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## Wheathampstead Expatriates Page 4

### Some of those who have moved away

Wendy Hatton, Lesley Emmerson, Ian MacDonald, Nicola Wright

*Updated 01 October, 2015*

My name is **Wendy Hatton**.

My parents, **Geoff & Mary Hatton** moved to Wheathampstead in about **1955** from Yorkshire. I was born there in 1956. Dad worked for **Hawker Siddley**. Mum had been a nurse but was not working for the years we were there. I have an older sister, **Julie**, and younger siblings, **Carole** and **Gary** who were both born in Wheathampstead. In 1960 we went to Australia where Dad worked at **Woomera rocket range**. We returned in **1963** and stayed for 3 years before migrating to live permanently in South Australia in 1966.

My memories of the village are somewhat sketchy but I do recognise some of the streets and buildings from photos on the website. I am pretty sure Dad used to visit the **Cherry Tree** which was close to our home. I remember watching swans on the Lea river and collecting chestnuts for conker fights.

We lived on the **Lower Luton Rd**, Lea Valley. When you walk up the road from the Batford Mill our house was the very first one on the left after the field. We used to walk to **Batford Primary school**.

Mum's best friend was **Millie Miles**. Our first house was on **Manor Rd** and Millie & Roy lived opposite. They would signal each other with a tea towel in the window if they needed anything. They had two sons, **David** and **Colin**. I remember another family nearby, surname Tomkins, who had a son, **Graeme**. I think he was a similar age to me.

It would be nice to have the opportunity to return one day and see how the village has changed.

Regards,  
Wendy Hatton

*added 11th April 2009*

From **Lesley Emmerson**

The **Emmerson Family** used to live at **22 Ceaser Road** and emigrated to **South Africa** in **1964**. Our parents



were **Peter** and **Margaret** (nee **Foulds**). There were six children:

Linda 1952  
Lesley (myself) 1954  
Alan 1956  
Timothy 1960  
Roger 1962  
Clive 1964

The front of the house used to have a hedge, I see now it's gone (Google). Behind the house was a farmers field and once the wheat had been harvested we (the children of the neighborhood) would go and pull up the stubble and have "stubble bomb" fights. Also we collected the hay and made a huge pile at the back of the garden and everyone, adults included, had great fun playing in it. Our last Guy Fawkes was held in the farmer's field with a massive bonfire and all the surrounding neighbors joining us. Next to us, looking from the front, on our left hand side was a **Mrs. Onions**. But was pronounced OwNions. She used to put nets over her strawberries and my sister and I would sneak over the fence to rescue birds caught up in it, and natural have a strawberry or two. She considered "fierce" by us children, but was kind enough to let us watch **Swallows & Amazons** on her **tele**, after we sold our, just before coming here. But the biggest influence of our lives was picking up **Roman pottery** in the farmers field after he had plowed and in **Devil's Dyke**. We LOVED the woods and would spend hours in it. Along Dyke Lane there was a sideward's growing branch in a hedge that we used as a jumping pole and naturally a place in the lane where we had our "castle" and had to beat each other up into to become "king" Conquers Hill, in those days, was naturally very steep, but my sister, who has been back, tell me its just a mere rise. At the bottom was a **shop** where we did shopping for our Mother after school with its bubble gum machine outside.

The women of the neighbourhood would at berry season gather with their baskets and babies in prams and off we would go on this huge adventure, sandwiches, tea and all to gather the berries.

We started school in **Wheathampstead** but for reason unknown, we were sent to **Sandridge**. We would walk along **Ceases Road**, past the pig **sty's**, through the **turnstile** and catch a bus. Our brother, Alan, would have a great reluctance to go with us and our Mother often had to take him in our Mini Bus, Reg **22 ENM**. At the school, was her friend **Margaret**, who was the; lollipop lady, who had her shin batter by the little boy, even the headmaster was not immune from his kicks. But always at home time he was a perfect angel.

**Snow**, is another remembrance, and build "**igloos**" outside on the grass. In fact, stage to say, I live now in one of the few places it something snows in **South Africa** and this reinforces the memory. And of the sledge called **Tiny**, **Alan** pushing me in the fish pond, my pet tortoise that did not survive the winter, the frilly dresses, church and my sister taking change from the collection plate. The village pond with swans, the water race which gave me nightmares for years until I saw a picture of it, the **bakery** where we bought warm Baps. Many memories that soon I hope to revisit soon.

Regards  
Lesley Emmerson

*added 29th Sept 2009*

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From **Lynda Downey** (nee **Emmerson**)

My sister has sent a photo of all of us just before we emigrated to **South Africa**. Here are a few memories of our time in Wheathampstead. By the way I have been back twice once in 1993 and once this year during the lovely snow. The village was so beautiful and white and I had a lovely walk in Devils Dyke. I wish I had never left. I am amazed at the very few changes since **1964**.

I saw somebody mentioned the teacher called **Mr Price**. Mr Price put the fear of God in me one day in school. I put my hand up and asked him if I could have a bit of paper please. He called me to the front of the class and tore off the tiniest bit of paper and gave it to me - he said I was not to ask for a bit of paper but a sheet of paper. I never got over that embarrassment. - Thank you Mr Price.

The fun we had in our Street. We first used to live in **Saxon Road** and then moved to Number **9 Ceasers Road**. We left the UK in November **1964**. The Dad's used to make go carts for us but they had more fun than we did with them. We had Toboggans and used to go into the fields in the snow. We used to have huge amounts of snow years back.

I used to love going to the church for the **Harvest Festivals** and to do the readings in church - also the **Nativity Plays**. I only had one photo of me as an angel but that was lost when I was Hi-jacked at gun point here in South Africa - my Bag with my one and only photo and my car gone forever. My little sister Lesley was a little swiss girl. I used to love the Bell ringers.

I remember the **school play** where my little brother was a golliwog and fell off the stage. I remember my beautiful yellow dress for the **Maypole Dancing**. I remember **Jacks - Two Ball and French Skipping**.

We always played down by the river for hours and feed the **pigs** on a Sunday with left over food. We walked and cycled the lanes regularly. We played in the **hayfields** at the back of the house. I remember the **Baker family** who lived across the road from us and **Monaghan family** two doors up from us. I saw **Marford Stores** is still there but not the old fashioned store it used to be.

We used to love it when the **Rag and bone man** used to come and we used to get goldfish from them. The **Fish and Chip van** and the **greengrocers van** that used to come around. I used to stay up with my Mother when my Dad was on night shift and she used to send me out for Lucky Numbers - I still love chocolate.

My sister **Lesley** and I used to belong to the **Brownies** and we always went to the **evangelist** church so we could get the **plaster of paris** pictures from them. My Uncle was a long distance lorry driver and we used to go up to the north with him to visit our Grandparents. I clearly remember **Bakewell Tarts** from the **Bakery** in the Main Street.

I see that the **water wheel** has gone when we visited this time I wonder what happened to it. That was the life to grow up free to go into the country lanes and have such pure and innocent fun. **Making houses** out of the mown grass. How we used to go and get party frocks from the market in St Albans - all the jelly and cake in those fancy bowls at the parties. I used to love going to the **Youth Club** as well.

We left Wheathampstead to go to a place called **Vanderbijl Park** in **South Africa** we then left to go to **Swaziland** and then to the **Transkei**. My eldest son is back in the UK and lives in York. I hope to come back to the UK one day to retire especially in a very little village somewhere. Both my Parents have passed on. My Mother went back to live in **Colne** up North where she was born and sadly died there in 2005.

On reflection I will probably remember more names after I have typed this after all **I was only 12** when we left. Would be lovely to see more people writing about the village and maybe recognize some more

names.

From **Lynda Downey** (nee Emmerson) *added 4th Oct 2009*

From **Ian MacDonald**

I moved with my parents (**Hugh** (mac) and **Elsie MacDonald** to Wheathampstead from Liverpool in 1952. We were the first occupants of **5 Offas Way**. At that time, there was a big field in the middle, which was later built on, and the bungalows were not there then.

Neighbours I recall were, the **Ansells** next door and the **Mathews** one door up. Further up the hill were the **Fletchers**. In one of the first four houses in Offas Way was a family called **Reid**. I remember the young girl **Pat** who went on to a grammar school in St.Albans. **David** (I cannot recall the surname) lived in the house that ran at the end of my garden and we spent many happy hours playing cricket on the little piece of waste land. Around the corner in Conquers Hill was **Colin Kelvey** and **Susan Spicer**. Susan I met up with a few years ago in Harpenden.

I started school at **St.Helens**, next to the old church. One of your expatriates quoted the buckets catching the rain and the central heating (wood burner in centre of room) which brought back memories. I also recall the **library** opposite the **school**. I recall **Mr Price** and **Mr Thrustle** (who I did communicate with a few years ago as he moved on to a school in St.Albans). I seem to recall a **Mrs Leach** as my first teacher. After about three years I moved across the road to the upper school before moving to **Roundwood Park** school in Harpenden.

I have very happy memories of Wheathampstead. I belonged to the **Congregational Church** and made several theatrical appearances as well as being a member of the **Lifeboys** and **Boys Brigade**. I played football for **Folly Athletic**, reserves normally but did play two games for the first team. A home defeat to Hill End and a very satisfying draw at Wheathampstead whilst I was home on leave.

I certainly remember getting up at 5 am to do a paper round from the village paper shop. Then in **1962** I started working in the shop on Saturdays until I left school in **October 1962** and worked full time until I left the village in January 1963 to join the **RAF**.

Unfortunately I do not have any photographs as I did not get a camera until many years later. I have returned on several occasions. The place has changed but not too much.

Thank you for your time and allowing me to recall happy childhood times.

From **Ian Macdonald**

*added 24 Dec 2011*

From **Nicola Wright**

My late mother, **Hazel Wright**, was a contributor to your website and it gave her many years of pleasure.

I found a video of a car trip from Sandridge through Wheathampstead & it brought a lump to my throat. It brought back many memories of growing up in the village despite leaving in **1967** to come to Australia & never having returned. This led me to the expats site & reading through some of the recent contributions realized I have so many memories of the same places.

I lived on **Lower Luton Rd**, No 123 by the River Lea, where I was born in 1951, until I was 7. My parents then moved to **Necton Rd**, Marford where we lived until the family left for Australia. I went to **St Helens school** both infants & primary then also went to **Roundwood SM** in Harpenden.

It makes the world seem such a small place after all. I don't suppose any one remembers me but I would like to have a chat about those days if anyone else would. My email address is shown below.

Thank you for maintaining an excellent website, will visit again often.

Regards **Nicola Wright**.

*added 20 March 2012*