

My Memories in the Fifties

My Background

My story starts in 1946 when my father bought a house in Banstead from a relative. Previously we had lived in Redhill since father's demobilization.

Education.

I attended Oakland School, a private school in Palmersfield Road, Banstead run by resident heads Miss Betty Barnard and Miss Elsie Minion, plus several other teachers.

The school for around forty boys and girls under eleven was in an extended semi with a spare plot at the side for recreation. We had dancing lessons and exercises in the hall and ate our packed lunches in a class room ,paying a penny for any item requiring heating. I remember feeling very cold; having to drink near frozen milk at break and wishing the teacher would not cover the small electric fire by standing in front! We took a weekly bus ride into Epsom for swimming lessons at the East Street Baths. There were two outdoor pools in Burgh Heath on the A217 and Nelson's pool on West Hill Epsom which we used.



*Epsom Municipal Baths in 1968
Photographed by LR James*

School concerts were held in Banstead Village Institute. I later moved to Dinorben School Wallington, which was also run by two spinster graduates, travelling there by train.

In 1951 I was sent to a boarding school in Hertfordshire and I do not remember suffering any hardships or shortages.

Recreation.

During my school holidays I enjoyed attending a youth group organized by parents and held in a hall behind the Victoria public house in Banstead High Street. Here we danced to vinyl records, had quizzes and beetle drives.

Banstead Downs Tennis Club had a junior section with coaching and Young

Conservative meetings were popular.

On leaving school in 1955 I briefly attended evening classes at Lintons Lane Secondary School Epsom so I could retake a couple of O-level exams and it was here that I met my future husband's brother.

Epsom town memories



Ebbisham Hall, Ashley Road, Epsom

There were two large cinemas. Events like shows, operas and jumble sales were held in impressive Ebbisham Hall, which is now a stationers, and smaller Forresters Hall in Waterloo Road, now a space beside the Co-op and the Lecture Hall in the Upper High Street now demolished to make way for the Odeon Cinema. Christchurch Hall on West Hill held Church events, film shows and was the former 'home' of Garden Society produce shows.



*Epsom Market and Ely's Store in 1958
Photographed by Collins*

There was a Sainsbury store, not self service, numerous butchers and fishmongers

and a department store called Elys. In those days the town had an individual character. The Market Place was not pedestrianised because there were far fewer cars.

Conclusion.

In 1966 we returned to Epsom and from then on it developed into the bustling town it has now become in 2011. Now there are few old properties and many apartments, some five stories high, in the station area which is currently being developed.

As the song goes:- **'Things ain't what they used to be'**.

Mary Wood (born 1938) © 2011