

Do You Remember...?

Growing up in Botley

The first part of a memoir by Ann Ford, nee Trinder

My father, Arthur Trinder, married my mother, Winifred Barrett in May 1940, and they moved into a brand-new semi-detached house built in a crescent on the east side of the present A34, just past Yarnells Road, and whose address was in those days, quite simply, 'The Southern By Pass'. I was born in May 1941, and because my father, a master printer, worked away for the Government printing secret documents and maps connected with war work, an evacuee mother and baby from London were placed in our house. The house boasted an aquamarine coloured bathroom suite – quite something in those days – and my mother was furious that the evacuee, when pressed to clean the bath, used Harpic, which took off the gloss!

My paternal grandparents, Arthur and Maud Trinder, lived in a detached house called 'Ivyhurst' in West Way, just before where Cumnor Hill and Eynsham Road split. They built the house themselves around 1924. They had moved only a short distance, from number 72 West Way. My father remembered helping to dig out the foundations for Ivyhurst when he was just 13 years old. He had won a scholarship to what was then Roysse's School (now Abingdon School) and used to cycle there and back daily.

When I was 5, and my sister Helen was still a small baby, I spent a lot of time with the Trinder grandparents, actually *walking* down the Southern By Pass to their house on my own. A favourite occupation for children then was to sit on the kerbside, with a notebook, taking car registration numbers – can you imagine doing *either* of these things now? (*And why would you bother? Because the registration plate told you where the car had come from! I can still recognize, from their FJ, DD and OD registrations, cars that come from Devon where I grew up. Not the case any more, of course, since the plates changed in 2000 – Ed*) There was a ditch then, in front of the houses which now comprise the lower section of Westminster Way from Montague Road, and I once dropped the gollywog that my mother had knitted into it, and was unable to retrieve it. In the second house down from Montague Road, lived Dr Dempsey and his family. In 1947, he was one of the first to open a National Health Surgery in the front room of his house. You didn't need appointments in those days – it was first come, first served, so there was always quite a queue outside his house long before the Surgery opened...

Back to Botley now: where Andrews Dry Cleaners and the Nat West Bank are (soon to be knocked down in their turn), stood Elms Farm House. Behind here was Mr Howse's Dairy. In the early 1940s, I can just remember two of my aunts, Irene and Doris Barrett, taking a horse and cart, loaded with churns of milk, up Cumnor Hill. Residents would bring out their own jugs and dip them into the churns. Several years later, when Miss Toynee moved into Elms Farm House, she kindly allowed members of the Baptist Church Youth Club to meet at her house. She was a great benefactor, although most people were unaware of her anonymous donations.

The shops on Elms Parade, apart from a few facelifts, still look much the same as they did when I was a child. Mr Wissett the chemist had a shop; there was Mr Booth, the fishmonger, the Lanka cafe and cake shop, the Post Office, and Mr Gaisford, the barber.

(It's still Gaisford, after all these years, and is the place to buy 'The Changing Faces of Botley' Book 2, from which this photo from 1956 is taken. The ironmonger's in the centre is now Andrews Estate Agents – Ed). In the flat above the barber's shop, 'Grace' had a ladies hairdressing salon in her front room. And there was Cambrey's



Elms Parade in 1956

the butcher's. Notice the clock in the centre of the parade: the numerals spell out 'STEPHEN HOWSE' who was responsible for building the Parade in 1937. The West Way shopping precinct did not exist in those days, there was open land for grazing instead, with a footpath across from where Barclay's Bank is now, through to Arthray Road with a stile at either end. I remember that, adjacent to the parade, in the mid to late 1950s, was a small wooden shop – a jeweller's, owned by a Mr Taylor.

On the opposite side of the road, the building on the corner of Poplar Road (where Ideal Eyes is now situated) was the Co-operative grocery store. The Seacourt Bridge Inn has always been on the opposite corner of Poplar Road for as long as I can remember.

Ann Ford