



MELFORD MEMORIES

Dorothy Theabold – [30.3.2023]

My name is Dorothy Theabold, I was born on 17th December 1926, and have lived in Long Melford all my life. How I got my name given to me by my mum, is because she was in service and had two friends. Dolly and Nelly, after whom I was named. I married a Melford man. My father and mother were both born in Melford and have lived here all their lives. My dad went to the First World War, and married my mother when he came home in 1919, in London.

I was not born in this house but a house just up the road, near where the Hospice shop is now, and I moved here when I was just three and half. I have lived here ever since and will not move now. We used to have an evacuee posted here in this house during the war who used the top floor of the house.

In Long Melford we were never short of food during the war as mother used to go out to cook dinners for people, taking out two aprons as she went, one was for the washing up and the second was for waiting on the table. She would come home as I remember as a child, after popping into the local shop to buy chocolate biscuits, bananas, and came home with nothing left from the money she earned. On a Friday night she used to make us toffee which was a real treat and I realized I was very lucky.

I went to a school here, at the only school in Melford at the time where boys and girls were educated in separate classrooms. However my children were taught at St. Catherines School situated next to St. Catherines Church in Long Melford.

I remember our next-door neighbour named Mrs. Bett's who had a young daughter, who was terrified of me, why I have no idea, but we were rather like Laurel and Hardy [who were well know comedians at the time]. She was a very slight child, and I was rather on the bucksome side which I guess frightened her.

When I was fourteen, I left school and went to work in Regoe's factory in Sudbury making Uniforms as the war was still on. When this factory closed when the war ended I moved to Riddell's another factory in Sudbury making foundation garments, where I had to try them on, take them home to be washed, then report back after the washing to see how the garments faired!

I met my husband via friends where I worked. My girlfriend here, who had a boyfriend at the time, introduced me to his friend. And we used to go out as a foursome. Then after a while, I married and whilst bringing up my family did not need to go to work.

After I lost my husband in 1969, I realised that I had to go back out to work to earn some extra money to keep us by finding work in a little fruit and veg shop named Blyes in Melford. This was very convenient for me as I had two children at this time aged eight and ten who were old enough to come home on their own from school. Then a position was vacant in Mr Boose' shop where I worked for the next fourteen years, also being where my husband was bought up, and not having to go far from home. I went to Mr Boose' and his father who was a jeweler who sold clocks and watches at

the time. After it closed, I went on to King's on Market Hill Sudbury until I retired. I really had an enjoyable time working here and loved it.

I had a cousin who lived in Colchester at the time who used to come for tea on a Sunday named Jessy Claydon. She kept a shop and used to bring us butter which was in short supply at the time, so this too was a real treat. We had rations to get bread on the high street, we could also queue up for a few cakes at the Bakery.

During the war, the local man who owned the bakery named Mr. Cooley with a nick name of (Jam Puff Cooley) being mentioned in Earnest Ambrose book published in 1972. After the war Mr. Cooley was found out to be a spy for the German's. He lived in the premises above the shop which was searched and it is said that spying equipment was found in his attic. His ploy was to invite service men billeted around here in for tea and a bun. He would then get them chatting and talking together so that he could overhear of the movements of the troops and the amount of service men posted to various camps nearby. Then he would report what he had overheard to the enemy who needed this information.

During this era I used to go to the local camps in Claire etc., where the troops held dances now and again where the younger folk gathered. I would put my hair in curlers, as if I did not do this my hair would be straight by the time I arrived using my push bike to travel to these dances, but we all found time to enjoy the entertainment.