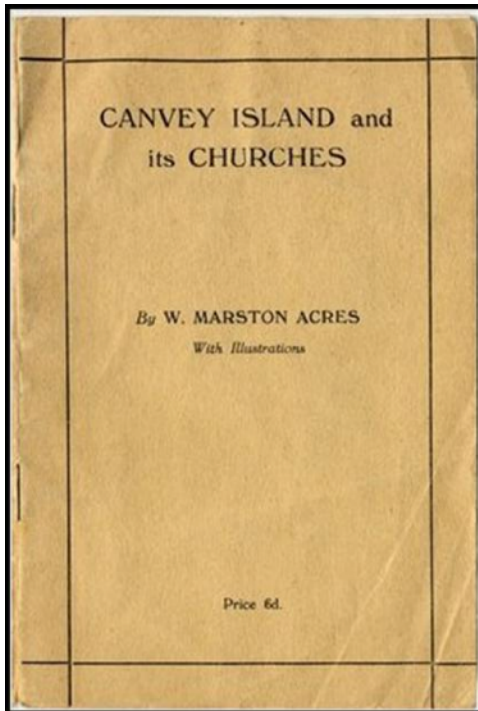


## Canvey Island and its Churches Price 6d

Published in 1947 By W Marston Acres with Illustrations



### Early History of the Island

The Island of Canvey, which Camden identifies with the 'Covenno's Insula' of Ptolemy, was until the 17th century a dreary marshland separated by creeks and waterways into six islands and subject to flooding at high tides; but although unsuited to human habitation the marshes and saltings afforded valuable pasture for sheep, and the grazing rights were, from early times, divided between parishes of South Benfleet, North Benfleet, Bowers Gifford, Pitsea, Vange, Laindon, Hadleigh, Prittlewell and Southchurch. The sheep were kept not so much for their flesh and wool as for their milk, from which cheese was made in sheds known as 'wicks'.

When flooding was threatened the sheep were driven to the centre of the island where the ground level was rather higher than elsewhere, but incursions of the sea frequently occurred without warning and involved the owners in serious losses; it therefore became imperative that something should be done to prevent such disasters. Experiments in drainage were

made by Sir Henry Appleton of South Benfleet, the largest landowner on the island, in the early years of the 17th century, and the Dutch cottage, built in 1618, which still stands, may have housed an engineer from Holland engaged in these experiments.

By a deed of 1622 Sir Henry Appleton and other Canvey landowners granted to Joas Copenberch one-third of any land he might reclaim by building a sea-wall. It is probable that most of the capital for the enterprise was raised by Copenberch in Holland and that he engaged the famous engineer, Cornelius Vermuyden, to carry out the work. The embankment was completed in 1624.

### The Dutch Chapel

After the sea-wall was finished, about two hundred of the Dutch labourers who had been employed on the work remained on Canvey where they found employment in manuring and tilling the soil. On the 12th February, 1628, these men petitioned the King that they might be allowed to hold divine Service in their own language in some nearby church, or in the house they had fitted for the purpose, and on the King's instructions the Bishop of London authorised the Dutch Church in London to appoint a minister to conduct services on Canvey in the Dutch language. In 1631 a small chapel of timber was completed and Cornelius Jacobson was appointed minister.



When Jacobson died, in 1644, much difficulty was experienced in securing a successor, for the stipend was small and the climate unhealthy. Between 1644 and 1649 five ministers served for brief periods; in 1650 the Dutch complained that they had been without a minister for a year, and as England and Holland were at war from 1651 to 1654 the lack could not be made good during that period.

In 1654 the Canvey community chose Johannes Beutacq as their minister, but the Dutch Church in London refused confirmation of the appointment. Thereupon the majority of the islanders refused to contribute towards the maintenance of any other minister than Beutacq, and although the responsible officials of the chapel were not prepared to ignore the London authority, the elders surrendered the keys to avoid a riot when Beutacq's supporters threatened to enter the chapel by force on 7th October, 1655. Beutacq, however, refrained from taking services and Canvey was again without a minister until 1657.

By this time several English families had settled on Canvey, and as their parish churches were inconveniently distant they applied to use the Dutch chapel for their services, but permission was refused on the contention that it would be contrary to the purpose for which the chapel was built if services were held there in any other language than Dutch. The English then held services in a farmhouse, which they invited Beutacq to conduct, and so many of the Dutch were attracted that it became necessary to secure a larger building. A climax was reached on Whit Monday, 1657, when the English assembled outside the Chapel and demanded its use. The Dutch put up a strong resistance, and after an unseemly struggle the English were obliged to retire without accomplishing their purpose. This event became known locally as 'The Battle of Canvey,' but it was a bloodless affair.

Towards the end of 1657 Joannis Lodewyck was appointed minister, but in the following May he left Canvey and no successor was found until 1661. Justinus Smetius, who then became minister, remained longer than any of his predecessors for it was not until 1681 that he decided to resign.

From 1665 to 1667 England was again at war with Holland, and on June 10th, 1667, part of the Dutch fleet anchored at Hole Haven and landed a raiding party on the island. Some houses and barns were burned and a number of sheep carried off, but it is unlikely that the Dutch sailors damaged the chapel used by their compatriots.

After the departure of Smetius services were carried on at the chapel until 1704, but during that period many of the Dutch left the island and settled at places on the mainland, and as they had learnt the English language they were satisfied to attend services in their parish churches. Only a faithful few continued to support the chapel, and after the death of Emilius van Cuilenborgh in 1704 no other minister was appointed and services were discontinued. A few years later, however, the chapel was used for English services, and in 1709 the Reverend Mr Lord was curate-in-charge of the island.

### **The First English Church**

The old Dutch chapel became dilapidated and was rebuilt in 1712, probably on the same site, at the cost of Mr Edgar, a Victualling Officer. A note in the South Benfleet Registers records that the new chapel 'by ye name of St Catherine's Chapel' was consecrated by the Bishop of London on June 11th, 1712'. In this small timber building, which accommodated about eighty people, services were held with more or less regularity until 1745, the nine parishes between which Canvey was divided sharing responsibility for providing a minister. During this period the island was seriously flooded on many occasions, probably from failure to keep the sea-wall in proper repair. There was a violent storm of wind which caused the sea to overflow its banks on February 15th, 1713, and numerous floods occurred between 1720 and 1738, particularly in February, 1736, when water covered the soil to a depth of four feet and many cattle were drowned. Besides causing serious inconvenience to the inhabitants and heavy losses to the landowners these frequent inundations must have been very detrimental to the fabric of the chapel, and in 1745 another re-building became necessary.

On days when services were being conducted at the church a flag was hoisted on the small spire and the shutters were taken down. No services were held during the winter months or

when the weather was considered unsuitable. Marriages of residents on the island were performed in their respective parish churches, and burials usually took place at South Benfleet. It is to be feared that for long periods the building was used only as a convenient repository for smuggled goods.

### **The Second English Church**

Funds for the re-building of the church in 1745 were provided by a benefaction of Daniel Scratton of Prittlewell, supplemented by gifts from local sources. Mr Scratton also provided from the payment of £10 a year to the Vicar of Prittlewell towards the cost of providing services in the church, and a further £10 a year for the minister to preach sermons in the church on twenty occasions in every year. Like its predecessor, the church was constructed of timber with a roof of red tiles, but it was dedicated to St Peter instead of St Katherine.

In 1792 Commissioners were appointed for 'more effectually embanking, draining and otherwise improving the island of Canvey,' the preservation of which was a matter of public interest as its produce was considerable. At that time there were 50 houses on Canvey with a population of about 200. The church accommodation was presumably considered adequate, for no considerable additions were made to the building until 1875, although it was partly rebuilt in 1849. An attempt to beautify the interior was made in 1862, when five stained-glass windows were inserted, and seating was renewed, and a Communion Table and pulpit provided.



**The exterior of St Katherine's 1933**

### **The Present Church**

In 1872 the Reverend Henry Hayes was appointed curate-in-charge of Canvey, and in 1881 when the island was formed into a separate civil and ecclesiastical parish he became Vicar. Mr Hayes soon made plans for enlarging and re-roofing the little church, but as land for extending the site was difficult to obtain it was decided to erect a new church in the old churchyard about 20 feet further back from the road. The porch, five windows, and some of the furniture of the old building were used for the new church, which was consecrated by Bishop Claughton of Rochester on November 9th, 1875, and dedicated to St Katherine.



The chancel retains the tiled floor placed there in 1875, but the wooden flooring of the nave was renewed in 1910 and in the same year the north side of the nave was panelled and the panelling on the south side altered to 'a more ecclesiastical style'. The pulpit and choir-stalls are of black wood with gold-leaf decoration, and the carved finials of the stalls bear gilded emblems. At the west end of the building is a plain octagonal font with a wooden cover.

There are many stained-glass windows, of which five in the east wall of the chapel were brought here from the former building where they had been placed in 1862. A window in the Lady Chapel, in which the characteristics of 14th century glass are imitated, commemorates Mary Ann Norton (d1893) two windows in the south transept have inscriptions beneath them which read 'An offering from the Communicants at the early Celebrations, 1887 to 1890', and 'An offering from the Confirmees of this parish, 1873 to 1887'. On the north side of the nave is a memorial window to the Reverend Henry Hayes, the first Vicar, and further west, one which displays the figure of St Katherine. On the south wall of the nave a window commemorates Jonathan Wood (d1860) and his wife Anne, and the north most window in the west wall records the baptism of John Joseph Walmsley in 1876.



Marble tablet commemorating the men lost in the 1914-18 war. Now hanging in St Nicholas Church.

In essentials, the church of 1875 has remained unaltered until the present time. It is constructed of timber, is cruciform in plan, and consists of a chancel with aisles, transepts, an aisleless nave, a large vestry-room on the north side of the nave, and a small south porch. The north chancel aisle, which was originally used as a vestry, was converted into a Lady Chapel in 1911, while the south chancel aisle, which was seated with chairs in 1875, is now occupied by the organ, brought here from Great Waltham in 1878. The chancel and nave are under one continuous roof but are divided by a wooden screen having tracery of 14th century character and surmounted by a cross. There are also wooden screens between the chancel and its aisles; all the screens are ornamented with coloured designs.

The exterior of the church presents few evidences of age-as, within recent years, the timber walls have been covered with cement and a new roof erected. The open turret, which contains a



bell and is surmounted by a slender spirelet, rises at the intersection of the chancel and the nave. On the spirelet, and all the gables, are iron finial crosses.



St Anne's Church

St Anne's Church. It has now been rebuilt

In 1900 the resident population of Canvey did not exceed 300, but building development at the east end of the island early in the 20th century necessitated the provision of church accommodation in that area, and a site at Leigh Beck having been given by Mr A M Clark in memory of his parents, a Mission Church was built there under the supervision of Mr L Wood of Grays.

On the 5th November, 1910, the church was opened for worship, the Bishop of Barking (Thomas Stevens) performing the ceremony. It was subsequently decided that the building should be dedicated to St Anne.

The church, which is constructed of ferro-concrete, consists of chancel and nave under one continuous roof, and a north aisle with a vestry at its eastern end. The bell, which hangs in a small turret above the western entrance, was placed there in 1911 to commemorate the Coronation of King George V, this fact being recorded on a brass plate affixed to the south wall of the nave. Three painted panels which originally formed the reredos now hang on the west wall, and nearby is a small stone bowl on a wooden stand which serves as a font.

Apart from these windows the church contains but few memorials of which perhaps the most interesting, because the most unusual, is a framed sampler memory of Edward Robinson, boatswain, who was drowned off Gravesend in 1884. A brass on the south wall of the chancel to the Reverend Henry Hayes was erected by his widow, and a marble tablet on the north wall of the nave bears the names of the 19 men from the parish who fell in the War of 1914-8. A stone tablet, erected in 1912 'in glad commemoration of our 200th anniversary,' is to be seen on the south wall of the nave.

In the sanctuary is a simple wooden memorial containing the names of 14 men who gave their lives in the War of 1914-8; on the south side of the chancel are memorials to William Budd, Churchwarden (d1917), and to R J H Monteith, lay reader (d1913); and on the west wall is an

oak-framed tablet commemorating Ebenezer Joseph Mather, founder of the Royal National Mission to Deep-sea Fishermen, who died in 1927.

The population of Canvey, which was only 583 in 1911, had grown to 3,532 twenty years later, and is now (1947) over 9,000. In 1926 the parish was converted into an Urban District with a Council of nine members (raised to twelve in 1939), and in 1931 Canvey was linked to South Benfleet by a bridge across Hadleigh Ray.

The Parish Registers show entries of Baptisms from 1813, of Burials from 1819, and of Marriages from 1861.

All the churches on the island, except St Katherine's are modern buildings.

### **Vicars of Canvey Island**

1881 Henry Hayes  
1901 Watson Haggard  
1909 Joseph Romanus Brown  
1919 Edwin Green  
1927 Reginald Arthur John Chute  
1928 Edward Bonamy Dobree  
1936 Hubert Arthur Stanley Pink  
1938 Allan Whittaker Swallow  
1945 Arthur James Mortimer

## **The History Of Canvey Island**

### **The Island of Cana's People**

Canvey can be traced back to Anglo-Saxon times. Canvey was originally made up of five islands. Canvey is not mentioned in the Domesday Book, however, the coastal marshes of South Essex, were. Here was grazing for some 18,000 sheep. Sheep farming was a thriving industry. The fat-tailed variety was the favourite breed. The ewe's milk was used to make cheese which was very popular in London.

### **The Romans**

A lot of Roman pottery has been found on Canvey. The Romans produced salt here and remainders of these can be found in the 'Red Hills' scattered about the island. It is also thought there was a burial ground at 'Dead Man's Point'.

Recently coins and pottery which may perhaps be from a temple or some residence of a higher class than was thought to be on Canvey has been found. The area near Thorney Bay is thought to have been a port in Roman times. In the past it had been rumoured a mosaic floor had been found somewhere on the island. But as far as I know no one knows the truth of this tale. Perhaps this will yet be uncovered.

### **The Dutch**

A Dutchman, by the name of Julius Sludder is thought to have been responsible for building the Dutch cottage in 1618, by 1622 he had also become the owner of part of Canvey. Joas Croppenburg, a Dutch Haberdasher of Cheapside, financed the reclamation of Canvey. Cornelius Vermuyden, a Dutch Engineer and relative of Croppenburg was called in to oversee the work. Some 300 workmen were brought over from Holland. His name lives on with a lake being named after him. Croppenburg Lake in the Smallgains area not far from the new Canvey Heights, has now all but disappeared but still shows up on plans of the area. Croppenburg Walk is off Harvest Road. There was also a Sluice named after him but as yet I have not identified it.

Dutch names are very prevalent on the island. Cornelius Vermuyden is now the name of one of our local Senior Schools.

### **The Dutch Cottages**

When the Dutch occupied the Island in the 17th century, they left their mark, not only with the dykes and sea walls. Two round Dutch Cottages, still standing today a third blew away in the 19th century. The surviving ones are dated 1618 and 1621. The one built in 1618 in Canvey Road is now a museum. The other is a private dwelling. The three other round cottages on the Island are copies of a much later date.

### **Daniel Defoe**

Canvey Island and the 'fever' was referred to in the writings of Daniel Defoe, in the 18th century. He said that he frequently met with men who had taken a huge number of brides in quick succession. Apparently the men of Canvey took many brides because of a form of malaria that struck their wives soon after the women arrived from the mainland. Some came from the south, Kent. Numbers of wives have been said to range from 14 and 15 to possibly as many as 35. Not many lived for more than a year in their new homes. I have found many references to the fever and the number of wives the men of Canvey professed to have. Some only lasted a few months. There must be some truth to this story!!!!

### **Chapman Lighthouse**

The Chapman lighthouse was demolished in 1957. It first came in to use in 1851, to warn passing boats of the off shore mud flats replacing a lightship that was moored in the area. The lighthouse was made entirely of iron. The 'hexagonal-shaped' living accommodation consisted of a living room, bedroom, kitchen/washroom and storeroom. The lighthouse keeper and his assistant had to use a rowing boat to get to shore. Eventually the lighthouse was in danger of collapsing and was demolished. It was replaced by a single bell buoy that can be found 800 yards off shore.

### **The Village School**

The first village school was built in 1874 near St Katherine's Church. The timber-framed building was closed when Long Road school was built (William Read School). The old school was then used as a Village Hall until it was almost completely gutted by a fire. The hall has since been demolished.

### **The Village aka The Hills**

The village was the main central part of Canvey for many decades. The first church, first school, shops and the first Post Office were all here and very well established in the 1800s. In early records it is sometimes called "The Hills" a name found in the area at Hill Hall Farm and there was also a Hill House in the village. Is this where the name comes from or is it to do with the red-hills made by the Romans or the fact the village is on the highest part of the island?

### **The Village Pump**

In 1889 perhaps one of Henry's greatest achievements was bringing fresh water to the Island. The only water supply the Islanders had access to at the time was from collecting rainwater and from the ditches. Financed by public subscription and 50 guineas from the Corporation of the City of London the parish pump was opened on the 5th December 1889 by the Chairman of the Port Sanitary Committee. There was a permanent committee set up of which Rev Hayes was an ex-officio member along with William Collingridge MD, Abraham Manning and Arthur Mayhew Clark.

The well was sunk some 312 feet through layers of sand and stodgy clay and positioned at what is now the junction of Long Road, Canvey Road and Haven Road. It was built with a thatched roof in a Dutch design. It had an inscription on the trough which read 'Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst'. It became the focal point of the village and stood at the road junction of Long Road and Haven Road, where the Red Cow stood (renamed King Canute in 1953).

The pump was dismantled in 1920s when mains water came to the island but the trough and the thatched roof survived until 1937 when the roads at the junction were widened to accommodate the tankers going to the new oil storage depot. The Red Cow was also demolished and rebuilt as the building that exists today.

### **St Katherine's Church**

From the 17th to the 19th century there have been four churches on the site of St Katherine's in Long Road. The first church was a wooden structure built by the Dutch. The English had to travel off the island to worship. On Whit Monday 1656, the two communities met in conflict. The English demanded the keys to the church. A fight broke out. But the Dutch would not give the English the keys and they remained in possession of the church until it fell into disrepair. It was demolished in 1712. By this time many of the Dutch had returned to Holland.

A new church was built in 1712 by Canvey Islanders, the first English Church and it was called St Catherine's. Another church was built in 1845 called St Peter's. St Katherine's, as we know it today was built in 1875. The spelling differed from the previous St Catherine's. Some of the old church was used in the new building. (The stained glass and old porch.) The church was finally closed in the 1960's. Today it is The Heritage Centre.

### **The Lobster Smack Inn**

The Lobster Smack Inn previously known as the Sluice House and The World's End, is believed to be built in the 17th century although there is a date on the building of 1510. It is locally known as the Lobby.



Ship's Captains and pilots were frequent patrons, to escape the higher prices elsewhere. Smuggling in the area was rife, even with a coastguard station next to the Inn. The Inn was apparently referred to in Charles Dicken's 'Great Expectations'.

The annual fair was also held here, taking place on the 25th June each year. About the same time as our local show is now held. The fair was well established by the 1760's with regular bare-knuckle prize fights in the 1800s. Some bouts lasted nearly 90 rounds.

### **Frederick Hester**

Frederick Hester was an Estate Agent from Prittlewell. The son of a Carpenter born in Fulham, London in 1854, he had a vision of Canvey Island as a holiday resort. He bought up farm properties, at knockdown prices, as the agricultural depression set in. Working with his son he divided them into plots, which they then sold to people to build holiday homes and shops.

Hester built a Tower-bungalow at the entrance to his Famous Winter Gardens with panoramic views of Canvey and the surrounding area. His Winter Gardens was to cover six square miles with the glass conservatories housing exotic plants, birds and fish.

A monorail was installed carrying holidaymakers through the gardens and the main theme of the resort was Dutch, with the workers in Dutch national costumes and many of the older roads given Dutch names. These can be seen today.

He was helped by his son Frederick William Brewster Hester (the FWB Hester on advertising posters) who lived on the island first at 'Sea View' Leigh Beck then at 'St Omar', Winter Gardens until his sudden death in 1911. He is buried in St Katherine's Churchyard.

Hester snr even wanted to have a Venetian canal, with gondolas. Hester's dream was never finished and he was made bankrupt in 1905. But he had made his mark on Canvey.

### **The Crossing**

Before the bridge connecting Canvey to Benfleet was built, the only way for pedestrians to cross to Canvey was by ferry or stepping-stones at low tide. Passengers paid 1d for the trip. For 2d they could take across their bikes.

Animals and large vehicles were driven across the 'gravel hard' at low tide. Some vehicles were abandoned when they were caught unawares by the incoming tide. The bridge was officially opened on 21 May 1931.

The Colvin swing bridge was in use until 1973 when the present bridge replaced it. The last time the swing bridge was opened was in 1968. A second bridge also opened in 1973 with a large demonstration against the Oil Refineries taking advantage of the event to express their anger.

Unfortunately both exits use the same roundabout. Hopefully a third exit will not be too long coming.

### **The Red Cow aka The King Canute**

There has been a Public House or Beer House on or near the site of the King Canute since at least 1867 when Thomas Drawbridge was first noted in the Post Office Directory of that year as a Beer Retailer and Grocer.

The Old Red Cow pub was demolished in 1937 when the roads were widened to accommodate the oil tankers that were now going down Haven Road to the oil storage depot. The new building, the one we know today was built further back from the junction. The old village pump was dismantled.

The Red Cow PH and grounds were taken over by the armed forces as their HQ during the floods of 1953. The area was the highest on the island and did not flood so it was the ideal location for the rescue and repair operations. Because of the pub's importance during the flood it was later renamed 'The King Canute'.

### **The 1920/30s**

The 1920/30s were a very busy time at the Concord/Shell Beach area with the building of the Casino and the Monico in the 30s. The Ozonia Hotel a Temperance Hotel was also built in the late 30s and the Beach House which was built in the 1920s. The Labworth Cafe on the seawall was built in the early 30s and still survives today. With 1,000s of people flocking to the beaches of Canvey there were traffic jams waiting to get on and off the Island, even after the bridge was built in 1931 there were still hold-ups when the bridge was opened to let the laden barges through.

### **Floods of 1953—Memorials**

Canvey Island has been flooded many times. Despite repeated raising of the sea walls the sea keeps winning the fight. In 1888, then again 1897 after a high tide part of Canvey was flooded.

On 1st February 1953 the great storms hit the North sea and much of the east coast of England was flooded. Many lives were lost that night. Canvey suffered the worst with 58 people dead. Survivors, many of whom were on roof tops or huddled in lofts, it was a long cold night. Many were eventually evacuated to the mainland and given temporary dwellings, or stayed with friends or relatives until the enormous task of rebuilding, not only the sea walls, but much of Canvey's infrastructure, was completed.

In the 80's Canvey's Sea Walls were once again raised. Hopefully this time we can sleep safer in our beds. But we are always aware of the powerful forces that could once again visit this Island.

### **Murder on Canvey**

In 1964 bones were found when men were working on the new sewerage plant in Thames Road. It is believed to be the remains of one of two revenue officers who were murdered in the latter part of the 18th century.

### **The Oil Refineries fight**

For several decades Canvey Islanders had to fight to stop refineries being built to the west of the Island. In the 70s one such refinery was half built before it was abandoned. That was the Occidental refinery. What was left was a half built derelict site with tanks and a very high chimney. The site was eventually cleared of its chimney and tanks but roadways and a mile+ long iron jetty are still there. With lots of piles of concrete etc it has become a haven for wildlife. The Occidental site

We already had gas storage on the island. With that and the proposed refineries they were also sinking bore holes to see if there was coal under our feet.

### **The Canvey Island Chimney Disaster**

In the 70s they planned to knock down the chimney from the unfinished oil refinery. The chimney had other ideas.

### **The Olympics**

We have had several entrants in the Olympics over the years. The latest being Dean Macey in 2000 Sydney in the Decathlon. He came 4th.

In 1952 the Prout brothers Roland and Francis competed in the Canoe races in Helsinki.

The year of 2012 saw the Olympics come to the Borough of Castle Point of which Canvey Island is part of. The BMX event taking place in Hadleigh Country Park.

### **Canvey's Coat of Arms**

The motto 'Ex Mare Dei Gratia' means 'From the sea by the Grace of God'

## The Rochford Hundred

by Philip Benton 1867

Note: Before you read the transcription about Canvey Island from the Rochford Hundred you should be aware that Canvey Island at the time this was written (1867) was not a parish in its own right it was divided between North and South Benfleet, Bowers Gifford, Laindon, Pitsea, Vange, Prittlewell, Southchurch, and Hadleigh and run by those parishes. Therefore any mention of parishes within this text is relating to land on Canvey Island not to the parishes on the mainland.



### Norden's Map of Essex 1594

Some have supposed that this Island was undrained until many years after the Romans had evacuated Britain. Be this as it may, at the east point, quantities of pottery of that nation have been found, possibly thrown up by the tide. There are several interior walls now visible, marking different inclosures, stretching from the waterside farm to the eastern point, but it appears to have been very insufficiently drained until Sir Henry Appleton (the future cavalier) and others, then owners of the lands, agreed by deed, dated 9th April, 1622, to give one third of the lands, in fee simple, to Joas Croppenburgh, a Dutchman, in consideration of his sufficiently "inning" and recovering the Island, then usually overflowed at every spring tide, at his own costs and charges. This agreement was by consent, made a decree of the court of Chancery in 1622-3, and these lands at the present day are subject to the repair of the sea walls.

It appears to have suffered occasionally at different periods from the tide breaking through, notwithstanding the labors of the Dutch. According to a memorandum in the register book (about 1715) it suffered very much; and again, in 1735—6, when about half the cattle were drowned, and Morant relates the preservation of a cow and five hogs, then happening to stand on a dunghill, which were carried with it nearly a mile, over a deep creek, and were prevented from drowning, by their support being stopped by a high bank. The highest ground is near the chapel, where stock used to be driven when in danger.

The Island was much improved through the exertions and example of the late Mr. Hilton, of Danbury, which were the means of recovering 10 acres in every hundred from the waste; the gutters and sluices being laid from four to six feet lower than they were seventy years ago. The salubrity of the Island is much improved owing to this, and the Artesian Wells, of which there are about seven, which average about 250 feet in depth, the water from all occasionally flowing over the surface. The water at Charles Asplin's farm, called Brick House, is conveyed in iron pipes to several of the grazing marshes, the flow of water being regulated by stop cocks; in one instance it is conveyed 80 rods, and the system well merits an inspection. Canvey formerly was shunned for its unhealthiness; an old writer tells us of old bailiffs, who being seasoned and acclimatized, had married in some instances from four to six wives. The custom was to select young fresh blooming lasses from the uplands, who soon sickened, and succumbed to the influences of the malaria. Norden speaks of low places about the creeks in the Hundred, which gave him a "moste cruell quarterne feuer," but he adds "The manie and sweete comodities counteruayle the daunger." He tells us this Island is "onlie conuerted to the feeding of ewes, which men milke, and thereof make cheese (suche as it is), and of the curdes of the whey they make butter once in the yeare, Wch serueth the clothier." Camden was also witness of the milking, and cheesemaking, and notices the "little dairy houses, called wickes."

The most ancient possessor of lands here upon record, was Edward Baker, Esq., who in 1543, held under Nicolas Wentworth several marshes. In 1557 Sir Roger Appleton, knight, held lands, and likewise his great grandson, Henry Appleton, Esq., in 1604. In fact, nearly the whole Island, called "Candy" alias Canvey, belonged to the Appletons, together with the feedings, fishing, and water courses surrounding it, ( cum omnibus juribus). Shorman or Sporman marsh belonging to the last named, was formerly the property of one Latham, gentleman. Sir Henry, the encloser, has already been mentioned. The daughters of William Lukyn possessed two salt marshes, held of the honor of Rayleigh, called Langdowne Wyck and Lynward, and paid yearly a quit rent of 2s. and 2d. This was in the reign of Elizabeth.

**"Antletts"** otherwise **"Antleach"** (called **Brick House**) and Sauldry marshes lying in Pitsea and South Bemfleet were owned by John Fell in 1749. One of this family sold the property to Major General Sir James Charles Dalbiac, K.C.B., who resold it to Jonathan Wood. Upon the latter gentleman's death in 1860, it was sold by the trustees under the will, and bought by Charles Asplin, of Tilbury Place. Upon this farm is a marsh call gay marsh, from the prevalence of the *Lathyrus Tuberosus* a plant which it seems impossible to eradicate. It has a flower like the everlasting pea, with a bulb at the root, which is edible, and is said to have been introduced by the Dutch.

**"Southwick Marsh"** otherwise **"Tree Farm,"** in the parish of North Bemfleet, was formerly the property of Col. Wm. Brewse Kersteman; it was purchased by Jonathan Wood, and being sold by the trustees under his will, was bought by H. N. Wood (testator's son).

"Little Brick House," in North Bemfleet and Prittlewell, purchased likewise by Mr. Wood, of the Colonel, was sold by his trustees, and bought by William Kynaston of Gresham Street, London. Col. William Brewse Kersteman, said to have been of Somersetshire, but who resided at one time in Devonshire, and married at Colchester, was a collateral relation of Colonel Kersteraan, of Loftmans. His mother was a Miss Brewse.



### Farms of Canvey OS 1850

"Fartherwicke" and "Chaffletts" were formerly the property of James Holbrook, of Tottenham, and afterwards of his sister, Mrs. Wakelin, of Tottenham. They were long in the Wood family as lessees; the latter for about a century. They belong now to Alfred and Charles Layard. The house and buildings upon Chaffletts were consumed by fire about 80 years ago, during its occupation by the Wood family.

"Russells," and other marsh lands adjoining were purchased by Henry Wood (father of the above-named Jonathan Wood), of Colonel W. Brewse Kersteman.

The "Waterside" farm, part in Hadleigh, and the rest, together with the house, in South Bemfleet, belongs to the Dean and Chapter of St. Pauls : William Hilton, of Danbury, was formerly lessee, and it is now in the tenure of his son, George Hilton of Flemings, in Runwell. Henry Wood occupied it about 60 years ago, and during his tenancy a fire consumed everything but the house. Being uninsured his neighbours subscribed most liberally to mitigate his loss; and, to his honor be it said, he afterwards insisted upon restoration, when fortune again smiled upon him.

"Knights Wick," situated in North Bemfleet and Hadleigh, formerly the property of William Hilton, of Danbury, is now owned by his descendants.

"Monks Wick," is owned by the Dean and Chapter of St. Pauls : George Hilton is lessee. It is situated in South Bemfleet.

**"Small Gains,"** in Hadleigh and Prittlewell, comprises what is called in old deeds "Low Marsh," with the addition of land bought of Richard Harrison. It is owned by Daniel Nash.

**"Sluice" farm,** partly in South Bemfleet, belongs to J. A. Nash, of Berkshire.



**"Hill Hall"** farm in the parish of Laindon, is situated near the chapel. It formerly was Thirlwall's, successor to Powley, rector of Bower's Gifford.

**"Dutch Church"** farm, all grass, in Laindon and North Bemfleet, belongs to Henry Mew.

**"Pantile"** belongs to E. Woodard, of Billericay, and likewise "Kersey," situate in South Bemfleet. He purchased these farms of King's College, Cambridge ; they were formerly parcel of Kersey Priory, at Hadleigh in Suffolk.

**"Kibcaps," "Lovens," "Scar House,"** and **"North Wick,"** belong to the Hilton family.

**"The Sixty Acres Farm"** belongs to Major Spitty.

**"Leigh Beck "** was formerly the property of Henry Comyns Berkeley, of Lincolns-Inn-Fields, of whom it was purchased by Henry Wood of Hadleigh Park, in whose family it continues.

**"Chimnies,"** in Bowers parish, belongs to the family of Hilton.

**"Rack Hall"** alias **"Wreck Hall "** alias **" Southchurch Marsh,"** in the parish of Southchurch, situate at the south-east side of the Island (formerly consisting of 40 acres), is all third-acre land. It was originally purchased by Ralph Robinson, of Horndon (circa 1770), for 100 guineas. This was resold in 1815 at the Bell Inn, Horndon-on-the-Hill, by William Jeffries, to the grandfather of the present proprietor, Daniel Nash, for £1300. The family had made up their minds to let it go for £800, but the company being stimulated by a copious circulation of sherry, and a competition springing up between Nash and Wilson of Rochford Hall, the result was as above stated.

When the purchase money was paid at the Lion Inn, Rayleigh, (then kept by Whitham), to Jeffries and Charles Robinson (now of Horndon), it was deposited in the boots of the recipients, for fear of footpads. The farm took the name of **"Wreck Hall"** from the circumstance of Ralph Robinson purchasing of the underwriters, the wreck of the Ajax (which was driven on shore opposite **"Burgess House"** at South Shoebury), and applying the timbers to the construction of the premises. The Robinson family at that time inhabited Burgess House, whither the present Charles (now in extreme old age) was removed when six weeks old, from Southend in a chest of drawers.

At the south-west corner of the Island is a farm, lying in the parish of Prittlewell, all third-acre land, which was sold by George Robins to Shorter, of Spitalfields for £250. This afterwards became the property of George Bullas, and was sold in 1863 for £2500. There are 96 acres inside the walls, and about 50 acres of saltings. This now belongs to Pitchford.

The road to Canvey Island through South Bemfleet, was originally over the downs, above the school through Suttons, but it was diverted to its present route upon application to the court of quarter session about the year 1830.

The soil of the Island is heavy, but good corn land, and the arable portion is all laid up in beds, from three to four rods in width. The roads, which are excellent, are kept in repair by the different parishes in which they are situated. The office of marsh bailiff has been in the Wellard family for seventy-two years. He acts under the direction of the commissioners.

Some years ago, before the settlement of the tithe question, various law-suits took place in consequence of brown mustard being grown with cereals, such as beans and wheat, the grower claiming the right of rubbing the mustard out of the tithe trave, which was established in his favour, after three trials. Whilst this question was in progress of settlement, the stacks entirely rotted.