

Walthamstow Memories

Well Hello everyone!

I found this site only the other day and after receiving a reply from Daniel to my initial contact, thought I would write down a few of my own memories from when I lived in Walthamstow.

I was born in Thorpe Combe Hospital apparently, though I have no recollection of that day's events, in June 1960. The eldest of 3 brothers, my family lived initially in a flat at 69 Brookfield Avenue until my youngest brother came along in 1967 when we moved to a house at 15 Evelyn Road.

I attended school at St Mary's Nursery (not far from what was then the Walthamstow Museum), Henry Maynard infants and Junior schools, and then Warwick Junior High. Most of my memories come from the time I was at Warwick (1971 – 1973 'ish) where I can fairly clearly recall teachers like Mr Maxwell (the head) Mr Christopher Ruff? Who may have been deputy head and a thespian to boot! I'm sure I recall going to the Royal Festival Hall on a school trip and seeing him perform. It may have been a panto? I remember well Mr Ford (Art teacher, who I see has contributed to this site!) Mr Block (English teacher and ex-para?) and a Mr Eagle who tried so hard to get me interested in History. Now I wish I'd listened!

I recall some of the kids I was at school with though I can only remember a couple of names from Henry Maynard – Russell Bishop, Alan(?) Kemp and Lee Tomlin. And from Warwick there were Mick Adams, Paul Bartholomews, Barry Gammage (who I briefly got in touch with some years ago, he lived in Rosslyn Road and I think took up with Amanda (or her sister maybe) Tippet who also lived on Evelyn Road), and Bobby Mann.

My strongest memories from school however are of my Metalwork teacher, Mr William Hall. Oh, how I hope he's still around so I can thank him for the part he played in shaping my interests, hobbies and in no small part, my career.

Due to a birth defect resulting in a short hospitalisation in late 1971 (I think!) I was unable to attend P.E classes (yippee!) but instead of sitting in the library, Mr Hall allowed me to go to the metalwork shop where he taught me (amongst other things) how to gas weld, forge aluminium, and where I became pretty competent on a Harrison Lathe (I now own a Harrison Lathe and do MiG and TiG welding!). This went on for the remainder of my time at Warwick and as a result I went on to develop a very unhealthy interest in all things engineering!

Aside from school I have great memories of freezing my parts off at the Whipps Cross Lido (and Larkswood occasionally), staring longingly into the window of a shop that went by the name of 'Job Stocks' over towards Hoe Street? (Have I remembered that correctly?), cycling with my best mate Mick Adams all over the Waltham Forest area (he lived in Higham's Park not far from one of my uncles who lived on the 7th floor of St Nicholas Court. Mick's dad was a copper if I remember correctly).

Other memories include picking plums and eating them walking down Brookfield Avenue in the summer, the little Scammell Scarabs (Google it!) in Hitchman's Dairy, the fish and chip shop on Beaulah road(?). The smell of tarmac that used to emanate from the Glendinning's plant on Shernhall Street. Hammering nails into random bits of wood in the Queen's Road Adventure Playground, roller skating at Pickett's lock with Slade blasting out over the PA!

I also remember getting a ride in the cab of a Mighty Antar that was pulling an enormous load out of the factory that my dad worked at just off the NCR around Edmonton way. It was then the British Oxygen Company and my father was a long-distance lorry driver for them. We were never short of a soda syphon at Christmas!

Happy days indeed!

In 1973, at the tender age of 13, my parents split up and I was taken by mother along with my 2 brothers, to live in Glasgow! But that's a story for another website!

I've thoroughly enjoyed reading the many memories shared here and would love to chat with anyone who may remember me (unlikely!) or some of the places I've mentioned (more probable!)

Keep safe everyone!

Richard Downing.

Walthamstow boy 1960 – 1973.