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EARLY ENGLISH HISTORY OF BREWOOD, GUNSTONE, FOWKE FAMILIES & PROPERTIES

*References mainly include: Domesday Book Records -
British History Online - Brewood: Introduction, manors and agriculture;
 Brewood: Churches, schools and charities;
Genuki Website - Brewood Parish: 1834 Directory.*

Early history documents produce a bewildering array of explanations, ancient word usages, meanings and spellings. An understanding of what many of these mean in modern terminology is most important in order to fully appreciate the complexity of many of the situations. It is hoped that the following information and explanations will be of interest and assist the reader in adding to their understanding of this very early, and complex family history.

Meaning of Words 'manor', 'messuage' and 'capital messuage'

The word 'manor' in early documents has the meaning of land tenure (manorialism) and a particular manor, referring to a land area, could contain several villages and hundreds of households. These days this word can be confused with 'Manor', as in 'Manor House', the house of a lord or important person, etc.

The word 'messuage' refers to a specific dwelling with its outbuildings and possibly some adjacent land. A manor (area) could contain several 'messuages', each occupied by a different family. Not all such messuages would be owned by the occupier. Messuages could be traded, meaning sold, bequeathed, named as part of an estate in a Will, rented or leased.

The words 'capital messuage' refer to that dwelling occupied by the owner of that particular messuage, together with its outbuildings and possibly some adjacent land.

As the centuries passed, portions of the original manor lands were separated, then separated again, by sale of woods or ponds or of land only, or by sale of messuages and capital messuages, or by sale of dwellings on small title with no significant land attached. Of course the property owners could, in turn, trade them or occupy them, as they saw fit.

Note: Where appropriate in these notes the word 'manor' is used without a capital when referring to an area of land.

The manor of BREWOOD (Breude) and Associated Families

The manor of Brewood was among the possessions of the Church of Lichfield prior to the Conquest of 1066, and in 1086 was held by the Bishop. King Henry II also granted to the Church 80 acres of asserted land from the royal forest some time after 1135, probably about 1155. After centuries of trading, what was left of the manor of Brewood remained with the Bishops of Lichfield until 1852 when it passed to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

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Enquiries encouraged. Corrections and additions gratefully accepted. Click on email link below.
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DECLARATION

The information contained within these pages is based on data supplied from many sources. Whilst every effort has been made to be accurate not all the connections and facts are guaranteed 'officially proven', either by the submitters, or by the Editors.