

Archived by Wheathampstead
History Society from the website
compiled by the late Brian Joyce.

Wheathampstead Expatriates Page 1

Some of those who have moved away

Nigel Allerton Peter Curry Eddie Collins Paul & Margaret Camwell

Wendy Pearce (née Moran) Jennifer Buckingham (née Clinch)

Updated 05 February, 2013

From Nigel Allerton

Reading some of the contributions on here certainly brings back some, fond, memories of my childhood in Wheathampstead.

I remember being taught by **Mrs McNally**, I think in my last year of infants school. Junior school, I remember **Mr Hayes** as the HM and **Mr Price** (he always called us by surname and always got mine wrong) and **Mr Parkes**. I don't really remember him smoking in lessons (as someone else does) but I do remember him having a plimsoll or two in his cupboard and wasn't averse to using them - he also had a running shoe with spikes on in the same cupboard. At that age, we didn't necessarily KNOW he wouldn't dare use it!

I was at the junior school (there was only St Helens then) when the Queen Mother came to open the senior school and we all went up to watch - with our little flags to wave!

It is good to see **Paul Langford** posting on here, I was in his tutor group when I was there and, one year, I think we bumped in to him on holiday down in Devon. One comment that has always stuck in my mind by Paul, was when we were supposed to be heating up some water to body temperature - 'I said blood hot not bloody hot' I heard shouted in the room! Who else can I remember? Sorry, Jean I don't really remember you, though I do remember being taught recorder & clarinet by **Vera Brunskill**. I do remember **Jean Elliot** - she organised the first holiday I went on (to Vannes, South Brittany, when I was in the 1st year). Later, when I worked my summer holidays at the **Cory-Wrights**, I used to go over to **Jean Elliot** to eat my lunch. I remember **John Oxley**, PE - probably because he re-set my little finger a few times when it dislocated. Also he played football for St Albans City where I sold programmes at home games - with **Nigel Shadbolt**.

Steve Chandler, if I remember rightly, didn't you have a TR6?

I'm not going to try and list out names of people, I'd be scared I missed someone out. I have met up with **Andy Allen** a few times since leaving school (though not recently - long overdue!). I worked a short time in London and met **Stephen Beadsley** which also led to meeting **Martin Noble** again.

Nigel Allerton

Aug 2010

Hi, my name is **Peter Curry**.

I lived in Wheathampstead from a baby, throughout the Fifties and Sixties, at number 12 Caesars Road with my Mum and Dad and brother and sister. I remember very happy times as a child. Many days spent wandering along the River Lea and Nomansland Common. We also spent many happy days in Devils Dyke, which is at the end of Caesars Road. With one of my mates **Barry Hill** we would travel up to the dumps to spend time rumaging through old cars that had been dumped, many of which would now be worth a fortune.

At about the age of twelve I worked part time at **Locks garage** in Lower Luton Road, the Folly. I was also reminded after reading on your web page from an ex-patriot in New York about Mr Hall, the baker. I used to work at the bakery on a Sunday morning, washing his Austin baker's van and his Ford Zodiac.

I also vividly remember the morning I was on my way to work at Vale garage. As I sped down Conquerer's Hill and turned in Marford road, I was met head on by a Ford Escort van coming in the opposite direction. This resulted in me being sprawled across the front of a bent front panel and bonnet that no longer opened, and me being very sore, but also very lucky not to have been seriously hurt.

I now live in **Australia**, in a town called Healesville, in Victoria. Although it is a very nice part of the world, I will always have a very soft spot for my old home village of Wheathampstead.

Eddie Collins

I, together with my sister Jean, was evacuated to Wheathampstead at the beginning of the war. **Jean** was 5 and 8. I had strict instructions from my mother that we were not to be separated and that Jean's hair, with Shirley Temple curls, was not to be cut. So at the age of eight I had to do battle with the billeting officer. Jean, being the pretty one, was in demand whilst I was an also ran. Anyway, after a false start with a family at Cherry Trees we were billeted with **Mr & Mrs Ward** and son **Clifford** at the **Folly Stores**.

The war does have a number of bad memories but Wheathampstead was never one of them. I continued to visit the place until the 50's then lost contact for something like 30 years, when in a fit of nostalgia, I found old friend **Roland Hunt's** telephone number in our local library. Since then I have been back several times. Last year sadly to attend the funeral of **Ernie Dineen**, brother of **Eileen Butcher**. I know a number of the people I went to school with are no longer with us, and some have moved to other parts, but Roland does keep me informed about some of the others.

I have lived in Lowestoft for about 25 years. First of all running my own general stores, must have been the Folly Stores influence, then working for the local council. Despite being born in London and living in Suffolk, if I have any roots they are in Wheathampstead.

Best Wishes **Eddie Collins**

Update 2007.

Roland and Pauline Hunt moved to **Lowestoft** last year and live not far from me. Unfortunately I now no longer have news from my WW2 haunts. So if there is anyone out there that can oblige both Roland and I would like to hear from them. Roland seems to be settling in, but it will be at least 25 years before he can be considered local.



I attach a couple of photos both taken in the late 40's. A group taken in the **Mellissa Field** (can anyone name them?)



and the prettiest girl in the neighbourhood **Lorna Parsons**. O.K! so maybe I was a touch biased.

Edward Collins

We left Marford Rd in **1984** to live in Calgary, Canada.

We still keep in touch with various Wheathampstead friends and have visited occasionally. There are obvious changes on the High Street - we remember it as a real daily shopping place, for instance Mr Hall's bakery and Simon's butchers and Fine Fare. Good to see the Salad Bowl is still there. It is nice to see Wheathampstead through the 'Net. Please show more photos of the housing areas. Congratulations on the Playgroup in URC Hall still running. I was on the first committee that started it with **Val Parr**,

Regards, **Paul and Margaret Camwell**.

Hi,

My name is **Wendy Pearce (nee Moran)** it was very interesting to visit your site today. I was born In St Albans Hospital and raised at 8 Castle Rise, Lea Valley. I was christened in the old church, records are probably still there, in 1943.

I went to school in Batford Primary, then to Manland Secondary School. I was then employed at **Murphy Chemicals** in the office when I was 15 yrs of age, and used to ride my bike every day there and back, I believe the building has since gone (it was opposite the railway line on the corner). My old school friends still live at Lea Valley, **Jill** (formerly **Long**) opposite the bus stop, and **Janice Wiseman**,

I moved to Luton after my marriage in 1961, and then migrated to Australia in 1968. I raised 5 children, 4 were born in England, 1 born in Australia. We started a very successful business in Sydney in the early 70's. My children are now business people in their own right, apart from one, who now works out of London as a tour Manager for Trafalgar tours, throughout Europe and Russia.

My recollections of Wheathampstead are still very precious to me, I had a part time job at the age of fourteen, in the old bakery selling bread and the most delicious chocolate éclairs and cakes, working for old **Mr and Mrs Hall** who lived to a grand old age. I also attended evening college in St Albans twice a week, and the trusty bike was the mode of transport. I didn't used to get home till around 9-10pm at night, how safe were our roads then, and no-one seemed to bother that it might not have been dangerous. Wouldn't be able to do that today, I remember it was five miles there and 5 miles back, a fairly long ride, especially up and down the hills. The only thing I really learnt that was useful was to use a keyboard, of the old manual typewriter type, with a bib over the keys, so that one couldn't see them. Three shorthand courses were attempted, but I could never get the hang of that, so decided that being a secretary like my sister Pat was out of the question.

I remember the smell of the water at the back of the old mill, it was a strange smell and never did find out why, but it was fascinating as a child to watch the foaming water fall and churn through the little concrete channel. Many a good tadpole or odd fish or two were found in that river, I hope it has not been damaged by pollution, as are so many of our waterways today.

I remember the murder of Ann Noblett in the 60's, who's body was found 3 weeks later in a freezer, to this day I don't know if they ever found the guilty party, but rumours ran rife in those days, as it was

such a small community. My Uncle **Reg Adams** had apparently heard noises late the night of the murder, and was interviewed by the police on many occasions, but obviously could not identify anyone. She came from a prominent farming family and I knew her, so why and by whom would be interesting to find out.

I revisited Wheathampstead and the surrounding areas about 11 years ago, and had some fun in the Old Bull Hotel, and it was good to see that none of the wonderfully historic buildings had changed much.

The King of the Gypsies - **Gypsy Petrolingo** also lived at Lea Valley Estate in Marshalls Way, so we were told as children, true or false was always a question, because we as children couldn't figure out why he lived in a house, why not a travelling caravan, as did all the other gypsies. My memory goes back to the gypsies selling pegs, and telling your fortune, if one didn't buy the pegs they said they would cast a spell on you, heaven forbid!. My mother had a vast collection of pegs, that I would think would last to this day!

Update October 2000

Hi there,

An arts teacher from my old high school (known then as **Manland Secondary Modern School**) now known as **St John Lawes School** in Harpenden, has been in touch with interest. He advises me that they currently have an archivist/historian who is putting together all the **old school records** way back to when it was built in 1939. Apparently all the records and photos are intact, though a very large collection, they are putting together a web site for old school pupils and other interested parties. I was thrilled when I received the email, so I'm looking forward to much more interaction down memory lane. Here's keeping fingers crossed, and thanks again for the chance to start the expats page, it sure is growing.

Kind regards Wendy

Hi,

My name is **Jennifer Buckingham** (nee **Clinch**) and I was thrilled a couple of years ago when my daughter told me she had found a Wheathampstead page on the Internet. Now that it is expanded and has the Expatriates page it is even better. I was born at **Brocket Hall** in Lemsford in 1941 when it was being used as a Maternity hospital. I grew up between Wheathampstead and Ayot St. Lawrence at Bride Hall and lived there until 1955 when we moved to Conquerors Hill. My parents lived there until their deaths in 1980 and 1987. My grandparents name was Hicks and they lived at Leaside Bungalow on the Lower Luton Road from 1917 until the late 70's. I went to school in Old Welwyn and when I left school I worked at a solicitors office in Harpenden for a year then went on to the St. Albans College of Further Education. After finishing my courses I worked in Welwyn Garden City and travelled there on the train when I didn't ride my bike. I have very fond memories of the station with it's creaky, echoing steps and the relief of "just making it" every morning.

I emigrated to the USA in 1961 and have lived all that time in New York State, for the past 33 years in the beautiful Finger Lakes area which is approximately 300 miles from New York City. I married here and have one daughter who, like me, has very happy memories of her yearly visits to grandparents in Wheathampstead, tops being feeding the ducks behind the Mill and "fishing" in the river by the Bull. Like Wendy my childhood memories of home are very precious to me. Riding my bike everywhere from a very early age and long walks around the lanes, across the fields and through the woods. How many parents could let their children do that unaccompanied nowadays? I remember what fun it was picking bluebells and primroses and taking them to school in jam jars, I really miss the English Spring as here it only lasts a day or two, we go directly from Winter to Summer!!! I remember the "polio" years when our parents worried over us so and we were kept away from the River Lea in case we came down with it. One summer in the early 50's I know several local children contracted it but I far as I recollect they all made good recoveries. What excitement when sweets came "off the ration" and we could buy what we wanted at the Paper Shop, I can't remember if they were sold at the Post Office then or not. Also what a treat it was to have an ice cream cornet from the van at Nomansland Common on a Sunday afternoon, no choice, just vanilla or maybe if we were very lucky, a choc ice! How strange and different everything in America seemed to me when I arrived in 1961, bigger, faster, louder and so much more of everything. But now I am very grateful for the childhood I had in Ayot and Wheathampstead, plenty of love, good food and strong values, they stood me in good stead as I entered a new part of my life. I was fortunate to be able to make many trips back to

Wheathampstead over the years while my parents were still alive so I saw the changes a few at a time. To me the biggest change came at the top of the High Street when the **Policeman's** house, **Aulds** bakery and **Place Farm** were all torn down for new buildings, that took a lot of getting used to. Also when the Station was removed it changed the whole feel of the Village for me and probably most of the long time residents too. Although many of the other shops changed in name and the goods that were sold it is still good to see that most of them are still very similar to the way they were in the 40's and 50's. That reminds me of very early memories of **Rowes the Greengrocers** and how they delivered door to door with a horse and cart and also seem to remember milk being delivered by a pony and trap from the farm behind the Church who's name eludes me, that must have been right after the war.

I made a flying visit to the village one afternoon last summer to look for the "mystery" wall and must admit although the location was described to me by Brian what I saw didn't look the same as the photo. Hopefully I will be able to come back in a couple more years and have a better look!

If anybody remembers me I would love to hear from them, if not, writing this has taken me on a trip down memory lane which has been very enjoyable.

Sincerely,
Jennifer