

Winter 2017
Edition 35

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

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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 8th April 2017

12.15 p.m.

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

Foreword by Richard Kirton

We started the New Year with the sad news of the death of Laurence Street. He died in Southend Hospital about 9 o'clock on 31st December 2016. He had undergone a hip operation on 4th November but his body was unable to cope with the anaesthetic.

He was a wealth of knowledge within the villages and we are eternally grateful for his articles and support. I have known him for many years and he will be a great loss to the villages.

There are fewer articles in this edition of 'Small Beginnings' but I hope that the diversity of content is sufficient to keep members entertained.

I am hoping to post an article in the next newsletter titled 'The Star Lane Messerschmitt' by Steven Siviter of Westcliff. He has always had an interest in this aircraft as his friend's father (Harry Hume) remembers the particular aircraft well.

Our Meeting at the Castle Inn on 14th January 2017

A buzzing get-together at The Castle started off our year in very sociable fashion. Although some of our regulars had been struck down by the current lurgies, 30-odd of us made it, two from 80 miles away in Suffolk. We were very pleased to see newcomers, too.

Less positively, we were saddened by the recent death of Laurie Street and we noted the retirement of Marion Still, Headteacher of Barling Magna Community Primary School, who has always been supportive to us. David Bailey reported on our financial position. We had decided last July that, if it was sound, we would pay for the rebinding of one of the Old Barling School log books. So, that will go ahead now.

Our next session is at **The Castle at 12.15 on Saturday April 8th 2017**. Newcomers always receive a warm welcome; so, do come and join us

Georges Brewery - Our Local Brewery

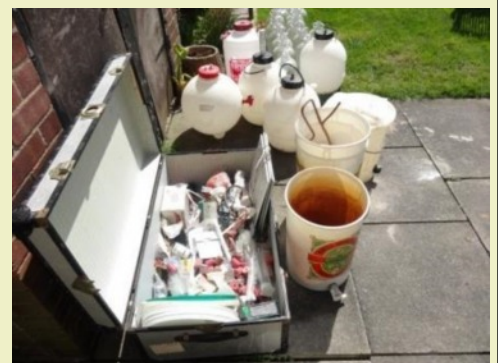


On Wednesday 28th December 2016, my friend Barry Hale and I went along to a tasting session at Georges Brewery in Common Lane, Great Wakering. I was so impressed that it inspired me to write this short heritage article from the future which might be titled "Our very own Georges Brewery - the only successful Brewery in the Southend area". What I saw convinced me that in the future, Wakering could well boast about the growing success of Georges Brewery through the years.

We were greeted by brewer Sam Martyn, a local lad with a passion for home brewing, who joined the business on 4th February 2015. Sam took us through a brief history of the business and showed us in detail the brewing process with occasional samples of some of their range of ales. I have to compliment Sam on his attention to detail and the amount of time that he dedicated to our questions, whilst we drank. Sam's assistant, Jamie Reeve, who joined the business in June 2016, was with some of the other guests. He had previously worked in the wine department of Waitrose, in Southend.

The proprietor, Mark Mawson, a local man born in Rochford hospital, happened to be out on deliveries. Mark spent £45,000 getting his new business, Georges Brewery, off the ground, in a cattle shed in Common Road, Great Wakering. The brewery is named after Mark's father, who introduced him to real ale when he was drinking Holsten Pils Lager. He cut his teeth on Abbot Ale and starting brewing as a lad.

Aged only 18, Mark loved brewing at home despite working full time at the Matchbox Factory in Rochford. He spent four and a



half years working there, during which time he became friends with Steve Mann who went into full time brewing after leaving Matchbox. Steve brewed for Bruce's Brewery at several of the Firkin pubs and was the link to Mark's brew kit that he now owns and is indeed from one of the old Firkin brew houses.



After the Matchbox Factory, Mark went into the construction industry where he worked as a bricklayer for 26 years. However, he became disillusioned after being undercut by workers from eastern Europe. In December 2009, he decided to start his own micro-brewery. After months of searching, he came across farmer Pendril Bentall, who wanted a tenant for one of his barns in Great Wakering. The barn, shown above before the construction work, had enough space for him to produce 20 nine-gallon casks of ale in one go.

Mark said his wife Tina supported his venture and his daughters, Colleen and Maddi, helped with painting and decorating the barn. The brewery was fully installed and, on Wednesday 11th May 2010, Mark Mawson's first brew, a pale ale called Freak Show, went on sale at the Station Arms pub in Southminster, near Maldon. Since then, with assistance from his extensive contacts within the micro-brewery world and the licensed trade, Mark has developed the range of beers offered and Georges Brewery is now able to offer up to twelve ales.



Georges Brewery Beers
Are not 'run-of-the-mill beers'
Are traditional 'touch the hearts of an Englishman' beers
Hendrix and the Hop Monster
represent 'the diverse nature of these beers'



Mark opened Southend's first Micropub, named Mawson's, in Southchurch Road on 11th December 2015, as a separate business to promote all real ale including his own from Georges Brewery. I first caught up with Mark at his Micropub and later at his brewery in Wakering. His passion and dedication really shine through and prove that with hard work and determination it is possible to create a successful business locally, putting some shop fronts back into our towns and villages just like one hundred years ago.



A more detailed history of Georges Brewery can be found by visiting The Hop Monster website at: <http://www.hopmonster.co.uk/history>.

Dave Lee Eats Anything

Article by Dave Lee



Seeing my name in highlights in the document titled 'A Nativity Play' (performed in December 1962) reminded me that, in my last year of school, I was reluctantly roped-in by our drama teacher to play Zachary the wise old grandfather. The play did go on a bit and there were comments that the Mayor of Southend was seen to be occasionally dozing in the front row of the audience. This typecast me into becoming the grandfather for the end of term summer 1963 play called 'The Dear Departed' where I wake-up from a deep sleep to find my family are fighting over my possession's after they thought I had died.

To add an element of realism to the family tea time scene, set around a table on stage, our drama teacher suggested we should try to occasionally take a bite of fish paste sandwiches between saying our lines, preferably without choking. In theory this was OK but in practice it was not easy.

Not only that, whilst on stage, one of my fellow cast members (Linda Heard) whispered under her breath to me "Don't eat it". I must admit I was somewhat alarmed by what was said to me, but as I was just about to bite into a sandwich, I felt committed and took a bite. To my surprise it tasted OK. It was only after the play had finished that I asked her what was all the fuss about and she told me the sandwich I had eaten had burst open when it was dropped on the stage floor during a scene change and was hastily put back together with possibly other added ingredients. Oh! well I have survived to tell the tale.

James Bennewith & Family

by June Castle

The Bennewith story begins with a Jane Brooks, (nee McCullar) who was married to James Brooks the licensee of the Star, North Shoebury, about 1769/70. James died and Jane took over the running of the pub until she married James Bennewith by licence at North Shoebury on 6 Oct 1772. They had James, May, William, Elizabeth and John all baptised at North Shoebury church. Then on 9 Sept 1780 John (17 days) & Elizabeth (20 months died). Then Jane died on 25 Sept 1780.

James Bennewith was left with 3 children, young James 7, Mary 5, and William 3. He moved towards the end of 1780 to the George & Dragon at Foulness. Then he met up with Amelia Bows, who was quite a lady as she had had two illegitimate children before she met James. Then they married by licence on 4 June 1782, eight days before their first son Edward Bennewith was baptised, on 17 June 1782. How they managed to live in those small rooms at the George & Dragon I don't know because Amelia proceeded to have more children, Henry 1784, Jane 1786, John 1789 (he was the famous bare-fist boxer). But perhaps all these children were too much for James because he died in September 1789. That didn't seem to worry Amelia because she took up with a "sojourner", Thomas Howgego and they had two children, Thomas Howgego Bennewith and Elizabeth Howgego Bennewith. I don't think they ever married. Amelia must have been too much for Thomas because he died in 1797. Amelia then met another sojourner, Isaac Easter, and she had a son also called Isaac Easter / Bennewith in 1799. Amelia ran the pub herself, or perhaps Isaac Easter helped her, until 1796, when she gave up the George. She then took over the licence of the Rochford 100 pub

until 1815. I think her son Thomas Howgego Bennewith then took over with his wife Charlotte (surname unknown) but she was called "Flanking Charlotte", although the 1841 census says they were occupiers of the Anchor beer shop. Thomas Howgego Bennewith and Flanking Charlotte were involved in what was called the Foulness Island Riot in 1828. Bennewith was suspected of telling the police who were responsible for smuggling in the area and there was a court case. (Chelmsford Chronicle of 27 Feb 1828). Then of course there were the bare-fist fights in front of the George. John Bennewith was said to be 6'2" tall - some reports say 6'6".

Addendum - The History House website lists 8 contributions to June Castle's original account of James Bennewith and his family and they can be seen by visiting the following website:
<http://www.historyhouse.co.uk/historynews/james-bennewith-of-north-shoebury>

Elizabeth Little and Mr Bennewith

By *Bernard Hetherington* (Steward at Leigh Heritage Centre)

I often talk to visitors about the history of Leigh (goes back 3,000 odd years) and about smuggling and I wondered if this story involving Little Wakering might be of interest for your magazine. It concerns a lady called **Elizabeth Little** and in 1840 she had a draper's shop in Leigh in what is now the Peterboat Beer Garden. She sold dresses, draperies, gloves, lace and brocades, and gin and brandy and it was all smuggled. She was one of the best sailors for miles around and she and her brothers had a boat. They had been in Ostend buying what I can only describe as 'duty frees' and, as they entered the estuary on their return to Leigh, they were intercepted by the Revenue cutter, which signalled her to stop. She turned tail and the cutter fired a shot across her bows, but she headed for Havengore Creek, so they fired another shot which wounded brother Bob in the arm. She got safely into the creek but, with the tide dropping, they ran aground in Barling Creek.

Brother Will thought the Revenue men might send riders overland to get them but she pointed out Little Wakering Church and sent Will to find Mr Bennewith, the undertaker, who 'lives near the church'. Will's instructions were to bring Mr Bennewith and his hearse and a coffin, no arguments and she would pay him well.

When Will returned with Mr Bennewith, they put the badly injured brother Bob in the coffin. All the contraband was arranged round the coffin and covered in purple cloth and brother Will was told to sail the empty boat back on the next tide. Then she got up on the box with Mr Bennewith, put a black shawl over her head and she had become the grieving widow. They came the 8 miles into Leigh and, as they were coming down Leigh Hill, another Revenue man stepped out. He raised his hand but only to raise his hat and bow as the coffin passed and they got all the contraband safely back into Leigh. The escapade and beating the revenue man was the joke of Old Leigh for several months.

Addendum - In 1845, the *Beagle* was refitted as a static coastguard watch vessel, like many similar watch ships stationed in rivers and harbours throughout the nation. She was transferred to HM Customs and Excise to control smuggling on the Essex coast in the navigable waterways beyond the north bank of the Thames Estuary and moored mid-river in the River Roach. There is an interesting tale from Roach Sailing Association Newsletters dated 1845 and titled 'How Charles Darwin's HMS Beagle ended up in Paglesham' by Rodney Choppin. The ship is believed to be buried under the saltings, off Paglesham.

Tony Alps meets my sister-in-law in Perth Australia

By Richard Kirton



Back in October 2016, I posted an article on our website titled 'Portions of the Great Wakering Estate Essex in 1926'. I mentioned that I would be taking a back seat until after Christmas since my sister-in-law, Brenda Bragg, and her husband were coming to stay from Perth in Australia, to celebrate my daughter's marriage. Tony Alps happened to mention that he was visiting his daughter over the Christmas period and that she lived in a suburb of Perth, called Karrinyup.

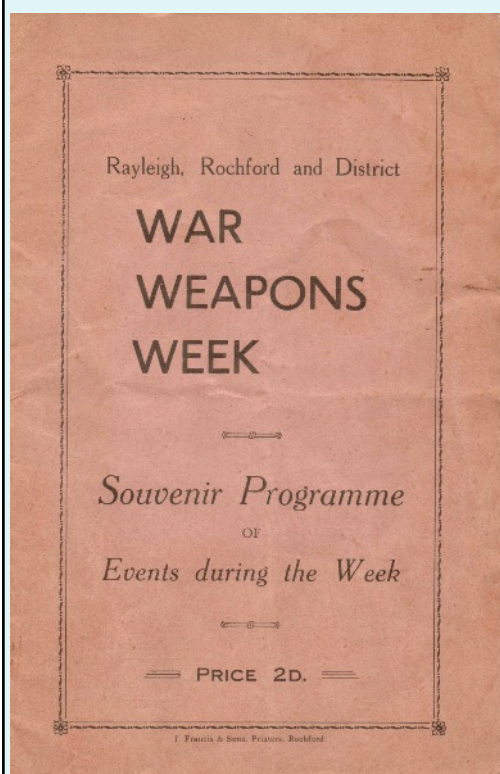
Having exchanged several emails, it was discovered that by strange co-incidence, Tony's wife Margaret, used to live at number 22 Hogg Lane in Grays, Essex. the same house that my sister-in-law Brenda and her husband Jim used to live in. Tony suggested that a get together would be a good idea sometime after they returned from the UK to allow them to talk about those old days.

Tony and his wife had already arranged to stay in the Perth area with their daughter over the Christmas period and were flying over to Perth from their home in Coolangatta in Queensland, some 5 hours away. After my sister-in-law and husband Jim returned to Perth, the two families arranged to meet each other on 27th December 2016. The photograph above shows them at the Ferry Stop of the Little Ferry Company which is Perth's latest attraction, embracing its most famous natural tourist attraction; the Swan River. Tony is at the back with his wife Margaret on the left, my sister in law, Brenda in the middle and her husband, Jim, on the right.

The Little Ferry Company was a dream cooked up amongst friends over Friday night barbeques along the South Perth foreshore. A boat design was chosen that embraced the history of boating on the Swan River with an old Edwardian 'Tender Boat' feel, but with one small difference. A solar electric option was pursued for a number of reasons since not only do these boats generate a negligible carbon footprint but they provide an absolute unique cruising experience.

War Weapons Week 1941

By Dave Lee



Before the United States of America entered the World War Two conflict and still with the threat of invasion, the WAR WEAPONS WEEK was a Government initiative across the British Isles to help raise money for munitions by organising a programme of local fund-raising events. It also encouraged people to save in War Bonds and similar Government schemes to help re-arm.

To help advertise such events, 'Souvenir Programmes' were published which were mainly sponsored by local businesses. One such Programme has been made available by Rita Stow and can be viewed on our 'Plus' website and downloaded in PDF format.

Women's Institutes across the land also played their part and in May 1940 they started a National Savings Group which continued throughout the war, raising a total of £4,250. They also supported village efforts towards the various other initiatives, such as War Ships Week and Salute the Soldier Week. At their monthly meetings they tried to carry on as usual and provide some cheerful normality. The programme included talks on 'war time cookery', 'make do and mend' hints and practical demonstration such as 'how to re-foot a lisle stocking'.

What I find interesting about this document is how involved Barling and Wakering village people were in arranging such events, including the schools. This article has also been posted on our 'Plus' website together with all of the pages from the document.



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 hour
- 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 people viewing on Saturday and Sunday, after the Christmas and New Year period. Pageloads and first time visits are still quite high and this is encouraging, bearing in mind that only two articles have been posted since October 2016. A Website Statistics Report is automatically generated on a weekly basis.

Weekly Stats Report Summary: 02 January 2017 - 08 January 2017

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thur	Fri	Sat	Sun	Total	Avg
Pageloads	23	54	46	73	19	96	49	360	51
Unique Visits	15	27	32	22	17	52	36	201	29
First Time Visits	10	17	23	15	16	49	35	165	24
Returning Visits	5	10	9	7	1	3	1	36	5

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.***

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