



**A stroll with Ernie**  
**down his High Street**  
**in 1913**

## INTRODUCTION

Ernie Adcock was born in Wakering, and lived there for most of his life, he was a master builder and was responsible for building most of the houses on the south side of the High Street from the large house opposite the Health Centre (which is where Ernie lived) to The Service Garage at Little Wakering Corner. Ernie was in his younger years a noted athlete, of county standard. For many years he was Chairman of the Governors of Great Wakering Primary School, and it was in this capacity that he very often gave a talk to the pupils about the different aspects of a child growing up in Wakering.

The following pages are a copy of the talk he gave to the students, describing the High Street when he was a boy in 1913. I have added some photographs to Ernies' original text, this will I hope give it a bit more interest, and also allow the reader to be able to imagine more easily what the High Street of Great Wakering was like in 1913.

Gordon Wiseman  
Great Wakering 1999.

### Ernie's Wakering High Street in 1913

I was born in Gt. Wakering when it really was a Village. There was no bus service and nobody in Wakering owned a motor car. A few of the better off people had a pony and trap but other than that if you wanted to go anywhere you walked.

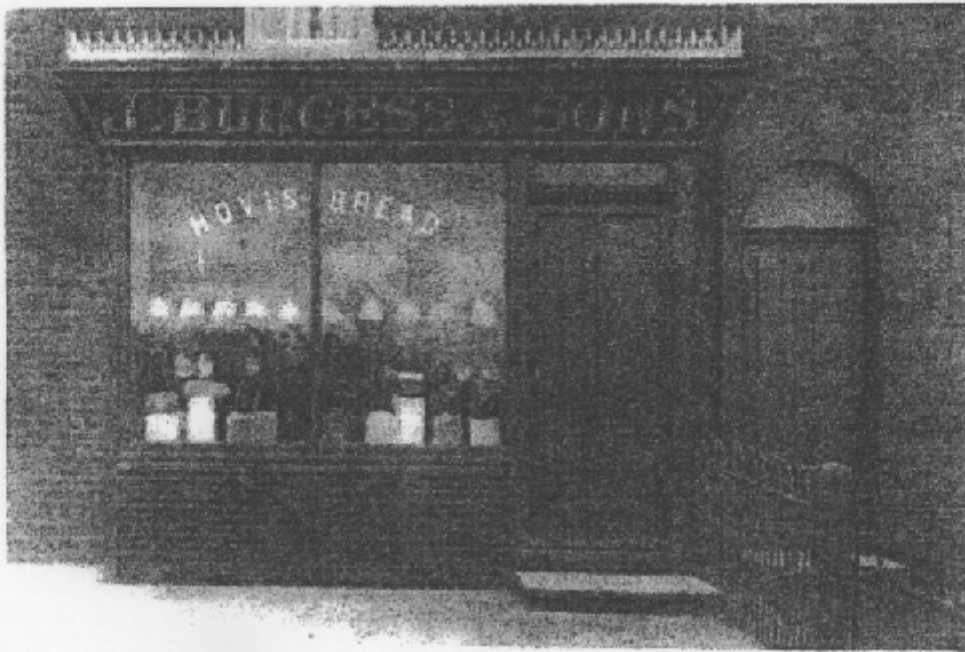
I would like to describe what Wakering High Street was like when I was a boy. It was not of course a road like we have today but a flint road very dusty in the summer and tremendously muddy in the winter, in fact it was so bad in the winter it would have been almost impossible to ride a bicycle even if you had one. Try to imagine the street without a motor car but quite busy with horses and carts. The baker, the butcher, the grocer, the milkman, the coalman, the comman, the miller and the brewer all delivering their goods by horse and cart and all the produce of the farms for the markets in London being taken to Shoebury Station on farm waggons to be loaded on to trains. My High Street was a wonderful place for a small boy.

Lets start our walk down the High Street from Lt. Wakering corner. On the west side of Lt. Wakering Road was a small bungalow, which was, and still is talked about by the older people as The Old School. My father went to school there sometimes, but in those days you had to pay to go to school and my grandma had not always got any money to spare to pay for schooling and so he didn't go very regularly.

On the east side of Lt. Wakering Road there were farm buildings. In those days of course every farm had about 10 heavy horses and after they had done their day,s work they would be turned into a meadow. The horses from this farm went across Lt. Wakering Road to what was known as the old school meadow. This old school meadows perpetuated in our Village by the small road on the site which is called The Old School Meadow.

On the south side of the High Street at Lt. Wakering Corner was a large pond, one of the six ponds we shall come across as we walk down the High Street. We shall not see any more houses until we reach two farm cottages opposite to what is now the Sports Centre. From Lt. Wakering Corner to this point the road was flanked on both sides with very deep ditches and large Elm trees and another one of the ponds, which was where the front garden of No. 319 High Street now is.

We have now come to the beginning of the Village but there is still nothing on the north side except another large pond and an orchard until we come to where Brougham Close is now. On the south side however we have the first of our three village bakeries (Burgess) and the first of the public houses, The Exhibition Inn. Next to the Exhibition, a grocers shop, a shoe repairers and a row of old cottages, then the first butchers shop (Webbs) still there, but not being used. There were four butchers shops in the village but not only were they butchers but they were also slaughter houses, and us boys were all very versed in the slaughter of pigs and bullocks and sheep.

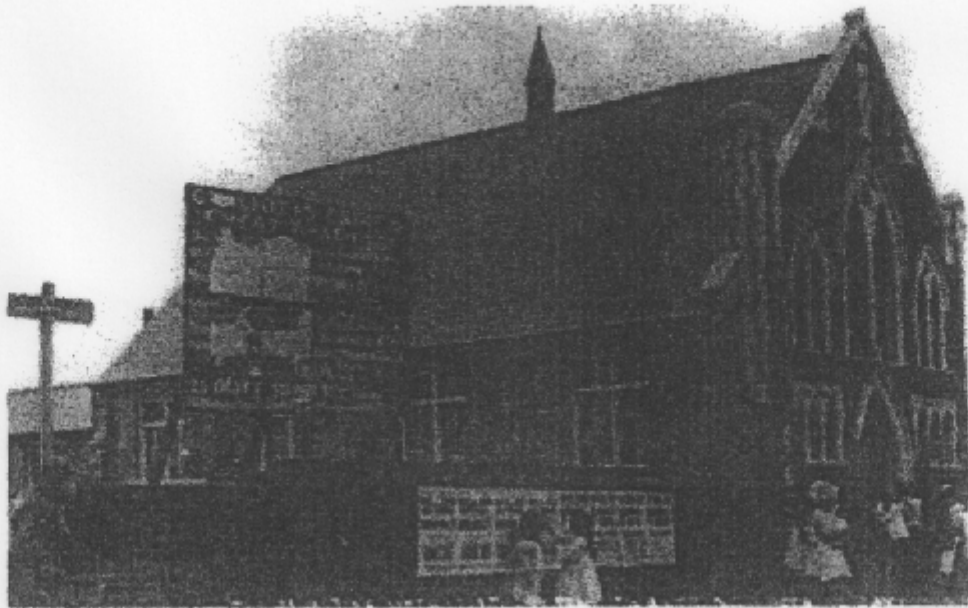


Burgess the Bakers



The Exhibition Inn c1960

The Methodist Church which in those days was known as the Methodist Chapel was on the corner of Alexandra Road, as the pair of houses on the corner now, were not then built. Alexandra Road had very few houses and the only way you could get anything up the road was by horse and cart and even this was impossible sometimes in the winter.

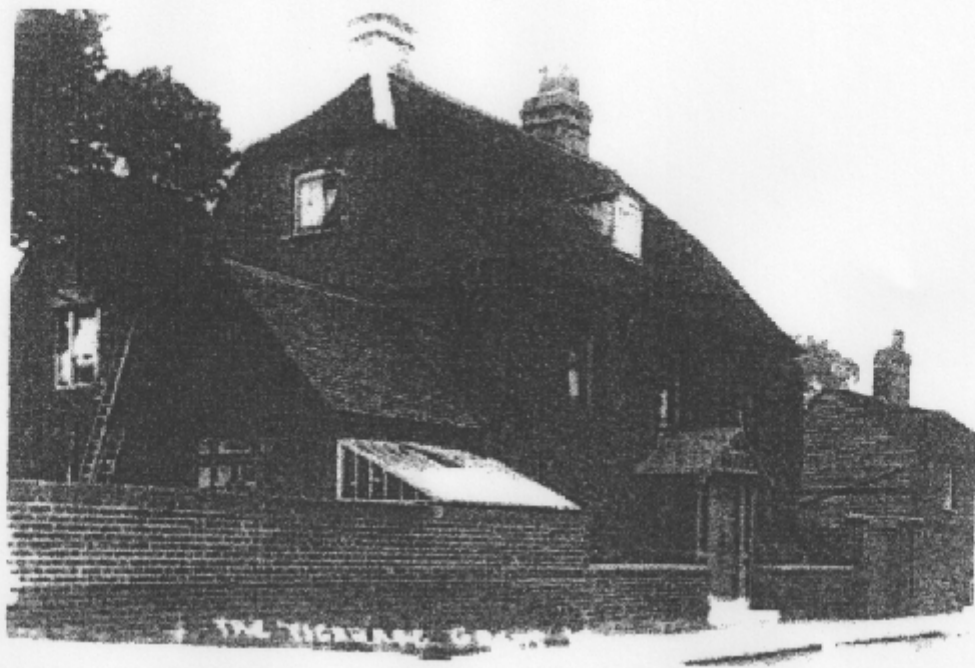


Methodist Chapel



Alexandra Road

As I have said, on the north side from the entrance to the Sports centre to Brougham Close was a large pond where us youngsters, during the harder winters which we then experienced skated in our hob-nail boots. Where Brougham Close now is was Mr. Wiggins saw-pit and Mr. Perry's stable and carriage house.



The Vicarage



The Blacksmiths

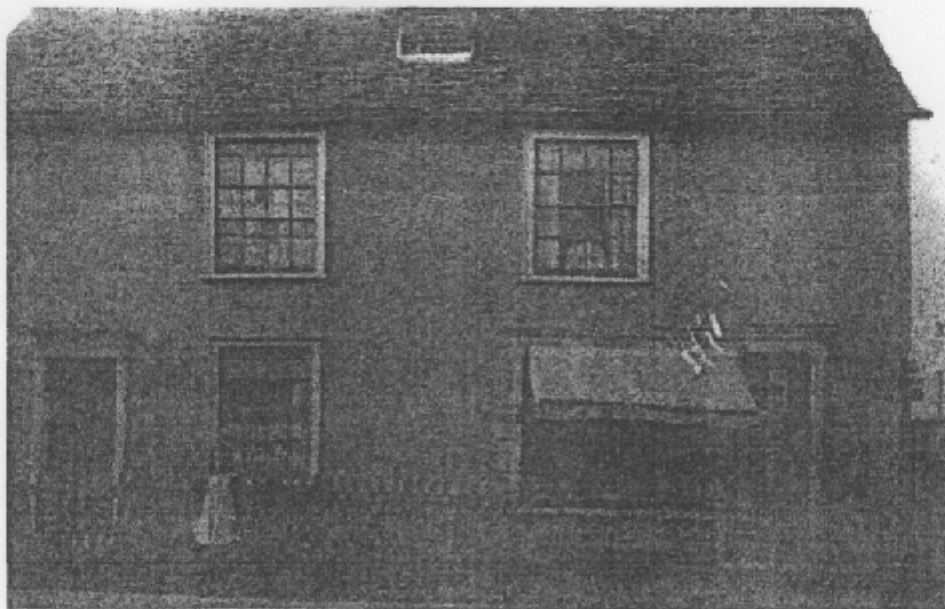
Peculiar People Chapel

Mr. Perry was the horse and carriage man in the village. The more well-to-do people used to hire Mr. Perry to take them or fetch them from Shoebury Station. His horse and carriage would be used for "posher" weddings and funerals in the village. At weddings he would have white ribbons on his whip and at funerals black ribbons. One type of carriage he used was known as a brougham and again to perpetuate this village amenity we have named the road where his stable was "Brougham Close".

What is now the British Legion Club used to be the Vicarage and there was a huge mulberry tree growing in the garden which spread over the wall and across the pathway. It was a common sight in those days to see the Vicar riding his bicycle to and from Church on Sundays.

Next to the Vicarage was the first of the two blacksmith's shops in the High Street. These were very busy places with so many horses around to be shod that it was almost necessary to book an appointment as you do these days at the doctors.

From Alexandra Road to what is now the entrance to your school there was only four small cottages and the rest was a large orchard. On the other side was the Peculiar Peoples' Chapel, now called the Evangelical Church, and then after this four old cottages now happily restored, you come to our first shop on the north side. This is where old Mr. Rivers lived, Mr. Rivers was the village thatcher, a very important craftsman in those days, when all the corn harvest was built into stacks in the fields or in the farm stockyard and had to be thatched to protect the corn from the rain. Next was the first of the three coal merchants premises and then Lee Lotts which was Mr. Caleb Rayner's dairy and milking sheds. Every day, twice a day, Mr. Rayner's herd of cows would be brought up from Mill Barn on the Common to Lee Lotts to be milked and taken back to the common. Just imagine our street with all those horses around and twice a day a herd of cows passing along. No wonder we all had good gardens.



Mr. Rivers Shop

Where the entrance to the school is now was a footpath which went across what is now the school playing field across Alexandra Road and across to the junction of Star Lane and Poynters Lane. This was a much used footpath, for all the children for North Shoebury used to come across this footpath to our village school.



Lee Lotts



The Post Office

On the corner of Twyford Avenue was the Post Office. The Postmaster was an important man in the village. No one had a telephone and all the urgent messages were transmitted by telegraph to the Post Office and then taken to the person concerned by telegram boy. Opposite was the second of the blacksmith's shops and as it was close to my house I was allowed to go along and switch the flies off the



horses while they were being shod. On a frosty morning the blacksmith's shop and the road outside would be crowded with horses waiting to have special nails put into their shoes so that they could pull their loads along the frosty roads. Now the second of the bakers' shops, Mr. Cripps and as all the bread was being baked on the premises we were allowed sometimes as a treat to help the baker in what was known as dough punching.



Twyford Avenue



Cripps the Bakers



Alp's Blacksmiths Forge and Shop



'Juniper House' Ernie's Home

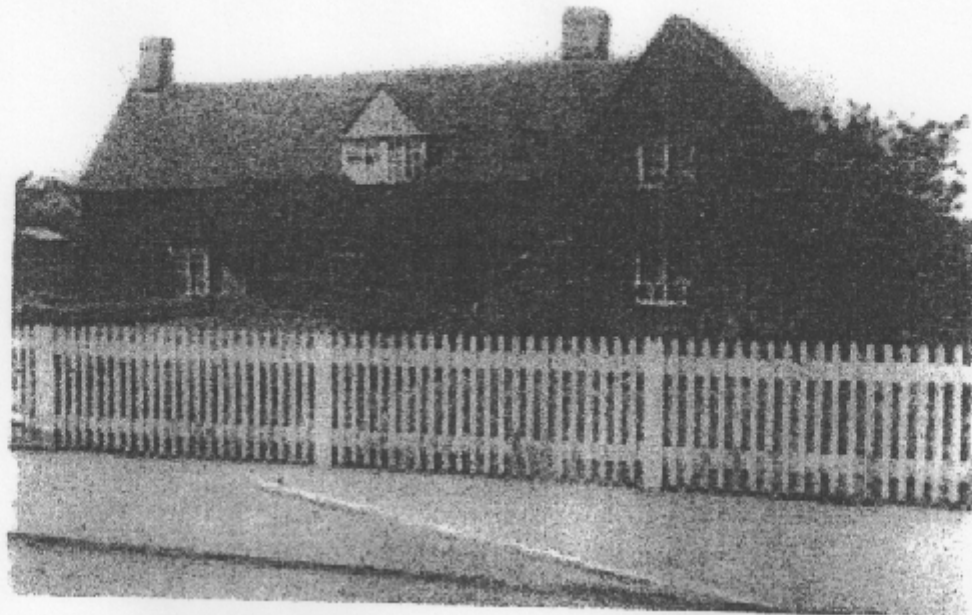


The Bell Public House

After the house where I lived there was a grocers shop, another coal merchants yard and then another public house called the Bell. This has since disappeared. Opposite on the north side were the Old Hall Cottages with another of the ponds at the bottom of the gardens. Next was a thatched cottage, one of the two that I remember



Thatched Cottage 'Sparrow Lodge'



'Old Hall Court'

in the High Street, the other being opposite Mr. Alps Blacksmith's shop. On the south side was a clothiers shop and then the White Hart public house, in the yard of which was a small shop now demolished, which was the village fish and chip shop. Opposite was Mr. Oliver's butchers shop and slaughter house and as it was next to our school we knew that on Wednesday afternoons we would be chanting 7 x 7 or singing British Grenadiers to the accompaniment of screaming pigs being slaughtered over the other side of the wall. Opposite the school were three shops, Mrs. Collin's drapery shop, Mr. French's barbers shop and another, Mr. Oliver's sweet shop.

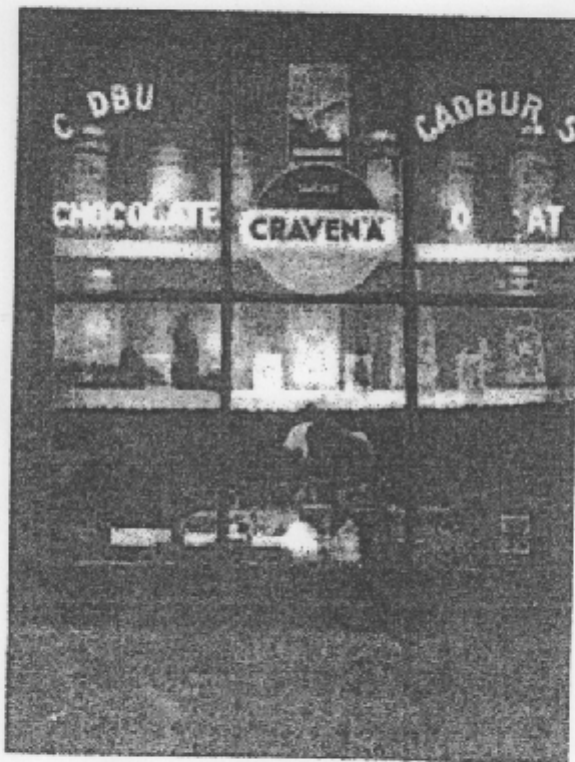


Oliver's Butchers

White Hart PH Clothing Shop



Mr French's Cycle Shop



Oliver's Sweetshop

The Red Lion was the next public house and it was very important because the small addition on the front of outbuildings was the base for the village Fire Brigade. This consisted of a hand cart with hose pipes and a short ladder and the necessary key to turn the hydrants on when the hoses were attached.



Mr. Aylett's Grocers

Mr. Buckingham's Butcher Shop Red Lion PH

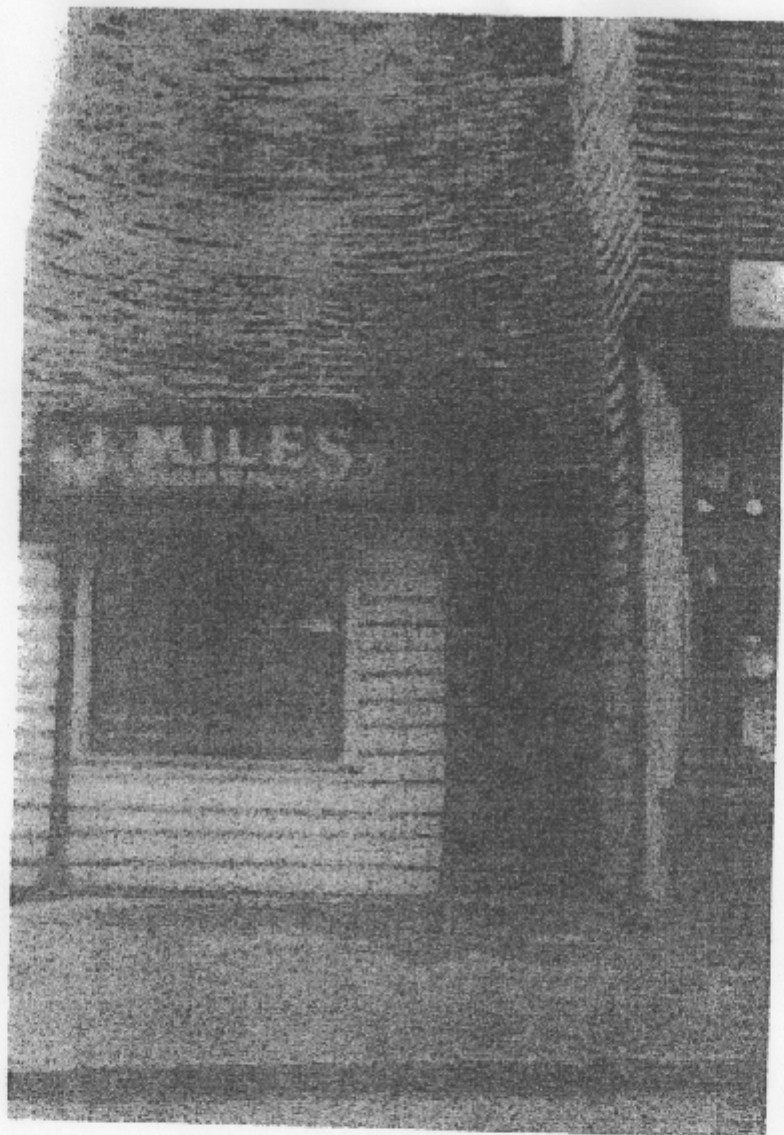


Great Wakering School

Mr. Wiggin's shop on the corner of North Street, sold all sorts of things for the do-it-yourself man and it was here that one of the two undertakers premises in the village was situated. The other was Mr. Baileys's opposite Twyford Avenue. All the coffins that they used were made on the premises.

Lion Fields was very much a used footpath, for everyone wishing to catch a train at Shoebury station walked across Lion Fields. This part of the High Street was the busiest as far as the shops were concerned.

Next to the Red Lion was Mr. Chandler's oil shop, Mr. Miles' shoe repairing shop and on the other side of Lion Fields, Mr. Buckingham's butchers shop with yet another slaughter house. On the other corner of North Street was Mr. Aylett's grocery shop, Mr Stowe's general shop and Mr. Hookey's greengrocers shop on the corner of Chapel Lane. On the other side of Chapel Lane was Mr. Rogers' grocery shop and next to that Mr Cerson's sweet shop. This part of the of the High Street was the busiest a far as the shops were concerned.



Mr. Miles Shoe repairs

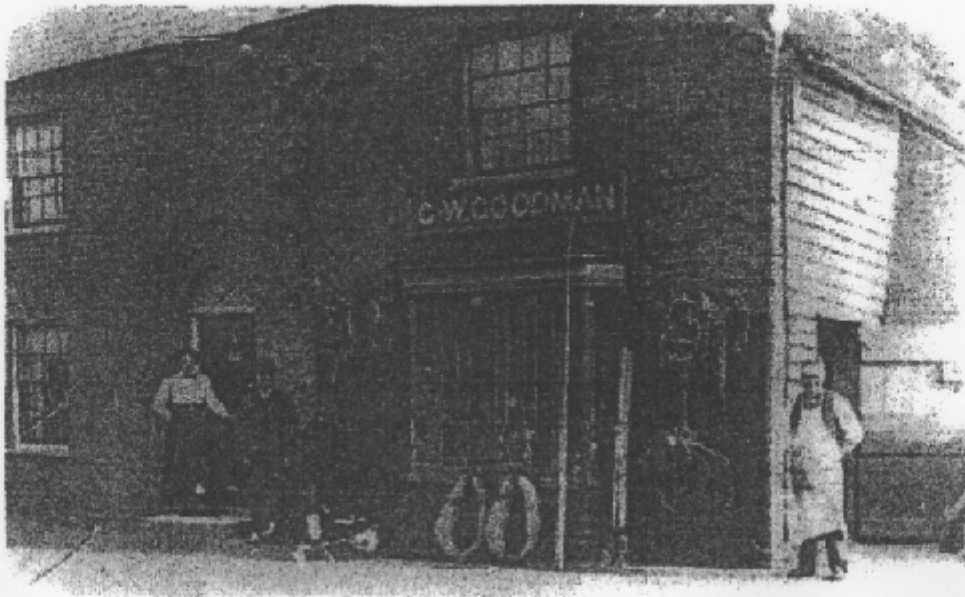


Mr. Wiggins



Mr. Rogers' Grocery Shop





Goodman Harness Maker

On the North side was Mr. Benniworth's wheelwright shop where he made wooden wheels for all the many carts and waggons in the area. Next was Mr. Golden Woods shoe shop where you could see him making shoes by hand, then a little further on Mr. Claydon's shoe shop and Mr. Coopers watch and clock repairing shop. On the other side of the road was Mr. Goodman's harness making and repairing shop, always a busy place with so many horses around. The Flats called "Goodmans" are built on the site of Mr. Goodmans harness shop. Your Grand Parents might remember the little white model horse on Mr. Goodmans window fitted with a perfect set of miniature harness. There was no electricity or gas in those days so all the village craftsmen sat in the windows of their shops so as to get all the light possible, and so we were able to see them at their work.



Doctor's House

The Doctor lived in a large red bricked house next to the Anchor Inn but as there was no Health Service in those days you has to be pretty sick before you thought of going to see the Doctor.



The 'Anchor' Public House

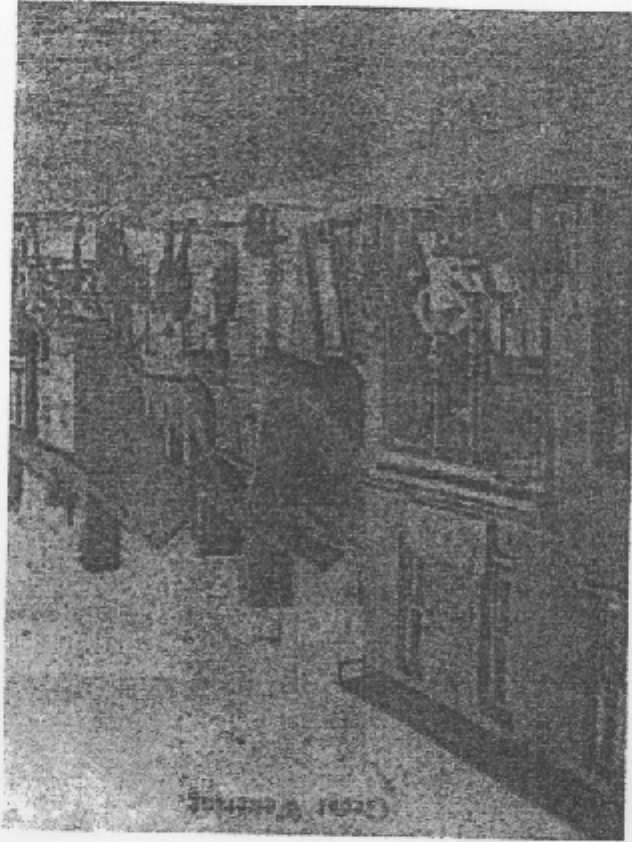
The only other shop on the south side of the road was Mr. Self's butchers shop which like all the others had a slaughter house attached. At the end of the High Street on the north side were Mr. Bishop's general shop, Mr. Fulcher's grocery shop, Mr. Milbourn's cornshop and Mr. Grigg's grengrocery shop. So you will see that although the village was probably only about one quarter as big as it is now we had more shops than today because everybody shopped in the village.

We played all our games in the street pulling up a box for stumps and things of that sort.

Only a few people had main water in their houses, some had a pump and a well but most of us obtained our water by fetching it in buckets from stand pipes in the street. There were about ten of these in the street. There was of course no street lighting but we always managed to find our way around.

During the summer, horse carriages from Southend called brakes, would come through the street loaded with holiday trippers for a ride round the country, and by running by the side of these large carriages and turning cartwheels we would be rewarded by a shower of pennies from the passengers.

Mr. Bishop's Grocers Shop

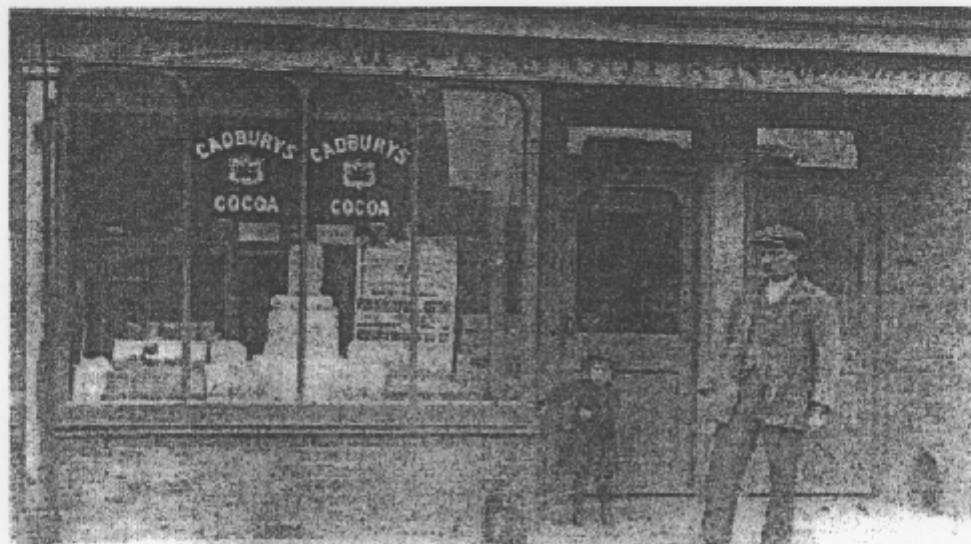


Mr. Self's Butchers Shop





Mr. Fulcher's Shop



Mr. Milbourn's Corn & Seed Merchants

The street had its regular visitors every week. The toffee man who gave us a bag of home made toffee for any old coins we may have found, the cockle man who came from Leigh every Saturday with a large flat basket of cockles and shrimps which he carried on his head, and the old blind man who came every Tuesday with his horse drawn barrel organ to play in the streets and collect money from the charitable village folk. A tremendously friendly street, every one knew everyone else and shared their joys and sorrows. An exciting street for an eight year old boy. A street full of many pleasures and happy memories. My Woking High Street.

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## Appendix

Great Wakering is an ancient parish lying near the coast and the Maplin Sand, 2 ¼ miles north from Shoeburyness station on the Midland railway (Tilbury and Southend section). 6 south-east from Rochford and 5 north-east from Southend, and in the South Eastern division of the county, Rochford hundred, petty sessional division and union, Southend county court district, Canewdon and Southend rural deanery, Essex archdeaconry and diocese of Chelmsford. The church of St. Nicholas is a building of stone, principally Norman with Perpendicular additions: it consists of chancel, Nave, north aisle, south porch and western tower with a shingled spire containing 5 bells, cast in 1808, the tenor bells weighing 8 cwt.: the church has 300 sittings. The register dates from the year 1604. The living is a vicarage, net yearly value of 210 pounds, with 200 acres of glebe and residence, in the gift of the Bishop of Chelmsford, and held since 1903 by the Rev. Horace Serjeant L.Th. Of Durham University. The Congregational chapel erected in 1890 at a cost of 1,100 pounds affords 300 sittings. The Primitive Methodist chapel, built in 1859 was enlarged in 1906 at a cost of 700 pounds, and will seat 400 persons. The Peculiar People, a sect which originated in this village have a chapel built in 1891 and holding 200 persons, and there are also Salvation Army barracks. Robert Horner esq. Edward Arthur Wedd esq J.P. and the War Department are the principle landowners. The soil is heavy loam; subsoil, clay and brickearth. The crops are general. The area is 2,759 acres of land, 12 of inland and 105 of tidal water and 2,306 of foreshore; rateable value, 7,106 pounds; the population in 1911 was 842, including that portion in Rushley and Great Potton Islands belonging to Great Wakering parish.

Post, M. O. & T. & Telephonic Express Delivery office (to places within a limited distance).-- William Henry Fry, postmaster. Letters from Shoeburyness. Wall Letter Boxes, — High street & New road Pillar Letter Box, Sea View Estate.

County Police, Frederick Joseph Percy, Sergeant.

Public Elementary School (mixed) built in 1876, & enlarged in 1885, 1889, 1894 & 1902, for 650 children; Albert Hamm, master; Miss Colgate, infants mistress

Marked thus # receive their letters through Southchurch.

### PRIVATE RESIDENTS.

Bentley Harry, Sea View house  
Cater William, Homeleigh  
Hamm Albert, School house  
Hookey George, Whitehead lodge  
Kemsley Arthur Unwin, Chrouchmen's farm  
Milbourne Henry, Ryde house  
Oliver Frank Walter, Bell house  
Robertson Rev. William (Congregational), The Manse  
Serjeant Rev. Horace L.Th. Vicarage  
Swainmes Herbert, D.P.H.  
Taylor Octavius, Friends farm  
Wedd Edward, Arthur J.P. Whitehall  
#Whur Alfred Robert, J. Thorpe

### COMMERCIAL

Alp George, blacksmith  
Aylett Alfred, grocer  
Bailey George H. P. builder  
Bennewith Samuel, wheelwright  
Brown Edward, blacksmith  
Buckingham William, butcher  
Burgess Edward, builder  
Burgess Henry, boot maker  
Burgess John, baker  
Burrill George, builder  
Cason Kate (Miss), dress maker  
Cerson John, shopkeeper

Chandler Albert, corn dealer  
Chandler Walter Hy. Oil & colour man  
Colby Robert, White Hart inn  
Cooper Arthur, marine store dealer  
Cooper George, watch & clock maker  
#Cresswell Arth E. farmer, Trotters farm  
Cripps Richard Joseph, baker  
Everard Annie (Mrs.) Dress maker  
Fitch Edward James, Red Lion P.H.  
Ford Sarah Ann, (Mrs), draper  
French Ernest D. cycle agent  
Fry William Henry, register of births & deaths  
Fulcher William George, grocer  
Goodman George & William, saddlers  
Goodman Alfred, grocer  
Gray Agness A. (Miss), shopkeeper,  
London House  
Grigg James, greengrocer  
Grigg Thomas, boot repairer  
Hasehurst Catherine R. (Mrs), L.O.S.,  
Midwife  
Hookey George, fruiterer  
Howard Chas. Barge ownr. Howard vils  
Kemsley Arthur Unwin, market gdnr  
Kemsley Gilbert, frmr. Towri Field frmr  
Land Co. (The), Friends farm & Sea View estate  
Mead Albert, confectioner  
Milbourn Albt. Edwd. Corn & flower dlr  
Milbourn George Frederick, baker  
Oliver William & Sons, butcher

Oliver Herbert, shopkeeper  
Perry George Henry, carman  
Phillips Thomas Matthew, Anchor Hotel;  
good stabling, motors for hire, parties accommodated  
#Rayner Caleb, farmer, Oldbury  
Rayner Thos. Frmr, Home Estate frmr  
Rivers John, coal dealer  
Rivers Mercy (Mrs), shopkeeper  
Rivers William T. grocer  
Rogers Edward Ernest, grocer  
Self William, butcher  
Shorrocks & Collin, draper  
Simpson George, Exhibition inn  
Smith E. Arthur, insurance agent  
Stallibrass Frank, solicitor  
Stow James, coal merchant, High st.  
Swan James Herbert, L.R.C.P. & S.I.,  
D.P.H.R.C.P.S.I. physician & surgeon,  
medical officer & public vaccinator for  
Great Wakering district. Rochford union,  
& medical officer to Coast Guard  
Ventriss William & George, builders Rose  
villa, Seaview estate  
Webb John, butcher  
Welton William, boot repairer  
Wiggins William & Son, builders,  
decorators & undertakers  
Wood Golden, shoemaker  
Worskett Frederick William, grocer  
Wyatt James. Coal dealer