



Demise of Laindon's Fortune-of-War Hotels (pubs)



The Old Fortune of War



The New Fortune of War



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Herbert E Jerram took up residence at the Fortune of War (now known as the Old Fortune of War) in the mid-1920s. This original Fortune of War was situated at the crossroads of Laindon High Road, Dunton Road, Noak Hill, and Wash Road. It was an area known as Laindon Cross.

In 1907, R.A.Beckett in his book “*Romantic Essex*” wrote ‘*Although the house recent years has been rebuilt, it is an old place*’ He also went on to say that when he visited the Fortune of War, the ‘Fortune Festivities were going on in the field opposite, a annual event since time immemorial. The hunt still met at the Fortune of war and if any hounds or horses were not fit to hunt were kept in stables.

We believe the Fortune of War dates back to the middle/late 1700s but the earliest recorded publican we can find is an Edward Miller (1828). In 1841 a Mary Bishop takes over and living at the pub at the time was Henry Hollowbread who in 1845 becomes the Landlord for the next ten years. It was also during his time the local Post Office.

There were a number of publicans over the next fifty years and then in 1910 Mrs Mary Adelaide Wade took over from her deceased husband. Although she was the Landlord it would appear that in 1913, she either employed or leased the Fortune to Sarah Davis.

Sarah had been successfully running two pubs in Poplar, East London – the Earl of Ellesmere and the Lord Raglan but with six children to bring up after the death of her husband she decided to move away from the smoke and bustle of London and look for another in the country.

She found what she was looking for in the well-established Fortune of War at Laindon. Sarah did not only run the Fortune but also served drinks and cooked the meals. During the First World War 14 engineers billeted in the pubs billiard room and she cook for them as well.

The Fortune was one of the first places in Laindon to have gas, but it still had the primitive earth toilets.

One of her children Violet was only nine at the time they moved to the Fortune but she remembered with affection the close-nit community. The village policeman rented one of the nearby cottages for four shillings a week others paid three shillings and six pence.

The blacksmiths was only a few doors away in Dunton Road and Mr Newman the blacksmith sported a long black beard and an ankle-length blacksmith's apron.

Violet also remembered the summer day-trippers who used to swarm down in charabancs on their way to Southend; tucking into her mother's generous ploughman of bread, cheese and onion or delicious ham.

So Violet was surprised when her mother wanted to move on because it was too quiet for her. So, they moved to the Bull at Dagenham IN 1922 but Sarah could not settle so she moved the family back to the area but this time not to a pub but Whelps Farm with livestock, land and stables.

Sarah and Violet never left Laindon; Violet was married at St Nicholas Church in 1926.

We know that Frederick Tubb took over as Landlord of the Fortune in 1917; We assume Sarah continued to run the pub as before until she left for Dagenham.



The Fortune of War closed in 1928 when the New Fortune of War pub opened on north side of the A127 by the Junction with Laindon High Road. The builder being none other than Herbert Jerram. It became known as New Old Fortune of War. The old pub continued as a café for a short time then a printing company took it over now the business is Alloy Wheels and Tyres, but it at least it is still

there.



The New Fortune of War was open by the brewers Ind Coope and it became a regular, famous stopping point for not only Laindon people but also for those on the way back and forth to Southend-on-Sea. The A127 was built in 1926 and duelled in the early 1930s. The roundabout became known as the Fortune of War roundabout.

In 1983 the owners changed its name to the 'Hustlers' this did not please the locals and in 1985 one of its bars was named the 'Fortune' but by 1996 the pub's name reverted back to the Fortune of War. Then in its final years before its owners Mitchells and Butlers closed it for business in 2003 it became known as the Fortune. However, locals still referred to it as the New Fortune of War.

A housing scheme developed by Barratt Homes is now in its place known as Saxon Walk.

It is always of interest to know where the names of various places etc get their names from; Well back to Beckett he tells us the name of Fortune of War probably originated with the celebrated Sir John Hawkwood, who held land in the area. He was the son of a tanner at Sible Hedingham, and apprenticed to a tailor in London. He enlisted in the army of Edward III, and was knighted for his valour at Poitiers. Later, as a military adventurer in Italy, he rendered signal service to the Pope, married a niece of the Duke of Milan, and died at Florence, full of riches and honours in his seventieth year. It is believed that his body was brought back home to Sible Hedingham, and in the church there the canopy of his tomb is still shown.

Back to Herbert Jerram, before he came to Laindon, he had been elected a member of the East Ham Town Council, for the Greatfield Ward in 1923. He was Chairman of the Works and Mental Defective Committee and was also on the Maternity and Child Welfare Committee and a member of the East Ham Unemployment Advisory Committee.

He was an ardent traveller, and had visited almost every part of the globe. In his young days he was a member of the Militia, which afterwards became the Territorials. On the outbreak of the First World War, he volunteered for service but was initially refused. He re-applied at a later date, enlisting as a private in the Essex Regiment and later gaining a commission.



It also appears he was a useful cricketer, a fine bowler, and it is understood he played for Essex against most of the English and Scottish Counties, unfortunately we have not been able to confirm this.

He became one of the ten founder members of the Laindon Lodge. The conception of the Lodge took place in the Laindon Hotel on 1st February 1930. He was also the Lodge's first treasurer. His son W. J. Jerram was the first to be initiated in December 1930.

There is no doubt that during his time he was among the distinguished residents of Laindon.



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