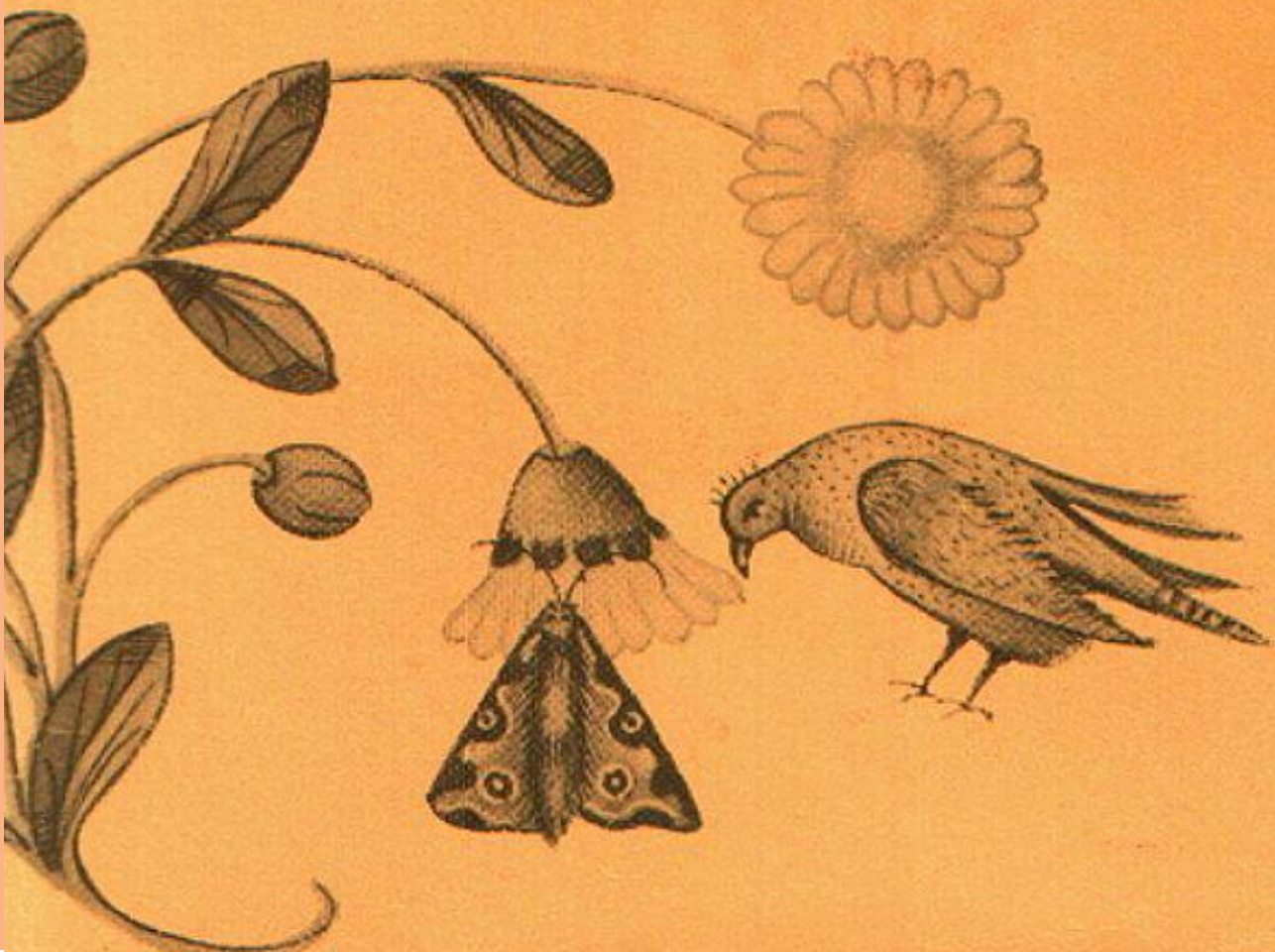
GOLDHANGER

An estuary village

Maura Benham



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From Culpeper's Complete Herbal

1977

Frontispiece

The head of the Goldhanger creek with the village in the distance

Photographs by Keith Mirams:
Frontispiece and pages 69 and 73

The Trustee of Maura Benham's estate has kindly given the Goldhanger History Society permission to produce an electronic version of this book. The original book is long since out of print and all who knew Maura agree that she would have been delighted to know her work and interest in the village is still being shared by others.

Printed in Great Britain by
Hewitt Photo-Lith Limited
Colchester, Essex

Acknowledgments

I HAVE to thank many local people for telling me what they have experienced and heard and thought about this village, and for lending me photographs and old postcards. In this I am particularly grateful to Mrs M. W. Hopwood, Mr and Mrs F. Neville, Mrs M. Rowley, Mrs D. Terry and Mr and Mrs R. Brazier; and to Mrs G. Wakeling, Mr B. C. Mann and Mr Douglas Bunting who also allowed me to see the deeds of their property. Mr George Emeny has helped me on matters relating to the Goldhanger Plough. The Rev G. W. Pearman and the Rev R. E. Turner assisted on church matters. The Rev L. R. F. Buttle and Mr H. B. Gardner lent me their notes, so allowing me to benefit from their research. Mrs de Brisay, who has recently excavated local red hills, gave me of her knowledge on all matters relating to the extraction of salt from the sea. Mr Terence Lane kindly referred to his records for information on the 18th century Quaker family recorded in the Parish Register. Mr John Bensusan-Butt has passed on references to Goldhanger as he found them in the course of his own research.

The staff of the Essex Record Office have been unfailingly helpful, as have the staff of the Reference Room at Colchester Public Library. Mr R. J. S. Long, Information Officer, Maldon District Council, has given me details of Maldon's ancient rights in the river.

I am indebted to Mr A. F. J. Brown who generously found time to read my manuscript and make many helpful suggestions. He had already introduced me to the history of the area in the 18th and 19th centuries through his WEA lectures and by the loan of his notes.

Finally my thanks go to my brother, Hervey Benham, whose expertise in the presentation of the material and its production in book form has been invaluable.

Tayspills
6 Church Street
Goldhanger

Maura Benham

January 1977

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Illustrations

Cover: Representation of the Corn Marigold from MS Ashmole 1504, by permission of the Bodleian Library.

Introduction

GOLDHANGER is a village with a compact old centre, set one field's length from the sea-walls of a wide tidal estuary. A creek has led up to the village which has thus been able to make use of boats, for fishing, for the bringing in and the taking out of goods, for journeys of all kinds. The land has been farmed and the rich alluvial soils developed, while the heathland to the north gave the shared rights of timber and grazing that were needed 400 years ago. The ancient town and port of Maldon lies some five miles away, by road or by water.

We can only catch glimpses of what has gone on in the village over the centuries. Sometimes we can find records that coincide or follow each other in such a way as to form a picture of a situation or a person. Often there are long stretches of time for which no record can be found. There must be frequent mention of Little Totham in telling the story of Goldhanger. Indeed, the difficulty in seeing the two villages in their true relationship over the centuries increases the further the subject is pursued. But no full research into the history of Little Totham has been attempted, and only those matters which are of interest in the affairs of Goldhanger have been brought into this story.

Sometimes it has seemed necessary to sketch in a wider background to a Goldhanger event. For example, the presence of Goldhanger in 1381 at the muster at Brentwood and at the subsequent rampages of the Peasants' Revolt in central Essex must be seen in the context of the slow breaking down of the manorial system throughout the country. We have no records of peasant life within the village at that time on which to draw.

The aim of the following chapters is to look at the district and piece together such records as can be found, so building up some picture of what has gone on here from the time of the Iron Age salt-worker to the year 1900. For the present century I think a different type of study is needed, made perhaps some years ahead.

Chapter I

The name of the village

GOLDHANGER, Goldanger, Goldangra, Goldangre – the name was spelt in many different ways from the Domesday records to the 19th century. Always the first part was 'gold', and this is said to refer to a yellow flower. For the second part there could be two meanings, 'hanger' a hill, or 'anger' grassland (as in Ongar), and the village being set on flat land, the latter is the more likely. As to the yellow flower, this is thought to be the Corn Marigold (*Chrysanthemum segetum*), giving the name the meaning of grassland where the Corn Marigold grows.

The Corn Marigold is said to have arrived in the British Isles with the Neolithic introduction of agriculture, and there are stories of its name deriving from the brightness of its colour, a gold finer than any other on the farm and so called after the Virgin Mary. By the 12th century it had become such a serious pest that Henry II issued an ordinance against the 'Guilde Weed', perhaps the first recorded enactment requiring the destruction of a pernicious plant. Nevertheless it was a plant that had its uses, and Goldhanger people may well have been glad it grew here. Culpeper's *Complete Herbal* (written in the mid-17th century) notes that it grew in gardens and was good for all kinds of fevers, promoting sweat and being frequently used to drive out smallpox and measles and to help the jaundice. The juice was recommended for sore eyes and to take away warts. John Parkinson in *Theatrum Botanicum* (1640) refers to Corn Marigold flowers being made into midsummer garlands and hung on houses. By the early 20th century it was described as a troublesome annual weed in cornfields, and in *The Flora of Essex* (1974) Stanley Jermyn gives it as 'uncommon and decreasing'. But it is a persistent annual in my Goldhanger garden.

So unusual and attractive a name roused some adverse criticism in the 18th century, the *Holman MSS* (1710–1730) commenting 'What could dignify the place with so fine a name?' and Morant in his *History of Essex* (1768) writing 'Aungre signifies the Place, but how this come to be dignified with the fine name of Gold, we cannot well conceive.'

Chapter II

The choice of the site

GOLDHANGER's name gives little clue to the reasons for chosing the site. The village lies near the north shore of the tidal estuary of the river Blackwater, some five miles below Maldon and ten miles from the open sea, at the head of a small creek. No watercourse of any size now flows into the head of the creek, though a stream runs down to the estuary half a mile to the east of the village and another a mile to the west, and on both these streams is the site of an ancient manor house. In the area of the village there are many springs and there have been many ponds, and the flat land slopes gently to the estuary, so perhaps providing the type of grassland valued when the village was named. The creek itself must have been a useful waterway, and up to the early years of the last century fishing smacks unloaded their catch at the quay at the bottom of the road called Fish Street which leads up to the Square.

It is not known when the first settlement was made. People were extracting salt on the shores of the Blackwater estuary in the Iron Age, from about 500 B.C., and the remains of their workings still show as large circular areas of red earth when the fields bordering the sea-walls are ploughed. Several such areas lie close to Goldhanger creek, and evidence of an Iron Age settlement near Chigborough Farm suggests that the salt workers may have lived by the river.

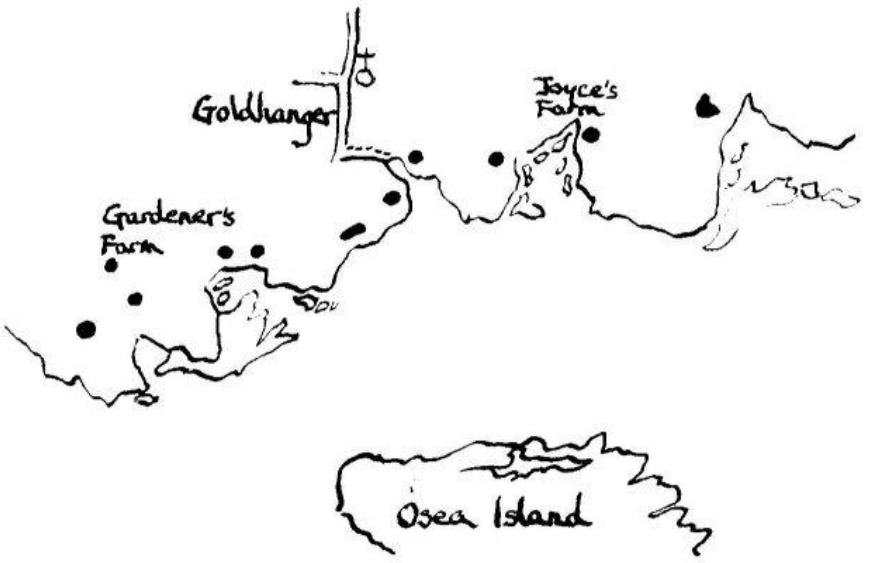
The Romans knew the district. They established a road straight from Colchester to Heybridge, about four miles west of Goldhanger, making a river crossing to their station at Othona on Bradwell Point, and some Romano-British structure stood near the old head of the creek. Great quantities of oyster shells are buried under cottages in Fish Street, but as oyster shells were used for land drainage up to the 19th century these are not necessarily the aftermath of a Roman settlement.

On the southern tip of the estuary Othona was important as one of the forts of the Saxon Shore, built to defend the south eastern coast against barbarian attacks. Later, in 653, the ruins of the fort provided a landing place for St. Cedd and a site for the establishment of his church and community. St. Cedd's foundation was missionary

as well as monastic, and must surely have influenced any settlement around the estuary. Thus a church may well have been built in Goldhanger in Saxon times, and a reference in the Survey to land having been held by a priest clearly indicates a religious settlement of some kind in the 11th century.

This area must have been affected too by the Viking attacks of the 10th century and the Saxons' determination to build defences in Maldon to withstand invasion. The Battle of Maldon (991) by the Northey Island causeway was only about four miles away, and barrows believed to be Saxon or Danish burial mounds have been found near Goldhanger.

In 1085 the Survey was made, then Domesday Book was written and the manor of Goldhanger was described in detail. Although this manor was fused with Little Totham shortly afterwards and remained for many centuries a part of the manor of Little Totham, neither village lost its identity and Goldhanger was firmly established on its present site.

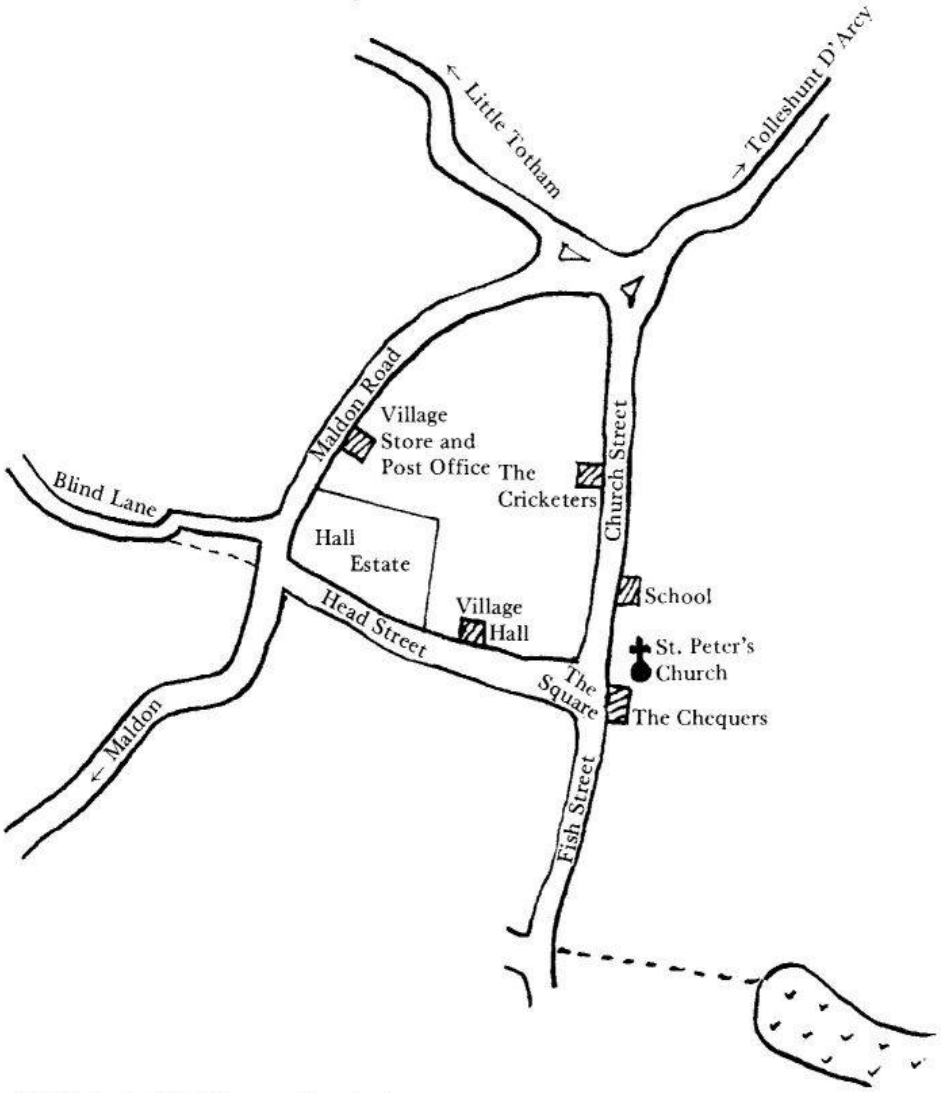


Red hills at Goldhanger

Chapter III

The shape of the village

HERE there is much to conjecture.



Sketch map of Goldhanger village today

In the three old streets that lead out from the centre someone at some time, perhaps at more than one time, built low neat red-brick walls, so defining the shape and boundary of the roads. One might think

this was done when the wealthy Leigh family built their big red-brick rectory at the top of Church Street in 1851–52, but these boundaries to the streets are shown, with one small exception, in the Tithe Map of 1839. Perhaps the walls only replaced fences and hedges; a Terrier of 1810 states 'Goldhanger – churchyard pale fenced by the parish'. It certainly seems unlikely that the wall on the north side of the churchyard was built when a rector was living in the house now known as the Old Rectory as it has no gateway in it to link the house with the church. However that may be, it is more interesting to speculate on earlier uses of the land.

The space in front of the Chequers public house is still called The Square, and the pump stands on the pathway on the south side. The piece of land behind it, enclosed by a wall and now used as the Chequers car park, is described as a garden in 1829, and it seems likely it was at one time part of the Square, putting the pump in the more usual central position. The Tithe Map shows no garden in front of the second house on the north side of the Square, the open space extending to the house frontage. So there may have been a considerable open area with a wide roadside verge extending as it still does for some distance up Head Street, a Square well suited for the annual toy fair held on May 14 or on Whit Monday and surviving in some form up to the time of the First World War. The big old house on the south side of Head Street, now divided into two, has a wing extending towards the road, and internal beams show that the upper storey of the street face was at one time overhanging. Opposite, in front of the small Parish Room, there is said to have been a sawyer's yard and a big pit of sawdust, perhaps accounting for the uneasy structure of the present building.

There may well have been another open space in front of the church. The brick buildings on the north end of the Chequers incorporate a low wall ending in line with the stump of an old elm tree by the north wall of the churchyard. All the trees nearer to the road are much younger. The tithe barn, demolished in 1974, stood well back from the present roadway between the church and the school with its front wall on much the same line. Had this line been the boundary of the churchyard, a useful space would have been provided for vehicles with business at the church, the Chequers or the barn. And the large side window of the Chequers, instead of looking out as now

Aerial view of the centre of the village

on a churchyard, would have had one of those good views up the street that were so important to publicans preparing to receive travellers. A further indication that the present Church Street may have swelled out as it approached the church lies in the line of elms which bordered the east side of the street. Most of these trees were felled recently but they had formed a fairly straight line from the stump opposite the Cricketers public house to the stump by the churchyard's north wall. Those felled recently were judged to be about 250 years old, and the row may well have been planted by an early 18th century rector to edge his glebe.

Looking back to earlier times, three other areas give food for thought. The church is set well back and would have seemed even further from the Square before the addition of the big tower on the west end in the 15th century. The rectory too stood well back from the highway but formed a group with the church and tithe barn. The general lie of the land to the east of the church and the rectory suggests that there might possibly at one time have been a creek running up to these buildings, perhaps joining with the main creek near its present head, and providing a means of bringing goods by water to church, rectory and barn. If, as some say, Goldhanger Hall stood to the south east of the church, behind the Chequers, that too would have benefitted from such a waterway. There was a sea-wall leading to Goldhanger church, judging from an entry in the Epiphany sessions 1651: '11 Jan 1650/51. Rob. Grant of Goldhanger for not laying a wholve in the [sea] wall leading from the salt-house to Goldhanger church, the path being flowen with water for want of same'. But it is hard to guess where this was.

Another area of interest lies on the west side of Church Street where the old hedge runs behind the houses bordering the road. Cottages have stood on this strip of land for several centuries, but in earlier times this may well have been a wide stretch of track. The old pond on the opposite side of the road about halfway along this stretch, known as Scotchys or Scrotchys Pond, would have made it a good resting place for the drovers who had to take cattle for long distances on the roads, and width was important on well-used highways which might become impassable in bad weather if no alternative tracks could be made. Similarly the strip now occupied by a brick house dated 1899 on the north side of Maldon Road near the junc-

tion with Little Totham Road may have been a useful resting place beside another pond. The Rector of Radwinter, writing in 1577, summed up the matter of these encroachments: 'I know by experience, that whereas some streets within these 5 and 20 years have been in most places 50 foot broad according to the law, whereby the traveller might either escape the thief, or shift the mire, or pass by the loaden cart without danger of himself and his horse, now they are brought into 12, or 20, or 6 and 20 at the most, which is another cause whereby the ways be the worse, and many an honest man encumbered in his journey. But what I speak of these things whereof I do not think to hear a just redress, because the error is so common, and the benefit thereby so sweet and profitable to many by such houses and cottages as are raised upon the same.'

The third area lies to the west and north of the old village centre. Maldon Road is now well used and forms a by-pass for the older part of the village, and maps of the 18th and early 19th centuries show it as a road, though a sketch map in Morant's *History of Essex* (1768) marks it only in dotted lines. Yet there must have been a great deal of horse-drawn traffic passing through the village, and although the roads at the top of Church Street ease their way round grass triangles, the junction of Head Street with Maldon Road remains a right-angle, and surely a very difficult corner for heavy waggons or coaches. Head Street narrows beyond the Village Hall and there is reason to think this further stretch has not always been thought of as Head Street. The map suggests it led straight across to Blind Lane on what is now a footpath, and would have made the quickest route from the church and rectory to Little Totham church. Striking to the left (west) at the field entrance beyond the old cottage almost opposite the Village Hall was a footpath that crossed the field to the point where the road from Maldon bends awkwardly to the north. Was this footpath the old road? Was this corner field a far tentacle of Tiptree Heath and so open for carts to cross as they wished?

Views from the church tower in the early 1930s.
Above: Looking south down Fish Street, with the Mill House in the foreground.
Below: Looking north up Church Street, with the tithe barn in the foreground and the school behind it.

Chapter IV

From Domesday to the end of the 15th century

IN CONSIDERING the choice of the site, mention has been made of the people who may have been in the district from Iron Age times to the making of the Domesday Survey. We now come to the picture given by the Survey, by the record of Domesday Book, and by the changes that quickly followed. Of the local way of life and how it changed through these four centuries we can have little idea, but by putting together such records as can be found we have occasional glimpses of what occurred.

THE FUSING OF THE TWO MANORS

The Survey shows that Goldhanger had been held by Lewin and by Ulward the priest as a manor, so suggesting an early church foundation. It passed to other hands, was one of the many possessions of Eustace, Count of Bologne, and later, probably at the end of the 11th century, became fused with Little Totham, a manor which had previously belonged to the Bishops of London and Canons of St. Pauls. The fusion was caused by the tenancy of both manors being held by one Hugh de Mauger.

THE USE OF THE ESTUARY BY LITTLE TOTHAM MANOR

Several villages lying well to the north of the river have a corridor of land giving access to the estuary. Great Totham stretches south to include Osea Island, and Tolleshunt Major retains a narrow strip of land through Joyces farm. Little Totham today does not stretch quite as far as the shore line west of Goldhanger, but it must have had good access to the river in the past. Domesday records show that the manor had pasture for 100 sheep and three saltpans, and these references to pasturage for sheep are believed to refer to saltings, the number of sheep being used to indicate the extent of the salting. Goldhanger had pasture for sixty sheep and 1½ saltpans. (Even today there are memories of the sheep being turned out to graze on the saltings and benefit from the salt intake, and the sheep tracks can still be traced on the eroding saltings.) Further, there is mention in the Domesday records of a fishery and a fisherman. There

is known to have been a fishery at Tollesbury and at Osea Island, and Magna Carta (1216) refers to weirs, making provision for them to be taken down unless by the side of the sea. Hervey Benham describes the two ancient forms of fishery, the weirs and the kettles (or 'kiddles') in *Once Upon a Tide* (1955). Kettles were netting enclosures, built between high and low watermarks, in which fish were trapped as the tide ebbed. Weirs were more substantial and permanent. They were generally of triangular shape, built on sloping ground, with the upper, landward, side open, and in the apex was a lidded box into which the fish were scooped with a lave net (or 'digel') from the pool left at low water.

So it seems that the manor of Little Totham had made use of a considerable stretch of the estuary before it was joined with Goldhanger. But its fishing rights may have been affected by events in 1155, when Henry II granted to Maldon Borough the exclusive fishery of the waters of the Blackwater as far down as the Gore saltings, sixteen years before Maldon obtained its charter and sixty-one years before Magna Carta stopped the kings of England disposing of the foreshore.

TAXATIONS

The two great taxations of the 13th and 14th centuries show Goldhanger and Little Totham as one unit. In 1288 Pope Nicholas 4th granted the tenths taken in taxation to King Edward I towards defraying the expenses of an expedition to the Holy Land. This was to be done for a period of 6 years, and a valuation was made in 1291 for the purpose. The amount charged against 'Goldhanger with the chapel of Little Totham' was £10-13-4. The Inquisition of the Ninth (1340) took the same figure of £10-13-4, this time listed under Little Totham with no mention of Goldhanger, and put the value of the Ninth at £4-15-4. This form of taxation granted to the King the value of the 9th lamb, the 9th fleece, and the 9th sheaf, and in cities and boroughs the 9th part of goods and chattels.

THE TWO CHURCHES

Goldhanger having been a manor owned partly by a priest suggests that its church, dedicated to St. Peter, was built before the fusing of the two manors. The church of All Saints, Little Totham, stands beside the manor house, Little Totham Hall, and with its richly carved south doorway is put at a slightly later date towards the end of the 12th century, and attributed to the Jarpenville family who then occupied the house.

Detail of the Norman doorway at Little Totham church

When allowance has been made for the raising of the roof of St. Peter's church in the 14th century, the building still has the high proportions and shape of a Saxon church with the two small round-headed Norman windows in the thick north wall. What the relationship was between the two churches in the early years is something of

a mystery. Fulke Bassett's Register 1244–59 refers to 'Goldhanger with the chapel: Patrons the heirs of John de Garbenville'. But if the lord saw fit to build his own church or chapel, who supported St. Peter's church three miles away by Goldhanger creek? Were there people of influence and wealth still living there? Goldhanger Hall is mentioned in the 18th and early 19th centuries and may have stood behind the Chequers. Two lesser manors lay within Little Totham manorial court: Follifaunts, which was given to Beeleigh Abbey by its founder Robert Mantel in 1180, and Fawlty, which also belonged to Beeleigh Abbey. But the only memorials in the church prior to those of the Leigh family in the 19th century are to the Heighams who lived for a part of the 15th and 16th centuries on the site of the present Highams Farm.

Considerable rebuilding and additional work must have been carried out at St. Peter's church in the latter part of the 14th century. The walls of the nave were heightened (as can be seen on the outside of the north wall) and the fine crown post roof with three tie-beams was built over the nave. A remarkable feature of this roof is the chamfering of every constituent timber, including the smallest and least important. The south aisle and door were either built or rebuilt at about the same time. Some 100 years later the tower was added, a massive structure in relation to the church and constructed a few feet away from the west wall which was then demolished and the building extended to join the tower's east face. This alteration can also be seen in the stonework of the exterior wall, in this case on the south-west corner. It must have been early in the 15th century that the Heigham family built the south chapel, piercing the south wall of the chancel to make a fine burial place for their family. The stone arch and surround of the north doorway are also of the 15th century, though the doorway possibly dates back to the 12th century.

THE EARLY RECTORS

The names of the rectors at the time of Fulke Bassett's register are not known. The first recorded was one Nicholas, dated 1285, who was imprisoned at Newgate, accused with the vicar of Totham (probably Great Totham) of killing a man at Havering. Dr P. H. Reaney writes in the *Essex Review* that 'in the 13th and 14th centuries there was great laxity in insisting on proper qualifications for benefices, partly due to

the scarcity of suitable candidates and partly for corrupt reasons'. And the period of the mid-13th century was a lawless one; so many bodies lay about the countryside that a change had to be made in the law of homicide. Will de Wytham followed and served apparently for the 33 years 1293 to 1326. For the next incumbent, Ric de Kenebroks, the patronage was held by the king, Edward II, but in 1363 Hugo Verdrun, described in 1375 as of 'Goldhanger cum Totham Parva' was under the patronage of John Heveningham, then lord of the manor. Ric de Kenebroks came in 1326, and possibly he stayed till 1363, but the Black Death of 1348/9 is believed to have swept away about half of the Essex clergy, so the living may well have been vacant for a few years at this time.

It seems probable that one rector served the two churches throughout this early period and that the difficulties of giving satisfactory service to both parishes came to a head in 1440 when the villagers of Little Totham rebelled against the system and insisted on having their own chaplain. Documents were drawn up in that year whereby 'the inhabitants of Little Totham for the sustenance and maintenance of the said Chaplain who shall serve in the said Chapel shall receive and have all tithes, oblations and other spiritual emoluments whatsoever which were accustomed in past time to fall to the said Chapel'. There followed a long list of parcels of land, one field having the tithes of wool, lambs, cheese and calves specifically assigned to the village. The rector was to pay the taxes to the ecclesiastical bodies and to the King, and Little Totham was to pay him 20 shillings annually. There is no clear indication how this worked out, but the listing of Goldhanger rectors shows two names for the period up to 1539, and an inventory of church goods taken at Little Totham in 1552 was signed by a curate.

THE FAMILY AT THE MANOR HOUSE AND THEIR WATER MILL

The Jarpenville family were probably settled at Little Totham in the 12th century, and in the third generation the manor passed through the female line to the Heveninghams, Matilda de Jarpenville marrying Philip de Heveningham. A part of the estate was handed over to Philip and Matilda in 1271 during the lifetime of Matilda's father, Roger de Jarpenville, and included in this part was a water-mill at Goldhanger 'with suits and all other things appertaining to that mill',

as well as four acres of meadow lying in a grove called Othulvesheye (perhaps Othulve's Leye or field, the 'l' having been mistakenly written 'h'). Misfortune struck the family in the early 14th century when Roger de Heveningham (son of Matilda), his wife Alice and their son Philip died between the years 1318 and 1322, but they left a grandson whose descendants held the manor for another 200 years.

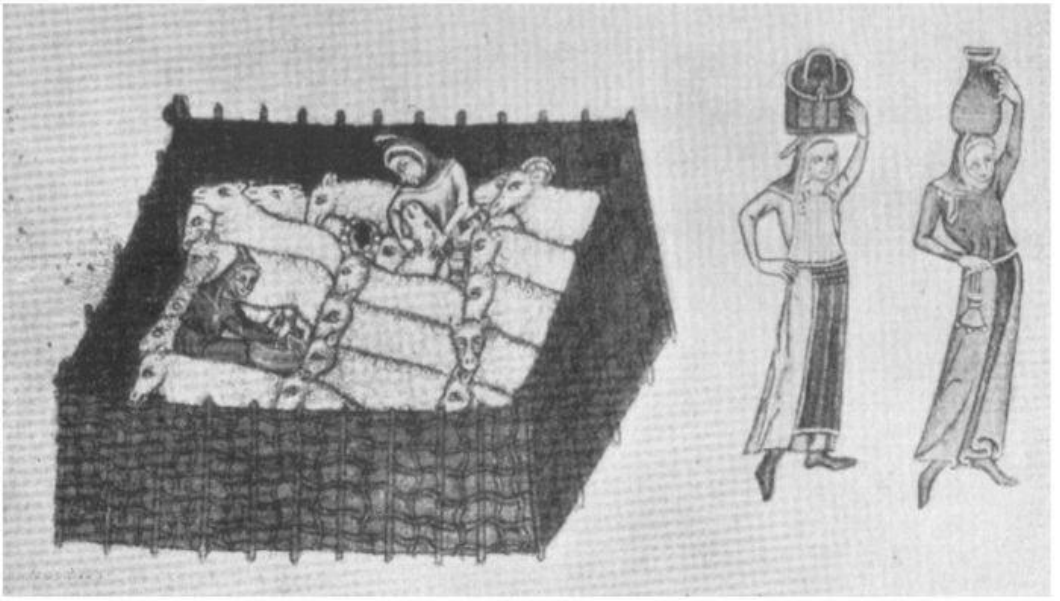
RIGHTS ON TIPTREE HEATH

An important factor in a villager's life was his right to use heathland, both for grazing and for the taking of timber. In 1204 King John disafforested the area that lay north of the great road leading from Stortford towards Colchester as far as Lexden Heath. This left what Morant describes as 'a great waste in the forest called Tiptree Heath containing above a thousand acres'. An Order of Council made in Henry VIII's reign shows what this had meant to the surrounding villages as it set out what might and might not be done on the heath by 'the freeholders, copieholders and inhabitants of the townes of Messing, Layer Marney, Wygeboroughe, Salcote, Tolleshunt Knights, Tolleshunt D'Arcy, Tollesbury, Goldeanger, Tolleshunt Major, Little Tothame, Much Totham, Hebredge, Langforde, Wickehamme, Braxted, Kelvedon-in-parte, and Inford, and of Tiptree-heathe'. They could allow any number of cattle, with the exception of goats, to graze freely, but hogs must be ringed. There were detailed regulations for the taking of timber which might be cut to repair houses but not other places, nor for new dwellings other than replacements. It might be cut 'for baking, brewing, sething or rosting, and fyres to warm them . . . not for making bricke, ryle, lyme, pottes, nor common brewing or baking . . . they shall take browmes, fires, thornes, bircheses, willoughes, sallowghes and alders between the feast of the purification of Ladie St. Mary [2 Feb.] and 1st April'.

SEA-WALLS

The red hills in the fields inside the sea-walls beside Goldhanger creek and Joyces creek show where the tide ran through muddy channels in the Iron Age. Hilda Grieve in her splendid account of the sea-walls of Essex in *The Great Tide* (1959) finds evidence of Essex marshland being embanked by the end of the 12th century. And great storms are recorded in the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, causing concern lest the low lying land should be

flooded. At first attention was centred on the banks of the Thames. Then in 1303 a commission was directed to 'the sea-coast of Essex', but the coast north of Maldon was not specified until 1439 when a commission was to include in its work the stretch from Hockley to Tollesbury and Wigborough. These commissions had to survey, to find out why disrepair and decay had occurred, and to levy from those benefitting from the walls the money needed to repair and maintain them. The charges included a levy on those using the banks for grazing. The walls had to be built and maintained by skilled men, and wages paid in 1346–47 to men making a wall in a marsh during the summer were as much as the marsh shepherd was paid for a whole year's work. How much of this activity occurred at this time on the north shore of the Blackwater as far upstream as Goldhanger is uncertain. Reclamations of land to the east and west of the creek occurred later.



Milking ewes: from the Luttrell Psalter, dated earlier than 1340

CARING FOR SHEEP AND MAKING CHEESE FROM EWES' MILK

One may envisage the people of the two villages cultivating the land and keeping cattle on the heath and sheep on the saltings. More strange to us is their use of the sheep. In a document believed to date to the 10th century the duties of a shepherd are described as including the milking of the ewes twice a day and the making of cheese and butter. Among his perquisites were the milk of the herd for seven nights after the equinox and a bowl of whey or buttermilk each night during the summer. An inventory of a Heybridge estate, dated 1301, included a building for making cheese from sheep. Norden, in his *Description of Essex* (1594) comments on the cheese made by men who milked ewes on the islands near the mouth of the Thames, and Camden, writing of the Dengie Hundred about the same time, described the cheeses as 'of uncommon size, which are sent not only over England but abroad for the use of the peasants and labourers'. But by the early 18th century, this was finished. Thomas Cox, writing in 1720 of Canvey Island and its sheep, says that 'In Mr. Camden's time, the Farmers milked their Ewes and made cheese of milk as they did also in many other places in the County; but now that custom is disus'd, because their milk makes the cheese strong.'

THE PEASANTS' REVOLT, 1381

Although no great number of villages are listed as taking part in the First Riot at Brentwood, Goldhanger is among them. Little Totham is not mentioned but the two villages were often included under one name or the other, so it may well have been represented.

The Revolt of 1381 was the culmination of many years of unrest as the old manorial system slowly broke up. As early as the 12th century some lords of the manor were exchanging money rents for the forced services which had been required from the serfs living on their lands. The bailiffs found they got better results from hired men working regularly than from farmers who left their own strips grudgingly on 'Workdays'. But in the 13th century the population increased with resultant pressure on the land and there was a more strict enforcement of work on the home farm as a condition of land tenure. In the next century the tide turned again, the population increase slowed down and the Black Death (1348–49) took a third or perhaps half of the people. Now that there were too few to cultivate the land

the small farmers increased their holdings and became middle class yeomen employing hired labour, and those who had no land were able to demand much higher wages. Many peasants also kept sheep and made money by the sale of wool. At the instance of the smaller gentry and tenant farmers Parliamentary laws were passed to keep wages down, and the resultant strikes and riots were met by prosecutions and imprisonment. Other grievances lay in the heavy taxation that had been imposed, particularly on account of the French Wars. Such was the situation in the years leading up to 1381 when a poll tax sparked off the riots of that year.

On some manors this change in the relationship between landlord and tenant had taken place without a struggle. On others field service was commuted but some servile duties were retained; for example, a fine was payable for marriage, the family's best beast was seized at the death of a tenant, use of the lord's mill – at his price – was compulsory for grinding corn. On some estates field work was still enforced. The only indication of feelings within the manor of Little Totham is Goldhanger's presence at Brentwood. The Jarpenville/Heveningham family were about half-way through their 400-year tenure of the manor; the lord, Sir John Heveningham, died in 1384, and was succeeded by the eldest of his five children, his young son John.

The John Ball who roused the peasants with his teachings of Christian democracy and put the question 'When Adam delve and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?' was a Peldon man, and Peldon Hall was among the manors sacked. (John Ball, Rector of St. James's Church, Colchester, was probably an older relative.) This brings the stirrings to revolt nearer to Goldhanger and may provide a connection to account for the village's presence at Brentwood.

The events of 1381 are recorded in the Inquisitions at Chelmsford: 'It was presented that numerous persons of Fobbyng, Makkyng, and Horndon, with a certain weaver dwelling in Billerica, and one John Newman of Rawreth, a common thief, and many other men of the vills of Rammesden, Warle, Heiwardstok, Gynge, Bokkyng, Goldhangre, Reynham, Welde, Benyngton, and Gynge-atte-Stone (Ingatestone) rose against the King and gathered to them many malefactors and enemies of the King, and made "congregations" at Brentwoode on Thursday after the Ascension, 4th Richard II and they made assault

on John Guildesburgh, John Bampton and other justices of the peace with bows and arrows, pursuing them to kill them, and afterwards on Monday the morrow of Holy Trinity they went to Cressyng, and broke and rooted up the Prior's houses there, and took away the Prior's goods. Also on the same day they broke the houses of John Sewall, Sheriff of Essex at Coggesale, and took one thousand four hundred marks in money of the same John's; and afterwards they rode about armed in a land of peace and did many ill deeds.'

Chapter V

The 16th century

GREAT changes took place in this century, both nationally with inevitable effect in Goldhanger as in all other villages throughout the country, and locally. A listing of the people in the two villages appears in the records of the Lay Subsidy of 1524, so giving some background to the events of the years that followed.

THE LAY SUBSIDY OF 1524

Detailed records still exist of the assessment for this tax made by the King. The inhabitants of 'Goldhanger with Little Totham' are listed together, and valued some on their land, and a few on their wages.

The wealthiest man was John Whyttlocke Senior, whose goods were estimated at £35-13-4. Of the other inhabitants valued on their goods, seven were put between £23 and £16, four between £16 and £5, ten between £5 and £3, and eighteen below £3. Only six were valued on their land, five whose figure was between 50 shillings and 20 shillings, and the widow of Richard Scarlet whose land was put at £5. Three men were valued on wages of 20 shillings each. There is no mention of the Heveninghams although records indicate that Sir John and his wife were at Little Totham Hall at that time and had seven children, the eldest son succeeding on Sir John's death in 1536. Nor is there any reference to Goldhanger church goods, though 'church goodes of Lytyll Totham' are put at £3. Perhaps the rector's activities were centred at Little Totham at that time. Sir John had married the daughter of Sir Ralph Shelton and the incumbent Ric' Shelton may therefore have been a relation. His predecessor was a Heveningham. Yet the Heighams were active at Goldhanger church, their 4th monumental brass being dated 1531, so it seems unlikely the church was out of use or neglected at the time of the tax.

As to the amount of the tax, the 'sum total of the town of Goldangr' with Little Totham' was £8-7-9. The Heighams are listed under the parish of Tolleshunt Major whose taxation total was £9-5-2. They were valued on their land, Thomas Heigham for £36-13-4 and Antonye Heigham for £13-6-8. The Sammes family seem to have been the wealthiest people in Great Totham where the

taxation total was £23-11-6. This valuation was made on goods, John Sammes (Sr.) having £114-6-8, Thomas Sammes £103-6-8, John Sammes jr. £113-13-4, Alice Sammes, widow, £11. Thomas Sammes was one of the two chief collectors for the Thurstable Hundred. Later in the century a branch of the Sammes family came to live first at Follyfaunts and then at Little Totham Hall.

The one remaining brass in Goldhanger church, dated 1531, and probably representing Awdrie Heigham.

The Holman MS (1710–30) describes a grey polished marble altar tomb standing in the south chapel with an inscription in old letters but torn off 'Of your charitie pray for the soule of Thomas Heigham Esquier Alys Awdrie and Francis his wyves which Thomas deceased ye last day of Decemb A^{o} Dñi MV^{c}XXXI on whose soule Ihu have mercy.' On the tomb had been the effigies of a man and three women, and the man and two women remained. A different hand entered on the MS '1749 all gone but the woman on the right hand next the man.'

THE WHYTTLOCKE FAMILY

The Whyttlocke family, who held the greatest wealth listed in the two villages at the time of the Lay Subsidy, were people of local importance for over a hundred years. They rented Follyfaunts in the early part of the 16th century and had cattle on the farm at Little Totham Hall. Middle John Whyttlocke's will, dated 1501, left bequests to his brother John and to several godsons including a John Sams. He also ordered seven masses at his burial (which was to be in Little Totham churchyard) 'with bread and beer and penie dole' also '10 sherts and smokes [smocks] to pore folks'. Three brothers had been christened John to ensure the continuation of the name; hence the use of the term 'Myddle John'. 'John Whyttlocke ye elder' witnessed the inventory of the church goods taken at Little Totham in 1552. John Sammes bought Follyfaunts in 1573 but the Whyttlockes continued to live in the district, Richard getting into trouble for failing to contribute to the cost of the surplice in 1588 and a later John witnessing the rector's will in 1615 and signing a petition regarding settlement in 1641/2.

THE HEVENINGHAMS' DEPARTURE FROM LITTLE TOTHAM HALL AND THE SAMMES' ARRIVAL

Goldhanger and Little Totham now felt the disruption of change at the manor house, for the family which had lived there for nearly 100 years and controlled the area as lords of the manor sold it and left.

Sir Anthony Heveningham had died in 1557. He had five daughters and two sons and both sons married, the elder twice, but at some time towards the end of the century the manor was sold to John Brown who died in 1591. Probably on the death of John Brown, John Sammes of Follyfaunts bought the manor and rebuilt the house as a brick mansion in a park of about 80 acres. A part of this structure still remains as a wing of Little Totham Hall. He died in 1606, the same year as his son, Sir John, who had married the daughter of a Lord Mayor of London in 1595 and was killed at the Battle of Isendyke in Flanders. A memorial stone to John lies under the altar in Little Totham church, and a fine monument to Sir John, his wife and son is set against the south wall of the chancel. The Sammes family founded a prosperous establishment which was to continue at Little Totham Hall for nearly a century and a half. So after only a short break the manor was firmly settled again.

THE EFFECTS OF THE REFORMATION

The change to Protestantism came to England in 1534, when Henry VIII's repudiation of papal authority was followed by edicts requiring sweeping changes including both religious practice and church furnishings. It seems strange to us now that worship in Goldhanger church should ever have been according to Roman Catholic rites, yet for nearly half the years the church has stood this was the case. Now the change had to be made. The Abbey at Beeleigh near Maldon, which had been of great importance in the district and to which Goldhanger had paid an annual tax, was dissolved in 1536. This affected two of the lesser manors within the Little Totham manorial court, which had belonged to the Abbey: Follyfaunts went to Stephen Beckingham, and Fawlty to Charles Brandon, Duke of Suffolk, who sold it in the same year to a London goldsmith. Henry VIII died in 1547 and Edward VI established Protestantism throughout the country. But he reigned for only 6 years, being succeeded by Queen Mary I who brought back the Catholic traditions and sanctioned the persecution of Protestants. So in 1554–55 Piggott was burned at the stake at Braintree and Stephen Knight, a butcher, at Maldon. Thomas Downing, the priest who had served Goldhanger for 15 years, was removed from office in 1554 by Bishop Bonner's decree depriving married clergy of their benefices, despite the permission for marriage given by the edicts of the Reformation; eighty-eight priests in Essex were deprived in this way. Another priest took Downing's place, but in 1563 both Goldhanger and Little Totham (listed separately) were vacant. Mary's reign lasted only five years, and after that short and turbulent period Elizabeth came to the throne and completed the establishment of Protestantism.

CHANGES IN THE CHURCHES

The people of England found themselves ordered to change the interior of their churches beyond recognition. The Royal Injunction of 1547 had ordered 'that they shall take away, utterly extinct and destroy, all shrines, covering of shrines, all tables, candlesticks, trindles or rolls of wax, pictures, paintings, and all other monuments of feigned miracles, pilgrimages, idolatry and superstition, so that there remain no memory of the same in walls, glass windows or elsewhere within their churches or houses'. The bishops had also been giving serious

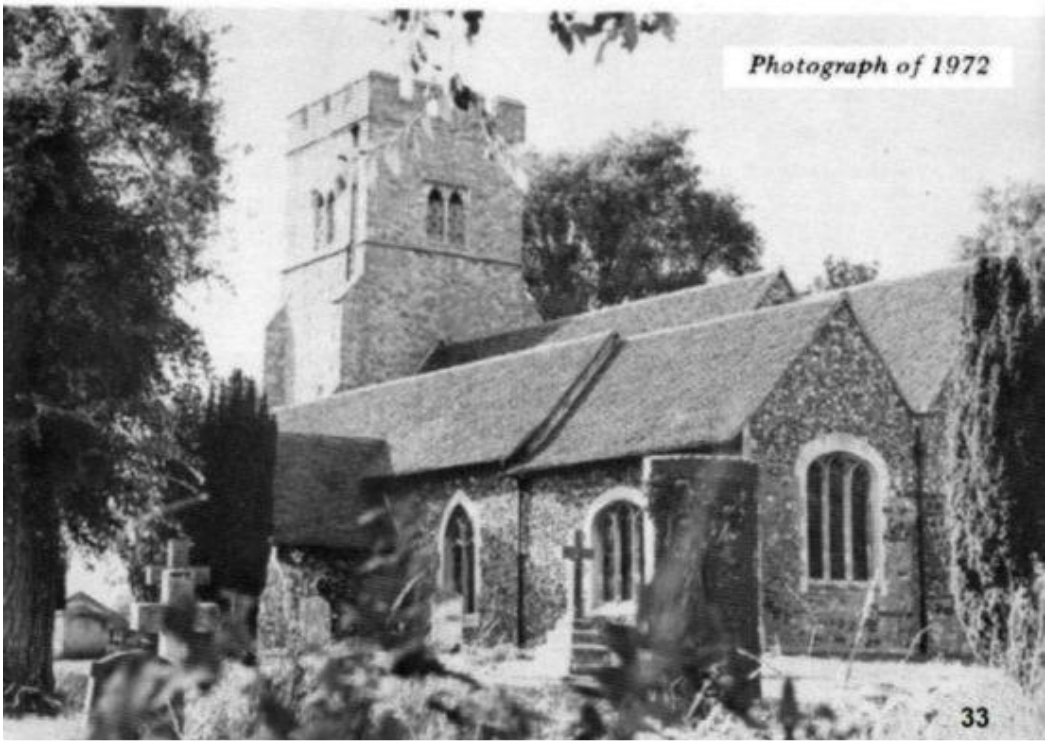
thought to the problem of how churches that had been used for a service conducted by priests in the chancel, often cut off by a screen from the congregation in the nave, could be adapted for a corporate form of worship, and the furnishings were to undergo great change as part of this alteration.

We cannot really envisage the interior of Goldhanger church either before or after these changes, but the main structure as we know it was there at the time of the Reformation. In the south chapel the Heighams had at least one tomb and a memorial stone together with their four monumental brasses dated 1427, 1429, 1460 and 1531. But the Heighams went back to their family seat in Suffolk in 1545, and so some important figures in the life of the church had left by the time the changes came.

There was certainly either a doorway or an alcove in the north wall of the chancel. Parts of a stone surround resembling that of the north door in the nave were revealed during replastering of the interior in 1976, and the space was seen to be filled with the narrow bricks of the Tudor period. One may wonder if it was closed up when Little Totham Hall was rebuilt in brick in the late 16th century. While it seems most likely this was a doorway, its position in the north wall of the chancel suggests that it could have been an alcove used as an Easter sepulchre, possibly incorporating a tomb. The inventory of church goods made at Goldhanger in 1552 included sepulchre lights. These were tapers given by bachelors and maidens at Easter, and show that an Easter sepulchre, watched over from Good Friday to Easter morning, was either a part of the church or was built up each Eastertide.

It was intended that when the decorations in the churches had been cleared away, the walls of the chancels should be painted with sentences of Holy Scripture, but references to such painting at Goldhanger and Little Totham are only found rather later.

Sketch of 1780.



THE PRIEST'S SURPLICE

The clergy now had mixed feelings about wearing the surplice. It had become customary when churches were not heated to wear a big white linen garment over fur or other clothing, but after the Reformation many priests had religious scruples, the more puritan members of the congregation did not like it, and the parishioners did not want to contribute to its cost. In 1589 'the parson of Goldhanger and Little Totham', John Knight, was brought before the court 'for that he refuseth to wear the surplise in all his administracion of the Sacramentes and other prayers since midsummer last'. And a year earlier Richard Whitlock, a member of the important family in Little Totham, had been before the court for refusing to pay towards a surplice the 16 pence for which he was assessed. A record of 1587 suggests that the subject had become something of a joke. The wife of one Genery 'dyd put a smock over her clothes and went to the house of Widow Willings of Goldhanger who kept an alehouse, among divers there assembled, terming it to be a surplice'.

AN ELIZABETHAN RECTOR: JOHN KNIGHT

John Knight, the rector who would not wear the surplice, was evidently a man of character and education. He came to the parishes in 1586 and to him fell the task of sorting out the old records and making a proper bound Register in which to enter baptisms, marriages and burials as required by the new law. He seems to have been the right man for this work, making his entries in a regular hand and completing each page 'per me' (by me) with a fine flowing signature. But the

John Knight's signature as it appears at the foot of each page in the Parish Registers

wardens were suspicious of his activities and accused him in 1591 because 'he had the register book at his house and rent out of the same one leafe and writ another in the same place thereof, but whether it be agreeing with the leaf he rent out we know not.' He evidently tended to bring in others to assist with the services, paying insufficient attention to their credentials. In the second year of his tenure he was censured 'for suffering the schoolmaster who is a layman to preach at the church'. John Knight explained 'thinking him Mr. Parker to be a minister and preacher, being as he hath sithence learned that he is not, did not suffer him to preach', and added that Parker 'was commended to him by Mr. Drabye, Bishop of Norwich.' (Parker was in fact a schoolmaster at Peldon.)

A puzzling episode occurred in the next year when he was brought before the court: 'he denyth to be their minister of the parish and he brought one Mr. Lune into the sayd parishe whom he affirmed to be his substitute, and he affirmed that he was lycensed by lawfull authoritye and thereupon showing the churchwardens a paper with a seale and sayd unto them that yt was his lycence, and then he being converted before Mr. Chaunceler yt was found that yt was no lycence, insomuch that at this tyme the churchwardens by reason that they did suffer him to saye service stande excommunicated.' What happened to John Knight in this matter is not recorded, but he seems to have remained in office and thirteen years later obtained a licence to convert some buildings he had recently put up at his own expense to be a schoolhouse. He already had three sons, aged ten, seven and three, and two more were born in the following three years. Farmers and tradesmen were feeling the need now to be able to weigh up their profits and losses and keep accounts, and in 1594 John Sawkyn, junior, husbandman, of Goldhanger, directed that his son Arthur should be 'set to school to learn to write, read and cost accounts'. John Knight died in 1605 on the same day as his fifth son Thomas.

His second son, Sylvanus, will be mentioned later as the surveyor. His fourth son, Richard, who had seven children baptised in Goldhanger, must surely have been the Richard Knight who was ordered in 1644 to keep the peace with a husbandman of the village. Several of these earlier matters are mentioned in Dr. F. G. Emmison's book *Elizabethan Life: Morals and the Church Courts* (1973), and after

writing of the many charges against Roger Cowper, one of the wardens, in 1591, Dr. Emmison concludes 'Goldhanger was evidently seething with discord'.

A SEAT FOR THE MINISTER

John Knight's parishioners were brought before the courts for a variety of misdemeanours. The Rev W. J. Pressey writes in the *Essex Review* of a court held at Coggeshall in 1591 where John Wade, John Tyler, John Heveningham and James Nicholson of Goldhanger were cited for declining to pay their proportion of a rate to meet the cost of erecting a seat for the minister. He adds that there was uncertainty whether the churchwarden himself had contributed, and comments that it was probably left for each parish to act according to its own requirements until by the Canon of 1603 it was finally decided that 'a convenient seat should be made for the minister to read the service in'. It seems that provision of seating for the congregation soon followed.

FOOTBALL

Games were not allowed on Sundays, and John Coke of Goldhanger was before the court in 1598 accused of camping on the Sabbath Day. It was alleged that he kept the goal and married men played against bachelors and divers others of Goldhanger and thereabouts did play, known to the churchwardens. Again Mr Pressey writes of the incident in the *Essex Review* and describes camping as an ancient form of football known as 'kicking-camp' which seems to have prevailed in the Eastern Counties. If played with shoes on it went by the name of 'savage camp'. It was spoken of as 'camping' because it was played to best advantage in open country (campus). And it was a strenuous game, described by James I as 'meeter for lameing men than for making them olde', and by Sir T. Elyot (about 1530) as 'Nothing but beastlie furie and extreme violence'. Records show that in a game Norfolk *v.* Suffolk, after a contest which lasted fourteen hours, Suffolk won, and as a result of casualties received during the match nine players died within a fortnight.

VARIOUS OFFENCES

Dr F. G. Emmison in his book *Elizabethan Life: Disorder* (1970) has many examples of bad behaviour by Goldhanger men and women at this time. Offences included ap-

probrious and slanderous language against the Queen and her Council; assault on a wife with destruction of domestic goods; quarelling and being a common brawler; abduction, rape and immorality; having above 20 rogues and beggars at a time in an alehouse; playing dice and drinking excessively in an alehouse; and failure to carry out the hue and cry duties of the constable.

WITCHCRAFT

A Goldhanger witch was excommunicated in 1599 but we have no details of her witchcraft.

PLAYS, ENTERTAINMENTS AND MONEY-RAISING

Plays were performed in connection with church activities, apparently partly with the object of raising money. J. E. Oxley in *The Reformation in Essex* (1965) gives extracts from the Heybridge Parish Accounts 1508–32 which show that neighbouring parishes joined in their festivities. In 1532 they contributed in kind to a feast in connection with Whitsuntide plays, giving twelve lambs, three calves and 7½ hundredweight of cheese. And around 1530 money was collected 'from all the towns which was brought in at the day of our play', twenty-two villages being listed including Little Totham and Goldhanger which gave 8s. 6d. Other ways of raising money were by the 'camping sport' (football) which raised 18s. 3d. in 1519, and a plough celebration which brought in 1s. 3d. in 1522. A good deal of the money raised by the Heybridge plays and entertainments was spent on providing the church with a new roof and various other interior and exterior repairs and additions.

RECLAMATION and USE OF THE MARSHES

Of the cultivation and use of the land at this time we can catch only glimpses. Hartlib wrote in 1652 'In Queen Elizabeth's days, Ingenuities, Curiosities and Good Husbandry began to take place, and the salt marshes began to be fenced from the seas.' Alteration in land use had been brought about by the refugees from the Low Countries who used their skills in Essex from 1570 onwards, reclaiming sixty acres of Harveys and Joyces marshes in 1598. (Harveys was the farm now called Lauriston, to the east of Joyces). The will of Richard Justys of Mundon (1561) refers to 'my lease in Goldhanger called Vaughty Wick Marsh and East Marsh and my whole stock of cattle now going

upon the wick and marsh and all the profits'. Buildings for making cheese from ewes' milk had been known as wicks at least from the early 14th century, and the area referred to must be the land between Fawlty Manor and the estuary.

John Norden, describing Essex in 1597, wrote 'I can not commend the healthfulness of it, and especiallie near the sea coastes, Rochford, Dengie, Tendring hundreds and other low places about the creekes, which gave me a most cruelle quarterne fever. But the manie and sweet commodeties countervayle the daunger.'

FISHING

The will dated 1575 of George Osbonde of Goldhanger bequeathed 'To my dear mother my half-boat, also a bream net and a new vag-net; to my brother in law Heard all things else pertaining to seacraft for the 6s. which I owe him.' The meanings of the words used to describe the nets are obscure, but David Heard, who now sells his catch from his house in Fish Street, has suggested that the nets were probably a beam net and a drag net. The latter might have been a fyke-net which is held open by wooden hoops, but it is unlikely this type was in common use here at that time.

Chapter VI

The 17th century

THE PICTURE that emerges of this century comes mostly from the lives of the rectors and the lords of the manor and their families, and at both houses the early years of the century brought changes. In addition, the records of the Hearth Tax are some guide to the number of people in the village, the prosperity of certain households, and the incidence of poverty.

HEARTH TAX, 1662 and 1671

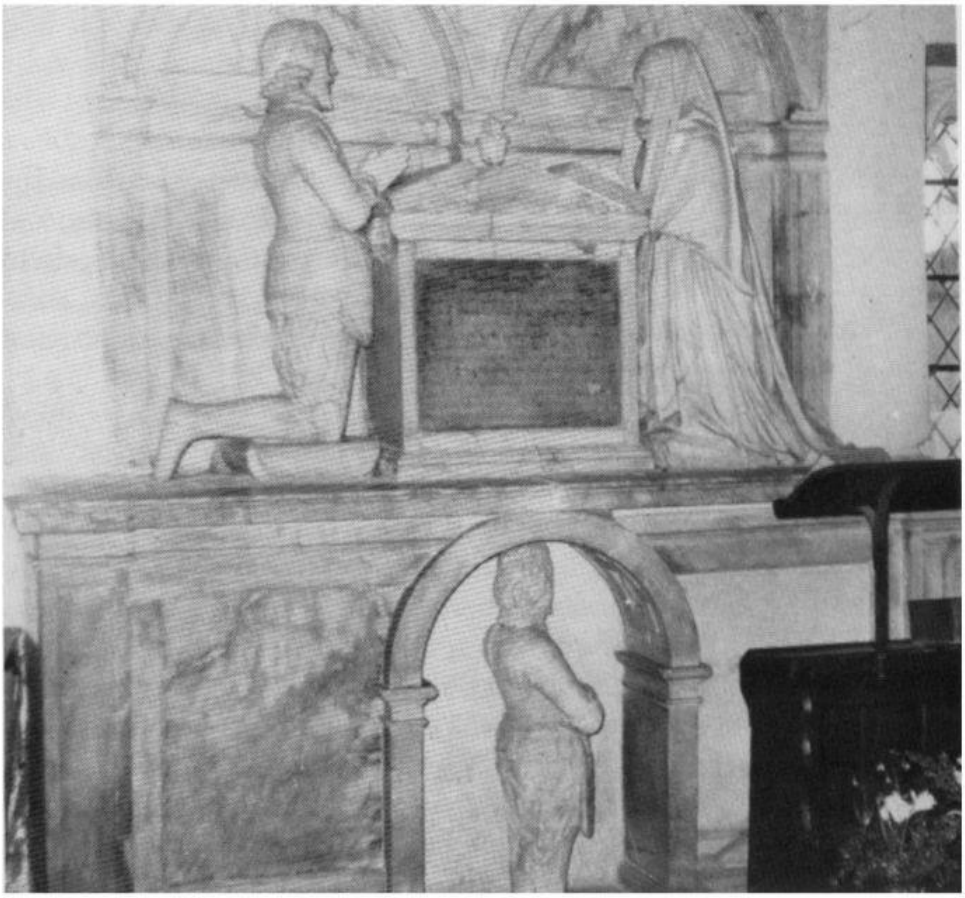
The taxation known as the Lay Subsidy (1524) was based on each man's lands, goods or wages, and 47 names appeared in a joint list for Goldhanger and Little Totham. The Hearth Tax was based on the number of hearths belonging to each householder. The earlier record is partly defaced, but that of 1671 shows the names of the householders and the number of hearths for both villages, the number of households in Goldhanger being forty-nine and in Little Totham twenty-two, a considerable increase since 1524. While Little Totham Hall stands out as a very large establishment by this measure, Goldhanger had no high number of hearths, several residents including the rector having five and one having seven, but the majority only one.

DEATHS AT THE MANOR AND THE RECTORY

The lord of the manor, John Sammes, died at the age of 74 in 1606. His son, Sir John, was killed fighting in Flanders in the same year. And the rector, John Knight, was buried together with his son in the spring of 1605/6. At Little Totham Hall Sir John's widow Isabella remained with her son Garrard. He died young in 1630, but he had married and left a son to continue the line.

THE RECTOR, WILL SWENO

Of the three rectors who covered the period up to 1629 we know little. Of Will Sweno, who came to Goldhanger as rector in that year, we know more. He was probably brought up on the shores of the Blackwater, as the William Sweno instituted rector of Salcot Virley in 1599 may well have been his father. Goldhanger Parish Register shows that Will



The Sammes monument in Little Totham church.
The figures are of Sir John Sammes, his wife Isabell, and, in the lower recess, their son Garrard. The inscription reads: 'Here lyeth the body of Dame Isabell Samms, eldest daughter of Sir John Garrard of Lammer in the County of Hert: Knight sometime Lord Mayor of London, who in her whole pilgrimage was an unspotted mirrour of true humility perfect constancy and all virtuous, and noble resolutions. In memory of whom and of her dearely loved husband Sir John Samms Knight (sonn of John Samms Esq. hereby intombed) and Captain of Isendyke in Flanders where he lyes interred her truly affectionate brother Benedicte Garrard hath caused this testimony of his love to be erected.'

Sweno had four sons and two daughters; that the two eldest sons died in infancy; and that the two daughters married. The younger daughter's husband was William Holman, a citizen of London, and their son born in 1674 was baptised at Goldhanger and given the name William Sweno. One may wonder if there was any connection with William Holman the Essex historian who wrote so scornfully of

Goldhanger's name. C. F. D. Sperling wrote in the *Essex Review* in 1894 that nothing was known of Holman's early life, and it was uncertain whether he was of Essex extraction or not. He came to Halstead as a Nonconformist Minister in 1700, at the age of 30, and spent 10 years in diligent historical research. He has made a note on an earlier Holman pedigree that he was born twenty-five miles from Weymouth.

Will Sweno, rector of Goldhanger, had the misfortune to be in office at the time of the Civil War. The clergy were expected to follow the political line and the song 'The Vicar of Bray' shows how some of them managed it. Will Sweno seems to have remained loyal to the King and was sequestered for the 16 years 1644 to 1660. The family should have received a fifth part of the rector's dues, but they had great difficulty in obtaining it, putting in various applications by the children under the tuition of their grandmother, and by Ann, Will's wife. In 1646, Sweno, supported by the certificates of ministers, put in a petition and was referred to the Assembly as to his fitness to have a pastoral charge. This appears to have been unsuccessful though the living was vacant in July 1647. At the Restoration he returned to the living and apparently to a reasonable standard of comfort; the Hearth Tax record of 1662 shows that he had six hearths, and that of 1671 five hearths. He died in 1678, aged 80.

RECTORS DURING THE PERIOD OF THE COMMONWEALTH

Cromwell's nominees took over during the sequestration. The first of these was John Whiting who found it inconvenient, particularly in bad weather, to get to Little Totham, and left the churchwardens to provide. He moved to Easthorpe in October 1647 after a very short stay if the record of the living being empty in July of that year is correct. The Committee for Plundered Ministers stated in about 1648–9 'that Goldhanger parsonage house so much out of repair in the tiling and glazing that the minister and his family cannot remain there in the winter without much damage to their health, to be put in repair, also the church'. Edward How was rector in 1650 with no minister at Little Totham, and Isaac Reade came in 1656, two of his children being baptised at Goldhanger in the following three years. In 1660 Reade was ejected but obtained the living of Wrabness and Wix.

'PREACHER OF GOD'S WORD AT LITTLE TOTHAM', and A CONTRIBUTION TO ST. PAUL'S CATHEDRAL

The minister or curate at Little Totham died in 1644, the year Will Sweno was sequestered. This was Nathaniel Kirkland, who described himself in the Parish Register as 'preacher of God's word at Little Totham'. His wife died in 1630 and in the next year he married an Isabell Sammes by whom he had three children. In 1629 he made an entry in the Register of a collection of 14 shillings towards the repair of St. Paul's Cathedral. The lady of the manor, Dame Isabella Sammes, was the daughter of a Lord Mayor of London, so it may have been she who raised local interest in the need. The cathedral which Little Totham helped to repair was not the building we know, but the earlier one destroyed in the Fire of London in 1666.

THE STATE OF THE CHURCHES AFTER THE RESTORATION

The visitation of 1685 recorded of Goldhanger 'the steeple wants forthwith to be repaired, the stonework of ye tower and leads thereon being very ruinous. The walls of ye ch and chancell to be new whited. Mr. Sweno's grave in ye chancell to be made up. There is a large chalice and cover of silver and all other things convenient for ye Comm. table. The pavement in ye middle isle of ye church must be made even'. For Little Totham the Visitation report ordered 'The King's Arms to be set up (in the church or chancel).'

There were four bells in Goldhanger tower at this time, one of which was made by Miles Graye in 1652.

THE RECTOR, JOHN LASBY

Will Sweno was an old man when he died, and towards the end may well have lacked the vigour needed for the two parishes. The Registers were neglected, and his successor, John Lasby, made an entry 'The Register was ill-kept in Mr. Sweno's time.' To which a small neat hand has added 'And so it was in Mr. Lasbie's.' However that may have been, John Lasby evidently brought new life to the area.

He had been rector of Heybridge for about eighteen years, and had lived with the Freshwater family at Heybridge Hall, perhaps in a separate establishment as the Hearth Tax of 1671 lists him as having four hearths beneath an entry of twelve for the Freshwaters. Shortly after marrying Elizabeth Sammes of Little Totham Hall, grand-

daughter of Dame Isabella, he obtained the living of Goldhanger and Little Totham. The Hearth Tax indicates the size of the household at Little Totham Hall, the records of both 1662 and 1671 giving the figure of twenty-three, a very large number for this part of Essex and showing the Hall to have been a considerable establishment.

John Lasby's early entries in Little Totham Register were full and personal, and suggest he found great satisfaction in becoming a part of the Sammes family. He recorded the burial of his wife's infant nephew as 'Garrard of my brother Sammes', and a year later recorded another burial as 'My bro. Sammes. A fine young gent in the flower of his age.' In the next year (1680) he buried 'My father-in-law, Richard Sammes esq.'

A daughter was born to the Lasbys in 1678 and christened Elizabeth. Three years later a son was born two months prematurely and christened John, but both mother and baby died. John Lasby wrote at length in the Register about this tragedy, and with great sadness.

It would be interesting to know where he and his daughter lived in the years that followed. His preference for the church at Little Totham rather than Goldhanger seems to have continued; he was buried in its chancel and there are memories of an inscription to him and his wife on the chancel step. A vicarage standing near Little Totham church is mentioned in records of 1610 and 1707, it being in good repair on the latter date, and it seems likely it stood on the piece of ground beside the gate now occupied by a pair of cottages. Wherever their house was, Elizabeth tried to escape from it when she was eighteen. Court records show:

> 'Thomas Sparrow, Labourer: to do what the Court shall enjoin concerning his endeavouring to steal and convey away the daughter and heir of John Lasby, clerk, she being a minor.
> Thomas Matthews of Tollesbury, labourer, to do what the Court shall enjoin concerning his eavesdropping in the night time at the house of John Lasby, clerk, and setting up ladders in the night time against the said house in order to have taken Lasby's daughter, being a minor, out of the window and have conveyed her away.'

Elizabeth died unmarried in 1705, two years after her father, and this

seems to have been the end of the Sammes' long connection with the manor of Little Totham. It is not clear whether John Lasby had bought, or perhaps inherited with his wife, the whole manor, but on Elizabeth's death it passed to her aunt, married to Henry Germaine, who sold it.

THE RAISING OF MONEY FOR A SHIP FOR THE NAVY

What happened to the Sammes family and why they left Little Totham we do not know. Earlier in the century Sir Garrard (the lower figure in the monument in the church) was a person of some importance. His name appears in a list of Deputy Lieutenants and Justices of the Peace who explained at length their inability to raise money to provide a ship for the navy. The Privy Council had ordered the J.Ps. in the area around Colchester to contribute to the expense a year earlier, but without success, and they now renewed their demand to the whole county. The reply to which Garrard put his signature at Chelmsford in April 1627 concluded that from the answers received 'we can expect no other than a general and absolute refusal'.

FAILURE TO SERVE IN THE MILITIA

Further evidence of reluctance to join in the country's defence is shown in the commitment to the Fleete Prison eight years earlier of Wm. Thrugood of Goldhanger for failing to serve in person with his own arms in the militia.

THE SAMMES FAMILY IN THE CIVIL WAR

There is no indication where the Sammes family's sympathies lay in the Civil War, nor whether they played any part in it. Dame Isabella's grandson, Richard, had seven children born between the years 1645 and 1653, and lived to see the Restoration.

TRANSPORT BY LAND AND SEA and THE WORK OF THE SURVEYOR

Transport at this time may have been easier by sea than by land. The great Highway Act of 1555 had put the onus on the parish to maintain the roads, and supervision was entrusted to an unpaid surveyor, chosen by the parishioners and compelled to accept the office (or pay £1 fine). Sylvanus Knight, the second son of the rector John Knight, held the position in Goldhanger, and signed,

together with Garrard Sammes, a return of work done on the highways in 1629. Included in this return was a list of those who had failed to do what was required of them:

> Thos King with his carriage hath done no work yet he occupieth more than 4 score acres of land.
> Rob Lenton wanteth 2 days work with his cart and furniture
> John Battell a cottager wanteth 3 days work
> Wm Bailes, alias Spooner, wanteth 1 day's work, he occupieth 13 acres of land.
> Roger Jackson a cottager hath done no work.

The post of surveyor at that time does not sound particularly desirable. The duties were numerous and exacting and reports had to be made regularly to the justices. Dr. F. G. Emmison has commented on the readiness of the Essex gentry to play their part in this work despite their usual avoidance of offices, and suggests that as large landowners they wished to control the supply of gravel which the surveyors had a statutory right to dig without the owner's leave.

Despite the Highway Act and the efforts made to get the work done by the local people, the roads in south Essex were said to be in a bad state in the first half of the 17th century, particularly where they crossed London clay. Nearly 100 places in east Essex had quays during the Elizabethan period and in 1630 it was stated that the majority of the Dengie farmers sent their corn to London by sea rather than to the country markets. In 1650 this part of Essex was said to be served by the ports of Bradwell, Burnham and Maldon, and these three ports enjoyed the privilege of landing goods free of charge in London after 1665 because they had continued to supply the city during the Great Plague.

ENTERTAINMENT

As to public amusements, we know the Elizabethans could entertain themselves and made music on many instruments of strange names; that the Puritans disapproved of much of this in the period of the Commonwealth, and specifically forbade the setting up of maypoles; and that after the Restoration there was a happy return to the use of maypoles, a cedar pole 134 feet high being erected in the Strand in 1661. Perhaps the people of Goldhanger put up a maypole in the Square. The accounts

for repairs to Little Totham's maypole, dated April 20, 1690, can be seen at the Essex Record Office. Large quantities of timber, rope and nails were used at a total cost of about £9.

SALT-BOILING and MASLIN

The Calendar of Records gives two indications of Goldhanger occupations at this time. On 15 July 1650 'Tho Saffold of Goldhanger, salt-boiler, to answer the inhabitants of Goldhanger.' Unfortunately we do not know what he was required to speak about. And an entry of 1 February 1661 records the theft of two pecks of misselin worth 10d. This is said to have been maslin, which was wheat and rye mixed and sown together.

POVERTY

In mediaeval times the duty of relieving poverty was generally regarded as morally falling especially on the church, although legally it was the duty of the manor, and W. E. Tate suggests in *The Parish Chest* (1969) that one-third of the tithe may have been used for this purpose. Overseers were established by the Act of 1597 to deal with the poor, and this method is said to have worked quite well for two centuries. A measure of the poverty in Goldhanger can be taken from the records of the Hearth Tax of 1671. Of the forty-nine names entered, thirty were to pay and nineteen were excused as too poor, a high proportion compared with Little Totham where twenty were to pay and only two were excused as too poor.

Chapter VII

The 18th century

AS we move into this century a rather different picture seems to emerge. We come to know more of the occupations and activities of the area, particularly in the coastal stretch, but less about the individuals who lived there. The families at Little Totham Hall and the Rectory become little more than names; again it had been at the turn of the century that the old-established family left the manor and a colourful rector died after many years of service.

FARMING and LAND USE

From Elizabethan times to about 1730 there was a legal requirement for every cottage to be built on a sizeable piece of land, so making the cottagers to some extent self-sufficient. Gleaning too was an important source of income, valued at £5 a year, and as north and south Essex harvested at slightly different times, young labourers sometimes got work at both harvests. By the early 18th century the demand for land increased with the recognition of farming as a good use for capital. The clothmakers were now well-to-do, and they invested in land and and even estates, for farming prices were good whereas the clothing trade was complicated and tended to be despised. Little Totham Hall had passed from the Sammes family to John Price whose son Robert was Recorder of Colchester and Sergeant-at-Law. Robert's son-in-law John Cole was the owner in 1768, but by 1794 it was a part of the Honywood Estate, let on lease as a house, yards and gardens of just over two acres, the total area with fields, woods, etc. being 185 acres. Fawlty Manor had been sold to a London goldsmith in 1538, and having passed through several hands was in 1768 in the ownership of Charles Coe of Maldon who also owned Osea Island. Coe and his brother were Maldon's leading commercial family and very go-ahead Whigs; they owned Maldon Saltworks and would certainly have been interested in agricultural improvement.

Interest in the reclaiming of land waned in the early part of the century, but by 1780 economic pressures caused reclamation to flourish again, and the Society for the Encouragement of Arts, Manufacture and Commerce gave medals for work done on the Essex

marshes. On the west side of Goldhanger creek thirty acres were reclaimed in 1789 by Thomas Lee at a cost of £225-16-9. He wanted to run a wall across the creek and thereby gain ten acres more, but this he was unable to do. (This cutting off of the head of the creek was carried out later, sometime between 1805 and 1839.) He was awarded the Society's Silver Medal for this reclamation work and six years later took in another fifteen acres of saltings.

Many years before writing his book *Agriculture of the County of Essex* (1807), Arthur Young made a six-weeks tour of England. This did not bring him as far as the Blackwater estuary, but he made some comments on farming around Chelmsford in 1768. 'One circumstance I should not forget, and that is their hollow drains, of which they do a great deal in the wet lands, and this excellent practice I found scarce anywhere but in Essex and Suffolk. They dig them 22 inches deep and fill up with wood and straw; the price 2d. and 2½d. per rod . . . They use 2 horses in plough and do an acre a day . . . I asked a little farmer in this neighbourhood, What was the employment of the labourers' wives and children? Drinking tea, he replied; and I cannot but remark that I found the custom almost universal.'

Arthur Young drew up an exhaustive survey of agriculture in Essex in the latter part of the century for consideration of the Board of Agriculture, and it was published in two volumes in 1807, entitled *Agriculture of the County of Essex*. He looked at the soils of the villages on the north side of the Blackwater estuary and found Goldhanger's to be 'dry and very good turnip loam'. But it was the land to the west of Goldhanger creek that particularly appealed to him. 'By far the most interesting tract of land near Maldon is the dead level space which extends from about Langford along the coast to Goldhanger church, and is of various breadths. Much the greater part is arable, there being only here and there a pasture of convenience.'

When considering the course of the crops, he again praised the coastal areas. 'The quality of the soil, the general merit of the husbandry, and the magnificence of the crops, cannot fail to strike a spectator who understands in any degree what he views; and one cannot but lament that the whole, or nearly the whole, is infested with those complaints in the human body, which have the same origin as the exuberance of the products.' The complaints of the human

body must have been the marshland agues and fevers which were said to drive the young men to seek sturdy brides further inland and in many cases make the journey more than once. He had commended the drainage work around Chelmsford in 1768. Now rather later he remarked on the great improvement of the land made by drains dug twenty to thirty inches below the surface, with brushwood, faggots, straw or shingle put in to keep the passage open, a method superseded some years later by cylindrical tile pipes. The notorious marshland agues to which he had referred earlier were, he said, being abated by this improved cultivation and by drainage of the marshes.

The amount of annual produce in a wide area of the county was listed in the last decade of the century, and the parish did well as is shown in the following figures for Goldhanger:

	Annual produce per acre in bushels	*Average amount in parishes listed*
Wheat	26	24½
Barley	40	33¾
Oats	45	36½
Beans	24	27

A LEADING FARMER, THOMAS LEE

It is evident that over the years Goldhanger had connections with commercial circles and men of ability both in Maldon and in London, and this no doubt contributed to the agricultural progress of the district. An outstanding figure of this period was Thomas Lee who farmed in several areas around Maldon and achieved fame for his reclamation at Bounds Farm in 1789. Arthur Young wrote of a visit to his Goldhanger farm: 'I accompanied Mr. Lee to his farm at Goldhanger and found that the soil improved as I advanced for about 5 miles. His fields close to the sea walls are of an excellent quality; a deep, putrid, dry, sound, friable, red and black earth for 2 feet deep, on a bottom of gravel, which forms the subsoil of the whole level. The crops equal to the appearance of the land, which is of admirable fertility; it does much better for barley than wheat, having had 10 quarters an acre of the former on it, but 7 common; of oats, 8 to 10 constantly. I saw immense crops of beans on it. It extends to the seawall. Some spots, however, of a loose, frothy sand, are bad, and crops of every

kind failing, either eaten by the wire worm or root-fallen.' He listed the course of Mr Lee's crops at Goldhanger:

1. Turnips, manured with 20 to 25 loads of dung, and ploughed for 8 times.
2. Oats; some barley.
3. Clover, red, and trefoil, both mown and fed; crops very great.
4. Wheat; 4 quarters average.
5. Beans dibbled, 6 rows on an 8-furrowed stitch, hoed thrice; produce 4 quarters and a half.
6. Wheat; 4 quarters.

In considering the use of marshland. Arthur Young wrote: 'Mr. Lee of Maldon has 250 acres of marsh at Goldhanger, worth 20s an acre, which carries 70 bullocks & 300 wethers & lambs: feeds in winter on hay & turnips; having 350 acres of arable worth 30s most of it also at Goldhanger and the rest at Totham. He stocks the marsh at the rate of 2 acres to a bullock. The marshes nr. Maldon and to Bradwell are much better than those on the north shore of the Blackwater, but Mr. Lee observes that those from Bradwell to Burnham are much better than any. He mows 30 acres of marsh every year; and I may note that hitherto I have found every man in the habit of mowing and grazing alternately: a bad system on uplands, but pernicious on marshes.'

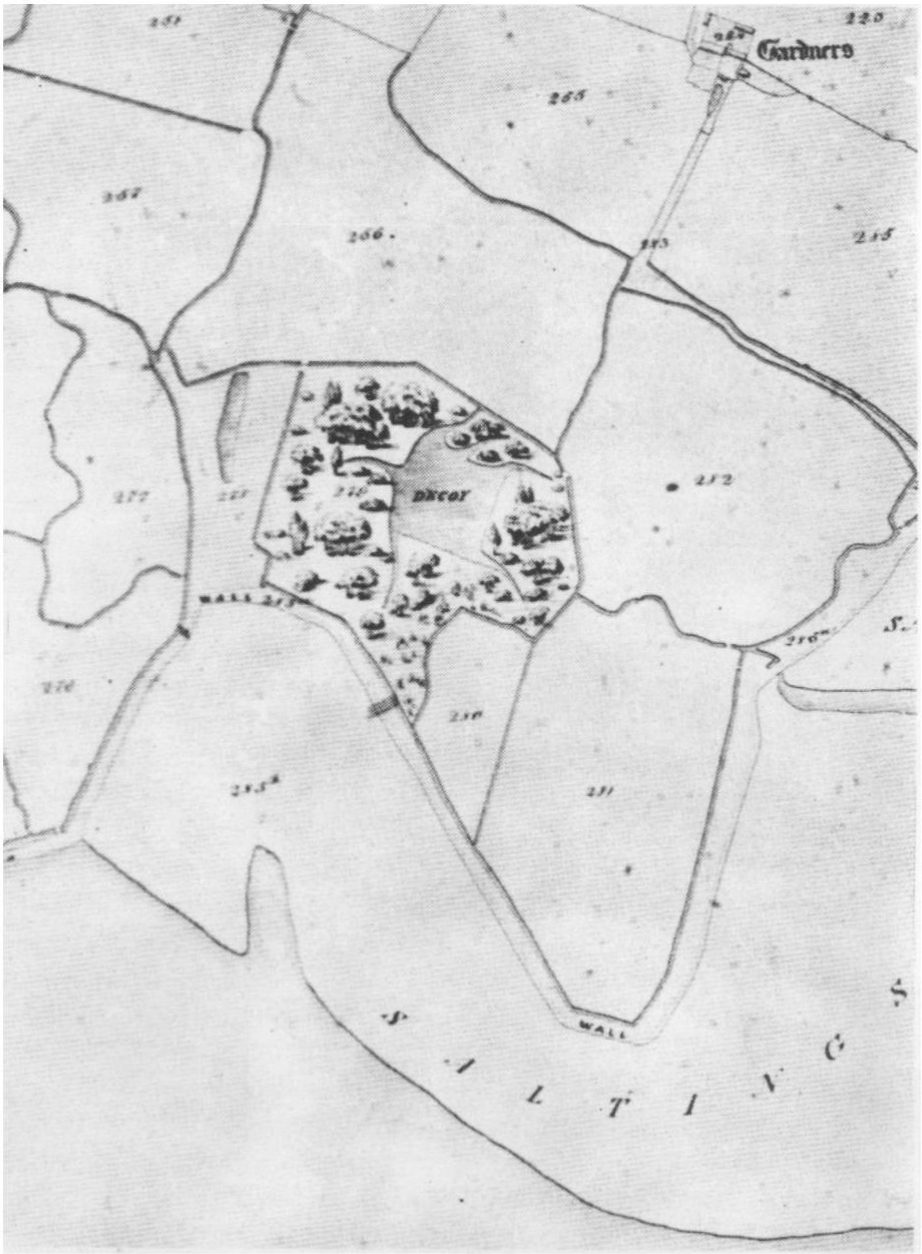
Arthur Young frequently quoted this farmer's opinions, sometimes as 'Mr. Lee of Maldon', often as 'Mr. Lee on the rich flat of Goldhanger'. Mr Lee had told him that wherever he had seen wheat sown on white clover lays, he had found and remarked a great inferiority of the crops to those which on the same soil followed red clover. They discussed drill husbandry; 'Mr. Lee has drilled but left it off and thinks he can beat it in the broadcast.' The heavy lands of the Dengie Hundred were plagued with Black Grass, and Mr Lee had his way of dealing with it. There were various opinions on the use of dung; Mr Lee remarked that once it had been turned, the fresher it was used the better. On the subject of labour, 'Mr. Lee of Maldon in the Dengie Hundred gave 28 years ago 10s 6d the year round: now 14s and the harvest. In winter now 2s which was 1s 4d. Barn men and others at piece work are not content if they earn less than 18s a week.'

Mr Lee had in addition to Bounds Farm the big decoy which subsequently belonged to Gardeners Farm and later to Cobbs (see section on decoys). And the Tolleshunt Major enclosure map of 1807 marks a large coastal area bordering the east side of Joyces creek and stretching nearly to the Gore saltings as 'Thomas Lee – The Great Marsh'.

DECOYS and WILDFOWLING

The text of the Tithe Map of 1839 refers to a number of decoys on farmland bordering the estuary. The map shows only a field described as a decoy at Jehu's (Fawlty), and at Bounds, but the decoys at the other three farms, Long Wick, Harveys (Lauriston) and Gardeners, are sketched in. Long Wick (the farm to the north of Joyces), had a considerable pond with eight pipes in the field inside the sea wall north east of the small bay and hatches known as The Shoe. Harveys had a pond of similar size but only four pipes inside the seawall well to the east of Joyces, near the Gore Saltings. Gardeners decoy, set inside the seawall in the bay to the south of the farmhouse with extensive saltings on the outer side of the wall consisted of a pond with 5 pipes set in a wooded area, the whole being some four acres in extent. Gardeners also had a Decoy House and garden, and three Decoy House fields, all described as pasture.

Miller Christy devotes a chapter of his *Birds of Essex* (1890) to the subject of decoys and wildfowling, and judges Essex to have had more decoys than any county in England with the exception of Lincolnshire. He quotes Daniel Defoe, who wrote in 1724 of the vast flights of 'Duck, Mallard, Teal and Wigeon' off Osea Island, and of the 'London Men of Pleasure' who came to shoot them. But these Gentlemen, he added, 'often return with an Essex Ague on their backs, which they find a heavier load than the Fowls they have shot.' Morant, writing forty-four years later, remarked on the many decoys which yielded plenty of wildfowl of all kinds at various places including Goldhanger. The decoys could only work effectively if they were quiet and peaceful, and so they were placed far from the farmhouse, and efforts were made to prevent kitchen smells reaching them. In 1800 an association was formed in the neighbourhood of the Blackwater estuary to prosecute gunners and puntmen who caused disturbance. Another writer regretted the developments of



The decoy pond where Thomas Lee made his huge catch of pochard

(from the Tithe Map of 1839)

the late 19th century: 'Viewing the country in its present condition, intersected by railways, with thousands of acres of marshland reclaimed, drained and cultivated, we can form but a faint notion of what a paradise for wildfowl the Essex coast must have been before an increased population and extended civilisation narrowed the limits of their domain. It is difficult to realise the state of things which existed before the introduction of shot-guns in the 16th century, when wildfowl were killed with the cross-bow, with trained hawks, or with such kinds of snares and nets as the ingenuity of man at that period could devise; and we have no better proof of their former abundance than the number of decoys which once existed for their capture.'

There are descriptions of the vast number of wildfowl on the river. Off Bradwell, 'I have seen the sky darkened with wild geese covering a space of half a mile by a quarter of a mile, as thick as manure spread upon the ground and making a noise which I could only compare with 50 packs of hounds in full cry. I have also seen 7 acres at low water covered with Wigeon, Curlew and Ducks, making such a noise that I could not hear my brother talking to me a few yards off.' Of punt-gunning it was said that a man might, by dropping down with the tide in his punt, bring home from four score to a hundred wildfowl of various kinds in one night's excursion.

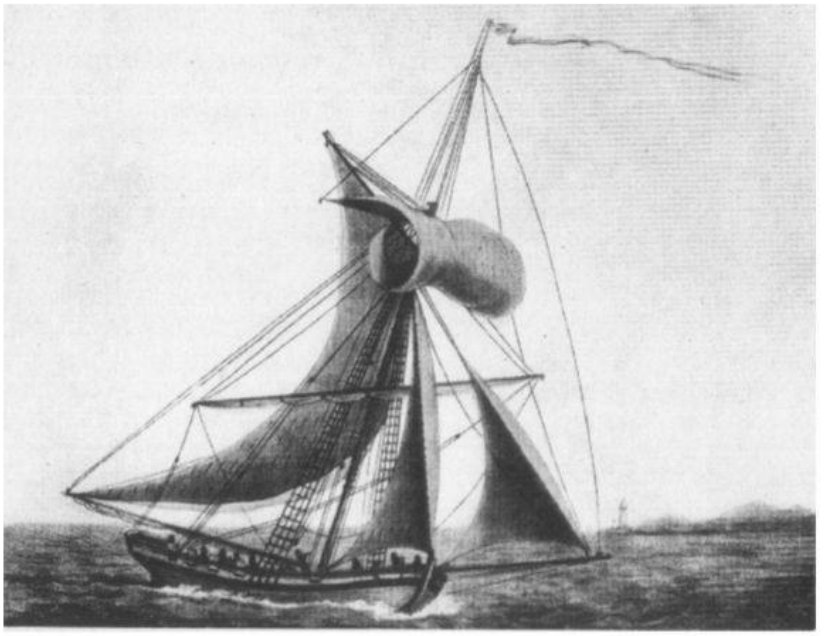
Arthur Young mentions Mr Lee's decoy at Goldhanger in the late 18th century where he says he took at one haul one waggon load and two carts of dun birds (pochard). A hundred years later Miller Christy refers to four Goldhanger decoys. The pond with five pipes that had belonged to Gardeners was then on Cobbs Farm land, and had been worked till about 1870; this was Mr Lee's pond where the huge catch of pochard was recorded, and where John Cooper, a great decoyman who perished in a high tide of 1736, had earlier worked. The Long Wick decoy had been used within living memory, and a further decoy known as Wigeon Pond lay half a mile to the east of it near Joyces creek in the narrow strip of land that gives Tolleshunt Major access to the estuary. Wigeon Pond was a large pond with eight pipes but it had not been in use for 25 years. The Gore decoy on Harveys Farm had not been worked for many years, but it had been in use within living memory.

(For the method of working decoy ponds, see appendix III.)

SEA-WALLS According to Salmon (*History of Essex*, published 1740-42) the great tide of 1736 'did much mischief on the coast of Essex' being 'occasioned by a strong north-west wind at the time of the full moon; the violence of the tide broke down the sea-walls, drowned several thousand of sheep, with a great quantity of other cattel. Mr. John Cooper, a great decoy-man at Goldhanger, and four others perished.' E. S. Gramolt in his unpublished thesis *Coastal Marshlands of East Essex between the 17th and mid-19th centuries* (1960) (ERO) writes in detail of the construction of the sea-walls. The practice was to build the wall in two arms carried across the saltings to the lowest point over which the wall was to pass. The proposed line of the wall was prepared by removing vegetation and digging a trench. The soft mud was removed and the hollows filled with brushwood and good clay, marsh clay being always the chief material of the wall. Sometimes brushwood made the permanent facing of the wall, as faggots secured vertically on its face; sometimes chalk and piles were used; and later Kentish ragstone was brought round by barge and used for the purpose. The walls beside the Blackwater had tops only two feet wide, but after the tide of 1736 the walls were heightened and widened to three feet. By 1790 the Goldhanger seawalls were 7½ feet high. The borrow-pits or dykes formed by digging out the clay to make the wall, also known as delphs or delfs, were at first dug close to the wall but later moved to some twenty feet from them.

SMUGGLING Smuggling was in its heyday in the second half of the 18th century. Big runs took place off Clacton and Frinton, and the larger ventures were organised from London, whence came parties of 'gentlemen' to bring in gin, tea and sometimes silk, lace and tobacco. South of the Colne smaller boats were used and local publicans were often the organisers. The Chequers, the only alehouse listed in Goldhanger in 1769, may well have played a part. As the marshes were thought to be unhealthy there were few big houses and thus few magistrates resident near the creeks. People living in Goldhanger today have heard tales handed down of their forebears turning a deaf ear to noises at night, and next morning finding their horses lathered and a keg of brandy in the porch. They say the smugglers had a depot at Chappel Farm and bound sacking round

the wheels of the carts to dull the sound and over the horses hooves to hide the footprints. The goods were often stored for a time, and there are stories of using cellars behind the Chequers, perhaps a part of Goldhanger Hall whose whereabouts remain a mystery. Some say



The revenue cutter Badger *which was stationed at Bradwell in 1799*

there was a passage under the cottages that stood on the grass stretch where Church Street and Little Totham Road join the main Maldon to Tolleshunt D'Arcy road, and that this was used for smuggling. Tiptree Heath was the centre and 'sorting office', and it is said the smugglers went from Fish Street up Head Street, Blind Lane and Wash Lane, or landing in Joyces creek would follow the green lane (on the west side of Joyces farmhouse) to Tolleshunt Major for a halt at the church, the Bell Inn or Renters Farm. But the Royal Navy was brought in to help the revenue boats during the Napoleonic Wars and this was the undoing of the trade.

SALT-MAKING The extraction of salt from the waters of the Blackwater seems to have continued over the centuries. The red hills are today described as Iron Age industrial waste, and

recent excavations of a red hill on the west side of Goldhanger have shown the clay tanks in which the seawater started the evaporation process, and remains of the earthenware pillars on which the shallow dishes of partly evaporated water stood for heating over brushwood fires. The workings are still referred to as salt-pans in the 11th century, Goldhanger having at the time of the Domesday records 1½ saltpans, presumably one being shared with another manor. Later the salt-works are called salt-cotes, the old saltpan areas having been reclaimed and enclosed by seawalls. Dr Henry Laver, in his *Common Place Book,* made in 1893–1903, writes of East Hall, Paglesham, where his father was a tenant in 1820. The marsh next to the seawall was called Salt Pan Marsh and was then in grass but very irregular because it was formerly used for evaporating salt water. One winter with spade labour they made it one of the most productive fields for corn, and found evidence that the salt works were in full use in the reign of Elizabeth. What this evidence was he does not state, but he describes more fully a visit in 1894 to see some excavations just inside the sea-wall at Bounds Farm where he was shown what he had no doubt were the remains of a salt-cote or salt-works. A well three feet square and three to four feet deep was lined with well-jointed planks and had the remains of a wooden pump in it. Nearby were some shallow brick tanks with a brick drain to a well. The brick tanks formed flues from a furnace close by. Some pieces of lead were thought to be parts of tanks or evaporating dishes. Close by the furnace they found a hundredweight or two of coal similar to that used many years ago in the district and known as 'Walls End.' A covering of three feet of red and black soil led them to suppose that the salt-cote had been destroyed by fire. They found no direct evidence by which they could date the works, 'excepting that from the size of the bricks they could not have been later than Jacobean.'

It was in 1670 that rock salt was discovered and first mined in Cheshire. An important commodity, it was the subject of two Acts of Parliament in the first half of the 18th century; in 1702 limitations were put on its movement for refining into white salt, and in 1732 permission was given for the licensing of buildings for refining and for making white salt, 'so that the number do not exceed one at each of the following places: Heybridge, Colchester, Manningtree, Ipswich, Woodbridge, Walberswick and Southwold'. The method

evolved in the coastal areas was to dissolve the rock-salt in seawater and then re-evaporate by boiling.

MILL and MALTINGS

There is written evidence of a windmill from an entry made in Goldhanger Parish Register in 1721: 'A child of Wisson at ye windmill was baptised by Mr Thompson at Maldon in Jan.' The deeds of the Mill House at the top of Fish Street do not go back quite so far; they record 'malting office with little house and 2 other houses with carpenter's shop' in 1736, and the 'gears in the millhouse' are mentioned in 1796. A. F. J. Brown in *Essex at Work*, 1700–1815 (1969), refers to the development in this century of milling to supply flour rather than unmilled corn to London, and the consequent advantage of proximity to water transport. A post windmill near the creek at Salcot was advertised as 'advantageously situated for both the London and country trade', and Wivenhoe windmill was 'exceedingly well situated for London or home trade, being within a quarter of a mile of a fine navigable river, where ships go every week to and from London'. From Chelmsford southwestward flour was more easily if dangerously moved by road, as in 1772 when hungry labourers stopped the waggons on the Chelmsford–London road and shared the contents. The number of windmills in Essex increased towards the end of the century, and most villages had one of their own or could use one a few miles away. The tidal mill at Heybridge had a windmill, granaries, house, farmland and a wharf for shipping flour to London. As to maltings, the trade from Maldon to London was inconsiderable in 1700 but had increased greatly by 1750. A two-storey concern in Goldhanger claimed to produce 800 quarters annually and to 'lie well for the shipping off goods'.

GOLDHANGER FAIR

Goldhanger Fair is recorded in 1760, when it was held annually on May 14, and like some fifty others in Essex was for 'toys', a word used to cover ribbons, gingerbread, fruits and knick-knacks. Whit Monday seems to have become the usual date in the 19th century, and in 1848 Goldhanger held a toy fair on Whit Monday, Tolleshunt D'Arcy a toy fair on June 11, Dovercourt a pleasure fair on Whit Monday, Thorpe-le-Soken two annual fairs on the Monday before Whit Monday and on

September 29, and St. Osyth a fair for toys, pleasure, etc. on Holy Thursday. And many other places are listed in White's History of Essex published in that year. The Fair was still held in the Square within living memory, continuing up to about 1914 when it was known as 'Juggy Rose's Fair' and sold a favourite delicacy consisting of rice pudding and prunes in saucers.

OCCUPATIONS and TRADES WITHIN THE VILLAGE

Spinning was the main form of outwork for women in the villages at this time, coming to an end with the decline of the cloth trade in the latter part of the century. The population was increasing and as the villages grew they were able to support their own shops and tradesmen. In 1778 there were 205 people (living in fifty houses) in Goldhanger, and this rose to 331 in 1801. Between 1770 and 1775 there were two shops but no butcher or baker. The records of the next century show considerable developments which will be described in the next section.

THE RECTORS

Henry Barrit, the rector who took over after John Lasby's death and held the living for forty-two years, is thought to have been an absentee and vicar of Herthurst, Surrey. The patronage apparently passed in 1745 to John Casborne, husband of Henry Barrit's daughter and heir, and after ten years of incumbency by Powis Powell, John Casborne himself became the rector. Four years later his wife died in childbirth and the baby also died, but John Casborne remained until 1765. There are references to a curate throughout the 18th century, and the vicarage at Little Totham having been in good repair in 1707 this may well have been the curate's house. John Casborne was followed by Talbot Keene (queried in one record as a pluralist), and then Charles Cowley who remained for twenty-seven years up to 1797. It seems likely that one of these three carried out improvements at the Rectory (now the Old Rectory) where the south front was greatly changed by the insertion of large sash windows in all but the centre ground floor section. Again it may have been one of these three, or their predecessor, who planted the trees already mentioned that formed the line stretching down Church Street from opposite the Cricketers to the north wall of the churchyard.

THE INTERIOR OF THE CHURCHES

We do not know if decorations or furnishings in the two churches were changed in this century, though the Visitation of 1707 required the Creed, Lord's Prayer and Commandments to be renewed on the walls of Goldhanger church. Fine altar tables of the early 18th century stand in both churches and may have been gifts of this period or part of the refurnishing carried out in the next century by the Leigh family.

THE EXTERIOR OF GOLDHANGER CHURCH

A sketch of Goldhanger church made in 1780 shows three gables in the roof of the south aisle, but it is not known what was their purpose, nor when they were constructed. This part of the building was altered in the extensive repairs carried out by the Leigh family in the mid-19th century when the south porch was raised, so it was probably at this time that the gables were removed.

A QUAKER FAMILY

A few months before John Lasby's death a Quaker gave information which was recorded in the Parish Register: 'Richard Perry gave notice of a marriage in the Quaker way with Elizabeth Christmas 8 mths since. 'Twas his ignorance he acknowledged not to have done it sooner.' And 'a child born to Richard Perry, a Quaker, that he called by his name, all 1703'. Quakers were spread all over Essex with many in the farming communities, and were at Southminster, Steeple and Mundon, with a principal Meeting at Maldon. The records of the Quaker Burial Ground at Steeple show Richard Perry 28/3/1704; child of Richard Perry 30/7/1706; Sarah Perry 17/9/1709. Quakers had their own burial grounds as local vicars would not allow such heretics in the churchyard, though there are instances of Quakers being interred during darkness in the churchyard without the permission of the vicar.

Chapter VIII

The 19th century

RECORDS are now fuller and more numerous. The parishes were mapped and listed for the commutation of tithes, and directories gave the occupations as well as the names of residents. The older people remember tales of the latter part of the century. So a more detailed picture of the village emerges.

TIPTREE HEATH

White wrote in his *History of Essex*, (1848), 'As late as the beginning of the present century, more than 2,000 acres of this heath were open and uncultivated, but its various unenclosed patches now comprise only about 500 acres. This once extensive waste is now divided among the parishes' (including Goldhanger) 'in radiating slips, some of which are from 3 to 8 miles from their respective churches.'

POPULATION

The population was increasing steadily. The number of people in Goldhanger rose from 331 in 1801 to 408 in 1901, with a peak of 558 in 1871 (see Appendix I).

THE RELIEF OF POVERTY

The first year that the overseers of the poor were in real difficulties is said to have been 1795, when living costs rose to such an extent that poverty was due not so much to incapacity to work as to the difficulty of subsisting on the current wages. Probably most Essex villages had a workhouse at this time, many of them little more than cottages and often called poor-houses. Often the inmates were not set to work, either because of infirmity or the difficulty of finding profitable work for them to do after the decline of the cloth trade and, consequently, of spinning which had been the main occupation in workhouses. Poor Law statistics show that Goldhanger had no poorhouse in 1803, but in the years 1813-15 one is listed, housing eleven inmates. A poor-house is shown on the Tithe Map of 1839 as the third building to the west of the road junction on the north side of the Square. This was in line with the two houses still standing there, and had a piece of garden in front which neither of the other two houses had at that

time. Three names, two male and one female, are listed as occupiers. This poorhouse must have been pulled down soon after the Tithe Map was made as the red-brick houses which now stand further back on this site are dated 1842.

Returns of the Relief of the Poor in Goldhanger, dated 1818, give details for several of the preceding years. Money raised by 'Poor Rates' was £805 in 1813, £605 in 1814, and £558 in 1815. Money expended for the maintenance of the poor was £713, £519 and £481 in the same three years. A separate listing of expenditure for militia purposes gives the amount spent on the maintenance of families as £10 in each of those years with 'all other militia charges' put at £31 (1813), £7 (1814), and £10 (1814). A further list gives the number of persons permanently relieved from the Poor Rate (not including their children) as twenty-five out of the workhouse and eleven 'in any workhouse', in each of the three years. The number of parishioners relieved occasionally (in and out) was forty-two (1813), forty (1814), and fifty-eight (1815). Charity Farm, on the Maldon road to the west of the junction with Head Street, belonged to a charity school in Witham.

SCHOOLING

It was two centuries earlier that John Knight obtained a licence to use some of his buildings as a school, and we do not know what education the village children received through the succeeding 200 years. But in August 1839 the rector completed a questionnaire for the London Diocesan Board of Education. In this he stated there was one daily school in union with the National Society. The children assembled in the vestry which would contain fifty to sixty, though the actual number on the books was forty-two. The average number attending the daily school was thirty, and four boys and five girls attended school on Sunday only. The general management and superintendence was in the hands of the clergyman, and it had been established for about five years. Its funds came from subscriptions, and there was no difficulty over support, the annual receipts being between £11 and £12. 'What is deficient after the regular subscriptions are expended is supplied by the clergyman.' The scholars paid nothing and annual expenditure was about £15. No children were clothed or boarded. There was also one dissenting school in the parish or district, and the number of

children educated at Dames Schools, Middle Schools and Schools for the Higher Classes was twenty. A lending library was in contemplation. 'Very few are without some education though in the case of many it is difficult to procure regularity of attendance.'

One may wonder where the large vestry was. The present vestry is a small enclosed area at the west end of the south aisle, and previously the base of the tower, now the ringing chamber, served as a vestry. If the three gables shown in the 18th-century drawing hanging in the church formed some sort of gallery over the south aisle, this might have been the room in which the school was held, though no windows are shown in the gables. The restoration of the church, including a complete rebuilding of this part of the south side, had probably begun by the middle of the century, and William White wrote in his *History and Gazetteer of the County of Essex* (1848) that Goldhanger parish school was in a building recently purchased by the patron (the Rev Thomas Leigh, father of the rector).

The Rural Dean made a rather wider report in 1841 in which he gave the number of scholars as thirty-two, twenty-two female and ten male, and the school hours as half past 9 a.m. to half past 12 p.m. daily except Saturday.

The present school was built next to the tithe barn in Church Street in 1875, as a result of the 1870 Education Act which required proper school accommodation for all children of school-going age in each parish. It was designed to accommodate 120 children. In 1890 the average attendance was 106, and seven years later it was enlarged by the addition of the infants school to take fifty. There are memories of the school that preceded it being held in the upstairs part of two cottages that stood on the green triangle formed by the junction of Little Totham Road and Maldon Road; of the rector going in for three hours on two afternoons a week; and of a Mr. Branch hitting the children across the hands if they did not hold their pens in the right position.

There are also memories of a Dame School held towards the end of the 19th century in part of the Old Rectory beside the church.

The Parish Magazines of 1895 mention some church school matters. A meeting was held to urge ratepayers to add a voluntary rate for the school, so keeping it under the voluntary system. The voluntary school at Little Totham was in so bad a state that it was to be

superseded by a Board School, and there were rumours Goldhanger might follow suit. The cost of the two systems was listed: 'Voluntary School (as at present) – cost to build, with residence for teacher, £5-7s. per scholar, including value of site. Board School – £12-16-10 per scholar. Cost of maintenance, Voluntary School £1-17-9½, Board School £2-8-0. B. J. Smith in an unpublished M.Phil thesis on the *Work of the School Board in Rural Essex, 1870-1903* (1968) (ERO), quotes the lament of a teacher at Tolleshunt Major Board School on 12 October 1894, 'the children are still engaged in picking blackberries and now another industry has arisen, the gathering of sloes, which will no doubt work the same havoc with the attendance as pea-picking and blackberrying have done in past years.' It seems likely neighbouring Goldhanger experienced the same difficulties.

CHURCH and CHAPEL

The Rural Dean's report of 1841 was mainly concerned with church affairs. The population was then 496, in 108 families, and in answer to a question on what proportion belonged to the church he entered 'The Greater Proportion'. The Church Rate during the past year had been 6d. in the £, and the Poor Rate 3d. in the £, the gross rental at which the parish was assessed for rates being £2235-10s. The average number of communicants during the past year had been 30. There were two places of worship in the parish not connected with the Established Church, one Wesleyan and one Independent. A similar report for Little Totham shows that although again 'The Greater Proportion' of the population (306) belonged to the church and the average number of communicants was sixteen, there was no Glebe House nor curate, so apparently the rector was serving both churches unaided. The Ecclesiastical census returns made ten years later stated 'Goldhanger church contains 260 free and 80 other sittings. Congregation varies from 260-300'.

The Quarter Sessions Records of 1829 referred to two places of worship other than the church, 'one stiling themselves Independent Methodists, the other Antinomians'. (The Antinomian sect appears to have originated in Germany, and during the Commonwealth period Antinomianism was found in England among high Calvinists who maintained that an elect person, being predestined to salvation, is absolved from moral law and not called upon to repent.) A letter

signed in the same year by William Collins, preacher of the Everlasting Gospel, Maldon, stated ' . . . preach at several places, Goldhanger about 60.' John Baker, Wesleyan Minister, writing in the same autumn, gave the following information: 'places of worship and no. of persons who attend on the Wesley Ministry in the Chelmsford Circuit – Goldhanger Chapel 100'. The Wesleyan Chapel which still stands, unused, behind the houses on the south side of Head Street was built in 1839, and is said to have replaced a chapel nearer the Square.

THE RECTORS

It was to a dilapidated church and a population considerably interested in the two chapels that the Rev E. M. Leigh came in 1836. William Shuckburgh had been rector for thirty-seven years, from 1797 to 1834, succeeded for only two years by John Archambro Argles, Ll.B. The living was then bought by the Rev Thomas Leigh, Rector of Wickham Bishops, and he put in as rector his son who had been his curate. The tithe records of 1839 show Edward Morris Leigh as owner and occupier of two properties, the Glebe including the parsonage house, and the Pump House Farm at the top of Church Street. He also owned and let Follyfaunts, and his father owned and let land near Wash Bridge. After ten years he died and his brother Charles Brian Leigh took his place, remaining in the living until 1893.

The Rev Thomas Leigh died in 1848, and a great deal of the family money seems to have been spent about this time on churches and rectory. Goldhanger church was thoroughly restored. The south porch and probably part of the south wall were rebuilt, and there was considerable reconstruction of the interior, the chancel arch being rebuilt, window tracery renewed, and stained glass put in. A clean sweep was made of the fittings with replacement of font, pulpit, altar, choir stalls and seating. The Heigham memorials, evidently badly broken up, were put together to form one tomb with the remaining brass figure and inscription set in the top slab. By 1855 it had been 'thoroughly repaired and beautified', and the guttering shows the initials 'C.B.L.' and the date 1860. Several memorials to the Leigh family can be seen in the south chapel. William White wrote in 1848 that the Rev. C. B. Leigh had a good residence, but whichever house this was it does not seem to have been satisfactory, as the

family built the big red-brick rectory (now called 'Goldhanger House') at the top of Church Street in 1851–2. The building cost £1900, and the builder complained that he had lost on it. This seems inexpensive today, yet Mentmore, the Buckinghamshire mansion, was also begun in 1851, and that great house of 100 rooms was completed at a cost of only £15,000. Meanwhile, Sarah Leigh, a sister of C. B. Leigh, was building the new church at Wickham Bishops at a personal cost of £4,000, her brother having laid the foundation stone in 1849.

Of the establishment at the big new rectory, the 1861 Census gives some details. The household consisted of the rector, his wife and three children, with a governess, two nurses, and four other domestic servants. People living today in the village remember their grandparents and other old residents speaking of the Leigh family in the latter part of the century. They kept cows and provided free milk daily to all the village, and if anyone was ill there was a dinner as well. There were regular times when people could go to the house for advice, many being illiterate, and Mrs Leigh saw the women thrice weekly. The sons were said to be 'wild', with big parties at the house and some guests staying at the Chequers; Lewis Carroll was among the visitors. C. B. Leigh died in 1893 and his place was taken by the Rev F. T. Gardner who remained until his death in 1936.

AN EPISODE WITH THE EAST ESSEX HUNT

Sir Claud Champion de Crespigny was one of the colourful country gentlemen living in the district in the latter part of the 19th century, and he writes in his memoirs (*Forty Years of a Sportsman's Life*) of an episode in Goldhanger creek. 'The fox was found in a covert northwest of my Essex house, Champion Lodge, and running under our window made for Goldhanger creek on the Blackwater – a real good point. There I espied him crouching on a small salting two hundred and fifty yards or thereabouts from the river wall. Of course the hounds could neither view nor wind him. I accordingly swam out to his coign of vantage with the whole pack after me. Finder, a big black and white stallion hound I had from Jack Fricker, was first up, and the leading two hounds drowned poor Charlie. I at once proceeded to dive, and after some rather exhausting struggles recovered his carcase, which the hounds broke up on the saltings.'

THE CHURCHYARD EXTENSION, 1899

The Parish Magazine records some anxiety as to the effect this extension might have on the wells and water supply, but a grant of £200 was made by the Local Government Board for the purchase of the land and by the end of 1899 it was expected the extension would be ready for burials in the spring. An iron fence six feet high was to be made by the Maldon Ironworks Co.; 'the old hedge, a disgrace to our churchyard, has been stubbed up, leaving the fine old elms standing out in a greater pre-eminence'.

BELL RINGING IN 1899

Again the Parish Magazine is the source of the information. After a long period of money-raising to get the 6th bell (tenor) and to re-cast the 3rd bell, 'so badly cast by the founder, Miles Gray, 150 years ago', a Re-Opening and Service of Dedication was held. Great Totham ringers rang one peel in bob minor (740 changes), and ringers from Coggeshall and Kelvedon also took part.

TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS

The directories published in the 19th century throw considerable light on the activities within the village. In 1832 there was a baker, a boot and shoe maker, a butcher, a miller and maltster, a shopkeeper and dealer in sundries, a smith and farrier, and one 'Inn and Public House', the Chequers. The 1845 directory is fuller and lists the gentry, of whom there was only one, the Rev E. M. Leigh. There were nine farmers, two boot and shoe makers, three shopkeepers and two blacksmiths; and two wheelwrights, a seed-grower and a bricklayer had been added to the list of occupations. In 1850 a curate joined the gentry, and another boot and shoe maker and butcher had come. Other additions were a carpenter, a baker and beer retailer, a grocer and a miller. In 1859 a rakemaker and sheep-dresser were included, and in 1863 a tinner and brazier, and a stay-maker named Mrs Hepzebah Weaver. In 1874 a beer retailer and shopkeeper had added to his duties the collection of the poor rate, a marine store dealer was established, and a farmer was listed as a cattle dealer. The first mention of a draper was in 1878 when a grocer added this to his activities. In 1882 there was an extensive fishing trade. The Rev C. B. Leigh was the principal landowner in that year but by 1890 the Rev H. F. J. Coape Arnold of

Warwickshire had taken on that role.

WILLIAM BENTALL AND THE GOLDHANGER PLOUGH

The Heybridge firm of Bentall originated in Goldhanger, and its development has been described by Lt. Commander P. K. Kemp in *The Bentall Story* (1955). Further detail and comment can be found in John Booker's *Essex and the Industrial Revolution* (1974).

The old original Goldhanger Plough.

This Plough was the invention of Mr. B.'s Father 45 years since (and who then resided at Goldhanger—hence the name); and is the original Goldhanger Plough, made from the original patterns. Mr. B. thinks it necessary to be thus explicit, as there are unprincipled makers who put "Goldhanger" on the castings, with a view to foist them on the public as the original article.

	£	s.	d.
Price of Plough	2	2	0
Coulter, gallas, and staff, extra, each	0	2	6
Shares, per dozen	0	7	0

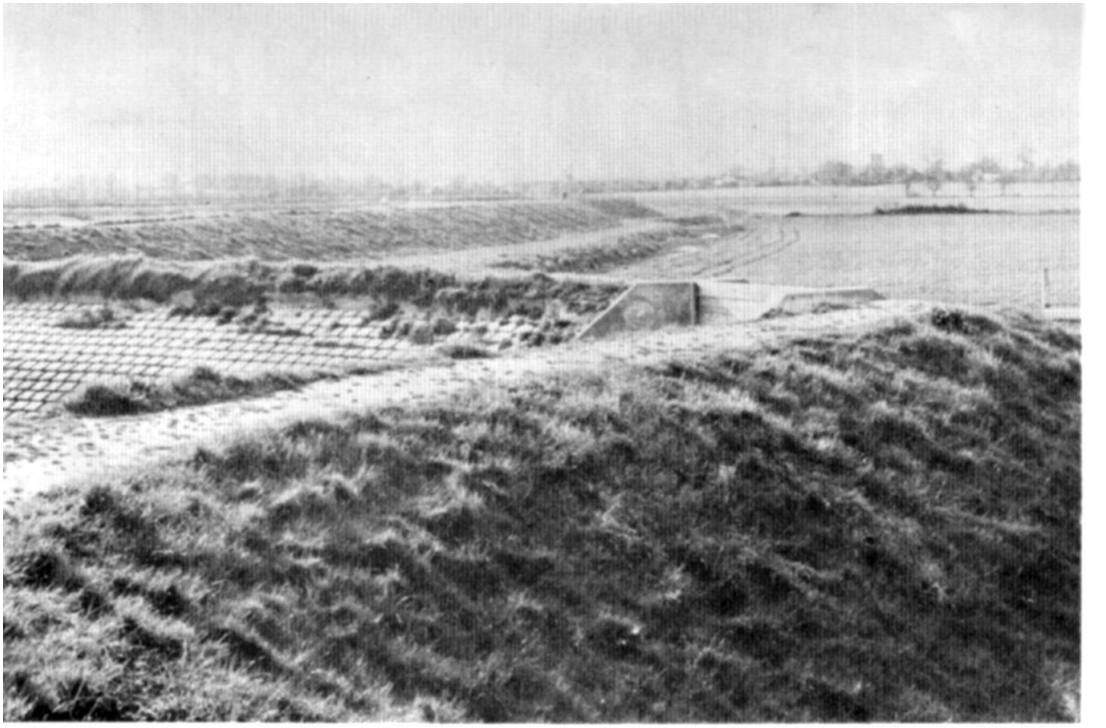
From Bentall's catalogue of 1852

William Bentall, who came of a long line of yeoman farmers and was living probably at Cobbs Farm, made his first ploughs for his own use, getting his ideas carried out by the village blacksmith. After three of four years the demands of neighbouring farmers caused him to build a small foundry, a smithy and a joiners shop on land still known as Foundry Field nearly opposite to Cobbs farmhouse, and by 1795 he had to make up his mind whether or not to give up farming and work entirely on the making of agricultural implements. His plough was achieving popularity particularly because of the way he had learned to bolt the cast-iron plough to a wooden frame, and he

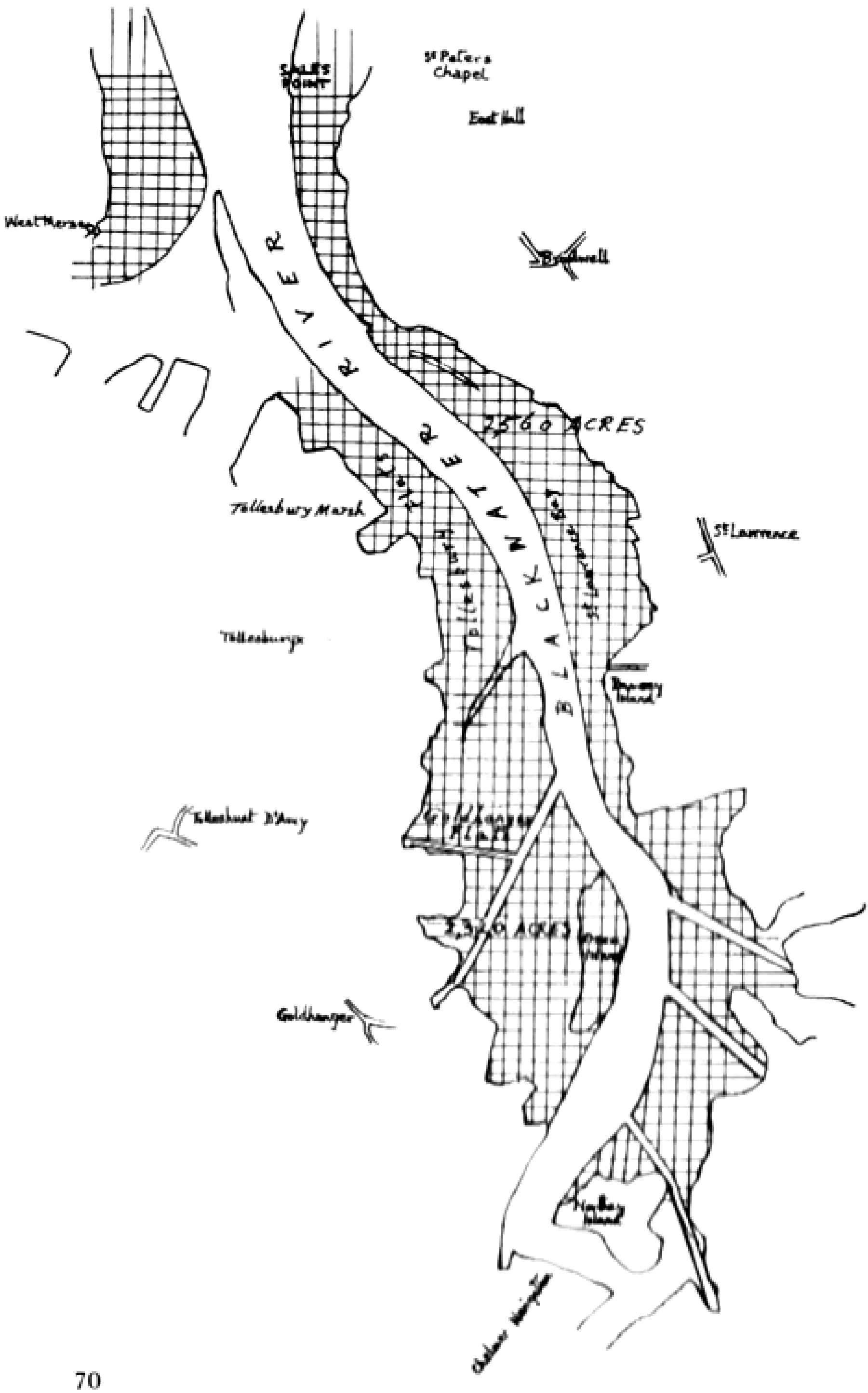
already had ideas for an improved threshing machine. So he decided to enlarge the foundry and smithy and concentrate on the development of agricultural machinery. To the plough he gave the name 'Goldhanger'. But as his output and his demands for raw materials grew, transport became a problem, and around 1805 he moved his works to Heybridge to take advantage of the Chelmer and Blackwater Navigation. By the winter of 1815 he had threshing-machines, presumably of his own make, to lend to Richard Causton of Goldhanger for 12s. a day, and in that year he also made a chest for Goldhanger church. Twenty-four years later he made a gate for the churchyard.

William Bentall's principal invention was the Goldhanger Plough, and Edward his son invented the Patent Broadshare and Subsoil Plough. So famous did their agricultural implements become that in Kent and Lincolnshire people used the expression 'to Bentall', understood as the action of using their iron cultivators. The Goldhanger Plough was not at first protected by patent, and William Bentall had trouble with an agent at Chipping Ongar who sold iron ploughs reputedly by Bentall but in the latter's view of inferior quality and spurious origin. Wedlake & Co. of London, who sold 40 types of plough in 1847, included their own 'Goldhanger or Essex Plough'. The Goldhanger Plough is not mentioned in Arthur Young's detailed study of agriculture in the county, although he gives very full consideration to the types of plough in use and was astonished at the lack of standardisation and accurate drawings, and stressed the need to assess the merits of the various types and set down principles for construction. Possibly it had not achieved its popularity and fame when he was making his surveys in the latter part of the 18th century.

There are still ploughs to be found with the word 'Goldhanger' on them, some having the name 'Warren' as well. Joseph Warren established a foundry at Broad Street Green around 1833, and moved to the Causeway in 1853 to be near the railway, founding the Maldon Ironworks within half a mile of Bentall's foundry. Around the middle of the century he obtained the help of Baker of Writtle, an accomplished draughtsman from a firm of estate agents, surveyors and auctioneers, in the re-designing of his ploughs, and Warren's foundry wares were sold from Baker's office in Writtle.



The sea-wall east of the creek today looking across the hatches and borrow-pit to the village with arable fields on the right


SALES POINT
St Peters Chapel
East Hall
West Mersea
RIVER
BLACKWATER
7,560 ACRES
Tollesbury Marsh
St Lawrence
Tollesbury
Tolleshunt D'Arcy
Goldhanger

RECLAMATION The value of the coastal land was now recognised, and some ambitious schemes were evolved to reclaim more of the saltings. A vast plan prepared for the South Essex Estuary and Reclamation Company by the engineer, Sir John Rennie, aimed to take in 30,420 acres, mainly on the coast south of Bradwell Point, but including the marshes, flats and sands of the Blackwater estuary. The scheme was approved by Act of Parliament in 1852, but came to nothing.

Had it been carried out, Goldhanger would have been considerably affected. The plan was to deepen the river, 'and improve the navigation thereof, by diverting the stream and current of the said river into a single channel'. A bank was to be made to enclose the wide flats that would then remain, the whole area from Decoy Point, near the Osea Road, to Shinglehead Point on the Tollesbury Wick marshes, including Osea Island, to be enclosed in this way. A straight, narrow channel was to lead in to Goldhanger creek, with what was described as a 'proposed drain' leading from it straight to the inlet behind the Gore Saltings and another similar channel leading straight in to Joyces farm. The total area to be reclaimed on the north shore of the Blackwater was 2,320 acres.

Part of Index Plan of the South Essex Estuary Reclamation and Improvement of the Rivers Crouch and Blackwater Session 1852.

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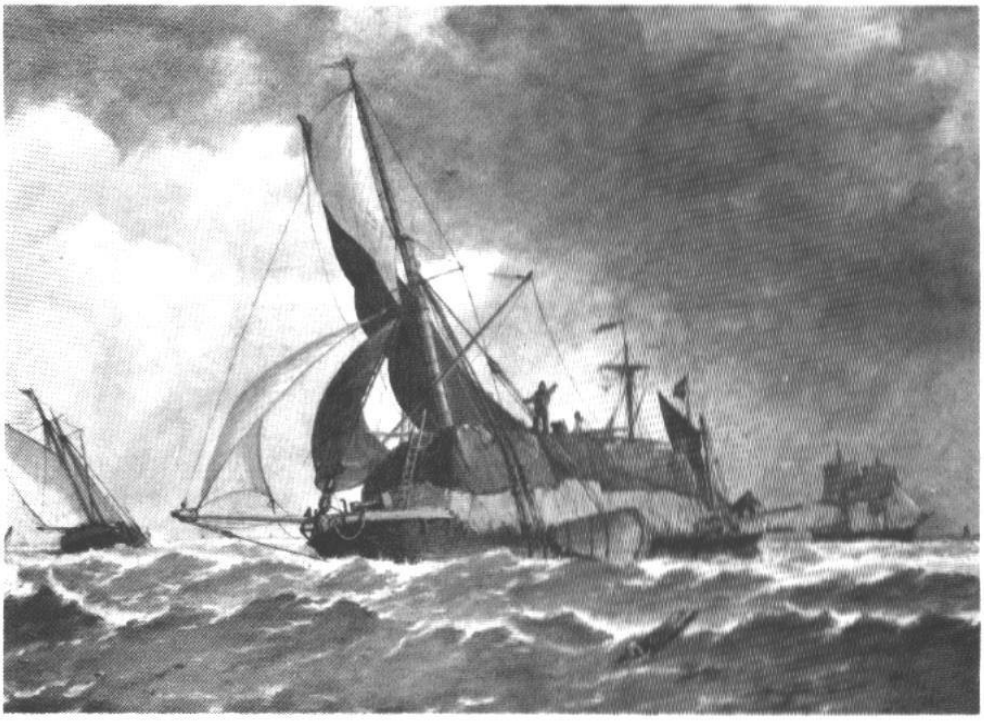
COASTGUARDS Four coastguards lived in the row of red brick cottages that border Church Street facing the meadow, and there are memories of them walking down on the sea wall on the far side of the present playing field to reach their post at the western tip of the creek. They would run up a Union Jack in the yard behind the cottages, and they lent other flags to give the schoolroom 'a pleasing appearance' at a Tea and Entertainment on December 27, 1894.

Looking down Goldhanger creek today

Low tide in the saltings in Joyces creek today

SEA TRANSPORT AND THE COASTAL FARMS

The coastal farmers made full use of the possibilities of transport by sea, and the pattern remains of farm roads running down to hatches or bays in the seawall, backed by a beach or slipway. A clear example can be seen to the east of Goldhanger creek where the farm roads from Highams and Joyces farms lead down to wooden hatches and a sheltered inlet. The increase in horse-drawn traffic in London brought huge demands for fodder, and the farmers met this need by using,



Barge laden with a hay-stack.
From a picture by R. H. Nibbs, 1878

and in some cases owning, a flat, beamy type of barge developed in Maldon and well-suited to take a whole haystack on the deck. The barges would load up at the seawall and return laden with London's horse manure.

Looking up Fish Street in 1973

THE MILL

Business at the top of Fish Street seems to have thrived. An 1803 mortgage included a wheelwright's shop, and a sale two years later listed 'the mill belonging to the said maltings'. Insurance in 1824 covered 'Windmill and going gears therein erected upon the malting', and by 1853 the insurance was doubled to include 'Malting timbered and tiled. Pale malt only. Wind cornmill adjoining, worked by steam engine.' A map of 1886 marks a windmill on the eastern edge of the site, an entry omitted from another map made eleven years later which simply records 'cornmill'. The engine-driven mill continued to work until well into the present century and is well remembered. Its main structure has been converted into a pair of red-brick cottages that face the street, and the foothold for climbing over the wall bordering the street is still there.

Photographs of the 1920s

Left: The mill buildings from Fish Street
Above: Frank Turner and George Neville (on lorry) unloading
Below: View from the Square

Above: The Mill House with the red brick mill building on the right.
Right: Drawing made from a faded photograph of the late 1920s taken from gardens south of the mill. The erection on the roof of the timber building was at that time a loading tower, the grain falling from it on to the mill-stones below. The tower was probably part of the windmill mentioned in insurance documents of 1824. The chimney on the right is said to have been taller than the church tower.

'THE CRICKETERS'

The deeds of this property go back to 1826, when Church Street was known as Goldhanger Street or The Street, and the site was used for a shop, orchard and gardens. The first reference to the Cricketers Inn comes in a notice of an auction to be held in Maldon in 1870, which gives 'Particulars and Conditions of Sale of the Valuable Public House known as The Cricketers, most eligibly situate, forming an exclusive frontage to Goldhanger Street . . . comprising a commodious Brick Built Dwelling House . . . and also 2 valuable building plots and building formerly used as a wheelwright's shop.' The Bake Office had an eight-bushel oven, and the property was occupied by Mr Chaplin 'who carries on a good trade as a publican, baker and postmaster, upon the premises'. All three lots were bought for £282, and the first lot, containing the public house and various outhouses with a frontage of 93 feet, was let to the Writtle Brewery for £25 per annum. The building referred to as the wheelwright's shop was the black shed which still stands on the north side of the Cricketers and was probably thatched.

SALT

And so finally to salt-making, the industry which may have brought Goldhanger into being. The work here seems to have come to an end early in the 19th century, though there is a reference to the parish containing some saltworks in 1839. According to the *Victoria County History* the Goldhanger works were deserted and larger works built about 1810 in Heybridge. By 1894 the Maldon manufactory was the only one in existence in the county.

Conclusion

THEN Goldhanger moved into the great changes and developments of the 20th century, a period which calls for a study of its own set in a wider context.

Of the village today it is probably true to say that the people think more of the Triangle than the Square, though the old part around the Square has achieved the status of a Conservation Area. The Triangle is formed by Church Street, Maldon Road and Head Street, and much of the housing is built around it. The space beside the church where the tithe barn stood is empty today, and the school next to it is likely to close soon. But the Coastguard Cottages still stand looking across to a meadow opposite, and further up the road George Emeny has developed his family's forge into a busy engineering workshop meeting the needs of agricultural machine repair, boat construction and many other types of ironwork. In the Square, Bernard Mann carries on his family's building business, and the Quy family, a name well known for several centuries in Little Totham and Goldhanger, provide the village taxi service in Fish Street. More recent in their foundation are two valued services: the village shop and Post Office run by the Abreys on the Maldon Road, and Peter Power's motor engineering workshop opposite the church. As to public transport, the family firm of Osborne brings buses through the village on the route between Tollesbury and Maldon, and Maldon, though deprived of its railway, gives bus services to many parts of the area including Chelmsford, Colchester and Southend.

The population today is about 700. There is a Council housing estate and many new privately built houses, some replacing old cottages and others forming a new fringe.to the fields. The Village Hall took the first new plot in Head Street in 1939, and soon had developments and replacements on both sides. Some families have been here for generations and some are newcomers. There is work for a small number within the village, but many spend their working day outside it, in Maldon or further afield, with a few commuters driving off in the early morning to catch the London train.

APPENDIX I

Population of Goldhanger in the 18th and 19th centuries

1723: 60 households including Little Totham
1778: 50 houses
1790: 35 houses
1801: 48 houses and population 331
1811: Population 423
1821: „ 459
1831: „ 496
1841: „ 520
1851: „ 535
1861: „ 545
1871: „ 558
1881: „ 524
1891: „ 490
1901: „ 408

The figures for the period 1723–1801 (houses) are from St. Paul's Cathedral Library records, compiled from returns made by the local parson probably all too often without full research.

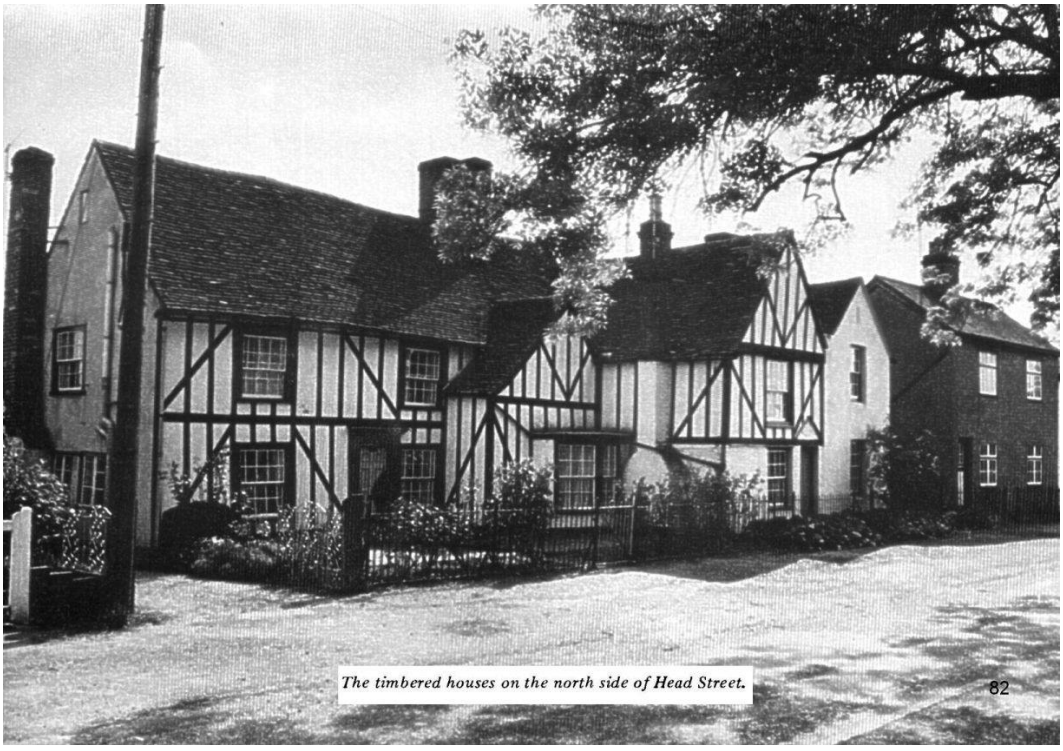
The figures from 1801 (population)–1901 are taken from the *Victoria County History.*

APPENDIX II

Names of houses and places found in deeds of properties

Deeds of the property on the south side of Head Street where the Wesleyan Chapel, the two old adjoining timbered houses, and two bungalows now stand, refer between 1746 and 1758 to two houses called MARRINERS and CRABTREE, references to CRABTREE HOUSE continuing until 1894. An entry of 1857 refers to a house called LEVERS. A manorial document of 20 August 1894 lists several pieces of land: '1¼ acres called RAINBOW FIELD having formerly been part of 3 acres of ground called MERCHANTS situate in Goldhanger in or near the street or lane leading from the public house called the Chequers to the ANCHOR CHANNEL; 6 rods . . . CRABTREE HOUSE with outbuildings, and LEVERS.'

Deeds of the Mill House property next to the Chequers at the top of Fish Street referred in 1743, 1764 and 1765 to a tenement with garden and orchard being part of a messuage or tenement garden and orchard called SILLIDS. This name is not mentioned again until a summary of the property was made in 1860 when tenements are listed as the two parts of a messuage tenement garden and orchard called SILLIERS.



The timbered houses on the north side of Head Street.

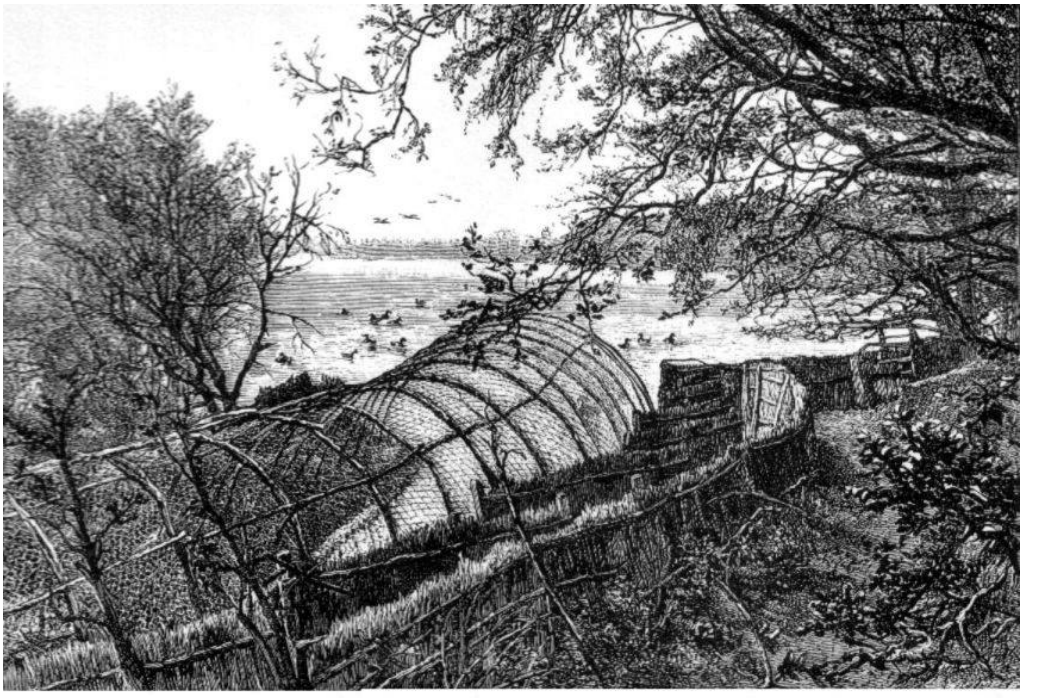
APPENDIX III

The method of working decoy ponds

Abridged from *The Birds of Essex*, by Miller Christy (1890)

The pond was of octopus shape, having around six arms or pipes extending from it, some 8 yards in width on leaving the pond, but narrowing to half a yard at the extremity, and covered by tarred netting stretched on wooden hoops. A series of screens made of reeds hide the decoyman from the birds. As the birds would move only into the wind, the decoyman was obliged to use the pipes from which the wind was blowing, and to prevent the birds scenting his presence he would hold a piece of lighted turf before his mouth. Then whistling to his tame ducks, he would throw a few handfuls of food over the screens to fall in the entry to the pipe. The wild ducks, seeing the tame ducks feeding, would come to join them and be enticed further up the pipe with more food. When well away from the wild birds still on the pond, the decoyman would run back to the head of the pipe, suddenly show himself and wave his hat, causing the birds in the pipe to rise and fly to the top of the tunnel, where the bend suggested a means of escape. The tame birds did not rise, but swam in a leisurely way back to the pond. The captured birds were too frightened to make a noise and the birds on the pond were unconcerned, assuming they had flown away. Having removed the captured birds and put them to death, the decoyman made another catch by using his dog to lure the birds up the pipe. The dog would jump over the screens to pick up a piece of bread or cheese thrown in beside the net, and then disappear behind the screens, reappearing at intervals at points increasingly far from the pond. Such was the curiosity of the birds that they followed up the pipe, to be finally driven into flight as in the previous method by the decoyman's waving hat.

This method was ineffective for the Pochard (or Dunbird) because it does not rise in flight when alarmed, but dives, and so would swim back under water to the pond. Where considerable numbers of Pochard could be expected large nets would be set horizontally between poles, providing as with the pipes for different wind directions. The poles were set on pivots so weighted that they could be raised the moment a flock of birds left the pond at dusk. The flock, striking the net, then fell into baskets or pens placed underneath. Great numbers of Pochard were caught in this way, and the spoils from these various methods of trapping were sent day by day to Leadenhall market.



View of a decoy-pond and entrance to pipe

85 *End of a decoy-pipe (from* The Birds of Essex *by Miller Christy)*

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(ERO = Essex Record Office; PRO = Public Record Office)

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