

Partial memories of The Crown pub and Laindon

Author: Unknown
Date Range: Early 1900s

...(text missing)...was when I was eleven years old. I came through the station. Since then I've only been through it, but not into the place. I've been through it in a car; I went through it when my brother and his wife took us down to Hadleigh in Suffolk, because we'd never seen it, and he wanted to go and see it. That must be twenty-five years ago now.

In the early days, by way of entertainment, we used to have a concert now and again. That would be held in the mission rooms, as far as I can remember, down Winding Hill. Just the other side of where Bebington's was, almost opposite the junior school. (Closed since July 1973). Then there was a fete down at the rectory in the summer. Another thing they used to have, every August bank holiday, they used to have a flower show up on the Crown meadow, opposite the pub. Then there was always cricket up there. A lot of people watched. I've been there myself. It'd just be something to go and look at.

The Crown was very popular then I think. The people in Dry Street went to the Crown. You see, they couldn't drink down there at the Red Cow – but they used to. Some of them used to get their beer from there and drink it on the green until there was something said out about it and they had to stop.

I'll tell you one thing: my husband and I, my husband's brother Ted, and his wife – we often used to go down Oxford Street, as they call it Lee Chapel Lane today, go through to Fobbing, and walk round, right round, call at the Vange Bells and have a drink and back up this way. That was Sunday evenings.

And then when the Arterial Road was opened up, I remember, I'd got my two children then – it must have been 1926 or 1927, Tom said 'We'll go down for a walk round to the new road'. Stuck on the side with a pram. He said 'I'm going across for a drink', he said, 'to the Fortune of War, you coming?' I said, 'No I'm not, I'm stopping here'. Oh, there was a lot of traffic up and down there.

Otherwise it had to be the Crown. Usual walk on a Sunday night, up to the Crown and back. And during the first world war, I remember, I'd just got down to the bottom steps to the old church – of course it was before I was married – Granny Burr said to Nelly and me, that was her daughter, Nelly, she said 'Will you go up the Crown and get us some beer?' And we said 'Yes'. And she was just going to take the supper up – she'd got a meat pudding, I well remember that – when just as we got down on the bottom step she heard the barrage going. I forget now where that was. 'Here', she says, 'You come back, you're not going!' She wouldn't let us go. And she was a big built woman, and, do you know what, she used to shake life a leaf. She was terrified.

It was when I saw the Zeppelins I thought my time had come. I was at Aveley at the time, at Uncle Jim's. He was a coal merchant. And I'd just opened the back door – I could hear.....(text missing).....