

Memories of Laindon

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We moved to Giffra, Topsham Road, Laindon in 1940 or 41. We had one general store called Hawkes and a post office called Rogers about five minutes away. The other general store was about ten minutes away, called Drews. Near Drews my cousin and I went fishing in the lily pond. We think it had a spring because even in summer the water did not go down much. I would like to know if it is still there?

We had a well in the garden and the water went through two filters before it got to the well, and every few years my uncle went down the well and cleaned it and put white stuff on the sides. When the well was being cleaned, we used our neighbours. The well was also used as a fridge because it was very cold. The bucket was on a rope. My aunt put in the milk and butter and it was put down the well to keep cold in the summer.

Monday was wash day I think it took nearly all day. When I came home from school for dinner, we had stew or cold meat with bubble and squeak. We had gas for cooking and lights. We walked to school or cycled.

The coal came once a year in a big lorry in the summer when it was dry, because of the ruts and mud. If you ran out of coal you had to carry it about one and a half miles so you made sure you had enough to last!

We had rabbits and chickens and all our fruit and veg were grown in the garden. My aunt and uncle had one third of an acre, he had a hundred and six rose trees and all the other flowers.

When I got older and went to a dance, I used to leave my wellingtons at a poultry farm in Victoria Road called Lawrence. I then put my shoes on there. Mr Lawrence charged the accumulator so you could listen to the radio. Everyone spoke to each other. People built wooden carts to put their shopping in so that they did not have to carry it from the village, or they used old pushchairs. Markhams Dairy came with a pony and trap or sledge in the snow; milk was in churns and ladled out into your jug.

It was a very quiet life, hard at times, but I loved it. When the postman came he put our letters in a box at the end of our garden, to save his legs. Sometimes birds made their nests in it, so my uncle used to watch out for the postman so he did not drop the letters on the mum or baby birds.

The doctor always came if you needed him, even on a Sunday. Even when he walked through the mud and wet he did not moan. If you did not have much money he would say 'pay me next time' and 'don't worry about it'. The retired nurse, had a phone, and if you wanted the doctor you went to her bungalow and she phoned for you. She would come round to see if you were all right. She was gassed in the First World War, she lived in a bungalow. Her brother was on the radio and used to speak about London Zoo.