


The Mildenhall Poor Law Union was formed in 1835. The Public Health Act of 1872 introduced Urban and Rural Sanitary Authorities. In 1894 Urban District Councils came into existence.

Pip Wright. pipwright.com

DR. ALFRED JOSEPH PICKWORTH came to the village in 1884, during a time of great change and was the Union* Medical Officer as well as the village doctor. He lived in the old flint cottage which later became known as 'Pickworth's Old Place' and which was on the corner of Mill Road and Back Street. Before this time medical treatment was generally only available to those who could pay. Some who were able to 'kept a bit by'. It was possible to take out a form of insurance if you could afford it! Hard times could mean having to choose between food and 'getting the doctor in'. There were doctors whose social conscience made them sympathetic towards those in poverty and the prospect of the Workhouse was greatly feared but all too common. Often a box was placed on a mantelpiece so that a few coins could be saved for when the doctor was needed. Being 'on the box' meant someone was too ill to work. It would have been normal for many in the village to use 'quack' remedies, all of which were advertised very widely in the press and magazines and reliance on some traditional treatments persisted well into the 20th C.

*The Union was the organisation which administered the local Workhouse.

THE ART OF LONGEVITY.



Dr. DIET says: "Leave off with a desire to eat more."

Dr. QUIET says: "Do unto others as you would they should do unto you."

Dr. MERRYMAN says: "A merry heart goes all the day; a sad one but an hour."

Dr. COMMONSENSE says: "The healthiest occasionally suffer from temporary derangement of the Stomach and Liver. ENO'S 'FRUIT SALT' and ENO'S 'VEGETABLE MOTO' ought to be kept in every Household and every Travelling Trunk, in readiness for any emergency. They always do good; never do harm. They are as gentle as the dew-drop and as sure as Quarter Day."

**The Pivot of Duty—
Sterling Honesty of Purpose;
Without it life is a sham.**

THE SECRET OF SUCCESS.—"A new invention is brought before the public, and commands success. A score of abominable imitations are immediately introduced by the unscrupulous, who, in copying the original closely enough to deceive the public, and yet not so exactly as to infringe upon legal rights, exercise an ingenuity that, employed in an original channel, could not fail to secure reputation and profit."—ADAMS.

*What Higher Aim can Man attain,
Than Conquest over Human Pain?*

**FOR HEALTH AND LONGEVITY USE
ENO'S "FRUIT SALT."**

The value of ENO'S "FRUIT SALT" cannot be told. Its success in Europe, Asia, Africa, America, Australia, and New Zealand proves it.

ENO'S FRUIT SALT possesses the power of reparation when digestion has been disturbed or lost through alcoholic drinks, fatty substances, or want of exercise. If its great value in keeping the body in health were universally known, no family would be without it.

ENO'S FRUIT SALT.—"After suffering two and a half years from severe headache and disordered stomach, and after trying almost everything without any benefit, I was recommended to try ENO'S FRUIT SALT, and before I had finished one bottle I found it doing me a great deal of good, and am restored to my usual health. And others I know that have tried it, have not enjoyed such good health for years."

Yours most truly, ROBERT HUMPHREYS, Post Office, Barraford.

CAUTION.—Examine each Bottle, and see that the Capsule is marked ENO'S "FRUIT SALT." Without it, you have been imposed on by a worthless imitation.

SOLD BY ALL CHEMISTS.

Prepared only at Eno's "Fruit Salt" Works, London, S.E., by J. C. Eno's Patent.

A typical advert which includes an early example of a 'jingle'.

Courtesy of the University of St Andrews Libraries and Museums. Eno's Fruit Salt, in Spanish Galleon (1893). Har PR4049.B34S7
1983 From : ["Emollient milk, Soap and Luxury Products. Advertising Consumer Goods in Later Victorian Times](#)

As well as looking after those who could afford a doctor Dr. Pickworth provided a medical service to the very poor people who were reduced to living in the Workhouse run by the Mildenhall Union. There were a number of Lakenheath villagers in the Workhouse from time to time. He is said to have owned the first motor car in the village.

In addition to his medical work he was also a Methodist minister. In time he became a JP and was created an Alderman in 1935 by the county of Suffolk. A governor of Addenbrookes Hospital, he died here in 1943.

A Cottage Hospital was founded in Mildenhall in 1868 and was available to those who could afford the fees. Guess who was the doctor? Pickworth retired as a doctor in 1926 but lived out his life here.

Living Conditions in Lakenheath.

By the mid 19th century the scientific understanding of disease and its causes had developed to a point where political intervention was necessary because of economic and social concerns.

The Monckton Copeman Report to the Local Government Board 1892 gives a clear picture of life in Lakenheath for the majority of the inhabitants. Human waste and the very high number of burials in the churchyard, which had been ordered to cease in 1882, had contaminated the wells which provided the water supply to such an extent that there were bitter complaints about smell and taste. The vicar of the time, REV. E.G. SCRIVENER, informed Dr. Copeman that there had been *"a particular occasion when a fresh grave was being dug, the remains of no less than nine other bodies were disturbed during the operation"*. He explained that it was the large number of burials which had taken place over the centuries which had raised the height of the graveyard. There was even a well close by which remained in use despite having been condemned by the public analyst because it was thought to give the best water! So far as I can tell the ordinary villagers, dependent on communal wells, had no access to safe drinking water in the village at all.

Storm water, which contained both animal and human waste, could seep into the wells and also into the village pond and there were examples of failure to empty shared cess-pits over a period of time. Household and abattoir waste also found its way into the cess-pits.

'The dwellings of the poor' were mainly rented from 'small owners' who were described by the Report as getting the maximum rent whilst being averse to maintaining the property, with the result that some were uninhabitable due to building defects such as damp walls and defective thatch. Some were built back to back with the result that dampness penetrated from one house to another.

Lakenheath was a very unhealthy place!

Epidemic!

The Monckton-Copeman report was commissioned by the Local Government Board to investigate the sanitary condition of Lakenheath and in particular the incidence in the village of diphtheria, a potentially fatal disease of the throat which is highly infectious and so easily transmitted in crowded conditions. The report focussed on 1889-1892.

Between 1889 and 1892 there were 148 houses where there had been a case/s of the disease, giving 203 cases and 27 deaths. According to the report one teacher from the school was affected in 1888. It's possible that there had been other cases as at this time infectious disease did not have to be notified to the authorities until 1899. It was thought probable that the school was a source of the disease. Some thought of the disease as a 'bad throat' and they probably self-medicated their families at the onset of the infection.

An all too common family tragedy in the village was that of the Cash family.

Ellen Tuffs was married to Robert Cooper Cash. In 1893 they were living at 21 High St. one of a row of terraced cottages roughly 30 yards south of Goward House, until recently the Lakenheath Hotel. The house which is still there was not far from the site of the old Star public house. Note: High St. was re-numbered a considerable time ago).

They had 13 children, the eldest, Sarah, was born in 1878. Then came Florence, Sidney, ALFRED, aged 8, FREDERICK, 7, and ALBERT, aged 6. Later came Mildred, Annie, Robert, Evelyn, Frederick, Bertha and Aubrey.

Alfred and his brothers Frederick and Albert all died in 1893 of diphtheria, one year after the Monckton Copeman Report was delivered to the Local Government Board.

Research by Ken Turner, grandson of Elijah, the brother of Ellen Tuffs.



The High Street looking north. The Cash family lived in one of the terraced houses on the left above the Star pub which is identified by the large sign.

The 6th Annual Report of the Local Medical Officer of Health on Lakenheath in 1894 stated that despite deaths from flu, croup, measles, acute bacterial skin infection (erysipelas), and diarrhoea, old age was the main cause of death in the village. However infant mortality was considered excessive! This was considered to be an improvement!

Arthur W Aldritch, Report to the Mildenhall Sanitary Union. Wellcome Library.

LAKENHEATH.

A HEAVY DEATH ROLL.—During the past fortnight several homes in this parish have been cast into gloom by the hand of death, no less than five persons having been buried in the parish churchyard during the week ending April 28th, the last interment being that of Lilly May, the youngest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Edwin J. Rolph, of Primrose House, whose funeral took place on Friday, with every demonstration of respect. The funeral cortège, on leaving the residence of the father of the deceased, was headed by the Vicar of the parish, the Rev. F. G. Scrivener. The coffin containing the remains of the deceased, was followed by the bereaved parents, the whole of the teaching staff of the Board Schools, of which the deceased was a pupil, and a large number of sympathising friends. The service was most impressively conducted by the Vicar, at the conclusion of which a large number of school children filed past the grave and took a last look of all that remained of their little school-fellow. The breast-plate on the coffin bore the following inscription:—“Lilly May Rolph, born November 6th, 1887; died April 23rd, 1894.” A large number of wreaths were placed on the coffin, and inscribed:—“In affectionate remembrance of dear Lilly, from her loving Governess”; “With loving sympathy, from the pupil teachers”; “With Dr. and Mrs. Pickworth's love”; “In loving remembrance of little Lilly, from Frida and Eva”; “With Ethel Mason's love and remembrance of dear Lilly”; “With deep sympathy, from Mr. and Mrs. Jolly”; “With sympathy from G. and E. Lummis”; “With heartfelt sympathy, from Fred and Sophia”; “In sincere sympathy, from J. and R. Parsons,” &c.—Preaching in the parish church on Sunday evening, to a large congregation, the Vicar, who selected his text from the 13th verse of the 14th chapter of the Revelation of St. John, during the course of a most solemn discourse, made feeling allusion to those who had so recently been taken from their midst, and addressed words of consolation to the bereaved. Appropriate hymns were sung during the service.

Lily May Rolph's funeral. The Bury and Norwich Post and Suffolk Standard 1894.

Immunization against diphtheria was discovered in 1890 but was not generally available until the early 1930's.

Dr. Pickworth had other interests. Each year he made fireworks for village celebrations. In 1912 in a premature explosion he suffered severe facial disfigurement and lost an eye.

He played a major part in the village for the whole of his adult life and was created an Alderman by the County Council in recognition of his service.

Finally, it's said that when he decided that he was too old to drive he arranged for his car to be driven into the chalk pit at the rear of his house, Pickworth's Old Place, and he be buried there.

Inscription on the tomb of Dr Pickworth in St Mary's Church, Lakenheath reads.

“In loving memory of Alfred Joseph Pickwork, Physician and Surgeon of this parish, 1884-1926, who dies 23 December 1943 aged 86 years, also Sarah Hannah, wife of the above who died 8 August 1890 aged 28 years and Mary Elizabeth his second wife, who dies on 4th April 1944 aged 78 years. Well done thou good and faithful servant.”

Find a grave.com

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