

Way Back When

I was born in 1947 on 1 May. My Mum and Dad, Lillian and Leslie Stevens, lived all together with my paternal Nan, Bessie Stevens. Her husband, George, had died of TB in the 1930s. He used to work at one of the mental hospitals.



Linda Stevens 1952

My Mum's family, the Barkers, lived in a small cottage next to The Railway Guard in Church Road - nine of them lived in this two-bedroom abode. Her parents came from Leeds.



Pound Lane School

My first day going to Pound Lane School was a bit frightening, but Mrs. Griffith, my teacher, soon put me at ease. She was a lovely lady. Janet Smith became my new

friend that day. She lived in The Greenway, Wells Estate. We still keep in touch. From Infants to Juniors, I remember Miss Doran who used to play bowls at Court Rec., Miss Spencer and Miss Polly whose sister taught at Linton's Lane Secondary.

My favourite pastimes were skipping, yo-yo, hula hoops and scrap swapping (these were coloured images of fairies, angels, flowers or butterflies that were put in pages of a book, shown to other children, and if they liked any of your scraps, they swapped with some of theirs). I also loved reading - being an only child, I used to lose myself in books. Rupert Bear, fairy tales, Greek legends, Hans Anderson and Enid Blyton.



Hula Hoops 1950s style

My friend Darrell lived next door but one. We used to sit on stools on the path outside our house taking car numbers. We also used to do jobs for neighbours, dusting, shucking peas or shopping, for a few pence. I knew everyone who lived in the street; people seemed happier then. I remember at seven coming out of school to find my auntie holding a big brown bag. When we got home she showed me what was inside: a small ball of white fluff, our first pet, a kitten whom we named Fluffy. He was a beautiful cat and lived to be 14 years. He died when I was 21 and was a big part of my life.

There were a lot of shops in Pound Lane. I remember the Co-op, Rayners the newsagents, Harkers the ironmongers, Holbrows fruit & veg; Mr. & Mrs. Bullimore had the Post Office which was next to Pinks bicycle shop. Also Nichols and Marlow's grocers shops and Dean's paint shop. Manor Green Road had a chemist's, sweet shop, United Dairies grocery shop, a butcher's and also a wet fish shop.

My favourite part of the year was Christmas. It seemed magical and full of wonder. I remember waking up on Christmas morning when I was nine or ten, finding a red velvet dress and red beaded slippers at the bottom of my bed. On Boxing Days the family gathered at my aunties', Mum's two sisters in Miles Road. We had such happy times.

My Dad, Les, used to work at Hudsons the grocers near the Clock Tower and my Mum used to take me in to see him when we went shopping. I used to get thoroughly spoilt

by all the staff. They used to sell coffee beans and the smell was overwhelming. Even now that smell of coffee takes me back to that time. Dad used to work on the bacon counter and every Christmas Eve, he didn't arrive home until late after despatching the orders.



Epsom High Street c1950s

My Mum didn't work but looked after Nan. I enjoyed watching the cake baking - especially licking the bowl afterwards. The Sunday joint was always used the next day either as shepherd's pie, rissoles or cold meat salad in the summer. Dad grew veg. and salad in the garden and also rows of gladioli in all different colours as well as pinks which smelled lovely.

Our summer holidays each year were spent at Brighton. One year when I was about four I got stung on the beach while eating ice-cream.

I have lived in Epsom all my life and am the third generation in our house. Epsom has changed over the years, sometimes not for the better. I was very lucky to have such lovely parents and extended family - and such happy 50s memories.

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