

# Zooming Down Memory Lane!

A Collection of Reflections, Poems and  
Short Stories from Healthy Generations  
'Zoom' group members



A Beth Johnson Foundation  
Healthy Generations Project  
Social Support Group production!

Digitally connecting older people across  
Stoke-on-Trent, North Staffordshire and  
the Moorlands during the pandemic

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We would also like to say a big thank you to our Tech Buddy Volunteers, Jon and Maggie who have supported the Healthy Generations Team and participants during our virtual social support groups.

## Celebrating our connections...

Stoke on Trent is steeped in history and heritage, from world renown pottery to internationally known singers and dancers. It's often said that our past helps strengthen our future, so how wonderful that some of our clients are exploring this history but also thinking about their personal experiences and memories. An exciting, creative approach to the reflections around some of the things that are so good about where we live, linked to individual, lived experiences that are personal and 'local' to the clients involved. I cannot wait to read it.

**Professor Sue Read, CEO, Beth Johnson Foundation**

# Healthy Generations

Supporting older people through the pandemic;  
Physically distanced, Socially connected

**Healthy Generations** is a three-year project, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. We are currently in our final year of the programme of delivery which has involved piloting and facilitating health and wellbeing sessions throughout Stoke-on-Trent, North Staffordshire and Staffordshire Moorlands, with the use of digital technology.

During 2021, our online social support sessions have grown from strength to strength. We have supported each other, as staff and beneficiaries, during the long months of the pandemic, further lockdowns and tier Systems. Even moving into the new way of 'Living with Covid', group members choose to continue to meet virtually using the 'Zoom' virtual communications app - giving group members the opportunity to safely 'meet' with each other; reducing isolation and loneliness, making new friends, trying new skills and connecting with family as they became expert in the use of 'Zoom'.

In 2020, our original online support group members produced the first Healthy Generations booklet entitled '**Covid Survival Cookbook and Other Stories**', sharing recipes, thoughts, poems and dilemmas. The group then evolved into a themed group for Poetry, '**Maggie's Poetry Moments**', attracting new members from far and wide.

We were joined in 2021, by a Keele University Intern student, whose studies included History, and his enthusiasm prompted the launch of the '**Local History**' group. We have been able to use our digital skills to source local information, pictures and facts and to share them with each other over Zoom. It quickly became clear that we all have similar memories and connections within the City of Stoke-on-Trent, North Staffordshire and Staffordshire Moorlands. We have learned so much together, about each other and the interesting history of the towns we live in. What became apparent, and a fabulous outcome from this, was the way we have drawn from our own memories of places and events to make them in to a personal memoir, which we would like to share with you.

**Zooming down Memory Lane** is a collection of work from all of our themed social support Zooms; sharing poems, stories, memories, artwork and photography. Maybe we can encourage you to put pen to paper, or even to come along and join us!

**Best wishes**

**The Healthy Generations Team - Jane, Amanda & Clare**

# Hartshill History

By Chris

I was born and grew up in Hartshill (in fact actually born in the front room of a house in Albany Road) the History of the area always fascinated me, the houses in which the famous Master Potters of Stoke on Trent had lived in during the 1800's and especially Holy Trinity Church, which all my family attended, so many fond memories.

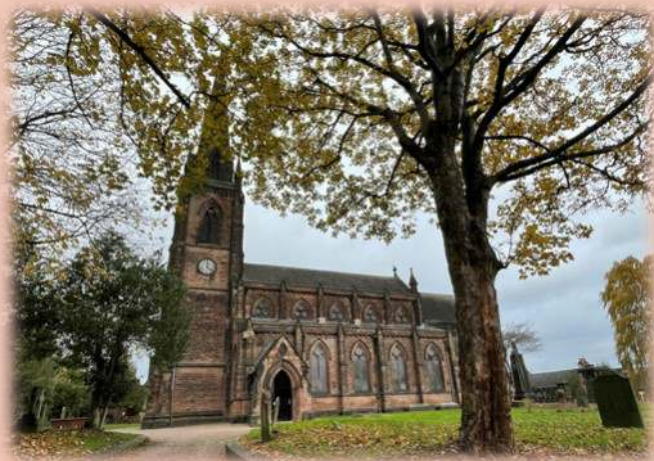
The area of Hartshill in Stoke on Trent was originally a Norman deer hunting park, which survived into the 15<sup>th</sup> Century. This then became a "landed" estate and farm. The name Hart – s – Hill derives its name from the Harts (deer) that lives in the fields at the top of the hill – in between the town of Stoke and Newcastle. At that time a Windmill stood on the highest point of the land and local farmers took their wheat to be ground. There is a water-colour of the Hartshill Windmill in the Museum in Hanley dated 1839.

Later in History many of the Master Potters, including Herbert Minton and Spode made their homes in Hartshill due to the terrible pollution coming from all the pottery kilns belching out their smoke from the coal-fired ovens. Hartshill was the highest part, and the nearest location to their pottery & tile factories, which were located down the hill in Stoke. But they and many of their higher-paid workers lived in a nice clean area with fresh air. The Minton Cottages, where many of the higher paid workers lived, such as the Factory Accountants, Managers, etc, are still standing to this day and are beautiful homes. Unfortunately the tiny cottages that the workers lived in were demolished a few years ago and a garage, and carpet shop were eventually built on the land. The workers cottages, however, were very small and had no inside sanitation /toilets or even linked to the main drains. The cottages were demolished in 1980, a great pity they were not preserved as they would have been interesting historical buildings.





The valley side section of the old hunting park still survives and it is still a large area of woods and grassland, after many years of neglect and allowing this area to become an eye sore, with a marl-hole at one end of the area, thanks to the very hard work of many local volunteers, and the support of the City Council, the land has now been re-claimed and is a Nature Resort called Hartshill Park. Thankfully the marl-hole was filled in as it was a very dangerous area, and quite a few children were drowned in the hole.



In 1840 Herbert Minton, the famous Potter, commissioned a very famous architect, Sir George Gilbert Scott, to design a Church, which would stand at the top of the hill. The ground chosen was where the old Windmill stood and this had to be demolished before building could start. The church was completed in 1842 and was consecrated as a Church of England

church to be called the church of the Holy Trinity. (During the same year Herbert Minton also commissioned Gilbert Scott to design and build a church in Penkhull and this was consecrated in the same year.)

The inside of both churches were decorated by the glazed tiles which had actually been made in Herbert Minton's tile factory, and they remain in both churches to this day, some of the patterns come from Minton first pattern book. Holy Trinity was a much larger and grander building than St Thomas' in Penkhull, both buildings were given Grade 2 status.



Herbert Minton also paid the cost of providing education for the local children. Hartshill C of E Junior & Infant School opened in 1836. This building stands at the back of the church and is now called the Minton Centre. Many of the original features remain in this building & a few years ago during the preparation of the walls ready for re-decoration some very interesting Minton tiles were discovered, which had not been seen for a great many years.



As the school was a C of E school the tiles had quotations on them such as “Honour Thy Father and Thy Mother”. Also one dedicated to the King of that time. The tiles are displayed in a freeze style, and were on the walls of the old class rooms, no one is sure how long the tiles had laid hidden and covered in paint. The tiles are of course unique, and now on display in all their glory.

The original Head Teacher’s House is still standing and is now the home of the Rector of Hartshill Benefice, as the old Vicarage (and stables) were sold off a number of years ago.



Hartshill has a lot to be thankful for to Herbert Minton as not only did he provide a magnificent place of worship, he provided a building for the local children to receive education (rare in those days!) He also provided a building called Hartshill Institute where the workers and residents of Hartshill could attend men’s debating groups and Bible Study – there was an alternative reason to these plans though, as he tried to discourage the men from drinking away their wages in the local hostelries and getting drunk! Herbert Minton was born in 1793 and died in 1858, his tomb is in the nave of the church below his beloved tiles.



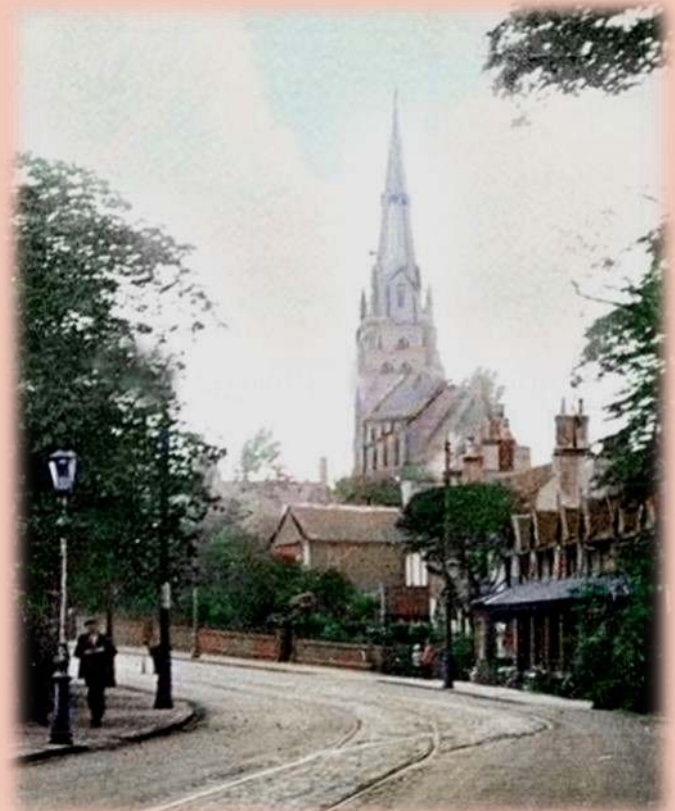
In 1872 there was a disaster and the church was nearly lost. Work had been undertaken to enlarge and renovate the church organ. Local workmen had been recruited to complete the outstanding work in preparation for a planned celebration organ recital. In the very early morning, a passing policeman – P.C. Ratcliffe of Hartshill was passing the church and smelt burning timber in the vicinity of the church. He immediately roused the Revd. Westbury and his sexton, and upon opening the church door they saw that a fire had broken out in the organ loft. As the flames began consuming the organ and the gallery, fire engines were sent for.

In due course, five turned up from Stoke, Copeland's works in Stoke and North Staffordshire railway – Newcastle and Hanley. However, even in 1872 it was still the case that the supply of water from the Staffordshire Potteries Waterworks Company was not reliable, and it was found that there was "no water in the main". Flames licked up the inside of the tower, roaring out of the large window and the clock face. The charred wood of the gallery fell, as did the clock mechanism.

Water was acquired from the cistern in the Vicarage as a line of Hartshill villagers hand-bailed buckets of water up to the church tower.

A messenger had to ride on horseback to Meir before the water in the mains could be turned on – an hour after the Stoke engine had arrived! The fire engines were then able to extinguish the fire.

The damage was appreciable the fire having blackened part of the nave roof and upper portions of pillars. Timbers were blistered and blackened – BUT Holy Trinity survived to tell the tale, and the church still stand at the top of the hill nearly 180 years since it was originally built.





# A Volunteer's Inspiration!

By Jon

## The Healthy Generations History Zoom Group

I'm always interested in people's past and their connections to local History. When Michael came to Healthy Generations on an internship from Keele University, it was great because he was studying History. We got talking and thought it would be great to host a History Zoom so that people could relate their own history to Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire.

From the Industrial Revolution in Stoke on Trent to Josiah Wedgwood, I learnt so many things about the six towns. It's amazing just how many people could tell stories about themselves or from their family/friends who worked in the pottery industry.

It's a real team effort. Everyone brings something and participants make their own local history presentations from their own stories and from research found on the internet. Listening to personal stories really brings history alive, and the members share their stories with a brilliant sense of humour too!



The Local History Zoom is just one of the ways I volunteer for Healthy Generations and I received a Volunteering Award from Support Staffordshire. I felt very proud when I was presented with my award at the Dudson Centre. I got to look around the museum and see the amazing potbank close up... again, bringing it all back to local history again!



# My Journey to Stoke

By Amina

Life comes and goes and the last 37 years have been very interesting. Getting married was the best thing for me, especially moving away from my step mother to start a new life.

My first step was to move with my husband and his uncle and wife. Even there, life was tough. A few months on and my husband was offered a job in Bishops' Stortford, a historic market town in Hertfordshire. When I moved away with my husband, I found it really strange to make decisions on my own and have freedom. No more rules and regulations. We stayed in Bishops Stortford for three years.

My husband was offered another job in Southampton. Being a port of the south coast, it's home to the popular SeaCity Museum, with an interactive model of the Titanic. Strange to think the actual Titanic departed from Southampton on 1912. There's lots of places of interest local to Southampton from the City Art Gallery that specialises in Modern British Art to Solent Sky Museum which features vintage aircrafts like the iconic spitfire at Hanley Museum and Art Gallery.

I've lived now in Stoke on Trent for only just over two years now. Having travelled and lived in different places including Cardiff, Birmingham, and a new build home in Glamorgan, it was quite a change to come and live in Stoke on Trent. There is so much local history here and so many historic buildings. Even the terraced houses look like they could speak volumes about the history of Stoke on Trent. The parks are brilliant too, I love the swans!



My Zoom Down Memory Lane has led me all over the country and now to Stoke on Trent and the Healthy Generations Local History Group.

# Memories of Madeley

*By David*

I was very lucky to have lived in the village of Madeley, until I married on April 6th 1974. My memories of Madeley are of a beautiful village that had a real community spirit.

All my family came from Madeley and we were really involved within the church community of Madeley Methodist Church. My dad was a local preacher and I have fond memories of him and my Grandad playing in the Madeley brass band. The brass band was connected to the Colliery, Leycett, and when the colliery closed, the band continued. My dad played the cornet really well.



One of my fondest memories of living in Madeley is the beautiful pool which I remember being a central feature and the countryside which was on the doorstep. I'd come out of the chapel and the pool was opposite.

If I walked along the River Lea Mews and over the bridge past Madeley Old Hall, I'd come to the railway lines. Turning left brought me to the village and turning right to the local countryside. The Old Hall was even featured on BBC4 programme. If you had a car and travelled from Madeley on the A525, it would even take you all the way to Rhyl!



Some features of the village have changed over the years. The college that I worked at in Madeley has been knocked down and turned into a housing estate. The Old Mill with the beautiful water wheel, where my mum used to work has now been altered into apartments. The Old Mill was where the River Lea Mews comes into Madeley and it's very picturesque.



Quite by chance, my friend's father found a Commemorative Medallion when he was working on a building site, 70 years ago. The medallion shows Madeley School and the Vicarage and is dated 6th May 1844.

My friend has now passed the Commemorative Medallion onto me and it's inspired me to share my wonderful memories of growing up in Madeley.



# Memory Lane

*By Sue*

A short trip down memory lane,  
come and join me for a walk  
We can go to places together,  
whisper, giggle or just talk.

Stoke, the place I called home.  
Memories appear quaint and charming  
Playing in fields, woods and church yards  
but by today's standards, quite alarming.

A small village called Penkhull  
resides on a hill up from Stoke  
But that hill was tall and steep;  
climb every mountain, no joke.

Walking through the streets of Penkhull.  
Everything seems so small.  
Can it all have shrunk?  
Or have I just got tall?

Adventures lived out in Penkhull Park.  
Witches hat, monkey bars - so carefree.  
A park with swings, slides, roundabout.  
Played on and enjoyed, pre-adult responsibility.

Such a long walk to Penkhull Infants,  
walking to school whatever the weather.  
The Close Middle School much nearer,  
it was a beautiful building to treasure.



Can't forget high school  
and the daily trek to Thistley Hough  
How did we manage to walk so far?  
Just got on with it, we were tough.

Sunny Sunday afternoons  
and visits to nan and grandad  
Memories of Goldenhill, Burslem,  
Tunstall and Sandyford.

Cotton Road, Broadfield and Church Lane,  
such engaging place names  
Don't know what's left of them.  
Places never stay the same.

Shopping for mum in Stoke market.  
A trip to Hanley or Newcastle  
Always, always walking.  
Never any driving or car parking hassel.

A special outing to Trentham,  
the ornamental gardens, lake and ballroom  
Enjoying Bath Pool Park,  
nature in full bloom.

All such a long, long way away.  
Time stretches back so far  
Filtered through rose tinted glasses.  
A tiny little glimpse of my memoir.

# A Morning Awakening

*By Peter*

One particular morning, I woke in the early hours at 3am. The world sounded eerily quiet and I felt inspired to capture the silence of the Stoke on Trent Autumn sky.



# Gardens View

*By David*

On a trip to Alton Towers I was amazed by the way all the trees were so beautiful in the Gardens, so I decided to sketch the scene by the monument area .

The details were done in the Gardens and the rest finished at home. It was very peaceful and wonderful to be sitting there after being in lockdown times.





# May Blossoms

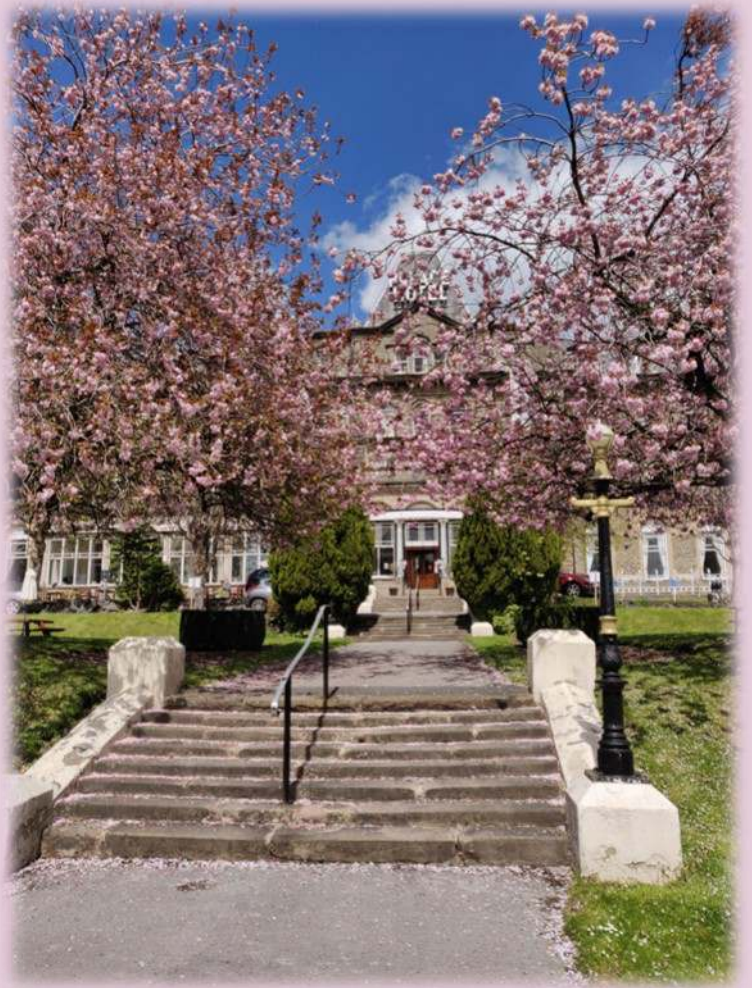
*By Helen*



The most favourite memory I have is when the May Blossom is in full bloom on the trees. This occurs towards the end of April and if lucky can last well into the month of May.

May 1991 holds special memories for me as that was when I married my lovely husband. I have some wonderful memories of the beautiful May Blossom on the trees and the warm sunshine.

Although Chris is no longer with us I still look forward to seeing the new Blossom each year.



# The Vic Cinema

By Chris

The old Vic Cinema was situated on the corner of Victoria Street in Hartshill. Right opposite was a “transport” cafe. We had to cross quite a busy main road to get to the Cinema but there was a crossing and of course there were a lot less traffic on the roads in my childhood.



Saturday afternoons were the highlight of our week! Our dad gave my sister and I a shilling each – twelve old pennies – we were given strict instructions that we **MUST** pay to sit in the 9 pence seats and definitely not the 6 penny seats. My mother insisted we would catch nits if we sat in the cheaper seats!

So, we had 12 pennies to spend, 9 of those were the entrance fee, we shared an ice cream and the attendant cut it in half for us, which left us with one penny to spend on sweets on the way home. **BUT** – although forbidden by mum - my penny was always spend on a penny piece of bread and butter pudding, which was made and sold by the Fairbanks sisters, who had a shop at the corner of Riseley Road. This was delicious with lots of sugar on the top. If mum found out I always got a smack but it was worth it!



Just after dinner on Saturday we gathered with our many friends to join the queue to enter the Cinema. The queue usually went round the corner and stretched right up Victoria Street. The excitement was tremendous and we were kept in order by a male attendant in his uniform, who if we were naughty hit us with his torch, so we made sure that when he was on his way we stood very still and behaved ourselves, can you imagine that being allowed in these days!





Eventually we got to the kiosk, where we paid our entrance money, and then it was one mad dash to get a good seat and try to sit together with your friends. It was dark inside and the noise in the cinema was tremendous, one of the favourite pastimes was stamping our feet on the floor and cheering, also sitting up out of our seats then letting them spring back with a clatter! Again, we were kept in order by the lady usherettes who screamed at us to sit down and behave! Sometimes the film would break down and all the boys and girls would scream, “put a shilling in the meter” and boo and shout until the film was restored.

At last the films started, we had a really good afternoon with exciting films such as Lone Ranger, with his Indian friend Tonto, then there was Gene Autry, the singing cowboy with his lady friend Dale Evans and Trigger their horse, and Tex Ritter – who we all adored. There was always a comedy film with famous actors such as The Three Stooges & Abbott and Costello, who had us falling off our seats with laughter. We also had a cartoon, such as Woody Woodpecker, Daffy Duck, Bugs Bunny & many others.

But of course we were all building up to the serial, our favourite was Flash Gordon. The previous week’s episode always ended with Flash being left on the edge of death or being tortured, so we waited in anticipation to see how he was rescued.

The adventures of Flash Gordon started as a comic character in an American magazine, he had graduated from Yale University in America and his two close friends were Dale Arden and Dr Hans Zarkov.





Every week Planet Earth was under threat of destruction or colliding with an alien planet called Mongo. When they landed on Mongo to save planet Earth they met up with the evil ruler Ming the Merciless. He scared the life out of me, and every time he appeared in a scene everyone booed him.

There were various scary areas on the planet Mongo, such as horrible forests with monsters living in them, there were many horrible aliens such as flying eagle-type men. Right at the end of the episode poor Flash would be hanging on to life by some way or other and usually trying to rescue his friend Dale, the film stopped and as we left the Cinema we knew we had to wait a whole week to see just how he would escape this time.

As soon as we left the Cinema we immediately took on the roles of being cowboys and Indians and had mock fights on our way home! Of course all the cowboys were “goodies” and Indians were always the “baddies”. How naive we were.

Apart from all the fun I remember on Saturday afternoons I was also very fortunate to be taken to the Vic Cinema twice a week with my mum, dad and sister. We usually went on Monday evenings, there was always a B film, followed by the main attraction, then on Thursday the films were changed and again we had a really good evening of entertainment. These trips were really appreciated and enjoyed as T.Vs had not become a household possession, so we only had our Radios to listen to and play board games during the evenings. Sundays, of course, were always committed to attending Church, visiting our Grandparents and extended family for supper then home for an early night ready for school the next day. So, Monday and Thursday evenings and Saturday afternoons were very precious to us!

In 1962 our beloved Vic Cinema was sold and became a Theatre in the Round, but I don't think we'll ever forget all the fun we had during our childhood. Anyone who didn't go missed out a great deal.



# Precious Memories

By Joyce

I enjoy doing the 'art for all' sessions as I find it very relaxing. We recently took a trip down memory lane and reflected on times in the past that had been special for us, and I painted this as way to illustrate some of my favourite memories...

We towed our Caravan to Woolacombe in Devon and the four of us had so many happy times there. We also enjoyed the Cream Teas (a lot of them, especially me)!

We always had cats and they were part of our family.

The piano is special as my late husband bought this as a surprise for me and I still play it now and again, but not very well!



# My trip down Fashion memory lane

By Steve

Thankyou Lord Kitchener, Lord John, BIBA, Cecil Gee  
You made all the fashion clothes just right for me.



Burton for Tailored Mohair suits on the never never  
Pound a week on the card paying forever  
Four button cuffs and eighteen-inch centre vent  
Parallel trousers, shortish with creases absent

Shirts from Ben Sherman in Kings road Chelsea  
Three button striped casuals from Fred Perry  
Carnaby street for suede loafers from Barkers  
Army and navy stores for Korean war US parkas



The Lanes in Brighton to get the knitted ties  
Lambretta scooters for us Mod kitted guys  
Saturday night Twisted Wheel in Manchester  
Showing off the duds with friends from Chester

Time to be young, the WHO, my generation, alive  
Will we all live, survive, till we're twenty five





Its 1969, the mods have gone, where do I go from now.  
Do I go down the Psychedelic route or Prog Rock flow.  
Me, Long hair, beards, smock tops, levi jeans and Jesus sandals  
No paisley shirts and bell bottoms for me, Dandies try all angles

My Music festivals start in 1970  
with the Isle of Wight,  
Not a pair of Ruby's hot pants  
or 'Osmonds' fans in sight



1973 Military surplus and T shirts showing bands  
Then Glam rock appeared and I held up my hands  
I had to follow David Bowie and TRex and some other chap named Glitter  
The makeup, eye shadow and the glam made me  
visit the clothes outfitter

Purple suede jacket, bell bottom cords, tight fitting  
tops, platform sole shoes and kipper ties  
Oversized shirt collars, big lapelled blue suit jacket  
with blue flared trousers, no more Tie Dyes



Then came the punks and all their style, lucky for me,  
I missed that era, having started a family  
How I longed for the sex pistols, the stranglers, the buzzcocks,  
the clash and doc martens 'secretly'

# The voice of Thunder

By Ruby

As a small child in the country where I was born  
We often had violent tropical storms  
Accompanied by blinding flashes of lightening  
They were all very frightening  
These would be followed by deafening thunder crashes  
It seemed as if everything would soon be turned to ashes

In the middle of these thunderstorms  
A bizarre ritual my grandmother would perform  
As the thunder roared with its loud bangs  
Up to the skies my grandmother would raise her hands  
To me these actions were amazing  
As she uttered a request with this phrasing

**“speak lord, thy servant heareth”**

I wanted to hear what the lord had to say  
And whether my grandmother would have her way  
And always to my profound surprise  
She would seem to receive an instant reply  
The reply usually came accompanied by another flash  
Of a blinding light followed by a loud thunder crash



What did all this mean I asked myself in awe  
As I observed this debacle with open jaw  
I puzzled and pondered but could not understand  
The strange powers my grandmother had in her hands  
And why she always waited for a storm  
To communicate with God in this form

A few years passed by this way  
With only my grandmother understanding what God had to say  
Then I started school and learnt something amazing in my science class  
The mystery of this ritual was cleared at last  
These phenomena were due to weather conditions and electricity  
And my grandmother's antics were just due to her eccentricity.

*Many thanks to Ruby  
for sharing this  
beautiful photograph  
of her beloved  
Grandmother.*



# Our Holiday in the Country (1957)

By Dorothy

When I was young, there were four children in the family. Holidays were a luxury we couldn't afford. However the church of England had a holiday home. It was Manchester Cathedral Country Home in Mellor nr. Marple. This provided and still does holidays for families on low income. It is a big house in lovely grounds and was then adapted for families. Because of how it was set up; only mothers and children were allowed to stay there. However Dad's could come to visit and spend time with the family.

I think the food was provided but the mothers had to work together to prepare and cook the meals. There is only my older sister and myself left now of our family, so our memories are a little faded, so we can't remember all the details. We used to go for a week (Monday-Friday) each year. I think we went 3 times. The last time was in 1957.

Mellor is now about 23 minutes by car away from where we used to live. In those days we did not have a car and had to catch three buses to get there. So it seemed to take a long time to get there. Because we had to take sheets and towels as well as clothes we had quite a bit of luggage. Mam gave us all a bag or case to carry and us children would wear extra jumpers, cardigans coats trousers and skirts and our wellies to help lighten the load. We thought it was great. Poor Mam, taking four children and all the luggage on three buses. We thought it a great adventure.

We were going on a holiday in the country, we loved it. There was a big house, woods and a lovely stream which we paddled in with our wellies on.





We had fishing nets made out of old stocking and jam jars with string tied around them. We caught little sticklebacks, which we put back at the end of the day.

When you came out of the woods, on the other side, there was a hill. At the top of the hill was a tree which we called the lone tree. We used to race up to it and then roll down the hill. On the way up the hill was a farm. So we saw quite a few sheep and cows. The farmer used to let us go and watch the cows being milked. It was exciting to see the animals close up. Also at the top, further along, was the church and a school. The children there had already gone back to school, so we thought it was great to be able to stand and watch them in the playground.

At the end of the house drive was a small shop, where we could spend our pocket money on sweets. Not that we had much I think we got 6d a week which is two and a half pence. You could get 4 black jacks for 1 penny or even a gob stopper.

The Mums worked hard cooking and washing, but unlike at home, they had the company of other ladies so they could natter, laugh and generally put the world to rights, knowing that their children were safe and happy.

We loved it there ,we found plenty to do and made lots of friends. We had lots of adventures. There was a park nearby. It was just great having the freedom to run about and explore the country environment around us.

Dad came to see us one day in the week. We went to meet the bus. We ran over the fields and crawled under a hedge, just as the bus came passed. My sister remembers Dad telling her that he was shocked and slightly ashamed when he saw four scruffy, dirty children crawling out of the hedge and realised they were his children. But he was pleased to see us really as we're pleased to see him and had plenty to tell him.

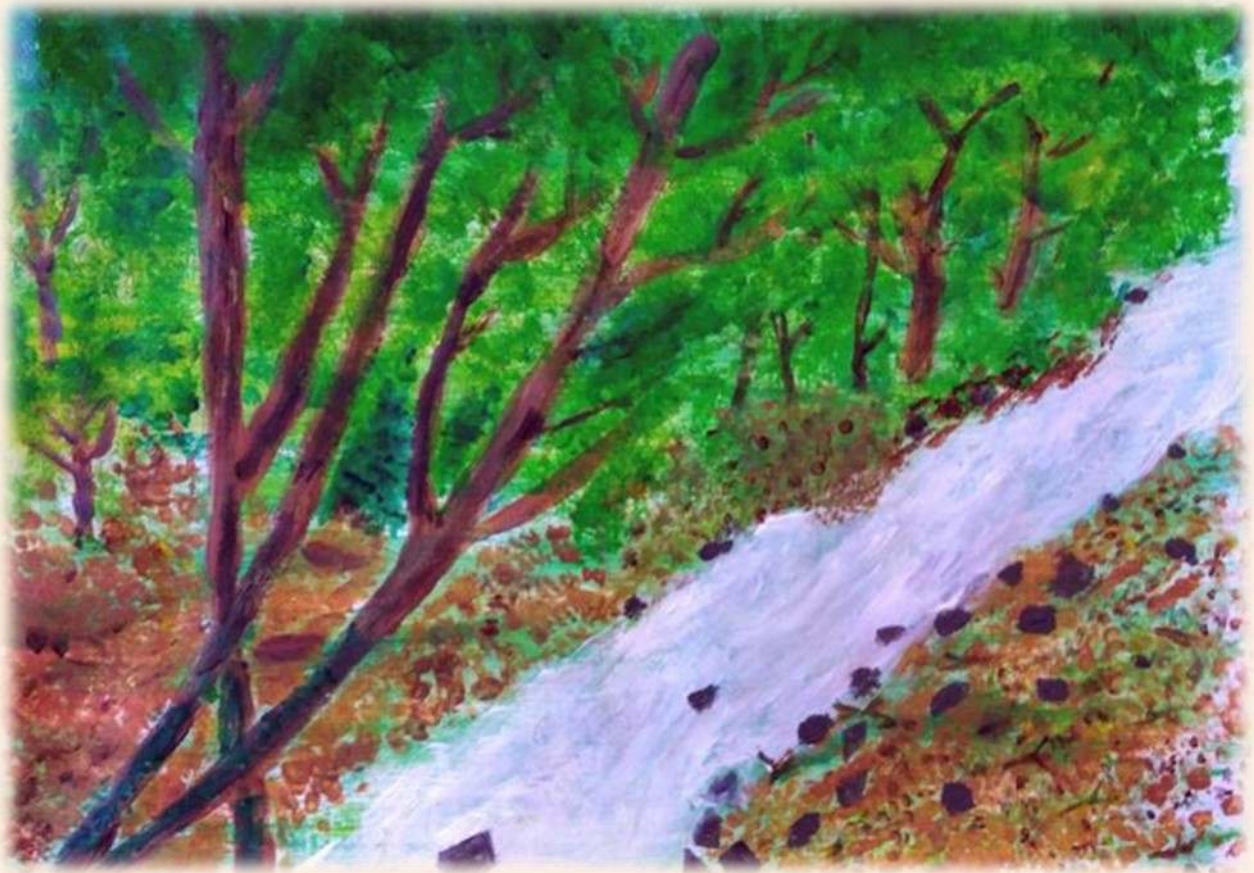
We made friends with the other children and had lots of fun. The bedrooms were divided up so that each family had their own room. There was partitioning between each room, although you couldn't see over it, there was a gap between the top of the partitioning and the ceiling. Some night we would have a midnight feast, although it would be before midnight. All the children would share some treats, such as sweets or biscuits. We would throw these through the gap. We would call it the feast of the passover.

There was no television, no wifi or computers in those days. There may have been a radio for the Mums to listen to. There were books, board games, and jigsaws. I think there was a playroom with toys for us to use.

We loved that holiday. It was nice being with family and friends. Having lots of space and freedom, seeing and doing things we couldn't do at home.

When I think about how hard it must have been for Mam and Dad in those days. I am so grateful for the lovely time and the happy memories I have. It is something that you cannot put a price on.

THANK YOU TO THEM BOTH.



*Dorothy's painting of her memories of the woods and streams  
from her treasured family holidays.*



# Two decades of events to ponder...

By Steve



1953 a year for me to remember

Events good and bad from January till December

Stalin dies, turbulent years of the cold war commence

Inconclusive Korean war ends, North Korea will keep us in suspense

Cigarette smoking reports a cause of lung cancer for the first time

Francis Crick, James Watson report Double-Helix structure of the DNA line.

Hillary and Tenzing the first to reach the summit of Everest

The Queens Coronation in colour with Phillip there to assist

Derek Bentley is hanged for his part in the murder of PC miles

Sweet rationing stopped introduced in world war 2 bring lots of smiles

BBC introduce 'Watch With Mother' it runs for twenty years

Kids all over the country, mesmerised, they have no fears

1963 a decade has passed

A year of multi-coloured contrast

Kennedy assassinated, Mandela in prison

Philby defects to the USSR a new commission

John Glen - first American to Orbit the Earth

Martins 'I have a dream' the issues to unearth

Andy Warhol and Jasper John create Pop Art

Beatles 'Love me Do' top of the chart

Winter of 63 the worse since 47, snow on the ground till spring

Charles De Gaul vetoes our entry to the EEC, he will try anything

Beeching puts his BR hat plan in place

Huge cuts expected - what a disgrace.



# Life in the 70's!

By Sue

Living through the 70s  
An exciting and supremely mad time.  
For me, loving Donny and David  
Was my only crime.

The music was loud and so funky  
The fashions were totally outrageous.  
Being a teenager in the 70s  
A time to be brave and courageous.

The glamour and the sequins  
More craziness was the norm.  
But my biggest heartfelt longing  
Was to own a pair of iconic platforms.

I begged and I pleaded with mum  
The answer was always "No"  
They'll ruin your feet I was told  
I just want platforms, don't care about a toe!

Hot pants, oh beautiful hot pants  
They were my next on my list of desire.  
No. Too tight, too revealing  
Sadly, also never to be a part of my attire.





Knee high plastic boots then  
Now they would really look cool.  
No way they're far too expensive  
Unsuitable and banned from school.

Shang-a-lang sang the Bay City Rollers  
Tartan t-shirts, trousers and scarf.  
Well yes, that was a maybe  
But a luxury so I'd have to save up half.

The iconic fashions of the 70s  
We all wanted to be the stylish copycat  
But nothing, no nothing  
Will ever challenge the thrill of my Donny Osmond hat.

In purple, Donny's favourite colour  
Oh Donny, I feel so cool and so glam.  
Magically transformative headwear  
True Puppy Love for this Osmond fan.

Always showing my love for Donny  
It was the absolute must have accessory  
Worn with pride and worn for Donny  
Oh, what a fabulous memory.



# Crossing Continents

By Ruby

How did I come from living in a land that is 80% tropical rain forest, in South America to call an English Midland city famed for its pottery industry my home?

As a child running around in a rural village surrounded by cane fields. I could never have imagined that one day, I would exchange the relentless heat of the sun for a country where sunshine is so rare that it is usually greeted with joy and brings out the happy side of most people. In retrospect, only a very small part of my life was spent experiencing untamed freedom and being ignorant of the word 'pollution'. I lived in a village where the roads were of red dust, dry coconuts dropped from trees with surprising regularity, and huge Anaconda snakes lay lazily semi-camouflaged in muddy trenches waiting to pounce on an unsuspecting prey. My brothers and I climbed trees and picked mangoes, papayas and golden apple fruits.

Giving this up all came about because my parents decided that I needed to exchange this idyllic world, for one of education and what they saw as progress. I was removed to an urban environment to live with my aunt a senior school mistress. I would have access to the best education available in my native country. So successful was this plan, that when I finished high school, of my own accord, I decided that I wanted to travel far away across the seas, to a 'bigger and better world'. Having limited resources, I opted for nurse training in London in the late sixties. London was all I thought it would be, exciting, liberating, and educational. I was like a child in a huge candy shop.

Inevitably, marriage and children followed, but that brought with it its own complications.

As a result, in the early eighties, my husband and I decided to return to the Caribbean, where we thought our children had a good chance of optimal all-round development as confident, self-sufficient individuals.







Like me when it was time for higher education, we returned to the UK to our home we left in London. We soon settled back in. The children had to re-establish British residence, and I had to obtain a good paying job, as I knew university was to follow for all four children. In the time that had passed, I had become a single parent. I too had taken advantage of my time in Trinidad to further my own education, so I was able to secure a job as a lecturer in Cardiff University.

I loved that city and really enjoyed living there. I had easy access to beautiful scenic parks, a bustling modern town, theatres, cinemas and easy access to London. This was the first time in my life that I was living alone, but it was a very happy time despite lots of turmoil and new beginnings in my life.

I had no desire nor plan to relocate again. But, I did have four children all at university at the same time. When my department head told me that we would be joining a university in a place called Stoke-on-Trent, I did not even know where that was. I was in my fifties, and did not have many options opened to me professionally. I was offered a promotion, so I reluctantly decided to upheave myself once more to move to this new place. I must say, that after Cardiff, my first impressions of the place were not fantastic. It was a grey September day and the entire place looked sad to me. Fortunately, we were put up in the picturesque Keele Village where lots of Copper Beech trees and beautiful gardens added a certain charm to this vista.



From the start everyone here was very kind to me. A member of staff at the university who was moving, ensured that I got a beautiful little house that she had been renting in a cul-de-sac in Knutton. Someone from my church, who I had never met offered to come to help me to unpack. Everyone seemed to look out for me, and I felt safe and very welcome.



At this time, the only places I was very familiar with was the railway station, and Hanley Bus Station. Most Fridays, I was at one or the other, eagerly making my way home to London. These were long and tedious journeys, and they grew less and less as I made more friends here.

I had some pleasant new experiences, like going to garden centres, having a pub or a carvery meal, and visiting old churches and churchyards. I gradually began to see the beauty of the places surrounding where I lived. My friends took me to historical buildings and other places like Dorothy Clive gardens, Biddulph Grange and the various museums.



I walked along the banks of the canal and even enjoyed the various markets, in Stoke, Newcastle and Hanley. I discovered 3 theatres in Stoke and enjoyed visiting them whenever they had any performances on.

My next-door neighbour in Knutton took a personal interest in me and asked me why I was not buying a house. They reckoned I was wasting money paying rent. I promised if I was made permanent at the University, I would do so, and one of my friends went to five estate agents and ensured that I was on their list of potential buyers. I was made permanent and bought a lovely little house with a beautiful back garden.



I still had no intention of remaining in Stoke permanently. When I retired, I started to make plans to return to London, but all the estate agents who come to assess my house for sale, advised me that this was not a good time to sell, and that I should put it off for a few years until the property market was more promising.



The defining moment came however when my daughter finished university and got her first job as a vet in Stoke. She was driving all over the Staffordshire countryside and came home excitedly every day telling me what new place she had discovered. Because of this, I started driving to places in Biddulph Moor and beyond. I had made a good friend, and we went out once a month for the day. We went to different places like Mow Cop Leek, Buxton and Bakewell. The gym I was attending a few times a week closed and I started going to the jubilee baths where I met Dorothy. She introduced me to various social groups including the Beth Johnson Foundation.

Unbelievably since I have started with Beth Johnson, I have been to cooking classes, have learnt to write poetry and am drawing and painting for the first time in my life. I attend various history, well-being and just fun groups there (now via Zoom). All the facilitators are kind, patient and understanding. I have met many new people through this medium and have a friendly and educational sessions to look forward to daily. Through Beth Johnson I have been sign posted to various other groups like Seated Samba dancing, Arthritis and other helpful groups to me at my age.



I cannot end this article without mentioning the sterling health care that I have received from the Stoke-on-Trent health care facilities. They are second to none in my opinion, and even though I have had three major health traumas, I am still here to tell the tale.

So, you will understand when I say. I have no intention of moving from Stoke voluntarily. It has truly become my home.

HOME *Sweet* HOME



# The Picnic

*By Pauline*

I was about nine or ten. I remember playing make-believe games with my friend Lynn. We would go up the hill to Heanor and buy bags of kali from Woolworths with our pocket money. I used to get half a crown on Saturdays, that's half of five shillings in the old money = £ s d. It didn't go far but it seemed like a fortune to me.

We bought raspberry kali, sherbet lemon kali and rainbow kali from Woolworths. On arriving home, we sneaked into my Father's woodwork shed and pretended it was a laboratory and we were scientists. We mixed the kali with water in jars and bottles pretending we were testing for sweetness and fizziness. What marvellous imaginative minds we bought to our make-believe world.

I loved the smell of my Father's old shed, wood shavings and linseed oil which lingered forever even after a good clean and brush up.

We were not supposed to go into my Father's shed. If he caught us, as he did on one or two occasions, he would scold us something awful. Saying "I've told you to keep out of here. There are sharp tools and very dangerous equipment in here. It is not a playhouse."

In the end he got a padlock and that was that. However, it was good fun while it lasted.

The next day it was hot and sunny. Lynn and I were wondering what we could do. "I know." I said. "Why don't we have a picnic? We can go down the Pit Fields. We can take our kali lemonade to drink."

So with permission from Mum, we made lots of egg sandwiches and bought two bags of crisps from the beer off. Those were the days when they were only 3d a bag in the old money and you got a massive bag full.



We packed all our supplies in our backpacks which in those days were called rucksacks and started walking to our chosen destination.

We were almost there when we heard a strange popping sound. “What’s that?” I said. “I don’t know.” Replied Lynn. Then all of a sudden there was a very loud bang. We were drenched, as fountains of kali lemonade rained down on us. Of course, the heat and the constant jog jog of our walking had built the pressure in the bottles until the corks flew off. How we laughed!

Laughing still, we arrived at the Pit Fields, so called because the brook in which we washed our sticky selves was in the shade of mountains of black slack waste from the Pit, which was now closed.

It was idyllic, as we sat in the shade of the trees which blocked the ugly mountains of unusable coal. Instead we were among the bluebells, verdant grass and overhanging bows of the woods which met the meadows, the brook and the man-made monuments of detritus behind us.

We began to munch and chew and quench our thirst with our infamous fizzy liquids. Then I felt something tickling my ankle. I looked down and my foot was covered in ants. They were swarming all over us, loving the food and the sweet sticky liquid.

We must have looked like Indians of the Wild West doing a war dance as sandwiches and crisps flew into the air and landed in the stream. We couldn’t get away from that little piece of Paradise quick enough!

Oh to be ten years old again.



*Pauline's painting of the beautiful bluebell woods from her childhood memories*

# My first job and the wonders of technology!

By Yvonne

I started my first job at 16 as soon as I left school. I finished school on the Friday and by Monday I was an employee! It was 1974 and I found myself at Rists Wires and Cables in Milehouse. At the time it was one of North Staffordshire's largest employers, with over 4000 employees, and made wires and cables for all sorts of industries round the world.

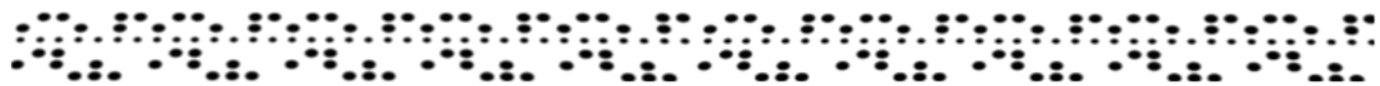
I got a job in the post and telex department. We worked in a little room with pigeon holes covering the walls. My job was to sort and deliver the post for the offices, and I worked alongside another girl who did the same role for the factory floor. We worked quickly though and often did our rounds together – we really enjoyed it!



Whenever I got the chance though, I jumped on the telex machines – and I took every opportunity that I could. I absolutely loved it! The girl whose job it was to operate the machines used to joke that she couldn't get out of her chair without me jumping into it. We were really good friends. She emigrated to Canada a year after I joined Rists and I was very happy to be able to take the role on full time.

I went to visit her for a holiday and while I was there staying with her in Ottawa, she arranged to take me into her new place of work so I could send myself a telex all the way from Canada that would be waiting for me when I got back to the UK!





The machines looked a bit like typewriters but were connected to a telegraph-type machine that transmitted data to other telex machines using telephone circuits. You typed information on the keyboard and it was either transferred onto a tape or typed live. Once you were finished typing your information, you dialled the number of another machine using a rotary dialler and when that machine answered, you pressed a button to send your tape through a tape reader or typed it live.

We had three machines in our office – 1 used only for inbound calls, 1 for outbound only and 1 that did both. All the machines could do both, but if you were working on an outbound call on a machine and someone tried to call in it would interrupt your message so we kept them separate.

We used to send messages all around the world to different car manufacturers– America, Finland and even Japan! I made some really good friends from those calls. I still keep in touch with one of the girls I used to message in Finland; she has visited me here in the UK and I always planned to go and visit her. But you're not so brave when you get a bit older...

When I was younger I was happy to embrace an opportunity. In 1977 Rists decided to arrange a fundraiser for Penkhull homes and asked for volunteers to do sponsored events and I was happy to volunteer – to do a parachute jump!! I frightened my Mum and Dad half to death but I had a brilliant time. Four of us took part and we raised a lot of money - it was quite an achievement back then.



I remember them saying to me *'this will be something you can tell your grandchildren about'* and I laughed – grandchildren were another lifetime away; I couldn't imagine that day ever arriving. The future was a blank page and we had no idea what the coming years would bring...



But I was so lucky to have had my first job at Rists, it's funny to think that I used to love working on something that seemed so advanced at the time, yet now seems so simple compared to modern technologies.

Not very long ago, I couldn't do anything at all with computers or mobile phones. I had tried so many times, but trying to learn how to use them felt overwhelming and I had all but given up!

But then I decided to give Healthy Generations a call. They were so patient and gave me the time and support I needed to start to understand how things work, and everything started to fall into place. I still have lots to learn but with the help of Healthy Generations I have come so far. I can download apps to my phone, I booked my Covid vaccine appointment online and can send basic emails - and use my google home assistant - all things that seemed impossible not so long ago! I know that being able to do things online is so important these days – especially in the middle of a pandemic. And now thanks to Healthy Generations, I can!





# St Patrick's Day

By Steve

Around 200 years ago,  
my great grandfather and his mother,  
Catholics from Kerry, fled their homeland from the famine,  
From Dingle Bay to Burslem, a new life in pots and mines.

The census says  
Lodged in Newcastle street,  
Could not write, A cross marks the spot  
He was 10, working in the pit, she was 28, washing clothes.

Did they read, speak Gaelic?  
Did people understand them?  
Did they celebrate St Patrick's feast day?  
Did they have the green beer and the caelie?

The next census,  
No trace of her,  
Had she disappeared or died, he was married living in Cobridge,  
Wedding certificate marked with a X.

150 years later,  
Me and my wife were in Dublin,  
In St Stephens green, on St Patrick's day,  
Drinking Green Beer, Doing the Caelie, watching the parade.

Fourth generation Irish  
Thinking of the past  
St Patrick's feast day of old, Wearing Green  
Irish folk songs, In Stoke-on-Trent

# The Ranch

By Dorothy

This poem is dedicated in memory of my dear sister Eileen.

I was brought up in Wythenshawe,  
three miles from a park that's for sure.  
We used to walk there without a fuss,  
and sometimes came back on the bus.  
With Mam, Dad, me and siblings three,  
we found a very special tree.  
It had funny shaped branch,  
which we all called our Ranch.

Every time we went to Wythenshawe Park.  
We played on our Ranch till nearly dark.  
We always knew just where it was of course.  
Sometimes we pretended it was a horse.

How the many years have flown,  
we now have families of our own.  
One day some years ago,  
my sister said That we should go.  
To take our families, to see the ranch,  
with its very special branch.



Thanks to Dorothy for sharing this wonderful photo of her beautiful Mam in Wythenshawe Park



We travelled there from near and far.  
We couldn't walk but went by car.  
We all took food, and played some games.  
Then we gathered all by calling their names.  
And then we walked around and round,  
but our tree could not be found.

When suddenly someone shouted out!  
"We'll not find this tree, there is no doubt  
forty years for us has flown,  
In which time that tree has grown."

We didn't know whether to laugh or cry,  
because our Ranch was way up high.  
Still it's good to know that high amongst the trees.  
Is a Branch so full of memories.



Photo of Dorothy's family taken in Wythenshawe Park on the day of the family visit to look for their special 'Ranch'

# Africa and Me

By Ruby

I know I was descended from African slaves  
That's the only explanation for my place of birth  
being on the South American continent far across the waves

My grandmother, who was born in 1896  
Told me about her ancestry which was just this  
Her grandmother, she told us, was an African slave  
And she produced children with an Irish overseer,  
my grandmother was very proud of this,  
because of the phenomenon of colourism  
which in these colonies did exist  
The lighter your skin and the straighter your hair  
Allowed such people to feel superior to the darker skin people I fear  
So my grandmother who was light skinned with an aquiline nose  
Thought that this ancestry she could proudly expose

I did not understand  
the full implications of this genetic mixture,  
or the unfairness that my ancestor had to withstand  
My grandmother had glamorized her heritage  
and told us all the time  
How well her grandmother was treated  
and how this overseer father to her was so kind  
She told us that he gave his slave woman  
livestock and land  
And had her live in comfort in Barbados  
with many helpers who were designated with his children to lend a hand

As I got older and learnt about the slave trade  
I realized that there were so many gaps in this unlikely story it was a shame  
Perhaps this story is what my grandmother was told  
Myths get formed when stories get old





For some reason, I did not mind going to England to spread my wings  
I had no desire to go to Africa, a continent where people were sold into  
slavery allegedly for beads and bling

I felt that they were partly responsible for my ancestors' enslavement  
and loss of my true heritage

For the pain and suffering they had to survive  
and horrible conditions in which they had to live

As far as I understood slaves were captured and sold by rival tribes  
Who capitalized on these people's weaknesses in order to thrive

Another negative was in the media, the way that Africa was portrayed  
Starvation, famines, wars, and skeletal images of children,  
it seemed to be a continent plagued

To add to this when I first arrived in England in the sixties  
some of the African people I met told me, with disdain

You are the daughter of a slave,  
and what you are called is not even really your true name.

So this continent I was not anxious to see,  
too many negative perceptions engulfed me

However, when my university wanted to recruit students from Africa,  
they chose me.

That's how I came to travel to Africa and to my surprise

That's where my miseducation was revealed for the first time in my life

When I landed in my first African country, I was full of surprise

My ideas I had to disavow as I could not believe my eyes

I had done my research I had read up on culture and practices... how cunning?

I thought I was fully prepared and would hit the ground running

But nothing prepared me for the  
realities I would embrace

Or the pleasure or affinity I would feel  
in that place

That was to be the same for every  
country on that continent I visited

Whether it was East, West or South,  
only to the North I was not invested.

The countries were so beautiful, they  
took my breath away

Even the poorest villages where I went to stay



Vast expanses of spaces so picturesque  
Natural phenomena such as large ant hills,  
huge trees and vivid green forests  
Beautiful animals larger than life  
Came up to me on village streets  
as I was walking by  
But when a lemur offered me a mango  
I was not thrilled  
My scream frightened the animal way,  
I was really loud and shrill



In all countries I visited there was a huge diversity  
Between rich and poor .... there was a lot of poverty  
In the capital cities, there are modern up to date buildings  
The hotels were plush, and it was difficult to understand  
that it was Africa I was visiting  
But in the villages, there were little mud huts with red dust roads  
There were no fences, no property boundaries  
just kind simple people who carried great loads



I held my meetings  
under huge shady trees;  
the branches were large and wide and  
there was always a gentle breeze  
The village people came bare footed and  
some with ragged clothes  
But they were always very clean and polite  
and great courtesy they showed

Women came out to pump water from underground wells  
They came from early morning but some were there until night as well

I had to get used to people curtseying to me  
Because they perceived me as elderly  
That was their way of showing respect, on this I could rely  
Especially from the young children,  
who expected me in their language to reply



At 5 am I woke up to the brightest golden yellow sun  
Then I knew that for me another day in Africa had begun  
In the villages at dawn there were sounds of brooms everywhere  
Sweeping their dusty yards clean and preparing for the days fare

But my trip to Africa was the most hard  
When I visited the beautiful spice island of Zanzibar  
In Stone town I was taken to an ecclesiastical compound  
With a magnificent church dedicated to the Scottish explorer Livingstone  
It is alleged that his heart was buried under the altar there  
Apparently at his request that his heart must remain in Africa;  
not just anywhere



There I visited the holding cells of slaves, so underground I had to go  
To the tunnels that led to waiting ships which picked up their human cargo  
From there they were taken in shackles to be transported by sea  
And then be borne to the new world their homes again never to see

Something happened to me there quite unexpectedly  
My throat got very dry, I felt suffocated and I started to cry un-controllably  
I asked the guide to take me out of that prison immediately  
Irrationally, I thought if I stayed there a second longer something dreadful  
would happen to me

So that's why when people are intent on me tracing my ancestry  
I tell them politely, nothing like that is ever for me.

# Grace and a Trip down Memory Lane

By Steve

Recently my youngest daughter was asked to come out of retirement (at the age of 20) and play for Milford ladies cricket team, if they won, promotion to the 1<sup>st</sup> Division was guaranteed. She obliged, I met her at the ground and chatted before the warm up.

During the warm up disaster struck, the Milford captain had been hit by the ball on her index finger and it looked broken. The captain received first aid treatment from one of the players who is a paramedic saying the finger was dislocated. She decided to go to the hospital after the game but would only field (not bat or bowl).



Member of the Staffordshire National  
Winning team 2016 (U15's)

At this point, memories came flooding back to the events in 2017 when my daughter aged 16 played her first Staffordshire senior game vs Surrey near Croydon.

We arrived at the ground in plenty of time after setting off very early. The ground was at a private school with a 2 storey pavilion and a full electronic scoreboard, way above her normal playing environment.

In the car park we noticed about 4 KIA SUV's. This was the car of choice for England lady players. Fear struck as none of the Staffordshire squad were even in the England squad.

Surrey won the toss and elected to bat.

Grace was fielding at Cover and after the fall of the first wicket, Nat Sciver appeared at the crease (she is no 3 for England and an all-rounder who hits the ball hard!!!).





Nat hit a shot and Grace chased the ball and dived to save a four but the ball hit her left hand index finger. She continued in pain to field for their innings. At the end of their innings she spoke to the Staffordshire and the Surrey coaches who checked the finger and advised her to go for an Xray at the Cottage hospital just down the road.

We arrived at the cottage hospital around 3pm, waited to see a doctor who told us that the X-ray department was closed indefinitely and we had to go to Croydon hospital about 20 minutes away. During the drive there Grace had a nose bleed which would not stop.

When we arrived at Croydon hospital at about 4pm on the Sunday afternoon it was difficult to find a parking space. Blimey this will be a long wait I thought! In went the coins at a fast rate to get the parking ticket a minimum of 4 hours is required so I thought 'should be on the road home by then'! In we rushed, to get more tissues for the nose bleed which eventually stopped.

We filled in the paperwork and after being moved from pillar to post, eventually we were asked to go to Children's A&E. To our amazement the Children's A&E waiting room was full with standing room only and no-one on the information desk.

The area was full of all nationalities, babes in arms and children running riot. My head dropped with the anticipation of an even longer stay and wishing we had driven home and gone to Stoke A&E.

Eventually a doctor appeared at the information desk and explained the situation that there was a staff shortage and at that point in time there was no-one doing X-rays. After a couple of hours, I asked another doctor who was at the information desk and he told me that someone had arrived to help with X-rays and we should be called shortly. After another couple of hours, I then had to get to the car to put more money in the parking metre.

Slowly people were called for X-rays, including someone who came after us. I went to the desk and was told her case was more serious even though I couldn't see any visible injury covered with bandages or plaster. Suddenly

the X-ray announcements stopped and the room was told that the X-rays had stopped while waiting for the new shift to arrive. This was around 8.00pm. After around 30 minutes, several of us moved to the information desk and asked what was going on.

Won't be long now, as a group we said 'enough is enough we want some action now, its utter chaos out here'!!!! I can only assume that a senior doctor was involved because the X-ray announcements started again.

Eventually at around 9pm, after 5 hours, we got the X-ray. We waited another hour for the X-ray review, which showed a hairline fracture of the finger. We were told to attend the Fracture clinic on the following Tuesday (I think) in Stoke and the xrays would be sent to Stoke (not given to us which concerned me).

At last we set off around 10pm and because of Motorway closures had to go through the centre of London. At the time I was working at Fullers Brewery (Home of London Pride) in Chiswick and was surprised when we passed it on the south ring road and even more surprised when we passed the Tesla showroom fully lit up, where are you my SAT NAV taking me?

Eventually we arrived home around 2am – LONG DAY!

Monday morning, we had to get in touch with the GP, she needed a letter explaining that the fracture to her left hand (her writing hand) meant she would need more time to do her GCSE exams, which was given.

On the Tuesday we attended the fracture clinic to find out no Xrays had been sent but somehow the consultant managed to get onto their website to see them and confirmed the fracture and at least 4 weeks to mend and no cricket.

This was her last game for Staffordshire aged 17, as she decided to progress her Umpiring skills.

She is now part of the ECB ACO (England umpires) pathway and hopefully in 2022 will umpire at the Hundred and eventually International Ladies cricket matches (broken finger crossed).



Umpiring at Lords MCC tournament 2018



# Harpfield Infant and Junior School

By Chris

Harpfield School opened in May 1875 and closed 129 years later. I wonder if anyone ever worked out how many children were educated in those years? That would be interesting!



I was admitted to Harpfield Infant school in 1948 into the Nursery class but other than remembering having to lie on a camp bed every afternoon and having a nap I haven't got any other memorable events. I loved my nap, but my sister Sheila hated it and was

always in trouble for not going to sleep and playing tricks on her friends. If you were naughty you had your name entered on a list and it was displayed on the class room door. My sister's name featured most days!

The most memorable event to me was being chosen to be one of the May Queen's attendants. I went home full of excitement and joy, but my poor mother was stressed out as she found it very difficult to obtain white material to make the dress. It was 1949 and not that long after the war had finished, rationing was still on and a lot of things difficult to obtain.

The next day I went to school distraught, when I explained to my teacher Miss Newton the problem we had. The girl who had been chosen to be the actual May Queen made me cry by saying that I would not be allowed to be her attendant as I would spoil the whole event. I went home that afternoon heart-broken, but one of our neighbours a Mrs Farrell heard about our dilemma and told my mum not to worry as she knew where she could get

some white material and she would make my dress and I WOULD be the May Queen's attendant. Oh the joy! I loved that lady all my life and never forgot her kindness.

What a wonderful day we had on May Day. For weeks before the event we practised our May Pole Dancing. It was quite difficult and complex, but the teachers helped us a lot and we got it right in



the end. We were all so proud when we did the dancing on the day in the school playground with our parents watching. This was followed by the “crowning” of the Queen. A day that has always stayed in my memory.

Miss Newton, was my very favourite teacher and a truly lovely lady. When I was nearly 7 years of age I was taken very poorly at a Christmas Concert held in the school hall at the Infant School. Unfortunately it turned out to be very serious and I spent the next year in Birmingham at Moseley Hall. During my time in the hospital I received many lovely letters from Miss Newton giving me encouragement to get better again. When I returned home I was too old to return to the Infant School and was admitted to the Junior School, although for the next year I only attended part time due to my illness.

I have so many good memories of Harpfield Junior School I could write a book. Most of the time I was very happy and I made some very good friends. We had 40 pupils in our class and the teachers were VERY strict. Although I never received any physical punishments, I can remember our top class teacher hitting us on the head with his knuckles to make us concentrate. He was more lenient to us girls, but the poor boys got some hard smacks at times. I personally don't think this did any harm to us and we certainly knew how to behave and show respect to the teachers.



Miss Chadwick was the Head Teacher! Anyone reading this who knew Miss Chadwick is probably remembering how very strict she was. As I say, I was a very good pupil and rarely got into any trouble but I remember how I was once unfairly punished by Miss Chadwick. In 1952 when I was 9, we were told that our King had died and the whole Country was grieving. It came as such a shock to us. The next day I made myself a few minutes late for school, something I had never done before. I had a routine - I always waited for the music to start on the radio to Housewife's Choice and that was my signal to leave home, run down the street, meet my fellow pupils and go into the playground until the school bell rang.

Oh dear, what had I done!! No one was around and I was so frightened but I knew I had to attend school so carried on. Assembly had started – Miss Chadwick was on the stage taking the Assembly. What should I do? I didn't dare to enter the Hall and disturb the Assembly so I waited in the cloakroom. When it had finished I went into the Hall hoping she wouldn't notice me, but of course she did. I will never ever forget trying to explain my reason for being late, but no, she wouldn't listen to me and slapped my legs until they were red. Oh boy, did I cry. She was so unfair.

It's strange that when we were at school all the teachers seemed very old, but when I took my eldest boy to be admitted to the Infant school Miss Newton was still there, it was so lovely to see her again, & she remembered me! Miss Chadwick was still the Head teacher at the Junior school and still as strict!

I think we had a very good all round education at Harpfield, we were taught the basics – Reading Writing & Arithmetic, Physical Education, such as swimming, dancing and outdoor sports. I loved it when we had Percussion Music, although I would have loved to have played the drums I usually played the triangle!

It was a very happy part of my childhood and I was sad when I left. I took my 11+ at Harpfield School and was fortunate to pass the exam, and went on to the Orme Girls High School in Newcastle.



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