

# The Farmers of Great Wakering

Extract from 'The Rayner Family of Great Wakering' by Albert Rayner Bsc (Econ) FCA  
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## The Wedd Family

According to the Tithe Apportionment of 1841 Alfred Wedd (1789-1877) was farming all the land which was owned by the Wedd family. In due course he was farming some 600 acres and employing some 30 men, including a farm bailiff. He was a bachelor and, in fact, was recognised as the Village Squire.

The Wedd family were important farmers and landowners in the village of Fowl mere in Cambridgeshire. The attachment of certain members of the family to Great Wakering arose as a result of marriage on 1 March 1780 at All Saints Church in Maldon, Essex, between William Wedd (1755-1819) and Elizabeth Wallman Pattisson (1758-1845). Elizabeth was the eldest child of Joseph Pattisson senior of Maldon and grandchild of William Wallman of Thorpe Hal 1, Southchurch, Essex. Some of the Pattisson family lived in Wakering and according to an Electoral Roll of 1832 there was a James Pattisson living at Trotters Farm. They were staunch Congregationalists and in 1822 one member of the family gave half an acre of land to Trustees for the building of a Dissenters Chapel. The Wedds, when they settled in Great Wakering, supported the village Congregational Church.

A most comprehensive Wedd family tree, prepared by Mrs Gwen Rawlingson of Great Wakering, shows that the Wedd family descend from Peter Wedd of Royston in Hertfordshire, who purchased land in Fowlmere in 1668. As a result of the marriage on 15 June 1705, of his grandson, Benjamin Wedd of Fowlmere to Hester Crackenthorpe, only daughter of the Reverend John Crackenthorpe, Rector of Fowlmere, the family can be traced back in the female line to Henry VII, the first Tudor King of England, who reigned from 1485 to 1509. As a result of the same marriage, a member of the Spencer family of Althorp, and also the 5th and 7th Lords Chandos, can be claimed as ancestors.

The aforementioned Alfred Wedd was the eighth surviving child of William and Elizabeth Wallman Wedd. According to the Tithe Apportionment made in 1841 Alfred Wedd occupied 114 acres of land owned by his mother, Elizabeth Wallman Wedd, which area included the Mi 11 head brickworks. Alfred also occupied a further 407 acres, the owners being recorded as Admiral Jacob Henniker-Major and Alfred Wedd, this area including the brickworks north of Landwick.

Alfred owned and occupied the Whitehall Estate, comprising the house known as 'Whitehall', an area of woodland, an orchard and 7 acres of arable land. He also occupied the Rectorial Glebe, being 58 acres owned by Thomas Clough, situated around the church and including Home Farm then known as Rectory Farm.

Alfred farmed until his death at Whitehall on 8 January 1877 aged 87. He had no heirs and left his property to his younger brother, Octavius, who was born around 1798.

Octavius Wedd and his son, Edward Arthur Wedd (1844-1925) both farmed at Fowl mere, where, according to the 1871 Census, the father, then 72, farmed 390 acres and employed 10

men and 6 boys. The son, aged 26, still a bachelor and living at home with his parents, farmed 573 acres and employed 14 men and 17 boys.

Following the death of Alfred in 1877, Edward Arthur Wedd (familiarily known as Teddy Wedd), left Fowlmere to take over his uncle's farms at Wakering, married Kathleen May, daughter of Dr George Parker May of Maildon in Essex, and moved into Whitehall. He then became the Village Squire and he and his wife were well liked and respected in the village. They played an active part in the affairs of the village. Edward was a member of the Parish Council and, for a part of the time, was Chairman. He also for a time represented Great Wakering on the Rochford Council. Edward Wedd and later his son Aubrey were both Justices of the Peace and were frequently mentioned in contemporary reports of Court proceedings which appeared in the local press. Edward supported the village cricket team and took an active interest in the village bands.

Edward Wedd had his own peculiar ways. It was his custom, at the appropriate time of the year, to carry around a pocketful of walnuts, the small English variety, and when he found a suitable gap in the hedgerows surrounding his fields, he would plant a walnut. In time, they would grow and many of them are standing to this day - some can be seen from the Common Road leading to the old brickfield site at Millhead.

The Wedd family have always been keen to keep alive the maiden names of their ancestors, even to the present day. The following note is of interest, being written by Frank Parker Aylett, who was brought up in Wakering, the son of the village grocer and husband of Ruth Reynolds, whose mother was a Rayner:

'I was given the Christian name of 'Parker' which was my mother's maiden name. The Squire's sons had long before been so treated.

The Squire beamed when I gave him my full name for a reference; the dear old man was obviously flattered by the seeming tribute to his choice of name.'

In the 1881 Census, Edward Wedd is recorded as farming 3000 acres in all and employing 40 workers. This acreage would include the land at Fowl mere. Thomas Rayner senior was Farm Bailiff to Edward Wedd, and it was the latter who built the farmhouse at Home Farm, where Thomas Rayner Junior farmed on his own account. Edward and Kathleen Wedd employed both a cook and a domestic servant.

The Wedds had three children. The eldest was Edward Parker Wallman Wedd MC who, when at Cambridge University, rowed in the annual Cambridge -v- Oxford boat race. He enlisted in the RAMC, was promoted Captain and killed in action on 13 July 1918. His second Christian name came from his great-grandmother's maiden name. The second child was Aubrey Pattisson Wallman Wedd, a Major in the Royal Engineers. He married Charlotte Cook of Aberdeen, daughter of Thomas Cook the founder of the firm of travel agents. After Aubrey's service in India, they took up residence at Little Wakering Hall and he inherited the estate on his father's death in 1925. The third child was a daughter, Muriel Agnis Wallman Wedd. She married the Reverend Oscar Paul Tidman in 1913 and bore three children, the eldest of whom, Mrs Torla Mackarness, has shown great interest in this project.

The estates owned by the Wedd family were sold in 1954, the year after the disastrous floods. It is understood that the sale was necessary in order to meet Estate Duty liability. The

lands, almost in their entirety, were purchased by Mr Bentall. The residence Whitehall itself was demolished in 1971 and a modern housing estate which was built in the grounds has taken the name 'Whitehall Estate'.