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# Some Memories of Wheathampstead.

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(Contributed November 2013)

Crying my eyes out on the first day of nursery school at the Mead Hall in Mead Lane because I didn't want to leave my mum.

Being met by my mum at St, Helens infant school with my knickers wrapped up in newspaper. I'd wet them in class and they'd had to be washed. Mrs LeFevre was the class teacher. I also remember Mrs Bailey; I think she was year 3. Her class was the one with the big red sliding door that led into the hall. I remember in her class when the Easter Bunny came and visited. Earlier that day we had made little baskets and decorated them with flowers etc. - after play time in the afternoon we came back to find our baskets filled with colourful sugary eggs. I really believed in that Easter bunny.

Whilst I was at infant school the village doctor was Doctor Parkinson. His surgery was at the bottom of The Hill opposite the junior school. He used to smoke a pipe and I can remember sitting on his lap whilst he did this on various visits.

Graham Dangerfield was the wildlife expert who used to live further up The Hill in a house called "Four Limes". He had some very scary Alsatian dogs that used to protect his grounds. If you walked down the alleyway at the end of Garrard Way you could see them snarling, growling, and barking at you from behind the fence. Mr Dangerfield was a regular on Blue Peter. My uncle Ern (who used to live a couple of doors away from me in Caesars Road) also appeared on Blue Peter with his orange frogs. Yes John Noakes was in the garden of no. 17.

I used to have piano lessons with Miss Wright at Barley Beans, a bungalow in Marford Road. I had my lesson on Saturday morning. I used to sit listening to a girl called Pamela. She was grade 7. I was grade 1. Miss Wright had a wonderful full sized black grand piano. I was always itching to use the loud pedal but was too shy to ask. Miss Wright was an old lady with a humped back, part of one of her fingers was missing and she used to have a small black and white dog called Claude. All of these things took my attention away from the dreary scales that I had to play again and again. I couldn't see the point at the time. I still play the piano today and I understand the importance of scales now.

In the summer at junior school we would go to Kimpton outdoor swimming pool for lessons with Mrs Sparks (I think that was her name). The changing rooms were on either side of the swimming pool. On a windy day the curtains of the changing rooms would blow open. One day this happened and revealed my sister standing naked apart from a pair of red patent shoes. She hated that pool.

Mr Sharp was a teacher at the junior school. He is a hard character to forget. I loved the way he jazzed up the hymns, I thank him for my joy of singing. He was very tall, nearly always wore a grey suit with baggy trousers, black shiny shoes and large black rimmed glasses. I loved his jazzed up version of Holy, Holy, Holy and was very disappointed when I went to senior school and they played a very dreary version.

In Mr Parks class at St. Helens Juniors I used to sit next to Deborah Smith (her Father owned the Village Chemist), I can't remember who sat on my left, sorry. I do remember Carolyn Turpin, Heather Clarke, Heather Milton, Denise Woodland, Alison Throssle and Leslie who used to be able to waggle her ears. On the brainy table sat Jonathan Woodrow and John Beckett amongst others. Nurse Smith (the district nurse) would pay us visits to go through our hair with disinfected lollipop sticks looking for nits, I can't remember if she ever found any.

My sister, Deborah, had a friend called Sally Pomfrett whilst she was in Mr Parks class. Sally moved to Wales and shortly after this our family went to visit. Sadly, on arrival in Wales our family dog Trigger attacked me in the back of our car. This resulted with me having to have stitches to the wounds on my face and Trigger being put down. A sad holiday for us all.

At senior school (Wheathampstead Secondary Modern) in Butterfield Road one of the worse memories is of the towels that were handed to you after showering after games. They were so small. Why we didn't take our own, who knows! Teachers I remember; Mrs Lavin (nee Bond) maths, sexy Mr Taylor - French, Mrs Elliot = domestic science, Mr Barber - English, Mr Corn the art teacher who used to remind me of Toulouse Lautrec and Mrs Bush - music. She used to stand with her legs wide open and her hands behind her back and chest out. Probably a good posture for singing!

Friends at the school included Angela Kennard, Debra Coleman, Heather Clarke, Karen Wilkinson and Heather Milton (note to sister Claire, I have a couple of your horse drawings in an old scrap book. You were a brilliant artist, I think Heather was too. Did you ever do anything with this skill?). The only boys' name I remember at senior school was Julian Stratton and that's probably because I had a secret crush on him.

I can remember getting drunk at an embarrassing age of 13! I had tried to get into the disco at the Youth Club. It was packed and I got sent away. As I was walking home through the High Street I began to feel very ill. I collapsed in the grave yard just behind the lynch gate. I remember calling out "Oh God, somebody help me!" Who should come along but the local Bobby - Nigel Folds. He led me to the phone box and made me phone home. I was rescued by my dear Papa and not a cross word was said as he drove me home with my head out of the window.

My first job when I left school was as a gardener in St. Albans. After this I had various jobs in factories and canteens before leaving home to train as a nurse in Surrey. In 1985 I returned to Wheathampstead and worked for a short while at Ushers the bakers. I loved this job, "Such Fun!" I worked with Lorraine Broadley a brilliant manageress. Our favourite part of the day would be 4.30pm, not because this was nearly closing time, but because, if we were lucky a very handsome man would turn up in his TR7 and come and have tea and cream cakes with us. In the summer we would get an extra treat because he enters the shop in his shorts after having cycled all the way from Hatfield. He would delight us with his beautifully toned brown body. His name was Richard Crocker.

Happy Days.  
Yvonne

(P.S. I was born in 1961 and lived in the village until the age of 19. I returned for a year or so and worked in Ushers the bakers this I mentioned in my story. After moving several times I have settled now in Glastonbury. My sister Deborah lives in a parallel street. Both of my parents are alive and well, and live in Wells. (10 mins. Drive away). I have one uncle who still lives in Wheathampstead in Caesars road. One last thing, in my sisters story she

mentions a family that used to live down by the river near to the Milton's. The family's name was Watts. My sister states that they were Swedish, they were in fact, Austrian. Don't know whether this is worth a mention. )

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