

A Story Prompted by a Teaspoon



Sometime during the winter of 1792/93 a house at what is now known as Butley High Corner burned down. The house, a barn and some four acres of land were copyhold owned by the lord of Kettleburgh Manor. The copyholder was Robert Blomfield of Hemley who also had property in Woodbridge and three other parishes. He was also a copyholder of an acre of land belonging to Butley Manor, known as Shoulder of Mutton. The two comprised Woodhouse Close and Robert had inherited both parts from Jane Bird, who died in 1785.

She, when aged 12 in 1731 had received both from her mother Maria Johnson. Jane was married firstly to William Clarke and then to Tyrrel Bird, who she married in Hemley in 1755. He farmed in Falkenham and had a son from a previous marriage, also named Tyrrel Bird, who married Sarah Girling in 1766, a year before the death of his father.

After the fire there was correspondence between two solicitors, Rede and Kilderbee beginning on 22 February 1793 and ending the following May. Rede wrote that the house had to be rebuilt by Blomfield or the copyhold would be forfeited. He referred to 'Bacon's Abridgement' which said 'the burning of a house by negligence or mischance is waste'.

Blomfield had been admitted in person and it had been burnt since his admission. Then, in May, William Baker of Tunstall wrote to Kilderbee to say Mr. Blomfield would not pay five guineas as compensation for the loss of the house. Eventually

in October Lord Archibald Hamilton bought the copyhold, paying £20 13s. 6d. which included the five guineas.

