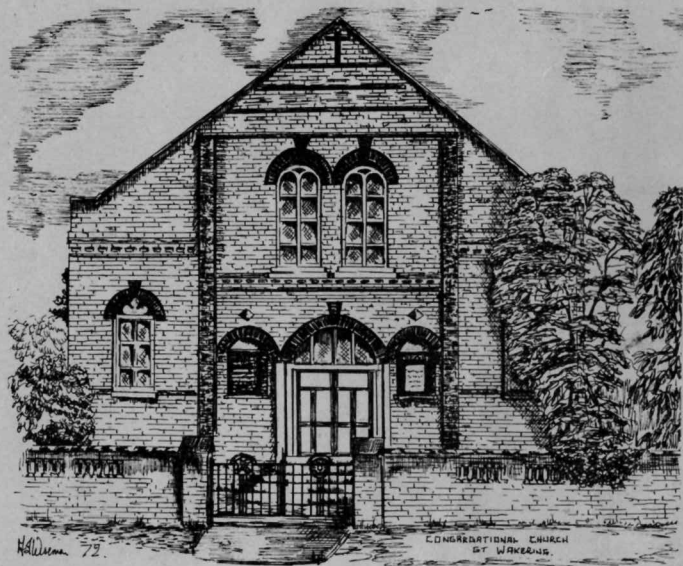


**GREAT WAKERING
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
1822 - 1972**



**150th Anniversary
3rd 4th 5th June 1972**

SOUVENIR EDITION

CHURCH HISTORY & GREAT WAKERING'S HISTORY
from Roman Times to the Present

'YOUR HERITAGE'

Price 20p



Old Manse
(demolished 1940)



Present Manse
(built 1940 by E. Burgess)



Junior Choir

The Manse,
Chapel Lane,
Great Waking,
Essex.

My dear friends,

It is a very great honour to introduce to you the story telling of the rise of CONGREGATIONALISM in GREAT WAKING. The story of those early days makes fascinating reading. At the beginning of the 19th Century the Baptists and the Methodists had endeavoured to get a foothold, but persecution was so great and so persistent that their efforts failed. As will be shown, the claims of Great Waking were laid on the consciences of our friends at Maldon who had been established since 1690, to send a Missionary to endeavour to establish CONGREGATIONALISM here. The hardships of those early days has been tellingly set forth, in this short historical account.

From Cottage to Meeting Place, and then to the present Church, which has been served through the years by some outstanding ministries. A fine body of men and women have kept the flag flying and have borne a lively witness to the gospel.

With the coming of the Airport to Foulness we believe the best is yet to be, and in the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, we press on.

Finally I would like to record my sincere thanks to the Deacons and our many friends who through the years have carried out their tasks with unswerving devotion, and in closing, a special word of appreciation to the Committee and particularly Mr. Allen Wiseman, for their patience and energy in compiling the facts for this booklet and our Anniversary Celebrations.

If the backward glance provided in these pages of records can serve as a mirror to reflect light on the future pathway, then its purpose will have been served.

Yours in His Glad Service,

ALBERT HARRISON.

Minister.

Bibliography and Acknowledgements

History of Antiquities of the County of Essex. Morant.
History of the Rochford Hundred. Benton.
The Records of Great Waking Congregational Church.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance given by the staff of the Southend Reference Library, and the people of Great Waking, and all who lent photographs for the Exhibition, or helped in any other way. Also Barling Magna Floral Art Group for their Display, and photograph exhibitor Mr. Maurice Christophers for a fine Exhibition.

FOREWORD

This booklet marks the 150th Anniversary of the GREAT WAKERING CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH. A full century and a half of history that can never be repeated. If no records were ever kept, future generations would never realise the problems, hopes and fears, or understand what life was like in the days of our forefathers, in this village of ours. No living person can tell us, but thanks to the prudence of past generations who took the time and trouble to keep records, write minutes, etc. we can read a little of our HERITAGE. Yes, we can learn quite a lot about our Village, its past history in fact. Thanks first of all go to the many people who have loaned photographs, prints, paintings and family treasures to be displayed in our ANNIVERSARY TRIPLE JUBILEE EXHIBITION of 300 PHOTOGRAPHS, PRINTS and PAINTINGS, by LOCAL ARTISTS, of our CHURCH and our VILLAGE.

In this year of 1972, the Government have announced the siting of the Third London Airport at Foulness, our immediate neighbour. Little imagination is needed to realise the implication of this. It seems even more fitting to print this booklet, before the village becomes buried in concrete. Perhaps it is now more appropriate to take a gentle look back to the past. Reading the chapter on our first Village School, perhaps we can realise more fully the difficulties our parents, grandparents and great, great, etc., grandparents overcame, to give us the affluent society we now enjoy. Few of us realise that ordinary people like you and me, working through the spirit of GOD, brought about the good things we now cherish so dearly. Yes, we should realise that the CHURCHES and most of all the common man's devotion to others, gave us these things. Let us give thanks to our forefathers for their part in our history. Can we promise to support the CHURCH which is the people in our time, that we in this village can produce new worthwhile ventures in our generation, that in the next 150 years there will be something worthwhile to write about us here, and now? Can we let slip these golden years of opportunity and progress, shall we leave the world a little better for our having been here? Its not too late! Remember the proverb, "Great oaks from little acorns grow". Think on these things, as we collect our Maternity Benefit, or are rushed to hospital. The first hospitals were started by the Church. Read the history of St. Barts, London sometime (it's in the library). Our first schools were run by the people of the Church, our orphanages, our charities, some now so huge that they have been taken over by the Welfare State, all from single humble beginnings. Yes, we can thank our ancestors from the Churches for most of the good things we believe in. Let us think on these things as we go forward into the future. Yes, we of this generation, but first let us read a little of our past.

We hope that newcomers to this village of ours, and theirs, will enjoy and understand our articles on this our HERITAGE.

Thank you for your support in this our
150th ANNIVERSARY YEAR.

The MINISTER, DEACONS and COMMITTEE and ALL MEMBERS
of the CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH.

THE EARLY YEARS

HOW WAKERING RECEIVED ITS NAME

The story of Wakering goes back to Roman times, and further, and through the subsequent centuries, this village of ours has played its part in history. The oldest records show in the museums of Colchester, and Prittlewell Priory, the findings of axe heads of the (old stone age) PALAEO-LITHIC and (new stone age) NEOLITHIC excavated in this area, also relics of the Bronze Age along with Roman tiles and Celtic burial urns, unearthed around this village of ours, and which, with tools, pottery and bones, etc. are displayed in the above mentioned museums.

Historians such as Philip Benton⁽ⁱ⁾ tell us that Wakering was a fairly important place to the Romans, the principle being that they never built roads for the fun of it, and there were roads leading to our village linking up at Billericay, to the main road to CAMULODUNUM (Colchester) the oldest town in Britain.

Historians tell us that there existed here a Wooden Watchtower or Signal station as it would be called today. Here we were midway between the two main Roman forts of RECVLVERS KENT and OTHONA BRADWELL. We know the Romans kept a small fleet of ships along the coast to protect the crops, especially wheat on Foulness which they exported even in those days. Old maps and records show that even in later centuries, signal towers were being built here. As recently as 1798 there were semaphore signal stations at Wakering and Foulness (BURWOOD and COURTS END), to signal the expected invasion of NAPOLEON.

When the Romans left about 367 a.d. the SAXONS followed, and later the ANGLES and the DANES. Historians tell us a community was formed and they called themselves WAECERS (WACERS), being a corruption of the Viking WAKE, i.e. the WATCHER, as in Hereward the Wake, alluding possibly to the watchtower left here by the Romans, the (ING) part meaning settlement or community. The name proving the Saxons lived here and cultivated the land. In the Domesday Book of 1086 it shows this village as WACHERINGA. After the Saxons, we know the Danes came for they started the earthworks at nearby Shoburyness.

There is no evidence of a Saxon Church in the village, but as the Forest of ESSEX came down as far as Eastwood, it may be supposed there was a wooden church here, probably on the present site of the Parish Church built in 1100 a.d. CHRISTIANITY came with the Romans but it was about 597 a.d. that it really began to flourish.

THAT'S HOW WAKERING GOT ITS NAME.

The nickname for Wakering is "BLAREM" and its people "BLAREMITES". The most popular known origin of this is that outsiders believed we had the knack of throwing our voices a long distance, when calling to each other across the marshes; they likened it to the "Blareing" of cattle.

(i) History of Rochford Hundred.

THE EARLY CHURCH

In the village the first of the Nonconformists arrived in October 1805, they were the Baptists. They rented a house in Wakering, pulled down the dividing wall of two rooms, to make it larger, brought stools and sat and waited for their first congregation to arrive on Sunday, 17th November 1805. For the first few Sundays only a few turned up, but on the fourth Sunday it was packed to overflowing with people standing outside. This occasioned a great stir in the village. Lots of people said, "We will come again and hear the good news", but others swore and started fights to break up the meeting, but still the villagers came. So many in fact that they had to start a Wednesday evening meeting also. People were coming from Foulness, Paglesham, Canewdon, some even by boat, but most on foot. This stirred the Parish Church, who realised that people wanted to know about the LORD JESUS, so they too, started an extra Sunday evening service and one on Wednesday evening too.

Brother JOHN SMITH conducted the Baptists. In a recorded letter to the Mother Baptist Church at Billericay, he rejoiced that the villagers of Wakering were listening to the Gospel Message, but not only that, they were helping their poor and needy families, of which there were so many. One problem remained, the people of Barling just would not come. Was there a feud between the villages? Historians do not tell us, but they would not come. So the mountain must go to Mahomet, as the proverb says, and it was decided to preach from there. Again a house was rented, stools moved in and on Sunday, 5th February 1806 there was no disturbance, but on the second Sunday meeting a great din ensued, some coming from the shoemakers shop next door, some from outside. This continued on the next three Sundays. After being ordered to stop by the Rochford Magistrates it became worse than ever for not only did the shoemaker sing, shout, and swear, but he also created a terrible din by banging warming pans on the dividing wall. This, with the noise made outside by about sixty of his associates assembled in the road, with a trumpeter from the cavalry, a drummer from the volunteers, a fifer, and others ringing bells, made it impossible for the preacher to be heard and the congregation just sang hymns and went home. After four years of struggling to preach against such disturbances, Brother Smith retired, not surprisingly with bad health.

The WESLEYANS came for a while, but did not stay.

Next were the CONGREGATIONALISTS. The first records show that the deeds of a plot of land (half acre) were given by Elizabeth Pattison whose parents had lived in the village, on the one hand, and Joseph Pattison and eleven others on the other, to build a Dissenters chapel, on 4th May 1822.

The real Founder then of CONGREGATIONALISM in Wakering was Elizabeth Pattison.

The site was the present one where our CHURCH, MANSE and SCHOOL HALL are situated. On the north side of the plot was farmland, on the south side was the property of the unfortunate MILLER (surgeon) who had been drowned on the Broomway road to Foulness when thrown and kicked by his horse whilst racing to safety against the incoming tide in 1805. On the west side of the plot ran Dog Kennel Lane, and the east side was known as Cherry Yard.

The Early Church (continued)

The Pattison family had lived in this area for some time. If you go to the present Cupids Corner you will find a row of cottages once named Barn Houses. During the 1700s it was built as a large barn for storing mustard, and was owned by a family of farmers called Harrisons. In the late 1700s the family had it converted into one large house which they named Mustard Hall. On the death of Joseph Harrison, it was sold to Mr. Joseph Pattison for his bridal home when he married an Elizabeth Wallman whose family lived in Thorpe Hall. (the present Golf Club House in Thorpe Hall Avenue), so our benefactors lived in Mustard Hall. They had a daughter, Elizabeth Wallman Pattison who married a Mr. Wedd from Cambridge, and on their marriage, moved to the newly built Whitehall (demolished in Late 1971). The Whitehall Estate is named after the large house just demolished. Mustard Hall was then converted into four farm cottages for his farm Bailiff, and workers and today can still be seen.

It is interesting to note that these cottages, with four others next door were sold in 1925 for £700.

Elizabeth's parents' influence must have helped our cause through the ages as the Wedd family served not only the early church as Deacons, but still continue their support although not resident in the village of which they were Squires.

Brass plaques to the memory of the Wedd and Wallman Pattison families can be seen inside our Church today. The first MEETING HOUSE was built on the site and opened in September 1822. The foundation stone being laid in May of that year. The anniversary was always held in June because of the difficulty of getting to Wakering in September, from the outlying districts. The Wedd family living at Whitehall had their own private entrance to our Church next door and on all anniversaries the whole congregation would adjourn through the garden entrance onto the lawns where strawberries freshly picked from the garden were enjoyed for tea. Strawberries being difficult to procure in September, June was therefore a much better month for the celebration. In the first few years progress came, Ministers were appointed, but the cause was not easy - persecution was everywhere, but still they toiled on. Among some of the early Ministers were the Rev. Holder and Rev. Jacobs in whose time a British day school was formed, also a Sunday School in 1842, by the Misses Johnson.

THE FIRST DAY SCHOOL HAD STARTED

The Rev. Phair had most probably the biggest single influence in the long history of this village. Not only with his school but also for his belief in the next generation. At a time when the Church of England was in direct conflict with all other believers, Dissenters and Nonconformists, the Rev. Phair and the Vicar of the Parish Church, the Rev. Dodson, were on very friendly terms and both believed a great revival was on its way. Undoubtedly the Rev. Phair gave his all. He was born in Birmingham in 1797, educated at Trinity College, Dublin and was renowned for his mathematical ability. On his appointment he immediately set up the day School, his pupils numbered 70 boys and girls. Think of it, 70 in the class, mixed ages, both sexes (and they talk about the large classes of 40 today, of one age group), all this and his Sunday School classes after his morning service and again in the afternoon before evening service.

During the winter evenings the Rev. Phair ran evening classes for the men of the village to teach them the three "R's". There then was your first night school. After teaching them to read he started a lending or circulating library as it was called so that having learnt to read the men of the village had something to read. The Rev. Phair then looked for ways of helping the women and poor families, so he started a Penny Bank so that people could try to save to buy food and clothes when things got really bad especially in winter time. At this time the Workhouse at the Pyghtle Near North Shoebury Corner was run by a Governor and Sub-Governor. It was a large wooden boarded building almost demolished in the gale of 1836, eventually burning down in 1877. Not only were the poor, poor, but they had to be seen to be poor, for on the right sleeve of their clothes they had a badge with a large letter "P" on it and the district's name. If they didn't wear the badge they were liable to be sent to the House of Correction (I hate to think what that was), for 21 days. The only other thing we know about the Workhouse or Poorhouse was that in 1761 and again in 1768 the children were given small sums of money to spend at the Annual Fair at Wakering on or near July 25th. Yes, the Rev. Phair's campaign was growing, he carried on this work for eleven years, until the pressure of work took its toll, his body gave way and he was struck down with paralysis. He lost all consciousness and for 3 days lay in a coma, not having spoken since he was struck down. On his desk lay a letter to a friend stating that he had had only one week off one Christmas time to relax, owing to his class of 70 children. His widow gave a lamp (seen in the photograph) which hung outside the old Meeting place until the new Chapel was built, planned to "Lead old and young into the light out of darkness."

On the 28th January 1869 the Rev. Phair passed to the life eternal.

The Rev. Samuel Oliver was chosen to fill the vacancy, whether the school carried on we don't know, but we know that the new Board School opened in 1876 (until recently the Infants School in the High Street). On the 26th January 1888 the Rev. S. Oliver too was called home to higher service, at the age of 86. Six candidates for the vacant pastorate were selected to give three sermons each. Two from the six were then chosen, Rev. Robertson receiving 100 votes, the other candidate 20. The Rev. Robertson must have been a wise choice for he stayed 34 years, the longest of any Minister to date. The congregations were so large now that it was essential to build a new Chapel. The memorial stone was laid by J. Sadd of Maldon on 15th October 1889. The first Divine Service held on the 20th March 1890 and a sermon preached from Matt. XVI, "Upon this Rock I will build my Church".

The new Chapel was built at a cost of £1,100, to seat 300 people. The old meeting place was now used as a Sunday School and had 150 scholars. The Rev. Robertson started the very first UNITED HARVEST THANKSGIVING SERVICE, in 1890, when all denominations were invited to take part. This service is still held annually, and is always represented by all the other churches.

Messrs. Rutters, later the Great Wakering Brick Company, donated every brick.

THE PRESENT CHURCH

Our present building was completed in March 1890, during the Ministry of the Rev. Robertson. In 1914 the Great War commenced and many of the congregation were in uniform like most in the village, fighting for the freedom of the world. In March 1919 a brass plaque inscribed to the memory of Captain Parker Wedd and given by the men of the Essex Yeomanry was unveiled, and in September a tablet with the names of those from our Church who had given their lives was also dedicated.

In 1922 the Minister passed on, and the Rev. Butterworth took over the Ministry, until 1928, the Rev. A.W. Wright took his place in 1928 and stayed until 1938. That year the Rev. John R.F. Pledger from Pitsea arrived, times were difficult, and the war was imminent. The state of the manse had been a great burden to the last Minister. As it was in an almost uninhabitable condition, it became an immediate task to raise funds to rebuild it. The Rev. Pledger had been many years a missionary in China, he was greatly revered by all, and one of his friends from Sheffield, a Mr. Burns, when he heard of our plight, sent an Architect to survey, and arrange construction of a new Manse built onto one wing of the old one. He also made a personal gift of £470 to start the fund.

On June 14th the Foundation Stone was laid by Mr. H.N. Sadd of Maldon using the same trowel which his Grandfather had used 50 years earlier for laying the foundation stone of the present Church. The new Manse was opened in October 1939, one month after the declaration of the Second World War.

Unfortunately the Rev. Pledger's lot at Wakering, though starting on a happy note, ended sadly. On October 4th, 1940 after visiting the camp of the Highland Light Infantry, stationed at Landwick, returning along Foulness Road (now New Road) a German bomber pursued by a Spitfire, jettisoned its bombs, one falling close to our Minister who was hit by the blast, covered in debris, and his right leg badly injured. He spent five weeks in Rochford Hospital before coming back to the Manse, but never really recovered. In March 1943 he was taken back to hospital, and on the 29th July our Good Lord called him from his suffering unto Himself.

In December 1943 the Rev. Smission was invited to become our Minister. On his first Easter Sunday, his wife instigated our present Egg Service, when fresh eggs are collected to send to Southend and Rochford hospitals. In 1943 that first collection raised 75 fresh eggs, which in wartime when they were almost unattainable, was truly a magnificent effort (last year the Church sent 705 eggs to the hospitals).

During that year a Roll of Honour of our Ministers was unveiled; this can be seen on the South Wall of our Church.

In 1958, the Rev. Smission was called to God and from 1958 until 1960 we had the services of Miss Helen Ashton, as Student Minister (she is now the Rev. Helen Ashton, B.D.) assisted by many Lay Preachers. After these difficult two years without a full-time Minister, Albert Harrison our present Minister, was called.

Over the years the Church at Great Wakering has been singularly blessed with a splendid body of Church Officers and Deacons, and it is only right that we should record our gratitude to all.

Our present Officers are:-

Church Secretary - Mrs. H.M. Cripps
Church Treasurer - Mr. H. Andrews

and our Deacons are - Mesdames M.Cooper, F.Harrison, R.Hume, The Misses H. Burgess, G.Sumner, J.Miles and Messrs. A.Halfhide, W.Kent, F.Mead and A.Wiseman.

1953 FLOODS

Sunday, the 1st February 1953, was the only time there was no Morning Service in our Church in the whole of its history, the reason being the terrible floods caused by the exceptionally high tide, which combined with a storm force gale, breached the sea defences along the East Coast from Lincolnshire to Kent.

In this village 6 people lost their lives, the floods reached almost to the Parish Church on the North side, to the lower end of New Road in the East, 40 homes were flooded on the Common alone where tragedy struck heaviest, Nissen huts were being used as homes while families awaited re-housing, the water rose almost to the rooftops; some families smashed through the roofs and sat in the dark awaiting rescue. After 3 hours, wet and bitterly cold, one young mother's numbed arms let fall her little son. In another hut a young couple held their children above the rising water, until the wife collapsed and she and her child were drowned. From yet another hut an elderly couple were heard singing a hymn until they too disappeared beneath the waves.

Heroes there were many that night; villagers toiled all day, collecting food, blankets, and clothing. Stations were set up in the village for the refugees.

Our Church members, like all the villagers, were involved, people opened up their homes as over 100 houses had to be evacuated. Many were rescued by boat, and an Army radio transmitter was set up on the roof of the Fire Station to try to make contact with our neighbours on Foulness Island. Not until 3 p.m. on Monday did rescue come to them, even Army DUKW vehicles could not get through. Yes, there was no Church Service that morning, to sing praises.

Instead of singing His praises, Minister and members were showing practical Christianity to the many in need, remembering St. Paul's injunction "Bear ye one anothers burdens and so fulfil the Law of Christ".



The Old Meeting House Built 1822 Demolished 1903
(showing right to left Rev.S. Oliver, Daughter, Mrs.Oliver, Son)



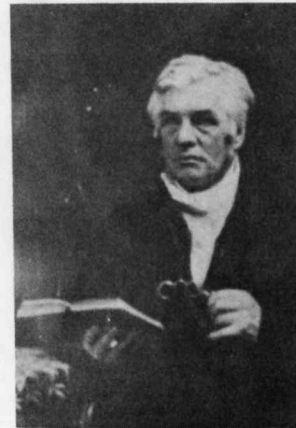
Present Congregational Church Interior
Built 1890



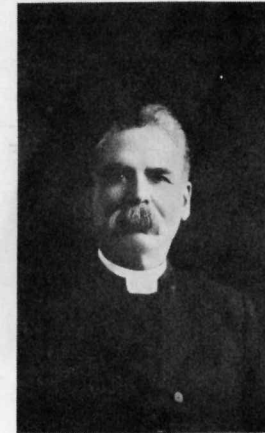
Last Great Waking Manor House Built Mid 1700 Demolished 1961
(shown converted to cottages)



Whitehall Demolished 1971
(home of the Wedd family)



Rev. J.W. Phair
1849-1860



Rev. W. Robertson
1888-1922



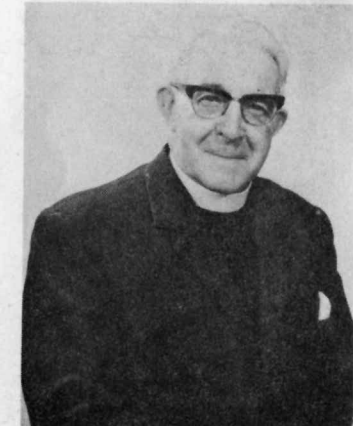
Rev. A.W. Wright
1928-1938



Rev. J.R.F. Pledger
1938-1943



Rev. E.A. Smisson
1943-1958



Albert R. Harrison
1960 - present



High Street, Great Waking (looking East)
about 1900



High Street, Great Waking (looking West)
about 1900

THE SCHOOL HALL

A new School Hall was erected in the garden of the old Meeting House under the presidency of Mr. A.E. Wedd, J.P.; On the Opening Day, February 20th, 1903, Mr. Kemsley suggested it should be used for all denominations as well as our Sunday School. The particular Hall we have now was purchased by Mr. Kemsley from East Ham in London where it was already in use as a Baptist Chapel. Built in 1873 our Hall is almost a Century old.

It was purchased for £249 and re-erected on its present site. It has had almost daily use since, and Mr. Kemsley's hope for it has certainly been realised as is shown below.

It was used by the Liberal Party for the 1906 elections, and by a Society called the Alpha Group of Good Templars. The Congregational Ladies' Gymnastic Classes were formed, followed by the Congregational Band of Hope in 1906. The Methodist Band of Hope also met but on a different night. In March 1907 it was used by the Salvation Army, and the Waking Horticultural Society. In 1907 the Boys Gymnastic Class was formed. The Ancient Order of Forresters used the premises from April 1908, United Temperance Society in March 1909, and our Womens' Own from 1912. Essex Education Committee used it from 1915 for domestic science lessons (Cookery). In 1940 the Boys Brigade and Lifeboys were formed under the Leadership of Miss Pledger, the Minister's daughter. In 1941 the Home Guard trained on Tuesday and Wednesday evenings and the A.T.C. in 1943. In the same year Brownies and Guides were re-formed by Miss Kerr, a private in the A.T.S. stationed at Shoeburyness.

More recently, Scouts, Cubs and Sea-scouts have made the Hall their H.Q. Other organisations include the Bi-cla Club, Junior Girls' Club, Junior Choir, St. Nicholas Young Wives' Club and our own Young Wives Group, Missionary campaigns, Tramp Suppers, Concerts, O.A. Pensioners Club, and many more too numerous to mention.

MINISTERS' ROLL

REV. GODFREE		REV. W. ROBERTSON	1888 - 1922
REV. H. J. AUSTEN	1822 - 1835	REV. J. BUTTERWORTH	1922 - 1928
REV. J. WEST		REV. A. W. WRIGHT	1928 - 1938
REV. JACOB	1835 - 1847	REV. J. R. F. PLEDGER	1938 - 1943
REV. HOLDER	1847 - 1849	REV. E. A. SMISSION	1943 - 1958
REV. J. W. PHAIR	1849 - 1860		
REV. S. OLIVER	1860 - 1888		

ALBERT R. HARRISON 1960 -

On January 29th, 1939 Mr. & Mrs. Edward Burgess celebrated their Diamond Wedding. Both had been Church Members for nearly 70 years and this was recognised by the award of a certificate from the Congregational Union of England and Wales. Mr. Burgess had been a Sunday School teacher, Choir Member, Church Treasurer, and eventually Life Deacon. He died in 1947 aged 94 years.

On 24th February 1956 Mrs. Goodman died at the great age of 100 years 8 months.

The electric clock was given in 1950 to mark the appointment of Rev. E.A. Smission as Chairman of the Essex Congregational Union.

The Lectern was dedicated in November 1964. It bears the names of 3 honoured Life Deacons -

John Montgomery, a benefactor of our Church.
George Cooper, who was a Sunday school teacher for more than 40 years and Percy Burgess, who like his Father, served the Church as Treasurer. He was also magazine secretary and Choirmaster for many years.

Shortly before his death in 1970, Mr. F. Bailey a member of the choir made and gave, the Hymn Board.

An Oak pedestal and vase are inscribed to the memory of Agnes Smith, who worshipped for many years in this Church.

Other gifts in memory of loved ones include the

Choir Cupboard to Alice Goodman and Ethel French.
Silver Vases to Elsie and Ernest Sheridan.
Pulpit Hymn Book to Jessie Wade.
Communion Table Vase to Alice Burgess.
Lectern Bible to Annie Burns.

Our wrought iron gates were given in Memory of Joseph Miles a much respected Life Deacon, and recently the oak Notice Board in memory of the Church Secretary Tennyson Cripps who died in office in 1971, having served also as a Deacon and Treasurer.

Over the years many gifts have been received, some from anonymous donors. These include the gas-fired boiler, oak font, stacking chairs, oak cross, piano, offertory plates and bags, etc.

On the walls can be seen tablets to the Oliver and Wedd families, also the Roll of Honour Great War and the Ministerial Roll.

Families connected with the Church for generations, and happily still represented are the Cooper, Mead and Sumner.

Alterations were made in 1968 when the back of the Church was re-designed to form 2 much needed classrooms for the Junior Church. In April 1972 a major scheme of re-decoration was carried out, including the removal of the screen, thus making the Communion Table an Open Table. These alterations are generally accepted as improvements.

VILLAGE HISTORY

WAKERING MANORS

The first records we find, show us that Wakering was divided into two manors and estates. One called Wakering Manor, the other called BERRE WERA at Little Wakering. Wakering Manor was owned first by SUENE of ESSEX. It was built before William the Conqueror invaded this country, probably about the same date as the Manor at Little Wakering which we know was in existence in 1005, A.D. Wakering Manor was situated at a place called PALES PITT, at the entrance to the Village. The Pitt suggests a pit or pond in present times, it is generally believed it was surrounded by a moat and was situated between the present Exhibition Inn and Little Wakering Corner. Historians tell us that the last Manor House on that site was demolished in 1735 and was replaced by the one (since demolished) shown in our photograph on the present site of OLD COURT flats and shops on the corner of Mercer Avenue and the High Street.

An interesting fact is that the owner of the Manor in the time of King Henry the Second (1154-1189) was Suene of Essex, HENRY de ESSEX who was Standard Bearer to the King and a great favourite of his. On an expedition to Wales with the King, bearing the Standard, while preparing to do battle with the Welsh, he took fright at the sight of the enemy, threw down his Royal Standard and ran away. The Welsh were jubilant, the discouraged English Army fell into utter confusion and were routed. For this unworthy behaviour he was charged with treason and sentenced to death, but his favour with the King stood him in good stead, for the sentence was revoked and he was banished to the Abbey of Reading, to spend the rest of his life as a monk.

The Manor and estates reverted to the Crown, and King Henry then gave it to JOHN de NEVILLE; later his Grandson forfeited it for joining forces with SIMON de MONTFORT against King Henry the Third. Fortunately for John de Neville the King gave it back to him on condition that he gave up to the Crown half his cattle and estates elsewhere.

In 1266 it passed to his Son, another John de Neville who died in 1282. It was in the Neville family for several generations. HAROLD de NEVILLE (whose Grandfather was one of the Barons who forced King John to sign the Magna Carta in 1215 and whose signature can still be seen on the actual Charters in Lincoln and Salisbury Cathedrals and also the British Museum) owned and ran the Open Free Market in the High Street. This is referred to in a dispute at Court between a Mr. Tybetott who wished to open a similar market in 1345 in opposition to de Neville at nearby SHOPLAND. De Neville won the day and the Wakering Market was saved. The Market was situated in Wakering High Street, between LEE LOTTS Estate and TWYFORD AVENUE. It certainly included a Fish Market as well as other goods, evidence of this is the thousands of oyster shells dug up in the gardens in that area. The oysters were probably brought up the Wakering Creek from BURNHAM and COLCHESTER, where oyster beds have lain for centuries.

From the de Neville family the Manor passed to the Knights returning from the Crusades under a system called Knights Fee, (a Knight who had served the King well, was rewarded for services rendered, by being given an estate for his lifetime only).

WAKERING MANORS (Contd.)

The first Knight to have this honour was ROBERT BRUS, then came HENRY de WALEYS; then THOMAS de WEYLAND. Back once more to the de NEVILLE family, to Sir JOHN, then to WILL de BOHUN, the Earl of Northampton. It then passed to the daughters of his Son HUMFREY who had inherited from his Father. Of his two daughters, Elianor, married THOMAS of WOODSTOCK, and Mary married HENRY Earl of DERBY who later became King HENRY fourth (1399-1413). The estate then became divided and passed to the Countess of Stafford's third husband WILLIAM BOUCHIER and later to his Son Henry (Earl of Essex) who fell from his horse while hunting, and died. In 1540 his Daughter Anne who married WILLIAM PARR, Baron of Kendall, inherited the estate and although she divorced him, the estate was still held by her and passed to her heir, WALTER DEVEREUX, Viscount Hereford. In 1594 it passed from LORD FERRERS of Chartley to Sir JOHN COPE, later sold to JOHN HIGHAM of BOREHAM and lastly sold to a JOHN TYRELL of Hatfield Peverel.

Certainly there are plenty of that name in Wakering, it being an old Essex name. If your surname is the same as any mentioned here, then your ancestors may have owned this village at some time.

The Manor at Pales Pitt which was demolished in 1735 ended the 700 year history of that site.

1903 WORSHIP CENSUS

The figures for the year 1903 Village Public Worship Census make interesting reading.

The village population census of 1901 was 1820 inhabitants.

	<u>Morning</u>	<u>Evening</u>	<u>Total</u>
CHURCH OF ENGLAND	63	143	206
CONGREGATIONAL	157	85	242
PRIM. METHODIST	174	121	295
PECULIAR PEOPLE	127	66	193
SALVATION ARMY	141	130	271
MISSION HALL	117	60	177
TOTALS	779	605	1384

Showing that 75% attended a place of worship.

"WHERE ARE YOU ALL NOW?"

Village History (continued)

1600's

PRIVATEERS

When war broke out with Spain and France in 1624, no-one in Wakering really thought it would affect them. I'm quite sure, but affect this village, it most certainly did, for on the 6th Sept. 1628 (according to the historians) this village was completely deserted. The villagers had left their homes and belongings and fled, for the following reason. The Spanish Armada, having been defeated and forgotten, our navy had relaxed its vigil. Complacency was rife, and as a result, the Dunkirk Privateers, (almost pirates) operated by the French Navy from the harbour at Dunkirk, were plundering our ships. Their aim was to attack all merchant ships, their reward was the ships and merchandise they captured. Privateers were recognised as a legitimate part of the great sea nations. (Sir Francis Drake was Captain of a British Privateer).

All along our coasts people lived in fear of a landing. The Thames shipping was continually raided, and on that fateful day Sept. 6th, it was reported that 600 men had landed at Wakering Haven (in 1565 mentioned with Leigh, as a sea port). The alarm was sounded and everyone fled inland. One woman is stated to have walked in her terror, 16 miles toward Chelmsford, with a baby strapped to her back. It was reported that Wakering had been burnt to the ground. Eventually a certain Captain Humphries took the trouble to check as the evacuees poured into Leigh, and sent a force of soldiers to Wakering to investigate. They found the village deserted, but all intact, so marched down to the Haven to see for themselves. There they found one solitary, harmless foreign fishing boat. There was no fleet of ships. Someone had imagined it to be a privateer and raised the alarm, proving what fear can do. This so spread, that at Chelmsford they raised a levy to form an army to repel the invaders. But eventually the villagers returned, to laugh at their fears.

1700's

Village records of the 1700's show that, like most small towns and villages, our High Street was so rough that the farmers would first plough it, and then it would be harrowed to level it off.

In 1711, an Apothecary named Thomas Jackson was drowned on the Broomway.

In 1793 hostilities commenced again with Spain and France, and the Napoleonic invasion was feared. The Rochford Hundred Volunteers were stationed on Foulness Island, near Lodge Farm (then a public house). Wakering was asked to form a troop of volunteers, but at the first attempt only 50 men could be raised and the minimum for a troop was 60. In 1798 semaphore signal stations were established. (reference page 3).

Village History (continued)

1800's

The 1801 census gives the village population as 674 inhabitants.

A certain Joseph Knapping, owner of most of Shoeburyness, formed a full troop of volunteers in 1813. He was the captain, a John Knapping was Lieutenant, P. Burchell, ensign and there were three sergeants, three corporals, two drummers and sixty privates. Pay was 1s. per day, privates, 1s. 2d. corporals 1s. 6d. sergeants. Prior to this a troop of cavalry was raised by John Asplin, in 1803. History does not tell us just where, but one local troop had two of their men courting local girls. Their Captain had them handed over to the navy press gang, and the men were put aboard a ship at the Nore. However, the Captain realised that he had exceeded his duty and they were returned to his troop.

In 1805 Thomas Miller (surgeon) of Wakering was drowned on the Broomway, and in 1836 two young girls named Chittock and Bates were lost on the same road trying to reach their boyfriends. They were not caught by the incoming tide, but died of exposure, for a terrific gale with thunder and lightning raged all night.

What were conditions like in this village of ours during the 1800's? Our church was built in 1822, when butter was 1s. 1d. per lb., cheese 8d., beef 8d., mutton 7½d. The farm workers wages had rocketed to 15s. per week from 9s. and beer was supplied daily to the farm workers. Hours were from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. in summer, 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. in winter. Only farmers, gentlemen and tradesmen could afford the coal that was arriving in the village. The poor collected twigs and branches from the woods, or bought faggots at 4d. per bundle.

About 1812 the sick benefit clubs had started, meant to help the poor and needy, but unfortunately for the people concerned the clubs paid out mostly in the public houses, and the money went immediately back over the counter with little benefit to those at home ill and often hungry.

Life was hard in these times, even a minor offence meant a public flogging. In Wakering as in all villages or towns that held a market, it was a condition of the market licence that an INSTRUMENT of CORRECTION was erected in the village. Some towns had pillories, stocks or cages. We had a whipping post, which was fixed to the west wall of Little Wakering Parish Church. (In 1926 it was moved for safety inside the church, where it can still be seen). While at Little Wakering Church, take note of the tower, which was rebuilt by John de Wakering, Bishop of Norwich, to commemorate the victory of the British at the Battle of Agincourt. The pelican, which is incorporated in his coat of arms, was chosen as the badge of the local school.

In 1850 several men from this village went off to the Gold Rush in Australia. It cost £15 for a ticket to Adelaide from London. When they arrived they found the towns deserted, everyone scrambling to stake claims. In a recorded letter to Colchester, the writer describes the scene as a giant anthill on a hot summer's day, with about 5,000 people digging frantically on their plot or claim, which was 8 ft x 8 ft. A man could go to his plot and return at night £1,000 richer, but many dug down 30ft. and found nothing. It is not known if any returned to see again the trees and fields of Wakering.

Village History (continued)

1900's

BUILDERS

BAKERS

BARGES

BLACKSMITHS

BUILDERS

In 1900 there were two local Builders, William Wiggins, who died in 1937 aged 90 years, and Edward Burgess, both being members of our Church. Mr. Wiggins firm has been carried on by Father, Son and Grandson. The recent Church re-decoration being carried out by his Great-Grandson.

As has been stated elsewhere, Edward Burgess and his son Percy were closely connected with our Church, and they built the present Manse. Edward Burgess was one of the few employers who arranged an annual outing for his workmen. Sadly, the illness of Percy in 1954 caused the firm to close soon after, but many older residents still regard "Burgess Built" as a Hallmark.

BAKERS

In this Century the Village had three home bakeries, Burgess, Milbourn, later Cooper and Cripps. In 1890 when the Cripps family took over from the Frost family, life in the trade was very different from that of today. Work started at 3 a.m. Dough was mixed by hand using well water, and baked in a coal-fired oven. Workmen's wives would call at 4 or 5 a.m. for hot bread and rolls for their menfolk's breakfasts. A 3 oz. roll was 1d. and a 2 lb. loaf 4d. Flour was delivered from Rankins Mill by steam lorry, and coal by horse and cart from Shoebury Station at £1 per ton. In 1924 a "T" type Ford was purchased for delivering the bread, replacing the horse and cart and barrows. In 1958 the Cripps family sold the premises which were demolished in 1970, and the site covered by Crouchman's Avenue.

BARGES

The last barges to sail from Wakering Creek were the "Anthony" and the "Gascoine". In late 1946, both barges were sold to Greenhithe (Kent) owners. Several barges have been owned locally, and past records show that since the 1850's 12 owners have been village men. Five members of the Howard family have owned barges between them from 1840 to the 1920's. Benton was another local owner, and Henry and Edward Juniper owned 4 jointly. The Brickfields owned by the Rutter family in the late 1860's gave work to the barges. In the mid-1920's they became the Great Wakering Brick Company and they owned 19 barges. The last four were the "Anthony", "Gascoine", "K.C." and the "Juniper". In 1942 the "Juniper" and "K.C.", were sold to Kent owners, "Juniper" was used as a salvage vessel at Gravesend and "K.C." as a towed barge (minus sails and rigging) up and down the Thames, eventually being broken up in 1954. "K.C." was in use on the Thames until 1947, then it was towed up to Chiswick and used as a houseboat. In 1956 it was towed up the river Deben in Suffolk and until 1971 was being used as floating tea rooms at Felixstowe Ferry.

"Gascoine" also used as a towed barge, was broken up in 1949. "Anthony" was sold to John Sadd at Maldon in 1949 and carried timber from their yards until 1966 when it was finally built into the banks of the river Stour in Suffolk.

BLACKSMITHS

There have been two known Blacksmiths in the Village. The old Forge and Smithy still stands at Alps yard in the High Street, although unused for many years. The ALP family have been Smiths there since 1850 when James Alp set up in Wakering after serving his apprenticeship at Rochford. The BROWN family forge was also in the High Street, situated between the Evangelical Church and the British Legion H.Q. (formerly the Vicarage).

IN LIVING MEMORY

On 24th May the School Headmaster would parade the children carrying flags to the residence of the late Mr. E.A. Wedd J.P., at "Whitehall", after singing patriotic songs, Mr. Wedd would stand on his doorstep and impress on the children the meaning of Empire Day. They were then granted a half holiday. Of about twenty wells in the area the water from roughly six was thought to be fit for drinking. Children whose Fathers worked in the Brickfields were allowed out of school early at lunchtime to run down the road taking a hot lunch between two plates wrapped in a red spotted handkerchief. If they dawdled and it was cold on arrival they were given a "clip round the ear". Daily a herd of milking cows were driven through the High Street from Lee Lotts to the marshes, with disastrous results to the pavements. Twice a day a string of horse-drawn tumbrils would be driven through the village loaded with bricks. There was Horner, and Chris, his sighted helper, with the horse-drawn barrel organ. The Salvation Army Band and Songsters played and sang outside the school on Saturdays and Sundays. How many Wakering people can remember "Fable and Americy"? the latter always bragging about his exploits whilst working on the Parish Church for E. Burgess the local Builder. One story says that he used to ride his bike round the base of the spire; when you look next time see if you would care to try! There was Jimmy Rivers, an aged and agile hay and stray binder, with his moleskin hat and short fawn jacket, (all the modern gear of today). There was Godfrey - his curly grey hair blowing into his face as he walked from Shoebury Station, a huge bundle of wares on his back wrapped up in black baize. He was the Local Tally Man. The winkle man from Leigh would come round on Saturdays with cockles, winkles, shrimps and whelks. Jimma Church with his three wheeled pram sold milk from Millers Farm, and butter with the imprint of a cow on top. The Muffin man with his tray upon his head rang his bell calling "Muffins". Cripp's Baker boy rang his bell to draw attention to his piping hot rolls, Bill Goodman the Village Photographer, and harness maker, also ran the village Drum and Fife Band in connection with our Church. His Brother cut hair at 2d a time. There was Dod Perry who started the first bus service from Shoebury Station with a six seater horse-drawn Brougham or Brake. It only met certain trains, and on winter evenings the paraffin lamp would smoke with disastrous results to the cab's occupants. Dod also collected the night soil by the light of Bat Lanterns. This was emptied on Mill Chase and lightly covered with straw; woe betide anyone who stepped off the road in that area, (they talk about pollution today). Street drains were emptied in the same way with the children standing round enjoying the stench. Children too would follow Frank Webb pushing his hand barrow up the High Street, with a freshly killed pig slit across the throat. On Fridays he would deliver meat to Foulness by horse and cart across the Broomway at low tide. The mail was delivered this way too. Water was obtained from standpipes in the High Street until the 1930's. Instigator of Village street lighting was Ernie French, who persuaded the local tradesmen to have a petrol lamp fitted on the fronts of their premises with a gallon can perched above to feed it. He also made 1d. Monsters which were bottles of aerated drink, popular with the brickmakers.



MUSTARD HALL,
ST WAKERING.