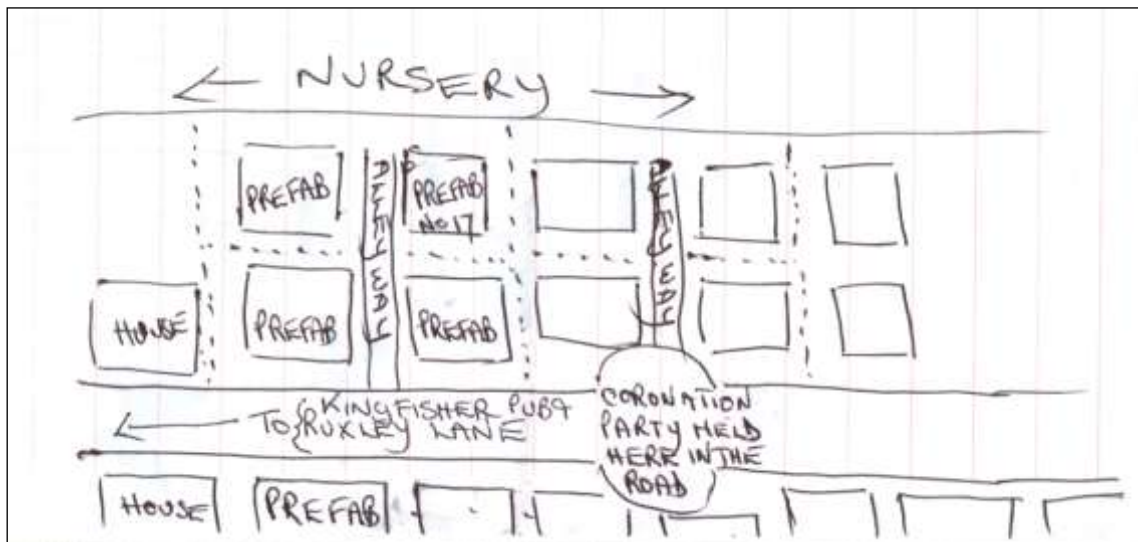


MY MEMORIES OF LIVING IN A PREFAB



It was 1948.

I was only 3 years old when my parents and I moved from Epsom, where we had been living with my grandparents and auntie. We moved to Gatley Avenue, West Ewell, to live in a prefab. I lived there until I married at the age of 22.



On one side of the road where I lived, there were 4 prefabs, 2 on either side of a shared pathway leading to our front gate. Every 4 prefabs along the road on our side had the same shared pathways and on the other side of the road, they were different. They were side by side with their pathways leading from the road to their front door. From our front door the hallway lead to 2 double bedrooms on the left. There was a separate toilet straight down the hallway. The bathroom was on the right, with a bath and basin only. In the hall there was an airing cupboard and also a long tall cupboard, which my mother, being very arty, painted it to make it look like a grandfather clock.

Also on the right by the front door was the living room. The kitchen was accessible from either the living room or the back door. We had no central heating in those days but we did have a lovely little coal fire with doors that you could close if needed. When I was very young, I do remember being mesmerised by the "fairies" up the back of the fire. (They were only bits of soot that lit up really). We had no television initially and my father and I would listen to a programme on the radio called "Journey Into Space". (That was the highlight of our evening). Eventually over time we did get a television. Then it was football that we watched. The kitchen was basic but had a cooker, sink, fridge and cupboards, also enough room to have a



small table for us to eat our breakfast etc. I remember my father sitting on the back doorstep cleaning and nailing new leather studs onto his football boots, so they were ready for his next match as captain of Epsom Football Club. The living room wasn't a bad size. There was room for a 3 piece suite, sideboard, television and a dining room table and chairs, which were well used in those days, as the family would come and visit on Sundays and we would all have Sunday roast around the table. We enjoyed the garden which went all around the prefab. The front garden on one side had grass to sit on in the summer and on the other side, occasionally, my father would grow potatoes to help break up the soil. On the garden at the sides, my mother would grow herbs and all sorts of cottage garden flowers also strawberries. There was a cherry tree as well, which we would always climb up to retrieve the cherries, hopefully before the birds beat us. (That cherry tree was there right up to the end when the prefab's finally were demolished).



On one side of the fence line there was a flower nursery which stretched almost down the length of our road. We were always chatting over the fence with the nursery people. The back garden had a shed to one side and my father grew a lot of varieties of vegetables for us to eat. We also had chickens. (I remember getting attached to a certain chicken and then realising one day it was served up for dinner). We also had two grey rabbits called Smokey and Twinkle but they were my pets and not for eating.

We all settled in to our new home and made good friends with our neighbours. There was a good community spirit. There were lots of children living around and about. Most of us grew up together. We had lots of parties. The parents all helped each other out when needed.

In the 50's there was hardly any traffic in the road and we played in the road on our

bikes. One day I was racing up the road and fell off my bike. Along came a sailor who lived down the other end of the road. He picked me up and carried me back to my home. Not many people would do that now. Everybody looked after each other.

On the day of the Coronation in 1953, a street party was arranged half way down the road and the children were given food and drinks and a biro with a crown on the top as a keepsake. I still have that pen.



In 1954 I started going down some stables which were just off our road and I would help with looking after the horses. We had free rides for helping. Every Sunday a horse and cart was made ready to make the journey to Epsom Downs with all the other horses and riders following. They would head up our road before reaching the main road.

Next to the stables was a junk yard (Hardwick's). Some of the giant cranes from there would pass up our road occasionally. My father didn't have a car to start with but he did have a motorbike and a bicycle. My mother and I had bicycles. My parents would cycle all the way to Epsom everyday to work. Later on my Mother had a bubble car, which was small enough to drive up the pathway to the front garden.



Eventually I left my home of 19 years to start a new life but all the good memories will remain with me forever.

My mother was there for a little while longer until she regretfully had to leave and all the neighbours were split up and moved to different places. It was very sad that an era in the prefabs had ended.



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