

# Basildon Heritage Newsletter...May 2013



In the past we have tended to report on our display events and projects we are working on. We will continue with similar reports but we decided to include articles on the history of the Borough and the odd interesting snippet we might come across in our research. We hope you enjoy our new format.

Education appears to be high on the Basildon Councils list of priorities at the moment with the suggestion of a new college building being built in the Town Centre. So our first historical article is about a man who saw a gap in the education of the mid 1800s.

## **Nathaniel Woodard – Basildon Man**

Puckles Charity School based at St Nicholas church had been educating the poor of Laindon and Basildon since the early 1620s until 1877. Private schools around the country were looking after the wealthy but who was looking after the education of the middle sector of society?

This was the concern of Nathaniel Woodard. Nathaniel was born on the 21<sup>st</sup> March 1811 (St Benedict's Day). 'Labour and obedience' is the motto of Benedictines. It was going to be this motto that helped drive Nathaniel to succeed in establishing a form of education to rival that of the state.

His father was a country gentleman of a small estate, living at the time at Basildon Cottage which was situated where the Basildon New Town Shopping centre now is (near the lifts in town square).

Nathaniel was the ninth of twelve children, so although his father was living the life of a gentleman, the family were relatively poor.

He did not go to school even though Puckles Charity School was only a mile or so away. His mother was a deeply religious women and his religious sense, deep and exacting from very early years, was strengthened and directed by her example and teaching. Therefore from an early age Nathaniel believed that his vocation in life was to take Holy Orders.

We are aware that his mother took him to Laindon Church. We are however not sure whether this was St Nicholas Church, Laindon or Holy Cross, Basildon. With reference to Laindon, we would assume St Nicholas but we have to remember that the

Priest's living up to the 1970s was Laindon-cum Basildon and Holy Cross was a chapel to St Nicholas.

To obtain Holy orders you had to graduate from Oxford or Cambridge but his father could not afford to send him there. He did instead send him to read with Rev. W Stratton, Rector of Boughton, Norfolk where he followed a course of study.

Sometime in early 1833 his fortune changed as he received sufficient funds for a University Career (believed to be from two aunts). He chose Oxford but it was about this time that he also became engaged to be married to Elizabeth Harriet Brill of an Essex family.

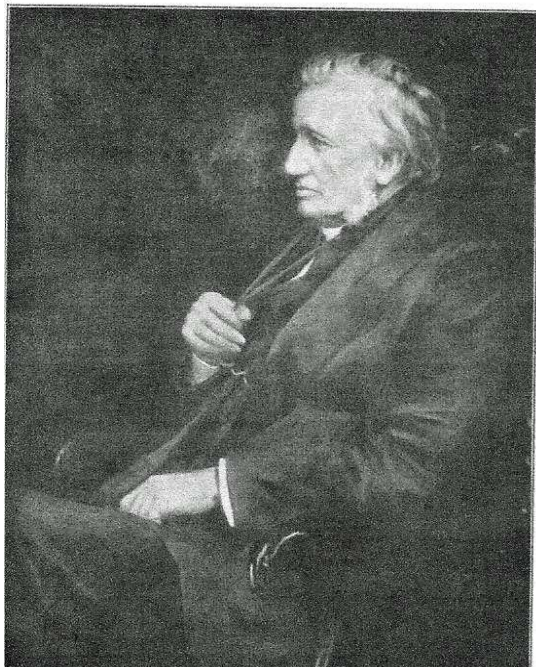
He entered Magdalen Hall in July 1834. Married Elizabeth at Netteswell, Essex on the 24<sup>th</sup> March 1836 and with this change in his family life he found it difficult to study and it was not until 1840 that he took his degree. He was eventually ordained on 6th June 1841 by the Bishop of London, Charles James Blomfield.

His first curacy was at St Bartholomew's, Bethnal Green where he started a school for children of deprived parishioners. He then moved onto St James the Greater, Clapton and then in 1846 obtained curacy at St Mary de Haura Church, New Shoreham.

He immediately opened up a day school in his vicarage and in 1848 he started up St Nicholas School where he took in Boarders. This school eventually became the present day Lancing College.

It was from these beginnings that he started to work full time in promoting educational projects, resigning his curacy in 1850. He went on to establish 11 schools in his life time and the Woodard Corporation now control's the largest group of independent Church Of England Schools in England and Wales (46).

In 1870 Oxford University awarded him the degree of DCL and he was



made Canon of Manchester Cathedral by Gladstone.

Nathaniel died on the 25<sup>th</sup> April 1891 and his tomb is in the Chapel of Lancing College. On the 24<sup>th</sup> November 2011 at Westminster Abbey a National Service of Thanksgiving was held to celebrate the 200 years anniversary of his birth.

We are currently talking to one of Nathaniel's descendents and we hope we might find out more of his early life in Basildon.

Would it not be fitting for the Basildon Council to honour one of its sons with a plaque in the town centre?

## Snippet



The Barge Inn, Vange.

The Barge Inn was built originally as a private house along the main route between London and Southend. By the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century it had become an inn and had the sign 'The Man with Seven Wives'. This was not a reference to the number of times he had married. His name was Wife and the sign was referring to the number of members of his family – *Jessie Payne, Basildon a pictorial history.*

## Events

The following events have been held so far this year:-

- Displays in Wickford and Vange Library
- Talk given to the Thurrock History Society on Plotlands
- Talk given to Little Burstead Parish Council meeting on Plotlands & Little Burstead
- Talk given to Stanford Le Hope Ladies Club on Plotlands
- Display and talk at St Chads, Vange on the 14<sup>th</sup> April on Plotlands
- Display at Wat Tyler on the 21<sup>st</sup> April – Pitsea in old photographs
- Display at Westley Heights and short talk on the history of Langdon Hills 21<sup>st</sup> April.

### Coming Events currently booked.

- 29<sup>th</sup> June -Display at Great Burstead Church Fete – Photo's of Billericay and South Green.
- 14/15<sup>th</sup> September -Display at Barleylands County Show

- 14<sup>th</sup>/15<sup>th</sup> September - Display at All Saints Church Vange
- 21<sup>st</sup>/22<sup>nd</sup> September – Display St Gabriel’s , Pitsea – 50 years anniversary
- 7<sup>th</sup> October -Talk at the Thurrock Masonic Fellowship (Ladies section) on Plotlands.
- 12<sup>th</sup> October – Wickford History Day (working with Wickford Community Archive)
- 13<sup>th</sup> October Talk to Wickford Breatheasy. – A walk around Wickford
- 19<sup>th</sup> October – History of Wickford Community Centre
- 25<sup>th</sup> October -Talk to the Women’s World Group on Plotlands
- Nov-Dec – Wat Tyler Green Centre – Basildon Borough at War

### **Roll of Honour Project**

Our Roll of Honour Project is nearing completion in respect of the First World War. However we are still looking for information in respect of the following names. If you know of anybody who might have any relevant information regarding these hero’s please do not hesitate to contact us.

Thomas Smith	Bedfordshire Regiment	Dunton
G Faux	Royal Horse Artillery	Langdon Hills
John Andrew		Laindon
W.J.Branch		Laindon
Arthur Jones		Laindon
James John Kerby		Laindon
S Smith		Laindon
A Stuart		Laindon
Tom Derrick		Vange
F B Love		Nevendon
Harry Masters		Nevendon
Sydney Reginald Thorpe		Nevendon

Wright		
Donald Grey		North Benfleet
Sidney Benjamin Grey		Pitsea
Harold T Tavener		Langdon Hills
Thomas G Laws		Langdon Hills
William H Rodgers		Langdon Hills
Harold C Twyman		Langdon Hills

### **Pitsea Railway Hotel.**

Following our suggestion, we would like to thank those members of Basildon Council who have been instrumental in saving the Sun Dial and Pub sign. It is currently being stored at Wat Tyler awaiting a decision of where they should be displayed.



### **Volunteers Wanted**

We are seriously looking for more volunteers to help with our research, collating and recording the information we gather, helping out on our display days. No experience is necessary other than an interest in local history. We are also looking for somebody with I.T. and photographic experience.

If you would like to join us or find out more about our group please either email us and one of our researchers will contact you or better still why not drop in at the Green Centre, Wat Tyler Park and see what we get up to. Monday and Wednesday 10am to 12.30am. Saturdays 11am to 3.30pm

Web site: - [www.basildonheritage.org.uk](http://www.basildonheritage.org.uk)

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Basildon Borough Heritage Group.

May 2013.

