

Found a new photograph of George Pickingale (with the alias of Frederick Pickingale)

Part I

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. ("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 a took 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 we 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's 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.

Part II

Mike Howard’s picture of George Pickingale which he got from Mrs. Lilian Garner of Canewdon, Essex in the late 1970’s when he visited her.



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

Sources:

1. 1908 a Lloyd's News representative visits "Frederick" Pickingale. Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper, Sunday 13 September 1908, page 2. British Newspaper Archive, online at www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk. Searched on March 23, 2025 Sunday 12:08 AM
2. Photograph of George Pickingill that was in Mike Howard's possession. He originally got it from Mrs. Lilian Garner of Canewdon, Essex in the late 1970's.

Researched and compiled by William Wallworth

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