Duplicates in office
library cabinet
(3rd Drawer)

BYGONE WITHINGTON

Essays by local residents

CITY OF MANCHESTER CULTURAL SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

In 1977, the year of the Queen's Jubilee, Withington Library celebrated its own Golden Jubilee on 30th May. To mark the occasion, a competition was organised to encourage past and present residents of Withington to write down their memories of the district during the 50 years since the library opened. The results, which we thought deserved wider circulation, are contained in this little booklet. To them we have added an essay by Mr. Jack Jordan which first appeared in 'Countrywide' for September 1977. Taken together, the essays provide a living picture of the local community at work and at play in a bygone era.

We hope that you will find them entertaining and interesting, and that they will perhaps bring back a few memories.

BRIAN STEVENSON

Organiser of Cultural Services
South East Manchester

HOMETOWN - WITHINGTON

By Jack Jordan

We arrived in Withington during the first World War, when it was still very much a village where everybody seemed to know each other, and where life revolved around local institutions and parochial events.

One of my earliest memories is of a long war-time queue stretching right down the village street from Barbican Street to the Maypole Dairy. The shopping area extended then, as it does today, along Wilmslow Road on either side from Copson Street to Davenport Avenue, and was well provided with shops of every kind. Morley Brooks and Seymour Meads vied for the villagers grocery custom, whilst the drapers shop owned by the two elderly Farnsworth sisters provided almost everything needed in the way of clothing and household requirements. Allendales had the monopoly of the greengrocery business and Mr. Horner's tobacconist shop displayed in the window a variety of pipes in all shapes and sizes.

A double tram-track took up most of the road through the village, and as horse-drawn vehicles abounded in those days there was often quite a bit of congestion. There has still been no widening of the road through the shopping area and similar difficulties prevail for present-day traffic, without, of course, having to contend with the fixed tram lines. The outer terminus of the tramway system was West Didsbury, and the fare from there to Albert Square was 2½d., equivalent to one new penny. From the White Lion in Withington to Albert Square was two pence, and that included the service of a guard and a trolley-boy, who invariably helped elderly people on and off the tram.

At the junction of Wilmslow Road and Palatine Road there was a large horse-trough, and a drinking fountain with a large iron cup fastened by a chain. This was later moved to a new location in front of the Withington Library, but disappeared from there many years ago.

Prior to the building of Withington Library in the twenties we had quite a walk to Didsbury Library along Wilmslow Road, passing by country Mansions occupied by Manchester Shipping and Cotton Magnates. Withington was still surrounded by fields and open farming country and you could see right across to the railway embankment which parallels Kingsway - a modern highway which then was still a project of the future. You could walk up Cotton Lane as far as St. Cuthbert's School and then over a stile and on to a field path, winding between cornfields and meadows right across to Burnage. The huge housing estates which now occupy the whole area were still only a planner's dream.

Behind the large detached houses in Broadway were Broadway Fields, now transformed into Fog Lane Park. Here we spent adventuresome hours, playing at Cowboys and Indians, climbing trees and fishing in the ponds. There were orchards for small boys to 'raid', but if caught the summary punishment dealt out was an accepted risk. I think we spent far more time out-of-doors than children do to-day. Television had still to be invented.

Most of the village children attended St. Paul's School, which catered for the complete age range, from infants to the leaving age of fourteen. There was, in addition, a similar type Catholic school, St. Cuthbert's, on Cotton Lane. The private Withington High School for Girls on Wellington Road has had a high reputation and continuous history since its foundation in 1890.

The Parish Church of St. Paul's was then the centre of much of the village activities, and the School Hall was a social centre for the young people of the Parish, with frequent dances, plays and a variety of entertainments. A 'Penny Bank' was held there on Friday evenings and the children felt very important as their small savings were entered into their own bank books.

During Whit Week there was a Church walk through the streets of the village terminating in a Field Day on a meadow in Old Moat Lane. It was a very festive occasion, with races and prizes for children and parents, and large tea urns on trestle tables provided much needed refreshment.

We were fortunate in possessing a local Swimming Baths on Burton Road, and the Withington Swimming Club produced several International swimming stars, including Zylpha Grant and Celia Wolstenholme, who held the world breast-stroke record.

The South Manchester Lacrosse Club had its headquarters at the White Lion Hotel, and had quite a large and vocal following when playing its home games on the Withington Cricket Club ground behind the Baths. The Baths are still there, but the surrounding fields have now been transformed into the ubiquitous housing estates.

The Scala Picture House next to the White Lion, must be one of the oldest cinemas, with a continuous history as such, in the country. It was there, at the Saturday afternoon matinee, that we were thrilled by the adventures of Pearl White, Tom Mix and Douglas Fairbanks, and laughed uproariously at the antics of Charlie Chaplin. The scenes were always re-enacted during the following week in the school playground.

Friday's Smithy, next to St. Paul's School on Wilmslow Road, is still in existence as a family concern. How we liked to watch the horses being shoed. The sparks flying, the clanging of the anvil with the hammer wielded by Sam Friday, the leather-aproned blacksmith, and the burning smell peculiar to a smithy, are still vivid memories.

On the other side of the road was Gibbons general store, where Mr. Gibbons also baked delicious bread. Here we spent our pennies on sweets, and Mrs. Gibbons was always very patient with us as we hesitated between the rival attractions of tiger-nuts or gob-stoppers. Her son, Jim, was a friend of Robert Donat, who lived close by in Tatton View, and who was later to become a famous actor.

A little further down the road the Red Lion Hotel is still a very popular hostelry, and some member of the Burrows family has been 'Mine Host' there for several generations.

It seems a far cry now to those days of horse-drawn baker's vans, milk floats and coal-carts, and a small boy sitting on the roadside with a pencil and a sheet of paper, writing down the registration numbers of the few motor-cars which passed by. At the end of the day, the sheet would only be half filled.

A PORTRAIT OF WITHINGTON, FIFTY YEARS AGO

By K. Glyn Jones

I remember with pleasure the village of Withington fifty years ago, for a village it was in the true sense of the word. A village of farms, cottages and fields and where every face was a familiar one and none were strangers.

At the junction of Burton Road and Old Hall Lane (later renamed Old Moat Lane) stood Mr. Garner's Farm with its cowsheds and haybarn. Here I went as a child with a pint jug to the shippon and waited for Old Sam the cowman to finish milking the cows. He then poured the warm fresh milk into a large churn, covered by a muslin sieve, and then with a pint, half pint or quarter pint measure, poured the milk into the jug. The warm smell of the shippon, the lowing of the cows and Sam sitting on his three legged milking stool still stays very vividly in my memory.

One of the most exciting days of the year was when the giant threshing machine arrived at the farm with a team of workers to thresh and bag the corn grown in the local fields. The children of the village rushed to see the great monster go into action, tossing and grinding the corn and the workers busy at their task.

Milk from the farms was delivered to the houses by horse drawn milk floats and many was the time when we were allowed to ride to school on the step of the float. On winter mornings there was often a hot drink for the driver and a crust of bread for the horse. At the White Lion stood the Horse Trough where the horses which drew the milk floats, the bread vans and the coal carts could stop for a refreshing drink.

On Burton Road where now stands the Community Centre there was the Primitive Methodist Chapel where on Sundays almost every pew was full and in the afternoons I went to Sunday school dressed in my Sunday clothes, for these were the days of "Sunday best" not to be worn on weekdays until they were too shabby for Sundays.

Yew Tree Lane (now Yew Tree Road) was a narrow lane approached by a stile. This stile was rather special as it had two steps, one on each side. We always avoided one step, known as the Devil Step and we were afraid to tread upon it. The origin of this name and the legend lies in obscurity.

Another farm stood at the corner of Yew Tree Lane known as Marsland's Farm and further down Old Hall Lane Peacock's Farm. Where the Old Moat School now stands there was a large field known as the Daisy Field where children of the village would picnic with a bottle of lemonade and sandwiches and make daisy chains, for true to its name it was always carpetted with daisies. All along Old Hall Lane as far as Alexandra Park Station were fields of corn and hay and many were the pleasant walks along the lane and through the fields on summer evenings.

When the days grew shorter a familiar sight was the lamplighter going his rounds with his long pole lighting the gas lamps one by one and if one was near enough one could hear the plop, plop, sound of the gas igniting the incandescent mantle. Often on winter evenings we would hear the organ grinder and the children would gather round to listen to the tunes from his barrel organ and watch fascinated as his little monkey, gaily clad in red jumper and hat, took the pennies from their hands.

The shopping centre of the village, on Wilmslow Road was mostly composed of family businesses. I recall Farnworths, the large drapery stores in the centre of the village. Here, when a purchase was made, the assistant put the money into a round cylinder suspended on an overhead wire, pulled a wooden handle and away went the money and the bill across the shop to a small glassed in office at the other end. The book keeper then checked the bill and returned it along the wire in the cylinder duly receipted and with the change, to the assistant at the other end of the wire. Shopping was more leisurely in those days and a chair was provided for the customer to sit and wait for the change or to choose from the articles brought to the counter by the assistant. Another large millinery and gown shop was Cowsills, owned by a family of sisters as was Farnworths also.

At the corner of Cooper Street (now Copson Street) was McLaren's grocery shop with its large green and gold tea cannisters and the floor freshly laid with sawdust each day to lay the dust. The groceries such as tea, corfee, sugar, currants, etc. were not ready packed but were weighed out and placed in strong blue paper bags the tops of which were deftly and neatly folded by the assistant. I remember the Maypole grocery shop with its white tiled sawdust strewn floor. Here we watched with great admiration as the manager or his assistant took two wooden butter pats from a jar of water and slicing off a piece of butter from the large barrel shaped mass begin to rapidly slap it into a neat square. Then transferring it to a piece of grease proofed paper and then brown paper, in a matter of seconds a neatly wrapped and stringed parcel was handed over to the customer.

A few doors away from the margarine and butter slapping emporium was Preens, the furniture shop. Here Mr. William Preen and his father before him made first class hand made furniture, which can still be found in excellent condition in many Withington houses today. Across the road, Stirlings the shoe shop, run by two Scottish brothers. They knew the style of shoe to suit their regular customers and their children and took an almost personal interest in each pair of feet. Older residents of Withington will remember too, Mrs. Wynn's china shop, Mr. Huddleston the corn chandler, Leathers, the drapers, almost the last of the old village shops and still thriving.

There were of course no buses but trams ran as far as the Palatine Road Terminus at Lapwing Lane or to the White Lion only. The latter went on to a short tramline which came to an end by St. Pauls Church where it waited before returning on its way to the city. There were three people employed on the trams, the driver, the guard and the trolley boy. When the tram reached its destination and was ready to return along the same route the trolley boy nipped smartly off the tram swung the trolley off the overhead wires and placed it in the opposite direction. The trams were not very comfortable as they had wooden seats and many had seats in the open at both ends of the top deck, a joy in the hot weather but cold, wet and miserable in the winter time.

Many of the streets of terraced houses in Withington were owned by the Donnet family. They also kept a plumbers shop on Burton Road. Old Mr. Donnet with his white mutton chop whiskers, reminiscent of Mr. Gladstone, was a familiar sight going around his tenants collecting his rents, as were his two sons in later years. These were the days when a couple contemplating marriage could find a "House to Let" sign outside a house and for a few shillings a week rent could start life in a home of their own. Families lived near to each other for Withington was a close community and grandmothers and aunties were always more or less a

stone's throw away to lend a hand in sickness or to look after the children. For the elderly there was usually a good neighbour to help with the shopping or call for a chat.

There were no estates of houses, either private or council in the village of those days, just terraced houses, cottages or the larger houses on Wilmslow Road and Palatine Road. Many of the large houses employed several servants and in some cases a coachman who generally lived above the coach house at the rear of the house. These coachhouses are now garages or converted mews type houses.

There were two "free" schools in the village, St. Pauls for the Protestand children and St. Cuthberts for the Catholic children. These two schools accommodated most of the children from the age of five to fourteen. The "Babies Class" at St. Pauls was taught by a dear lady by the name of Miss Roe who taught her children to read, write and to count, for school was for learning as soon as one entered. Slate and slate pencils were used for writing and bean bags for counting. The younger pupils occupied the lower floor of the school and the older pupils the upper floor. The headmaster, Mr. Scholes, was a firm but kindly man but woe betide anyone who disobeyed the rules. The penalty for so doing was to be sent to his room to receive the cane, the threat of which kept most of us behaving ourselves. Beyond the wall of the school playground was Mr. Priday's smithy and as the playground wall was not very high a few adventurous boys would climb over the wall during "playtime" and nip into the smithy to watch the blacksmith at his work. Time would fly by and often when they returned over the wall the classes had returned to their classrooms and the delinquents would have to report to Mr. Scholes. Nevertheless it was a happy little school where every child was known by name and where, in many cases, the parents of those children had been taught by the same teachers.

I speak of St. Pauls as that was the school I attended but I am quite sure the same family atmosphere prevailed at St. Cuthberts school on Cotton Lane, for we were all "children of the village".

Sundays in Withington were quiet days, no cinemas were open, games were not played in the parks and children were not usually allowed to play in the streets. We went for walks through the fields or to the park to listen to the band and to walk around the bandstand meeting friends. There were always people walking around leisurely on Sundays and as there were no cars the roads were quiet whereas in these days the roads are crowded with cars and very few people stroll around leisurely.

I remember the cricket field on Burton Road where on summer days the village team entertained us with cricket matches and, in the field beyond, the lacrosse team would be in action.

Outside the Withington Baths was an enormous tree and around the base of the trunk was a circular seat. This was a favourite meeting place and was known as the Big Tree.

One could not write about the old days in Withington without mentioning Hollis's paper shop. This was on Burton Road at the corner of Brown Street and was run by the grandmother of the present owner and then by the mother and father.

Here the local children spent their Saturday pennies, or halfpennies and on a string above the counter were hung the comics we used to buy. I remember Rainbow, Comic Cuts, Film Fun, Magnet, Gem and many others. Space and science fiction had not at that time invated childrens' literature nor had radio and television arrived in our homes. Our amusement was outside playing whip and top, skipping ropes, bowling hoops and hopscotch or reading in our comics of the escapades of Tiger Tim, Bobby Bruin and the like.

Such was our life in the Withington of fifty years ago; life in a village of friendly people, where children played happily and safely in the streets and where it was a Long Time Ago.

WITHINGTON IN THE 1930's AND 1940's

By Sydney Buxton

Thick yellow fog and the trams clanking slowly past. Gas lamps trying to pierce the gloom of a November evening. The friendly oasis of our library is there and we settle down to a Lantern Lecture by some travelled personality, after an introduction by library staff.

As a child I loved to read the Hans Christian Anderson fairy tales, also the volumes of encyclopedias. The staff were very keen on us having clean hands those days.

In Summer time we would go to Blackpool by charabanc from the paper shop opposite to the library. We had Methodist Sunday School picnics from Withington Station. Whit walks were held, the boys in their Sunday best, the girls in white with gold painted baskets of flowers. Banners flying and led by the Burnage Silver Band and the Boys Brigade, we set off along Wilmslow Road passing the Horse Trough near the White Lion, then down Cotton Lane to Burnage (Ladybarn) park. I can remember having milk and buns while the band played "Lullaby of Broadway".

In the village there was Mr. Preen, a very fine cabinet maker, who even with several fingers missing could still play the piano. His workshop backed on to George Street, now Gledhill Street. We had some good bonfires there near the stables with his waste wood plus Timpson's shoe boxes. My grandmother, Mrs. Tiller, was in service at a house in Wilmslow Road near Cotton Lane where she met my grandfather who had a Market Garden business nearby. Some time later they moved to George Street. Their daughters attended St. Pauls. When my mother married she moved to a house a few doors away with my father, Arthur Buxton. My mother's name is Violet. I was born in George Street, where the "White Lion" clock was very handy for telling the time. There was a fish and chip shop on the corner of Albert Grove opposite Mrs. Weir's shop where many an innocent child was told to go in and ask for a 'Burglars Guide' by older children. The Undertaker groomed his jet black horses nearby. The Bookmaker used to stand in the passage that led to the back of Queen Street. Football and cricket we played on the 'Rec'. I can just remember the bandstand. Street games, whips and tops, marbles, conkers and flicking cigarette cards passed many an hour. Most houses were gas-lit. My mother sometimes sent me for threepennies worth of bacon to Morley Brooks in the village and the friendly assistant would give me nearly half a pound. Then there was Suttons the German butchers in Cooper Street for pork chops, poloni, brawn and black puddings and nearby the appetising smell of Carters Bake-house. There was Perrins Bike shop in Hill Street and a chap who lived in a house at the back of the library who charged up radio accumulators for 2d. in his cellar. He gave children sweets from a big tin. We had Saturday Matinees at the Scala, and supplied with a ha'porth of sweets from Mrs. Allcrofts or Mr. Hollins enjoyed ourselves. I remember the pig farm on Hill Street and the farm near Old Moat Lane; Mr. Rickits the Barber who also mended umberellas; Mr. Priday the Blacksmith; Dr. Soni, very good-hearted, who lived on Mauldeth Road and had his own surgery for operations.

Lighting candles in St. Cuthberts with Catholic friends who also had Whit walks; so did St. Pauls, where I went to day school. I remember Mr. Muzzel. The head-master was Mr. Anderson. The teachers that come to mind are Miss Mort, Miss Stevens, Mr. Chadwick, Mr. Harrison, Miss Gordon, 'Naggy' to the children, but

when my brother was ill in hospital she sent a large basket of fruit. Then there were the policemen with their white cotton gloves on to lead us safely across the main road, and Jubilee mugs and toffee tins celebrating George V's Silver Jubilee.

The Forties

The 'Blackshirts' walking around the village disappeared. Kharki-clad Territorials took their place. There was practice fire-fighting with stirrup pumps near Bellfield's yard. We went to school on Saturday mornings, playing games such as 'Monopoly' and 'Ludo', gas masks fitted by Wardens. Foreign refugees came to live in a big house on Heaton Road. Uncle Bill called in to see us, just back from Dunkirk.

Barrage balloons, Sirens, Searchlights, Rations. Withington Baths boarded over and sandbagged for use as a First-Aid Post.

St. Paul's school children and mothers evacuated to Grimsargh near Preston. We came home to 19 Moorfield Street where we had removed to from George Street. Bombed out in 1941. Dad and brother Jack rescued the nearest neighbours. The family on the other end of the block all killed by a bomb through the house roof into the back garden shelter. Friends, neighbours, relations, looked after us. We went to live in Ridsdale Avenue, off Burton Road. A land mine demolished the Wardens' Post and they lost their lives. Land mine hanging in St. Paul's churchyard with people sheltering in the vaults. Land mine exploded near the library down Wellington Road. The hole big enough to put 3 buses in, side by side.

Children collecting shrapnel for souvenirs. Army Cadets from Old Moat marching and blowing our bugles on Sunday mornings. Home-guard post in Wilmslow Road towards Fallowfield. Glenn Miller's music at Old Moat Youth Club. Dad bringing home a Yank that one of our sailors had met in the 'Gluepot' (The 'Albert') and hot-pot suppers at neighbours' on New Years Eve. Hitching a lift in a lorry on Victory night to Albert Square with a crowd of happy youngsters including my future wife.

WAR-TIME MEMORIES

By Arthur Williams

At approximately 10.30 p.m. on January 1st, 1941, Withington was alerted by the Air Raid warning siron and all the Wardens' Service sprang into action. About fifteen minutes later there was a terrific explosion from the direction of Burton Road. A Mr. Armitage of Arnfield Road reported to the officer in charge at the Wardens' Headquarters in Heaton Road that he had seen two parachute mines coming down over Withington, and that one had exploded but the other had not. The one that failed to explode seemed to pass over St. Paul's Church but he was not certain where it had landed. An immediate alarm was put out from headquarters and all available wardens, police and firemen searched for the missing mine, but unfortunately it was undiscovered.

Alas, the mine that did exploid killed five wardens who had assembled at their meeting post in Burton Road; the mine dropped almost on top of them. Amongst the five who were killed were Mr. Barber, a popular dentist in Withington, and a Mr. Lobb, who was a master at the Manchester Grammar School. I regret that I cannot remember the names of the other unfortunate victims.

About 2.20 a.m. the next morning, Wardens Headquarters received an agitated phone call from a lady who said that she was the vicar's wife and that something terrible was lying in her garden. An immediate investigation proved it was the missing mine, but it had landed in the soft soil by the vicarage front steps and fortunately it had failed to exploid. The bomb disposal squad were immediately informed and later that morning a Naval Officer of the disposal squad rendered the bomb harmless. It was about six foot high and three foot wide, a very terrifying sight to set eyes on, and a great relief to all of us at headquarters when it was finally removed by the bomb-disposal squad.

The following poem was written by me and published in the A.R.P. Journal the following week:

REQUIEM

No glory of the battlefield
No heat of battle, shot or shell
No valiant stand in foreign field
But here by their own homes they fell.

And yet they died for freedom's cause
Their names inscribed in England's story
For this we know as now we pause
Their duty was the path to Glory.

MEMORIES OF WITHINGTON

By Phyllis Klein

It is less than fifty years since I first came from London in 1936 as a bride to live in Withington; and my first impressions and memories may be of interest.

At that time the new Withington Library was still very much of a talking point. I found it architecturally most satisfactory and always thought it exceptionally well and unusually sited. It certainly dominated the Village, which in those days had far more character than today. I remember in particular a few very old shops next to the Albert Public House. They were low, and small. One was Baldwin's the Shoe Repairer, and next to it a remarkable Tobacconist who also sold snuff and walking sticks. I could never quite understand the connection between these last two items. Perhaps they were both attributes of the Dandy of Fashion of a bygone age!.

The owner of the Grocery Shop at the corner of Cooper Street (now Copson Street) called on me himself to ask for my "esteemed" custom and for years he served me with personal courtesy and consideration - so different from the impersonal attitude of today's Supermarkets.

There were no Radio Shops in those remote days, and, of course, no Television. But there were good, clean wholesome films at the Scala Cinema which opened for afternoon and evening performances daily.

I was very intrigued to find a beautiful Farm House in Burton Road where a Council Estate now exists. I do not remember much about the animals, but the lovely blossoming fruit trees in Spring I can still clearly see in my mind's eye. Over the way, where a row of houses, aptly including a Veterinary Surgeon, in Yew Tree Road, was yet another Farm. Here I seem to remember mainly pigs; but also cows, horses and chickens.

I have seen many changes since I have lived here. The clanging trams have gone, and instead the roads are crowded with cars and lorries of a size never imagined then whose drivers seem to consider we mere pedestrians as a nuisance and a curb to their speeding. Many of the beautiful houses have gone to make way for inartistic but utilitarian blocks of flats; or those that remain have been let off in flatlets, the once beautiful gardens overgrown with weeds or destroyed to make way for car parks.

Of personalities I am not so clear, but I do remember the late Professor Alexander on his famous bicycle. His dress, for those times, was unconventional to say the least; but one forgot all that and could only admire that wonderful intellectual head, and the simplicity and friendliness to all which marked him out as the truly great man that he was.

Backing on to my garden lived three sisters - maiden ladies of extreme good looks. The eldest, Miss Gertrude, kept what I think must have been the last of the Dame Schools. Her little pupils were taught, with much love and kindliness, by truly old fashioned methods. But they could all read and write well at the age of about six years; they knew their tables and simple arithmetic; they spoke well and clearly in good English and not Americanized, and above all they had good

manners. Can so much be said for today's happy go lucky, "do it yourself" (or not!) self expression methods?

It is sad in many ways to see the disappearance of a more elegant and leisurely mode of life and life style, and a lowering of standards in general. I suppose some things are better - and some worse. But progress (if such it is!) marches on and

"The old order changeth
Yielding place to new".

WITHINGTON

By B.J. Taylor

Sixty years ago I was a very young child living in Withington in the middle of a cul-de-sac which was situated behind the shops fronting the village section of Wilmslow Road. The west side of the village comprised streets of working class houses; Albert Street, George Street, Albert Grove, Moorfield Street, Hill Street, Patten Street. It would now seem that most of these streets have been demolished.

At the end of our street was a high wall which screened an abbatoir, and from time to time we could hear the pigs squealing as they were slaughtered. Another prominent feature was the 'White Lion' clock. An inspection of this was important to the residents because at that time very few people in that area boasted clocks or watches and our old alarm clock was often borrowed by neighbours who wished to be certain of getting up early.

At that time cornfields lay only a short distance away on the other side of Yew Tree Lane, along which we often saw the cows being brought in for milking. The farm was on the corner of what is now Copson Street (the old Cooper Street) and Yew Tree Road.

Opposite on the other side of the road were two very old cottages - they could have been Elizabethan - and these interested us because they had a primitive cesspit for toilet disposal. As children we all knew the story of the 'muck-cart' man who had fallen into it one day when they were clearing it. Apocryphal or otherwise it seemed very funny to us.

Westward, Cooper Street came to a stop at the fields, a final gas lamp-post and a path leading to Meyer's Farm. Halfway between Cooper Street and the farm was a row of six cottages with a pump to supply water at one end. Many were the times that we knocked at the cottage door to ask if we could have a drink of water, so that we could have the pleasurable excitement of working the pump handle and watching the water gurgle from the spout. It was reputed that Queen Elizabeth had slept at the farm, and if age had anything to do with it this could have been true. The farm was moated; a ring of water full of weeds, reeds and rushes which completely encircled the farm. A causeway had been built for access to the farm dwelling. This was the reason for the estate, the lane, and the school being called "Old Moat"; or if it were not it is remarkably coincidental. The Meyers were friendly people and it was a delight on a summer's evening to sample the milk fresh from the cows.

I used to deliver an evening paper to the farm; a pleasant enough chore in the summer but something of a frightening experience to a small boy on a winter's night. At that time one could see the scattered lights of what was to become Princess Parkway, which I think was under construction at that time.

Just off Cooper Street lived the famous Horace Barnes, a popular footballer with Manchester City and a doughty performer with the bat for South Manchester Cricket Club whose pitch lay between Burton Road and Cooper Street. We used to sit on the grass and watch him hitting 'sixes'. Withington also had a well-known lacrosse club which played just nearby.

I remember at least one Withington Agricultural Show being held at Burton Road, which was also a favourite spot for children in those days on account of the Municipal Baths. These were opposite the Waterloo Hotel and many were the happy hours we spent there. Tradition had it that the proprietor of the 'Waterloo' had won a fortune on the Waterloo Cup, and that the hotel had had its original name changed to commemorate this event. There was a high wall running along Burton Road enclosing the hotel's garden and we understood that the dog had been buried there. The daughter of the hotel (I believe that she was called Katey) was a reputed beauty. We all stood outside St. Cuthbert's Church on Palatine Road one day to see her marriage to the famous American boxer, 'Boy' McCormack.

The two day-schools were St. Pauls and St. Cuthberts. The latter was a small school along Cotton Lane, the end of which is opposite the existing Christie's Hospital. Here were the remains of the village green with an ornamental gas-lamp in the middle and this was a favourite spot for schoolboy fights. At the end of Cotton Lane was a five-barred gate and then fields leading to a pond which I think was called 'Sharke's' and is now the present duck pond in Fog Lane Park.

Where the newer secondary modern St. Cuthbert's School now stands was what we called the Old Lane, a beautiful rural pathway through the fields and hedgerows to the railway embankment and on to Ladybarn or Heaton Mersey. What were once grassy, flower strewn meadows are now covered with semi-detached houses right across to Parrswood Road.

The village possessed a police station situated almost next to St. Paul's school, and next to it a blacksmiths. He was called Priday. This was a real family business as his sons, of whom he had two or three, followed him into the business. Often would we stand to watch horses being shoed on our way home from school.

On the corner of Wilmslow Road and Palatine Road, diagonally opposite the 'White Lion' was a large horse trough. It was quite ornate and was made of a greyish marble. Facilities were provided for dogs and human beings to take a drink. I used to stand and read the inscription on the head of the trough:-

'That ye may drink both ye and your cattle and your beasts'

The trough was moved to a new position opposite Davenport Avenue, and just outside where the new library stands. I ran into an old Withingtonian recently who told me that the trough had been acquired some years ago by a farmer and now stands in a field in the Woodhouse Park area of Wythenshawe.

The old library occupied a house on Wilmslow Road, a few yards away from its present position in the direction of Mauldeth Road. The librarian was a kindly 'old' bespectacled woman. Her kindness and understanding were probably the greatest single factor in my personal education. I was too young to join the library but she allowed me to sit for hours feasting on the treasures which that building housed. The 'free' library provided many Withingtonians with an escape from the realities of the back streets and the social deprivations of those pre-war years.

There were two brooks which ran across the fields which are now an estate between Wilbraham Road and Mauldeth Road West. One ran either side of the railway line. The one nearest to Rippingham Road Park (small recreation

ground which is still there) was a clean and pleasant little brook meandering along. The other was always dirty and black; our name for it was the 'Dye' brook, and we would never play in it or near it. The school for the deaf stands over or near its present culverted existence; the name of the school is "Whitebrook"!

The electric tram-way from town ran through the village. The village was too narrow to allow for a double line so in the middle the trams passed each other by means of a 'loop-line'; there always seemed to be a clangour and a clashing when the trams were running through the village on their way along Palatine Road to West Didsbury, which in those days was known as the terminus. A single track went on to Chorlton and Southern Cemetery, but there were no lines to Northenden or Didsbury. The early trams were open-ended so that the driver stood the whole of the time partially exposed to the elements. The rest of the crew were the conductor and a 'trolley-boy'. The duty of the latter was to handle the trolley which made contact with the overhead wire.

To me, there was always a cinema in Withington, the 'Scala' (still doing business to this day). We saw Tom Mix, Pearl White, Chaplin and many others for a 1½d. admission fee, at the Saturday matinees. There were always long, excited queues of children at the Cooper Street entrance. Older Withingtonians will remember tea and biscuits being served during the performance to those who occupied the better seats at the back. Below the screen either a piano or small group provided suitable music for the silent films. In the light of contemporary researches into 'T.V. violence' and its effect on the young it is interesting to think of the effect of the 'Hooded Terror' - a ten part serial - on interested adults. We were forbidden to see it! At the terminus, just beyond Sandileigh Avenue a new cinema, complete with flats and a restaurant was erected, and this was called the 'Palatine'. It was here that I saw Al Jolson in 'Sonny Boy' and noted its remarkable emotive effect on the 'Palatine' audiences.

On the corner of Lapwing Lane was a small patch of waste ground and about this time a new telephone exchange was erected. Further along Lapwing Lane was a large building with an impressive clock. We learned that this was Withington Town Hall but we were always puzzled as to why Withington needed a Town Hall.

Withington Hospital then to us was Withington workhouse with all the possible Dickensian connections that could go with it. At the end of Nell Lane was a small cemetery which we gazed at with morbid interest. The First World War was not so far away then and these were the graves of German prisoners-of-war, or so we were told.

The village doctor - his surgery was on the corner of Palatine Road, was Dr. Sargent - and I can remember his collector calling weekly at the house for his fee. At Alan Road there was a clinic associated with the schools where children with ring-worm, and similar complaints were treated.

Withington was a very pleasant place in which to live in those days, even for those with little money. People I met from Hulme, Ardwick, Ancoats and so on, were envious and regarded me as living right out in the country. On the way home from school we could pick swedes from the farmer's field to munch and on dark, winter evenings be warned by the headmistress not to travel home over the fields, but to use the road.

The nearest approaches to 'industrialisation' I can remember were the Withington Laundry on Cotton Lane, set in green fields and the establishment of the Old Farm Pickle Factory on either Rippingham Road or Davenport Avenue.

Perhaps the happiest and most nostalgic memories are those of children. I can see myself, hand-holding with my brother and sister, crunching the ice with our eager feet along the lane on the way to the Christmas party at the little school. There the open fires roared in the corner of the classroom, the gas-jets flared and the fiddler stood by the piano waiting to start the dance.