Before the Five Bells, Vange, Essex.
1690—1769



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The Tooker family (sometimes spelled Tucker) holds a prominent place in the 17th-century history of Vange, Essex, primarily as wealthy landowners, manorial lords and influential clergymen tied to the local parish.

Historical Overview & Manorial Ownership

During the early 1600s, the Tooker family acquired the **Manor of Vange**, an ancient marsh land estate propositioned between Pitsea and Fobbing.

Charles Tooker, Esp.: He was a wealthy gentleman who held the united Manor of Vange until his death on 20th August 1625.

Robert Tooker: He was the son and direct heir to Charles. Following his father's passing, Robert inherited the manorial rights. In 1639, exercising his rights as the patron (lord of the Manor), he officially presented" (appointed) a new Rector to Vange Church.

Christina Tooker: The widow of the family, she maintained control over the parish appointments later in the century, presenting a new Rector to the parish in 1669.

Ecclesiastical Ties to All Saints Church

The family line directly intersected with the prominent academic and churchman William Tooker, D.D. (1558–1621), the Dean of Lichfield and a celebrated Latin scholar.
His son, also named Robert Tooker (1597–1687), was a scholar who moved into Essex and served directly as the Rector of Vange beginning in 1625.

Through these roles, the family heavily influenced the operations of All Saints Church, Vange, which remains one of the oldest structural landmarks in the Vange today.

Tooker family, Vange, Essex.

In 1669, Christina Tooker officially appointed Vange's new Rector.

She was prominent Tooker family widow She held the legal right to choose local priests.

(This proof confirms her family ruled Vange manor during this era).

Tooker Family Land Timeline

1625: Charles Tooker dies owning Vange manor.

1639: Heir Robert Tooker appoints a Rector (George Maul).

1669: Widow Christina Tooker appoints a Rector (John Tooker).

Later: Manor passes to Viscount Paul Bayning

Connection to the Blacksmith Forge Land Ownership:

Tookers owned all Vange infrastructure.

Parish Rights: They managed local church property.

Estate Sale: The family eventually sold off parcels.

The 1690 Deeds: This breakup created the forge deeds

After the death of Christina Tooker in 1669, Vange Manor was divided up two thirds and advowson (or right of presentation to the rectory) fell to Godfrey Thacker.

This man sold it to James Marreners who, by his will, left it to his wife during her life, and at her decease to his two daughters, Ann and Rebecca. The former married John Wingfield, while Rebecca married Charles Smith, who afterwards purchased Ann's part to add to his own lot. Now the other One third of this estate went to one William Aylett of Stifford. Two other people Belton Neville and Richard Barnard, likewise owed land in the parish.

Taken from Vange parish History

The Imperial Gazetteer of England and Wales by Rev. John Marius Wilson

The following Deeds have been transcribed and summarized by Google Ai. From the original Deeds. Held at the Essex Records Office, Chelmsford, Essex.

Transcription from the Deeds of 1690.

25th and 26th days of Sepr.1690.

Godfrey Thacker Esq and wife

To

William Wheatley and Wife

Attested Copies of Lease and Release of the

Manor of Vange and a farm and Lands

In the said Manor and Parish of

Vange in the County of Essex.

Summary of the Documents *(Google Ai from original 1690 deeds).*

These documents are attested copies (made in 1709) of a 17th century English property transaction Known as a Lease and Release and a Feoffment, dated 25th and 26th September 1690.

The transaction records the outright sale of the Manor of Vange in Essex from Godfrey Thacker and His wife Mary to William Wheatley (a London goldsmith) and his wife Anne for the sum of £441 1s 6p.

Modern English Translation & key details.

Because the original text was written in archaic early English legal jargon, it has been translated and simplified into clear modern terms below.

Core Transaction Details.

Date of the original Deed: 25th and 26th September 1690 (during the second year of the reign of King William III and Queen Mary II).

Date of three copies: 7th September 1709 (certified as true copies by witnesses John Gibbs of Billericay and Felton Vanderzee. Of the same.

The Buyers: (Grantees): William Wheatley, citizen and goldsmith of London and his wife Anne. Purchase price £441, 1 shilling and 6 pence.

Property Transferred.

The deeds transfer full ownership of the following real estate located in Vange (alias Fange) Essex.

The Manor of Vange: including all its royalties, courts, quit-rents, and privileges.

The Church Patronage (Advowson): The right to appoint the rector of the parish church of Vange every third turn.

Main Farm and Woodlands: A farmhouse (messuage) and land estimated at 60 acres (three score Acres), previously occupied by a widow named Grace Samuel, and now occupied by a yeoman farmer named Ralph Simpson .

The Blacksmith's Forge: A cottage built upon the waste ground used as a smith's shop, formally held by Thomas Lore and currently managed by the churchwardens and the parish overseers.

The Churchwardens and Overseers: by 1690, the property had transitioned to the civic and religious administrators of the parish. In 17th century England, churchwardens and Overseers of the poor often acquired or leased properties to generate rental income for the parish poor funds or to utilize as parish storehouse/workhouses. (Freeola).

Summary of the Documents continued *(Google Ai from original 1690 deeds).*

Legal Mechanisms and Conditions.

The lease (page 2-3): To bypass certain medieval land taxes, the sellers first "leased" the property to the buyers for 1 year for the token payment of 5 shillings and a rent of one single peppercorn. This legally put the buyers in possession of the land.

The Release/Feoffment Executed the very next day, this document finalized the absolute sale, re- leasing the full inheritance (fee simple) to William and Anne Wheatly forever.

Existing Encumbrance: The documents note that the property is sold clear of all prior encumbrances, Except for one pre-existing mortgage of £300 plus interest owed to Mary Irwin, which was originally taken out by Godfrey Thacker in 1685.

In historical property deeds like this one, the names mentioned outside of the primary buyers and sellers represent the local inhabitants, previous owners, or current working tenants of the estate.

They were explicitly written into the text to clearly define the property boundaries, usage rights, and operational history.

Based on the legal text of this 1690 document, there is what we can determine about Grace Samuel and Ralph Simpson

Grace Samuel (Widow) ?.

Her Role: She was a previous tenant who had direct occupancy of the land.

Context in the Deed: The text refers to lands and pastures " belonging lately in the tenure and occupation of Grace Samuel, Widow.

What this tells us: In 17th-century legal terms, "tenure and occupation means she physically lived on, managed or farmed a portion of the estate's lands. Her status as a "widow" is legally significant; during this era, widows frequently maintained control over their late husbands' lease agreements or dower lands, making them prominent figures in local manorial records.

In the baptism registers of All Saints Church, Vange, Essex. It shows a Gratia Samuel baptised in May 1654. And he was buried there on the March 1703. Also in the church records there was a Jacobi Samuel buried in September 1670, and a Gratia Samuel buried 12th September 1682 his or her Parents?.

Gratia is Latin and the English translation was Grace.

Ralph Simpson (Yeoman)

His Role: He was the active, current tenant working the estate at the time the document was written {September 1690).

Context in the Deed: The text states the properties are· now in the tenure and occupation of Ralph Simpson, Yeoman·.

21st March 1702 there is a entry in the Holy Cross Church, in Basildon, Essex. Under burial Ralph Simson.?

What this tells us: His title as a Yeoman provides great historical insight into his social standing. A Yeoman was a distinct social class in early modem England-above a common peasant or labourer, but below the gentry. It means Ralph was a respectable, relatively prosperous farmer or tradesman who legally held or rented land, likely managing the day-to-day agricultural operations livestock, and workers across the Manor of Vange.

Original Transaction Dates: 21st and 22nd September 1695 (7th year of the reign of King William III).

Summary of the Documents *(Google Ai from original 1695 deeds).*

The provided document image set represents an exceptionally well-preserved set of late 17th-century contemporary attested legal copies, transcribed and certified in September 1709. The documents detail a standard English property conveyance using a legal framework known as a Lease and Release.

The Parties:

Sellers: John Mortimer of Newington green, Middlesex (Victualler) and his wife, Ann Mortimer (who was the widow and executrix of William Wheatley, a prominent Citizen and Goldsmith of London).

Buyer: James Parker of London, Gentleman.

The Property: The Manor of Vange (historically written as *Vange als Fange*) situated in the county of Essex. The sale includes a central messuage (tenement/farmhouse), extensive agricultural land totalling approximately 65 acres (under the active tenancy of Michael Stephens, yeoman), and a separate cottage built on the manorial waste functioning as a Smith's Shop or Forge cottage, and the advowson (the right to appoint the parish priest).

The Terms: The initial 1 year lease was grated for a nominal 5 shillings to establish legal possession. The outright ownership (the Release) was transferred the following day for £350, part of which was Used to settle an existing quadripartite mortgage from 1691.

Debt Settlement: The deed notes that out of the £350 purchase price, an existing £159 mortgage dating back to April 3, 1691 (contracted by Ann's late husband William Wheatley) was to be paid off to ensure a clear title.

The scribes/Witnesses: Document copies were certified in 1709 by John Gibbs of Billericay, Essex And Felton Vanderzee also from Billericay.

Original Transaction Dates: 21st and 22nd September 1698 (10th year of the reign of King William III).

Summary of the Documents *(*Google Ai from original 1698 deeds).

Parties Involved:

The Vendors: James Parker of London, Gentleman, and Margaret Parker, his wife.

The Purchaser: Francis Aylett of Basildon, County of Essex, Yeoman

The Core Transaction :

The manuscript contains two legal instruments forming a standard English "Lease and Release" mechanism, designed to convey ownership without requiring physical entry onto the land:

Property and Assets Disposed:

The Manor of Vange: Absolute lordship, rights and members of the manor.

A Messuage or Tenement: A farmhouse and lands spanning approximately 65 acres of arable land, Meadow, pasture and woodland (occupied by tenant Micheal Stevens).

A cottage: built upon the waste lands, formally used as a smith's shop or forge.

Manorial Rights: All associated courts baron, view of frankpledge, quitrents, services, and the Advowson (the legal right to appoint/nominate the rector) of the parish church of Vange.

The Lease for a Year (21st September 1698):

James and Margaret Parker leased the Manor of Vange to Francis Aylett for a nominal fee of five shillings, and a rent of one peppercorn. This lease establishes a temporary legal possession for one year, enabling Aylett to legally accept a permanent transfer of the land.

The Release (22nd September 1698):

Executed the following day, this deed permanently transfers the absolute property ownership ("in fee simple") to Francis Aylett and his heirs forever. This finalized the sale in consideration of £103 paid directly to James Parker, alongside the resolution of a prior £250 mortgage held on the Land by Henry Coleman. Bringing the total valuation to £353.

Attesting Witnesses/Scribes: John Gibbs (of Billericay in Essex) and Felton Vanderzee the same.

Micheal Stevens Yeoman: 1695—1698 ?.

AI Mode conversation: Micheal Stevens Yeoman 1695 - 1698, Vange, Essex

Historical records identify Michael Stevens as a yeoman (a land-owning farmer) who lived in the parish of Vange during the late 17th century, explicitly documented between 1695 and 1698.

Social Status: As a yeoman, Michael Stevens was a freeholder who owned and cultivated his own land. He occupied a respectable social class just below the landed gentry, meaning he was relatively wealthy, influential in local parish affairs, and legally eligible to vote or serve on juries.

The Location: During the 1690s, Vange was a small, rural, marshland parish in southern Essex. Yeomen in this area typically managed agricultural lands, livestock, and profitable salt marshes or wharves.

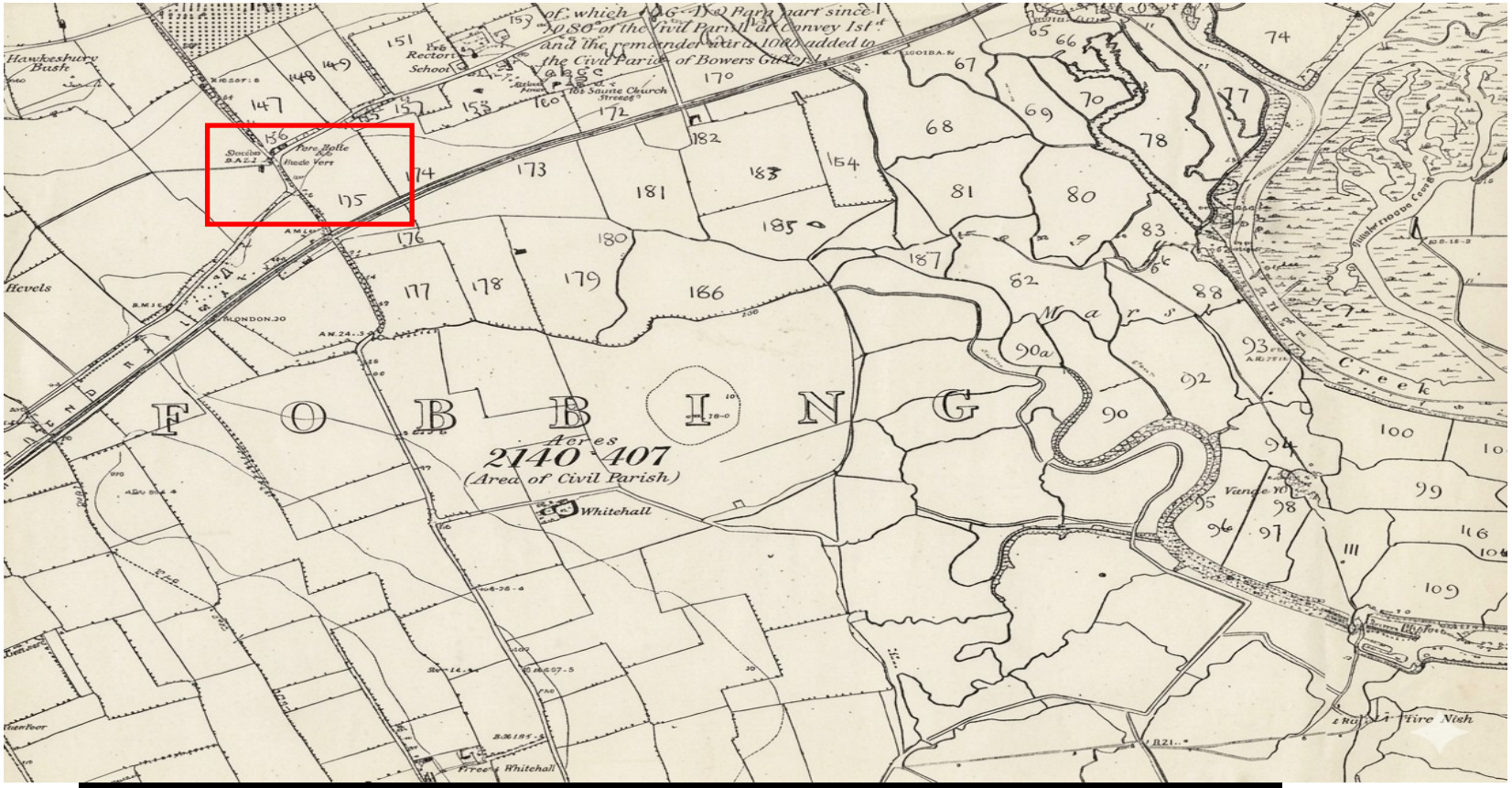
The Timeline (1695–1698): This specific date range strongly indicates that Michael Stevens appeared in surviving local tax tallies, land deeds, or court records. Notably, this overlaps with the **Marriage Duty Act of 1695**, which required parishes to keep meticulous census-like lists of all residents to levy taxes on births, marriages, and burials.

Quarter Sessions: Yeomen frequently served as constables, jurors, or surveyors. The ERO houses "Quarter Sessions" records where his name may appear for local civic duties between 1695 and 1698.

The first mention of The Five Bells is in the Ale house Recognizances of 1769, it is not to say it was a ale house before that ?.

Barstable Hundred: 1769 Vange, William West. Five Bells.

The Tithe Award Place-names of Vange – by Parcel No.



Place name	Alias		Fld no	Owner	Occupier
The Bells Inn	The Five Bells	1777,	156	Richard Hatly Crabb	Henry Brown

Place name	Alias	Fld no	Owner	Occupier
Large Bells Field		175	Joseph Pock-lington	Thomas Pockling-ton

The Tithe

The tithe was an annual payment of an agreed proportion *(originally one-tenth)* of the yearly produce of the land, which was payable by parishioners to the parish church, to support it and its clergyman. Originally tithes were paid 'in kind' *(wool, milk, honey, fish, barley etc)* and were payable on 3 categories of produce:

All things which grew and which increased annually e.g. grain, vegetables and wood.

All things which were nourished by the ground - lambs, calves etc. - and animal produce like milk, hides, eggs and wool.

The produce of man's labour - particularly the profits of mills and fishing

Tithes were also categorized as being great and small. Great tithes, from corn, other grains, hay and wood, commonly payable to the Rector of a Parish, were also called 'Rectoral Tithes'. Rectors were often remote from the parishes, so a new deputy or vicar was appointed to act as the parish priest. Because the vicar was not entitled to the great tithe, it was usual to provide him with the small tithes, worth about a third of the total tithe of the parish, as a basis for a living Small tithes, from all other things which grew, like vegetables, fruit, hops, also animals and animal produce, and milling and fishing profits, commonly payable to the Vicar of a Parish, also called 'Vicarial Tithes'. The difference in income between the Rector and the Vicar could be quite considerable, with the bulk of the tithe income often going to an absentee Rector. Some Vicars did their utmost to in- crease their income by making such produce as acorns or fallen apples tithable! At the dissolution of the monasteries in the early 1500s, many of the great tithes, rectoral tithes, passed into the hands of laymen, who became the new owners of the church land and its accompanying rectoral tithes.

By 1836 tithes were still payable in most of the parishes in England and Wales, but the Government had decided on the commutation of tithes, the substitution of money payments for payment 'in kind' all over the country, and the Tithe Commutation Act was passed in 1836. Three Tithe Commissioners were appointed and the long process of commutation began, with Assistant Commissioners stationed around the country to oversee implementation of the Act. The Act proposed a fluctuating money payment adjusted each year and based on the average price of wheat, barley, and oats.

A survey of the whole of England and Wales was therefore necessary. Enquiries were sent to every parish and township listed in the census returns, and meetings took place all over the country to find out how much commutation had already taken place. The Commissioners then established Tithe Districts to distinguish them from parishes. Most Tithe Districts corresponded with parishes, but the Commissioners could, if necessary, form separate districts. Many parish boundaries came under close scrutiny, perhaps for the first time in centuries, and maps showing these were drawn up. These were the Tithe Maps. This huge effort to survey the country in the 1840s gives us the first detailed view of the rural landscape of England and Wales.

Acertified copy is dated 1709 because that is the exact year the clerk officially copied and verified the original 1690,1695 and 1698 document's (*Google Ai).*

Here is why a gap in dates happens with historical records

Purpose of a Certified

Official Verification: A clerk copied the original text into public records to secure the title.

True Copy: The 1709 date proves when the copy was verified against the original.

Legal Backup: The copy acted as a legally valid backup if the 1695 original was lost or destroyed.

Dictionary:

*A **feoffment:** (or enfeoffment) was the traditional legal method used in medieval English common law to transfer the ownership of freehold land. It represents the total relinquishment of property rights from one party to another, granting the new owner a free inheritance (fee simple) that they could sell or pass down to their heirs .*

*A **peppercorn rent:** is a purely nominal or token payment (such as £1 a year or literally one pepper-corn) used to create a legally binding lease agreement when no actual rental income is intended.*

*A **grantee:** is a person, institution, or organisation that **receives a grant, property, or legal right** from a grantor. The exact rights and responsibilities of a grantee depend on the context of the transaction.*

*An **advowson**:(or patronage) is the right under English law to nominate or "present" a qualified member of the clergy to a vacant parish or church living.*

***Frankplege:** was a system of joint suretyship and collective responsibility used in medieval England to maintain law and order. Under this system, communities were divided into small groups—typically consisting of ten households, known as a **tithing**—where every male member over the age of 12 was held legally responsible for the conduct of the others. If any member of the tithing committed a crime and fled, the remaining members were compelled by law to pursue them or pay a heavy fine to the* king [or local lord].

Quitrent Or "Quitrenys": appears to be a minor typo or variant spelling for "Quit-rents" (or Quitrents), which refers to an ancient form of land tax or symbolic payment dating back to medieval feudal law. Under English feudal law, a quit-rent was a fixed monetary payment made by a tenant to a superior landlord or the Crown. This fee formally "quit" or freed the tenant from performing other customary obligations, such as compulsory manual labour or military service.

Continued over

A Court Baron: was the principal English manorial court of the Middle Ages that regulated local land tenure, enforced feudal obligations, and resolved civil disputes within a lord's estate. Governed by the custom of the manor, it served as the essential administrative and legal backbone of the manorial system. While it slowly lost its practical authority to centralized common law courts over the centuries, its remnants survived until the official abolition of copyhold land tenure in 1922, and the courts remain today strictly as ceremonial entities.

Attested copy: is a duplicate of an original document that has been officially verified and signed by an authorized professional (such as a notary public, solicitor, or gazetted officer) to confirm it is an accurate and true reproduction.

While "attested copy" and "certified copy" are often used interchangeably in everyday language, they have distinct legal definitions depending on the jurisdiction.

Gazetted Officer: is a high-ranking government official whose appointment, promotion, or transfer is formally published in an official government journal known as the Government Gazette. Primarily used in India and a few other Commonwealth nations, these officers derive their executive authority directly from the head of state (the President of India or State Governors).

Messuage:- A dwelling house with outbuildings and land assigned to its use.

Appurtenances:- The rights and duties appended to an agreement over holding land, especially within a “Manor”. These include rights of grazing, other rights on the commons and wastes, and the obligation to abide by the customs and regulations of the manor. Copyhold or leasehold property was often described as a messuage or tenement with appurtenances.

Fee simple: (historically "fee simple absolute in possession") is the highest, most complete form of property ownership recognized by common law. When you own land or real estate in fee simple, you own both the property and the land it sits on outright, with no time limit or expiration date. In every day language, this is commonly referred to as freehold ownership.

Continued over

Quadripartite mortgage (or quadripartite agreement/deed): refers to a legally binding real estate contract or property-secured loan involving four distinct parties. Unlike a standard bilateral mortgage (just a borrower and a lender), a quadripartite structure legally ties all four entities to specific obligations, rights, and protections concerning the property and the financing.

Pitsea shop was once the village forge:

Some of the oldest business premises in Basildon are the village smithies. At Vange Bells the smithy is mentioned in the title deeds of 1690 as "a smith' shop

Or forge lately in the tenure of Thomas Lore and now of the churchwardens and overseers of the parish of Vange. "In 1786 Philip West, the Vange blacksmith, also held the Five Bells at a yearly rent of £14. 8 shillings.

From Jessie Payne June 1957

VANGE BOOKLETS

All Saints Church Hall 1931 £2.10

Barges at Vange Wharf £2.10

Cashes Well No5 £2.10

John (Paddy) Hemingway £1.50

The Barge Inn 1832 – 2015 £2.50

The Bull Public House 1878— 1961 £1.50

The Vange Crystal Well £1.50

Vange Board School 1876 £5.80

Vange Fire Station 1934 – 1962 £3.90

Vange Hall Brick Works 1886—1921 £3.30

Vange Reservoir & Southend Water Company £2.00

Vange Swimming Pool 1933-1952 £2.00

The Shops of Vange London Road & High Road £5.00

The 1st Pitsea and Vange Scouts 1913—1970 £4.50

3rd Battalion Essex Home Guard. Vange and Pitsea. £2.80

Royal Observer Corps, Monitoring Post, Vange, Essex. £2.10

BASILDON BOOKLET

Locarno Mecca Dancing £6.00 1961 - 1971

PITSEA BOOKLETS

W. J. Wager Dairies £1.50

Tuskite Works Pitsea Hall Lane £1.50

Broadway Cinema 1930—1970 £3.00

Pitsea United 1909—1971 £8.70

The Old Pitsea Market 1924—1969 £2.60

Pitsea Shop's along the High Road part 1, The Bridge to Old Parsonage. £4.50

BASILDON HERITAGE

A Future for our Past

Ken Porter 07968 313614

Kenneth.f.porter@gmail.com

jo-cullen@mail.com

Mobile 07552 947687

FaceBook: Basildon Heritage

www.basildonheritage.org.uk

basildonheritage@outlook.com

Basildon Heritage
The Green Centre
Wat Tyler Country Park
Pitsea Hall Lane
Pitsea, Basildon
Essex.
SS16 4UH.

Monday & Wednesday's 10am—12pm

Saturdays 10am—3pm

Basildon Council
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