

## Personal Recollections

One of the earliest things I remember was Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, when all children from Sawbridgeworth & High Wyck met in Pishiobury Park for sports & tea, & were presented with enamel mugs, the Queen's head in colour stamped on.

(Two uncles came over from Canada & received invitations to Buckingham Palace Garden Party, one unfortunately had an accident & broke his arm, so couldn't accept, but the other went with his French Canadian wife, & were naturally thrilled, as were all to hear about the Party.)

Similar mugs were given when King Edward VII was crowned, & china ones for King George & Queen Mary.

In addition to the Bakery & Post Office, where one could also buy sweets etc, there were two tiny shops, the owner of one was also a 'Rag & Bone' man. He died leaving quite a lot of money, as well as property.

Representatives from Grocery shops in Sawbridgeworth & Bishop's Stortford came round to take orders & the goods were delivered before the end of the week. A fishmonger also came once a week, fresh herrings were never more than 1<sup>d</sup> each, often cheaper.

At my home we kept chickens & sold eggs at 1 each or 16 for 1/-, Birds plucked, drawn & ready for table were 2/6, & some weighing 6 or 7 lbs would be 3/6 each.

Having a very large garden, surplus fruit & vegetables my father sold - small fruit such as currants, gooseberries etc, at 2 quart. bundles of about 3 or more lbs. in weight at 2 bundle, Cooking Apples, plums etc 1/- peck. Cox's Orange 10/- bushel.

One of my brothers kept bees, & sold honey 9 lbs. & 1/- sections.

When I was a child there was strict discipline in the schools, & the cane frequently used once the father of a boy punished in this way, came to the school & fought with the master, counter charges were brought to court, but dismissed, another time a boy was made to stand on a form & fainted, some of us had to write 100 words during play time, I found a way of concocting one from another, so didn't lose much play.

There were no buses, so to travel anywhere we had to walk to either Sawbridgeworth or Harlow station for tractors, it was possible to hire a pony trap, but that meant walking 1/2 mile the previous day to order, sometimes for a treat we walked to Bishop's Stortford 6 miles, had lunch in a Temperance Hotel, did some shopping then back by train to Sawbridgeworth & walk home from there.

One Red Letter day was the School Treat at The Vicarage, where we had games & tea, 3 2 + 1 were given to winners in the sports. Once I was on the winning side in a Tag of War, & we each received 2 pence, but I happened to strain myself & the Doctors fee was 8/-.

Another special day was to go to Standon in wagons loaned by Mr. Rivers for the annual Church Choir Festival where 12 to 16 East Herts choirs met for the Festival.

There was a strong Mothers Union here also Girls Friendly Society, I joined the latter as a candidate, then full member, & eventually an associate, in connection with this we had a good stool ball team, & visited neighbouring places for matches, later we formed a mixed hockey, also tennis clubs, playing either at the Grange or Manor of Groves, there were also football & cricket clubs.

I belonged to a Variety Group, & used to give entertainments all round about even as far as Broxbourne, what fun we had crowding into small cars, which often stalled, & we would get out & push till the road sloped down, this at about 11.30 pm on dark nights & poor car lamps. At this time I smoked my first - & last cigarette.

There was little chance of children being able to obtain further education, other than the elementary, unless they went to a Boarding School, a few managed to get a place in Hadow College which was within cycling distance. It speaks well for the teaching in High Wyke that several later on got quite important jobs, one had got his against an Oxford M.A. he was my eldest brother, the next in age was a chartered accountant in Canada.

High Wyke did its bit during the various wars. I was killed in the Boer war, nearly 100 served during the 1914-1918. & 28 lives lost, plus 4 closely connected with the village, ours was the first Memorial Cross in Hertfordshire, & paid for by Mr. Boston. In 1939-1945 over 100 men & women served, casualties 5 killed, one in the village by bomb. During the latter war parcels or P. orders were sent each month to all serving abroad or at home, & gifts of £5 presented to each member when they returned, the cost all being met by the efforts of High Wyke & Alden Green people.

I had a lot to do with the Comforts Fund & Welcome Home schemes, & dealt with many different ~~characters~~ characters, maybe they were good soldiers but morals not so good! - one tried to commit bigamy, another tried to get extra cash by pretending he hadn't received the monthly gift - we were able to prove he had - then just after the war he was jailed for a year, for theft, - he had also deserted his wife & two children!

When St James Church was first built my grandfather used to attend services, & 3 of his sons sang in the choir, they had sung Eucharist at 5.30 am. & used to go to the vicarage for breakfast after. The 1<sup>st</sup> vicar - Mr. Johnson - was very musical, likewise Mr. Nairn who succeeded him, then followed Mr. Raskham, a very good preacher, but tone deaf, so all services requiring the vicar to take a vocal part had to be dropped, but there was a very good choir & many anthems were produced.

The wife of one man who used to drink heavily left him, & he took in a woman off the road to keep house, she would accompany him to the Public house & one night was so drunk she couldn't walk home, so he fetched a wheel barrow, & on reaching the house he opened the door & tipped her off into the room!

Another character was nick named Mr. Noney, after a row with her husband, he killed her cat, she skinned & made it into a pie, telling him it was rabbit! - after he died a daughter came home, but didn't stay long, she said her mother had a tin box under the bed, & every time she moved the tin lid creaked, & she would begin calling - "I'm a coming dear, I won't be long!"