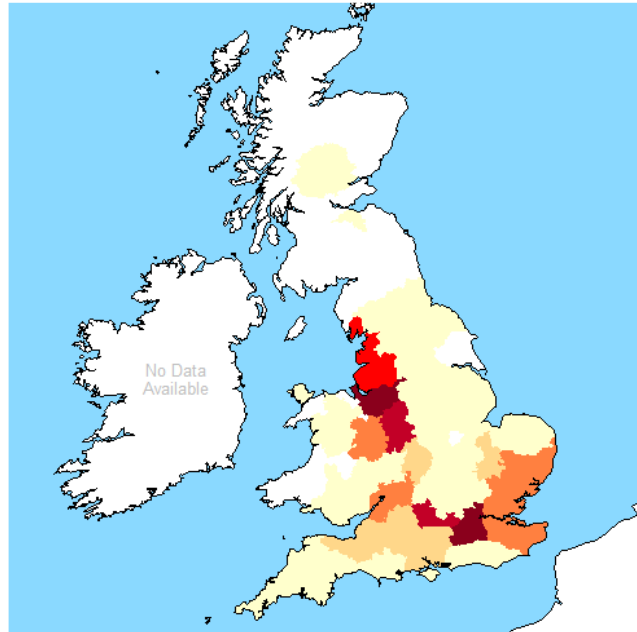


ARCHER-BOWYER

The surname Bowyer is derived from an occupation; the bowyer being the maker or seller of the bows.¹ Most people with the surname Bowyer originate in Berkshire.² The Bowyer family line begins with five times great grandparents **Abraham Bowyer** and his wife **Margaret**. Abraham was born about 1731³ and Margaret six years later.⁴ Margaret may have been Margaret, the daughter of Thomas Fox, who was baptised in Chipping Ongar, Essex on the 3rd of August 1737⁵ but this cannot be proven and no marriage has been found.



Distribution of the Surname Bowyer

Abraham and Margaret had five children baptised in the parish of St. Germain's, Bobbingworth⁶

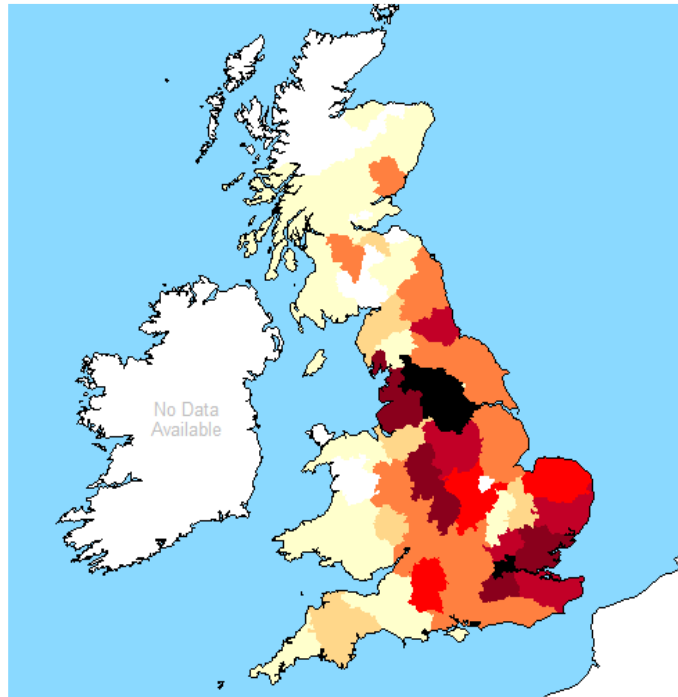
Essex. Their daughters were Elizabeth who was baptised on the 30th of December 1759 and Margaret who was baptised on the 17th of April 1763⁷ and buried at Bobbingworth on the 7th of January 1787.⁸ These were followed by three sons, Abraham baptised on the 16th of February 1766,⁹ four times great grandfather **John**, who was baptised on the 10th of December 1769¹⁰ and James who was baptised on the 2nd of April 1772.¹¹

Very little is known about Abraham and Margaret. Margaret was buried at Bobbingworth on the 1st of January 1786.¹² Abraham survived her by nearly thirty years and was buried on the 19th of July 1815, also at Bobbingworth.¹³

John Bowyer married **Mary Archer** at St. Margaret's, Stanford Rivers on the 11th of February 1792.¹⁴ Archer is a surname that is found predominantly in Essex and

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- 1 P. H. Reaney, *A Dictionary of Surnames* Routledge and Kegan Paul 1958; Basil Cottle, *The Penguin Dictionary of Surnames* Penguin 2nd edition 1978; Mark Anthony Lower *A Dictionary of Surnames* Wordsworth editions Ltd. 1860.
 - 2 *The Surname Atlas* Archer Software (2003).
 - 3 Burial register for Bobbingworth, Essex D/P 127/1/15 image 4.
 - 4 Burial register for Bobbingworth, Essex D/P 127/1/2 image 8.
 - 5 Baptism register for St. Martin of Tours, Chipping Ongar, Essex D/P 124/1/1 image 57.
 - 6 Bobbingworth is also known as Bovinger.
 - 7 Baptism register for St. Germain's, Bobbingworth, Essex D/P 127/1/1.
 - 8 Burial register for Bobbingworth, Essex D/P 127/1/2.
 - 9 Baptism register for St. Germain's, Bobbingworth, Essex D/P 127/1/1.
 - 10 Baptism register for St. Germain's, Bobbingworth, Essex D/P 127/1/1 image 39.
 - 11 Baptism register for St. Germain's, Bobbingworth, Essex D/P 127/1/1.
 - 12 Burial register for Bobbingworth, Essex D/P 127/1/2 image 8.
 - 13 Burial register for Bobbingworth, Essex D/P 127/1/15 image 4.
 - 14 Marriage register for St. Margaret's Stanford Rivers, Essex D/P 140/1/4 image 37.

Suffolk.¹⁵ Initially, the name was probably given to someone who was particularly skilled as an archer.¹⁶ The earliest ancestors in this line are five times great grandparents **John** and **Elizabeth Archer**. Their baptisms and marriage have yet to be found. They had six children baptised at St. Margaret's, Stanford Rivers, Essex. Elizabeth was baptised on the 1st of May 1765. Mary was baptised on the 30th of November 1769. John was baptised on the 16th of November 1772. Thomas was baptised on the 28th of September 1774. William was baptised on the 18th of December 1776 and Sarah was baptised on the 20th of October 1779.¹⁷



Distribution of the Surname Archer



St. Margaret's, Stanford Rivers

John may well have been the John Archer who was buried in Epping, Essex on the 7th of April 1792 aged 66, making him born 1725/6.¹⁸ If this is indeed five times great grandfather, then perhaps he was in Epping with his newly married daughter, Mary. In the 1730s The infamous Gregory Gang, with whom Dick Turpin was associated, were based in Epping Forest and it was here that Turpin committed the murder that resulted in his flight to York.¹⁹

St. Margaret's Church is located away from the two main settlements in the parish of Stanford Rivers. These are at Toot Hill and Little End but there is no way of knowing where in the parish the Archers lived.

¹⁵ *The Surname Atlas* Archer Software (2003).

¹⁶ P. H. Reaney, *A Dictionary of Surnames* Routledge and Kegan Paul 1958; Basil Cottle, *The Penguin Dictionary of Surnames* Penguin 2nd edition 1978; Mark Anthony Lower *A Dictionary of Surnames* Wordsworth editions Ltd. 1860.

¹⁷ www.familysearch.org.

¹⁸ National Burial Index via www.findmypast.co.uk

¹⁹ <http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk> accessed 8 January 2008.



All Saints, Epping

John and Mary Bowyer née Archer's, eldest son, **John**, was born two months after his parents' marriage, on the 22nd of April 1792 and baptised on the 13th of May 1792 at All Saints, Epping, Essex.²⁰ This was what is now known as Epping Uplands, more than two miles away from what became the busy Victorian town of Epping. Epping Uplands was 'pleasantly situate on elevated ground near the extensive forest to which it gives its name'.²¹ John and Mary had another son, Thomas, baptised on the 25th of December 1796, also at Epping.²² In 1794, a William, son of John and Ann Bowyer was baptised in Epping²³ and this may be an incorrect entry for another child of John and Mary.

Mary was buried in Epping on the 27th September 1798 at the age of twenty nine.²⁴ John too died young, being buried on the 18th December 1808, aged thirty nine, also in Epping.²⁵ Their two confirmed sons would then only have been sixteen and twelve; who might have taken responsibility for them?

Three times great grandfather, John Bowyer junior was a shoemaker,²⁶ a notoriously nomadic occupation and he appears to have begun a migration eastwards. On the 25th of December 1822, when he married **Ann Oliver**²⁷ at All Saints, Norton Mandeville, Essex, he was described as being 'of Chipping Ongar', Essex.²⁸ Chipping Ongar was a small market town, about seven miles east of Epping.²⁹ Ann was of Norton Mandeville and both were able to sign the register. The witnesses, who also signed, were Thomas and



St. Martin of Tours, Chipping Ongar

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- 20 Baptism register for All Saints, Epping, Essex D/P 302/1/7 image 18.
 - 21 Facsimile edition of Pigot and Co.s National and Commercial Directory for Essex 1839.
 - 22 Baptism register for All Saints, Epping, Essex D/P 302/1/7.
 - 23 www.familysearch.org.
 - 24 Burial register for All Saints, Epping, Essex D/P 302/1/10 image 28.
 - 25 Burial register for All Saints, Epping, Essex D/P 302/1/10 image 46.
 - 26 1841 census for Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex HO107 326/14 folio 40. 1851 census for Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex HO107 1776 folio 74
 - 27 See Oliver paper.
 - 28 Marriage register for All Saints, Norton Mandeville, Essex D/P 267/1/4 image 5.
 - 29 Facsimile edition of Pigot and Co.s National and Commercial Directory for Essex 1839.

Rebecca Oliver.³⁰ There may well have been some children born during the early years of this marriage but the only ones who have been identified are those born in Writtle, Essex, which was where Ann had been baptised, on the 22nd of September 1799.³¹ Ann did have an illegitimate daughter, recorded as Baker Elizabeth Oliver, who was baptised at Norton Mandeville on the 11th of March 1821. It seems unlikely that she was also John's child.³²



All Saints, Writtle Font

Six children have been found for John and Ann Bowyer. The eldest of these, **Mary Archer** was baptised at Writtle on the 7th of August 1831.³³ In 1841, Mary Archer was at home with her parents at Cooks Mill Green Writtle.³⁴ The hamlet of Cook's Mill Green is a couple of miles east of the centre of Writtle. Mary Archer Bowyer went into service in Chelmsford and was in the household of Mary Ann Green, in London Street, in 1851.³⁵ On the 2nd of April 1855 she married **Thomas Dawson** at the Old Meeting House, Baddow Lane Chelmsford, Essex³⁶ and her story continues under Dawson.³⁷

John and Ann's eldest son, Joseph, was born about 1832/3 in Writtle and he can be found with his parents at Cooks Mill Green in 1841.³⁸ Ten years later he was still at home and was a shoemaker like his father.³⁹ He was able to sign his name when he witnessed the marriage of his sister Mary Archer in 1855.⁴⁰ He remained at home, almost certainly in the same house, with his widowed mother, Ann, in 1861 and was still working as a shoemaker.⁴¹ In 1864, Joseph married Louisa Farmer in Chelmsford registration district.⁴² They had three sons, Joseph born about 1864/5, Stephen born about 1866/7 and Frederick born about 1869/70⁴³ before Louisa died in 1870 at the age of thirty.⁴⁴ In 1881, Joseph and his three sons were still at Cook's Mill Green with his mother, Ann, acting as housekeeper.⁴⁵

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- 30 See Oliver paper. Marriage register for All Saints, Norton Mandeville, Essex D/P 267/1/4 image 5.
 - 31 See Oliver paper. Baptism register for All Saints, Writtle, Essex D/P 50/1/3 image 17.
 - 32 Baptism register for All Saints, Norton Mandeville, Essex D/P 267/1/7 image 8.
 - 33 Baptism register for All Saints, Writtle, Essex D/P 50/1/7 image 88.
 - 34 1841 census for Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex HO107 326/14 folio 40.
 - 35 1851 census for London Street, Chelmsford, Essex HO 107 1775 folio 437.
 - 36 The marriage certificate of Thomas Dawson and Mary Archer Bowyer, 1855 - from the General Register Office.
 - 37 See Dawson paper.
 - 38 1841 census for Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex HO107 326/14 folio 40.
 - 39 1851 census for Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex HO107 1776 folio 74.
 - 40 The marriage certificate of Thomas Dawson and Mary Archer Bowyer, 1855 - from the General Register Office.
 - 41 1861 census for Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex RG9 1080 folio 5.
 - 42 The General Registrar's marriage indexes.
 - 43 1871 census for near Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex RG10 1663 folio 6.
 - 44 The General Registrar's death indexes.
 - 45 1881 census for Cooks Mill Green, Writtle, Essex RG11 1764 folio 18.

The next child of John and Ann Bowyer was Ann, who was baptised on the 5th of November 1836 at Writtle.⁴⁶ She was followed by Sarah, who was born on the 29th of March 1838⁴⁷ and baptised on the 6th of May at Writtle.⁴⁸ The youngest daughter, Clara, was baptised on the 14th of February 1841 at Writtle.⁴⁹ The three girls were with their parents at Cooks Mill Green in 1841.⁵⁰ Ten years later they were still there and listed as scholars.⁵¹ John Bowyer died in Writtle on the 23rd of January 1860 of a diseased bladder.⁵² The informant was Jane Marriage, who does not appear to have been a relative.⁵³ All of John Bowyer's daughters had left home by 1861.⁵⁴ Ann married Samuel Joyce in 1861, in Chelmsford registration district,⁵⁵ and went to live in neighbouring Chignal St. James, where her daughter Ann was born weeks after the marriage.⁵⁶ Sarah went into domestic service, working as a housemaid at Felden Farm in Bovingdon, Hertfordshire, for Arthur Austin.⁵⁷ Clara married Ellis Buckingham, a railway fireman from Oxfordshire, in 1860, in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire registration district and the couple set up home in Berton Road, Aylesbury.⁵⁸

Robert was the youngest of the children of John and Ann Bowyer. He was born at Writtle about 1842/3 and in 1851 was a scholar living with his parents at Cook's Mill Green, Writtle.⁵⁹ Robert became an agricultural labourer and was still at home with his widowed mother in 1861.⁶⁰ In 1871, Robert was living near Cook's Mill Green, Writtle with Ruth, who had been born at Norton Heath, Norton Mandeville, in about 1850/1, the couple had two children with them, Mary Ann born about 1869 and Sarah Susanna born about 1870, both in Writtle.⁶¹ Robert, an agricultural labourer and Ruth were living as man and wife⁶² but they did not actually marry until 1878,⁶³ by which time they had had two further children born in Writtle, Elizabeth Annie in 1872 and Robert Bowyer Argent born about 1875.⁶⁴ After marriage, Robert and Ruth moved to the far side of Cook's Mill Green, across the parish boundary in Roxwell.⁶⁵

In 1878, Robert appeared before a Coroner's Court as a witness at the inquest of

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- 46 Baptism registers for All Saints, Writtle, Essex D/P 50/1/8.
 - 47 Birth certificate of Sarah Bowyer, 1838 - from the General Register Office.
 - 48 Baptism registers for All Saints, Writtle, Essex D/P 50/1/8.
 - 49 Baptism registers for All Saints, Writtle, Essex D/P 50/1/8.
 - 50 1841 census for Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex HO107 326/14 folio 40.
 - 51 1851 census for Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex HO107 1776 folio 74.
 - 52 Death certificate of John Bowyer, 1860 - from the General Registrar.
 - 53 Death certificate of John Bowyer, 1860 - from the General Registrar.
 - 54 General Registrar's marriage indexes; 1861 census for Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex RG9 1080 folio 5.
 - 55 The General Registrar's marriage indexes. 1861 census for Brick Barnes, Chignal St. James, Essex RG 9 1080 folio 97.
 - 56 1861 census for Brick Barnes, Chignal St. James, Essex RG 9 1080 folio 97.
 - 57 1861 census for Felden Farm, Bovingdon, Hertfordshire RG9 837 folio 31.
 - 58 General registrar's Marriage indexes; 1861 census for Berton Road, Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire RG 9 865 folio 80.
 - 59 1851 census for Writtle, Essex HO107 1776 folio 74.
 - 60 1861 census for Writtle, Essex RG9 1080 folio 5.
 - 61 1871 census for near Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex RG10 1663 folio 6; General Registrar's birth indexes; Chelmsford Petty Sessions Records for 1879 P/CM 1/27 and 1880 P/CM 1/28. The children were registered with the surname Argent, although they appear as Bowyer in the census returns.
 - 62 1871 census for near Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex RG10 1663 folio 6.
 - 63 General Registrar's marriage indexes.
 - 64 1881 census index for Cook's Mill Green, Roxwell, Essex RG11 1764 folio 72; General Registrar's birth indexes.
 - 65 1881 census index for Cook's, Mill Green, Roxwell, Essex RG11 1764 folio 72; General Registrar's birth indexes. Cook's Mill Green spans the parish boundary between Writtle and Roxwell.

fifty six year old labourer John Wilson, who had died at the workhouse. Although he often slept rough, Wilson had lodged with Robert Bowyer for the preceding nine weeks. When Wilson was seen by a doctor on the Friday afternoon, the 20th of December, he was lying on some old clothes and sacks with a brick under his head and was already insensible; it seems he had had a stroke. 'A woman in the house' (presumably Ruth) was advised not to move him. The plan was to remove him 'by skilled hands' in an ambulance the following day. That evening, Robert put Wilson in a cart, covered him with a sack and took him to the workhouse. Wilson died the following day and the doctor, when questioned, was of the opinion that Robert's inexpert removal had hastened Wilson's death. Ruth was not there to give evidence as she was 'in a very weak condition'; she was pregnant with twins at the time. The assistant overseer was blamed for not visiting sooner but of Robert the coroner said, 'Bowyer didn't care two straws about the unhappy man. All he wanted was to get him out of his house.'⁶⁶

Robert and Ruth's twins Harry John and John Harry were born in Roxwell in 1879.⁶⁷ In 1881, Ruth and the six children were living at 'Cottage', Roxwell, Essex, the five eldest children were described as scholars.⁶⁸ Robert himself was a prisoner in Springfield jail, near Chelmsford.⁶⁹ On the 2nd of May 1879, the School Attendance Officer, James Diaper, had taken out an order to ensure the attendance of Mary Ann, Sarah Susannah and Elizabeth Annie Argent at school. On the 14th of November, Robert appeared before Chelmsford Petty Sessions Court because he had contravened this order. Out of one hundred and eighty four possible attendances⁷⁰ Mary Ann had been present sixty times, Sarah Susannah forty seven times and Elizabeth Annie on only eleven occasions. Robert was to be fined six pence with two shillings costs or would spend seven days in jail in lieu of the fine.⁷¹ It is not known which of these options he chose. The following year, on 3rd December, Robert appeared again on another charge of failing to send the three girls to Highwood National School. On this occasion, Mary Ann had made thirteen attendances, Sarah Susannah six and Elizabeth Annie ten, out of a possible sixty. Robert was to be fined six pence plus four shillings and six pence costs for each child. He was given the option of paying this off at two shillings and six pence a week for six weeks. No alternative jail term is mentioned but it seems that this is what landed Robert in Springfield Jail.⁷²

Robert and Ruth had more children after the birth of the twins. William born in 1881, who died in 1884; two short-lived sons in 1883 and 1885⁷³ and Bessie Rose who was born in Roxwell in 1887.⁷⁴ Robert did not learn his lesson as, in 1890, he was summonsed yet again, not once but twice, this time for failing to send the twins to school. On the second occasion he was fined ten shillings.⁷⁵ This was early in the history of compulsory education⁷⁶ but Robert can hardly have been unaware of his obligations. It is possible that the family were non-conformist and objected to the

66 *Essex Newsman* 28 December 1878 p 2 cols c & d.

67 1881 census index for Cook's Mill Green, Roxwell, Essex RG11 1764 folio 72.

68 1881 census index for Cook's Mill Green, Roxwell, Essex RG11 1764 folio 72.

69 1881 census index for Springfield Prison, Essex RG11 1767 folio 83.

70 Each attendance would normally be for half a day.

71 Chelmsford Petty Sessions Records for 1879 P/CM 1/27.

72 Chelmsford Petty Sessions Records for 1880 P/CM 1/28. *Chelmsford Chronicle* 10 December 1880 p 6 col a.

73 General Registrar's birth and death indexes.

74 1891 census for Cook's Mill Green, Roxwell, Essex RG 12 1387 folio 61.

75 *Essex Herald* 01 April 1890 p 2 col e and 20 December 1890 p 7 col c.

76 Compulsory education was introduced in the Education Act of 1870.

religious associations of the school but given that Robert was a serial offender in this respect, it may be that he just didn't care.

A daughter, Clara, was born and died in 1890.⁷⁷ In the 1891 census Robert, Ruth and the four youngest surviving children were still living at Cook's Mill Green in Roxwell and Robert was an agricultural labourer.⁷⁸ In March 1893, Robert was again in a Coroner's Court, this time following the death of his newborn child. The Coroner berated Robert for not summoning an attendant during the confinement and said, had Ruth died, Robert would be facing a manslaughter charge. The child's death was deemed to be from natural causes.⁷⁹ The final child that has been identified is Olive who was born and died in 1896; all the children were born in Chelmsford registration district, almost certainly in Cook's Mill Green.⁸⁰ The 1911 census entry for Robert and Ruth finds them alone at Cook's Mill Green but it suggests that they had had fourteen children, seven of whom had died.⁸¹ Although there is a gap between 1875 and 1879, only thirteen children have been identified, either as Argent or Bowyer.⁸²

To return to John and Ann Bowyer; in 1841 they were living at Cook's Mill Green, Writtle with their children, with exception of Robert who was yet to be born. The household also included a fourteen year old apprentice, Frederick Grigg,⁸³ who presumably helped John with his shoemaking. The exact position of their home is uncertain but it may have been on the current A414 near the Fox and Goose, possibly on the site of what is now a garden centre. By 1851, John did not have a live-in apprentice although his son, Joseph, had joined him in the shoemaking trade.⁸⁴ There is no mention of John or Joseph in the Shoemakers' Index, held by the Northampton Shoemaking Museum.⁸⁵ After John's death, in 1860,⁸⁶ Ann remained in Cook's Mill Green until at least 1881.⁸⁷ Her residence at the time of her death, on the 25th February 1889 was given as Highwood, Writtle, although this may also have been in Cook's Mill Green and is consistent with a cottage near the Fox and Goose.⁸⁸ Ann died of liver disease and the death was registered by her daughter, Ann Joyce, of 21 Primrose Hill, Chelmsford.⁸⁹

Acknowledgements

Dr. Geoff Swinfield, Mrs I. L. Williams.

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- 77 General Registrar's birth and death indexes. 1911 census for Cook's Mill Green, Roxwell, Essex RG RG14PN10062 RG78PN529 RD194 SD2 ED17 SN13.
78 1891 census for Cook's Mill Green, Roxwell, Essex RG 12 1387 folio 61.
79 *Essex Herald* 28 March 1893 p 7 col g.
80 General Registrar's birth indexes.
81 1911 census for Cook's Mill Green, Roxwell, Essex RG RG14PN10062 RG78PN529 RD194 SD2 ED17 SN13 .
82 General Registrar's birth and death indexes.
83 1841 census for Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex HO107 326/14 folio 40.
84 1851 census for Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex HO107 1776 folio 74.
85 Shoemakers' Index, held by the Northampton Shoemaking Museum.
86 General Registrar's death indexes.
87 1861 census for Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex RG9 1080 folio 5; 1871 census for near Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex RG10 1663 folio 6; 1881 census Cook's Mill Green, Writtle, Essex RG11 1764 folio 18.
88 The death certificate of Ann Bowyer, 1889 - from the General Register Office.
89 The death certificate of Ann Bowyer, 1889 - from the General Register Office.