

John Bocking 1719 - 1787

1719 John Bocking was born and named after his grandfather. He was the fifth child for Thomas and Susanna. George I was king. Before he was baptised in 1724, there was a local smallpox epidemic, scarlet fever plus the threat of diphtheria.

John was born in Bulmer, and his descendants were here for the next 220 years. Some of John's landscape still survives: Wiggery Wood; the church, the road layout; the farms: Smeetham Hall, Goldringham Hall, the Auberies; and some of the sturdier cottages and barns. There were many Bockings in Bulmer and also in the neighbouring Belchamps.

1750 Mr and Mrs Andrews were painted by Gainsborough. They lived at The Auberies, in Bulmer, and owned almost 3,000 acres, including most of the land visible in the painting. Their circumstances were in contrast to John and his family who were agricultural labourers with no land, few belongings and no security.



Gainsborough painted Mr and Mrs Andrews

In rural areas, the powers of landowners were extensive, with thefts of livestock and horses punished severely. Murder, burglary, highway robbery, horse theft and sheep theft could be punished with death.

1750 On January 1st John married Sarah Digby from Gestingthorpe.

1752 and **1755** John and Sarah had a daughter (Sarah) and a son (John)

1757 and **1760** and **1762** They had three more children.

1787 John died and was buried in Bulmer churchyard. He was 68