Autumn 2016
Edition 34

# Small Beginnings

*The newsletter of the former pupils of the old Barling School is published for the benefit of all ex-pupils, staff and friends of the school*

## BOOKMARKS



## Reunion Lunches

A group of us meet for lunch every few months to catch up on news, socialise and plan the main reunion events. We meet at the:

### Castle Inn, Little Wakering

### Our Next Lunchtime Get-together

### Saturday 14th January 2017

### 12.15 p.m.

***Anyone with an interest in our school or area will receive a warm welcome.***

## Foreword by Richard Kirton

We wish to thank all of those who came along and supported our splendid reunion which was held at the old Great Wakering Primary School on Saturday 1st October 2016.

I have been fortunate enough to meet up again with Ann Mott which has enabled me to enhance her and her mother's accounts of what life was like in Great Wakering, over a hundred years ago.

It might come as a surprise to some but two women were sentenced as witches in Little Wakering and Shopland back in the 16th century and members might like to read the article.

# Our Reunion on 1st October 2016

What a terrific night we had at the Great Wakering Community Centre. So many people to meet. So much to look at. So much to talk about. I'm sure that a good time was had by all. There are many people we have to thank. First, all thanks to the sixty-plus people who came and made it such a lively affair and were so generous with donations, including food and raffle prizes. Sincere thanks, too, to our team of volunteers, who ran the event beautifully: Jeanne and Janet on Reception; Val, Graham, Jan, Tony, Barbara, Brenda and Maureen on Catering; Doris and David on Raffle; Laurie for displays of the 1953 floods and the new Wakering Action Plan; Richard for our website; Dawn and David and their team for Publicity, for bringing folders of photos and for 101 jobs that contributed to the success of the evening.

A special word of gratitude must be paid to Keith Price, who talked to us for a very entertaining hour about 'Growing up in Great Wakering in the 1950s'. Although he wasn't able to join us, Robert Mount kindly sent a donation to our funds. We had two lovely surprises from Jan (Sivell) Hicks on behalf of her mother and our schoolmate, Vi (Mitchell) Sivell, who passed away earlier this year. First a beautiful bouquet of flowers went to the person whose birthday was closest to Vi's. That turned out to be Shirley (Lubbock) Gibson. Then Jan presented us with a very generous donation from her mother's estate, which was much appreciated and will go towards our next project.

**Attendees**

David Freeman, Keith 'Badger' Price, Ruth Tidmarsh, Pat Robbins, Nigel Robbins, Rob Richardson, Shirley (Lubbock) Gibson, Sally Gibson, Sandra Cornwell and John, Les Gilkes, Karen Gilkes, Carol Osborne, Roger Osborne, Sylvia (Stock) Lloyd, Brenda Whale, Chris Stock, Judy (Eastwood) Smith, Terry Smith, Kit (Barker) Hatley, Percy Hatley, Derek 'Podge' Beadell, Michael Burles, Daphne (Keen) Dare, Pam Lee, Dave Lee, Veronica Keen, Beryl Brudenell, Peter Brudenell, Mick Prior, Pearl (Mumford) Perryman, Marie Sutton, Margaret (Sutton) Myles-Hook, Alan Sutton, Roger Myles-Hook, Peter Moss, Stanley Witton, Alan Pitts and Janet Pitts and daughter, Janet (Sivell) Hicks, Betty Francis, Brian Wright, Anne Wright, Barry Petts, Betty (Deadman) Dobson, Tony Groves, Janet Groves, Maureen (Abrey) Petts, Barbara (Smith) Elliott, Doris (Chapman) Bracci, Valerie (Mott) Ridley, Graham Ridley, Brenda Elliott, David Bracci, Janet Rodmell, Jeanne (Prior) Richardson, Laurie Street, Richard Kirton, Peter Griffiths, David Bailey, Dawn (Mumford) Bailey.

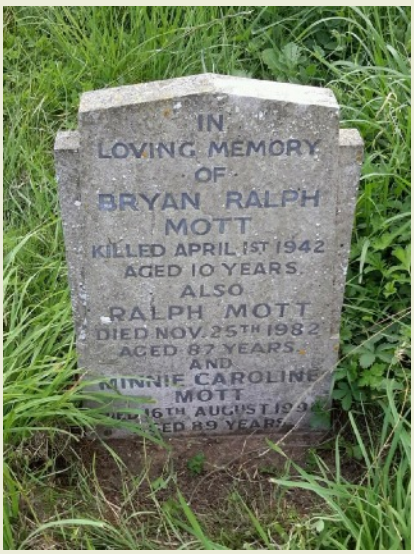
# Peter Griffiths' Tale of Woe

It was on the edge of Wick Meadow that I once had a nasty accident. It was the summer or autumn of 1947. A group of us were playing in the ditch under the trees on the side of the meadow nearest to Little Wakering. We were all from that village: David Little, Michael Little, Les Gilkes, me and one or two others.

I was running along the ditch, which was dry, when suddenly I became entangled in curls of rusty barbed wire that lay hidden among the twigs and leaves. It bit into my legs and numerous wounds started to bleed on my calves and thighs. The others came up and carefully disentangled me. Hankies were reddened with blood, but didn't stop the flow.

David, who was a couple of years older, carried me all the way home to Ben-Hur, our house, whose front room acted as the police station, on Little Wakering Road. I shall always be indebted to his strength. The doctor was called and he cleaned me up. Nearly seventy years later the scars are still visible.

# Memoirs of Ann Mott




A memorial stone stands in the churchyard of Saint Nicholas Parish Church bearing 3 names from the Mott family.

Ann Mott's mother, Minnie Caroline Mott died on 16 August 1990 aged 89 years and is buried there along with her husband Ralph Mott who died on 25 November 1982 aged 87 years and her son Bryan Ralph Mott who tragically died on 1 April 1942 aged just 10 years old.

The following extract from an official WW2 incident report mentions the death of 2 boys, Burgess and Mott. The boy Mott mentioned in the extract was Bryan Ralph Mott, brother of Ann Mott and son of Minnie Caroline Mott.

| | |
|---|---|
| 4/42 Gt Wakering | 2 small yellow bombs. 1 unexploded and 1 exploded while being interefered with, causing 3 casualties, 2 serious and 1 slight, 200 yds west of D.F. Wireless Station. 2 boys, Burgess and Mott were conveyed to Rochford Hospital where they died the same day from injuries received. |

Ann was just 5 years old at the time of her brother Bryan's death and she vividly remembers the sad incident to this day.

There is an excellent article titled 'Parachute Bombs fell all over Wakering' on the Rochford District Community Archive website which highlights a British wartime experiment that went badly wrong and was partly to blame for the accident.

Minnie Caroline Mott shared many undocumented memoirs with her daughter Ann who now shares them with us all, using her own words, as follows:

My grandmother was a skilled needlewoman who could make any clothes, for men or women. There were no bought patterns, of course, and all parts were constructed by blocking. She made mum a set of clothes for her little doll and I treasure the only surviving piece, a tight waisted corset, machine made, bound around the edges, lined and boned, with eyelets down the back for cords. "Gran" lived into an energetic old age and on washdays would trot up and down with her full basket to the line at the end of the garden, until a scold caused a poisoned foot and her death at the age of 85 in 1928. She worked hard indoors, too, wiping dirty crockery and cutlery with paper to get off the worst before using the precious clean water which had to be collected from the stand-pipe half-way along the road. They did have a big tank in the ground which collected the rainwater from the roof, and there was a hand pump to draw this up (mains water arrived in their house in the 1920s). Grates had to be "blacked", a horrible job. Mum's' mother's wedding dress had a swansdown

trimming Her mother had a little private school where she lived before marrying. The Salvation Army buildings are there now. She was very artistic, and won prizes at village shows with arrangements of flowers in her epergne, a silver stand with three narrow trumpets to hold the stems. At Christmas the family entertained soldiers from Shoebury garrison, and the children in the house across the road were invited to receive presents from the Christmas tree.

Mum's mother had 3 cousins, Charlotte, Alice and Esther Wiggins, who lived in the New Road (usually known then as Tinker's Lane) after retiring from their employment with Lady Capel-Cure in her home in West Essex. Alice and Esther lived until 1956 and mum would visit, taking chicken broth and mince pies at Christmas-time, and other titbits at other times of the year. I went too, and spent most of the time gazing at their fascinating grandfather clock. Esther had been the Lady's maid and chaperone to her daughter, and travelled on holidays in Europe, sometimes in alarmingly steep mountain areas, all by horse and carriage. Alice had been the dressmaker. They gave me titbits of their handiwork, such as beaded wool embroidery on net, and offcuts from the brocade for the gown which the Lady's daughter wore when she was presented to Queen Victoria. They also made me a golliwog, but unfortunately I made him shabby through playing with him.

The only activities allowed in mum's home on Sundays were hymn-singing, accompanied by piano or harmonium, and reading a "nice book". They would also go for walks, often down to Goroke, which was a particular spot on the common, but mud did not know how it got its name. Mum's mother worried about the country's deteriorating morals, and they were particularly shocked when they saw a woman sitting by her front window using a sewing machine, this prompted her mother's frequent lament "This country is becoming as wicked as the continent".

Mum, her sister and mother had beautiful bonnets which were made for her by a (French?) Lady in the London Road, not far from Victoria Circus.

Grandpa's captain was a Mr. Daws. He suggested that selling the old barges and buying a big one which could cross to the continent would be a wise move financially, but Grandpa was sentimental and hung on to his old craft. One of them went down in a storm off Southend pier, and the crew had to burn the mate's wife's underwear as an alarm signal. They were all rescued. One man was killed, however, on another occasion. It was believed that he fell asleep and was knocked overboard by a swinging boom. The spread of motor vehicles after the first World War started the decline in barge transport.

When she was older, mum learned to play the cello carrying it between home and Shoebury station and riding by train to Southend. Her teacher was Doreen Vicears, wife of Adam Seebold, whose orchestra played at the end of the pier. Mum's sister Kate was a brilliant violinist, short dark and very pretty, and she was very popular when she played to the troops on leave from the war at the garrison or in the hospital which had been set up in the Palace Hotel at the top of Pier Hill. Mum also entertained with her cello. Aunty was allowed to borrow her teacher's Stradivarius, and the two girls slept with it under the bed, afraid of burglars. Aunty moved from Wakering when she married, but mum continued to take part in local concerts with friends until family commitments became too much for them. Mrs. Hilda Cripps told me how once they were introduced at a concert as "Mrs. Cripps will play the organ, Mrs. Rayner

the violin and Mrs. Mott the seller". Knowing mum's sense of humour I don't know how she kept a straight face at this mispronunciation! The two string players then started to tune their instruments, whereupon a friend in the audience heard a man grumble, "think that they would have done that before they came!" Mrs. Rayner was Katie from Home Farm.

In the second World War mum played for a choir, which I believe had some connection with the Air Raid Precaution members. They had a harmonium on a lorry when they went carol- singing. She went back to teaching when the war began, as so many men had been called up and there was a great shortage of teachers. She expected to stay for about two years but carried on for twenty, although she switched to Southend Schools in 1945.

The Ayletts, who had a shop in the High Street on the east side of North Street, were mum's cousins. When one of them was on leave during the first World War was wondering along one day and watched a horse grazing contentedly, "I wish that I were that old horse" he said. He went back to the war and did not return.

After the war Grandpa's meadow was converted into two tennis courts, mum, her brother and sister had many happy hours with dad and his large family and Wakering friends, including Mr. Hamm the headmaster, Mrs. Hamm, his wife who also taught and made beautiful iced cakes, and two other teachers Mr. Tommy Davies and Mr. Scott.

I enjoyed visiting Mr. Arthur Cooper, known as "Lefty" who was a neighbour in St. Johns Road, usually called the "New Town". He was born about 1881 and had been a Knacker. His stables were about halfway up the road on the east side. He had been bought up in one of the huts which were the brickies homes near Millhead, and sometimes crewed on the barges when they were short of men. It could be difficult getting in and out of the creeks if the wind wasn't co-operative, as the tide was low for so long. The barges were hard to manoeuvre, and it was the most skilful and daring crews who could get out. It was quite a race and competition of skill. There were plenty of rats down by the sea wall. In his younger days he had a dog which was a good ratter, so he would block up most of the holes then the dog would drive all the rats to one place. As the rats jammed in the hole he would pull them out by their tails and toss them for the dog to kill.

Some of the brickies prided themselves as being rough- "the rough" is a name which Wakering people still used recently - Mr. Cooper saw many fights, mostly in or near the Anchor which was the brickies favourite pub. The wives would go screaming to the police station, asking for their men to be separated, but one policeman used to say "I'll come in half an hour, one of them will be pleased to see me then."

Mr. Cooper loved horses and would sometimes sleep with them after an evening out, if he feared that his wife considered that he had drunk too heartily! He must have been one of the first people in the district to have a humane killer, for he was asked to demonstrate it, at the police stables in Alexandra Street, in Southend, when they had a horse to put down. He was very nervous, afraid that something would go wrong, but he would say "I put the gun to his head and down he went just like that," and he would slap a fist hard into the palm of his other hand, gazing at the floor for a moment as if seeing a corpse.

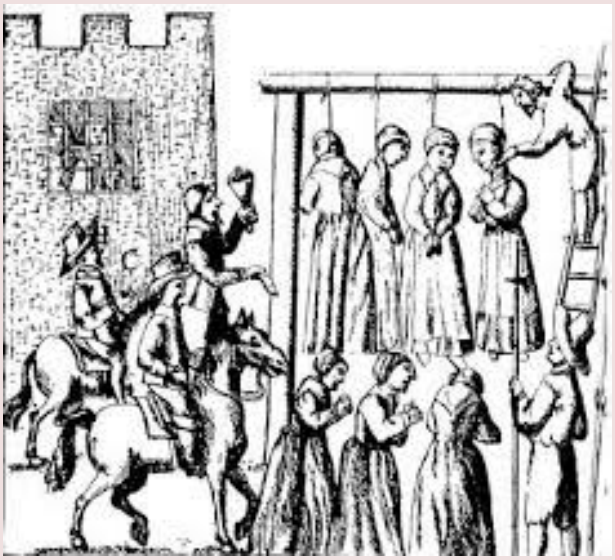
When talking about a horse being in fine condition he would say enthusiastically, "He was a horse a fine stepping horse" and would pump the air in front of his chest with his forearms, fists pawing downwards, like a horse's front legs. At one time there was an Indian who used to sit fasting near the Kursaal, quite a tourist attraction. His name was Zacths. One day Mr. Cooper was called to put a horse down on Foulness. It had been wasting away and was so thin it had been nicknamed Zaccho. Mr. Cooper peeped into its mouth, found what he had expected and offered to take the horse away alive. On returning home he set to work on dentistry, removing useless bad teeth and trimming others. Back came Zaccho's ability to eat and soon, "Ooh, he became a fine stepping horse, a fine stepping horse," and Mr. Cooper would chuckle gleefully, pummeling the air.

Mr. Cooper remembered the building of the new Congregational Church and told me how all the important people in the village went there, rolling up in their pony and traps, including Major Wedd, he told me something about which I believe was connected to the church, and which he liked to follow sometimes all the way to Southend. During his youth there was a vicar at the church who worked hard to bring the brickies and their families into Christian Worship. Quite a few men and women settled down together without marrying, but he "rounded them up" and persuaded several couples to marry. Mr. Cooper's own mother was a sweet contented person, always singing songs like Pretty Little Polly Perkins from Paddington Green and often hymns. People would come across her sometimes and ask "All alone Mrs. Cooper?" "No I'm never alone," she would reply quietly. One day when he was about sixteen another youngster came running behind him, jumped on his back and said "Guess what - your mothers had twins." "Look, I nearly fell down with surprise!" he'd laugh. He had no inkling of the pregnancy. He remembered the high infant mortality, of course and especially a typhoid and cholera outbreak. The source of which was believed to be the ditch along the south side of the common.

He would enjoy himself at Christmas, singing and acting in a play with the carol singers. Little Wakering Hall was one of their favourite stopping places. He would struggle to remember details of the play and its characters, but only recall a few, including St. George and the Dragon and Tom the Sweep. The only words still in his memory were part of a couplet, "I'm Tom the Sweep, and all the money I Get I Keep." I said "you must have been mummers," but he had never heard the word.

Before leaving school mum became a pupil-teacher, learning and practising teaching while still receiving lessons. Throughout her life she considered this to be the best way of discovering whether a youngster had the aptitude to become a good teacher, before wasting time at college. She had a struggle to get to college, as subjects like Algebra and French weren't on Wakening School's curriculum and she needed a smattering of them, but she was accepted at the City of Leeds Teacher Training College. One of her wedding photos shows her standing outside her home, wearing a school mistress's reproving look. All the children in "New Town" came to gaze at the happy couple in all their finery! In 1926 Dad had entered in a partnership with Mr. Leonard Tickett who did vehicle repairs in an old barn in the Little Wakering Road. They had a garage built in the High Street, where the sheltered flats stand now nearly opposite the Exhibition, and called themselves Wakering Engineering Co. After they retired and I had become a motorist my battery supplier told me, "They weren't just repairers they were engineers! If they could not buy what they needed they made it!" They retired in 1956.

# Witches of Little Wakering



Who would believe that Little Wakering had two convicted witches as can be verified from the book 'Witch Hunting and Witch Trials (RLE Witchcraft): The Indictments for Witchcraft from the Records of the 1373 Assizes Held from the Home Court 1559-1736 AD' by C L'Estrange Ewen.

The book was originally published in 1929, the author presenting a formidable collection of facts, brought together in a scholarly manner. The relevant extracts from the book follow:

ABSTRACTS OF INDICTMENTS (Pages 124 & 125)
1572. Essex Lent Sessions and general gaol delivery holden at Chelmsford on 17 Mar., 14 Eliz. Writ dated 24 Jan . . .

45. William Skelton of Little Wakeryng, labourer, on 10 July, 13 Eliz., at Lit. W., bewitched Dorothy Fuller, daughter of John F. of Lit. W., yeoman, who languished until 30 Nov., 14 Eliz., when she died at Lit. W. Endorsed. Billa vera.
Po se cul ca null Judm m°.

46. Margery Skelton of Little Wakeryng,[1] spinster, on 26 Sept., 13 Eliz., at Lit. W., bewitched Phyllis (philiciam) Pyckett, daughter of Richard P. of Lit. W., yeoman, who languished until 20 Oct. following, when she died at Lit. W. Endorsed.
Billa vera. Po se cul ca null Judm m°.

47. William Skelton of Little Wakeringe, labourer, and Margery Skelton of the same, spinster, wife of W, S., on 16 Nov., 10 Eliz., at Barlinge, bewitched John Churchman of B., sailor, who then and there immediately died. Endorsed. Billa vera.
Po se cul ca null Judm m° [both prisoners].

48. -, -, on 29 July, 14 Eliz., at Barling, bewitched Agnes Collen, aged 1½ yrs. and more, daughter of William C. of B., who languished and became decrepid. Endorsed. Billa vera.
Po se cul [both prisoners].

*[1] In 1566 Margery Skelton, of Little Wakering, had been suspected of sorcery and examined by Archdeacon Cole in these words. "Whether she ever used to hele any of her neighbours that were sycke or deseased, other [either] women or children, and she sayde she hathe, wth prayinge of her prayers she hath healed vi persones [etc.]." Precedents and Proceedings, by W. H. Hale, p. 148.*

## Cunning Folk

Cunning-folk were local practitioners of magic, providing small-scale but valued service to the community. The Witchcraft Act of 1542 made no distinction between witches and cunning folk, and prescribed the death penalty for crimes such as using invocations and conjurations to locate treasure or to cast a love spell. The law was, however, repealed in 1547, and for the following few decades the magical practices of the cunning folk remained legal, despite opposition from certain religious authorities. In 1563, Parliament passed a law against Conjurations, Enchantments and Witchcrafts', and the death penalty was reserved for those who were believed to have conjured an evil spirit or murdered someone through magical means.

The ensuing witch-hunts largely ignored the cunning folk, and in the Essex records for the period 1560-1603, forty-two 'cunning folk' are mentioned, of which twenty-eight are male and fourteen are female. In answering to charges in connection with witchcraft, two of the women, Margery Skelton of Little Wakering in 1573 and Ursula Kempe of St Osyth in 1582, were found guilty and hanged. Four cunning men were also charged with witchcraft, none of whom were hanged, with two being acquitted. Throughout the early modern period the term 'cunning folk' was also used for practitioners of the craft who were 'white', 'good', or 'unbinding' witches, healers, seers, blessers, wizards, and sorcerers, although the most frequently used terms were 'cunning men' and 'wise men'.

*Source*: Extract from the Book ' Essex Witches' by Peter C. Brown.

*Footnote by Peter Griffiths*: The last cunning man in south-east Essex was Cunning Murrell of Hadleigh, subject of a book by Arthur Morrison, most famous for 'Child of the Jago'. 'Cunning Murrell' is an Essex classic, fit to stand beside 'Mehalah' by Sabine Baring-Gould and this year's superb novel 'The Essex Serpent' by Sarah Perry.

## A Brief Encounter with Sheila Key

I feel that I must share my brief encounter with Sheila and her husband, John Gordon Key. It happened on the day that I took my sister-in-law, who was visiting us from Perth, Australia to see Barling Creek in early July 2016. We were returning to my car which was parked outside Sheila's house at 65 Kimberley Road, Little Wakering. Within a very short space of time, we ended up being invited in to discuss local history and to copy some maps which adorned her walls. My sister-in-law ended up talking to John whilst I was busy moving some pictures off the walls to enable me to position them for the best light to photograph them.

Well, we ended up in Sheila's bedroom which my sister-in-law was quick to point out to John and his reply was "they will be alright, let them get on with it". Quite amazing that I was talking to Sheila for the first time ever and within 10 minutes was invited in to her bedroom. My sister-in-law, Brenda, was totally flabbergasted, saying that they were a friendly bunch down this road. It was my intention to return and talk further with Sheila and her husband but to date I have not had the opportunity.

Richard Kirton

# Memoirs of Minnie Caroline Mott

(née Howard)

The following account was written by Ann Mott's mother, Minnie Caroline Mott, about her life during the early years of the 20th century. She died 16 August 1990 aged 89 years and her account highlights how little people had, over a hundred years ago.

I was born in Great Wakering on June 22nd 1901, we lived in a fairly large house with 4 bedrooms and a garden of nearly half an acre. There was a meadow, vegetable garden, orchard and a stable where our pony, which we used to ride, lived. Over the stable, trap room and food and harness room was a long loft where my sister, brother, myself and friends used to play on wet days. A swing hung from the rafter. Unlike children of today we made our own enjoyment and as the meadow was an ideal place for a swing, seesaw, hoops and stilts, cricket etc. One swing hung from a huge elder tree which we climbed to the top and then held onto a block - the type used to pull up sails on barges - and whizzed down to the ground quite a distance away. Our garden was very popular with all our friends.

There was no gas or electricity in the village. In my early days we had lamps and went to bed by candlelight. The lamp over our dining room table was a very elaborate one which hung from the ceiling and its height could be adjusted. Our drinking water was fetched daily from a standpipe in the road and stored in a very large earthenware tub, covered by a wooden lid, and stood on a firm stool in the kitchen. We had a well from which we pumped soft water for washing. All our cooking was done on a kitchen range. Huge black saucepans stood on the top for boiling vegetables and boiled puddings. The oven was ideal for baking and my mother and grandmother who lived with us, were first class cooks.

At the back of the house was a little wash house with a copper which was heated a fire in a built in grate. A woman came on Mondays and stayed all day to do the family wash - 6 people in all. In return for a day's work, she received 2 shillings and sixpence (121p) lunch and tea, she also bathed there as the copper fire warmed the room.

We went to the village school where the discipline was very strict. We sat in long benches with a little hole for an inkpot for each child. Pens were not used a great deal - only for exams, as slate and slate pencils were in daily use. Sometimes the pencils squeaked. Often when the teacher was giving a lesson we had to sit with arms folded behind our backs, no round shoulders in those days! A punishment was to stand in the corner with hands on heads, or the cane. On Empire Day we used to march the length of the village street waving flags. We often went to school bowling hoops or playing marbles in the gutter, tops too and skipping ropes were popular in the playground. Occasionally the vicar used to check the registers to make sure the teachers had marked the register correctly. Many of the children came from poor but good homes with honest parents. Their fathers were either farm workers or worked in the brick fields which was down by the sea wall on the way to Potton Island. At 1155am every school day the children whose fathers worked there were let out and they would tear down to the church gate where mums would be waiting with hot dinners covered by a plate and tied up in a huge red handkerchief, each child would hold the knots and run as fast as possible to their father and back for their own meal before afternoon school.

A few children came from Potton Island and were ferried across in a dinghy. It was a long walk over the marshes and fields to the village. They had to bring their lunch and in the winter they were let out at playtime but even then some of the walk was in the dark, and fog too was a hazard. One family came from Rushley Island and another from Havengore, these children were also ferried across the creeks. The classes were very hard. I remember the chief assistant - deputy head today - telling me she had 70 children.

The only way to Southend was to walk, or walk to Shoebury and go by train. We often did this if my mother needed clothes or materials All food was bought in several very nice shops in the village and cut the size required. I remember the grocer getting his butter pats and slicing off 21bs and slapping it down on to the paper to wrap. The two shops we visited in Southend were Brightwells and Keddies. My mother and grand-mother did beautiful needlework and I have a lovely photo of my mother wearing her wedding dress which she made, and my sister and had I had lovely dresses and suits. Both the shops had two long counters on which huge rolls of cloth were rolled to be viewed. High seated chairs were provided and I used to be lifted up and sat on one. As we went back loaded my father met us at Shoebury station. Sometimes he would take us to Southend in the pony and trap and Bess would be put up at the Middleton Hotel where there were hostlers. After she was harnessed to come home we got in and she would tear out of the long yard and down the High Street at full speed to Cobweb Corner and the Southchurch road. Cobweb Corner got its name from the mass of overhead tram wires for the trams from the four roads. (Now Victoria Circus).

In the winter, we wore vests made of baby flannel, a chemise, liberty bodice, flannel petticoat and a white one trimmed with lace. Over our dresses we had a pinafore trimmed with Broderie anglaise, we even went to school in these. On our chests hung a tiny bag containing a piece of camphor. We always wore very soft leather boots right from a tiny tot. When we were older we had lovely ones up to the knees and buttoned with a button hook. If we had earache a red tile was heated in the oven, feverfew was placed on it and covered in a piece of flannel, and it was held to the ear. A hot brick wrapped in flannel also made a good hot water bottle.

My father owned a little fleet of barges which traded up the east coast, so every Monday, he would walk to Shoebury and go to the London Docks to see about freights, and Thursdays he went to Rochford market to trade with the farmers. During the school holiday we used to go with him and see the market and go for walks in the fields, now a golf course. Bess was at the Horse and Groom but she never hurried away from there, I wonder what they gave her at the Middleton Hotel! Once a year during our summer holidays we were taken to London, this was an experience very few village children shared. I can remember riding in horse drawn buses and on one occasion a horse fell.

We were a very musical family, my parents played church organs before their marriage, my mother taught us to play the piano until we were sent to a teacher, my brother went to Miss Bacon, the organist at the garrison church, for piano and organ lessons, my sister went to the Southend Academy of Music to learn the violin, and when I was old enough I went to Miss Bacon, I had to walk the 2 miles each way to Shoebury and in the winter it was dark to come home, and there was not many houses along the road in those days. When I was eleven I had a nice new bicycle to use, my brother used to ride on Bess and he tied her up on East Beach where there was a very

large shed where Mr. Rose used to work on barge repairs, and next to him was a smithy. My father's barges came here on the beach for small repairs and to Paglesham for more complicated ones. When a barge was at Shoebury my father had a tumbril cart and barges sails were brought home. Once when my brother and I waded out to meet the tide we saw my father in the cart tearing out to meet us as the tide had caught us up. He was just in time as the water was in the cart and Bess's body before we reached the beach.

The sails were spread out on our meadow and a funny little man known to us as old Ticer came from the sail makers (Mr. Turnage), at Leigh, and Ticer had a bench to sit on, and he would look for any repairs that needed and stitch away with a huge needle and palm on his hand. Afterwards the sails were red-ochred. The ochre barrel gradually rotted and the workshop fell down, but red stained wood was still visible when we moved away in 1966.

We went to Sunday school in the morning and then into the church service, Sunday school again in the afternoon and church in the evening. Our Sunday school treats were fun as farmer Rayner lent his wagons and horses to take us to Hockley Woods or to the beach at Ness Road Shoebury. This was rough common land with bushes and the road to Thorpe Bay was a cart track. We played on the common or beach and tea was provided by the people in the old wooden Shore House. After I married I found out that the horses and carts which were used to carry to make the first road were provided from Friar's Farm in Shoebury High Street, my husband's home. The nice old farm house was demolished about 12-15 years ago (the early seventies).

In those days there were not many yachts in the creek. There were a few fishing boats and two yachts, one owned by Mr. Wedd J.P. the village squire, and one my father owned which he bought from Mr. Wedd. From small children we used to go sailing and learnt to sail a yacht and swim. My mother made my costume and my sister's; mine was red with short sleeves trimmed with braid, the trousers part came below my knees with frills.

Half way from Wakering church to Potton was an old farm house called Halfway House, and here just over the sea wall were two wooden bathing huts, each divided by four or six cubicles. One belonged to Mr. Wedd and the other to Mr. Kemsley who owned Chrouchman's Farm - now the Lansdowne Club - lovely place in those days. We were friendly with both owners and were given a key to the huts, so when our yacht was near we used them or we would just walk there for a swim. Often in the summer holidays my friend and I would take our lunch and would cross the fields to the huts which were approached on platforms on piles from the sea wall across the saltings. High tide covered them. We would amuse ourselves rowing about the dinghy, swimming, reading or picking sea lavender. It was so peaceful!

Another childhood pleasure of mine was to go around the various farms in the trap when my father went to visit the farms about freights for the barges. Thorpe Hall was one, and that was approached by a country lane from Bourne's Green with two farm cottages standing near Station Road. There was no Thorpe Bay station until later. Hamstel Road was built up almost as far as Eastern Avenue, and then what is now Eastern Avenue was a country lane shaded by huge trees, and called Hamstel Lane.

The village rates were collected by Mr. Judd who rode a bicycle from the Council Offices at Rochford. He came with a Gladstone bag which he put on his carrier and rode back to

Rochford. I have no idea how many houses he did in one session, but there was no fear of being mugged in those days. The rates on our house and were only a few pounds.

There was no bridge onto Foulness Island. People had to walk to the sea wall to the right of way where the police hut now stands, and there was a track across the sands called the Broomway because it was marked with broom sticks. At times it was a very dangerous walk especially if fog suddenly descended; people were drowned as they lost their way. The Foulness post was collected at Wakering and once the postman and his horse which pulled his cart were drowned. Some people were overtaken by the tide and drowned. Many people living on the island never came off.

## The Sutton Family

Those with Email may well remember that ***Pamela Mulcaire*** informed us all recently that the Sutton Family lived in Barling Road near her. Florence Villas was next door and in the one half, next to us lived the Normans; Eric, Roy, Pat and half-sister Audrey Beavis. I think Roy went to Australia. I vaguely remember the Smiths but before them the Roses lived there. Ann (Mower) would know more but she does not have email and has difficulty reading now otherwise I would send her your copies. I think the father of Margaret was a bus driver – Charlie?

***Tony Alps***, who now lives in Coolangatta, Queensland, was quick to respond, stating where he fitted into the family. Charlie and Ruth Sutton were his aunt and uncle. Charlie *was* a bus driver and Tony always remember him as such. Ruth (nee Smeeton) was one of his mother's sisters. They were very close. They had two children, Alan and Margaret (Tony's first cousins) and they all saw a lot of one another during their childhood. They lived right opposite The Shoulderstick in Barling Road. Tony and his brother John, lived in Mucking Hall Road so it was only a short walk from one another's homes.

Tony's first job as a kid, towards the end of the war and the months that followed, was working at the market garden situated a few doors down from Alan and Margaret's. He has very vivid recollections of Ann Mower riding around the place on her pony!

Tony's family migrated to Australia in 1951 (see the website) but has always retained strong links with relatives in the UK. Tony was lucky enough to go to one of the reunions a couple of years ago and met some old school friends and neighbors, most of whom he had not seen for over 65 years. It was really a great experience. Both Alan Sutton and Margaret Myles-Hook (nee Sutton) are on this website. Alan still lives in the area and is a great source of information and would be able to answer most of your queries.

***A message from Pauline King and Gordon in the USA*** "Was it this Charlie Sutton the coach driver that knocked Gordon Chittock over outside Kingsmead Cottages? He run behind the bus and he still has the scar on his face and this is how I remember him at school. Now he is the best man in my life. We left school at 15 and I did not see Gordon for 54 years, so now we are making the most of life. We are now in Las Vegas for 4 weeks. Best to all."

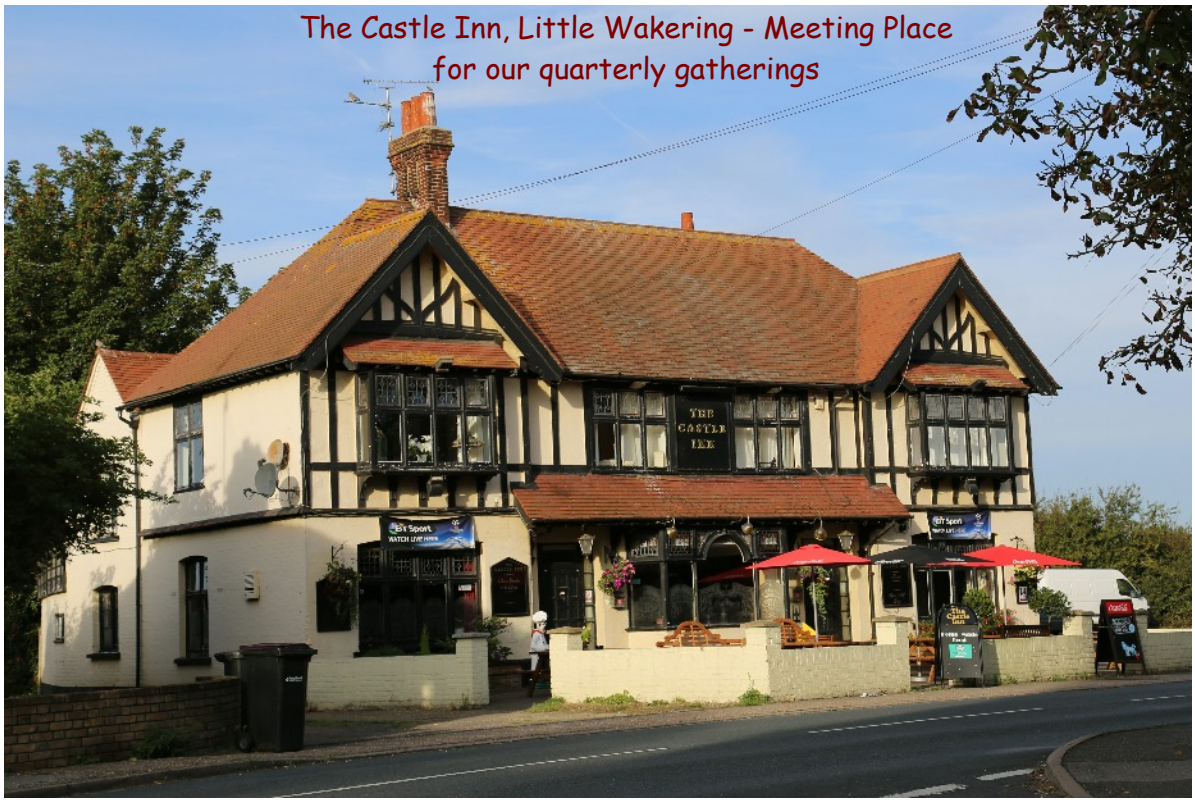
# Memoirs of Fred Aylett

Minnie Mott's' cousin, Fred Aylett, wrote a journal of his childhood in Wakering but regrettably this is probably in the custody of the Essex Records Office in Chelmsford. He also wrote an article describing how bricks were made and wrote the following short account, on 6th April 1962 aged 76 yrs, of his early working days:

In my young days, boys of 10 years and over were allowed to work half time as barrow loaders all through the brickmaking season. They worked from 6 am to noon one week and 1 pm to 6 pm the next. The result was they came to school tired, it was iniquitous but nobody thought so. They were paid 6 shillings a week, in the close season they came to school full time.

At 1130 am there used to be a regular exodus of "dinner carriers". Ranged all along the school wall on the path outside were a number of women with round pudding basins covered with red spotted handkerchiefs, these contained "hot dinners" for the brickies. The headmaster came around to each class and called "dinner carriers here", and on wet days when the sheds could not work the announcement was "barge loaders and brick sorters only".

Most of the bricks were transported by old sailing barges. These were operated by bargemen, whose homes were in the village. The crew were usually three in number, the captain, mate and boy. They were dressed in blue suits, with a reefer coat and blue cap and a blue Guernsey. Before they made a journey they shopped at the village store and carried their goods in clean white bags. One of them was cook, usually the mate, but sometimes the boy. They sailed out into the estuary and so made their way up the Thames to London.



The Castle Inn, Little Wakering - Meeting Place for our quarterly gatherings

# Great Wakering Sports and Activity Centre

In September 2011, Great Wakering Sports Centre closed leaving the community with no access to sports facilities. Now, great new sporting opportunities have been created at Great Wakering Primary School, thanks to a National Lottery Award. Awards in excess of £72,000 have funded improvements to the school's sports hall, including a sprung floor.

A climbing wall has been added and outside existing hard areas have been converted to provide two floodlit ball courts. The sports pavilion has been refurbished with new changing room and showers. You may know of some groups of people in the village who could benefit from all of the activities on offer. There are also other great facilities including:

- Badminton Court £10 per pour
- School Hall from £20 per hour
- Netball Court / Playground from £10 per hour
- Field / Football Pitches (5,7,9 a-side pitch sizes) from £10 per hour
- Climbing Wall (own instructors) from £25 per hour
- Bouncy Castle Parties £100 for 2 hours
- Climbing Wall Parties from £130 for 2 hours

All parties have the use of the Dining Hall with tables and chairs for their own refreshments.

Telephone: 0770 859 2013

Email: sports@greatwakering.essex.sch.uk

*Richard Kirton*

# Website Statistics Report

As you can see from the report below, there were significantly more Page Loads on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, suggesting that people stayed to look at many pages. First time visits are still quite high and that is very encouraging. The report is sent to Peter Griffiths on a weekly basis.

**Weekly Stats Report Summary: 26 September 2016 - 02 October 2016**

| | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thur | Fri | Sat | Sun | Total | Avg |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Pageloads** | 1 | 37 | 295 | 483 | 268 | 107 | 82 | **1,323** | 189 |
| **Unique Visits** | 20 | 8 | 38 | 97 | 101 | 38 | 38 | **340** | 49 |
| **First Time Visits** | 14 | 4 | 20 | 51 | 53 | 17 | 34 | **193** | 28 |
| **Returning Visits** | 6 | 4 | 18 | 46 | 48 | 21 | 4 | **147** | 21 |

*Richard Kirton*

## Villages Websites

Our new website - Barling and Wakering Villages Plus - is expanding all the time, as site-manager Richard Kirton adds new photos frequently. If you have any pictures showing people or places in the area, please do get in touch. We would love to add them to the thousands already there.

It is easy to get from the new site to the old one and vice-versa. The new one can be reached here:
http://www.barlingwakeringvillages.co.uk/plus/index.html

The Original Website can be reached here:
http://www.barlingwakeringvillages.co.uk/index.html

*Peter Griffiths*

## Situations Vacant

We are still looking for a volunteer (or more) to edit our newsletter. It has been suggested that the job could be split, with one person being responsible for content and another for layout. So, if you would like to help, please don't be shy in offering your services, even if only for one or two editions.

*Peter Griffiths*

**Please share your past stories with our members. They will be delighted to hear them.**

## Contacts

**Dawn and David Bailey** Email: danddbailey@btinternet.com Tel: 01702-217489

**Peter Griffiths** Email: p-pgriffiths01@tiscali.co.uk Tel: 020-8769-6799

**Richard Kirton** (Editor) Email: r.kirton@talktalk.net Tel: 01702 216407