

George Pickingill

The Cunning Man and Witch of Canewdon Essex
History of the most famous of the interesting individuals of the village



William Wallworth

The Exile's Publications ~ April 17, 2025 ~ W-032 Edition A

George Pickingill (1816-1909)

of Canewdon, Essex

Researched and compiled
by William Wallworth

First worked on in December 18, 2008
Several editions as part of the Pickingill family history

This stand-alone history on George Pickingill,
W-032 Edition A was done on April 17, 2025 Thursday 9:35 PM.

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George Pickingill (1816 – 1909)

Husband of Sarah Ann Bateman



2. **GEORGE PICKINGILL** (of Charles Pickingill¹) was born 2 April (1816?) in Hockley, Essex and was baptized 26 May 1816 in St. Peter and St. Paul church in Hockley.

Father: Charles Pickingill (No. 1)

Mother: Hannah Cudmore

~ 1816

According to one of the newspaper accounts below covering his death as "Frederick Pickingale", he was born April 2nd.

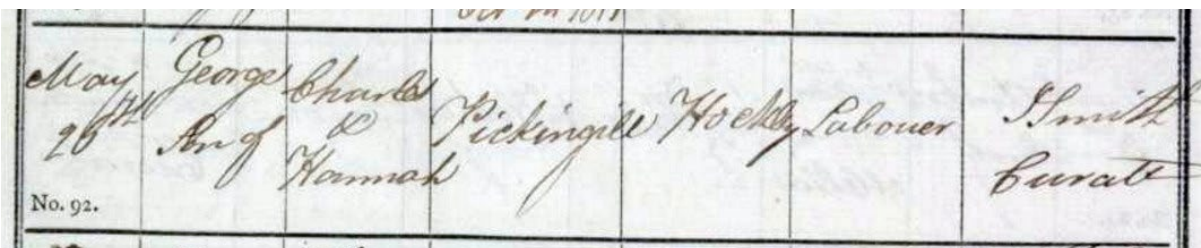
From the parish register of St. Peter and St. Paul church in Hockley:

Baptisms 1816 - Page 12. No. 92.

When Baptized. / Name. / Parent's first names. / Surname. / Abode. / Profession. / By whom the Ceremony was performed.

May 26th / George Son of / Charles & Hannah / Pickingill / Hockley / Labourer / J Smith Curate

Image of the baptism record:



Concerning George Pickingill's age and the spelling of his last name, it varies widely as you can see from the censuses below and the last one from his burial record

1851 – age 26 – born ca. 1825 George Pickengill

1861 – age 46 – born ca. 1815 George Pickengale

1871 – age 58 – born ca. 1813 George Pitengale

1881 – age 60 – born ca. 1821 George Pickingale

1891 – age 80 – born ca. 1811 George Pickingill

1901 – age 95 – born ca. 1806 George Pickengal

1909 - age 103 - born ca. 1806 George Pettingale

One theory of why the age inflated in later years was to make it easier to collect parish assistance from the church in his old age?

Since most of the articles concerning George uses his name with the spelling of PICKINGILL. We will use that spelling except when we discuss the actual records below. In the records, it appears that the spelling of Pickingale is used many times.

~ 1816 to 1830's

George Pickingill lived with his parents in Hockley from the time of his birth in 1816 until the late 1830's or early 1840's.

~ 1841

It is not known where George Pickingill was at the time of the 1841 census. Not found in the census. Perhaps was on a page that faded or poorly written or was not enumerated.

~ on the night of 30th and 31st of March 1851

In 1851, George Pickengill was a farm labourer working on a farm in New England Island in Essex. The island is enumerated with the parish of Little Wakering, Essex.

George was a lodger in a farm house on the island where David Clemens was the farm bailiff.

From the 1851 census of Little Wakering:

Name / Relationship / Marital status / Age & Sex / Profession / Birthplace

New England Island Farm House

David Clemens / Head / Mar / 57 M / Farmers Baliff / Esx Tolesbury

Judah Ditto / Wife / Mar / 58 F / Baliffs Wife / Esx Sutton

James Liliy / Lodger / U / 49 M / Farm Lab^r / Do Engrave

Robert Ward / Do / U / 46 M / Do / Do Gt. Stambridge

William Page / Do / U / 38 M / Do / Do Prittlewell

William Curley / Do / U / 26 M / Do / Do Barling

William Truss / Do / U / 22 M / Do / Do Barling

George Pickengill / Do / U / 26 M / Do / Do Hockley

Jeremiah Harrington / Do / U / 20 M / Do / Do Lt Stambridge

William Wood / Do / U / 13 M / Farmers Boy / Do N Shoebury

Images of the record:

No. of House	on the Night of the 30th March, 1851	Person or Family	Male	Female
6	New England	David Chinens	Head	57
	Island	Judah Vitta	Wife	58
	Farm House	James Lilly	Lodger	49
		Robert Ward	Do	46
		William Page	Do	32
		William Purley	Do	26
		William Duff	Do	22
	★	George Pickingill	Do	26
		Jeremiah Warrington	Do	20
		William Wood	Do	13

Farmers Hall	Up Salisbury	—
Ball's Wife	Up Sitten	—
Farm Hall	Do Engrave	—
Do	to St. Paul's Bridge	—
Do	to Pittswell	—
Do	to Harling	—
Do	to Harling	—
★ Do	to Hookley	—
Do	to St. Paul's Bridge	—
Farmers Hall	to St. Paul's Bridge	—
Farmers Hall	to St. Paul's Bridge	—

~ 19 May 1856

George Pickingill married **SARAH ANN BATEMAN** on 19 May 1856 at Saint George, Gravesend, Kent, England.

From the marriage certificate:

Registration District: Gravesend and Milton

1856. Marriage solemnized at the Parish Church in the Parish of Gravesend in the County of Kent

No. 473

When Married: 19th May 1856

Name / Age / Condition / Profession / Residence at the time of Marriage / Father's Name / Father's Profession

George Pickingill / Full / Bachelor / Labourer / Gravesend / Charles Pickingill / Blacksmith

Sarah Ann Bateman / Full / Spinster / ----- / Gravesend / Joseph Bateman / Labourer

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Established Church after Banns by me, Rob^t. Joynes Rector

This Marriage was solemnized between us,

The X of George Pickingill

The X of Sarah Ann Bateman

In the Presence of us,

Catharine Cocks

Martha Smith

Images of the record:

No.	When Married.	Name and Surname.	Age.	Condition.	Rank or Profession.
473	19 th May 1856	George Pickingill	Full	Bachelor	Labourer
		Sarah Ann Bateman	Full	Spinster	

Married in the Parish Church according to the Rites and Ceremonies of the Establish

This Marriage was solemnized between us, { The X of George Pickingill
The X of Sarah Ann Bateman } in the Presence of us, { Cath
Mari }

Parish of <u>Gravesend</u> in the County of <u>Kent</u>			
or Profession.	Residence at the time of Marriage.	Father's Name and Surname.	Rank or Profession of Father.
<u>Labourer</u>	<u>Gravesend</u>	<u>Charles Pickingill</u>	<u>Blacksmith</u>
	<u>Gravesend</u>	<u>Joseph Bateman</u>	<u>Labourer</u>
the Established Church, <u>By</u> <u>Banns</u> <u>after</u> <u>Robert Joynes</u> <u>by me,</u>			
<u>Catherine Cocks</u>		<u>Rector</u>	
<u>Martha Smith</u>			

Catherine Cocks who was present at the marriage, were was George Pickingill's sister who married George Cocks.

The Martha Smith who was also present at the marriage was probably Sarah Ann Bateman's mother.

According to the marriage certificate, George Pickingill and Sarah Ann Bateman were living in Gravesend, Kent.

Also notice that the father, Charles Pickingill, was listed as a blacksmith.

Sarah Ann Bateman was born in Tillingham, Essex and was baptized 1 May 1831 at St. Nicholas church in Tillingham. She was a daughter of Joseph and Mary Ann (Aggus) Bateman.

From the parish register of the church:

Baptisms 1831 - Page 84. No. 671.

When Baptized. / Child's Name. / Parents Name. / Surname. / Abode. / Profession. / By whom the Ceremony was performed.

May 1st / Mary Ann (daughter of) / Joseph & Sarah Ann / Bateman / Tillingham / Labourer / G. G. Cresswell Curate

Image of the record in the parish register:



There was an error made in the baptism record in the parish register. Her name was written as "Mary Ann" instead of "Sarah Ann" and the mother's name in the record was written as "Sarah Ann" when it should be "Mary Ann". The Curate G. G. Cresswell accidentally mixed the names of the daughter and mother in the record.

For the entire period of 1830 to 1845, there was several children of Joseph and Mary Ann Bateman baptized and there were no other couples having baptisms with the last name of Bateman.

Throughout her whole married life, Sarah Ann Pickingill is recorded as "Mary Ann Pickingill" even in the newspaper article about her being caught stealing potatoes and being fined.

Then in the death certificate and her burial record in Canewdon, she was "Sarah Ann Pittengale" again.

So the mix up in the baptism record was probably why she sort of stuck with the name of Mary Ann Pickingill. She may have done something in the past that she didn't want people to know that she was Sarah Ann and then used the mix up in the baptism record to hide. Like using an alias.

~ About her parents

Joseph Bateman married Mary Ann Aggus on 15 January 1831 in Saint Nicholas church in Tillingham, Essex.

From the parish register of Tillingham:

Marriages 1831 - Page 36. No. 106.

Joseph Bateman of this Parish Bachelor and Mary Ann Aggus of this Parish Spinster were married in this Church by Banns this Fifteenth Day of January in the Year One thousand eight hundred and Thirty One By me John Bryan Carwardine Rector of St Lawrence

This Marriage was Solemnized between us

The mark X of Joseph Bateman

The mark X of Mary Ann Aggus

In the Presence of
John Osborn
The mark X of John Aggus

~ About Mary Ann Bateman when she was living in Gravesend, Kent before she married George Pickingill

I included a couple information about George Pickingill's sister, Martha Pickingill.

~ 1850

Martha Pickingill as a servant in Gravesend, Kent was charged with stealing several items from her master John Lorrimar Akers. She was convicted and served 6 weeks imprisonment with hard labour.

The newspaper mentioned that after she left her employment she was lodging at No. 37 Peppercroft-street.

Details and sources are in the Pickingill History.

~ 1851

In 1851, "Mather" Pickingale was listed as a lodger at the Ship Inn High Street in Chatham, Kent. The owner of the Ship Inn was Thomas Garrett.

Kent.

Martha Pickingale was a prostitute as were 4 other young women lodgers.

Martha Pickingill was convicted in 1850 and served 6 weeks imprisonment. After she got out of her imprisonment, she probably could not get another servant job because of her record.

Details and sources are in the Pickingill History.

~ 1853

Mary Ann Bateman and Elizabeth Harlowe were mentioned in a court case in Gravesend, Kent in a newspaper article.

Both parties were femmes publiques, in other words prostitutes.

From the newspaper, Kentish Independent, Saturday 17 December 1853:

GRAVESEND POLICE COURT. - WEDNESDAY.

Present: - W. F. Dobson, Esq, (the mayor, in the chair) E. Tickner, and J. Smith, Esq., and Dr. Ridge.

Mary Bateman was summoned for having unlawfully assaulted Elizabeth Harlowe. Both parties were femmes publiques.

Elizabeth Harlowe stated, that on Monday night she saw the defendant in Windmill Street, she was with two other females. Witness asked her for an article of clothing which belonged to complainant. The defendant immediately struck her twice, and abused her, and would have assaulted her again, but the other female kept her back.

Mary Taylor stated, that she was with the complainant, and she confirmed the evidence of the complainant.

The defendant in answer to the charge, said that the complainant came across the street to her, and pulled defendant by her clothes in a very indecent manner; that she simply defended herself, and the complainant then tore defendant's bonnet to pieces.

Elizabeth Davey confirmed the statement of defendant as to the indecency of the conduct of the complainant towards her; but was unable to say which struck the first blow.

It appeared that it had been a run between the two which should get the summons, and the complainant had won the race.

The cross summons was then heard, the complainant and defendant changing places; and the now complainant, Mary Ann Bateman, produced her torn bonnet as an additional evidence.

The Bench dismissed the first case, and ordered defendant in the last case, Elizabeth Harlowe, to pay the costs, 8s., and she had also to pay 3s. 6d. costs, in her own case, which was dismissed.

Images of the newspaper article:

STONE WITH THE KILL.
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George Venn and William Sande, apprentices to Thomas

~ 1854

Mary Bateman of 74 Peppercroft Street in Gravesend, Kent had a child, Mary Ann Bateman, baptized 31 August 1854 in Saints Peter & Paul church in Milton Next Gravesend, Kent.

From the parish register of Sts. Peter & Paul:

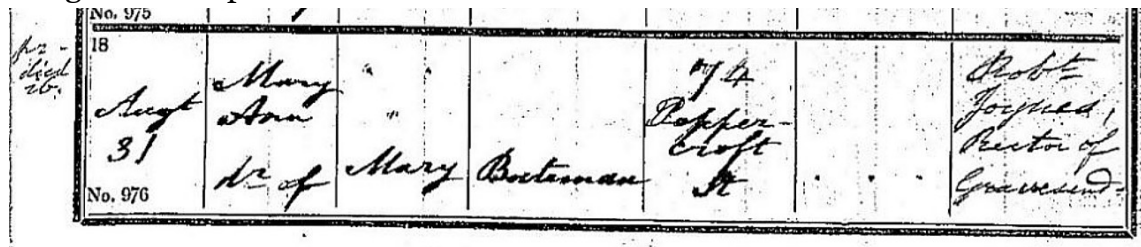
Baptisms 1854 - Page 122 No. 976

When Baptized. / Child's name. / Parent's Names. / Parent's Surname. / Abode. / Profession. / By whom the Ceremony was performed.

(on the left margin) hz - died ib. / Aug^t 31 / Mary Ann d^r. of / Mary / Bateman / 74 Peppercroft St / ----- / Rob^t. [Jocpeld?] Rector of Gravesend.

The father's name was not mentioned.

Image of the baptism record:



Interesting to note that the mother Mary Ann Bateman was living at 74 Peppercroft-street in Gravesend in 1854.

In 1850, Martha Pickingill was living at 37 Peppercroft-street.

Mary Ann Bateman died at the age of 3 months and was buried 4 September 1854 in the Municipal Cemetery in Gravesend, Kent.

From the Kent Burials

Name / Residence / Age / Burial date / Burial ground / Place / County

Mary Ann Bateman / Peppercroft Street / 3 Months / 04 Sep 1854 / Municipal Cemetery / Gravesend, Municipal Cemetery / Kent

~ September 1855

Mary Bateman, a prostitute, was charged by the court in Gravesend, Kent.

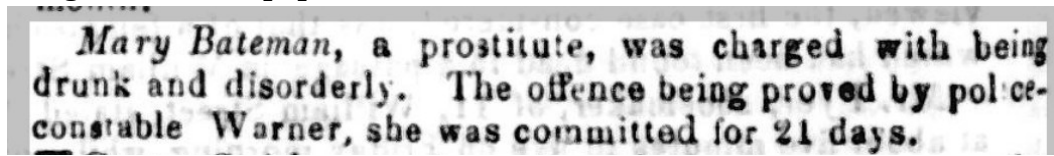
From the newspaper, Kentish Independent, Saturday 15 September 1855:

GRAVESEND POLICE COURT. - FRIDAY.

Present - R. Oates, Esq.

Mary Bateman, a prostitute, was charged with being drunk and disorderly. The offence being proved by police-constable Warner, she was committed for 21 days.

Image of the newspaper article:



~ 1 December 1855

Mary Bateman, a prostitute, Rosina Weatherfield, a former prostitute now married and Mary Ann Taylor, a prostitute were charged with fighting in the streets in Gravesend, Kent.

From the newspaper, Kentish Independent, Saturday 01 December 1855:

GRAVESEND POLICE COURT. - MONDAY.

Present: R. Oates, Esq. (in the chair), and H. Ditchburn, Esq.

Mary Bateman and Rosina Weatherfield were charged with fighting in the public streets.

Police-constable Trew stated that on Friday night, about eleven o'clock, he found the prisoners in front of the Mitre Tavern, fighting with each other, he cautioned them and endeavoured to get them away, but as they seemed determined to have the fight out he was compelled to take them into custody; the prisoner Bateman was a prostitute, and the other prisoner, though she had been, was now married; another prostitute, named Mary Ann Taylor, was holding the bonnet of one of the prisoners while they were fighting.

The woman Taylor being in the Court was called forward and placed by the side of the other prisoners, and the constable then said that he heard the voice of Taylor, when he was at the top of High-street, exciting the prisoners to fight.

The prisoner Bateman being called on for her defence made such a statement which induced the bench to put her in the witness box, and being sworn, stated that she was standing outside the Mitre, when the two prisoners, and another female, came to her, and after a few words from Weatherfield, both Weatherfield and Taylor assaulted her and gave her the black-eye she then had.

The bench committed Bateman and Taylor to gaol for 14 days, as common prostitutes, and fined Weatherfield 10s. for the assault.

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Returning back to the main timeline

~ 22 June 1858

In 1858, George and Mary Ann Pickengale were living in Hawkwell, Essex where their daughter, Martha Ann, was born on 22 June 1858.

~ on the night of 7th and 8th of April 1861

In 1861, George and Mary Pickengale were living at Tinkers Lane in Eastwood, Essex. George was listed as an Agricultural Labourer.

From the 1861 census of Eastwood:

Name / Relationship / Marital Status / Age & Sex / Profession / Birthplace

Tinkers Lane

George Pickengale / Head / Mar / 46 M / Ag Lab / Essex Hockley

Mary A do / Wife / Mar / 33 F / do Wife / do Tillingham

Martha A do / Daur / ---- / 2 F / ----- / do Hawkwell

Images of the record:

15	Tinkers Lane	1	George Pickengale	Head	Mar	46	141
			Mary A do	Wife	Mar	33	
			Martha A do	Daur		2	
16	Tinkers Lane	1	George Pickengale	Head	Mar	46	141

Gen Saw	Essex Lt Hambro
Ag Lab	do Hochley
do Wife	do Tillingham
do	do Hawkwell

~ 16 May 1861

George and Mary Ann Pickingale's son, Charles Frederick, was born 16 May 1861 in Eastwood, Essex.

~ 7 November 1862

Mary Ann, the wife of George Pittingale of Eastwood, Essex, got caught stealing two pecks of potatoes from the property of James Tabor who was one of the members sitting at the Sessions. But he excused himself from this case.

She was fined and they paid.

From the newspaper, Chelmsford Chronicle, Friday 7 November 1862:

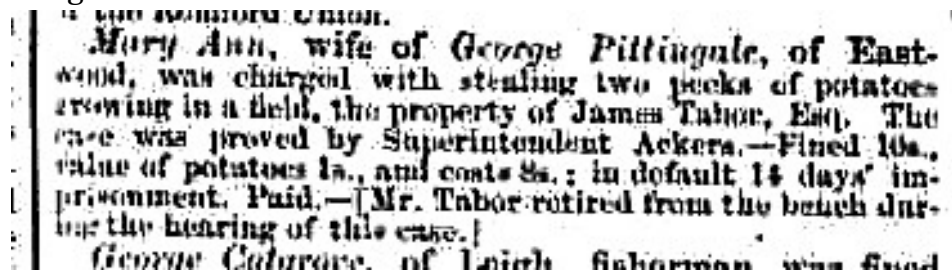
PETTY SESSIONS.

Rochford, October 30.

Before the Rev. T. S. Scratton, James Tabor and A. Tawke, Esqrs.

Mary Ann, wife of George Pittingale, of Eastwood, was charged with stealing two pecks of potatoes growing in a field, the property James Tabor, Esq. The case was proved by Superintendent Ackers. - Fined 10s., value of potatoes 1s., and costs 8s.; in default 14 days' imprisonment. Paid. - [Mr. Tabor retired from the bench during the hearing of this case.]

Image of the article:



~ 13 July 1863

George and Mary Ann Pickingale's daughter, Mary Ann, was born in 13 July 1863 in Eastwood, Essex.

~ 19 May 1864

Mary Ann Pittingale was charged for stealing a pair of baby shoes and was sentenced to 21 days of hard labour.

From the newspaper, Suffolk and Essex Free Press, Thursday 19 May 1864:

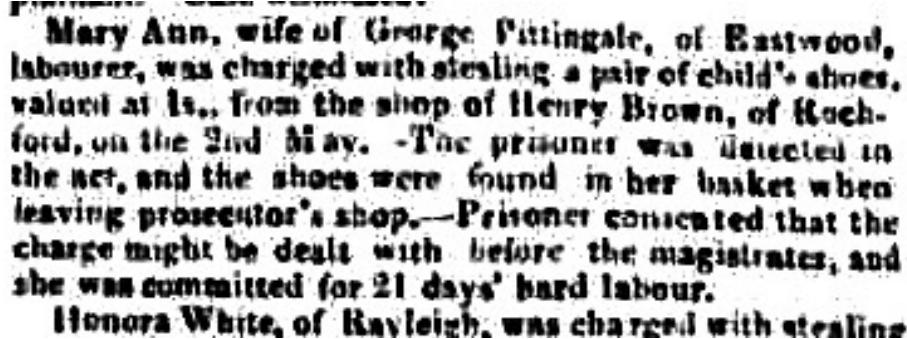
ROCHFORD MAY 12.

(Before Revds, T. S. Scratton and W. Twyne; James Tabor, A. Tawke, and E. J. Disney, Esqs.)

(among other cases mentioned but not transcribed here)

Mary Ann, wife of George Pittingale, of Eastwood, labourer, was charged with stealing a pair of child's shoes, valued at 1s., from the shop of Henry Brown, of Rochford, on the 2nd May. -- The prisoner was detected in the act, and the shoes were found in her basket when leaving prosecutor's shop. -- Prisoner consented that the charge might be dealt with before the magistrates, and she was committed for 21 days' hard labour.

Image of the article:



Mary Ann, wife of George Pittingale, of Eastwood, labourer, was charged with stealing a pair of child's shoes, valued at 1s., from the shop of Henry Brown, of Rochford, on the 2nd May. -- The prisoner was detected in the act, and the shoes were found in her basket when leaving prosecutor's shop. -- Prisoner consented that the charge might be dealt with before the magistrates, and she was committed for 21 days' hard labour.

Honora White, of Rayleigh, was charged with stealing

~ between 1864 and 1867

The Pickingale family moved from Eastwood, Essex to Canewdon, Essex.

~ 12 May 1867

George and Mary Ann Pickingale's son, George, was born in 12 May 1867 in Canewdon, Essex.

~ on the night of 2nd and 3rd of April 1871

In 1871, George and Mary Ann Pitengale were living in Canewdon, Essex. George was listed as an Agricultural Labourer.

From the 1871 census of Canewdon:

Name / Relationship / Marital status / Age & Sex / Profession / Birthplace

The Street

George Pitengale / Head / Mar / 58 M / Ag Lab / Essex: Hockley

Mary Ann do / Wife / Mar / 44 F / ----- / Essex: Tillingham

Martha do / Daur / ---- / 12 F / Scholar / Essex: Hatfield

Charles F do / Son / ---- / 9 M / Scholar / Essex: Eastwood

Mary A do / Daur / ---- / 7 F / Scholar / Essex: Eastwood

George do / Son / ---- / 3 M / ----- / Essex: Canewdon

Images of the record:

George Pitengale	Head	Mar	58	M	Ag Lab	Essex: Hockley
Mary Ann do	Wife	Mar	44	F	-----	Essex: Tillingham
Martha do	Daur	----	12	F	Scholar	Essex: Hatfield
Charles F do	Son	----	9	M	Scholar	Essex: Eastwood
Mary A do	Daur	----	7	F	Scholar	Essex: Eastwood
George do	Son	----	3	M	-----	Essex: Canewdon

On the same census page we find the Pitengale family listed next to Thomas and Sophia Whitwell's family and Samuel and Mary Bush's family.

It is interesting to find out that George Pitengale's neighbor, Thomas Whitwell, was probably a nephew of Daniel Whitwell. Daniel's 1st wife, Hannah, was a sister of the cunning man James Murrell of Hadleigh.

Daniel Whitwell was still living at this time so George Pitengale could have known him.

~ on the night of 3rd and 4th of April 1881

In 1881, George and Mary Pickingale were living in Canewdon, Essex.

George was listed as a Laborer.

From the 1881 census of Canewdon:

Name / Relationship / Marital status / Age & Sex / Profession / Birthplace

Cottage

George Pickingale / Head / Mar^d / 60 M / Laborer / Hockley Essex

Mary A Pickingale / Wife / Mar^d / 50 F / ----- / Tillingham Do

Mary A Pickingale / Daut / ---- / 17 F / ----- / Eastwood Do
 George Pickingale / Son / ---- / 13 M / Scholar / Canewdon Do

Images of the record:

George Pickingale	Head	Mar	60	Laborer	Hockley Essex
Mary Pickingale	Wife	Mar	50		Tiltingham Do
Mark Pickingale	Wid	+	17		Eastwood Do
George Pickingale	Son	+	13	Scholar	Canewdon Do

On the same page of the 1881 census, one of the nearby neighbor of the Pickingales were William and Sarah Higby and their children.

They were the grandparents of Lilian Higby "Granny Garner" who later lived with them. Lilian's grandmother was the one who later told Lilian about George Pickingale having a coven and was the witch master of it.

It was probably around this time in 1881 when Sarah Higby suspected George Pickingale of being a witch.

Image of the record:

Page 2] The undermentioned Houses are situate within the Boundaries of the										
Civil Parish [or Township] of	City or Municipal Borough of	Municipal Ward of	Parliamentary Borough of	Town or Village or Hamlet of	Urban Sanitary District of	Rural Sanitary District of	Ecclesiastical Parish or District of			
Canewdon				Canewdon Village		Rockford				
No. of Schedule	ROAD, STREET, &c., and No. or NAME of HOUSE	HOUSES Inhabited (1), or Building (2)	NAME and Surname of each Person	RELATION to Head of Family	CON-DITION as to Marriage	AGE last Birthday of	Rank, Profession, or OCCUPATION	WHERE BORN		(1) Deaf-and-Dumb (2) Blind (3) Imbecile or Idiot (4) Lunatic
A	Cottage	1	William Higby	Head	Mar	44	Servant	Canewdon Essex		
			Isabella Higby	Wife	Mar	36		Canewdon Do		
			William Higby	Son	+	16	Laborer	Do Do		
			George Higby	Son	+	14	Laborer	Do Do		
			Alfred A. Higby	Son	+	12	Scholar	Do Do		
B	Cottage	1	Mr. Brian Killward	Head	Mar	44	Sea Captain	Canewdon Essex		
			Frances Killward	Wife	Mar	38		Canewdon Do		
			Edw. Killward	Son	+	8	Scholar	Do Do		
			George Killward	Son	+	3	Scholar	Do Do		
C	Mill House	1	Harriet Afford	Head	W+	73		Ingateshore Essex		
			John A. Afford	Nephew	+	15		Canewdon Do		
			William C. Afford		+	14	Servant	Do Do		
D	Cottage	1	George Pittingale	Head	Mar	62	Laborer	Wickley Essex		
			Maria Pittingale	Wife	Mar	50		Tilbury Do		
			Mark Pittingale	Son	+	17	Scholar	Canewdon Do		
			George Pittingale	Son	+	13	Scholar	Canewdon Do		
E	Cottage	1	Lillian Lawrence	Head	W+	64	Wine Merchant	Canewdon Do		
Total of Houses...		5	Total of Males and Females...			9	8			

NOTE.—Draw the pen through such of the words of the headings as are inappropriate.

~ 25 August 1887

James Taylor was charged for stealing from George Pittingale.

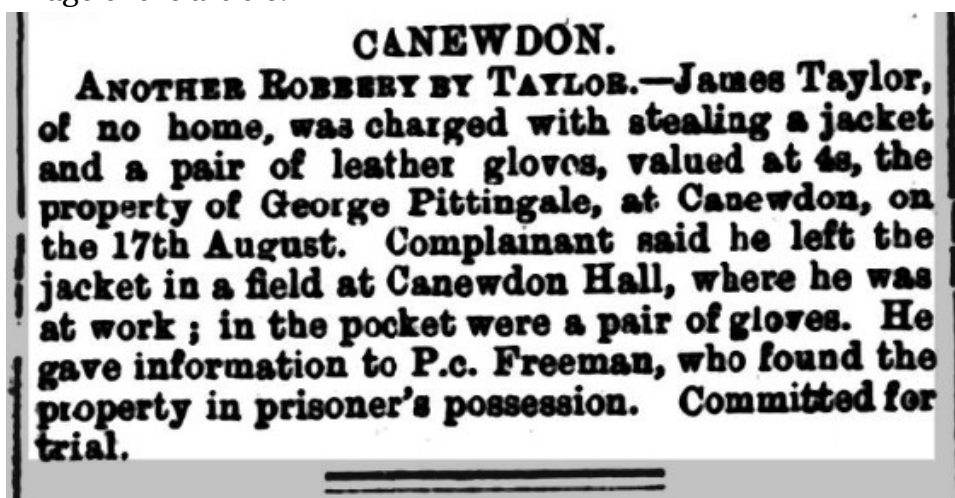
From the newspaper, Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser, Thursday 25 August 1887:

ROCHFORD PETTY SESSIONS.

C ANEWDON.

ANOTHER ROBBERY BY TAYLOR. --- James Taylor, of no home, was charged with stealing a jacket and a pair of leather gloves, valued at 4s, the property of George Pittingale, at Canewdon, on the 17th August. Complainant said he left the jacket in a field at Canewdon Hall, where he was at work; in the pocket were a pair of gloves. He gave information to P.c. Freeman, who found the property in prisoner's possession. Committed for trial.

Image of the article:



~ 26 August 1887

James Taylor was charged with stealing a jacket and a pair of leather gloves, valued at 4 shillings from a field at Canewdon Hall. It happened on August 17, 1887 and the items belonged to George Pittingale.

The prisoner was committed for trial in the Petty Session that was held at Rochford, Essex on August 24, 1887.

From the newspaper, Chelmsford Chronicle, Friday, 26 August 1887:

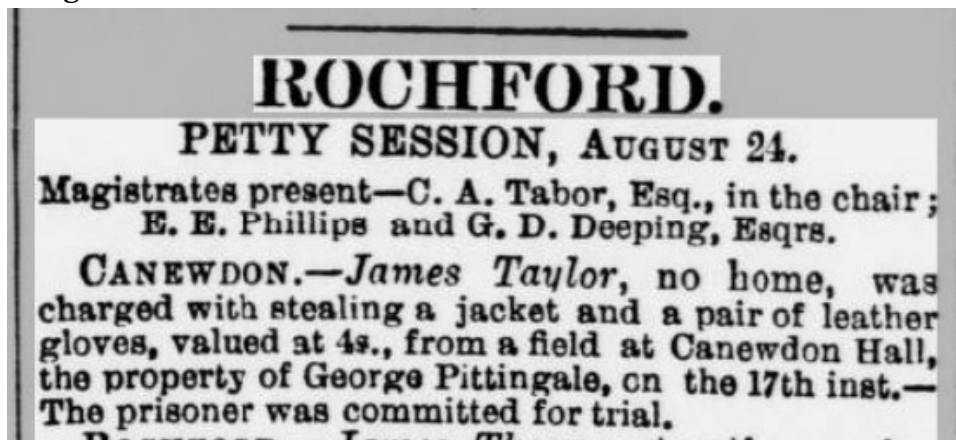
ROCHFORD.

Petty Session, August 24.

Magistrates present - C. A. Tabor, Esq., in the chair; E. E. Phillips and G. D. Deeping, Esqrs.

CANEWDON. - James Taylor, no home, was charged with stealing a jacket and a pair of leather gloves, valued at 4s., from a field at Canewdon Hall, the property of George Pittingale, on the 17th inst. --- The prisoner was committed for trial.

Image of the article:



~ 13 September 1887

Sarah Ann Pittingale died at the age of 63 years on 13 September 1887 in Canewdon, Essex and was buried 17 September 1887 in the churchyard of St. Nicholas in Canewdon.

From the death certificate:

Registration District Rochford

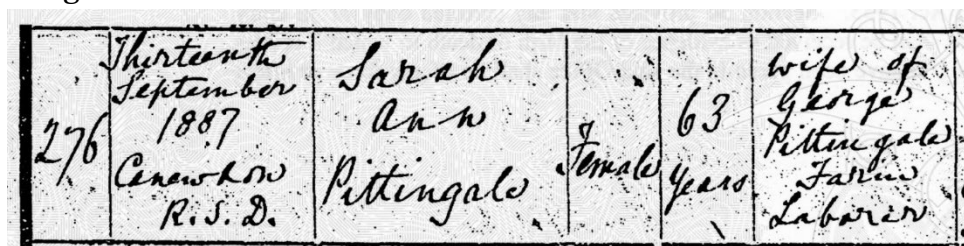
1887 Death in the Sub-district of Rochford in the County of Essex

*No. / When and where died / Name / Sex / Age / Occupation / Cause of death /
Signature, description and residence of informant / When registered / Signature of
Registrar*

276 / Thirteenth September 1887 Canewdon R. S. D. / Sarah Ann Pittingale / Female /
63 Years / wife of George Pittingale Farm Laborer / Disease of Liver Dropsy Certified by
Tho^s. King M.D. / M. A. Pittingale Daughter Present at the Death Canewdon /
Thirteenth September 1887 / Thomas King Registrar

The informant was her daughter Mary Ann Pittingale.

Images of the record:



Disease of Liver Dropsy Certified by Thos King M.D.	M. A. Pittingale Daughter Present at the Death Canewdon	Thirteenth September 1887	Thomas King Registrar
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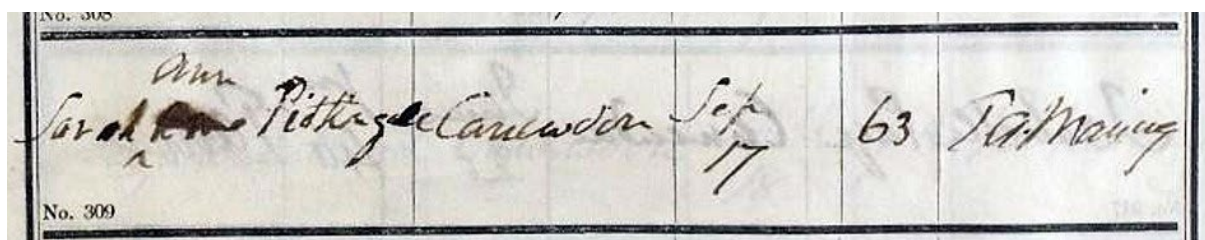
From the parish register of St. Nicholas church in Canewdon:

Burials 1887 - Page 39 No. 309

Name. / Abode. / When Buried. / Age. / By whom the ceremony was performed.

Sarah Ann Pittingale / Canewdon / Sep 17 / 63 / T. A. Maning

Image from the record of burial:



~ 21 October 1887

James Taylor pleaded guilty to only stealing the jacket from George Pettingale. He was sentenced to six months of imprisonment with hard labor.

From the newspaper, Chelmsford Chronicle, Friday, 21 October 1887:

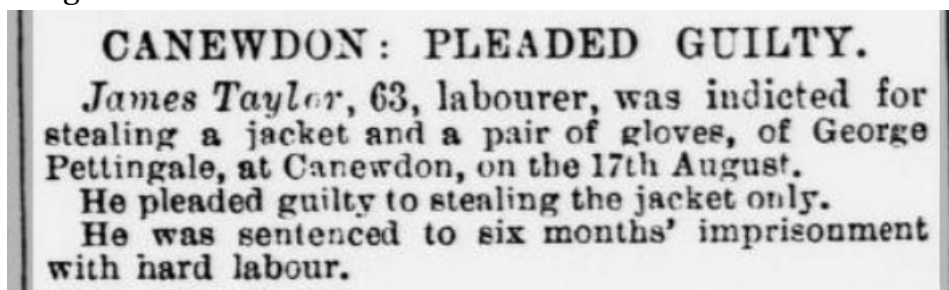
CANEWDON: PLEADED GUILTY.

James Taylor, 63, labourer, was indicted for stealing a jacket and a pair of gloves, of George Pettingale, at Canewdon, on the 17th August.

He pleaded guilty to stealing the jacket only.

He was sentenced to six months' imprisonment with hard labour.

Image of the article:



~ on the night of 5th and 6th of April 1891

In 1891, George Pickingill, a widower, age "80" years old, was living in Canewdon, Essex and his married daughter, Mary Ann Wood, and granddaughter, Emily Wood, were with him.

George was listed as an employed Agricultural Labourer.

From the 1891 census of Canewdon:

Name / Relationship / Marital status / Age & Sex / Profession / Employer, Employed, or Neither / Birthplace

Canewdon

4 - Number of rooms occupied if less than 5

George Pickingill / Head / Widower / 80 M / Agricultural Labourer / Employed / Essex Hockly

Maryann Wood / Daur / M / 27 F / ----- / ----- / Essex Eastwood

Emily Wood / Granddaughter / ---- / 1 F / ----- / ----- / Essex Canewdon

Image of the record:

George Pickingill	Head	Widower	80	Agricultural Labourer	*	Essex Hockly
Maryann Wood	Daur	M	27			Essex Eastwood
Emily Wood	Granddaughter		1			Essex Canewdon

~ 17 February 1898

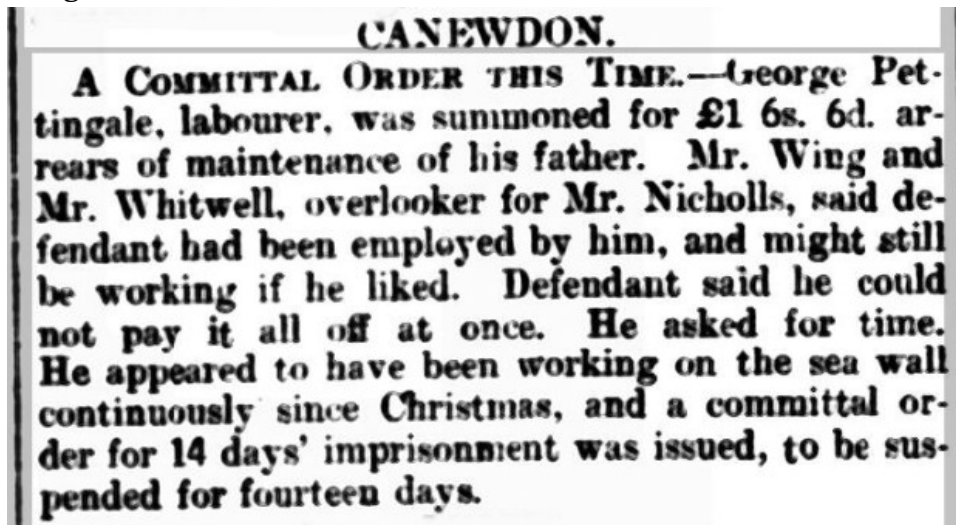
From the newspaper, Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser, Thursday 17 February 1898:

CANEWDON.

A COMMITAL ORDER THIS TIME. --- George Pettingale, labourer, was summoned for £1 6s. 6d. arrears of maintenance of his father. Mr. Wing and Mr. Whitwell, overlooker

for Mr. Nicholls, and defendant had been employed by him, and might still be working if he liked. Defendant said he could not pay it all off at once. He asked for time. He appeared to have been working on the sea wall continuously since Christmas, and committal order for 14 days' imprisonment was issued, to be suspended for fourteen days.

Image of the article:



~ ca 1898 - About Jack Taylor and George Pickingill

John William Taylor (1888-1972) was born in Canewdon, Essex.

His history and that of Lilian Garner will be treated in a later update of my work Dark Moon over Canewdon.

From the book, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft* - by Ronald Hutton, 1999:

Ron Hutton visited Mrs. Lilian Garner and Jack Taylor in April 1967. And below is what he learned from Jack Taylor.

Page 297

“Another was Jack Taylor, then in a retirement home at Rayleigh.”

“When my sister and I were children, we wanted to ride our pony and trap to Rochford Fair; but that day the beast just wouldn’t move, no matter what we did with it. Then we suddenly saw George Pickingill staring at us with those terrible eyes of his. He came over and told us to put down the reins and not to interfere with the pony at all. Then he whispered in its ear for a few minutes and stood back and hit it; and it started off, and found its own way done to the lanes to Rochford, without our needing to touch it.

... Jack was born in 1888 and became a labourer alongside the Pickingills; George took an especial liking to him.”

In the 1891 census of Canewdon, Essex, John W. Talyor, age 2 years, was living with his parents and two sisters.

In the 1901 census of Canewdon, Essex, John W. Talyor, age 12 years, was living with his parents. His father was a horsekeeper on a farm.

The two sisters in 1901 were servants living in other households.

So the event of Jack Taylor seeing George Pickingill occurred before 1901. Since he mentioned he was with a sister, I would say the event took place in ca 1898.

~ 1899

In 1899 there was some sale of properties in Canewdon in which George Pittingale was one of the tenants.

From the advertisements:

“Valuable Freehold cottage Properties situate at Canewdon.... Which will be sold by Auction by Mr. T. W. Offin at the “Old Ship” Hotel Rochford, on Thursday, July 27th, 1899, precisely at 4 o’clock.

Particulars.

Lot 1. A Timber Built and Tiled Range of Six Freehold Cottages. Abutting on the High Street, Canewdon, having back Gardens, and in the occupation of
Rent Per Annum.

Edward Lockwood	A monthly Tenant	3-18-0
George Pittingale	ditto	3-5-0
Mrs. Jobson	Weekly ditto	2-12-0
Robert Warner	Quarterly ditto	3-5-0
Thomas Bines	ditto	3-18-0
Mrs. Cottee	Weekly ditto	2-12-0

Lot 2. A Plot of Freehold Building Land

Adjoining Lot One and having a frontage of about 37 feet to the High Street, Canewdon, with a back boundary of about 58 feet by a depth of about 70 feet, now used as a Garden by George Pittingale, a tenant on sufferance. Possession will be given on completion of the purchase. There are Five Elm Trees on this Lot, which will be included in the purchase.”

“The Title to the several Lots shall commence as to Lots 1 and 2, with an Indenture of Conveyance on Sale dated the 31st day of May, 1878, made between Jeremiah Bingham Kersteman and Freeland Burrard Kersteman of the one part and Henry Prior of the other part, which said deed contains a recital of the seisin of the said J. B. Kersteman and F. B. Kersteman free from incumbrances.”

Parish relief			do Hockley
Labour on farm	Worker		do Eastwood
do do	Worker		do Canewdon
Parish relief			do { Cock Clarks Pulverton

~ 25 April 1901

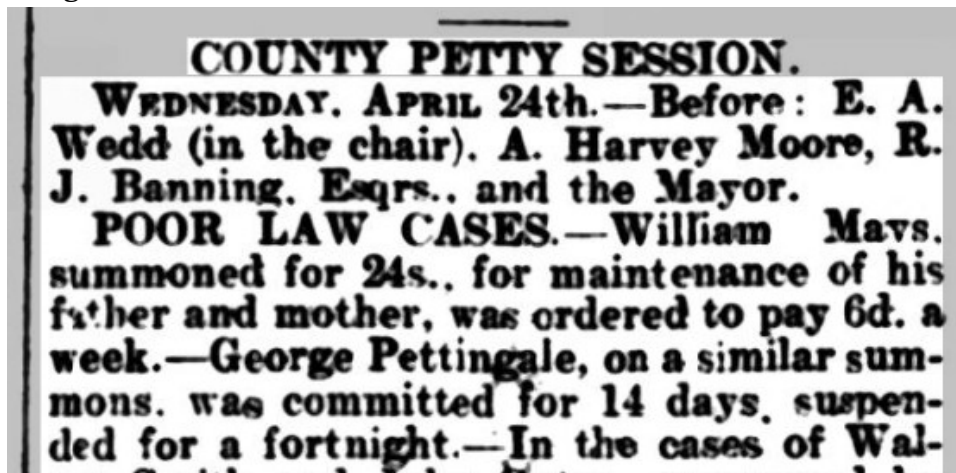
From the newspaper, Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser, Thursday 25 April 1901:

COUNTY PETTY SESSION.

WEDNESDAY. APRIL 24th. --- Before: E. A. Wedd (in the chair), A. Harvey Moore, R. J. Banning, Esqrs., and the Mayor.

POOR LAW CASES. --- William Mays, summoned for 24s., for maintenance of his father and mother, was ordered to pay 6d. a week. --- George Pettingale, on a similar summons, was committed for 14 days, suspended for a fortnight.

Image of the article:



~ 25 September 1902

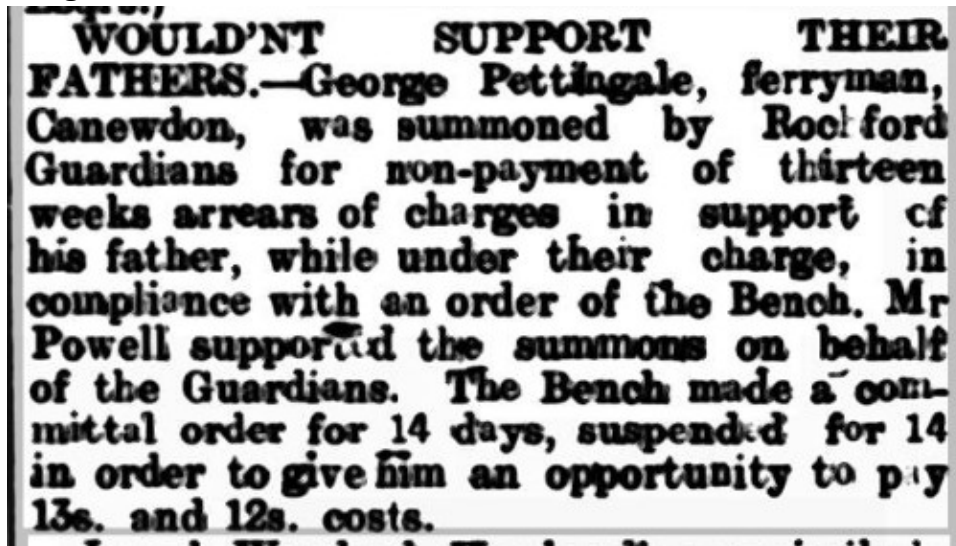
From the newspaper, Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser, Thursday 25 September 1902:

SOITHEND COUNTY PETTY SESSION.

WOULDN'T SUPPORT THEIR PATHEBS. --- George Pettingale, ferryman, Canewdon, was summoned by Rochford Guardians for non-payment of thirteen weeks arrears of charges in support of his father, while under their charge, in compliance with an order of the Bench. Mr Powell supported the summons on behalf of the Guardians. The

Bench made a committal order for 14 days, suspended for 14 in order to give him an opportunity to pay 13s. and 12s. costs.

Image of the article:



~ 27 September 1902

George Pettingale (junior) a ferryman of Creeksea, Essex was ordered at the September 24, 1902 Petty Sessions to pay 13 shillings arrears towards the support of his father plus 12 shilling costs or 14 days imprisonment.

From the newspaper, Essex Newsman, Saturday 27 September 1902:

PETTY SESSIONS.

County, Sept. 24.

Justices present - E. A. Wedd, chairman; E. J. Beal, J. R. Brightwell, and A. Harvey Moore, Esqrs.

DOUBLING THE DEBT. --- Geo. Pettingale, ferryman, of Creeksea, was ordered to pay 13s. arrears towards the support of his father, and 12s. cost, with the choice of 14 days' imprisonment.

Image of article:

COUNTY, SEPT. 24.
Justices present—E. A. Wedd, chairman; E. J. Beal, J. R. Brightwell, and A. Harvey Moore, Esqrs.
DOUBLING THE DEBT.—*Geo. Pettingale*, ferryman, of Creeksea, was ordered to pay 13s. arrears towards the support of his father, and 12s. costs, with the choice of 14 days' imprisonment.

~ 1908

As we seen with the census records that his age inflated as time went by and because George Pickingill was living a long time, then the inflated age reach over 100 and then to 105 years of age. And soon the word about his "longevity" spread to other areas and London.

From the newspaper, Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper, Sunday 13 September 1908:

HALE AND HEARTY AT 105.



Essex centenarian takes a ride on the first motor car he has ever seen. His impressions are given on this page. ("Lloyd's News" photo.)

HALE AND HEARTY AT 105.

Essex centenarian takes a ride on the first motor car he has ever seen. His impressions are given on this page. ("Lloyds's News" photo.)

ENGLAND'S OLDEST MAN.

Essex Patriarch of 105 Feels Good for Another 20 Years.

HAS HIS FIRST MOTOR RIDE.

Essex probably can claim to be the county possessing England's oldest man, and he is to be found at Canewdon, a little village tucked away in an eastern corner of the

shire, far from any railway station, and almost forgotten. The worthy old fellow is Frederick Pickingale, who claims to have reached his 105th birthday on April 2 last.

“What, come all the way from London to see me!” he exclaimed when a “Lloyd’s News” representative called on him yesterday, and was invited to enter his tiny cottage, of which the rent is only 1s. 3d. per week, where the old man who is still quite active, lives with his son. He was busy, brush in hand, tidying up his front room when our representative arrived, for he takes a pride in doing his housework, and getting his own meals ready, and fills in odd moments by pottering about in the garden.

“Yes, I’m a hundred and five,” he said, “and feel good for another twenty years. I was born over in Hockley, close here, and I’ve been in these parts, working on farms, all my life. I only stopped working at ninety.

“I can remember a lot of things you can’t,” he continued, with a chuckle, for he is a merry old fellow, and laughs as readily as he talks. “You’ve heard talk of a man called Napoleon, and a battle at Waterloo? Well, I can remember the times when that battle was fought, and how the word was passed through the village that we’d won another great victory over the French. In those days they used to come through the country wanting men to fight --- press-gangs, that’s the word --- and I can remember having to hide away, or they’d have taken me.”

Though there is no documentary evidence of the old man’s age, it is pretty well established. He himself is sure that he is 105, and a neighbour, aged over eighty, tells that he was a grown man as early as she can remember.

He will not hear the old days run down, “of course,” he says, “bread was very dear --- I mind how it was over a 1s. a loaf --- but we could get vegetables and eggs, and I think people were kinder, and stuck together better then, though I must say everyone’s very kind to us now.”

The old man has never seen a railway train, and the first motor-car he ever set eyes upon was the one in which our representative drove up. “My, but that’s a funny thing,” he said. “When I was a boy we didn’t have ‘em. Would I like a ride? Oh, yes, rather!”

A New Experience.

Aged 105, but still keen on a new experience, the bright old fellow bustled around, washed himself, combed his scanty grey hairs, brushed his overcoat, and took his seat in the car in a great state of excitement.

He had a great send-off. Some women at the village pump near at hand left their buckets to see “old daddy,” as they call him, take his first motor-car trip. Children playing before the cottage doors rushed indoors and brought their elders, and quite a crowd gathered round.

The old man was delighted and could hardly speak for wonder. “Well! well!” he kept saying, and then he would chuckle merrily. Down the road and past the village

pond he was taken, and when on a level stretch the car was put to its top speed he almost shouted with joy, "I'd like to go to London on it," he said. "I've never been to London. It must be a wonderful place." Then he rode back to his cottage door, sat solemnly in the car while his photograph was taken, and then toddled indoors again with something to marvel over for many a long day.

If you ask him how to live to be 105 he laughs and says, "You just go on living that's all." He has worked hard all his life, and is still active and useful. The plain food of the country village has been his fare, and he still likes his pipe of tobacco and mug of ale.

As he talks his thoughts keep going back to the days of nearly 100 years ago. "They're all gone, the men who used to work in the fields with me. This is like a new world." And then he recollects that he has to finish tidying up his cottage for Sunday, and as his visitor leaves for the roar and rush of London this fine old fellow in the quiet village so far from the beaten track takes up his brush and turns to work afresh.

Mike Howard's photograph of George Pickingale which he got from Mrs. Lilian Garner of Canewdon, Essex in the late 1970's when he visited her. Which earlier Eric Maple made a photo copy of it for his article in the early 1960's



The reporter that came to visit “Frederick” Pickingale probably took this picture right before or after the one he took of him in the automobile.

The face in the auto picture is not close up to see the details, but the chin is similar. But other similarities in both picture are the Bowler or Derby type hat, the walking stick, the dark overcoat, and the bottom of pants wrinkled from being a bit too long.

Also notice in both photographs the index finger of the right hand is pointing downward in front of the walking stick... a habit ... or some sort of hand sign ?

In the newspaper article, George Pickingale, was mentioned as "Frederick Pickingale". It could be a cover-up act by George Pickingill to prevent people from finding his baptism at Hockley and therefore figure out his correct age.

I noticed in some websites online, that the index finger has some meanings.

From the website, Soulful Significance:

“The index finger is a strong symbol of authority and leadership. It has the special power to point and signal action. This finger helps you guide others in shared goals.”

Also noticed on the Magician card in my set of the Smith-Waite Tarot Deck, that the magician has the index finger pointing downward.

Image of the card:



~ 10 April 1909

George Pettingale, died at the age of "103" years, on 10 April 1909 in Canewdon, Essex and was buried 14 April 1909 in the churchyard of St. Nicholas in Canewdon.

From the death certificate:

Registration District: Rochford

1909 Death in the Sub-district of Rochford in the County of Essex

*No. / When and where died / Name / Sex / Age / Occupation / Cause of death /
Signature, description and residence of informant / When registered / Signature of
Registrar*

332 / Tenth April 1909 Village Canewdon R. D. / George Pettingale / Male / 103 Years /
Farm Laborer / Senile Decay Cardiac failure Certified by Allan Dixon M. R. C. J. / X The
mark of Frederick Pettingale Son present at the Death Village Canewdon / Tenth April
1909 / Henry P. Topsfield Registrar

Images of the record:

332	Tenth April 1909 Village Canewdon R. D.	George Pettingale	male	103 years	Farm Laborer
Senile Decay Cardiac failure Certified by Allan Dixon M. R. C. J.		X The mark of Frederick Pettingale Son present at the Death Village Canewdon		Tenth April 1909	Henry P. Topsfield Registrar

From the parish register of St. Nicholas church in Canewdon:

Name. / Abode. / When Buried. / Age. / By whom the ceremony was performed.

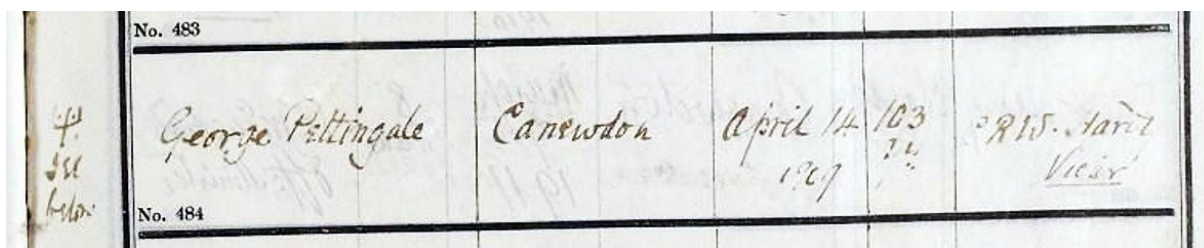
Burials 1909 - Page 61 No. 484

George Pettingale / Canewdon / April 14 1909 / 103 yrs / C R W Hardy Vicar

Then on the left side margin of the page next to the entry was a note saying "[symbol]
see below"

Then on the bottom margin of the page it says "[symbol]. N^o. 484 born at Hockley 1816
was only in his 93rd year".

Images of the burial record:



~ 1909 - from the newspaper obituaries

It is interesting how the news of George Pickingill's "longevity" and death spread to the other side of the world. He was mostly reported with the name Frederick Pickingale with some with the name George Pickingale.

~ 12 April 1909

From the newspaper, The Times, 12 April 1909:

DEATH OF THREE CENTENARIANS. - George Pettingale, believed to be the oldest man in England, died on Saturday. He was within a few days of his 106th birthday and had lived most of his life at Canewdon, a village near Southend. Up to a few years ago he continued his work as a farm labourer, and retained all his faculties to the last.

~ 12 April 1909

From the Newspaper, Sheffield Independent, Monday 12 April 1909:

Grand Old Men.

Deaths of Three Centenarians.

(the article covers other people but not transcribed here)

George Pickingale, believed to be the oldest man in England, died at Canewdon, a village near Southend. He was within a week or so of his 106th birthday, and had lived most of his life at Canewdon. Up to a few years ago he continued his work as a farm labourer, and retained all his faculties perfectly to the last.

Mr. Pickingale was born at Hockley, a village near Canewdon, and spent all his life as an agricultural labourer in that corner of Essex. The old man never travelled in a train, but he once had a ride in a motor car, and was delighted with his experiences.

His memory of the events of his boyhood was very distinct. He remembered the news of Waterloo coming to the village and the rejoicings over the victory. He lived near the sea, and as a boy he recalled the coming of the press-gangs and the hiding of the seamen and fishermen in the inland villages.

Mr. Pickingale had no advice to give as to how to live to be a centenarian. "You just go on living, that's all," he said to a representative. He was not a teetotaler; he smoked, and he ate anything that came his way, although as an agricultural labourer he did not get anything beyond the plainest food.

But he worked hard all his life, and never had a holiday until he reached the age of fourscore years and ten.

~ 15 April 1909

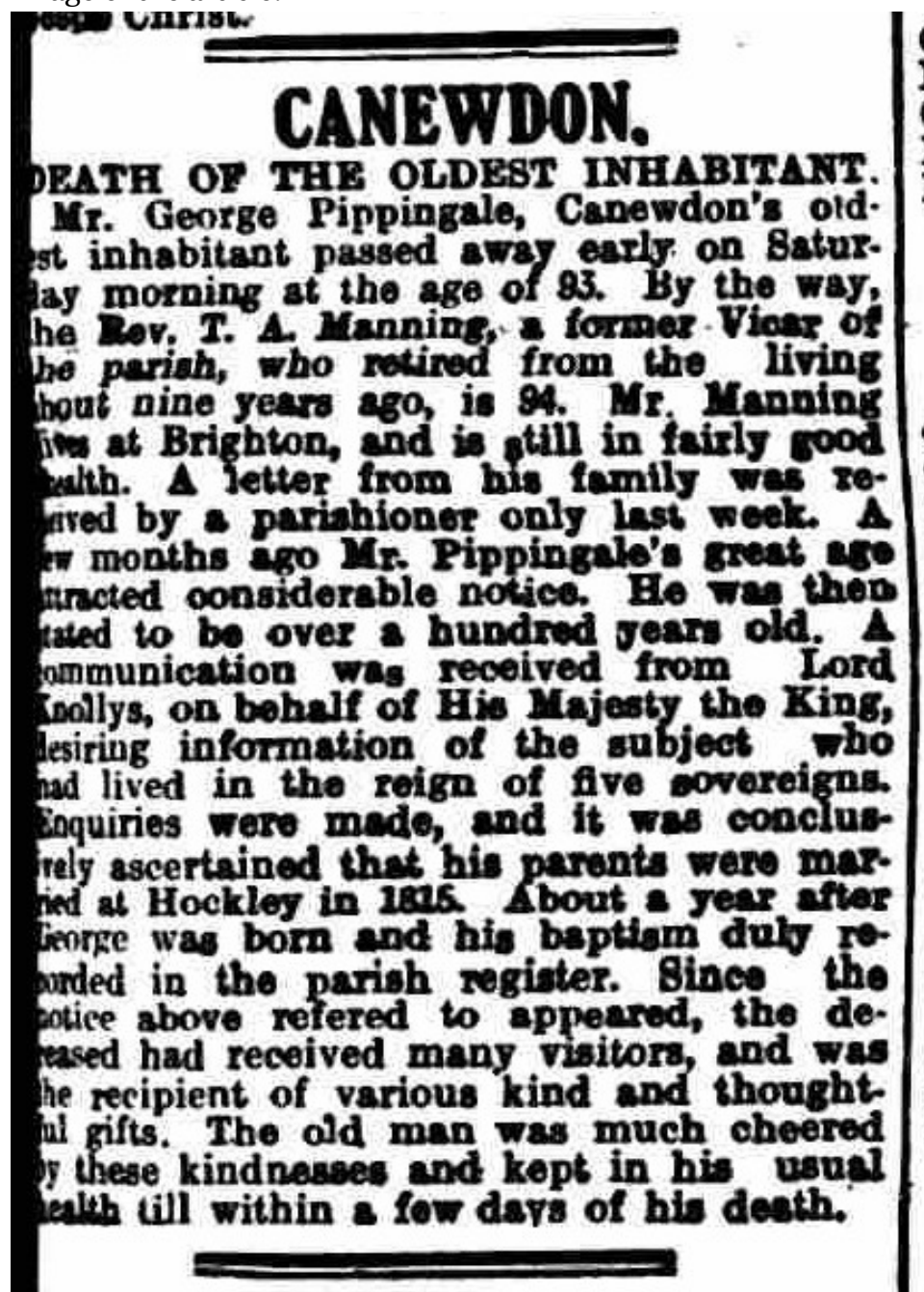
From the newspapers, Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser, Thursday 15 April 1909, page 7:

CANEWDON.

DEATH OF THE OLDEST INHABITANT.

Mr. George Pippingale, Canewdon's oldest inhabitant passed away early on Saturday morning at the age of 93. By the way, the Rev. T. A. Manning, a former Vicar of the parish, who retired from the living about nine years ago, is 94. Mr. Manning lives at Brighton, and is still in fairly good health. A letter from his family was received by a parishioner only last week. A few months ago Mr. Pippingale's great age attracted considerable notice. He was then stated to be over a hundred years old. A communication was received from Lord Knollys, on behalf of His Majesty the King, desiring information of the subject who had lived in the reign of five sovereigns. Enquiries were made, and it was conclusively ascertained that his parents were married at Hockley in 1815. About a year after George was born and his baptism duly recorded in the parish register. Since the notice above referred to appeared, the deceased had received many visitors, and was the recipient of various kind and thoughtful gifts. The old man was much cheered by these kindnesses and kept in his usual health till within a few days of his death.

Image of the article:



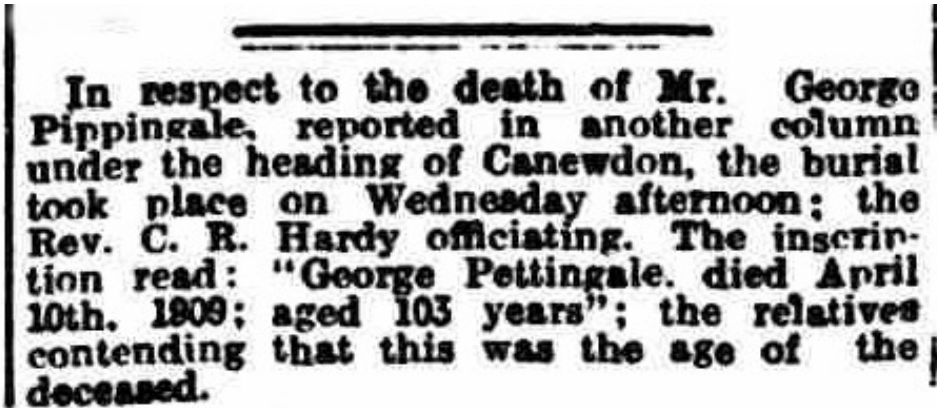
~ 15 April 1909

From the newspaper, Southend Standard and Essex Weekly Advertiser Thursday 15 April 1909, page 5:

In respect to the death of Mr. George Pippingale [sic], reported in another column under the heading of Canewdon, the burial took place on Wednesday afternoon; the Rev. C. R.

Hardy officiating. The inscription read: "George Pettingale, died April 10th, 1909; aged 103 years"; the relatives contending that this was the age of the deceased.

Image of the article:



In respect to the death of Mr. George Pippingale, reported in another column under the heading of Canewdon, the burial took place on Wednesday afternoon; the Rev. C. R. Hardy officiating. The inscription read: "George Pettingale, died April 10th, 1909; aged 103 years"; the relatives contending that this was the age of the deceased.

~ 16 April 1909

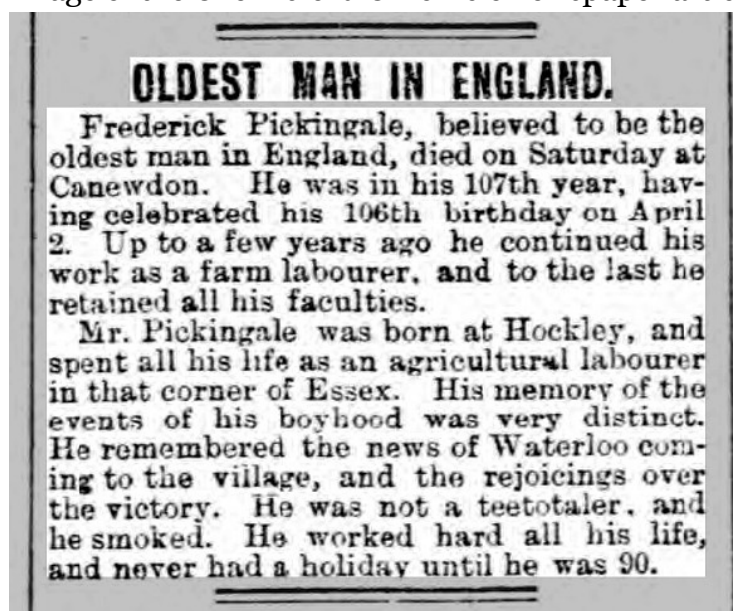
From the newspaper, Chelmsford Chronicle, Friday 16 April 1909:

OLDEST MAN IN ENGLAND.

Frederick Pickingale, believed to be the oldest man in England, died on Saturday at Canewdon. He was in his 107th year, having celebrated his 106th birthday on April 2. Up to a few years ago he continued his work as a farm labourer, and to the last he retained all his faculties.

Mr. Pickingale was born at Hockley, and spent all his life as an agricultural labourer in that corner of Essex. His memory of the events of his boyhood was very distinct. He remembered the news of Waterloo coming to the village, and the rejoicing over the victory. He was not a teetotaler, and he smoked. He worked hard all his life, and never had a holiday until he was 90.

Image of the Chelmsford Chronicle newspaper article mentioned above:



~ 26 June 1909

From the newspaper, The Star, 26 June 1909, a New Zealand newspaper:

The oldest man in England, Frederick Pickingale, an agricultural labourer, died on April 10 at Canewdon, in Essex. Pickingale was in his 107th year.

He spent all his life in the corner of Essex in which he was born, and as Canewdon is remote from all railway communication the old man had never travelled in a train. It was only last September that he saw a motor-car for the first time, and was given a ride in one, to his great delight.

~ 1 July 1909

From the newspaper, The Star, 1 July 1909, a New Zealand newspaper:

106 YEARS OLD.

OLDEST MAN IN ENGLAND.

The oldest man in England, Mr Frederick Pickingale, died on Saturday at Canewdon, Essex (said "Lloyd's Weekly News" on April 18). Mr Pickingale was in his 107th year, having reached his 106th birthday on April 2 last. Last September the old man told a representative of "Lloyd's News" that he felt "good for another twenty years"; and he looked it. Mr Pickingale was quite well and hearty until within a few days of his death. To the last he retained all his faculties and was able to work a little in his garden.

Mr Pickingale was born at Hockley, a village near Canewdon, and spent all his life as an agricultural labourer in that corner of Essex in which these villages are situated.

Canewdon is away from railway communications and the old man never travelled in a train. The first motor-car he saw was that which conveyed "Lloyd's" representative to the village last September. He had a ride in the car, and was delighted with his experience.

The centenarian did not cease working until he was ninety. Then he went to live with his son. But his natural activity would not let him rest, for he used to do some of the housework and potter about in the garden. His memory of the events of his boyhood was very distinct. He remembered the news of Waterloo coming to the village, and the rejoicings over the victory. He lived near the sea, and as a boy recalled the coming of the press gangs and the hiding of the seamen and fishermen in the inland villages.

Mr Pickingale had no advice to give as to how to live to be a centenarian. "You just go on living, that's all," he said to our representative. He was not a teetotaler, he smoked, and he ate anything that came his way, although as an agricultural labourer he did not get anything beyond the plainest food. But he worked hard all his life, and never had a holiday until he reached the age of fourscore years and ten.

And yet towards the close of his long life he was able to look back upon the past with pleasure. He did not care to hear the old days run down. There were privations, but there were happy memories of kind friendships. But at the last all the friends of manhood had gone, and he was left in what he called a new world.

Comments about George Pickingill from the magazines, books and the internet:

From the book - Modern Wicca: a History from Gerald Gardner to the Present - By Michael Howard, 2010

Page 47 - in the chapter of "The Pickingill Connection"

"Eric Maple had first visited the Essex witch village of Canewdon in 1959 while staying in the area to recover from an illness. Having an interest in the local folklore he heard tales from the older villagers about the witches who lived there fifty or sixty years before."

"When Eric Maple investigated the folk traditions of Canewdon in the winter of 1959-1960 he found stories about the witches living in and around the village in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries had survived among the local farming community."

From the magazine - Folklore Vol. 71 December 1960
The Witches of Canewdon - By Eric Maple

“The master of the Canewdon witches was always said to be a wizard. Cunning Murrell of Hadleigh was supposed to have been a Master of Witches, but George Pickingale was the last and perhaps the greatest of the wizards. He was a farm-labourer, a widower with two sons, who lived in a cottage near the Anchor hotel. In common with other members of his family, he possessed eyes of peculiar intensity. He was a tall, unkempt man, solitary and uncommunicative. He had very long finger-nails, and kept his money in a purse of sacking.

Pickingale practised quite openly as a Cunning Man, restoring lost property, and curing warts and minor ailments by muttered charms and mysterious passes. One woman was said to have been cured by him of rheumatism, but he did this by ‘transferring the disease to her father’. He made no charge for his services.

Unlike Murrell or [sic] Hadleigh, he was not above the use of ‘black magic’ when it suited his purpose. He coerced local people into fetching his water from the village pump by subtle hints regarding the use of white mice. He could stop farm machinery when he wished to do so by the power of his eyes, and because of this, he was often bribed by farmers to remove himself.

He was visited by people from great distances. Once the men of Dengie sought the advice of the Wise Man of Canewdon in a wages dispute. His power over animals, both domestic and wild, was a byword. He could halt farm-horses, and he could also draw game from the hedgerows. To do this, he would strike the hedge with his stick and the game would rush out....”

“Pickingale died in 1909 at the age of ninety-three. In his old age he was regarded as something like a ‘grand old man of the village’. Visitors would give him money as a parting shot, he announced that he would demonstrate, by a symbolic act at his funeral, that his magical powers remained unimpaired. He did this, for as the hearse drew up at the churchyard, the horses stepped from the shafts.”

From the magazine - The Essex Countryside, November 1961

Last Legends of Essex Witches - Witch lore of Canewdon by Eric Maple (Part 2)

“The Master of Witches was George Pickingill, who kept not only the witches but the villagers as well in a state of sheer terror. Mr. Whitwell, whose family has lived in Canewdon for centuries, remembered the fear which this man inspired. When George Pickingill wanted water drawn for him from the pump he did not have to ask twice, for the penalty for disobedience was a curse. The victim was often taken seriously ill as a result, and would remain in that condition until Pickingill lifted the spell.

Old Picky, as he was called, died in 1909 at the age of ninety-three. His last and greatest act of magic was performed at his own funeral. As he lay dying he had declared that he

would demonstrate his powers in a way that Canewdon would never forget.

On the day of his funeral the hearse drew up to the churchyard and suddenly the horse stepped out of the shafts and trotted off down the road, to the great alarm of the mourners. Old Picky was having the last word, as usual.”

From the magazine - Folklore Vol. 73 Autumn 1962

The Witches of Dengie - By Eric Maple

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“The people of Dengie Hundred greatly feared the witches of Canewdon on the far side of the river, yet there were occasions when they actually consulted them. Mr M. Burton of Dengie village remembered how two labourers decided to consult the ‘Old Man Witch’, George Pickingill of Canewdon over a wages dispute. As they set forth, one said to the other, ‘I wonder if the old b ... is at home.’ On arriving at the wizard’s cottage they knocked at the door and suddenly the window flew open and the wizard thrust his head out and hissed at them, ‘Yes, the old b ... is at home’.”

From the book - The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft - by Ronald Hutton, 1999

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“..... Such Data certainly existed in the 1960s, when people still survived who had lived in Canewdon at the opening of the century and known Pickingill. One was ‘Granny’ Lillian Garner, who had been one of Maple’s chief informants. Another was Jack Taylor, then in a retirement home at Rayleigh. In April 1967 I spent some time in the district myself, inspired by Maple’s book to collect further information. What I found exactly supported his original body of material, which is hardly surprising as it was gained from the same sources It confirmed the impression given by Maple, that Pickingill’s clients, though numerous, were drawn mainly from rural south-east Essex. My only significantly new quantity of testimony was provided by Jack Taylor, whom Maple seems to have missed, and it was wholly in harmony with the latter’s other evidence. I print one story here, as it so dramatically illustrates the powers of a traditional cunning man:

When my sister and I were children, we wanted to ride our pony and trap to Rochford Fair; but that day the beast just wouldn’t move, no matter what we did with it. Then we suddenly saw George Pickingill staring at us with those terrible eyes of his. He came over and told us to put down the reins and not to interfere with the pony at all. Then he whispered in its ear for a few minutes and stood back and hit it; and it started off, and found its own way done to the lanes to Rochford, without our needing to touch it.

... Jack was born in 1888 and became a labourer alongside the Pickingills; George took an especial liking to him.”

From the book - *Modern Wicca: a History from Gerald Gardner to the Present* - By Michael Howard, 2010

Page 51 in the chapter of “The Pickingill Connection”

“Sybil Webster told me that [George Pickingill] was supposed to have traveled to Norfolk regularly in a pony and trap. This was probably to see his relatives in Castle Rising, a village that, like Canewdon, has a reputation for witchcraft”.

Page 57 and 58 in the chapter of “The Pickingill Connection”

“In October 1977, a few days before Hallowe’en, I decided to visit Canewdon in the hope of finding out more about Pickingill..... I called at the vicarage and asked the aged minister if he could help me in my quest.... he kindly suggested that an elderly lady called Granny Garner might be able to help me, and he directed me to her cottage in the lane leading up to the church. Apparently she had been Eric Maple’s chief informant in the village and he had described her as the last white witch in Canewdon.

Lillian Garner was eighty-seven years old when I met her, but her mind was, as they say, “as bright as a button.” She invited me in for tea, and told me that she remembered George Pickingill from her childhood as a village character and eccentric old gentleman. She recollected when the first car came to the village that he had his photograph taken beside it. She revealed that her own mother had told her that Mr. Pickingill was the leader of a local coven of witches. Apparently her mother was actually a member of the coven and said that the witch master had “many visitors” from outside the village who came seeking his occult knowledge. Before I left, Lillian gave me the original of the photograph of George Pickingill that was published in Eric Maple’s book *Dark World of the Witches*. A photograph of Granny Garner herself standing at the door of her cottage was reproduced with Maple’s article on the Canewdon witches published in the encyclopedic work *Man, Myth and Magic* in the 1970s.”

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“... E. W. “Bill” Liddell, living in Auckland, New Zealand. He said he had been born in Essex, England, and had emigrated in 1959 or 1960. Liddell added that as a young man he had been inducted into his family’s traditional form of witchcraft on May Eve, 1950. This Craft tradition had allegedly been founded by “Old George” Pickingill (1816-1909), who lived his last years in the remote Essex village of Canewdon.”

From a website constructed by Scott Bisseker for Bill Liddell, 2006, www.pickingill.com
Old George Pickingill and the History of Modern Witchcraft

"I was investigating George Pickingill a good twelve years before Maple visited Canewdon. 'Old George' was the first-cousin of my paternal great-great grandfather,

who adopted the surname of one of his employers. This was standard practice for many members of the widespread Pickingill stock. They sought refuge with Romany families and imbibed much Rom magic. There are some 30 to 40 Pickingill siblings by last count and most bear different surnames. However, only 5 or 6 are remotely interested in the silly superstitions of their ignorant forebears. Such is progress!" (Bill Liddell, 1999)

"George Pickingill was an itinerant horse dealer who accompanied his Rom kinsmen to Horse Fairs. He was renowned as a Gypsy sorcerer and met a number of his nine female leaders when travelling with the Rom. The Gypsies have always known the favoured haunts of the traditional witches. They had no trouble locating Pickingill covens. Mike Howard advised me in personal correspondence dated 27th March 1997 : "Your comments about the gypsies and Pickingill covens has reminded me of an encounter I had in 1976 with a Romany called George Wells who lived in South London. He claimed to know of Pickingill people on the Suffolk-Essex border at Brandon, and others still in the New Forest area. "Mike was not impressed and gave little heed to Wells at the time. In hindsight this was a pity. It may have been possible to corroborate some of the claims in the Lugh material.

George Pickingill was apprenticed to a Cunning Man named Shewell. His education was completed by Rom sorcerers and the leaders of Old Style covens. His reputation preceded him and landowners and influential 'Rosicrucians' were impressed with Pickingill's magical prowess. He was granted access to the archives of several 'Cunning' Lodges. It was not long before Pickingill was exhibiting his gifts at Masonic Temples and private houses. He confined the bulk of his demonstrations to a country house in Hertfordshire." (Bill Liddell, 1999)

"The strong possibility exists that George Pickingill, the famous Rom horse whisperer, is the 'George Pettingale' who was buried on the 14th April 1909. This George Pickingill was born on the 23rd December 1803 in either Suffolk or Norfolk. He would have been 105 in April 1909. This George Pickingill had retired to the Hundred of Dengie, which adjoins the Hundred of Rochford in which Canewdon is situated. Pickingill sons were named for English kings; George, William and Charles were the most common forenames. There is nothing improbable in having three George Pickingills living just a few miles apart. The church wardens and the parishioners of St. Nicholas' church in Canewdon would never have permitted their vicar to bury the George Pickingill in their churchyard. This was the satanist who allegedly conducted sex orgies in their churchyard. It seems more plausible to suggest that the son, or the innocuous Rom horse-whisperer, is the George Pettingale buried at Canewdon. The recorded age of 103 suggests it could have been the ancient horse-whisperer rather than George Jnr. 'Pettingale' may have been substituted for Pickingill as a sop to the sensitivities of the parishioners and the other villagers.

It seems eminently feasible that 'Old George' Pickingill lies in an unmarked and unhallowed grave. However, his input into the pagan revival is his epitaph." (Bill Liddell, 1999)

~ **From the research of the earlier members of the family.**

Thomas Pickingill Sr. was a grave digger and his wife sat with the dead. They were dealing with the dead and the rituals that goes with it.

Samuel Pickingill was apprenticed and became a blacksmith.

Thomas Pickingill Jr. (alias James Pickman) went to the sea. Being in the Royal Navy for years during the Napoleonic War. Could the news of Waterloo that George Pickingill mentioned came from him?

Mary Pickingill, married first to Job Taylor, then to Richard Bowton. Bowton was a blacksmith in Ashingdon parish, Essex (next door parish to Canewdon). He was buried in a Masonic manner. Further research uncovered that Mary's brother-in-law was John Bowton who was a member of the Freemason lodge in Romford, Essex.

Martha Pickingill married James Scott the butcher in Canewdon. One of the folklore of Canewdon mentioned that one of the witches was the wife of the butcher. Two of her daughters married James George Rice Allerton and Golden Allen. Both were members of the Freemason lodge in Rochford, Essex.

Charles Pickingill, the father of George Pickingill, was described as a blacksmith in one of the records. It is more than likely that he, as a teenager or young man, may have started as a laborer and then learning some of the blacksmith trade at Samuel Pickingill's shop or/and Richard Bowton's shop.

All this new information shows that there were several connections of the family being blacksmiths and freemasons. Blacksmiths of course were involved with horses. This is probably how George Pickingill may have been in contact with and perhaps became a member of the Horseman's Word or Horse Whisperers.

Michael Howard wrote an interesting section about the Horse Whisperers in his book "Children of Cain, A Study of Modern Traditional Witches", 2011. And he pointed out that the Horseman's Word and Freemasonry had similar rites and that he says were drawn from earlier witch groups.

Children of George and Sarah Ann (Bateman) Pickingill:

15. + **MARTHA ANN PICKINGILL** was born 22 June 1858 in Hawkwell, Essex, England.

Martha Ann Pickingill married William Punt.

16. **CHARLES FREDERICK PICKINGILL** was born 16 May 1861 in Eastwood, Essex, England.

17. + **MARY ANN PICKINGILL** was born 13 July 1863 in Eastwood, Essex, England.

Mary Ann Pickingill married William Wood.

18. **GEORGE PICKINGILL** was born 12 May 1867 in Canewdon, Essex, England.

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