wide enough to admit a pony and trap.

The present occupiers of " Ye Olde Chantry Café " state that " in Pre-Reformation times " this building was " probably a Grammar School, the teaching being carried on free to the poor of the district by the priest living in the Chantry." It also has been suggested that it was used by a brotherhood of monks in the 15th and 16th Centuries, but the main historic interest is its connection with the Pilgrim Fathers in 1620. Christopher Martin, the Treasurer of the *Mayflower*, is supposed to have lived here. He was not only responsible for the financial side of the adventure but also for the provisioning of the ship, and it is almost certain that the flour taken with them by the Pilgrim Fathers was prepared at the Windmill on Bell Hill just outside the town. This contention is supported by the fact that about this time the windmill was the copyhold property of Thomas Wattes, the son of " Worthee Wattee " the Martyr, and his sympathies would be on the side of Christopher

Martin and his friends. Four Billericay people left the town to join the ship at Grays or Leigh, and it is said that others of the Essex contingent joined them at the Chantry House beforehand. Christopher Martin was accompanied by his wife Marie, her brother-in-law Solomon Prower (she had been widowed before marrying Christopher in Great Burstead Church), and John Langerman, described as their Servant.

BillERICA, Massachusetts, was founded by later emigrants from this district in 1653.

No. 63, High Street. Messrs. J. E. Morris (Billericay) Ltd. The tall red brick facade of this building gives it a comparatively modern appearance but it will be noticed that the actual window level is the same as its neighbour on either side though perhaps slightly lower than Messrs. Podd's, and Adam's, on the south. The house is, in fact, another of the many refronted Tudor buildings in the street, of two floors with attics, the front windows of which are hidden behind the present brick parapet.

The rear is gabled and weatherboarded with a kitchen wing possessing an attractive sashed Bay window and pillared porchway reminiscent of pictures of 18th Century Coaching Inns. There is an extensive range of outbuildings and stables possessing bricks with dates of the 18th and 19th Centuries. The front of the building is only very slightly altered from its appearance in the well known 1830 view of Billericay.

It has been suggested that this house was formerly connected with the Chantry House, and it does, in fact, date from about the same period as the South extension of that place, the garden boundaries being also a little confused, but there seems no real proof that any actual connection did exist between the two buildings. The old name for the property was "Poplar Chase", from a row of Poplars which once extended along the back drive into Western Road.

Frederick Morris was Grocer and Tallow Chandler here in 1848 and by 1880 the Wine and Spirit licence had also been added. Mr. J. E. Morris, here at the beginning of the present century, was a prominent member of the Billericay Cricket Club. The present owner/occupier is Miss E. White, a relative of the Morris family, Mr. Jennings being Manager of the Wine and Spirits Off Licence which has entirely superseded the old Grocer's department.

Frederick Morris was one of the townspeople concerned in the 1887 Trust settlement of the nearby Reading (now Recreation) Rooms.

Nos. 65 (Mr. F. Podd, grocer) and 67 (W. Adams, draper, etc.) were erected as one house early in the 16th Century, a kitchen being added in the 18th Century. The rear is gabled and plastered and bears much of its original appearance, though the front has been altered on at least three occasions. The first change was the insertion

of a double bay shop front at the North end, shown in a view of the street about 1885. This was then removed and the house became a miniature of the Bank House adjoining with a Pillared Porch and bay window either side. In the 1920's the present shops were inserted, and in 1947 the existing first floor windows and black and white cement work replaced the old stucco and parapet, etc. The original timber construction remains, and there are timbers revealed in two rooms.

Henry J. Emerson, Linen and Woollen Draper, was here in 1862 and later John Frederick Emerson, Draper, was one of the 1887 Reading Rooms' trustees.

Barclays Bank—"The Bank House"—is a gracious Georgian style property of painted stucco with sash windows and a portico with columns so beautifully shown on the Bartlett drawing of 1833. It is mostly of 18th Century construction and includes some earlier panelling in the kitchen. A wing was added about 1922. Most windows are of the Sash type, the two Bays on the front being inserted in the early 1900's. There is a very good staircase, and some of the rooms have encased Ceiling Beams. The house is mainly of Timber and Plaster construction, the modern wing being of brick. In the garden is a Cannon Ball brought from Sebastopol during the Crimean War by a previous resident.

The property was purchased by the Bank on the 24th April, 1922, and the Branch was opened in the following year. Prior to this the house was occupied as a residence by J. Jefferies who also owned and occupied the adjoining meadow and orchard running back to Western Road. There are no Deeds earlier than the Conveyance but the Abstract of Title indicates that John Jefferies acquired the property from Alfred Carter in 1881 when it was copyhold. It is described then as

"All that message or tenement in Billericay formerly in the occupation of Robert Mapletoft and late of George Adams deceased and all that croft of land customary and heriotable with the appurtenances held by fealty suit of Court and the yearly rent of 12 pence also formerly in the occupation of the said Robert Mapletoft and late of the said George Adams deceased with the appurtenances (except as much of the said premises containing 9 roods it was surrendered to the said George Adams deceased on the 26th May 1831 to the use of John Barrell all of which said premises were in the occupation of the late William Carter deceased and all the rights etc."

John Barrell mentioned in this deed was apparently the Grocer and Wine and Spirit Merchant who was also agent for the Phoenix Insurance Company, an agency which later passed to Caleb Houghton. William Carter was *Doctor* Carter, father of Doctor Frederick Carter of "Sheeredays", etc.

John Jefferies was clerk to Henry Collin who managed the agency for Sparrow and Co.'s Bank at 28 High Street—"The Old Bank

House"—and became Agent in 1861 himself on Henry Collin's retirement or death. When he purchased the present Bank House the Agency was transferred here and later, as Sparrow, Tufnell & Co. merged into Barclays Bank Ltd.

The Jefferies family were resident here until 1922 when the property was purchased by Barclays Bank Ltd. and Mr. Rust became the first Manager.

The house is said to have been at one time the "White Hart Inn" and appears on the Joseph Fishpoole map of 1689. It is not, however, named there.

The Recreation Rooms were founded as the Billericay Reading Room by Major Spitty in 1864, but the earlier history of the place seems to have been lost. It is not mentioned in the Post Office Directory of 1874 though John F. Emerson is there described as Secretary of the "Literary Institute". He is also described as a General Draper. An Indenture (now lost) between Thomas Jenner Spitty and F. Carter "of the First Part" and certain other persons "of the Second Part" records the Sale by Messrs. F. Carter and T. J. Spitty of "all that customary or copyhold messuage or tenement with a garden orchard and appurtenances thereunto belonging situate lying and being in the Town of Billericay in the County of Essex in the Manor of Great Burstead, Whites Gurnards and Chalweodon then used as the Billericay Reading Room to Hold the same unto and to the use of the said George Smith and his heirs and assigns for ever at the Will of the Lord according to the custom of the said Manor. . . ."

The existing Trust Deed of 1887 agrees that George Smith, in 1880, "should stand seized of the said hereditaments and premises thereby assured In Trust for the said parties thereto . . . their heirs and assigns in the proportions set forth. . . ."

These were One Tenth each to Caleb Houghton, Frederick Morris, William Henry Amos, Charles Richardson, John Frederick Emerson, John Anthony Sparvel-Bayly, Edward Woodard and Frederick Carter. Charles Carter's proportion was one-twentieth. One Tenth represented £90 purchase money paid to Frederick Carter and Thomas Jenner Spitty and the "costs charges and expenses in connection with the purchase."

The Trustees also included James Mumford, Thomas Hood, Jonathan Henry Price of "Burstead House Academy", John Henry Smith, John Aylett, Walter Richard Moore, John Beard Nix, Thomas Johns, and John King, all of Billericay.

In 1883 George Smith was admitted Tenant of the Lord of the Manor on behalf of the Trustees, except of one part of the site which had passed into the hands of Thomas Hood in exchange for his share. This site is evidently that on which Pitcher's shop and Residence now stand.

In 1886 the Reading Rooms were enfranchised at a cost of £20 borne equally by W. H. Amos and James Mumford. The existing building was built in 1886 the Deed of the following year referring to the "said message or tenement" which "had been pulled down and on part of the site thereof new Reading Rooms have been erected the cost thereof being defrayed by public subscriptions, AND WHEREAS the remainder of the site thereof has as aforesaid been conveyed to the said Thomas Hood in fee simple and he has erected thereon a Cottage and premises etc."

In 1908 Dutton's Essex Almanac describes "Literary Institution Reading Room and Library, High Street. In the Recreation Room there are three-quarter sized and half-sized billiard tables, which are an acquisition to the institution. President, Mr. W. Clement Wells, sec. Mr. W. Houghton, treas. Mr. E. B. Payne, librarian and collector Mr. F. Negus. During the 1914/18 War a decline in the affairs of the Rooms set in and the Library, etc., was disposed of. After the War the father of Mr. D. N. Pritt, Q.C., who then lived in Laindon Road, helped largely in reorganising things, so much so that even after his departure the Rooms progressed to such a state that plans were actually prepared for extending the building towards the west. The recent war once again brought about a depression from which the Recreation Rooms, as they are now known, have only just recovered to any extent. Present Secretary is Mr. C. Pearson. An engraving of Billericay's famous "Thin Man" or "Ghastly Miller" of the 18th Century, was formerly in the rooms, but was sold about 1952 to help defray some of the expenses of the Institution. There was also formerly a Barometer here presented by Dr. F. Carter in memory of his brother-in-law, Major T. J. Spitty who was the founder of the Rooms.

A new list of Trustees was drawn up in November 1924 and included Walter Richard Moore, John Beard Nix, John King (continuing Trustees), and William Houghton, Frank Moore, Leonard Moore, Albert Samuel Harrington, William Bassom, Charles Bassom, James Morton, Fred. Coombe Harris, William Arthur Jefferies, Edgar George Wormald, Robert Baines Johnson, and Edward Burgess Payne—all new Trustees.

Nos. 75, 77 and 79, the Drapery and Wool Shops of Miss N. Shelley, and residence of the owner, Mr. S. J. Shelley, form one of the most interesting buildings in the town. At the present time it has an L-shaped plan with wings extending to South and West, and a smaller wing at the South-west corner, the old kitchen, etc. Beyond this once extended a range of stabling, etc., which formed the third and South side of a courtyard and which were demolished only a few years ago.

The premises date from the early 16th Century, or earlier, and beneath the modern weatherboarding facing the yard is an original window like those on the front of the "Chantry House", one of five formerly there. The existing windows are all Casement pattern of varying dates. There is extensive cellarage, now disused, and

besides the usual Moulded and Chamfered beams throughout the building one room has the Oak timbers in the walls and ceiling revealed. A painting of a Fleur de Lys discovered some years ago on the North wall of the draper's shop indicates that this may have been the headquarters of the tradesman whose sign appears on one of the 17th Century trade tokens. The map of Joseph Fishpoole's lands, 1681, shows the "White Lion Inn" here. The two acres of Cherry Orchard once belonging to this inn, still exist at the rear of Mr. R. C. Shelley's Motor Garage at the bottom of the Yard, but was parted from the property when the present owner took possession.

In 1770 the licensee of the "White Lyon" was Simon Raven. During the latter part of the 19th Century, Timothy Shipp used the stables (now demolished) for his work as Veterinary Surgeon, and the place was popularly called "Shipp's Yard" referred to in the following:—

To Laindon Common we did trot
Back to Billericay like a shot
Down ~~to~~ Shipp's Yard, a drunken lot,—“Pricker and his
“Monkey”.

“Pricker” was a bricklayer named Murrell who spent most of his time in the old “Duke's Head” on Laindon Common, and the “Monkey” was the crowd of boys who followed him home to his lodgings in Shipp's Yard imitating his actions and calling out the rhyme. Present Deeds date from 1881.

Nos. 81 and 83 form an attractive building of 18th Century date, built on an L-shape plan with wings extending to West and South. The front elevations are now of red brick with sash windows—one being a blank with bars painted to match the remainder. Tiled roofs—simple projecting hoods cover the doorways. The rear is even more pleasant and unspoilt than the front, and is of a variety of materials. The wall of a covered sideway at the South end is of extremely old plaster, and the interior has several ceiling beams. There is a good chimney stack at the North end.

Occupier of No. 81 is Mr. S. G. Leeds whose old established Funeral Director's business was recently incorporated in that of F. E. Farrar of Noak Hill, Billericay, and No. 83 has been for a number of years the residence and headquarters of Miss Polley, Dressmaker.

Nos. 85 and 87 were originally one house of about 17th Century date or earlier, and built in one block with a kitchen wing, since rebuilt, at the North end extending towards the West.

The large central hall was later cut short by a partition at the South end to form a passage from the street door to the back of the house. Later still this passage became the entrance to No. 87, the door between it and the room on the North still remaining to the

present day, and a new entrance to No. 85 being made through the shop at the North end. There are the usual beams inside the building and a particularly good specimen with Stopped Chamfers crosses the ceiling of the old central hall on the ground floor. One bedroom in No. 87 has a sloping floor of very wide oak planks probably contemporary with the house. The front rooms have deep casement windows formed by the thickness of the red brick wall superimposed on the original timber and plaster. The front door of No. 87 is of very heavy Oak with a large iron lock and key. The brickwork of the finely cut arches over these windows is notable and is said to have been set out on the pavement before being placed in position. The difference between the four originals and the one rebuilt example is particularly noticeable. There is a good example of a Bottle Chimney Stack at the rear, now shortened and disused.

The early history of this building is not known, but for some years No. 85 has been the residence, shop and showroom of Mr. S. C. Squires, whose Radio and Electrical works are nearby. No. 87 has seen several occupiers during the last few years, and is at present the residence and consulting room of Mr. R. K. McWilliam, Chiropractist.

Lloyds Bank (No. 89) was built late in the 19th Century in red brick and stucco on the site of two very old properties dating from about the 16th Century. A photograph shows them occupied by John Smith an Ironmonger and Watchmaker and John Dennis, a Hairdresser. The building as rebuilt was the residence and business premises for many years of Mr. Taylor, Corn Merchant, the Granary being at the rear and now converted as the residence of his widow and son.

Before proceeding any further on this side of the road, we should retrace our steps towards **The Chequers**, a real old world inn with a long low tiled roof and roughcast walls and has sash windows in small panes and two small bay windows of similar type, one reaching the ground while the other is supported on brackets. It was built in the 16th Century with a Central Hall and projecting crosswings, that on the South now forming the premises of Mr. Goodspeed (Fishmonger). It was added to on the North and has been greatly altered inside and out at various dates. There are many odd corners, low ceilings with beams of various sizes and descriptions, and at the rear two yards with miscellaneous outbuildings. The timber construction is exposed on the staircase, and some portions of the walls are Wattle and Daub. One fireplace shows evidence of an Inglenook behind it, but the others are either modern or entirely covered-up. A former exterior wall in the kitchen has a very heavy door of early date. By its proximity to the Chantry Farm, or Chapel Lands, the inn is supposed to have been the original Chantry farmhouse. It is quite reasonable to say that this was connected with the business aspect of the farm, and the Chantry House opposite for the entertainment and lodging of visiting priests.

The house in Chantry Chase, a charmingly quaint corner, forming part of the Chequers block was originally a Blacksmith's shop, and the brick arch which supported the doors and opened into the Chequers yard was revealed beneath the plaster of the dining room wall recently, though it has been again covered over. This house is part weatherboard and part brick, and has a hip roof covered with slates. Windows are of the Sash type. The house **42 High Street** on the corner was built during the 17th Century as part of the Chequers, and in the 19th Century was the lodging house for the scholars at the Crescent House Boys' Academy on the opposite side of the road. One room was used by the boys as a Billiards Room and the niches for the Billiard Cues are still in one of the walls. There were formerly several of the boys' names scratched on one of the windows, but this was unfortunately broken and replaced some years ago. Some of the Timber Construction is revealed on the staircase, and one bedroom and a ground floor room have exposed ceiling beams.

The South crosswing, now forming **No 1 Chapel Street**, has been entirely modernised internally, but above the roller shutters of Goodspeed's fish shop is a quaint gable with a scalloped bargeboard below a tiled roof. The roof timbers are evidently taken from old ships and some have Latin numbers on them. In 1862, W. H. Amos was baker here, as well as Carrier with a daily service to Brentwood, his Mail Cart leaving the Chequers yard at 8.40 a.m. each day. He was one of the 1887 Trustees of the Reading Rooms. A Mr. Swayne was Baker at this address until after the First World War, followed by a Frederick Boyd. In the early 1930's the shop became for a brief period a Wool Shop, and was then taken over by Mr. Goodspeed, the present owner.

At the rear of the Chequers and fast falling into decay is one of the oldest and most interesting buildings in Billericay—the Medieval "**Chantry Barn**". This is built like the church at Greenstead, of split tree trunks set on end with flat side inwards on a brick sill. It was also thatched. Near one end are the remains of some old Bellows relics of the days of the Pease Brothers, Carriers to Southend and London whose headquarters this was. They are mentioned as early as 1848, as visiting Southend on Wednesdays and Saturdays, returning from "**Spread Eagle**," Prittlewell, on Thursdays and Saturdays. Rochford was visited three days a week leaving again for Rayleigh at 9 a.m. Pausing at Billericay they departed for the "**Bull Inn**", Aldgate, at 5 p.m. The brothers had six horses to pull their cart up Brook Street Hill, Brentwood. In 1862 they were Carrying only to London and Rochford, the railways having by then taken away their Southend trade. Chantry Chase is shown on the 1593 map as Wellfelde Lane.

Nos. 3, 5, 7 and 9 Chapel Street were probably originally one building though of two dates.

The original house was erected about 1570 in one block, with a gabled crosswing at the North end which had an overhanging upper

storey supported on curved wooden brackets only one of which now remains.

About the 17th Century the South wall of the main block seems to have been partly demolished, leaving the main cross beams on both floors and a few feet of wall at the East end, and an addition now Nos. 7 and 9 made, though the former includes part of the original house. About the 18th Century additions were made at the rear of No. 5 (St. Aubyn's) and at the end of the 18th or early 19th Century a kitchen was added. This house was refronted about 1807, although the original timbering remains under the present stucco, and at the same time it was "modernised" internally to a large extent. The Crosswing received only slight alterations at this time, however.

The Nook (No. 3) which was the Crosswing of the original house, has chamfered beams in two rooms, and some other timbers are exposed in the walls to a slight degree. There is a heavy old door in the kitchen. Rear of the house is of red brick including the kitchen addition. Present tenant is Mr. L. H. Boreham.

No. 5, Chapel Street—"St. Aubyn's" a charming front with sash windows and a nicely proportioned door with an ornamental fanlight is much larger than appears from outside and has been known unofficially as "The Big House". The rear is part red brick, part weatherboard with Sash windows, and french doors to one room. Although modernised in the Georgian period, the interior still possesses some earlier features, the Attic Stairs being the original of c.1570, and the dormer window being flanked by heavy timbers with crude Stopped Chamfers. Roof timbers are mainly roughly trimmed some having their original bark. One of the bedrooms on the first floor has exposed beams in two walls and along the angles of walls and ceiling, and the 18th Century addition has exposed timbers with both Stopped and Plain Chamfers, the ground floor room in the same wing having chamfered ceiling beams of Pine. The heavier beam which crosses passage and front room has been encased at some date, but there is an exposed wall timber in this room, and elsewhere in the house. There are three Georgian doors with glass panels, one having the original "furniture", and two having specimens of Blown Glass. Two other doors have wooden locks, and a former exterior window in the kitchen has very heavy glazing bars of oak. The front room on the ground floor has a six-panelled door with moulded panels, and brass finger plates with fleur-de-lys design, as well as an early mortice lock of interesting pattern, the brass handles or knobs having Lions' heads in relief. The door has a bevelled and reeded frame to the room and conventional Georgian moulding to the passage. On the outside of the door is an 18th Century brass fingerplate of lattice pattern like those formerly in "Hurlocks", and inside the room there is some re-used carved chair rail on two walls. The kitchen still possesses its wide open fireplace though now fitted with a small

modern stove; the chimney, however, is large enough for a boy to climb the stack as in the old days. There is a very wide and heavy sash window to this room facing into the garden and towards the now neglected Chantry Barn which has probably stood there since Medieval days.

On the former back wall is some Parget work protected by the roof of the kitchen addition and that of the earlier extension in the South-east corner.

The earlier owners and uses of St. Aubyn's are mostly unknown, but the letters T.C. on a rainwater head formerly on the front of the house, refer to Thomas Cross, a corn dealer at the Market House, who died 1810 aged 45, only three years after the alteration to the house. His widow died in 1839, and his two daughters, Sarah, born 1793 and Deborah, born 1795, remained in possession of this property and others in the district. In 1848, White's Gazetteer and Directory mentions a Girls' Boarding Academy under the names of Sarah and Deborah Cross. They died in 1871 and 1875 respectively and were buried in Great Burstead Churchyard.

Nos. 3-13 Chapel Street, including St. Aubyn's, were next possessed by Jonathan Tyler, a retired farmer who lived here until his death about 1914. The house has since passed through the hands of a number of tenants and was about the end of the First World War the headquarters of Miss Rose and Miss Jay, dressmakers who later removed to Brentwood. Mr. G. Birch, organist at the parish church, lived here for some years. About 1948 Mr. Gascoigne-Cecil purchased St. Aubyn's for his son who lived on the premises and used them as the Head Office of "Billericay Farm Services Ltd." The present owner/occupier, P. R. Richman moved here in March 1951. The property is now entirely residential, and is the home of the worthy honorary assistant secretary of the Billericay Group.

Nos. 7 and 9 Chapel Street—a pair of weatherboarded cottages with casement windows have been roughly described under the general history of this block of buildings. It should be pointed out that the end wall of the c.1570 house was near the South side of the front windows of this cottage, from which point the heavy main beams cross from front to back and join the remaining portion of the original wall. This again forms the continuation of the South wall of the first extension to St. Aubyn's, most of which is at the rear of No. 7. From the old main beams in the cottage others of different type extend at right angles into No. 9 adjoining, and are joined to the original beams by iron Dogs. In some of the walls of these two cottages are exposed wall timbers, the doors being of crude plank type. The rear of both is weatherboarded with casement windows.

Corresponding with the end of the original 16th Century house is the brick wall of the North end of a cellar which extends under part of No. 7 and the whole of No. 9. The floor of the cellar is part brick, and the original entrance may be traced by a bricked-up door

or archway in the South-east angle leading in the direction of the two end cottages neither of which have any evidence of a cellar or even entrance to one. The present entrance which is itself of some years standing is from St. Aubyn's, though the cellar is owned by Mr. Patten who possesses **Nos. 11 and 13 Chapel Street**, a pair of roughcast cottages with tiled roofs and casement windows.

Lying a few yards back from a courtyard at the end of this row of cottages is a small brick building which until 1939 was the old **Fire Station** Mr. E. V. Sutton an authority on Fire Engines has given the following notes for inclusion in this little history.

The old original horse manual probably came to Billericay about 1907/8 and was the property of the Great Burstead Parish Council. At this time the local parishes were taking over the supervision of fire prevention although for a long period previous to this it had been in the hands of the various insurance companies who each maintained their own brigades according to the insurable values in any particular area. The engine we first knew was one supplied to the Essex & Suffolk Insurance Company.

It was an established fact that these brigades only attended fires on the properties insured with any particular company. If you were not insured, then your fire was left to the tender care of the local Parish Pump which may have been maintained by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners and was in charge of the Churchwardens and Overseers.

To denote whether you were insured you displayed a Fire Mark on your property and to this was often added the policy number. On the policy the "Fire Engine House" was also mentioned. Fire-marks were mostly in iron or tin and some firms had copper versions.

The Essex & Suffolk Equitable Insurance Society was established at Colchester in 1802 but was allied with the "Atlas" in 1911.

The appliance at Billericay was a fine type of engine as used by the London Fire Engine Establishment and the Metropolitan Fire Brigade well up to the end of the 19th Century. It had two single acting pumps capable of delivering 100 gallons per minute and operated by 22 men on the side levers."

In the case of Billericay at least it seems that there must have been some co-operation between the various Insurance Companies which included here—"Accident," "Essex & Suffolk," "Liverpool & London Globe," "Norwich Union," "Phoenix Fire," "Royal," "Royal Exchange" and "Sun."

Of the last three there are representative "Fire Marks" still remaining on buildings in the High Street.

On the outbreak of the last war, larger premises were needed and the Fire Brigade Headquarters were removed to the present Ellis's

Garage in Sun Street. After the war the headquarters were removed to Laindon but after protests and some increase in fires in the Billericay district, the Engine was restored to Billericay and to its present quarters at the converted British Legion Hall in Western Road.

In the old days the Horses were kept on the meadows in Mountnessing Road belonging to Mr. Bariff whose name is still remembered by that of a modern house near Bellevue Road.

Continuing a little farther along Chapel Street before crossing back to the Church we must look at **Chapel House** and **Baptist Chapel**, now all one building—pebbledashed with part slated and part tiled roof—which was formerly three holdings:—

- (a) that part on which is built the Chapel and tiled portion of the house was Copyhold.
- (b) that part on which the rest of the house and sheds fronting Chapel Street stand was freehold, and
- (c) the garden at rear formerly held on a yearly tenancy from the late Major Spitty of whose Chantry Farm property it formed part. This was purchased by Mr. Albert Harrington in 1917 on the sale of the Spitty estate.

The Deeds go back to 23rd December, 1829, but evidence suggests that the oldest part of the building was erected in 1799.

This document was a detailed account rendered in September 1812 to Rev. T. B. Crowest of Upminster at his request, by Richard Fry of Coseley near Bilston, Staffordshire, who had apparently advanced the necessary money for building. The account is headed

MR. FRY'S DEBT OF THE CHAPEL SEPTEMBER 2nd, 1812

On account of the new meeting at Billericay, April 1799

It includes:

	£	s.	d.
Paid to Mr. Turtle for the ground and the old building thereon	30	0	0
Richardson for Windows	13	4	0
Carriage for ditto from London		12	0
Labourers' work		16	0
Beer for workmen and a raising dinner	4	12	0
Pulpit Bible and Psalm Book	19	0	

Mr. Curtis is named as the builder and a certain Tunstil, carpenter. The interior of the Chapel is much as it was left by the builders, except that it was apparently shortened later to make living accommodation. It contains a tiny gallery and the old closed pews, each with its separate door. The pointed window was shortened and squared off soon after the war, when the round pillars of the Portico were replaced by the existing square reeded ones.

The "New Meeting" as it has been called was founded by dissenting members of the Old Meeting further down Chapel Street, the Baptists coming in later and combining the last of the New Meeting members with the last of the Billericay Quakers, etc. The Rev. T. B. Crowest was probably a visiting minister who nevertheless had a hand in the erection of the chapel in 1799. His first child was born in that year, and several of his family are buried in the Old Meeting burial ground. The site of his own, burial however, is unknown.

The Deed of 1829 is the Steward's copy of the Manorial Roll entry referring to the admission of Thomas Burren Crowest as tenant of "all that piece or parcel of ground . . . upon part whereof a tenement or building hath been erected for religious worship and used as a Protestant Dissenting Meeting house by a Society of Protestant Dissenters frequenting the same."

The former tenants were five sisters named Mead who were admitted in May 1820. In October 1833 Mr. Crowest bought the site of the house and sheds fronting the street as freehold property by conveyance from Rev. C. H. Hallett. The indenture includes the words "on which a barn formerly stood," and it seems likely that at this time Mr. Crowest became resident minister and having converted part of the Chapel to two rooms down and two up, now wished to increase his living accommodation. He was also an Architect and Surveyor and his original design for the front of the Market House and Town Hall, now Council Chamber, in 1830 is still in the possession of his great-granddaughter. He died in 1849, the property passing to Thomas Pease who had married Mr. Crowest's only daughter.

Thomas was one of the two brothers who were the most important Carriers to Rochford and Southend in one direction and London in the other. They rented a great deal of farmland in the district, their headquarters being the Chantry Barn and Farm at the rear of the Chequers. Their Booking Office still stands in front of Chapel House.

In 1873, Thomas Pease sold the house to Michael Keaveny of whom little is known, but remained as yearly tenant. The Copyhold was enfranchised in 1876, and the property purchased by Samuel Harrington, Baker of Ramsden Crays, whose son had married Thomas Pease's daughter Hannah and had a few years before started the Ironmonger's and Grocer's business in High Street. The Pease family remained at Chapel House until 1889 when the Harringtons moved in from the shop.

Samuel Harrington the baker died in 1905, and his son, also Samuel, 1914, the property passing to Albert Harrington whom we have met at No. 53 High Street. He died at Chapel House in 1942, the property passing to his son, Mr. Sydney Harrington, who now lives there.

The Baptists have continued to hold services at the Chapel to the present day, except during the first weekend of the 1914 war when it was requisitioned by the 5th Battalion Royal Norfolk Regiment as a billet for about 30 men who occupied it for only a few days. In the North wall of the chapel was formerly a window opening into the room behind the Portico. It was inserted by a former resident who because of illness could not attend the Chapel but was able by this means to take part in the Services without leaving his own room. The position of the window can still be traced.

We must now leave Chapel Street and make our way back to the **War Memorial**. Situated at the apex of the triangle formed by the junction of Chapel Street and High Street is a beautifully proportioned white Portland Stone Cross standing on a plain base inscribed with 62 names—"To the Glory of God and sacred to the memory of the men of this district who gave their lives in the Great War 1914-1918."

The memorial, unveiled on Sunday, 16th October, 1921, by Major General Sir William Thwaites, K.C., M.G., C.B., with a Guard of Honour of 40 ex-servicemen under R.S.M. J. W. Wheatley, was dedicated by Rev. S. L. Brown, Rural Dean. It was formally handed over to the Parish Council by Mr. W. J. Cottis on behalf of the Memorial Committee and the Rev. W. S. Smith offered the prayer of thanksgiving. The work was executed by Mr. J. B. Blythe to the designs of Mr. R. J. Layland, surveyor to the Council.

Until the last war the memorial and the space behind it up to the Church wall was enclosed by railings, but these were removed for salvage, since which the area has remained open.

A plan has been prepared to erect dwarf walls round the Memorial and the lime trees to form a "Garden of Rest" with a suitable commemorative panel as a Memorial to the fallen of the 1939-1945 war. The Billericay Group hope that this scheme will soon proceed in order to improve and beautify this corner of the Town.

As stated at the beginning of this chapter, **The Parish Church** a Chantry and Chapel were established at Billericay in 1342 for the people on the hill unable to attend their parish churches at Great Burstead and Mountnessing owing to winter floods. The Chantry was endowed with lands to support a priest. About 1490 the Chapel was rebuilt no doubt with the assistance of subscriptions from the Pilgrims who passed southwards to Canterbury by Tilbury or North to Walsingham, many of whom must have stayed in the town overnight and prayed in the Chapel before starting again on their journey. All that remains of this rebuilding is the tower, a particularly good specimen of brick architecture of this date.

The Chantry was suppressed by Henry VI and with its lands was granted or sold to Walter Farre, who sold the property to a member of the Tyrrell family. The Chapel was then purchased by the inhabitants whilst the lands remained in the possession of the Tyrrells until

the late 19th Century when they were sold by the executors of Sir John Tyrrell of Boreham to Major Spitty, and are now being developed for housing.

The Chapel having been purchased by the Billericay inhabitants was vested in Feoffees who held it in trust for the people. They maintained the structure, provided at least one service each Sunday, and appointed their own Chaplain, mostly a Clergyman from one of the neighbouring parishes.

It is not known exactly when the Chapel was again rebuilt, but it has been stated that in the account books of "a small town in Somerset, dated 1775" is an entry in which George II authorised the collection of £1,650 to provide a "chapel at Billericay in Essex". On the east wall facing Chapel Street are some bricks bearing initials and the date 1781 which have been thought to refer to some alteration there but may after all note the actual date of building.

When this new Chapel was built there was a Gallery at the West end only with one staircase on the South of the tower. The existing staircases were rebuilt about 1844 when the Gallery was extended along the North and South sides. At this time there was a round clock built flat on to the tower and later surrounded by a lozenge-shaped frame, the present clock being erected by Public Subscription in commemoration of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897. Some restorations of the tower were carried out in 1880, and the Pinnacles rebuilt in 1952.

In 1844 application was made to the Bishop of London to use his influence in obtaining a permanent endowment by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for the maintenance of the Chapel and its Chaplain and the assignment of a certain district to be under his charge, but as no such endowment could be made from public sources to any chapel whose patronage remained in private hands the Feoffees surrendered the patronage to the Bishop of London on condition that their application was granted, adding the wish that through their wardens they should retain control over the finances and nature of services.

By an Order in Council dated September 3rd, 1844, authority was given for Marriages, Baptisms, Churchings, and Burials to be "solemnized and performed in the said chapel" all fees therefrom to be assigned to the minister, and it is from that date that the Registers commence, all earlier Registrations being recorded at Great Burstead, the Mother Church.

The patronage was first styled as the "Church of St. Mary Magdalen, Billericay, by an Order in Council dated April 26th, 1845, the first incumbent being Rev. J. K. Bailey, who was then Chaplain. He left in 1859 and was succeeded by Rev. E. L. Cutts who was for some time Secretary of Essex Archaeological Society. He was a writer of some distinction, and his works include "Colchester," in the Historic Towns Series, and "The First Rector of Burghstead".

In 1883 the Parish boundaries were revised with those of Great and Little Burstead the change taking effect in November of that year. In 1952 the area of Buttsbury represented by Christ Church, Perry Street was also included.

The present building is of red brickwork with a large tiled roof which owing to its span abuts somewhat awkwardly against the lovely brickwork of the tower. The windows are semicircular leaded and divided into small squares by glazing bars—typical of the Preaching house type of architecture of the latter half of the 18th Century.

The interior of the Church is plastered and for many years before 1950 was distempered in a dull yellow colour with dark brown painted dado and woodwork. In that year, however, large-scale alterations, re-planning and redecorations were carried out by Messrs. R. Keeble & Sons, builders, under the guidance and to the designs of Mr. G. S. Amos, A.I.A.A. The Church now presents quite a bright and cheerful atmosphere in its Ivory coloured walls with soft greyish green dado and woodwork. Modern fluorescent lighting has been installed and the ceiling has been strengthened and divided with plaster beam casings picked out in pastel shades of pink and blue, reminiscent of the Adam style of decoration.

A rather fine Carved Oak Royal Coat of Arms on the West Gallery is late 18th Century date and shows the Arms of the House of Hanover with its white horse. It is notable for an error in the Arms of Scotland where the tressure is made to go all round the lion instead of being dimidiated with the English part of the first quarter.

The two East Windows were erected in memory of Dr. William Carter (d. 1879) and Elizabeth Mary Carter (d. 1869) "by their children".

The present Organ was purchased by public subscription in 1900 and placed in the North-east angle of the ground floor where it remained until the restoration of the church in 1950, when it was removed to the West Gallery occupying the site of the converted Barrel Organ which was removed to the chapel at St. Andrew's Hospital. The Chancel Step bears Brasses to the memory of Rev. and Mrs. Darby, and various members of their family who died in the Malay States.

CHAPTER IV

Church House, Heard's (No. 46) and Thornton Cottage, Warren's (No. 48) are probably both of early 18th Century construction, with wings extending to South and East. The rear of No. 46 remains mainly weatherboarded and almost unaltered in its appearance, but No. 48 was extended towards the East at about the same time as the adjoining Thornton House was built. Both Nos. 46 and 48 have

had a brick front added on to the original and carried above the Eaves in the form of a parapet, the date 1804 on the rainwater head perhaps being the period of the alterations. The Roofs are tiled and the windows are of the box sash pattern. There are exposed ceiling beams in both properties, one in No. 46 being particularly heavy.

The Church House property now presents a front elevation of a simple plain late Georgian style—double-fronted with a centre doorway of pleasing design with reeded frames and oval motifs on the caps.

It was owned, or occupied by a Joseph Featty in 1856, and the Funeral Director's business was established in 1885, the present proprietor being Mr. S. J. Heard.

The posts along the pavement here are stated to be the last of many such for tying up the Cattle during the Markets and Fairs of which this part of the town was the centre.

"Thornton Cottage" formerly had a gabled brick porch and was pleasantly creeper-covered and picturesque in appearance—now, alas, pebbledashed. The shop front was inserted by Mrs. F. M. Eke who moved her Florist's business here from the present Lloyds Bank premises in 1939.

The International Stores, "Thornton House" (Nos. 50 and 50a) is a converted early 19th Century house, double-fronted and originally had a rather fine central doorway which when removed was re-used at the rear of Burghstead Lodge. The house was probably named after Rev. John Thornton of the Congregational Church, but it is not known for certain whether he lived there himself.

Earliest Deeds are dated 1841. A photograph of about 1885 shows it to be the business headquarters of C. Bull who hired out Pony Traps.

About 1895 Rev. J. D. Hoystead, rector of Ramsden Crays, was resident, and for some years a Greengrocer's and Florist's shop occupied the North side of the main door until 1936 when the property was purchased and converted by the International Tea Co.'s Stores Ltd. The part now Ashley's draper's shop, etc., was first occupied as the "Oliver Radio Stores" and then as an Army Store before the present proprietor took possession at the end of the war. It had its own street entrance until recently, but is now entered by way of "Ashley's" main shop in the adjoining building.

Nos. 52-56, Ashleys and Howards. Now three shops and flats, was formerly the "George Inn". In 1730 the inn is mentioned in Deeds of Messrs. Horsnell's adjoining, but it is not listed in the 1770 Alehouse recognisances. The old weather boarded building at the rear and fronting Chapel Street may possibly have some connection with its old use. On the upper floor of the High Street building are

some old doors including some with protecting iron bars fitting into a socket on each door post so that they could not be forced from outside. They are said to be relics of the old days when the maid-servants barred themselves in against over-amorous or drunken visitors ! Most rooms—including the shops, have exposed ceiling beams and the rear of Ashley's shop (No. 52), formerly a separate room, has all the ceiling joists exposed.

The inn was converted into three cottages and refronted in red brick, the wall being taken above the eaves as a parapet which was removed when the still later conversion to shops was made. The North Cottage (No. 52) was occupied for many years by Mr. " Fred " Ramsey, a Barber/Postman and well known character in Billericay whose portrait is in the Billericay Town Collection.

No. 56 used to have a shop front after the style of Mr. Eales', further along the street but without the steps. It was for a long time a Milliner's establishment with never more than three bonnets at a time arranged very genteelly in the window.

Nos. 58 and 60, in the occupation of Fred, John and Ernest Arthur Horsnell as a Fishmonger's and Fruiterer's—and by Jasper Layland for China and Glassware.

A 17th Century timber framed and plastered building with tiled roofs and dormer windows, this was built in one main block, a wing being added at the North about 1700. Other additions and alterations have since been made, the last in 1946 when the roofs were raised slightly to make the others more usable. The present shop fronts were inserted during the 1930s. There are a number of exposed beams and the timbers supporting the roof of the c.1700 addition (Blacksmith's shop) are of interest. Some of the timbers are possibly from old ships. One interior door has two panes of blown glass. The North end of the building was formerly connected with the blacksmith's business, whilst the South end had a small shop bay window. In the centre was a doorway and fanlight of Georgian design with a flat hood supported on carved brackets. These brackets and the fanlight still remain as the entrance to Layland's China and Glassware department, though hardly noticeable to a casual passer-by. The door itself, however, has been replaced. The small shop formerly at this end of the building was finally occupied by Mr. P. Howard before his removal to his present premises at 54/6 High Street.

The Deeds of this property date from 1730 when it was held by Joseph and Ann Paprill and called:

" A messuage and tenement with small court situate in Billericay between a tenement then called the George Inn and a tenement called the King's Arms held by the yearly rent of one shilling on part of which premises is now erected or built a smith's shop." The property passed to John Paprill and his wife Suzanna, and then to their son John—a Blacksmith.

(Joseph Paprill, Blacksmith, is mentioned in the deeds of No. 84 High Street—Cottis' Bakery.)

In 1793 the Copyhold passed to Joseph Wood, an Ironmonger who surrendered it to Meggy and Chalk, auctioneers of Chelmsford in 1800. In 1813 William Curtis, Cabinet Maker, was owner, and in 1843 the property was sold by Auction at the Billericay Market House (now Council Chamber) to Sarah Makings, Blacksmith. The auctioneers were Messrs. Rolf & Hills, Billericay people.

In 1882 the Executors of Sarah Makings sold to Lewis John Sparrow—also a Blacksmith. Maria Jane Scott, wife of William Scott who continued the business, was the next purchaser and William's son carried on as blacksmith for a short time after his father retiring through ill health, but retaining the anvil and other tools and equipment which are still stored in one of the local builder's yards.

The Copyhold was extinguished in 1930, Sir Fred. Carne Rasch then being Lord of the Manor. Joseph Coverdale, Surveyor, of Ingatestone was a witness, whilst Mrs. Maria Jane Scott's signature was witnessed by R. Jasper Layland.

A Conveyance referring to the two shops occupied by Mr. J. Layland, formerly part of the Blacksmith's property, describes:

" All those two messuages or tenements with the small Courtyard, Sheds and Smith's Shop thereto adjoining and used therewith with the appurtenances situate in Billericay aforesaid between a Tenement called the ' George Inn ' and a tenement called the ' King's Arms ' (held with other messuage adjoining by the yearly rent of one shilling) as the same were formerly in the tenure of William Makings and William Curtis afterwards of the said William Makings and John Noon then of the Widow Makings and Henry Ambrose then of Sarah Makings and — Whistler and now or late of William Scott and Mrs. Quilter subject to the right of way by the owner and occupier of the . . . "

Nos. 62-64 High Street, Laylands — Ironmonger, Cycle Stores, Tobacconist and Confectioner, c. 17th/18th Century, timber framed. A brick front has been superimposed on the original, and the rear formerly weatherboarded has been pebbledashed. Windows at rear are Casement type, the front having three shops with Sash windows on first floor and dormers to attics. Roofs are slated. The interior shows several rough timbers in the walls of the first floor. A ceiling beam crosses the centre of this floor from back to front of the building, the part on the staircase being chamfered, but the remainder in the front room being encased. Other rooms on the same floor have encased ceiling beams as has the ground floor. The building was at one time the " King's Arms " Inn, shown on the map of 1681 but little is known of its history. During the 19th Century there was a double shop front, with square panes of glass, across the present No. 62 and part of the Cycle Stores. The Confectionery shop front was inserted c.1910, being at that time an ultra modern pattern for a town of this size.

The earliest Deeds of 1866 refer to an earlier one of 1848 when "Edward Swinbourne Chalk of Chelmsford . . . was under a Bargain and sale from the Commissioners and assigns of John Hills a Bankrupt admitted Tenant . . ."

At this time the property formed two tenements and in 1850 Edward Chalk was admitted to the other portion purchased from the trustees under the Will of James William Bassom.

In 1866 Edward Chalk died leaving the property to his brother, Arthur Robert Chalk, who, however, had predeceased him. Under the Will of Arthur Chalk it passed to Rev. Thomas Chalk of Quainton, Bucks. It was then described as "formerly in the occupation of Edward Petchley and undertenant, afterwards Stephen Miller Cockerill or his tenant late in the occupation of Robert Lancaster late of Mr. Gladwin since of William Moss or his undertenants and late of James Miller and now of — Lucas." The Copyhold was enfranchised in 1886.

In 1899 Abraham Bowerman Croxon and George William Attenborough, mortgagees of the property sold to Charles Edgar Lewis, a name well known in Billericay and Brentwood. It was then described as being in the occupation of William Lucas as a yearly tenant. "Lucas, Beall and Carter" are described as Corn Merchants in the 1874 Post Office Directory, this being their headquarters.

In 1902 the property was sold to Robert Yorke Larritt who had established an Ironmonger's business in the tiny shop between the old "Crown" archway and the present Council Chamber. It was at this time stated to be in a derelict condition, the roof being held up by rough tree trunks wedged in place as a temporary expedient, and Mr. Larritt set about restoring the place to a reasonable condition. In 1931, Counterpart leases were made to Mr. J. Layland in respect of No. 62, and Mrs. M. Layland for No. 64, which applied mainly to the shop premises and outbuildings.

Mrs. Layland (formerly Miss Larritt) inherited the entire property from her father in 1939.

Nos. 66/70 inclusive appear to have been one house and are of 17th Century construction, the first two having been in Stock brickwork and No. 70 weatherboarded, as is the greater part of the back of all three. There is a brick addition at the North end extending towards the East. The whole block is Gabled and Tiled on the street front but has eaves at the rear. The roofs of Nos. 66/68 were raised slightly a few years ago. The interior has the usual quota of exposed ceiling beams, etc., and one shows evidence of a blocked Inglenook fireplace.

(No. 70 R. Layland Estate Agent) has a rather nice Georgian glass partition, and a fireplace of about the same date.

Mr. Olley, a Bootmaker, was occupier in 1903.

No. 72 is of c. 16th Century and was probably part of a larger house which extended across the site of No. 74 which has, at the rear, a re-used Doorhead, carved and bearing the inscription IB 1588—probably from the earlier house on the site. The fragment of the Tudor building still standing is timber framed and plastered with tiled roof. It has a gabled front, now pebbledashed. For a number of years, until its removal to the new club rooms, it was the headquarters of "Billericay Conservative and Liberal Unionist Association", known as the "Blue Room".

No. 74 (Eales') is of early construction, but now of 18th Century style, showing a fine example of a Georgian bow shop front with several panes of Bull's Eye or Blown Glass, and the shop itself calls for preservation as a memorial of the quieter days of Horse-drawn vehicles. It contains various fittings of contemporary date, including a very fine Fire Grate, etc., in the front ground floor room. The initials on the 1588 door at the rear are said to stand for Isaac Burgess, whose family were here for several centuries to the last century when Mr. Eales' father took over the business. Mr. Fred Eales is Billericay's best known "character" of modern times. He knows everyone and everyone knows him. At all times a fount of information upon all subjects connected with Billericay. Always ready to have a chat his abounding good humour bubbles forth.

Nos. 76-78a, with tiled roof and sash windows and the front now pebbledashed, was built as one complete house with wings extending towards North and East. Probably of 17th Century date and mainly of brick construction; some rooms have moulded ceiling beams. It was the residence of William Waylett, a well known character in the Town whose Coachbuilding Works stand in Chapel Street at the rear of this house.

No. 76 at present forms a private house on its own account, but two blocked doors still lead to the room on the South of the front door which has been for about 15 years "The Book Shop" founded by Messrs. D. D. Evans and S. J. Looker.

The lock-up shop, now Marsh's Tobacconist's and Confectioner's, was in the earlier part of the century a Draper's under the proprietorship of a Miss Tyrrell, who lived at "Claremont", 6 High Street.

No. 80, Alderslades, Butchers, and No. 82, "The Bays", a private residence, was built about 1510. It was built on an L-shape plan with wings extending towards South and East, and is timber framed and plastered, part of the studwork being filled in with red brick under the present plaster. A kitchen wing was added to No. 82 during the 18th Century. In the North crosswing the ceiling beams have been encased, but two on the ground floor of "The Bays" are exposed and have Stopped Chamfers. In the South

bedroom of this house some good wall timbers are also exposed and the door to this room and its opposite number on the same floor are of oak of very early date with moulded panels.

The door at the foot of the stairs is the same pattern. The central Chimney Stack is massive and there is evidence of an Inglenook fireplace in the room nearest the shop.

The stairs to the cellar in "The Bays" are of two different dates, the older staircase, now built over by a cupboard, leading into the "Inglenook room", and the present one inserted in the 18th Century when the house was divided into the two tenements. Some other brick steps appear to lead into the house on the South (No. 84), but they are fragmentary and partly covered by the modern stairs.

Most of the building is plaster faced except for the kitchen wing of No. 82 which is of whitewashed brick. The roofs are tiled and gabled with scolloped barge boards on the front elevation.

Deeds date from 1871, but the date 1510 is said to have been found on one of the old tiles when the roof was repaired some years ago. No. 80 has been a Greengrocer's shop (Maclure) and before that, in turn, a Tailor's and a Fishmonger's. The present Butcher's business was founded by Mr. A. T. Alderslade, who until then was Licensee at the "Coach and Horses" Chapel Street. For some years his widow carried on the business until her death, when Miss I. Alderslade, the daughter, took over.

"The Bays" (No. 82), was for some years the residence and business headquarters of Miss H. M. Brown, who ran an Arts and Crafts Shop here, and also taught drawing and painting at various London Schools before retiring finally to Billericay. After her death in 1944, the house reverted to a private residence.

No. 84, Cottis, Baker and Pastrycook. This is a 16th Century building timber framed and weatherboarded at the rear which is also gabled. The various outbuildings, forming a long wing towards Chapel Street are part weatherboard and part brick. The kitchen contains some old panelling and there are crude doors in the attics.

The front elevation was bricked over during the 19th Century, and a parapet raised above the eaves, but this was entirely altered by the present owner in 1922. The roof is tiled with dormers and the upper part is rendered and half timbered. Earliest deeds are dated 1853.

The property was purchased by William Rust, Miller of Great Waltham, in 1826, and sold to Golden Collins for £327 in 1852 when Sarah Collins was mentioned as Baker and Confectioner. In 1867 and for some time afterward Charles T. Aldridge was here.

Before the 1922 alterations the building was double fronted with a shop bay window on the North and a flat sash window on the South of the main door. The room behind the Sash window was a tea room which was continued as the "Tudor Café" long after the alterations, though by then thrown open to the main shop by the removal of a wall.

The "Tudor Café" was closed in 1946 when it was replaced by the new Houghton's Restaurant across the road.

Grenville House (No. 86) has a Georgian red brick elevation, with tiled roof and a charming little circular fanlight over the door, but includes parts of a much older house. It is the sole remaining portion of the old "Crown" coaching inn which stretched from here to the Council Chamber and had its Brewery, Tap, and some extensive stabling, part of which remains in Crown Yard, between High Street and Chapel Street.

The most notable feature of Grenville House is its fine curved staircase built without any apparent means of support. The remainder of the "Crown" inn has long been rebuilt, the portion now "Barrington House" (Nos. 88/100) about 1900, and No. 102, some years earlier.

"Ye Crowne" is mentioned as far back as 1593, and in 1771 was the scene of a cricket match 'between the gentlemen of Temple Mills, Essex, and eleven picked men of the same County, for £20. The wickets will be pitched at 11 o'clock precisely. A cold ordinary on the field."

A guide to Essex of 1823 states that the Stage Coach from Tilbury to Chelmsford stopped at "The Bell", Horndon-on-the-Hill, and "The Crown," Billericay, and in 1828 (Carey's "Great Roads"), "The Despatch" coach left "The Bull" Inn, Aldgate, "daily $\frac{1}{2}$ bef. 3 aft. Sund. ex." for Southend "through Billericay, Rayleigh, Hadleigh, Leigh, Rochford and Prittlewell", stopping at "The Crown", Billericay. In the same year the "Southend (Post Coach) Route as above, daily 3 aft. 'Blue Boar', Aldgate".

Twenty years later (1848) Coaches from Southend left Rochford ("King's Head") at 6 a.m. on Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays, calling at Rayleigh and Billericay, and at this date "The Crown" was a Posting Inn—landlord, William Rolph, who was also classed as a "Horse and Gig Owner", Brewer, and Wine and Spirit Merchant. At "The Crown Tap" at the Chapel Street end of the stables the licensee, William Piper, was also a Blacksmith. "The Crown" Brewery covered a large part of the ground between the "Tap", now "The Coach and Horses" Chapel Street, and "The Crown" High Street, facing the stables most of which still remain along the South side of Crown Yard or Alley. The cellars of the brewery still remain under the gardens of Barrington House, etc., and there is said to be a connecting passage to them from "Grenville House".

The Brewery, which existed for some years after the inn had disappeared, was supplied with water from a well in the field on the opposite side of Chapel Street and older residents can still remember when four men were employed all day in pumping it up the hill and across the road to its destination. At the lower end of the same field were Watercress beds which supplied fresh salad for the visitors to the inn.

By 1862 the coaching inn had vanished with the by-passing of the town by the railways. No coaches are mentioned in the Directory of this date, but instead a "Mail Cart to Brentwood daily 8 a.m." People from Rochford met the trains at Southend by means of an "Omnibus" from Burnham three days a week. Passengers and Goods for Chelmsford, Rayleigh and elsewhere were now carried from Billericay by Carriers.

By 1862 "The Crown" sign had been transferred to 122/6 High Street, as a Beerhouse, where it remained until 1890, the Licensee then being removed to the present "Crown Hotel".

Licensees at "The Crown".—1593, John Stotleman; 1770, Elizabeth Hurst; 1848, William Rolph.

"Crown Beerhouse".—1882, G. Perkins who transferred the licence to the present "Crown Hotel" 1889/90.

A Property Sale list of 1882 describes the "Valuable Beerhouse known as The Crown, with Dwelling House and Garden adjoining situate in the High Street Billericay", also "A Valuable piece of freehold garden ground situate adjoining the Crown Beerhouse with a frontage of about 24 feet to the High Street and a small Enclosure used as a Quoit Ground the whole let to Mr. G. Perkins at £1 per Annum. The purchaser of this lot will be entitled to a Right to draw Water from the Well on Lot 8 with free access thereto."

This, of course, refers to the property at 122/6 High Street, the "garden ground", and "Quoit Ground" being that on which the Nurses' House (No. 120) is now situated.

In 1593 "The Crown" is described as being near the Salt Bins which were, no doubt, connected with the Cattle Market. These bins are mentioned at later dates as in 1700 when the "Tilted stalls between the Salt bins and 'The George'" are referred to in connection with the Summer Fair, and in 1708 when John Cass paid 6s. 8d. per year for "Saltbing".

In 1867, "Grenville House" (No. 86) was the residence of Henry Finch Robertson, master of the old Grammar School at the Market House and Town Hall, and during part of the present century, Mr. F. Boughtwood lived here after disposing of his butcher's business at 92 High Street. After his death it was purchased by Mr. Clarke, Butcher, who had followed Mr. Boughtwood at No. 92. The present occupier is Mrs. Clarke, widow.

"Barrington House" (Nos. 88/90) was built in the early 1900's and is a typical Edwardian style property of red brick with tiled roof in front, the rear being of yellow brick and slated. The Deeds of the land date from 1860.

No. 88 has a small gable in front, and No. 90 an attic type window with a castellated effect. Windows are both Sash and Casement, and there is an arched entrance porch which has been slightly altered from its original design. The first floor elevation is partly "timbered" giving the building a mock Tudor effect.

In its early days No. 88 was a Solicitor's office, a later resident was Mr. Wormald, Rate Collector and, in more recent times, Mr. Palmer, a Jeweller and Watch Repairer. Messrs. H. W. Iles Estates Ltd. are the present occupiers.

No. 90, Bata's Shoe Stores was formerly a Draper's Shop. Mr. Groves was at Barrington House before his removal to his present premises nearly opposite.

No.92 was in 1867 occupied by John Orton, butcher, and has been a Butcher's shop from the time it was rebuilt on the site of part of "The Crown" Inn. The archway at the South end leading to **Crown Yard**, or Alley, keeps in remembrance the earlier Carriageway of Coaching days.

At the end of Crown Yard, facing Chapel Street, the "Coach and Horses" is a rebuilt and renamed "Crown Tap", whose licensee in 1848 was William Piper. As the "Coach and Horses" its licensees have included John Thorogood, 1862; William Lazell, 1874; Thomas Reed, 1894/5; A. T. Alderslade, 1908.

The Council Chamber (or old Police Station). A grey cement rendered building with a roof of slate forming a pediment which contains the Coat of Arms of Essex, i.e., three seaxes, has three tall windows and two doorways with semicircular heads.

Built in 1830 as the Market House with Grammar School and Assembly Room replacing the old building which seems to have stood in the open road opposite The Chequers. The street front had a central door originally, with an iron balcony above and was designed by Rev. T. B. Crowest, Architect, and Minister at the Baptist Chapel, the original designs still being in the possession of his great-granddaughter. It was owned by the Town Hall Company and the upper room was used for various purposes, including Private Dances, Concerts and Auctions. The Ancient Order of Foresters had their first meetings here before removing to "The Sun Hotel". In 1848, 13 Corn merchants attended this Market House each week. By 1862 part of the ground floor had become a Police Station with two men, Michael Keaven being Police Sergeant, and George Thomson, Police Inspector. Henry Collin, the Attorney and Bank Agent, was also Superintendent Registrar, and Clerk to the five County Magistrates. In 1908 Petty Sessions were held in the "New Police Court 2nd and 4th Mondays in each month at 11 o'clock". This Court was on the first floor in what is now the Billericay Urban District Council Chamber. The number of Magistrates has increased to nine.

The Grammar School founded by Samuel Bayly in 1692 was held in a room over the market house and ended its days in a room adjoining the Police Cells where, on one occasion, it is said, the boys locked up their master as a practical joke. The playground was on the site of the old Police House, now the Health Department of the Urban District Council. The founder left to the vicar of Great Burstead for the time being, and other trustees, Watch

House Farm, Laindon, to pay out of the rents such a salary as they thought sufficient to a schoolmaster for teaching 10 poor children of the Parish, which included at that time Billericay. In 1848, the farm was let at £60 per annum, out of which the Schoolmaster—Walter Robert Bartley Lee—received £45 for teaching 15 free scholars.

In 1862 Henry Finch Robertson was paid £75 yearly out of £100 rents for Watch House Farm. The boys managed, even with such a small number, to form their own Cricket Team which played regular matches against Stock. The present Billericay Cricket Club was founded about 1875 and John Wardle, master of the Grammar School about 1885, was a member of the club when it played on Laindon Common. He is reported to have hit a ball from the top end of the Common into the Duke's Pond, and on another occasion put up 100 for the first wicket. A Mr. Perkins followed as Master at the school, the last one of all being Henry Mathews.

The Police Station and Court remained here until 1938/9 when the present more commodious building was erected at the corner of London Road. During the War Years, the top floor and Police House were used for Civil Defence purposes, the ground floor becoming the local Registrar's Office when the Police moved out.

After the war the premises were purchased by the Urban District Council and converted to their present use as Council Chamber, etc. On the walls of this room are the various Plaques won by the Urban District during the various war-time Savings Weeks and one commemorating the adoption by the town in 1943 of the Corvette H.M.S. *Lark*.

Now let us cross the High Street and continue our survey on the West side.

North Thames Gas Board Showrooms and Offices with flat above, was formerly known as "The Gables". It is of late 16th Century date, timber framed and plastered. The rear is weatherboarded and has gables matching those on the street front.

The central chimney stack was removed during the conversion from private house to offices, and the space left was large enough to form a separate room. At this time was discovered the Elizabethan doorway with trefoiled head which may be seen in the showroom. There is an interesting carved timber in the roof structure which was discovered during re-roofing activities some years ago.

All windows, including the Bay, are of the Sash type of Georgian style.

Of the early history of this house little is known for certain, but it may have been the house of "Mr. Finch" shown on a map of 1689, which was the first building in Billericay to be licensed for the meeting of Dissenters in 1693. The present offices were opened on behalf of the Gas Light and Coke Co. Ltd. in 1930 by Councillor F. W. Price, Chairman of Great Burstead Parish Council, who was

handed a silver key by Sir David Milne-Watson, LL.D., D.L., Governor of the Gas Light and Coke Company. Guests numbered nearly 100.

Sir David Milne-Watson presided at the tea at the Women's Institute Hall after the ceremony. In his speech here, he remarked that this was a new venture on the part of the Company, who had pursued the policy of opening new showrooms all over London, some on a very large scale. On this occasion they felt that to open a building in a large and ostentatious way would be altogether out of keeping in a beautiful little town like Billericay. Fortunately for the town and for the Gas Light and Coke Company, the building operations had been in the very good hands of Mr. Tapper, the architect. He had advised them to leave the beautiful old house in an unspoilt condition, making necessary alterations inside but leaving all the charm of the country house. Sir David was certain that having regard to the local amenities and the character of the town they had acted wisely. From the point of view of obtaining business he was sure they would get more from the residents through that building than through something glaring and flashy, a sentiment with which the Billericay Group heartily agree, and commend to other public and private developers.

"The Gables" had been purchased on behalf of the Brentwood Gas Company which was taken over by the Gas Light and Coke Company from January 1st, 1931, after the opening of the new showrooms.

Nos. 93 and 95, "Grey House", is of timber frame construction and under the same roof as the Gas Offices and dates from late 16th Century. It has an open carriageway at the North end leading to a yard and Coach house at the rear. The side door of "The Gables" also opens into this, and lends some support to the story that both houses once formed a Coaching Inn—name unknown. In the last century it was a private residence of attractive appearance and remained as such until converted by Mr. Christie, who owns the property and lives on the premises, into the present shop. At first, in his own occupation as Boot and Shoe stores, these shops have had various other uses since. In the late 30's, an "Arcade" was opened through the centre of the building where is now the passageway to the Hairdressing establishment. The shops are at present occupied by "Leigh" Boot Repairer, and "Bell" Dyers and Cleaners. The building contains some exposed Ceiling beams, but it has lost much of its appeal by the insertion of the modern shops.

No. 97, The County Library, a plain red brick building with slate roof and simple oak shop front, has nothing of very great interest about it. It is built on an L-shap plan with wings extending to the South and West, the latter being perhaps the oldest part. The present shop front is a modern insertion replacing a slightly older one. Formerly two distinct premises, the South end was, about 1919, a Hairdresser's, and the North a Tailor's. Mr. Self, whose name still appears on the side of the building, was here as a Draper

until the mid 1930's and the premises were afterwards taken over by the Billericay Urban District Council as its Rates Department. In 1949 the building was leased by the Essex County Council as headquarters of the Billericay Branch of the County Library with Adults' and Children's Lending Libraries and Reference Room, which was opened at the end of 1950. Until this date there had been a library centre at the Women's Institute open on two days of the week for one hour on each day, the late Mr. Anthony Nichol who was followed by Mr. H. M. Roberts, acting as Librarians.

Miss M. Cohen is the First Librarian at the present branch.

No. 99 (Groves) "Almar House" is a comparatively modern building of little interest, of pebbledashed walls and slated roof. It was built on an L-shaped plan, but the space in the North-east corner was built over when the present shop was inserted. It was formerly a Grocer's. Mr. Groves removed his Outfitter's business here from Barrington House across the road.

No. 101 "Glenavis", a solid looking late Georgian double fronted house of red brick with yellow arches and a slate roof, is weather-boarded at the rear with additions in red brick, the front formerly having a parapet raised above the eaves. The massive great Doric entrance is interesting and unusual. In 1710 Joseph Westwood was admitted to this copyhold property which had been willed to his wife Elizabeth for life and after to "his son Joseph and the heirs of his body fairly to his three sisters Mary, Susan and Josephine." In 1721 Thomas Wood was admitted tenant until 1747 when he surrendered it to the Lord of the Manor. The deeds show various transfers from that time until in 1842 it was surrendered to Thomas Chalk, and then in 1877 Joseph Rutland, acting Devisee in Trust under will of Thomas Chalk was admitted. The property later passed to the Houghton family. For some years until 1952 the local Telephone Exchange was housed here after its transfer from 107 High Street. In 1952 the new and specially built Exchange was opened at the rear of the Post Office.

No. 103 (Houghton's) and No. 105 on the opposite side of the yard should be described together as they have been closely connected in ownership for at least 150 years. Houghton's (No. 103) can truly be described as "an old building modernised in a nice manner" and it now presents a good tiled roof, the upper front and side elevations being treated with stucco in a traditional pargetting design. The double fronted shop is of simple character and there is a good wrought iron projecting sign. No. 105 is a comparatively modern house of Edwardian Villa design with slated roof and built on the site of a single-storey building which may be seen in old photographs of this part of the town. It was no doubt the building referred to in a "Contract for redemption of land tax issued to Abbot Kent of Carpenters Hall, London, for property in Billericay Street . . . and a building used as a School Room also belonging to the said premises in occupation of Ruth Kent, Spinster late in

occupation of Mr. George Adams." The receipt for £146 13s. 4d. is dated April 29th, 1799.

In September 1812, the property is mentioned as being "late in the occupation of James Vanderzee deceased and then of . . . his Son and used by him as an office." James Vanderzee was an attorney whose initials may be seen on a rainwater head dated 1765 on the side of Houghton's, and on bricks in the garden wall of the same premises. The owner at this date (1812) was Sarah Kent who inherited from her brother, Abbott. She died December 1812, and the property was purchased by "John Kemp of Broomfields in Great Stambidge, Gentleman" for £800. In March 1818 "George Rolph Junr." grocer and draper, purchased the place and appears to have soon got into financial difficulties. In 1826 he mortgaged the property to Sparrow & Co., Bankers.

In May 1833 it was declared at the Manorial Court that George Rolph had died "seized of the said messuage", and a first proclamation for his heir was made but "No one came". In October a second Proclamation was made with a like result, but in March 1834, George Rolph, the eldest son, appeared with the probate of his father's will which left the property to his wife Hannah. As she had died during his lifetime, the copyhold was granted to George junior, who immediately, and on the same day, surrendered it to Thomas Chalk, printer, of Chelmsford, in return for £800 at 5 per cent. In November 1834 George Rolph was summoned to appear before the Court of Common Pleas for non-payment of £1,600 to Thomas Chalk "or any part of the same having hitherto wholly refused and still refuses wherefore the said Thomas saith he is injured and hath sustained damage". Just over a fortnight later, a Deed of Covenant was signed between George Rolph and Robert Greenwood who had been responsible for paying off the earlier mortgage of 1826.

At this date (1834) the old Schoolroom occupied by George Shaw, in 1848 Attorney and Clerk to the Magistrates. In 1842 the property, now Nos. 103 and 105, was surrendered by Robert Greenwood to Thomas Chalk and leased in 1857 to John Starling Day, Surgeon, at a yearly rent of £40. The lease included "the double Coachhouse, Smith's Shop, Storehouses and Stable as the same were sometime in the occupation of Mathew Dale, afterwards of James Vanderzee deceased, after that of — Vanderzee his son, since of Ruth Kent Spinster, and William Moore, after that of George Rolph and late of John Martin, Surgeon and Frederick Gladwyn, Ironmonger."

In 1848 Caleb Houghton, Linen and Woollen Draper, occupied the premises vacated by George Shaw, but about 1860 leased the main house following the removal of John Starling Day, and added a Grocery department to his original business of Draper. In 1861 he is described as Grocer, Draper, and Agent for the Phoenix Fire Insurance Company. The following year a W. H. R. Ketcher, druggist, was agent for the Phoenix, and Caleb Houghton for the Pelican Fire Insurance Co.

Caleb Houghton converted the ground floor of the double fronted house into two shops, the North for drapery and the South for grocery, removing the 18th Century doorway with its fanlight and gabled hood to the side of the building where it remained until the alterations in 1946. A view of it is preserved in the Billericay Town Collection.

The Well type staircase was removed at the same date, an outside staircase being built for the new flats on the first floor.

The Draper's shop became Houghton's Restaurant, the room at the rear being opened up into the shop. The Restaurant is now confined to the rear part opening on to the garden, the Grocery department occupying the entire front of the premises.

The property, owned by Thomas Chalk when Caleb Houghton first leased it, passed into the hands of Joseph Rutland, acting Devisee in trust under the will of Thomas Chalk, in 1877. It was purchased by Caleb Houghton from Mrs. Rutland, widow, in 1897, and remained in the Houghton family until its sale to Mr. W. J. Cottis in 1945. No. 105 has since been sold to another owner. The former bakery at Houghton's was the last in Billericay to use wood fuel.

When the old building on the site of No. 105 was demolished, the floor beneath the boards was found to consist of large Shin Bones (of Bullocks ?) and it has been supposed that it was the site of a Butcher's shop, or may have been near a Slaughter House. Except for those removed for the foundations of the present house, these bones still remain *in situ*. At the lower end of the garden of No. 103 were two ancient Wych Elms, and when these were cut down a number of large bones, thought to be over 300 years old, were found among the roots.

No. 107, sometimes known unofficially as the "Dolls' House", is much larger than it appears. The front elevation shows a charming small mid-Georgian house of red brick with rubbed arches and sash windows—one bricked-up. A nicely tiled roof appears over the parapet and cornice. The central doorway has a well proportioned pediment supported on shaped brackets. The main block forms a reasonably sized house on its own account with large rooms, its own staircase, and a wide Hall which is said to have once formed an open Carriageway to the rear. By the back door is an iron bracket of the kind used for carrying lanterns, which lends some support to this idea. It is firmly fixed into the wall from which it is impossible to remove it without severe structural damage. A wing extends from the main block towards the West, and is of older date than the rest of the house. About 17th Century date, it has its own staircase and was formerly about twice as long. The present room on the ground floor of this wing has been formed out of two smaller apartments.

This part of the house may have formerly been sleeping quarters for Ostlers and Servants at the "Red Lion" nearby, according to a prevailing story passed down from their fathers to the older residents of the town.

Ann and James Chevely, Bonnet and Straw Hat makers and Confectioners, seem to have been here about 1848-c.1862. A Mrs. Cheveley is mentioned in the 1867 Rates Book. The Billericay Telephone Exchange was here until its removal to 101 High Street.

No. 109, "Ivy House", a private house in a plain Georgian style with sash windows, brick front and tiled roof, was built about 250 years ago. There is stated to have been a Carriageway through the North end of the house which was converted into living accommodation when the original stuccoed building was refronted in brick. Two main beams cross through the building. Earliest deeds are 1734. About 1867 Thomas Oliver, Woollen Draper, Clothier and Straw Hat Maker was here, and from 1878 to 1883 it was occupied by a Greengrocer.

The boundaries of "Ivy House" are closely mingled with those of Nix's and "The Red Lion". At the lower end of the garden the brick wall has three coved bays of the kind associated with 18th Century pleasure gardens, and there is evidence that this was part of "The Red Lion" property in that inn's more prosperous days.

The shop and house No. 111 (Nix's) at present shows a plain front elevation of cement rendering lined out in stone courses above a simple double fronted plate glass shop front. The upper windows are of the sash type and the roof is tiled. The door to the upper part has an ornamented semicircular fanlight with a hood supported on reeded pilasters, but the back and sides show its much earlier origin. Some ancient Leaded windows overlook "The Red Lion", of which some of it at least may have formed part, the inn being described by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments as a "fragment of a 15th Century house".

The house is built on a half-H plan with wings extending to the West. The leaded windows are in the South wing, which is part Stucco and part Brick, with an exterior chimney stack at the West end, and an exterior six-panelled door of *circa* Georgian date. The North wing is of one storey only and of brick construction. Roofs are Hip-shaped and tiled. The main block is of uncertain date and was largely altered in Georgian days.

John Nix was Chemist and Druggist here in 1848, the business being established as long ago as 1812. He was also the Agent for Royal Exchange Fire Office, one of whose plates may still be seen at "Bleak House" near Sun Street. In 1862, John Knowles Nix, Druggist, Stationer and Stamp Office, is mentioned in White's Directory, but the Insurance Agency was then at Tunbridge's (now Purdy's). The present proprietor, Mr. D. Thomas, is related by marriage to the Nix family and carries on the business under the old name.

In the garden wall of this property is a bricked-up door leading to "Ivy House", and the owners also have a right of way through

"The Red Lion" property which points in both cases to the original extent of the inn which may have included the full width from Lion Lane to Houghton's, or at least to No. 105.

"The Red Lion" is one of the oldest buildings in the town, being part of a 15th Century house. In the 1923 Report of the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments the bedroom ceilings are described as having visible the original roof timbers, the purlins being moulded with curved wind braces and cambered collar beams. At the rear, the first floor of the South crosswing projects slightly over the yard, and the North wing is gabled and has an exterior chimney stack. The two exterior stacks at the Lion Lane end are interesting. Walls are mainly stuccoed, but the back is partly weatherboarded and has several brick additions to the main building. Most of the windows are of Sash type but there is one old casement in the North crosswing and a modern casement on the ground floor of the South crosswing. The stables and outbuildings—once more extensive and forming the South and West sides of the inn yard—are of weatherboard construction but in recent years have been cement rendered, except for the portion fronting Lion Lane, which for over a century has been included in the Nix property.

A house called the "Lion" is described on this site in 1593 which means that this building is the oldest licensed in Billericay. The "Crown" goes back as far, but has changed its site twice, whereas the "Lion" has always been on this site and on these premises.

The inn was the headquarters of the Courts Leet, and Baron held annually in Whitsun Week under the Petre family as Lords of the Manor, for the regulation of the town, the appointment of Constable, Aletaster and other officials, and Admittance of new tenants or Surrender of old ones to the Copyhold property together with the other legal matters and even the regulation of the Market. The last three days of the week were celebrated in feasting, etc.

The Licensee in 1593 was Jacobus Warne, and in 1770 Abraham Thresher. In 1848 the licensee Richard Mumford was agent for London Corporation Fire and Life Assurance Co., and a billhead still on the premises dated 1858 bears the heading:

"Richard Mumford's Red Lion Commercial Inn, Billericay.
Post Horses, Close & Open Carriages, Flies, Gigs, etc."

Mr. J. A. Sparvel-Bayly in "The Silent Lady" ghost story of Burghstead Lodge describes the day nurse as setting off to "her cosy quarters at the Red Lion Hotel, then, as now, one of the most comfortable old fashioned hotels in rural Essex". (Written 1895.)

In 1861 Thomas Hunt was licensee but a Richard Mumford appears again 1862. The Post Office Directory of 1874 shows Thomas Sides "Family & Commercial Hotel & Posting House". In 1908 F. G. Buckenham, who now lives at Frith Farm, Laindon Common, was licensee.

In 1874 the inn was also the Inland Revenue Office under Charles R. Garrett.

In 1897 tables were set out in the roadway here in connection with the Diamond Jubilee Ox-roasting—the actual roasting taking place in the yard now covered by Ellis's Garage nearby.

CHAPTER V

On the opposite corner of Lion Lane, once leading to the Lion Fields, is "**Greywalls**" (No. 115) with which "**Burstead House**" (No. 117) originally formed one complete house of 16th Century date. It is of two storeys with attics, and has been refronted in brick and much altered. The rear is of weatherboard construction with three Gables, and each house has a kitchen wing added to the original building when it was divided into two parts. The chimney stack of the Greywalls kitchen was repaired a few years ago and was then found to have a brick bearing a date "about 100 years old". The main chimney stack is of grouped diagonal shafts, and inside the building three first floor rooms have fireplaces with panelled overmantels of late 17th Century date. One room has a panelled dado. The main staircase probably opened originally into a central hall which has since been cut off by a room and the entrance passage so that the staircase is rather hidden away. It is massive with square newels, moulded string and twisted balusters, and was restored three or four years ago.

Burstead House was for many years the Burstead House Academy known in its last days as "Price's Academy", the schoolroom being across the playground over the Coachhouse which some imagine to be part of a 15th Century barn. The Academy was founded by James Mabbs in 1733 when he left £500 to the trustees of the Dissenting Meeting House for the education of poor children nominated by them. The money was laid out in the purchase of £580 3 per cent. Consols, and the dividends paid for the education of 16 poor children in 1848. Towards the end of the 19th Century a Miss Mead of "Crescent House" left £500 for educational and other purposes in the town. It was vested in the trustees of the Independent Chapel, part being added to the Mabbs' Charity. Jonathan Henry Price was Master here in 1861 and the school closed its doors about the beginning of this century—no one seems quite certain when although there are still some of the scholars alive at the present day. Jonathan Price was one of the 1887 Trustees of the Reading Rooms.

This Academy is not to be confused with Miss A. Boughtwood's school at the present Army Cadets' Headquarters whose official name was Great Burstead House School according to members of the family although the "Great" was not generally used. Some old residents declare that Miss Boughtwood's school was a continuation of the old Academy whilst others think quite differently. A relic

of the Burstead House Academy remains in the bell which hangs by the side entrance facing the former playground now covered by Ellis's Garage. In 1897 an ox was roasted in this playground during the Diamond Jubilee celebrations, the townspeople eating it at tables set in the street outside "The Red Lion".

For about 30 years until 1939 this was the Burstead House Temperance Hotel, but in that year the business was sold to new proprietors, who closed down altogether on the outbreak of the war. Soon afterwards, the Food Office removed here from 37 High Street, and remained until the new premises were built in Chapel Street at the end of the war.

About 1873 a Girls' Academy was at "Greywalls", the Principal being a Miss Elizabeth Champion. In recent years it has been an Antique shop, the first headquarters of the Greywalls Press, and a Lending Library. It is now a private house only, as is Burstead House.

The row of three red brick cottages, Nos. 121, 123 and 125, between Ellis's Garage and St. Edith's Chase have nothing remarkable about them, except for the centre one (No. 123) which has a carving of what appears to be a King's Head projecting from the chimney stack. It seems quite old, but its origin and history are unknown.

At the rear of these cottages is the **Women's Institute Hall**, approached by St. Edith's Chase but officially in High Street. It was described in 1924 as having seating for 300 which by various alterations has since been increased. It is available for Concerts and Meetings of all descriptions and has often been used for Exhibition purposes. It is a timber structure with Stage, Canteen, Committee Room, etc., and a smaller hall known as the West Room. This last was, until 1950, the headquarters of the County Library. Billericay Branch opened for one hour on two days a week, but in that year the permanent library was opened in the High Street, as already described. The West Room is the centre of the Quakers, or Society of Friends who meet here every Sunday morning.

During the War, the main hall was the local British Restaurant.

Nearly opposite the hall is the Gardener's cottage attached to "St. Edith's". It was converted years ago from the old Coach house of "St. Edith's", and the position of the former doors, etc., can be traced in the brickwork.

"St. Edith's" itself is in two sections, the North end being lower and older than the main block, whose date of erection can be traced in the fretwork of the weathervane. The Northern end has an old tiled roof, and a front elevation of brickwork with a distinct Georgian flavour. A moulded brick cornice and parapet has a low pediment. Sash windows to the upper floor and casements below.

The Southern or left-hand end is quite different, being built in light Suffolk Gault brickwork with a stone porch supported on circular columns with foliated capitals and pointed arched windows, all in a sham Gothic style.

The 19th Century portion was built by the Woodard family, Edward Woodard being a Solicitor. Miss E. S. Bayly remembers heated discussions between herself and her two sisters, and the boys on the wall of the playground when this was a school about 1880, the wall of St. Edith's grounds being also the boundary of Burghstead Lodge where the Sparvel-Baylys lived. She knew the house, however, simply as "Mr. Woodard's", the present name being given to it by a Roman Catholic Sisterhood. A postcard c.1916 shows it as "The Ursuline School". The Coverdale family was the last to occupy the house as a private residence, Mr. F. G. Coverdale being here in 1924. About 1937 it was viewed for probable conversion as Town Hall, and in 1940 was requisitioned by the Army who, for a brief period, had a Rest Centre here. Later in the war period it was leased as a Nurses' Hostel in connection with St. Andrew's Hospital, this lease being renewed last year. The staircase is the most important feature of the interior of St. Edith's.

Before proceeding further, let us return to the east side and, continuing our observations from the old Police Station (the present Council Chamber), the first house we notice nearest to it is **No. 98, the Clerks' Department of the Billericay Urban District Council.** This is "**Barnsley House**", in whose deeds the earliest date is February 22nd, 1778, the house being built about 1750.

It is of Georgian style of red brown brick, pebbledashed at the rear. There is a low parapet with projecting cornice below the three lead-covered dormers. The large sash windows with margin bars have internal folding shutters, and the front entrance has a small Pedimented hood with shaped brackets. There is an open balustraded staircase, and the garden is approached by french windows. In part of the grounds have been erected further offices of the Council without, however, destroying the shrubs and trees which are a feature, and on the North side of the House there remain one or two old buildings of the Coachhouse type.

According to the Deeds, there previously stood on this site a property called "The Maidenhead", the first reference to the present house being in 1778. The house was sold by Thomas Wolfe, Esq., Gentleman of Saffron Walden, to Felton Neville, Esq., on a date not recorded. This Felton Neville erected the memorial to the Fishpoole family of "Hurlocks" and their daughter, Ann Abbot, who left the Charity called "Fishpoole's Gift" to Great Burstead Parish. He died September 28th, 1780, aged 59, and his memorial is near that of the Fishpooles in Great Burstead Church.

He had already sold Barnsley House with "one acre of pasture, outbuildings, chase house" etc., to Thomas Chaplyn, Surgeon, who died of Consumption in 1778 aged only 31. His memorial in Great Burstead Church bears the inscription:—

"His Abilities & Tendernefs in his Profefsion will prove a Lasting Respect to his Memory amongst his neighbours. His Social and Friendly Virtues endeared him to all who knew him. But to no one more sensibly then his friend JOHN THOMPSON BULL Who caused this Tablet to be placed here at his sole Expende."

There is no reference here to his widow, but this lady, Jane Chaplyn, married a William Whinfield and "Barnsley House" passed into his hands. He owned other properties, including a farm at Hockley, a Butcher's Shop and Coal Wharf at the same place, and a private residence at Shenfield all let to various tenants. On his death his son sold the Billericay property to George White Raine, another surgeon, in 1854, and he remained until his death in 1870. Mrs. Raine survived him for some years and sold Barnsley House in 1886 to a third doctor—J. C. Creswell, "General Medical Practitioner". In Billericay Parish Church is a Brass on the Chancel Steps to "Robert John Nash Creswell, only son of Dr. & Mrs. Creswell late of Billericay, who was killed by lightning at Sungkai F.M.S. Feb. 29. 1912 aged 28."

Dr. Creswell sold Barnsley House to Dr. R. Holtby in 1910. The fifth medical man to live here was Dr. W. Shackleton, who bought the property in 1919. He left the district in 1940 and the house became the local Home Guard Headquarters until 1945, when the property was purchased from Dr. Shackleton by the Billericay Urban District Council.

Dr. R. Bowseman was here with Dr. Shackleton, but resided at "Lynton House" next door.

"**Foxcroft**" (No. 100) is an 18th Century house of grey brick, tiled roof and sash windows with portico of square columns of the Tuscan order and was altered and enlarged at the rear for its present use as a Children's Home. Rev. E. G. Darby, a former Vicar of Billericay, was resident from about 1876-1904, moving here from Vicarage House, Chapel Street. In 1904 he removed to the smaller "Lynton House" next door, his large family having grown up and left home—mostly for Malaya as may be seen by their memorials in Billericay Parish Church. Dr. Frederick Carter came here about 1904 and remaining until his death in 1909.

No. 102 "Lynton House", an Edwardian red and grey brick villa with slated roof, stands on the site of a 16th/17th Century building which originally formed part of No. 104. Jesse Dove was Boot and Shoe Maker here, as well as Cowkeeper, in 1862, but by 1874 he is described only as Cowkeeper. The dairy was in the yard of No. 104, and the milk was delivered in open buckets carried on yokes across the men's shoulders. The present house has included as resident Rev. E. G. Darby, who removed here from "Foxcroft" in 1904 and died here in 1923. Mr. Randall Porter, for 40 years headmaster at Laindon Road schools, died here in 1933. Dr. R. Bowseman, the next resident, was here until late 1939 when he moved to his new house "Grenfell", High Street, and after his departure it was requisitioned by the Army. Towards the end of the war,

1942
40
1912

"Lynton House" became the Billericay U.D.C. Clerk's Department until the purchase of Barnsley House. It at present forms the offices and living accommodation of Mr. F. J. Sorrell, Solicitor and Commissioner for Oaths, etc., who moved his office here from No. 104 High Street, and his residence from Shrewsbury House, Stock Road.

No. 104, L. H. Miles, Jeweller and Watch and Clock Repairer, is a pleasant little property with a tiled roof, Plaster front and simple shop front, and forms part of a 16th Century house with later additions. It has lost much of its antiquarian interest through the alterations prior to Mr. Miles' purchase of the premises, though the shop still possesses an exposed ceiling beam, and a Chamfered beam across the angle of the back wall and ceiling. John King—Cooper and Basket Maker—was here in 1848. The Post Office was transferred here about the end of the century, and John King was Postmaster in 1908. It remained here until the new Post Office building was opened in 1938, the business still being in the King family at that time. The shop and adjoining room were then let as offices to Mr. F. Sorrell until his removal to "Lynton House", when it was taken by the present owners.

No. 106 "Oak House" is of early 18th Century date, with stippled plastered front, sash windows in small panes, central door with hood and shaped brackets. Old photographs show a double bay shop window across the North end of the front and the present hall with a flat sash window in place of the South Bay window.

George Upson was Saddler and Harnessmaker here in 1848, and at the same date Hannah Miller, a Milliner. It was for a short period in the 1930's a Greengrocer's, and it later became part of the B.U.D.C. office accommodation. It is now shared by several firms and agencies.

Inside are some exposed beams supporting the ceilings, and there is a massive exterior chimney stack at the rear. The back and ends of the house are weatherboarded, and there is a small Gable at the rear set back a little from the main length which has ordinary eaves. Roofs are tiled.

No. 108 The Surveyor's Department of Billericay Urban District Council. An interesting looking old building with two gables and a tiled roof; the walls are in stippled stucco with a black plinth.

It was built about the middle of the 17th Century with central block and North and South crosswings. There is an arched entrance or carriageway to the courtyard at the rear through the North crosswing which suggests that the house was at one time a coaching station, although there is no record of this in the Deeds which date back only to 1825.

Inside and outside the building has been much altered, a kitchen wing being added to the South crosswing, which has since been rebuilt as office accommodation. The main building is timber

framed and partly covered with lath and plaster, the rest being weatherboarded. A few rough beams are exposed internally and the timber construction is revealed in the Carriageway. Windows are sashed with glazing bars, and there is one large shop type bay window probably inserted in the 18th Century when the house was given its early Georgian appearance.

First recorded owner was a Mary Wood of Hornchurch on whose death (1832) the property was sold to J. H. Machu, a "Silk Trimming Manufacturer", by public auction. In 1844 Mr. Machu sold to George Cole, a corn merchant, who willed it to his brother Philip, Farmer of Herongate and Corn dealer at the Billericay Market House. He lived here and owned other property in the district including Grimes Hill Farm, Great Burstead, which had also belonged to his brother George. Philip Cole died 1903, leaving the property to his son, Edmund, a farmer. About 1914 the house was occupied by the late Mr. R. Layland, Surveyor to the old Rural District Council. During the First World War all the outbuildings at No. 108, including the former Silk Trimming factory, were requisitioned by the Army. The Billericay Rural District Council purchased the property from Edmund J. Cole, and for a number of years this remained the only accommodation for the Council. In 1934 the property was purchased by the newly-formed Urban District Council.

No. 110 is a pleasant little house of late 16th Century date with a gabled and tiled roof and the front now being pebbledashed and having a simple entrance door with hood and brackets. A chimney stack at the rear bears the inscription G.C. 1861, and a separate C.O. above. The first represents George Cole, farmer and corn merchant, but the other is unknown. Inside are some exposed timbers.

No. 112, a double fronted red brick house with a flight of steps to the door, is now shared by Messrs. Douglas Allen, Estate Agents, and Messrs. E. Edwards & Son, Solicitors. It has a tiled roof and casement windows and the pilasters of the door are reeded with shaped and carved brackets. It is probably early 18th Century with later additions at the rear. Old views show the shop windows to be the same size, but divided into smaller square panes during the latter half of the 19th Century. At that time William Ruffle, Builder, lived here and left his name on a brick in the garden wall, with the date 1856. His chief claim to fame is the fact that he was responsible with a man named Cross, for the building work at Laindon Road School, then the Great Burstead Board School. Until 1939 Sarsfield, Hairdresser and Tobacconist, was here and afterwards the premises were used as Army Stores, etc. For a brief period afterwards Mr. Bushell, Secondhand Dealer, etc., was here until his removal to Western Road.

No. 114, Marshall & Son, Newsagents and Tobacconists, is mentioned by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments,

1923, as an 18th Century house. At that time there was a shop bay at the North side of the central door and a flat Sash window on the other, corresponding to its neighbour No. 116, but with windows reversed. It has since been much altered, the shop being carried the full width of the building. At the beginning of the century this was the headquarters of Mr. Bull, Newsagent and Stationer, whose name appears on the back of postcard views of the town.

The first Billericay Telephone Exchange was located here before its removal to 107 High Street. A small outbuilding has a floor of thin Tudor bricks.

The front elevation is now pebbledashed with sash windows and tiled roof. Beneath the front eaves of the house is a Cornice of slightly different pattern to its neighbour, being denticulated.

No. 116 "Dryden House", mentioned by the Royal Commission on Historic Monuments as an 18th Century house, now has a slated roof and rendered front elevation with a modillioned cornice under the front eaves. The interior retains much of its contemporary appearance, as does the attractive rear elevation, though later additions have changed the plan of the house to a certain extent. There is a chimney stack with grouped shafts and a gabled crosswing extending towards the East. The centre of the rear part of the building rises above the rest of the house with a Turret effect and has a Hip Roof. Wall treatment is Plaster (rear), the small addition being weatherboarded. The cellar staircase door has a contemporary lock and key of unusual pattern and is still in working order.

This was the Headquarters of E. J. Powell, builder and decorator, before the war, and now of his son George Powell of Wickford.

No. 118 The Cheyne Library is an 18th Century house whose chief attraction nowadays is at the rear where there is an assortment of Gables, Lean-to's, Windows of both Casement and Sash type, and red brick and plaster walls. The building was originally double fronted with decorative treatment round the windows, etc., as may be seen in a model in the County Library, which shows the house as in 1934, before its conversion to shop premises.

The house has no known history, except for two Ghost Stories, one of a former resident who hanged himself in the cellar after the theft of his life savings, and the other of a girl whom a later resident saw going up the stairs in front of her and thought was her own daughter who should have been in bed. When the mother entered the bedroom her daughter was in bed and had not left it for some time before !

Mr. Wells, Watch Repairer, was here for some years until his removal to 124 High Street, and it was after he left that the house was converted as at present. "The Country Library" was the first business in the new shop, the "Cheyne Library" moving here from 28 High Street about 1939.

No. 120 is a modern red brick villa type house occupied by the District Nurse. It has no particular interest except that it occupies part of the site of the "Garden Ground" and "Quoit Ground" formerly attached to "The Crown" Beerhouse.

Nos. 122-126 inclusive is of 17th Century date, but has been added to at the rear when the building was converted into three tenements. The back addition to No. 126 extends partly behind Purdy's premises on the South. This group of buildings has an old tiled roof with a centre gable and projecting wings. The front elevation is now grey roughcast and has both casement and sash windows. The left-hand bay is supported on brackets and the two doorways have hoods on shaped brackets and plain architraves.

There is a central chimney stack with three diagonal shafts, and an exterior stack at the South end is now inside Purdy's building.

From about 1860/90 this was "The Crown" Beerhouse. It was the direct ancestor of Crown Hotel near the railway, and continued the licence formerly held by the ancient Crown Inn near the centre of the town.

No. 122 was recently Rackham's Upholstery and Toy, business, which moved here from what is now Lloyd's Bank. In 1952 it became the Billericay Pram Service when Mr. Rackham left the district.

No. 124 has been for about 20 years in the occupation of Mr. Wells, Watch Repairer, who moved here from the present Cheyne Library, and No. 126 is a private house formerly occupied by the local District Nurse.

No. 128, W. R. Purdy, Private Residence and Grocer's Shop, was built about 1775 and refronted in 1918. It is of brick and timber, with a slated and tiled roof, and has sash windows except for the two Bays on the first floor front. In 1848 John Tunbridge is described as Grocer, Linen and Woollen Draper, and Glass Dealer. In 1867 he is described in a Rates Book as owner and occupier. Mr. Gerald Tunbridge, at the end of the century, was a member of the Board of Guardians, and was noted for always wearing a cap with peaks back and front and side flaps buttoned under his chin. One of his daughters married W. Brown the blacksmith and both she, as a widow, and her unmarried sister lived at the house, No. 130 adjoining until their respective deaths. The Purdys took over the business early in the present century.

No. 130, a small pleasant double-fronted house with a tiled roof, roughcast walls with sash windows in small panes. The central doorway has a plain hood on brackets. Nothing is known of its history except the reference to Miss Tunbridge and her sister Mrs. W. Brown (see No. 128 above). A Mrs. Rose Richardson appears to have lived here in 1867.

No. 132, now **R. J. Youngman's (Confectioner, Tobacconist and Stationer)**, is the North end of a 17th Century house which included No. 134, and the house on the site of the Post Office. It is timber framed and stone dashed over the old plaster, the rear being weather-boarded with a slate roofed addition. The main roof is tiled. The small bay window is supported on iron brackets.

In 1848 John Palmer, a Baker, was here and in 1862 Miss Elizabeth Palmer, Baker and Confectioner. Miss Edith Sparvel-Bayly, in her *Yesterday—A Childhood in Billericay*, says "Across the road in front of the house was a tiny shop where Miss Palmer sold boiled sweets, peppermints, tin whistles, hoops, balls, and small dolls with charming faces and nice hair that could live comfortably in the seven-roomed house that Maicy, the gardener-coachman, had made for the little Baylys." This was about 1880 when the Sparvel-Baylys lived at Burghstead Lodge just across the road. In 1867 the owner of these three houses was George Richardson, then Ellen Richardson of "Bay Cottage". From the next owner, John Edward Spinks, also of "Bay Cottage", they passed in 1906 to W. Brown, whose blacksmith's shop was where the Post Office now is, and who married a Miss Tunbridge. The present owner purchased the premises from the executors of Miss Tunbridge who had inherited it from her sister. Mrs. Stammers had the shop until Mr. Youngman took over the business and it was then still the "tiny shop" of Miss Bayly's description though merely a Confectioner's. The whole of the front part of the building is now included in the shop by the removal of the old stairs and inclusion of what was a private room.

No. 134, the central part of the original 17th Century house, was for many years in the occupation of William Hatch, Gardener-seedsman, who rented also part of Pratt's Fields in Chapel Street. He was a member of an old Billericay family whose names may be traced as far back as the 16th Century. There are a number of memorials to them in the old Dissenters' Burial Ground, and it has been conjectured that it was a member of this family who gave his name to Hatch's Farm, Little Burstead. William Hatch (1789-1870) was buried in the Congregational Churchyard, and was the last of his line to live in Billericay. His son moved to the Midlands, but returned some years ago to Shenfield, where his widow and William's grandson still reside.

The Post Office, a fine red brick building in the modern Classic style with a hipped tiled roof, semicircular headed windows divided into small panes, is now blending admirably with the Georgian flavour of this part of the Town. It occupies the site of the House, yard and buildings of a Blacksmith and Carpenter, and was built in 1938 to replace the old building at No. 104 High Street. The Telephone Exchange at the rear was opened in 1952 as the successor of that at "Glenavis" next to Houghton's. The house demolished for the present building was the South crosswing of the 17th Century

building which included Nos. 132/4. It had a projecting upper storey on the street front and some moulded battened doors. An ancient wooden lock from here is in the "Billericay Town Collection". The house was haunted by "a young lady in white", although the last resident, Mr. W. Philips saw or heard nothing of her. He has described the house as extremely eerie and depressing with low ceilings, and dark gloomy attics reached by a staircase with a gate at the bottom. At the end of the yard was the large Blacksmith's and Wheelwright's shop and, against the "White Hart" boundary, a Painter's and Carpenter's shop. In 1848 Joseph Caton was Blacksmith and Wheelwright here. In 1862 he is also described as Parish Clerk. In 1874 William Brown carried on the business which remained until well into the present century. For a few years before it was demolished the house was occupied by a Mr. and Mrs. Philips who had a Greengrocer's stall in the yard, having moved the business from what is now Speir's Electrical Works at the corner of Crown Road.

Glancing back towards St. Edith's on the opposite side of the road, we see first a small grey house, **No. 131**, now an Optician's, but formerly the Roman Catholic Presbytery. The house is closely connected with St. Edith's to whose garden there is a side door.

No. 133, South of the above is an attractive 18th Century double fronted plain rendered and painted house with tiled roof and dormers. The Windows are of the Sash type divided into small squares. The central doorway has a small hood and brackets on reeded pilasters. On the right is a shop. This had until recently a canopy extending over the pavement and supported on iron brackets, but owing to its bad state of repair it had unfortunately to be removed. There was a Butcher's here in 1804, and the shop, which has not been used for business purposes for a number of years, has escaped modern improvements, and remains internally a period piece. There is an attractive pump at the rear of the house probably contemporary with it. Deeds of the property date from January 1st, 1771. All rooms except the Kitchen and Pantry, which is itself as large as many a modern kitchen, are in the front of the building, the back part of the roof sloping in a long sweep from the ridge above the attic windows to the top of the back door. Its width—the same as the house—is unbroken by any chimney or other projection.

Across the yard by the boundary of "Three Horseshoes House" are stables and outbuildings mainly of weatherboard with tiled roofs. Present owner/occupier is Mr. E. Burgess Payne, a member of an old Billericay family. He was appointed as one of the 1924 Trustees of Billericay Reading Room.

"**Three Horseshoes House**" (**No. 139**) and **Dr. Ryslstone's Surgery** (**No. 137**). Unfortunately this building has an asbestos roof. The walls are of red brick with windows of the sash type in small squares. One of the entrances has a very pleasant curved

topped hood on shaped brackets and there are two splayed bay windows. They are described in the 18th Century deeds as "a Malt house and two cottages". These later became an alehouse. The South part of the building appears to be a c.17th Century structure, the appearance of it being altered in the 18th Century. There is an unexplained infilling of the brickwork round the ground floor window at the South end which looks suspiciously like the blocking of a double door of some kind. At the rear, by the cellar stairs, is some Pargetting. In the 19th Century, two bay windows were inserted in the front of the building, and an extension made at the rear of the North block. The chimney stack at the North end bears the date 1885.

The whole place, except part of the rear, was refaced with brick at some date, in place of the former lath and plaster. Two bedrooms in the South block were until recently one exceptionally large apartment, probably in former days a Meeting Hall or Club Room. The attics have at present no light, but an entry in one of the older Account Books of Messrs. Bassoms refers to repairs to a Dormer window at "The Three Horseshoes". The interior doors and fittings are mainly Georgian in style. On the wall of the South block is an old "Royal Insurance" sign.

According to "Trade Signs of Essex" there was a "Three Horseshoes" in Billericay in the 17th Century. Two inns of this name are given in the 1770 list of Alehouses in Great Burstead, which then included Billericay, the licensees being John Rumble and William Watson. In 1790 the property was sold as an Alehouse or Malthouse to the Baddow Brewery who owned it until the early part of this century. During part of the First World War it was a Red Cross Centre and for some years until 1938 the present Surgery was the local Registry and Relief Office, until its removal to the old Police Station. It then reverted to a private residence, the remainder of the building forming two other cottages. Mr. Brian E. Edwards now occupies the major part of the building as "Three Horseshoes House".

Burghstead Lodge is a most beautiful large Georgian house of superb proportions in the Classical 18th Century style. The elevations are of dark mottled brickwork with sash windows divided with glazing bars into small panes. The painted entrance portico is a good example of restrained design with a semicircular fanlight and tracery. The fine wrought iron gates and railings make this property one of the most outstanding in the High Street. At the rear is a round-headed window and a columned porch to the garden. A fine old tiled roof peeps above the parapets.

The early deeds describe this as the "White House" (or Horse) and the fields adjoining as West Field, and King's Field, which last name may have some connection with the forfeit of certain lands in Billericay to King Richard II after the Peasants' Revolt of 1381.

The earliest deeds have the date 1635 when a certain Edward Britten sold the property to a Richard Morton. Other names mentioned are Dorothy Stevens, 1682 (the Stevens family graves are in Little Burstead Church), Nathaniel and Elizabeth Lewes, 1691, John Turner of Great Burstead (owner) and George Hellier (tenant) 1738, and John and Elizabeth Turner, 1739.

In 1766, Smith Turner and Ann, his wife, were at Burghstead Lodge, and it was probably by them that the house was rebuilt, the initials S.T. and date 1769 being on the rainwater heads at the South end of the house. Smith Turner was a Church Warden of Great Burstead, probably at the time the East window there was bricked-up, which would account for the remains of a Gothic window in the garden of Burghstead Lodge which is supposed to have come from that church. Miss Edith Sparvel-Bayly mentions that in her time there was a Summerhouse in the garden with two pictures representing Moses and Aaron—probably from a church.

In 1777 the house was mortgaged to James Vanderzee, attorney, whom we have already met at Houghton's. In 1788, Joseph Sutton Loder of Mansell Street, Goodman's Fields, London, became the owner, followed, in 1793, by Edward John Astley, probably a relative of Dr. Ananda who gave the certificate to the Medical Transactions regarding Thomas Wood, the famous Ghastly Miller of the Billericay Mills, sometimes known as the "Thin Man". Smith Turner was a signatory.

In 1797 the property was purchased by John Richard Comyns of Hylands near Chelmsford. He was great-nephew of Sir John Comyns, Knt., Chief Baron of the Exchequer, whose fine tomb, now mutilated, is in Writtle Church, and who owned the manor house of Great Blunts, the mansion of which, now a farmhouse, lies back from the Stock Road.

J. A. Sparvel-Bayly was here during the late 70's and early 80's of the 19th Century. He was a descendant of the D'Esperville family of Savoy, who lost their possessions during the French Revolution. This D'Esperville emigré shared part of his exile with Louis Philippe, later King of France, and taught French, etc., in schools in Switzerland and England. In the English school he met Charlotte King, one of the senior pupils who was daughter of Thomas Spitty King and Charlotte Bayly. Her guardian not consenting to their marriage, they eloped from the school in 1838. At his death, however, this guardian, Charles Bayly, left his property in Kent and Essex to his great nephew, John Sparvel, on condition that he added the name Bayly to his own. On the industrialising of Swanscombe, Kent, John Sparvel-Bayly left Knockholt Lodge there, and rented Burghstead Lodge at £60 per annum, but in a very few years ran through all his fortune and removed to West Ham, the contents of Burghstead Lodge being sold off by public auction. At West Ham he wrote a considerable number of Historical and Archaeological articles for newspapers and magazines and "New Studies in Old Subjects", published 1889. His own collection of

many of the articles, and a typescript copy of his Ghost Story of Burghstead Lodge—"The Silent Lady; an Essex Mystery" concerning the lady in the "glittering green gown" who is said to have haunted a bedroom here, is in the Billericay Town Collection.

The house in the Sparvel-Bayly's time is well described in Miss Edith S. Bayly's memoirs "Yesterday; A Childhood in Billericay" from the larder, beer, wine, and coal cellars in the basement, where she and her two sisters were sent to skip on wet days, to the school-room and billiards room on the top floor. The haunted bedroom was at the back of the house (South-west room on first floor). It was "a spare room with huge fourpost bed and green curtains".

The Shrubbery which ran along the Brentwood Road and still partly exists beyond the Police houses, was said to be haunted by the ghost of a "white lady". Mr. Sparvel-Bayly was a great Archaeologist and with Major Spitty, a distant relative by marriage, was responsible for many finds in Norsey Woods and elsewhere in Billericay. Miss Bayly mentions a "small room known as Papa's Museum" and says "it was full of archaeological finds—amphora, tear vessels, coins, and impressions of flat monumental brass effigies which Mr. Bayly collected and which were valuable". She also mentions the discovery in Norsey Woods of "coins of Richard the Second's time, and bits of harness, etc.", relics of the fight between the Rebels and the King's Men which finished the Wat Tyler revolt of 1381.

The next resident at Burghstead Lodge was Major General Brydges Robinson Branfill, a member of the family connected for several centuries with Upminster Hall. He was also an archaeologist, and during his residence here a meeting of the Essex Archaeological Society was held at the house. He wrote an article on "Norsey Woods", and suggested derivations for the name in another article called "Billericay".

Major Branfill died in 1905, and his widow in 1935, both being buried at Upminster. After some years of neglect the house was purchased by Mr. A. B. Brooks, J.P., who rented it until 1943 to Mr. Hugh Cole. In that year Mr. Cole moved to "Lockers", Southend Road, and Mr. Brooks from "Gatwick House", Bell Hill, to Burghstead Lodge where he resided until 1952.

A room at the South-west corner has an exterior doorway of Georgian date with gabled hood, removed from the front of "Thornton House", Billericay, when it became the International Stores Ltd. One room is panelled in Pine, and in the room on the right of the front door is a carved doorhead removed from the 18th Century Belmont Castle at Grays. There is a good carved 18th Century staircase.

In the South-east corner of the front garden is a cellar which appears to have had no other entrance than a trap door. It was discovered by Mr. Sparvel-Bayly who had heard a tradition that

such a cellar did exist, although its position had been forgotten. When found there was nothing in it but an empty barrel.

During the last war this cellar was used as an Air-Raid Shelter. The Coachhouse and Stables of Burghstead Lodge are contained in their own walled enclosure at the rear.

"Grenfell", the modern house South of Burghstead Lodge was designed for his own occupation by Dr. R. Bowseman, who moved here from Lynton House, December 1939. The elevations are of dark red brick in a late Tudor style with moulded brick mullions and transomes to the casement windows. The roof is tiled and there is a flat projecting porch. It stands on the site of three cottages of no particular interest beyond the fact that the centre one was for some years the residence of Maicy, the French coachman/gardener to the Sparvel-Baylys at Burghstead Lodge. He had married an Essex woman, and had a large family whose names, according to Miss Edith Bayly, "began with Annie and Tommy and went on to Eugenie Antoinette". He did the Lodge garden "after his own fashion, which meant good vegetables but not many flowers", and looked after the two carriage horses, wearing a livery of "light blue with silver buttons when he drove the family in the brougham, the wagonette or the dogcart". He liked eating Snails but had to do so whilst at work as his wife did not like to see him eating them at home. Maicy and the Groom, William, used to wait at table during formal dinner parties wearing their liveries and white gloves. "William was silent like another young man of the name. In his case it was not because of possible spies and foes, but, the maids said, because he had so many meals to eat at home. First a staybit early in the morning, then breakfast, then elevenses, then dinner, then fourses, then tea, then a dewbit, and then supper, and all were solid ceremonies".

Messrs. Patten's is probably of 18th Century date, of red brick, with later additions. It is partly tiled and partly slated. Windows are all of the Casement type, the present shopfront being remodelled about 1900. As far back as 1848, Thomas, and William Moore were here as Grocers, and Linen and Woollen Drapers, and their descendants carried on the business until 1948. The Moore family was connected in marriage with the Houghtons, and the Thorogoods formerly of Blunts Wall Farm.

The Police Station with its residential quarters, two Courts and other facilities was erected in 1938, replacing the former at what had been a Market House and Assembly Room and is now the Council Chamber. A recent addition took the form of two pairs of Police houses in Burghstead Close at the rear of the main building.

The main building is of red brick in what can be called the Modern Classic style. The windows are metal casements in small squares. A tiled roof peeps above the stone cornice and the main entrance has a wide stone architrave.

The site is part of a meadow and shrubbery, formerly part of the Burghstead Lodge property, and used for the Cattle and Horse Fairs during their last days after they had been driven off the main street itself. The side window at Patten's was protected, until recently, by iron bars. These were placed there to save the glass from being broken by the cattle who were inclined to rub against the building on these occasions.

The early history of the Police in Billericay has been roughly examined under the entry relating to the Council Chamber.

We have now reached the top or South end of this Western side of the High Street and are at London Road corner. Therefore we must return to our survey of the East side where we left it at the Post Office and we next find "**The White Hart**". A building with this name is mentioned, but not shown, on the 1681 map where, however, it appears to refer to the present "Hurlocks". It is possible that the name was transferred here from "Hurlocks" which changed hands about the time the present Inn was erected. It is an 18th Century building, and has extensive cellars, etc. At the rear was a large meadow on which the Telephone Exchange has recently been erected, and which was probably the scene of the Cricket match advertised in *Chelmsford and Colchester Chronicle* for 1776—"To be played at the White Hart at Billericay on 5th of June 1776. A match of Cricket between 11 picked Gentlemen of Borstable & Chafford Hundreds against 11 of Billericay for 11 Gold Laced Hats. The wickets will be pitched at 10 o'clock & the match to be played out". In 1770, John Baker was licensee at this inn.

Daniel Cornell, a Clockmaker, is thought to have lived here, as there is a fine example of a Parliament Clock made by him in the inn and forming part of the fittings. In 1791 William Cornell was Victualler at "The White Hart", and Mr. A. B. Brooks, J.P., of Layer Marney, has a pewter tankard with his name and the date 1806.

Other licensees have included 1839, William Punt, 1861, Mrs. Sarah Punt; 1886, another William Punt, who was here until the close of the century; 1908, F. Cole.

"The White Hart" was formerly a popular resort of Hay Carters, and it was in 1862 the headquarters of — Lazell (no initials given) Carrier to the "Spotted Dog", Conduit Street, Chelmsford on Mondays and Fridays. The present elevations are of red brick with tiled and dormered roofs.

Nos. 140 and 142, R. M. & A. Rollins. No. 140, now a Furniture, Lino and Carpet Store and No. 142 The Cosey Tea Rooms were the home of the Tylor family, farmers and bakers, for many years. The former was a double fronted house with pillared portico and formed the family residence, whilst the present Tea Rooms were the Baker's shop, etc., the Oven being at the rear.

In 1848 Philip Tylor described as Baker, and Corn Factor attending the Market House was here. In 1874 Edward Tylor, Baker and Farmer, was here. No. 140 was converted into the present double fronted shop during the present century and was Cole's Cycle Store before the present occupiers took the premises just before the war. The house may be of 17th Century date refronted and otherwise altered. Within recent years the front elevation was again slightly altered and given a coat of pebbledash. The roof is tiled. No. 142 is c.18th Century and brick, with slate roof. There is a shop bay, but otherwise both properties have Sash windows.

"Bleak House" is an 18th Century brick building on an L-shape plan with wings extending South and East. Partly weather-boarded, the greatest interest lies in the front elevation, a nice Georgian facade of red brick with a denticulated cornice and parapet. The windows are of the sash type with side wings, one window over the door being filled in and painted to match the others. The deep set entrance door has a good pediment with modillions and ornamental frieze standing on reeded pilasters and capitals. A Royal Exchange Fire Insurance sign is affixed in the door hood. There is little known history to the house, though it may have been, in 1867, occupied by Frederick Hempleman, Farmer and Manure Manufacturer of West Ham. There is a range of weather-boarded stabling, etc., at the rear.

Messrs. Cramphorn's building on the corner of Sun Street, of red brick elevation and tiled roof, was built on an L-shape plan with a small forecourt in the South-west corner, now built over by the present shop. The North end of the shop was added during the 1930s on part of the ground belonging to "Bleak House", which is owned by Messrs. Cramphorn's.

CHAPTER VI

On the opposite corner of Laindon Road is **"The Sun" Hotel**. Little is known of the present building which is probably 18th Century date, though a house is shown on the site on the 1593 map. In the 19th Century it was owned by the Spitty family, and in 1908 was a Commercial Hotel, and meeting place of Billericay and District Farmers Club. There is a Hall attached which is used mainly for Sales of Furniture. In 1874, Messrs. Teague and Welsted, coal merchants, were at the "Sun Wharf", Billericay, and at Brentwood. The Ancient Order of Foresters met at "The Sun" after leaving their old Town Hall headquarters and before going to "The Bull".

Licensees included 1848, James Benson; 1861, Joseph Duncan; 1862, Mrs. Sarah Piper; 1874, Thomas Oxley; 1894, John Cheek; 1908, Edwin Cook.

The present building is of grey roughcast with slated roof. Windows are of the sash type and the two entrances have pedimented overdoors on reeded pilasters.

At the rear of "The Sun" Hotel was the Weir Pond, which stretched from near the back door of the hotel as far as "Fairview", Laindon Road. It was gradually encroached upon and finally filled in in 1938. On the waste ground opposite "The Sun" (corner of Laindon and London Roads), was the farm house of the Town Farm, commonly known as "Quilter's" from its last resident. The Weir Cottages beyond are mainly 18th/19th Century date, but the one nearer the corner is of very much earlier date, probably late 16th or early 17th Century.

Passing along Sun Street, we find the weather-boarded cottage next to "The Sun" Hotel which had, at the end of the last century, a Greengrocer's Shop at the end nearest the hotel. It was then sometimes known as "The Eclipse" from its position between "The Sun" and "The Half Moon" opposite. It was probably the former "Sun Tap" mentioned in the 1867 lists.

Ellis's Garage and Motor Engineering Works occupy the site of the Half Moon Beerhouse and its Gardens and Skittle Ground. The actual beerhouse was the cottage still standing and half hidden behind the Petrol Pumps. It is a weather-boarded building of c.17th Century date, the ground floor being extended towards the street in recent years when a central door was inserted in place of two doors of its beerhouse days. The house was noted for its home brewed beer. Licensee 1867, James Benson, who was formerly at "The Sun".

To the left of the Half Moon was a blacksmith's shop, now a granary connected with Messrs. Cramphorns. The blacksmith in 1867 was Edward Osborne.

The cottages from the Garage along Sun Street and extending round the corner to Chapel Street were built as Barracks during the Napoleonic Wars, for the threatened invasion of this country by the French at the end of the 18th Century. At the rear was the Parade Ground, now gardens and allotment ground. Messrs. Bassom's accounts mention work at the "Old" and the "New" Barracks. The blind road about the centre of Sun Street with its row of two-storey cottages on the left hand side and three-storey cottages on the right, was formerly known as Pump Alley. All the cottages have slate roofs and are at present pebble-dashed with sash windows.

Facing these cottages is the Southend Waterworks Company's offices and depot—a solid looking block of buildings of stock brickwork and tiled roofs.

"**Hillside**"—a double-fronted, red brick villa type house with slated and gabled roof, is officially in Southend Road and facing Sun Street, and stands on the site of a Wheelwright's shop which remained until the end of the last century.

We now complete our journey through the town of Billericay by turning left down Chapel Street and find on our left **The Rose Hall**, a small building of cream coloured bricks and sharp pointed windows and a slated roof a baby edition of the Congregational Church opposite. It was in 1850 the British School, though it may have been built before this as part of the Barracks. The School was held by Trustees who, in 1867, were rated for five cottages in Southend Road with estimated rental of £25. It was later combined with the National School, still standing in Laindon Road, in 1873 as the nucleus of the Great Burstead Board Schools, the buildings of which were opened in 1878 and are now known as the Billericay Junior School.

The Rose Hall was at one time the Congregational Sunday School. During the recent war it was used as a Mess Room by some of the regiments billeted in the town, and lastly as a Packing Station for Messrs. W. W. Ball & Sons of Kennel Lane. It is now owned by the British Legion and is their local headquarters.

Immediately opposite is **The Congregational Church**, a cream coloured brick building with slate roof, stone dressings and lancet shaped windows in the Early English Style of Gothic revivalist architecture. It was built in 1838 and with the houses as far as Hillside Road, stands on the site of Pratts Fields, the oldest deed of which is 1725. It admits George Bates, Gentleman, as tenant of "All those five acres of arable land called Pratts". In 1752 it was "Presented that the said George Bates was dead so seized and thereupon the first proclamation was made for the Heir of the said George to come in and be admitted". In June 1753 a second Proclamation was made "but no one came", but a year later "James Bates, Gentleman, came in proper person and humbly prayed to be admitted Tenant to the said premises". This was no doubt at "The Red Lion" where these kind of matters were settled by the Lord of the Manor or his representatives at the annual Court Baron. Other deeds of these fields are interesting and describe buildings long since demolished, and a certain "Fellmonger".

The story of the Congregational Church is given elsewhere in this book under the heading of the Dissenters' Burial Ground, etc. The red brick villa type houses between it and the Mayflower Hall were built by the Moore family, but there is no particular history to them. That nearest the Hall was, however, the West View Studio of Rayner Green, perhaps the earliest commercial photographer in Billericay. Many of his photographs still exist, some of his views of the town being in the Billericay Town Collection.

The early 20th Century brick houses on the West side of Chapel Street facing the above, occupy the site of the 1593 "Herronn Crofte", which was afterwards attached to "The White Hart", High Street. It was the scene of the famous 1776 Cricket Match which was played for Gold Laced Hats as prizes. (See "White Hart.") **The Gospel Hall**, this year celebrating its 47th anniversary, is a grey roughcast building with asbestos roof.

The Manse was erected for Ministers of the Congregational Church in 1907, the cost being defrayed by Public Subscription, the Rev. J. H. Wilkinson being the present resident.

Beyond is a row of 17th Century or late 16th Century cottages with a later wing at the South and a c.18th Century builder's store and Carpenter's Shop, etc., occupied by Mr. E. Gentry, whose family have been in the building trade in Billericay for about 180 years. This is one of the most attractive corners of the town, the old Walnut tree in front of the South block helping not a little in this respect. At the rear of the North end are some weather-boarded and tiled outbuildings c 18th/19th Century date, and there is a small but pleasant garden backing on to the grounds of "Foxcroft", High Street, which has an entrance between Gentry's and The Manse.

The old Dissenters' Burial Ground North of Gentry's was once attached to the Dissenters' Meeting House, whose site is now occupied by the large grey building known as Vicarage House. Roman Burials have been found in this ground.

The history of organised Dissent began in 1662 when the Puritans were ejected from the Established Church. In 1672, Charles II issued his Declaration of Indulgence, and in Billericay, Nathaniel Ranew obtained a Licence to preach in the house of Mr. Finch and another for the house of Reginald Sumner. Nathaniel Ranew had been ejected from the Ministry at Felstead by the Act of Uniformity. He died within a year and was succeeded by Edward Keightley, a native of Grays. The first Chapel or Meeting House was erected in Chapel Street under Thomas Jackson in 1714, the year he became Pastor. Some idea of the interior of this "Barn-like" chapel may be read between the lines of some of the Bassom accounts of repair work, etc., undertaken there at the beginning of the last century. In 1798, Rev. John Thornton, a young man of 29, took over the ministry and it was he who was responsible for the present Congregational Church in 1838. The Khluts, father and son, were among the most popular ministers at this new church. Their ministry ended in 1895. In 1940 Rev. Dorothy Wilson from the City Temple became minister here but remained only a short time and was succeeded by Rev. George Walker, whose book, the "Story of a Little Town", and many talks on the subject of Billericay history did much to arouse public interest in the ancient town. Rev. J. H. Wilkinson succeeded to the ministry in 1951, when Mr. Walker retired.

The original Meeting House was sold to Mr. Curtis, a builder, who demolished it and erected the present rather grim looking **Vicarage House**, with Georgian tradition of grey Gault brickwork with slated roof. The windows are sash type in small squares and the entrance has a pediment supported on four heavy square pilasters.

Among its residents have been some of the Moore family of the High Street business now Patten's. The Rev. R. C. Webb of the Parish Church lived here for a time as did Rev. E. G. Darby on his first coming to Billericay in 1873. After his removal to "Foxcroft", High Street, the house was taken by Rev. J. D. Hoystead, Rector of Ramsden Crays during his retirement. The house is still owned by Miss Hoystead, although the building was converted into two flats by the Billericay U.D.C. following the departure of the Army, who had requisitioned it during the war years.

The Mayflower Hall opposite was built in 1920 by the Congregational Church to commemorate the tercentenary of the Pilgrim Fathers, a wooden plaque to this effect being placed in the entrance to record the fact of Billericay's part in the *Mayflower* venture. The hall was requisitioned as an Army Mess Room in 1939/45, and an A.A. gun was sited on one of the flat roofs. The building includes a main hall with stage, and side aisles that can be partitioned off as separate Sunday School Classes, and in the case of exhibitions for different sections of the show. A smaller hall known as the Livingstone Room is at the rear with various smaller rooms and the kitchen.

The Hall is used mainly for Congregational Church activities, their Arts and Crafts Exhibitions held on alternate years being particularly successful.

On the map of Great Burstead 1593, in Essex Records Office, a "Ginger Grove" is marked on the site of Hillside Road. This probably refers to an agricultural experiment during Henry VIII's reign when attempts were made in various parts of the country to grow Ginger on English farms. At the North-west corner of the road is the local Food Office and W.V.S. headquarters. These cover the site of some ancient cottages demolished in 1939, the ground afterwards being requisitioned as the site of Army Huts and Stores. The footpath beyond the Food Office leads to Jacksons Lane and crosses the site of the Watercress Beds and Well, attached to the former "Crown" Inn and Brewery. This meadow was one of the two sites for the "Heads" of the Canal from Billericay to Battlesbridge planned in 1825, the other being on the Chantry Farm where certain rough workings point to the plan getting beyond a mere scheme.

Back on the West side of Chapel Street we find "**Barnsley Cottage**", of 18th Century date, with recent additions. It is a pleasant little cottage, part red brick and part pebble-dashed, with a slate roof, and is part of the "Barnsley House", High Street, property. "**The Coach and Horses**", a modern descendant of the "Crown Tap", has already been referred to under the "Crown Inn", High Street, heading, as have the Stables, former Blacksmith's shop, etc., forming the South side of "Crown" Yard or Alley. The present Public House is a comfortable building of brown tiled and gabled roof with dormers and red brick walls. The lovely old trees outside make this a delightfully shady spot.

"**May Tree Cottage**" is probably 16th Century, as a building is shown on this site on the 1593 map already referred to. It was until a few years ago known as "**Bakery Cottage**", from its connection with Cottis's Bakery, whose back entrance is beside the cottage. Mr. and Mrs. Vernon Philips lived here until their removal to the new Canadian shingled bungalow opposite. The cottage is a mixture of weatherboard, red brick, and cement rendering with a tiled roof. It is one-storeyed with attic bedrooms, and hip gabled back and front.

Just beyond this cottage on the same side of the road is the dilapidated red brick building formerly the Coachmaker's shop of William Waylett. Behind is the grass grown yard with sheds and stores, once a hive of activity, the business being known for miles around Billericay. At the end of the yard can be seen the rear of Mr. Waylett's residence, described under the High Street section and now divided into several small tenements.

The rear portion of the Coach works' first floor collapsed a few years ago. Until the present year it has been the Undertaker's works of Mr. S. Leeds, who was apprenticed to Mr. Waylett in his younger days. The cottage forming the North-east angle of the building as well as the back premises has been for some years the furniture store and upholstery works of Mr. E. Saville of High Street. It has also been used as a Laundry, and a Meal Kitchen, at various times. The building must have been quite pleasant to look at in its better days, with its red brick and weather-boarding. The windows of the Coach shop have wooden mullions.

A few feet to the North are the timber built buildings, now felt roofed, formerly housing Mr. F. Eales' mail cart which he drove regularly to Brentwood for many years under a Post Office contract.

Adjoining is **No. 20, Chapel Street**, a pleasant double-fronted cottage of weatherboard with various patterned windows and tiled roof. The rear is part plaster and there is an exterior chimney stack at the North end with the date 1788. There is a story that this cottage is built in the centre of four trees, one forming each corner of the house. There is a small garden in front with low brick walls, which adds to the pleasing effect.

On the other side of the road is **The "Ritz" Cinema**, which occupies the site of the old "**Weavers' Cottages**", part of a holding left in 1664 by Roland and John Morton to the Weavers Company of London, the rents to be used for the benefit of the poor weavers of Billericay. The cottages were probably the farm house of the holding, and were pleasantly gabled and plastered, etc., with tiled roofs and some leaded windows among other later insertions. Two receipts for rent of the cottages dated 1847 are extant. In 1867 the Rates Book describes the property as four cottages, annual estimated rent £22 10s. They were demolished about 1900, though vacant for three or four years before. Photographs taken whilst still occupied, and in their last days just before their destruction are still

in the town. The site of the cottages remained as Allotments until the erection of the Cinema when a Scout Hut at the lower end of the ground was also removed.

The " Ritz ", a quietly designed building of mottled brickwork with tiled roof, was opened on Easter Monday (April 18), 1938, the builder being Mr. Walter French, who had already been responsible for the Wickford and Rayleigh cinemas. There is seating capacity for about 650 people, and was described when first built as "an intimate little cinema where patrons can feel at home".

At the rear is a free car park and cycle store.

The new " **Weavers Cottage** ", the present home of Mr. W. J. Cottis, is a delightful modern house with cream coloured washed walls and a reed thatched roof, surrounded by a beautifully kept and well cultivated garden. The house has extensive views right over the country to the East and South-east towards the Thames Estuary.

In taking our final steps in our survey of the Town, we appropriately close by looking at a quaint little 16th Century Cottage tucked away almost in the shadow of the Church and known as **Marie Cottage**, shown on the 1593 map. It is timber framed and plastered and shows its hipped and gabled end to the street. The windows are of the sash type in small panes and above is a fine old tiled roof with tiny dormers.

PRESERVATION

Readers cannot fail to realise from the foregoing that Billericay contains much that is interesting, charming and well worthy of preservation.

This quiet charm and dignity of which we are justly proud can however so easily be spoiled. One has only to observe the fate of many of the main streets of the nearby small towns to realise that character once lost can never be regained. One short-sighted or selfish person desiring to create an air of progress and display could ruin this harmony and good neighbourliness by installing a blatant shopfront of plate glass and chromium which, however well suited to the great London stores, would be quite out of keeping with the character of a small country town. It therefore behoves every owner and/or occupier to ensure that when alterations or rebuildings are contemplated due regard is given to the external appearance so that the character and charm of the area is not impaired.

With these objects in view the Billericay Group submits the following suggestions and recommends their adoption by all owners, occupiers, builders, shopfitters and any other persons having control or influence over the fate of the buildings.

Alterations, Repairs and Decorations.

Where alterations are to be made to existing buildings which will in any way affect their external appearance careful consideration should be given to the preservation of any good proportioned or interesting features such as chimney stacks, gables, parapets, windows and entrances.

New shopfronts should be simple in design with glass in squares no larger than is sufficient for the proper display of the goods to be sold and constructed of suitable hard wearing, easily maintained materials such as oak, bronze or painted deal. The fascias should not be too large or out of proportion to the rest of the building and the lettering simple and in good taste.

Advertising matter should be kept to the minimum and never be allowed to extend beyond the top of the shopfront so as to deface any part of the upper storey.

If it becomes necessary to re-roof any of the buildings, tiles or other suitable permanent coverings should be used in varying shades of browns and dull reds.

Should it be found necessary to treat the external faces of walls waterproof colour-washing on plastered surfaces is to be preferred to pebble-dashing but where mottled brickwork exists it should be preserved by treating with petrifying liquid or one of the proprietary brands of transparent waterproofers.

The regular inspection and early repair of doors, windows, eaves, gables and all other details before they fall into an advanced state of decay will prevent the loss to posterity of many beautiful and interesting features.

Outside painting should be regularly undertaken not only to keep the properties in a good state of preservation but also to improve the appearance of the streets as a whole.

Paintwork generally should be of light cream and ivory tints but the judicious introduction of colour is to be welcomed.

New Buildings.

Where new buildings are to be erected they should be carefully designed to impart an air of good neighbourliness. Their external appearance should be dependent upon simple proportions and good materials rather than sham period effects. In this connection we would commend for notice the splendid manner in which the new Post Office and Police Station have blended with the rest of the properties.

CONCLUSION

The Billericay Group is a society interested in the history, preservation and improvement of the natural amenities of the Town and its surrounding countryside. Members will be pleased to help all who are concerned in those amenities.

Lastly it should be remembered that our town of Billericay is not ours to deal with as we like but as a trust for future generations. Many of the buildings still in our High Street and described in these pages were in existence when the first Elizabeth ascended the Throne of England.

Let us preserve that trust now that this is the Coronation Year of

QUEEN ELIZABETH THE SECOND

the most Gracious Patron of

THE COUNCIL FOR

THE PRESERVATION OF RURAL ENGLAND