

# Laindon Hall

## (Legenduna Manor)



## Laindon Hall

The farm or should we say Manor House was one of the Manors of Laindon and the Lords of the Manor were the Bishops of London but the Hall its self was occupied by tenant farmers.

The house was believed to have been built during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it has been suggested during the period of the War of Roses (1455-1485) and stood on the same site of the original manot house. It stood to the East of St Nicholas Church. It was a very picturesque weather boarded building. It had carved and moulded pendants at the lower end of the gables, and carved and moulded tie beams dating from the Elizabeth period. At one time the upper story of the south wing projected on the east front.



*Laindon Hall with the church in the back ground*

Inside, moulded ceiling beams and in some rooms the original timber framed partitions could be seen with plastered spaces between the framing. There were two huge chimneys and an open fireplace in the kitchen. (The kitchen was altered to suit modern requirements). What was particularly special and had survived centuries was a lovely Elizabethan oak staircase.



*Staircase 1902*

During the early years of 1900 up to the 1930s it was occupied and the area farmed by Jeremiah Lagden. The Lagden's had had a long pedigree of farming in the Essex around Shenfield. Jeremiah and his wife Harriet were the grandparents of Bert French and his family who currently farm from Watch House and Benson Farm in Wash Road. The graves of Jeremiah and Harriet Emma are at the east end of St Nicholas churchyard, behind the church overlooking the site of Laindon Hall.

Mr and Mrs Lancaster who lived there from the early 1930s until it was sold to the Basildon Corporation in the late 1950s. He did do some farming although most of the estate had been broken up and had become part of the Laindon plotland scene.

Unfortunately, the building was destroyed by fire in 1964 and Basildon and Laindon in particular had another building of considerable historic interest. Just prior to the building going up in smoke and as it stood slowly decaying, the various authorities were

discussing whether it should become a local museum and be part of the Gloucester Park Development.



*Laindon Hall - 1949*

Its heyday as stated appears to have been during the Elizabethan period so it was fitting for it to finish life in the second Elizabethan period.

### **Legenduna Manor**

The first mention we find of Laindon Manor is in the year of 604 when King Aethelbert gives the manor amongst others to Bishop Mellitus to enable him to support the new St Paul's Cathedral in London. The manor was to stay in the hands of various Bishops of London until 1648 when it was taken over by parliament and sold to William and Richard Bennings for a price of £798.

Moving back to the period of the Domesday Book (1086) we find that Laindon consisted of three manors; Legenduna, (Laindon), Wella (Frith Farm), Gobions (The Manor House) – Mr Sloper a local dairyman was the last owner of this property.

The hall was occupied in the late 1500s by James Harris and his family. There were outhouses (Barns) to the south-east of the building and a cottage\* nearby.

On December 30 1593 while James and family slept, John Harding, a labourer, broke into the house and stole a doublet worth 10 shillings., a pair of hose worth 5 shillings and 5 shillings in money. Unfortunately, we have not been able to establish what happen to John Harding.

It appears that James was not very popular with the locals because in 1602 he obstructed and enclosed hedges and fences a lane leading from the highway towards Laidon Church. He also enclosed with hedges and ditches a footpath across his lands towards Laidon Church plus a piece of waste (or common) land near the church. All areas being used by the inhabitants since time in immemorial.

James also owned a wood called Church Wood. William Rame in 1601/2 broke into it and cut down and carried away ten oak trees, twenty ash (ashen) trees and six willows (sales) worth 100 shillings. Again, we are not sure what happen to him.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century James and Elizabeth Braid lived at the Hall. Elizabeth died there in childbirth in December 1784, aged 30-years-old.

In July 1901 saw the formation of the Laidon Hall Estate, which included the 400 acres of Laidon Hall Farm.





Laindon Hall Barns

**\*The Cottage** – The Walker family (George, Annie and four children) moved from Ilford to a new bungalow built in Church Road, Laindon in 1928. Unfortunately, they found they could not afford the rent so they moved to Bluehouse Cottage on the Bluehouse Farm estate, Laindon. These premises also proved to be too expensive so they moved yet again, this time to the Laindon Hall Cottages. Rent being paid to the Laindon Hall farmer, Mr Lancaster.

It was a long four room cottage of wood situated between Laindon Hall Farm and the Church. The front faced east towards the hall, with the vegetable garden in front where Mr Walker grew, potatoes, carrots onions etc, there was also an elderberry bush from which Mrs Walker made wine.

Chickens were kept in the back garden which faced the church. The family also had a pet fox terrier, which on one occasion killed one of the farmer's chickens. They bought the chicken.

Lighting was by candles and oil lamps, heating from open fire and an oil stove to boil the kettle on. Water was collected several times a day from a stand-pipe in the farm yard. Toilet facilities the same as at Bluehouse cottage – bucket and chuck it, with newspaper tied with string as toilet paper.

The rooms at each end of the cottage were the bedrooms. Mr and Mrs Walker in one and the four children in the other, sleeping in a double bed – head to toe. The other rooms initially were the kitchen, living area and scullery. The floors were of shiny black bricks or tiles with a few mats scattered around.

The family would get up early in the mornings and collecting mushrooms from the field opposite the church. Borrowing a sledge during the winter to sledge down the 'Green Hill' (Dove's Hill) into Pound Lane. Watching regiments of soldiers living in tents in the mushroom field going through manoeuvres, playing football and messing about with search lights. The soldiers would often walk over the hill to general stores in Church Road to buy cigarettes and sweets.



After approximately five years the family moved again to Gants Hill. We are not sure when the cottages disappeared other than for a short time afterwards a local Rovers Scout Group used them as their headquarters.

## **Census**

**1841** – Thomas Marshall – Labourer

**1851** – John Barnard – Ag. Labourer

**1861** – Thomas Bright – Farm Bailiff

**1871** – Thomas Bright – Farm Bailiff

**1881** – ?

**1891** – Thomas Spooner – Farm Baliff

**1901** – Thomas Spooner – Ag. Labourer

**1911** – Jeremiah Richard Lagden – Farmer

**1921** – Jeremiah Richard Lagden - Farmer

Ken Porter

Basildon Borough Heritage Society

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