

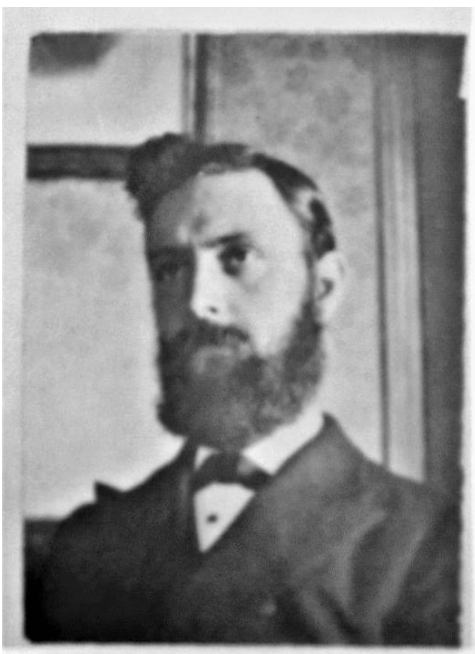
EXTRACT FROM
MRS DORIS DITCHBURN'S NOTEBOOK



THE VILLAGE

Lakenheath being a village on the edge of the Fens was a long way from a town sixteen miles from Bury St Edmunds, which was the nearest town.

In my childhood days cars were almost unknown in the district, my uncle Dr Alfred Joseph Pickworth (who was the village doctor) was the first person in Lakenheath to own a car, most people travelled on foot or by bicycle, the few exceptions being two or three people who owned a "pony and trap", we being one of the more fortunate families.



Dr Alfred Joseph Pickworth



Dr Pickworth's Car outside the Post Office circa 1920



There was a man named George Lummis who owned a coach and two horses, he kept a butchers shop but every Wednesday being Bury St Edmunds market day, he would take people and parcels to the market and shops, the journey taking 1½ to 2 hours each way.

The coach had a door at the back with a step mount into the coach, there were also seats on top of the coach and whenever we were taken to Bury St Edmunds by Mother we always sat on the top seats as Mother thought it better for us to get the fresh air.

It was, of course, a treat to go to Bury St Edmunds, and usually one went for special occasions such as buying new clothes for the Sunday School Anniversary.

Once when I was about nine years of age, some friends of Mother's who had bought a car offered to take Mother and me to Bury, I quite well remember the excitement when the car arrived, it was an open car and the ladies wore large hats with veils over their hats tied under the chin to keep their hats on.

The coach's only lighting was carriage lamps usually thick tallow candles.



The Methodist Chapel Lakenheath had the largest Sunday School having 120 children. It was the usual thing to attend Chapel three times on a Sunday. Sunday School at 11.00am o'clock, afternoon and evening services at 2.30pm and 6.30pm.



The Wesleyan Sunday School Teachers 1906

Most people had their own pew ours was on the righthand side of the Chapel under the clock, no one was expected to go into another person's pew, a pew rent was paid each quarter, this was known as the seat rent, the names of the people was on a ticket fixed on the end of the pew.

Dr Pickworth (Uncle Alfred) always had the back seat in the seat behind Mother's was Mr and Mrs John Gill (Uncle John and Aunt Rose) behind them Mr and Mrs Serjeant (Uncle George and Aunt Mabel) people usually attended in families.

Dr Pickworth (Mother's Brother) was great worker for the Methodist Chapel, a gentleman greatly respected and loved by all. He held the unique position of bringing children into the world, christening them, marrying them and burying them, being a Magistrate and J.P. (Justice of the Peace).

Two dates in the year were of special interest to the village folks, the Methodist Anniversary and the Methodist Treat.

For the Anniversary, two platforms were erected, one on either side of the pulpit on the "Great Day", the scholars would arrive all wearing new dresses, shoes and hats, often the one new outfit the poorer families could afford.

The services were well attended at times all seats were occupied and chairs put in the aisle.

The Anniversary always took place the second Sunday in June, while the "Treat" was always held on the third Wednesday in July.

The "Treat" was quite a village entertainment, children met at the Chapel and the parade started at 2.30pm This was headed by the "Thetford Salvation Army Band", also a banner.

The parade left the Chapel and proceeded along Wings Road, down Mill Road, along the back street, turned into the High Street and proceeded down the main street to Harry Finchams meadow, or "The Retreat".

During the street parade stops were made every little while and hymns sung, once in the meadow a tea was served, followed by races.

It had been the general practice to end the day with a "Firework" display. Dr Pickworth was always in charge of the fireworks, at the end of one Treat day, as usual Dr Pickworth went to light a firework when it exploded in his face, blinding him permanently in one eye, and temporary in the other eye. This resulted in Dr Pickworth being in hospital for many weeks.

From then onwards all "Firework Displays" were cancelled.

As a result of the accident one side of Dr Pickworth's face was permanently disfigured.

THE VILLAGE FAIR

The last weekend in June was the annual fair, Dack's round-a-bouts, swinging boats, cocoa-nut shies, rock stalls, hoop-a-la stalls, and cockles and winkles stall.

This was the annual gathering of families, people would save their money up for weeks prior to the Fair weekend and many families would meet just for that occasion.

The "Fair" was a place where many young people met and often later became husband and wife, the boy asking the girl to go for a ride on the round-about often started a romance.

At one time there used to be a "Horse Fair". Horses were bought and sold during this weekend.

It was also a weekend when many of the older men would get drunk. People talked about the "Fair" weeks after it was over.

Dack was the name of the man who owned the "Fair" round-about etc.



Copied from Doris Ditchburn's 1974 Notebook by

Lakenheath Heritage Group – July 2020