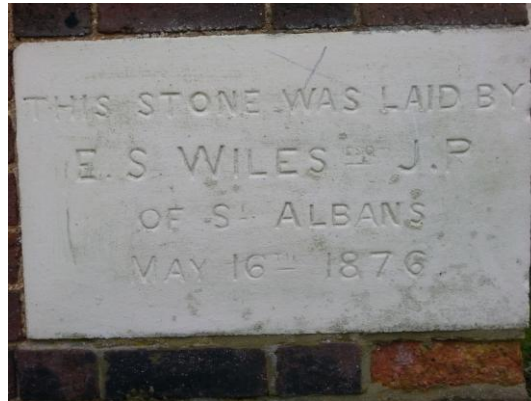


Chapel, church, school and sewage works

This foundation stone can be seen to the right of the door of the Congregational Chapel on Brewhouse Hill. What might be expected to be an uncontroversial event gave rise on this occasion to a lively exchange of letters in the local press.



The following report appeared in the *Herts Advertiser* of 20th May 1876.

WHEATHAMPSTEAD

LAYING THE FOUNDATION STONE

of a

NEW INDEPENDENT CHAPEL

'Mr. Edward Sutton Wiles, of St Alban's laid the foundation stone of a new Independent Chapel in this village on Tuesday afternoon in the presence of a very large concourse of people. The site obtained for the new building, which is intended to accommodate about 300 persons, is in close proximity to the old chapel in Harpenden Road. The causes which have operated to bring about the necessity for a new place of worship of this kind will be found fully explained in the speeches which were made on the occasion. Non-conformity is making very considerable progress, and hence the requirement for a place better adapted to comfort and convenience than the dilapidated, incommodious, and badly ventilated building now extant. On Tuesday the weather proved very favourable for the occasion, and the greatest success attended the ceremony as well as the after proceedings.'

The report continued with summaries of several speeches, of which the last was as follows.

'Mr. Charles Lattimore, who was afterwards called upon to speak, said it might be asked what business he had amongst them that day¹. He answered that it was the interest he took in their cause, and his desire to promote their welfare - (hear, hear). There were two things which he must just shortly notice, for he would not trespass on their time. The first was - Is there any necessity for this building? - (a voice: Yes). That was the question that would strike all rational men. He would answer that - knowing, as he did, the great dearth of spiritual instruction and spiritual knowledge in this parish - (hear, hear, and applause); knowing, as he did, that the great portion of so-called Protestant clergymen put on the habiliments of overt ritualism² - (cheers) - these things had created a necessity for this chapel, which he hoped might be instrumental in disseminating that knowledge which tends to make "wise unto salvation." The next point he came to was as to the means of carrying this out. He was truly grieved to see everyone offering to the extent of his means to contribute to this work - grieved for the necessity of doing so - but he rejoiced to see the spirit which animated them on the occasion. No cause could possibly succeed in which the heart did not participate. He was grieved because all the land round and the very land where that (the parish) church was built and the great portion of this parish were originally given by Edward the Confessor for religious purposes to all future times³, and he was grieved to think that they should be

¹ Charles Higby Lattimore, who was related to the important local family of brewers, lived at Place Farm, now more familiar as Wheathampstead Place. He had a national reputation, having campaigned with Richard Cobden for the repeal of the Corn Laws and also for reform of the law about tenant farmers' right to compensation for improvements they made to the land they rented.

At this time, he was farming 380 acres of land, most of which he held on a 21-year lease that had started in 1866 (as described below), and employing 19 men and five boys. He was therefore a prominent figure both nationally and in the local community. He was also known to be a member of the Church of England rather than a Nonconformist. He had been an Assistant Churchwarden some years earlier and was one of the ten local dignitaries who were the first 'Non-official' managers of the National School when it was set up in its new building in Brewhouse Hill in 1862, along with the incumbent rector of St Helen's, the Reverend Owen Davys. Reverend Davys had been rector since 1859 and was the driving force behind the building of the new school in which he took a very close interest. He was appointed Canon in 1877.

² As the correspondence continues, it becomes apparent that this is a reference to Reverend Davys, who was 'high church', favouring a cathedral style of worship. In his autobiography, Canon Davys wrote that, when the church was reopened in 1866 after restoration, "We obtained choral help from Peterborough Cathedral and St Albans Abbey, with some local musicians, and sang such services as had never been heard in this neighbourhood before ...". The choir's surplices had been borrowed for the occasion. An elderly parishioner, interviewed in the 1970s, recalled that the choir used to sing alternative verses of the psalms from opposite sides of the church. It may be inferred that this style of worship had offended the 'low church' Lattimore.

³ This is a reference to King Edward the Confessor's gift of some 10,000 acres (about 15 square miles) of land around Wheathampstead to the monastery and convent of Westminster in 1060. Most of this land was still owned by the Ecclesiastical Commissioners in 1876 and indeed until after the Second World War.

obliged, by their resources, to club together to get some small part of this land which Edward the Confessor gave for religious purposes some centuries ago, and then to be charged for it at the rate of something like £400 per acre!⁴ If these things were not true they would be questioned by others. The committee had great difficulty in procuring this plot of land - (hear, hear) - so great was the opposition which arose in an independent quarter⁵. If Edward the Confessor could appear before them what would he say of the use that was being made of his property that they should be obliged to give an extravagant price to the Ecclesiastical Commissioners for permission to use a small portion of the land for religious purposes which he gave as a free gift for that end altogether. Although men might devise well, yet the seditious and perversity of men might turn these gifts into curses to others. There was some satisfaction to know that this was a church which was to be based upon the religion of the Bible and the Bible was truth. They must take care therefore that their ministers did not wander from the truths it contained. Great deeds had been accomplished by the Nonconformists of this country. They had fought for the Bible in its integrity when others had run riot; and after the revolution and separation of Church and when dissent occurred in the Church it was to Nonconformity they looked for the integrity of the Bible and the maintenance of the Protestant truths for which their forefathers shed their blood - (cheers). This cause was worthy of their adoption and he hoped none would be insensible to its advantages. He felt they had a worthy minister and asked them to give him all the support they could. He was a Churchman, but he held the principles of the Bible for which his forefathers and progenitors had shed their blood, and he rejoiced to see the teachings of the Bible once more acknowledged in his own native parish - (cheers).¹

Mr Lattimore must have expected, and presumably intended, that his remarks would cause offence to the clergy of St Helen's, and he was not to be disappointed. This letter appeared in the next issue of the *Herts Advertiser* on 27th May.

To the Editor of the Herts Advertiser

Sir,

For the sake of those unacquainted with the village of Wheathampstead I venture to make a few remarks upon a speech which appeared in your valuable paper last week. No sooner had the speaker acknowledged himself an intruder than the object of his intrusion was perceived – an attack upon the church and her clergy. For a man to talk of “dearth of spiritual instruction and knowledge” who neither attends church, chapel, nor Sunday-school is simply absurd, but not more so than that very obtuse phrase – “habiliments of overt ritualism” which closely follows. It is advisable that the speaker, in the next sarcastic remark he may have to make, should be a little more careful about the use of his adjectives. That this parish is not neglected in spiritual matters your readers will be able to judge from the weekly announcements in your columns of our Sunday services. Moreover, after making these remarks upon the church, if he still calls himself a churchman (though we do not) let me remind him of the proverb, “It is an ill bird that fouls its own nest.” One more point I feel

⁴ The land for the new chapel had been bought from the Ecclesiastical Commissioners.

⁵ More research is needed to identify this ‘independent quarter’.

compelled to notice before concluding and that is, that this very person, so proud of his native parish, and so prepared to censure those who had demanded a not very unreasonable price for a plot of land, under the circumstances (which land but for the forbearance of the church could not have been purchased at all) offered the most strenuous opposition to the parish when land was required for the sewerage works, and it was chiefly through his instrumentality that an exorbitant sum was paid for it.

I am, sir, yours truly,
LAY CHURCHMAN.

Wheathampstead
May 23rd

The anonymous writer bases his initial response on the claim that Mr Lattimore does not attend St Helen's Church and is therefore not qualified to comment on the quality or quantity of its services but cannot resist adding to this the accusation that he had claimed an 'exorbitant' (*sic*) sum for land needed for building the new sewerage works.

The background to this accusation must have been familiar to local readers of the *Herts Advertiser*.

In 1873, the northernmost strip of the land that is now known as Meads Dell but was then called 'Painter's Field' was owned by Lord Cowper of Panshanger and leased to Charles Higby Lattimore of Place Farm, the same Mr Lattimore whose speech started the controversy. It was a small part of the total of 260 acres, 3 roods and 38 poles which he had originally leased for 21 years in 1866 from Viscountess Palmerston of Brocket Hall. The land, and therefore the lease, was later acquired by Lord Cowper.

On 5th September 1873, the newly-created Rural Sanitary Authority of St Albans, who had recently taken over the responsibilities of the Guardians of the Poor, had served notice on Lord Cowper that they wished to compulsorily purchase this plot of land, described as being approximately one acre, one rood and 32 perches in size, in order to build a sewerage works. They invited Lord Cowper and Charles Higby Lattimore to state their claims for compensation.

On 23rd September 1873, Lord Cowper claimed £500. On 24th June 1874, Charles Higby Lattimore stated that his lease ran from 29th September 1866 to 29th September 1887 and claimed £150 in compensation for the loss of the last 13 years of this lease.

Lord Cowper appointed Henry Trethewy of Silsoe as his arbitrator; he valued the land at £512.10s.0d. The Rural Sanitary Authority appointed Sampson John Rumball of St Albans, who valued it at £164.7s.6d. They agreed the value of the timber on the land at £25. They had agreed to appoint William James Beadel as umpire in the event of their disagreeing. On 11th December 1874, Beadel ruled that Cowper's compensation should be £307.

Charles Higby Lattimore also appointed Henry Trethewy as his arbitrator, with Sampson Rumball again representing the Rural Sanitary Authority. They agreed to appoint Alfred

Sedgwick as their umpire if they disagreed. They did disagree; Sedgwick awarded Lattimore £155, which must have pleased him since the original documents show that he had originally asked for £150 and Sampson Rumball (as noted in his invoice to the Rural Sanitary Authority) had valued the remainder of the lease at £52.10s.0d. Could this be the basis of the accusation made by the anonymous letter-writer?

Mr Lattimore finally received £168.5s.5d., made up of £155 compensation, £10.7s.2d. interest and £2.18s.3d. rent he had paid while the matter was being settled. He paid his solicitor, Spence and Hawks, £5.6s.8d., which the Rural Sanitary Authority reimbursed. They also paid Lord Cowper's legal expenses of £31.12s. 0d.

But what had prompted Lay Churchman to write his letter, and to remain anonymous? Mr Lattimore thought he knew the answer and wrote the following letter which appeared in the next edition of the *Herts Advertiser* (3rd June 1876).

To the Editor of the Herts Advertiser.

Dear Sirs,

My attention having been called to an anonymous letter in your journal of May 27th, containing calumnious statement, and false insinuations, I beg your insertion of my reply thereto in your next publication. I am not in the habit of noticing anonymous aspersions preferring to leave the "moral assassin" who stabs in the dark to feed on the secret pleasure of a degraded mind; but as I find my "Lay Churchman" is a lodger just by, and recently-appointed schoolmaster, of some five months' standing⁶, and bearing the euphonious name of "Algernon Pike," I consider it due to myself to notice this jesuitical letter. Two charges are therein contained. First: that an exorbitant sum was paid for the land required for sewage works *through my opposition*. I reply: This charge is a base calumny: that I did all I could to induce the committee⁷ to stand to their first purchase of East Mead, and offered to assist in the disposal of the surplus land (if any) that the parish might obtain their sewage land for a *trifling sum*. This was defeated by one of the committee, and caused the necessity of taking my land. When they required to take possession of my land I met the committee, with their solicitor, at the Swan Inn - Mr. Harrison, the Government Inspector, being present - when the sum of £100 was offered to me as full compensation for my loss, which was endorsed by Mr. Harrison as a fair offer, and accepted by me, with the express view of saving the parish from all avoidable expenditure, and I concluded there would be an end of the matter so far as I was concerned. Judge then of my surprise upon receiving afterwards repeated letters from Mr. Edwards, offering me various reduced sums of £75 and £80, annexed to certain conditions about payment of rent, &c., upon such lands. I had then no alternative

⁶ Mr Lattimore is making the point that the events surrounding the purchase of the land had taken place between more than a year before Algernon Pike had taken up his post as Master of the school. His knowledge of the controversy must therefore be at second hand.

⁷ It is not clear from the letter or the legal documents which committee is being referred to or who is 'Mr Edwards'. More research is needed.

but to comply with Mr. Edwards' written request, on June 6th. 1874, in which he says, "Lord Cowper is going to arbitration, I wish you would do the same, as it would save the parish much expense." I agreed at once to do so, and the award of that arbitration was made by a referee chosen by the parish arbitrator. Mr. L. N. Edwards has numerous letters from me, all desiring to save the parochial money, and I call upon him to publish them if these statements are disputed; and I also refer any one to Mr. Thomas Blain⁸, one of the committee, as to the calumnious statement, that I was the means of causing an *exorbitant expenditure*. And after serving this parish for many years at the Board of Guardians as chairman, and surveyor of the roads, at a considerable expenditure, I repudiate all such charges with contempt. Secondly; your correspondent insinuates "that I am unable to judge of the dearth of spiritual instructions and knowledge in this place." A residence of five months, as schoolmaster, will hardly qualify him as a religious censor, nor to become my confessor; but I will relate a few circumstances attending the services in this church at sundry times, which, I confess, were unaccompanied with any edification. Previous to the alterations⁹, and during an outing of the present incumbent¹⁰, I remember an assemblage of the parishioners at church, on a Sunday morning, waiting till half-past eleven o'clock for a minister, when the churchwarden, Mr. James Mardall, was compelled to dismiss them with regrets at the occurrence. During another outing in a following year, a substitute arrived on the Saturday, and took up his abode at the rectory. The churchwarden met him on the Sunday morning, and speaking to him about the services, the substitute enquired who he was, and upon being informed, replied in a manner which caused him to fear an outbreak. The service proceeded, and when he came to the Litany the clergyman threw up his arms shouting, "God save the Queen," calling upon the clerk to follow him! The congregation rose, and some left the church; upon which the churchwarden requested me to get the person out of the reading desk as he feared to go near him. I got him to follow me into the vestry, and afterwards to the rectory, where I was obliged to stay with him during the remainder of the service, as well as during the whole afternoon, lest he should return and make another riot in the church. In the evening he appeared with a sword and revolver, and locked himself in a bedroom. The case became serious, and two medical men being called in pronounced him insane. A fly was then procured, and he was sent in charge of a police-constable to Hatfield Station¹¹. But your correspondent says we blow a weekly trumpet now, proclaiming our intended performances on the ensuing Sabbath. True, you are thus imitating the Pharisees of old, only we are not told that they levied black-mail on their assemblies! I have heard the "real presence" proclaimed there, and I confess that I never derived any spiritual edification therefrom. Your correspondent's delicate insinuation about "soiling one's nest," I scarcely understand; but he may remember that Ahab charged Elijah with troubling Israel in his day, and I commend his answer to his serious consideration. In conclusion, are you, Algernon Pike, the anonymous author of that scurrilous letter signed "Lay churchman"? If you are, I call upon you to disprove the facts contained this letter; otherwise I shall consider you a base

⁸ Mr Blain was the farmer of Orchard Farm in Marford.

⁹ This is presumably a reference to the alterations that were made to the church in 1865.

¹⁰ Canon Owen Davys. It is worth noting that Mr Lattimore never names Canon Davys though anyone who read the letter would have known to whom he was referring.

¹¹ This episode definitely calls for more research!

calumniator.

Regretting to occupy so much of your space, I remain, Mr. Editor, faithfully yours,

C. H. LATTIMORE.
Wheathampstead Place,
June 1

Mr Lattimore was right about the identity of 'Lay Churchman', as evidenced by this response that appeared the following week in the *Herts Advertiser*. Algernon Pike had taken up the position of Master of St Helen's School on January 10th 1876.

To the Editor of the Herts Advertiser.

Sir,

So C. H. Lattimore has actually found out that I am "Algernon Pike, schoolmaster in this village"; in virtue of my office I have occasionally to administer chastisement, but I never knew it received amidst such howling as by your writhing correspondent. It does not matter to me as a "lodger," still less to the suffering contributors to an exorbitant rate, how the *spoils* have been divided, since the site of the sewage tanks was changed from the property of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners to the land which C. H. Lattimore calls "my land." He knows, what everyone knows in the parish, that he fought the committee inch by inch, and drove them into heavy legal and arbitration expenses, because he wanted to take a certain piece of land (the "surplus" land of his letter) from "one of the committee." Let your readers judge now whose letter is "jesuitical," and whether I am guilty of a "base calumny." Next, C. H. Lattimore has done good service for the "present incumbent" when he states that only *one* service has been omitted (he does not say how many have been added) in seventeen years, and he also knows perfectly well - what I have had to ascertain from enquiry - that this was in consequence of the clergyman who was engaged for the duty finding his wife having died by his side during the night preceding his engagement, and being so unnerved thereby that he forgot to communicate in time with the churchwardens. I abstain from comment upon "the pleasure of a degraded mind" found in making public the misfortunes of another gentleman, once suffering from temporary insanity brought on also by a terrible domestic bereavement, but now, I hope, after a lapse of some thirteen years, perfectly recovered. The assistance of a second clergyman had, I find, upon that occasion been secured, and the church service, so unexpectedly interrupted, proceeded. It is a noteworthy fact, however, that these misfortunes happened before C. H.

Lattimore took *his* somewhat prolonged "outing" from the church, and when its affairs were under his especial patronage and protection, shown by the fact of his acting as assistant churchwarden. It is more a physician's than a schoolmaster's question whether insanity be infectious? If so, it will account for certain hallucinations in the letter last week, culminating in the delusions that an offertory is "black mail," and that the writer is the "prophet Elijah." How about the "surplus" vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite? His polite insinuation that our church congregations are Pharisees holds good for every religious body which announces its services by bell, notice, or advertisement; evidently, therefore, C. H. Lattimore is "the last of the Sadducees." Happy will it be for the peace and quietness of his "native village" if, after having received "the stabs" of the "moral assassin," there is in his case *no resurrection*. With

regard to "the real *spiritual* presence" (not corporal), it argues this quasi-Churchman's own "great dearth of spiritual knowledge." and I would advise him to rub up his Church Catechism at once.

As C. H. Lattimore thinks he has caught a "Pike," but I mean him to find he has caught a "Tartar," I may add that, having in the first instance no desire to become conspicuous seeing I have only been "five months" in the village, and furthermore, expressing as I do the sentiments of all the "Lay Churchmen" I know in the parish, I need not now be afraid of individualising myself. And now that this will be my last *stripe* upon this discordant "trumpet-blower," I must suggest to him with reference to our "intended performances on the Sabbath" (by which he means, I conclude, our musical services) a further reference to the following passage from Shakespeare's "Merchant of Venice":-

The man that hath no music in himself
Nor is not moved with concord of sweet sounds,
Is fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils;
The motions of his spirit are dull as night
And his affections dark as Erebus:
Let no such man be trusted. - Mark the music.

I am, sir, your euphonious correspondent,

ALGERNON PIKE,

Wheathampstead
June 7th

The fourth and final letter of this exchange appeared in the *Herts Advertiser* of 17th June 1876.

To the Editor of the Herts Advertiser

Sir,

You will not expect me to reply to the mass of "scurrilous fustian" which your correspondent Pike, with the aid of his wire pullers¹², sent you last week. He will now be equally conspicuous for *insolence* and *veracity*. The insinuations therein plainly reveal the "mental calibre" of the wire pullers, as the dangerous chasms in our public roads betray the ruinous effects caused by their blundering sewage policy. But having drawn this sectarian pedagogue from his

¹² Who did Mr Lattimore mean by 'wire pullers', who might today have been called 'string pullers'? He is reinforcing his point that Mr Pike had no first-hand knowledge of the controversy surrounding the sale of the land for the sewage works so someone must have been feeding him the information and encouraging him to write the letters. It may be inferred that Mr Lattimore is, again, referring to Canon Davys, perhaps among others. The next-but-one sentence suggests that he is referring also to the Rural Sanitary Authority, which had taken over the responsibilities of the Guardians of the Poor of which he had at one time been Chair.

obscurity, I purpose to make of him a *negative* example of the evils resulting from the appointment of *denominational* schoolmasters to be paid out of the public taxes, and left under the influence and direction of crafty and designing Churchmen¹³ – a position described by the poet –

*Screened by such means, here scandal wets her quill,
Here slander shoots unseen when'er she will;
Here fraud and falsehood labour to deceive,
And folly aids them both, impatient to believe.*

I beg, therefore, to call the attention of the Nonconformists of this county (who, I believe, pay taxes as well as Churchmen) to this growing abuse, and which the specious bill lately brought before Parliament by Lord Sandon¹⁴ is adapted to extend, and to enforce provisions which will prove unpalatable to them, and are at length beginning to be understood by the people. At an important meeting at the Westminster Palace Hotel to consider the new Government Education Bill, on Monday last, Sir H.Havelock, M.P., in speaking of the effects of the Bill, is reported as follows:- "Under this Bill the rectors of a rural parish would be at once judge, jury, and witness, and if such a measure were carried they might say 'Good-bye' to religious equality – (cheers). With an innocent appearance, it was one of the most insidious measures ever placed before the country – (hear)." "Mr H.Richard, M.P., expressed his bitter regret in being compelled to fight that battle because of the constant efforts of so-called statesmen to convert the sacred cause of national education into an instrument of sectarian aggrandisement – (cheers)." I trust the Nonconformists will duly consider the effect of the new Bill, which will tend to establish numerous "Pikes" in all districts, the result of which they will readily comprehend.

I remain, sir, faithfully yours,

C.H.LATTIMORE
Wheathampstead Place

¹³ This can only be a reference to Canon Davys. The falling-out between these erstwhile colleagues was surely now complete.

¹⁴ This is a reference to what became the 1876 Elementary Education Act (Sandon's Act). This placed a duty on parents to ensure that their children received elementary instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic. In most cases, this amounted to making school attendance compulsory. The Act created school attendance committees, which could compel attendance, for districts where there were no school boards, and the Poor Law Guardians were given permission to help with the payment of school fees. An implication of this was that the children of Nonconformists would have to attend a Church of England school, something which clearly enraged Charles Higby Lattimore, despite himself being a member of the Church of England. The St Helen's School logbooks at the end of the nineteenth century have several references to the question of whether Nonconformist children should be required to attend Religious Instruction at this Church of England school.

June 15th.

At this point, the editor of the *Herts Advertiser* decided that enough was enough.

[This correspondence must now cease. – Ed. H.A.]

Appendix One

What more do we know about Algernon Pike?

The 1871 census shows that Algernon Pike, aged 16, was a pupil teacher living at home with his father Christopher, a tailor aged 48, mother Ann aged 49, and two brothers, Henry (12) and James (9) in Harewood, Yorkshire.

His arrival in Wheathampstead is recorded in the St Helen's School logbook on January 10th 1876: "Algernon Pike from St John's College Battersea – Master". He was aged just 21.

On September 30th 1876, the rector, Canon Owen Davys, wrote a summary of the Inspector's annual report. This included that "This is Mr Pike's first school" and that he was "Algernon Pike, Teacher certificated in 2nd Class (1st division)" (ie not trained).

The next summary, dated September 30th 1877 again records that the Master was "Algernon Pike Teacher certificated in 2nd Class (1st division)". However, the logbook entry for January 7th 1878 states that Mr Frederick Loy (*sic?*) is Master, though there is no record of Mr Pike leaving.¹⁵

Mr Pike had taken an active part in the life of St Helen's Church, particularly in its music, as shown by this report in the *Herts Advertiser* of 22nd April 1876, less than four months after his appointment and just a month before the exchange of letters. It was perhaps his first major public event in the village and, given Canon Davys' love of music, must have helped to ingratiate him.

WHEATHAMPSTEAD CHURCH CHOIR CONCERT

The members of the choir of St. Helen's church gave a very attractive and miscellaneous concert of sacred and secular music in the Schoolroom in this village on Wednesday evening. The labour and trouble of organising and carrying out the whole thing devolved upon **Mr. Algernon Pike**, whose self-sacrifice was very amply

¹⁵ Mr Loy's two years as Master were unsuccessful. Following two unsatisfactory annual reports by the Inspector and the withholding of his Certificate, he had gone by 5th January 1880 when Chas Edward Tolley took over as Master.

remunerated by the success with which his efforts were attended. There was a large and appreciative audience, which included the Rev. O. W. Davys, Mrs. Davys and family, the Rev. Mr. Curtis and Mrs. Curtis, Mr. G. R. Robbins and Mrs. Robbins, Mr. Noel Fenwick, the Misses Fenwick and many others. A judicious selection from Judas Maccabaeus comprised the first part of the programme, which opened with a capital execution of the overture "Largo." This was succeeded by the chorus, "O, Father, whose Almighty power," the rendering of which was an indication of the good training which the choir had undergone. Mr. F. A. Batchelor sang the recitative and air, "I feel the Deity within." and "Arm, arm, ye brave" in a very appreciable manner, and the violoncello obligato by Mr. J. Tong (Codicote) was very creditable as far as it went. "We come in bright array" (chorus) was nicely sung, and the trio and chorus, "Disdainful of danger," which followed, was listened to with wrapt attention, and at the close the performers were accorded a demonstrative round of applause. A flattering ovation was given also to **Mr. Pike** for his rendering of the recitative and air, "Sound an Alarm." Mr Wynn's cornet obligato was very spiritedly played and was most effective. The latter remark also applies to the rendering of the chorus, "See the Conquering Hero Comes," which received an encore. The second part of the programme was as follows: - Selection from "Norma," (Bellini), instruments; glee, "Hail! smiling morn," (Spofforth), choir; song, "Sweethearts," (Sullivan), **Mr. Algernon Pike**; duet, "Tell me where do fairies dwell," (Glover), choristers - Smith and Green; glee, "Strike the lyre," (Cooke), the choir-men; part song, "The dawn of day" (Reay), the choir; song, "The anchor's weighed" (Braham), Mr. Algernon Pike; gell, "Mynheer Vandunck" (Bishop), the choir-men; Flute solo, "Operatic Airs," Mr. F. A. Batchelor; song, "The stirrup cup" (Pinsuti), Mr. G. Nash; trio, "My sweet Dorabella," Messrs. **Pike**, W. Batchelor, and F. A. Batchelor (Mozart); comic song, "Doctor Quack," Mr. J. Tong; comic, "The enraged Schoolmaster," Messrs. G Nash, W. Batchelor, **Pike**, Gatward, and W. Tong (Elliot). The duet by the choristers, Masters Smith and Green, was creditably sung and deservedly honoured with an encore. "My sweet Dorabella" was enhanced by the manner in which Miss Findlay executed the difficult piano accompaniment. The audience appeared to have been highly gratified with the concert, the music throughout being rendered with excellent time and precision.

A similar report was published in the *Herts Advertiser* on 30th December 1876 (six months after the exchange of letters).

WHEATHAMPSTEAD CHOIR CONCERT

On Thursday, the 27th ult., a concert was give by the Church Choir, in the National school, in this village, and the part music was under the direction of the Rev. O. W. Davys. The programme was a most attractive one, consisting of sacred and secular music; the sacred part consisting of a selection from Mendelssohn's Oratorio "St. Paul." It would be too much to say that this concert was beyond criticism, but for a village concert it was a great success. The first piece performed was the overture "Andante con moto," which, although well played by most of the instruments, was not well received by the audience; the bombardon so effective in the following choruses was a little out of tune in the overture. The chorus, "Now this man," was sung with great precision. Chorister Smith next sang "Jerusalem! thou that killest the prophets"

with great confidence, being greatly assisted by the Rev. A. F. Curtis's masterly playing of the violin. Next came the chorus, "Stone him to death," the staccato parts of which were very effective. The tenor air, "And they stoned him," sung by chorister Green and Messrs. W. Batchelor, **Pike**, and Riley, who did themselves full justice. After which came the tenor solo, "Be thou faithful unto death," which was sung with great taste and feeling by **Mr. Algernon Pike**. "How lovely are the messengers" came next, followed by the grand chorus, "O great is the depth," both of which choruses were well received. The secular part was introduced by the Wheathampstead Handbell Ringers, who made a successful debut by their performances of the "Lap changes." Next came part-song. "The village chorister," followed by song, "To the woods," in which chorister Green was deservedly encored. The Rev. A. F. Curtis next gave a violin solo, a "Rondo" of Mozart's, and it speaks well for the rev. gentleman's splendid rendering of the piece and the musical taste in the village, that an encore was enthusiastically demanded. Next followed **Mr. Pike's** song, "Let me like a soldier fall," which brought out to great advantage his firm tenor voice. The glee, "Foresters sound the cheerful horn," was sung in really good style by the choirmen, and was well received by the audience. The cornet duet (a novelty to the audience) by Messrs. F. A. Batchelor and C. Cain was deservedly applauded. At this part of the programme it was found necessary to insert another song for chorister Green, who rendered "Home, sweet home" in a manner which should have done credit to a cathedral chorister. After this a series of comic songs were given by Messrs. Clarke, Riley, and Tong, who were severally encored. The concert was brought to a close by the singing of Bishop's famous glee, "The fisherman's good night," followed by "God save the Queen." The piano accompaniments in the sacred and part of the secular music were played by Miss Findlay with ability and good taste; and it must be gratifying to those who have got up the concert to find that their efforts were rewarded by a well-satisfied audience and a large increase in the proceeds over those of the concert given last Easter.

The 1881 census states that Mr Pike was by then living in Brant Broughton, near Newark in Lincolnshire, and was a 'Certificated Teacher' aged 26. He lived with his wife Elizabeth, aged 24, their daughter Mary aged 2, son Matthew aged 7 days, his mother-in-law Mary Bell, a widow aged 61, Ann Putterill, nurse aged 68, and Sarah Stevenson, servant, aged 18.

In 1891, aged 36, he is living at School House, Benefield, Northants (near Oundle) with his wife Elizabeth, daughters aged 12, 8, 5 and 1, son aged 10, and servant Elizabeth Barr, 46.

He is still in Benefield in 1901 aged 46, living with his four daughters (22,18,15 and 11) and their servant Jane Leverett (*sic?*) who was 17.

The last census to which we have access, 1911, confirms that Algernon Pike was still living in Benefield, a widower and Head Teacher aged 56. His younger two daughters are still at home, the older of these working as an Assistant Teacher at the Village School.

He died in 1921, aged 61. His death was registered in Oundle, so he may have still been working as Master of Benfield Village School when he died.

Appendix Two

What more do we know about Charles Higby Lattimore?

For a biography of Charles Higby Lattimore, [click here](#).

Sources

- The letters are reproduced from the *Herts Advertiser* of those dates, which are available on microfilm at HALS.
- The facts and figures about the compulsory purchase of land for the sewage works are taken from photocopies of the original documents which were generously supplied by the archivist at Thames Water Authority.
- Canon Owen W. Davys (1912) *A Long Life's Journey, with some I met on the way* Simpkin, Marshall, Hamilton, Kent
- Additional information is taken from census reports.

Patrick McNeill

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