

# **Phil Walton**

## **Buglawton Boy**

**Between 1948 - 1976**



*"I left school age 14 with happy  
memories, no qualifications, friends  
for life and a bible"*

## Phil Walton – Buglawton Boy

### Introduction:

Having been involved in family history for most of my adult life I decided that it is time to record my own impact, small as it may be, on this planet. I was uncertain how to start and was helped with a suggestion from a friend - Nick Rushbrook. My initial plan was to copy Nick's idea – that is, using an A4 format produce one page of text noting key events with a facing page of relevant photos for every year. I have followed Nick's example but only in part. Nick produced his record for his own family and also kindly presented me with a copy of the final book. He had carefully woven into his history relevant local and national significant events, this I found very interesting and so concluded that I would try to provide additional information about the local area and other people that I was in contact with at the time of certain of the events.

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**Acknowledgements:** - I thank the many people who have helped me with my research – I have tried to include names wherever I felt appropriate. Apologies to anyone that I have missed. I take full and personal responsibility for any errors or inconsistencies.....Phil Walton....December 2024

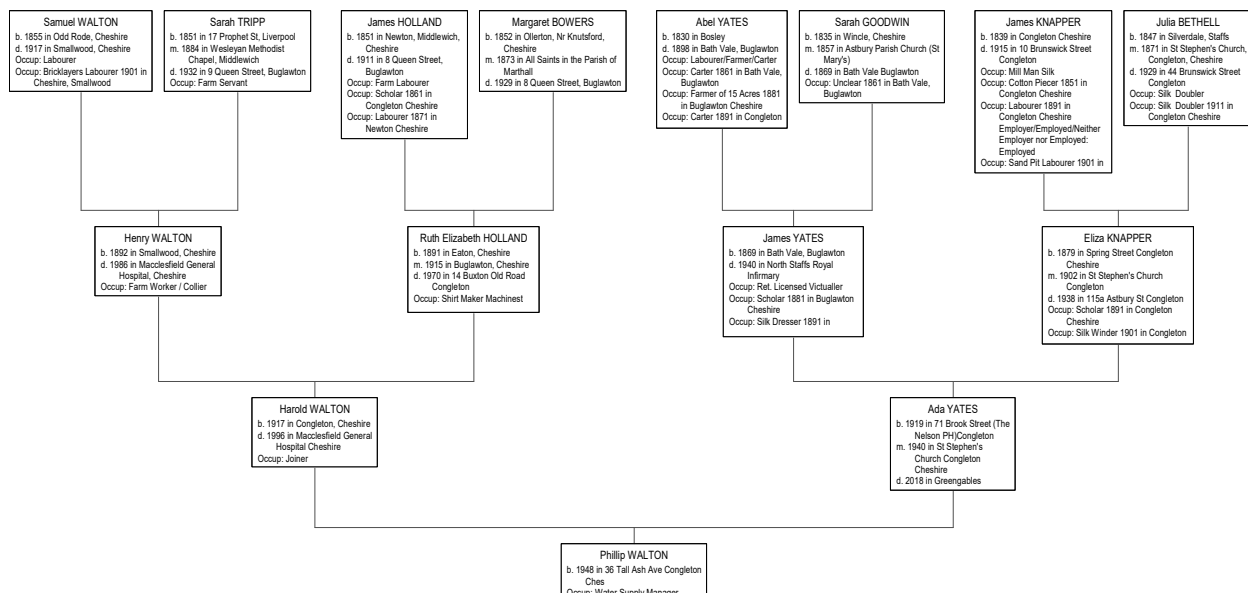


## My Grandparents:

Information about my maternal grandparents is second hand as both of my mothers parents had died before I was born, Eliza (nee Knapper) in 1938 aged 59 and James in 1940 aged 70. In addition to my passed on Mothers memories I can also call on my extensive family history research. My mother was born on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1919 in The Lord Nelson pub in Brook Street Congleton. This photograph is taken at the front of the former building with James sitting in the front of the Charabanc on the right hand side. And below is a photo taken at the time of my parents wedding in August 1940 when Dad was on leave from the army. They married at St Stephens, Congleton and the group photo is taken outside of 115a Astbury Street Congleton where Mum lived. In the wedding picture left to right Cissie Thorley (nee Knapper) (Ada's Aunt), Ruth Walton (nee Holland, Harold's mother), Nancy Walton (Harold's sister), Harold, Ada, Julia Yates (Ada's sister) James Yates (James died two months later). It might be that Henry Walton (Harold's father) took the photo, so the two added photos are Henry with his dog (called Nigger, which in those days would go unnoticed) and a portrait of Eliza Yates (nee Knapper) Ada's mother. James Yates was the Lord Nelson landlord until the mid 1920's when



the family moved to Biddulph and became the landlord of The Swan on Biddulph High Street, this building does still exist. Henry Walton was born in Smallwood and left school aged 12 to work on a farm, he later became a coal miner and later for a long period was a driver for Congleton Co-op. Henry Walton's father (Samuel) was a wheelwright and in his childhood spent a number of years in Arclid Workhouse with his brother and mother following the death of his father George. George was a canal boatman. George died in 1855, one month before Samuel was born and two days after his leg was amputated after becoming caught in the rope attached to the horse pulling his canal boat. George's wife Sarah (nee Tripp) originated in Liverpool and moved to Cheshire after giving birth to an illegitimate baby. Sarah had also spent time in the workhouse (Liverpool in her case) during her childhood, her father worked as a Rigger on ships. My mothers paternal grandfather Abel Yates was a carter with his own business and her maternal grandfather James Knapper had various manual jobs including Plate Layer and Millman (silk). I would not be writing this if they hadn't succeeded in overcoming the many hard times they suffered. They are all worthy of recognition.





## Buglawton in the 1950s

Most of my childhood memories are set in Buglawton. Here are a few facts about Buglawton during and before I arrived. Completing this record has increased my understanding of the local area. People I knew during the 1950s have shared their own thoughts and memories of the time during which many changes occurred. To understand what was happening I have copied before and after maps for the Buglawton area. The four early maps are reproduced with the permission of the [National Library of Scotland](#). I did not set out to write a history of Buglawton – the changes at the time did impact those like myself who were around at the time. There does not appear to be a definitive history of Buglawton. I have though referred to a very good booklet produced by the late Peter Boon which is available in Congleton museum – it is called “Buglawton”.

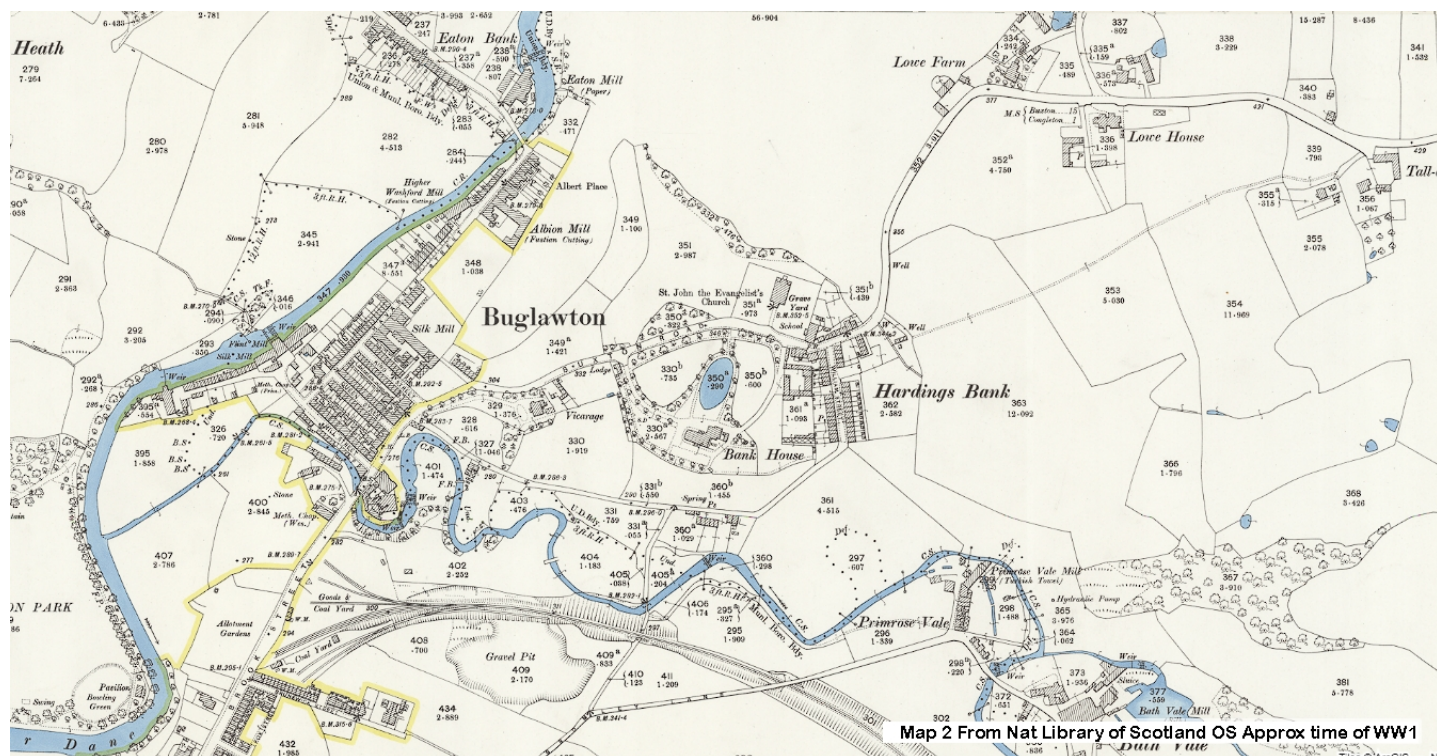
### The Maps:

1. Map 1 is the late 1800s – the population of Buglawton fluctuated between 1500 and 2000 with most houses being close to the River Dane in lower Buglawton - Mill Street, Queen Street & King Street (locally known as Bottom, Middle & Top Street), Havannah Street, Eaton Bank, Bridge Row and Dane Row. A second group of workers cottages at Hardings Bank close to the Church and convenient for the mills close to Dane in Shaw Brook.
2. Map 2 is from around the time of World War One – hardly any change from the first map but showing the rows of cottages in much better detail. Up until 1936 when it became a suburb of Congleton Buglawton was an independent Urban District, with most of the population in the industrialised area close to the River Dane.
3. Map 3 is the late 1940s – Some cottages are now being demolished. My father lived at 7 Queen Street until it was demolished in 1937 his family moving to Kingsley Road in the area always known as “Tin Town”. High Low Avenue (1919) and the top part of Tall Ash Avenue (1924), were similar new post WW1 council houses.
4. Map 4 moves us onto the late 1960s – there was continued rapid housing development. The Buglawton Council Estate was built between 1956-58, with the Buxton Road bypass completed between 1954-56. Many private houses were built after this including the “Star Homes” development behind Tall Ash Avenue in 1961. It is interesting that the “BUGLAWTON” name has moved higher up to be close to the Church and new estate.
5. Map 5 is a current (2024) online aerial view. Buglawton is now very urban but still has rural surroundings.
6. A final full page map highlighting many of the locations mentioned in this book.



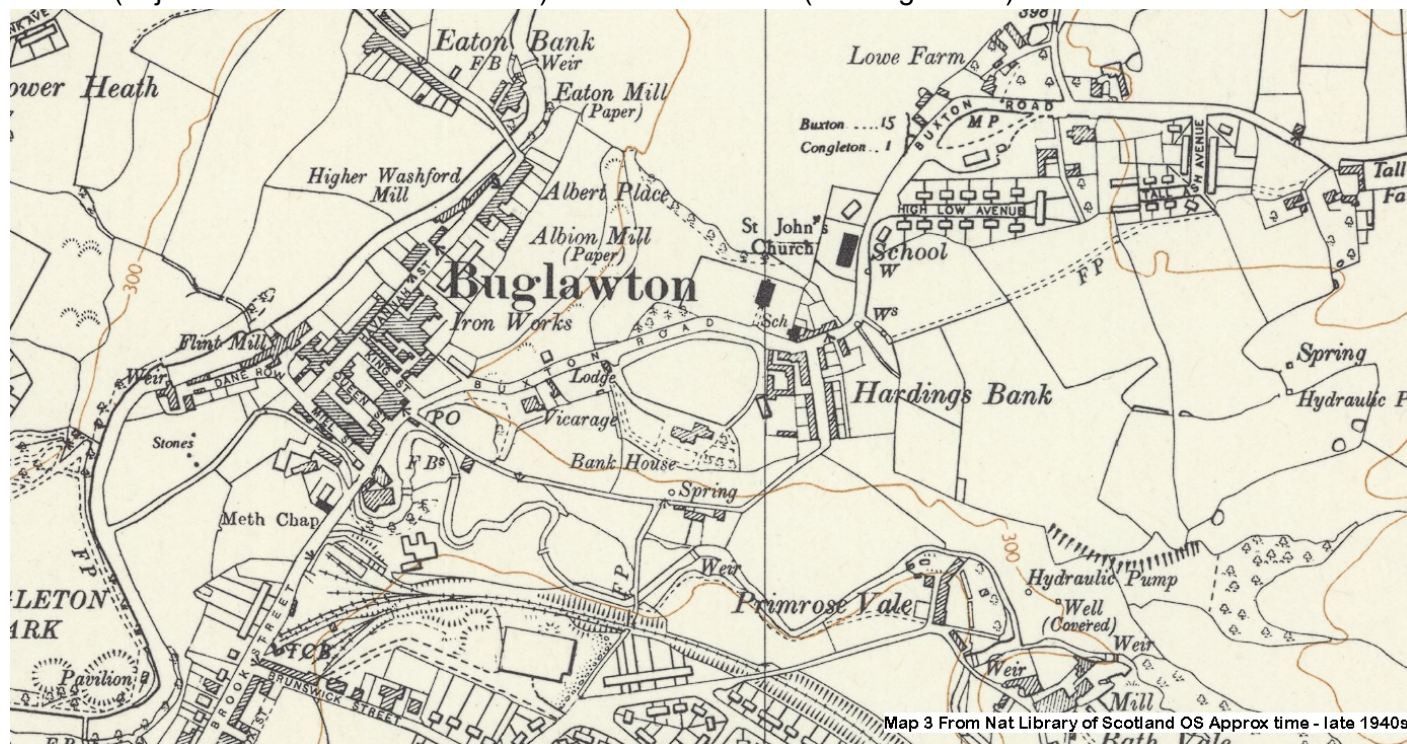
Map 1 From Nat Library of Scotland OS 1250 based on 1873 survey





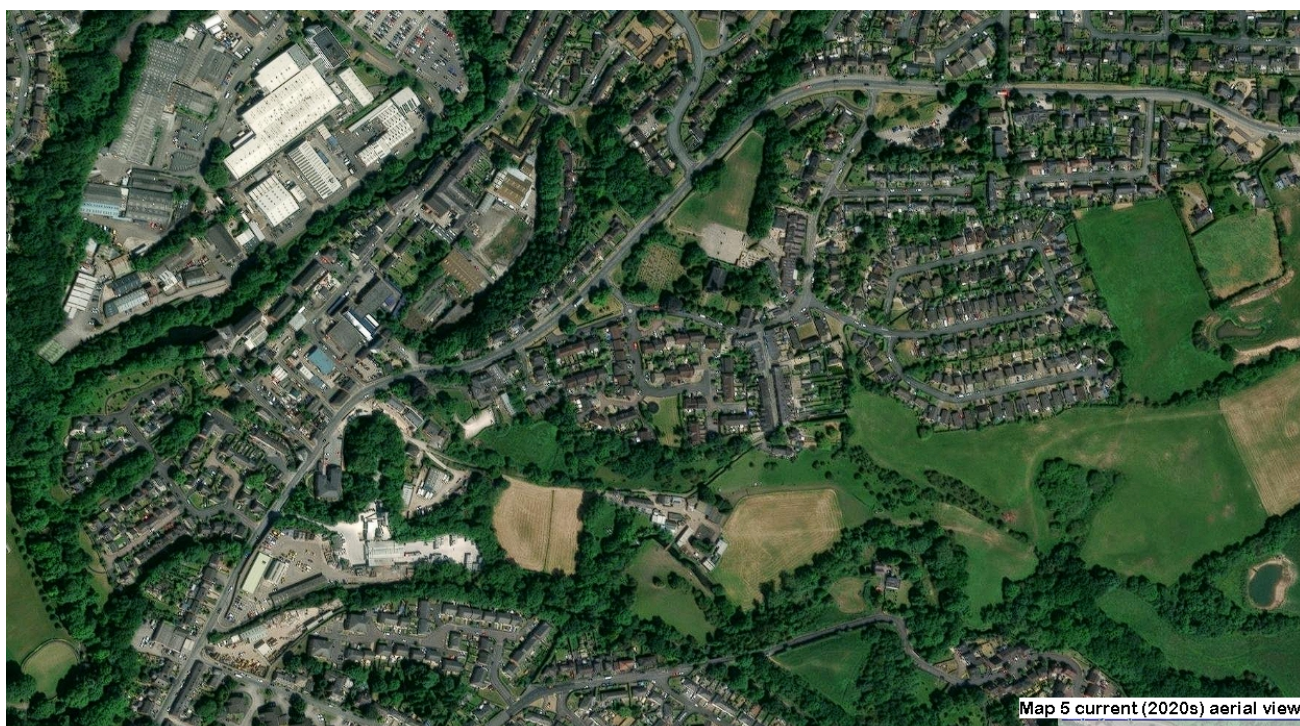
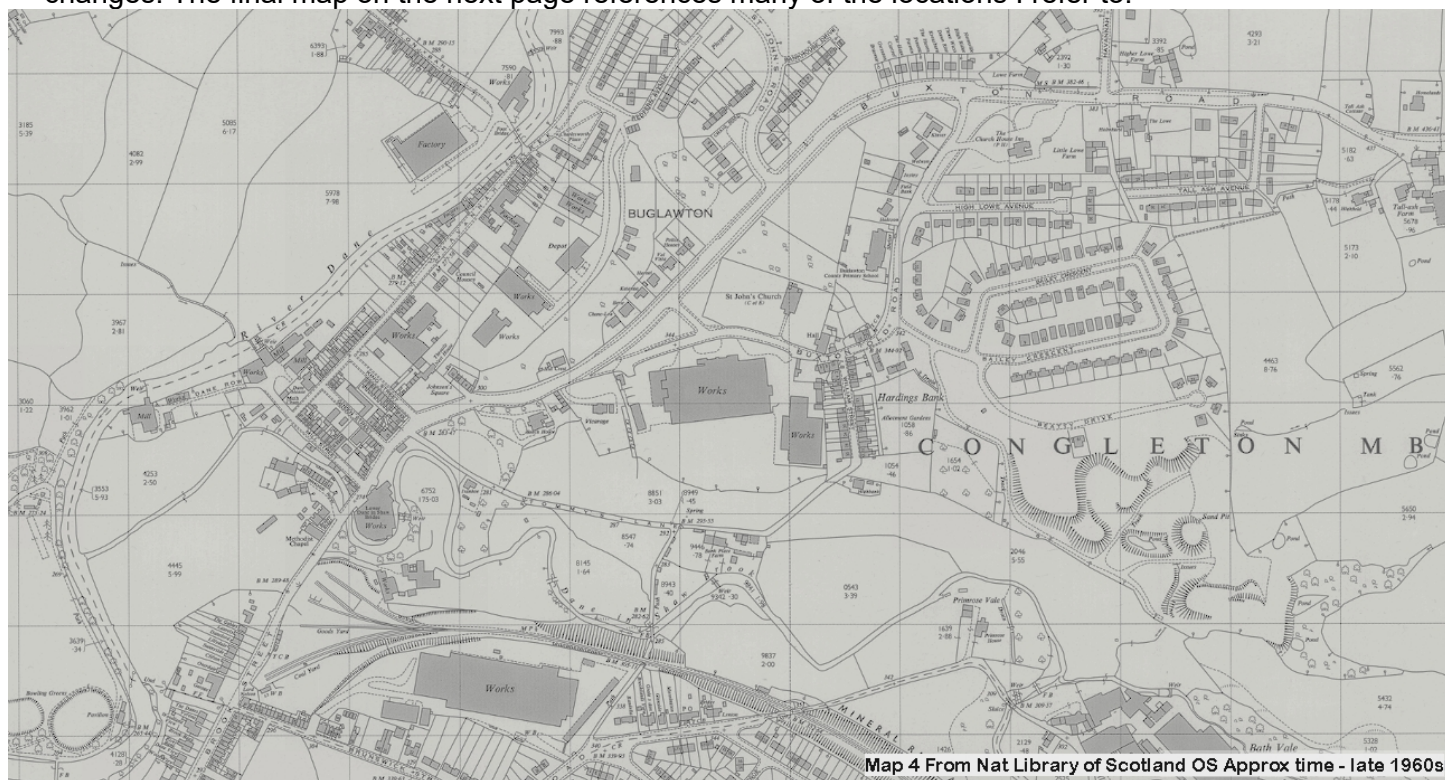
The map (2) above shows the main areas of population when my father Harold was born in 1917 (he was actually just about on the map in Brook Street Congleton, next to what in 2024 is Throughgoods shop). Two years later my mother, Ada Yates, was born close by also in Brook Street at the Lord Nelson Pub at the corner of Brook Street and Brunswick Street (next to the end of the mineral railway line). However they met for what may have been the first time twenty years later at Congleton Fair. In-between these years (previous page) they had both moved with their families, Harold to Kingsley Road, Congleton and Ada as a small girl to another pub (The Swan in Biddulph).

What is most striking to me now is the speed of change in moving people from the old village centre in Lower Buglawton to new housing both council and private on both sides of the Buxton Road bypass. Not much of the older housing has remained, the most notable seem to be Bridge Row (adjacent to Dane in Shaw brook) and William Street (Hardings Bank).





Map 3 is included to show where the first council housing appeared between the two world wars – High Low and Tall Ash Avenues. The detailing in this map is not very good, map 4 below is much clearer with the disappearing houses in Lower Buglawton being evident. I have clear memories of the Newsagents (Hardings?) and Oliver Rutlands shop next door. The Co-op was at the bottom of Queen Street and the Post Office at the bottom of King Street. There were shops in Havannah Street and near to Brook Street Chapel. Along Mill Street were Denham's chip shop (I was often despatched there by my mother to buy wet fish which was also sold there), the Labour Club and Staffordshire Knot pub. I can't recall ever going further along Mill Street in my younger days so never ventured towards Washford Mill and Dane Row (if it was still there) or the Primitive Chapel (the Pigeon Loft) – which I didn't enter until 2022 when it had become a welcoming cafe. The reopening of the Throstles Nest (much loved by my Grandfather) is one of not very many welcome changes. The final map on the next page references many of the locations I refer to.





## Buglawton in the 1950s



**Our Playground** – the main map shown on here is dated around 1950 – superimposed (faintly) is the current road layout (2022).

Buildings that existed in the early 1950s are in darker print. Note: 1) the darker print for the earlier council house building – Brunswick Street area (Tin Town), High Lowe Avenue, the top of Tall Ash Avenue, 2) The older part of the village Mill Street, Queen Street, King Street (Bottom, Middle and Top Streets), 3) The “Buxton Road” bypass.



## Tall Ash Avenue

I was born and lived at 36 Tall Ash Avenue for 24 years until Kath and I married in 1972. The first 24 houses (without a hipped roof) and closest to Buxton Road were built in 1924, a further 10 houses were added just before I was born in 1948 (we were the first family to live in number 36) these houses have a hipped roof. There is one more house on the photo below (number 38), this was build in what was our garden at number 36.



My recollection of names of people in the newer houses at that time are:

- 21 – Bosson – Gordon and Mary with their children – Gordon, Doreen, Alan and Christine, born in later years were Dorothy and Maureen.
- 23 – Skellern – Cyril and ? With their children – Carol and Pat, born in later years Susan and Stephen
- 25 - Boston – Bill and Barbara – Peter the eldest child was born in 1950, in later years Pamela and Robert. Eric and Maureen (nee Jervis) see number 9 below, they moved in here when the Bostons moved to Havannah Lane. Children Mark and Susan.
- 27 – Lucas - Archie and Laura (courtesy of FreeBMD) - The mother was daughter to “Adderleys” who lived at number 26 – note that Google has attributed incorrect numbers here, number 28 is correct so work back. Margaret, Christine, finally Michael in 1950.
- 29 – Moses Jack and Ivy.
- 31 – Tristram – Probably Alf and Louie With their children – Cyril, Alf, Duggie &, Lottie. Roy Houldsworth added - *locally in the lower village of Buglawton we all new Alfred as Alfie Kettle his grandparents brought him up to help his parents as the Tristram Family was quite large. Alfie was cousin to Sandra Kettle they both lived in Havannah St*
- 30 - Morris – Harold and Phyllis (says CheshireBMD) Children Carole & Robert.
- 32 - Dixon – Frank and Nancy with daughters Catherine and later Marilyn
- 34 - Batson – Claude and Hilda with daughter Norma.
- 36 - Walton – note that there was no 38, that was then part of the garden to 36
- At the bottom of the Avenue, there are now garages – in 1950 this was the “Cow lane” which can be seen running down to Buxton Road. The bungalow near to Buxton Road was not yet built the edge of Davison’s farm house can be seen half way along the lane.

Information in this book also recalls other names from Tall Ash and close by so below are my best recollections of our other neighbours. My thanks to Jennifer Tonks(Hewitt) for her help with the following. In addition to the image above it is also worth referring to the older map on page 5 To start with firstly carrying on up the avenue from 21 (Bosson)

- 19 – Prince – Charlie lived here – The 1939 register records his wife as Florence when widowed he married Mrs (Jessie) Redfern who had previously lived close by at number 11 and was a widow. Mrs Redfern's children Lessie and John also moved with her.
- 17 – Holland – these names are taken from the 1939 census so may be incorrect.
- 15 – Swindles – I only have a vague memory and according to the 1939 census their names were probably Wilfred and Annie.
- 13 - Barlow – Arthur and Elsie according to the 1939 census with two children. The Hewitt family moved here probably in the late 50s. Mr (Lionel) and Mrs (Rosa) and children Jennifer, Dianne, Walter and Carol
- 11 – Redfern – see also number 19. Mr (John) Redfern sadly died in 1962.
- 9 - Jervis Mr Leonard and Mrs Harriet – they had one child Maureen who married Eric Foden see number 25.
- 7 - Carlisle – according to the 1939 census George & Sarah, I know of four children Russel, twins Janet and Janice and Denise.
- 5 - David and Ian Cunliffe lived here with their mother. Ian was a year or two older than me and David was a couple of years older than Ian.
- 3 – Pickering – the house is on Buxton Road – I can't recall any names
- 1 - Harding – also on Buxton Road and I can't recall the names.
- 2 – Griffiths – I recall the children here were much older and the family owned or bought the piece of land between that house and Tall Ash Farm – previously we had played there.
- 4 – Egerton - my good friend Robert lived here with his mother Maggie, Mr Egerton had sadly died when Robert was quite young.
- 6 – Williams – Mr Horace and Mrs Lauretta and son Stuart who was wicketkeeper for Congleton Cricket club, Stuart also once told me that he was an original member of Buglawton Wolves football team along with Cyril Tristram (see number 31).
- 8 – Washington – I seem to recall it was Jack or that Jack was the brother who lived in William Street, the daughter – a few years older than me was called Susan from memory.
- 10 – Ken Frost – this name is on the 1939 register.
- 12 – Mrs Phylis Lesley (Martin Dale's Grandma)
- 14 - Mr & Mrs Frost – they had a son Steve.
- 16 – Dawson - Mrs Ada , children Craig, Rita and Kevin.
- 18 – Turner – Mr Turner was know as "Padge" and was the Waterman for Congleton Corporation – when I later worked for Macclesfield Water Board I came across old records referring to Mr Turner. He had two granddaughters at Buglawton School when I was there, Jean and Ann McDougal (check spelling) – Ann was in the same class as me.
- 20 – Frodsham – I recall Mr Frodsham and his son Sammy – Sammy worked at the sand quarry in the fields behind Tall Ash Avenue. One day he was completely buried in sand and was eventually dug out. It was reported in the "Chronicle" that if Sammy hadn't been so exceptionally strong he would not have survived.
- 22 – Camm – Mr Bob and Mrs Ethel – I recall Mr Camm he worked for the British Railways at Crewe Works.
- 24 – Wakefield - there were three older children living here
- 26 – Adderley – See number 26 above. Also one of the sons (Harold) later became my cousin Irene's borther in law – he married Alan Bells sister.
- 28 – Turner – I think there were four children - all older – I recall the daughters having friendly boyfriends who played football with the local younger boys (us) when visiting (courting) the Turner girls. I also recall that during late October and early November it was possible to buy fireworks from the Turner's back door!

Back to Buxton Road and turn left – opposite Havannah Lane there was a farm house (Little Lowe) and part of a very big old house (The Lowe) now called Holmhurst. On the left when leaving Havannah Lane was High Lowe Farm.

- Holmhurst – Leech's – Albert and Eve (aka Mama) Children were Leslie and John. I delivered milk for Albert for many years, he was great to work for although he didn't rush

things and spent a lot of time talking to his customers. So much so that we didn't complete the milk round until 2 pm some days. I recall that some days we didn't actually start delivering until after 8:30. A highlight was the early call to Thomas Prestons paper bag factory where we took milk into the onsite canteen. John Leech tells me that the supervisor was called Mrs Sant. A lovely lady who always offered us toast or bacon butties. There was a constant stream of people from the shop floor or office popping in for a chat and snacks. It might be a memory that softens over the years (like schooldays) but it did strike me as a friendly place to work.

- Little Lowe Farm – William (aka Bill or Ludo) and his wife Nellie - Children were Thomas and his elder sister Margaret. Williams father also lived with them – he visited us regularly at number 36 – originally from the lake district he had many stories to tell.
- High Lowe Farm – Cyril and I can't remember his wife's name, they had four sons Cyril, Alf, Ray and Kenny.
- Lowe Farm – this was on the opposite side of the Havannah Lane to High Lowe Farm, this must have been demolished around the time that the new Buxton Road was built bypassing the Church and Hardings Bank and accommodating the construction of the new housing estate.



**1948**

I will start with the words I put together following after the sad death of my big brother Dave with memories of my early years still fresh in my mind. I was proud to be able to share these at Dave's funeral – here they are:

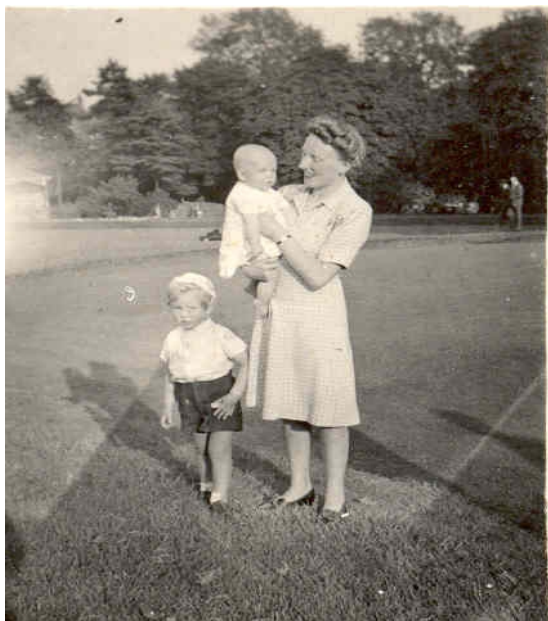
*"There were three "Walton Boys" sons of Harold and Ada – Dave the eldest was born on 24<sup>th</sup> June 1944 - his mothers 25<sup>th</sup> birthday. It was war time, Dad was overseas and did not see David until he was 14 months old.*

*Mum, Dad, Dave & Ray moved to Tall Ash in 1948. A third baby was due and Mum was desperate for a girl and had already decided on a name – Jenny – unfortunately I arrived.*

The other thing of note is from one of our childhood friends Tom Davison. Tom lived at Little Low Farm which was connected to Tall Ash Avenue by a lane that lead from the farm to fields behind our house and was used by Tom's dad (Bill also known as "Ludo") who would use it to take his cattle to the field. We called it the "cow lane".

Tom has told me on more that one occasion that on the 18<sup>th</sup> August 1948 he knocked on the door of 36 Tall Ash Avenue to ask "can Dave come out to play?" However, the door was answered by my mothers sister "Aunty Julia" who told Tom "Oh no, we have to be quiet Mrs Walton has just had a baby". Tom was shocked by this news and immediately ran off (down the cow lane) as fast as his little legs could carry him to impart this news to his mother (Nellie).

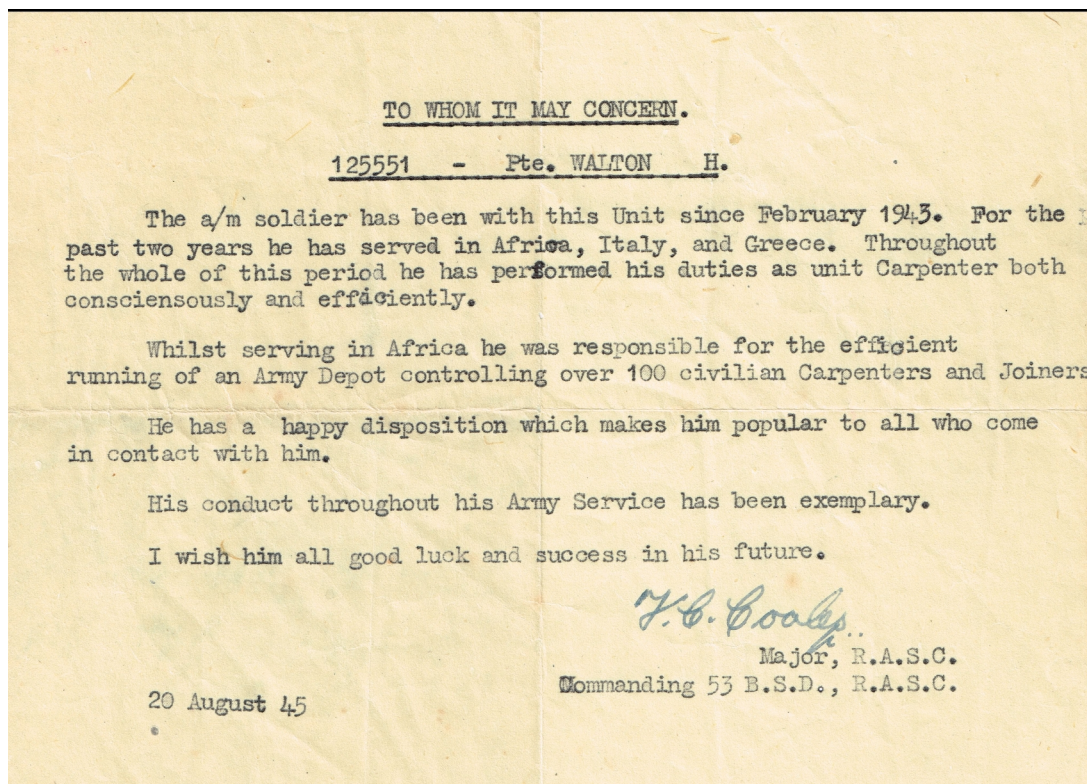
There aren't many photos of the time, the one on the left appears to be in Congleton Park. Definitely Mum and definitely David. The baby is too close in age to David to be Raymond, it looks as though it is cousin Irene (Kennedy as was) which would place the photo in 1946. The photo on the right is the earliest I have of Tall Ash. It could be me as a baby with Ray standing with either Pam or Irene (our two cousins). Hilda Batson in the background who lived at number 34. Ray was born in Knowlton House, Parson Street, this was always thought to have been before the move to Tall Ash, this would date the right hand photo as 1948 and the children as Phil, Ray and Irene.



**1949**

I have no memories from this early time in my life. As a family we must have been settling into Tall Ash, getting to know the neighbours. There were a lot of new families moving into the new houses at the same time and most of the mothers at that time were stay at home housewives. I only ever recall Dad working for the council and assume he was at this time and started with the council on leaving army service.

The reference below from Dad's commanding officer would be helpful in finding a job.



Two early photos of the "Walton Boys" on the right in the garden of 36 Tall Ash Avenue and below with Tom Davison in the field behind our house. The field was farmed by Tom's father.





## 1950

This would be settling down time in Tall Ash and me being in awe of my older brothers.

## 1951

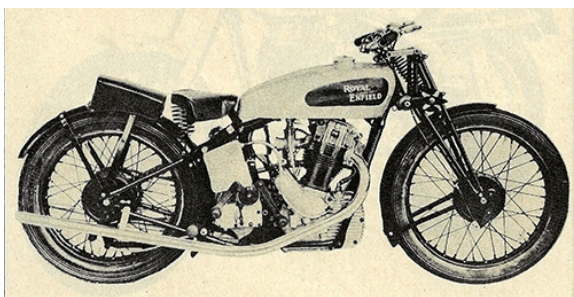
In 1951 Dave would become 7, Ray 4 and myself 3 years old. So only Dave at School, Dad at work and Mum run of her feet, as she would no doubt be justifiably saying. The photo below could have been in 1951 or maybe 1950. It is at 23 Royle Street Congleton the home of our cousins Pamela and Irene.

## 1952

The first thing to come to my mind is the birth of Kathleen Mayer – but lets not get ahead of ourselves.

Dad was driving to work at Bromley Farm (the Congleton Council maintenance depot) on an Auto cycle. It would have looked something like the “James” one below, or it may have been a Hudson. In more modern times it would be called a moped – it was started by peddling as you do on a bicycle which started the engine. If there wasn't enough power to get up a hill more peddling was required. Some time later than 1953 this was replaced by a “proper” motorbike – my memory says it was a Royal Enfield, like the black and white one below, but I can't be sure. The most vivid memory I have is riding on the back seat, like the one in the photo and the inside of my leg touching the hot exhaust and removing the skin from the inside of my right leg.

The photo on the right is Harold with his sons standing in the garden at the side of 36 Tall Ash c1953.



## Other Memories of Early Years:

**Early Years** – most words on the following two pages were put together by Dave, Ray and myself for our mothers Eulogy:-

Tall Ash was wonderful – not many toys but it didn't matter as we were outside most of the time and in wide open country spaces. (The map on page 6 references my words)

Games took a lot of the time – they almost always had a competitive edge to them usually organised by Dave as the senior brother.

Football and cricket of course depending on the season. It was all very innocent yet when I was putting this together with Ray's help the list included learning to play both poker and roulette, also using knives and guns. In our case the "poker" learning was from a book and it was a toy roulette wheel - no money changed hands – you have to remember this was the heyday of "cowboy" films – where everyone played poker and wore guns.

Games also replayed incidents in World War 2 which was still fresh in grown ups memories. Toy guns, especially those that fired rolls of caps were precious and sought after. It was Dave that had the "real" gun, it was actually a .177 calibre air rifle – not especially dangerous but to this day I find it hard to comprehend how Dave convinced Mum and Dad that it was a good idea to give him a gun as a present.

Of course cowboys also had knives – they used them for "whittling" and carving things into trees. As well as "whittling" we used them for games like "split me" – the skill here was throwing with the handle so the sharp end entered the ground in a position where your opponent's foot couldn't reach without them falling over.

Our athletics track was a small field at the bottom of the bank behind our house – it belonged to "Davison's farm" and Tom Davison was Dave's partner in setting up the events. Dave was kind enough to let Ray and myself have an advantage in recognition of the age difference, although the advantage was never quite enough for us to win any events.

From our garden you could see the Biddulph Valley Way railway line (still in use then as a mineral line) and watch the steam trains travelling between Biddulph and Congleton taking coal into Brunswick Wharf, Congleton. It was probably just one trip in each direction each day. There were old sidings and a disused rail loop that connected the main line to the mineral line with all sorts of old railway "stuff" to play with. Close to the main line, was a railway bridge crossing the Macclesfield Canal, and close to the railway bridge is a wooden footbridge that lead to a path towards the Cloud. One of Dave's favourite claims to fame was in the 1950s taking on a dare (set by Tom Davidson) to walk across the footbridge – not on the wooden deck but along one of the handrails – yes I'm sure he did it even though the handrail was only about 3 inches wide (8cm).

## Cousins

We had two cousins. Pam and Irene Kennedy they were the daughters of Julia (mum's sister) and George. We were of similar age and have maintained close contact throughout our lives.

Pam recalls day trips on Bostock's buses and frequent Christmas time visits and parties. They would sometimes walk from (their house) in Royle Street to Buglawton through the park. Opposite the Brook Street entrance to the park, where they would have exited, was Holloway's shop. It's easy to imagine the excitement of the young girls selecting a "family block" ice cream. This would be wrapped in newspaper for the journey to



Tall Ash where we could have ice cream at home, when domestic fridges were a dream for most families. The sisters also visited sometimes during school holidays as their parents were both working. They especially liked collecting the hen's eggs from our chicken run and collecting soft fruit as we had raspberries, gooseberries, black and red currants. I was certainly in favour of this as it meant they were less jobs for Mum to task me with. A few years later Irene was a regular visitor to Tall Ash with her soon to be husband Alan Bell, Irene would attend to Mums hair and Alan would play table tennis with us boys.



## 1953

I would almost certainly have started school in 1953. The infant teacher at Buglawton was Miss Taylor and the headmaster Mr Pedley. It is likely that there were 3 school intakes at the time – September, January and following Easter. It was normal to start in the term that you became 5, so in my case it would have been following Easter or if not then September when I would already be 5. There was a change that affected the class I was placed in. On the earliest photo I have from my school days I am with children who would later be in the year above me. I was told that sometime in the fifties the year group that you were placed in changed from the beginning of September to the beginning of August, so at that time I was held back. It later changed back to September from August (which it currently is). I was only moved once and that was in my early school years.

My Mum became a dinner lady at Buglawton but I am unsure of when she started. I did not enjoy the school dinners and probably took sandwiches. The dinners were prepared in the “central kitchen” this was the Senior Girls school in New Street Congleton. The food was then placed in large insulated aluminium containers for transport to other schools. I believe it was “plated up” at the receiving school. Mum did bring home left overs some times, mainly puddings from memory, I didn’t like those either! I think Dave and Ray did like them as they did keep on coming.

The class photo shows me with children that I always thought of as “the year above”. Except next to me on the front row Stephen Biddulph and Alan Shufflebottom also David Davenport on the back row (they must have been the other “August” children).

In addition to myself the other “Tall Ash” children were John Redfern, Pat Skellern (if it is her) Ian Cunliffe, Christine Lucas and Catherine Dixon. Missing who I would have thought would have been there are Robert Egerton and Christine Bossons. After writing this I have spoken to Christine and she located a photograph which was the year before the one below. The date of the photo is more likely to be 1954 or even 1955.



When I showed the previous photo to Allen Brown he produced the photo below. He confirmed that the boys that would later be in the same class as us were the older ones i.e. Shufflebotham, Walton, Biddulph and Davenport more details follow later.

**Photo below from Allen Brown who provide the names**





## 1954

At this time all three Walton brothers would be attending Buglawton School and Mum would be a dinner lady there. Out of school time would be spent together and with local friends. So together with photos on the previous pages most are on here. Some are taken outside – others like Dave's class below were taken in the school hall. The outside photos had a surround and fold over cover which indicated that they were taken during the coronation year (1953).





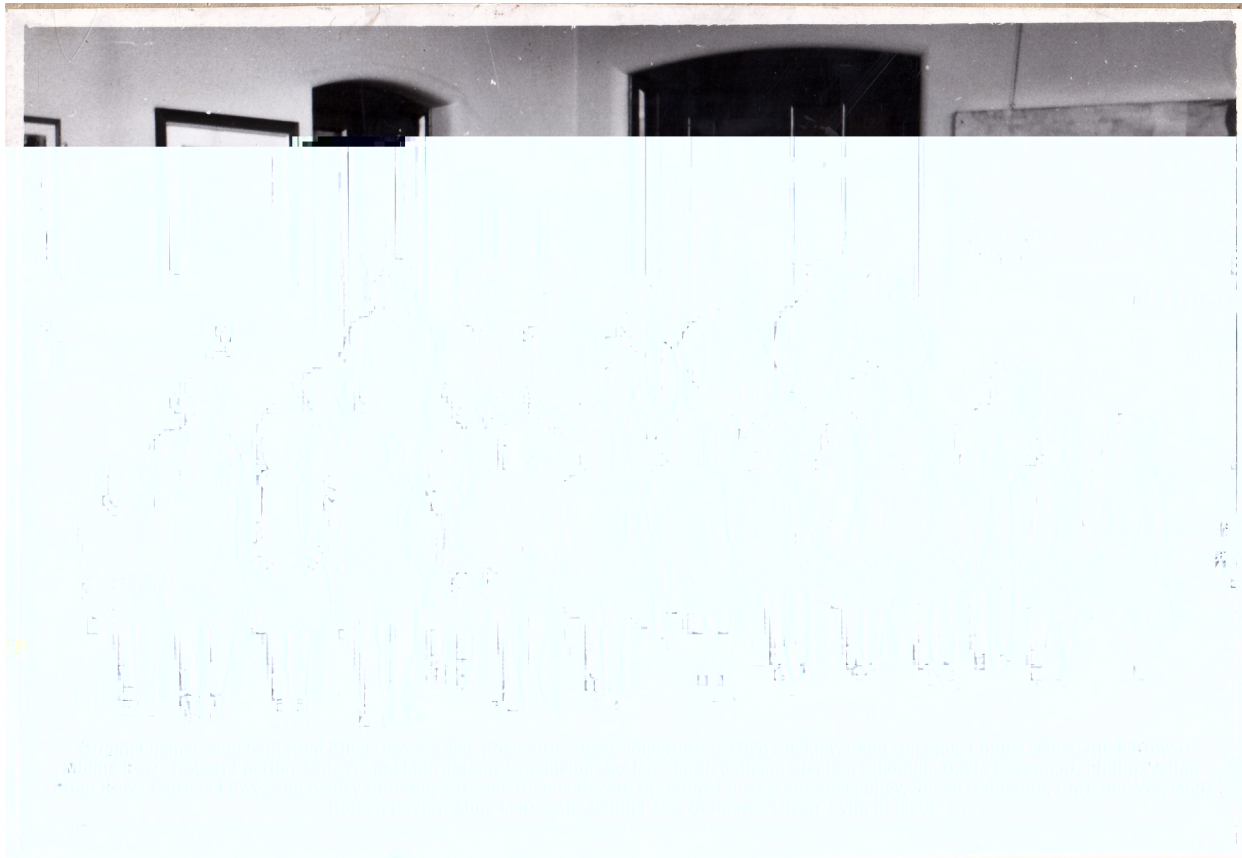
1955



I recall going to Brook Street Methodist Chapel Sunday School around this time with my older brothers. There were two classrooms downstairs and a large room upstairs. Play's were performed in the upstairs room and my brother David recalled that middle brother Raymond had a significant role in one play and featured in either a report or a photo in the Congleton Chronicle, to date I have no confirmation of this. The chapel was situated in the dip of Town Bank and Church Bank – a substantial building which was formerly a school that my father attended before Buglawton School was opened. The History of Congleton by WB Stephens records that the Chapel was built in 1835 and in 1851 recorded

150 attending Sunday School in the afternoon and a further 20 in the evening also *"Another Wesleyan Chapel which developed as a day school was Brook Street, it opened in 1869. There were two classrooms downstairs for infants and a large room upstairs for older pupils. Brook Street continued as a day school until 1927.....A general inspection of premises was ordered in 1908 ...As for Brook Street 'the managers cannot be recommended to spend money on this school' As late as 1949 'Brook Street Sunday School was pressed into service to take overflow classes from St Stephens and St Peters primary schools'".* I feel I can compare Brook Street with Buglawton School which was obviously more modern although – when I first arrived the lights were gas not electric and up to when I left the toilets were uncovered and "across the yard" – actually across the playground.

The photograph below is probably out of sequence – it's matches the earlier two taken in the Hall at Buglawton School – likely to be 1954.



## 1956

Holidays were either a day trip to the seaside or in good years a week in a Boarding house in Blackpool. The first one we stayed in Mum and Dad bought food and the people in the house cooked it for us. It was smallish house and the three boys shared one bed. Later it was a larger “proper” boarding house, I believe it was in Shaw Road. It was usually on a full board arrangement so we would go back to house in the middle of the day for dinner, (not lunch), then we had tea at around 5:30 in the evening. Bostock’s buses took us there as they went every Saturday morning and returned with the previous weeks holiday makers later in the day. The journey could take up to five hours as there was no motorway and the numerous town centres were all blocked with people going to the seaside! The photo here which would have been in Blackpool was probably taken in 1956.



It was around this time that I had my tonsils taken out at Congleton War Memorial Hospital. After I was admitted I was checked by either a doctor or nurse, I can't remember who exactly. What I do remember is my response to the question they posed “what are you in here for?” I repeated what my mother had told me “you are going into hospital to have a tooth out”. Immediate reply “oh no you are not your are having your tonsils out!”. Hospital stays were much longer in those days and I did question my Mum when she visited, apologising for the confusion she said that on my return home I would find a new Noddy book! I was happy with this being a big fan of Noddy & Big Ears. On my arrival home my disappointment was intense – no Noddy book! I can't actually remember why, they probably they couldn't find one or had no time to get one with all the hospital visiting.

I should not complain, it was brother Ray who had most hospital visits and accidents. Some of Ray's memorable accidents and illnesses, I can't quantify the years:

1. Time in an isolation hospital while very young. Best remembered for Mum's regular repeated story “*he went in with lovely curly hair, they cut it all off, he never had curls again and he didn't recognise me when he came home*” Ray recalls “*I went in with whooping cough and then caught scarlet fever in the hospital (it may have been the other way around though)*”.
2. Being hit by an axe held by brother Dave – he was chopping at a tree at the time, a lot of blood but probably not worthy of a hospital visit.
3. High jump in Davison's field behind our house. It would have consisted of two posts pushed into the ground with string tied across. No sand pit so great care to be taken when landing. On one particular occasion Ray tried to break his descent by holding out his arm, it was his arm that broke. I can recall vividly him walking up the garden path saying “I think I have broken my arm” holding up his left arm confirmed his view as it showed a ninety degree bend halfway between his wrist and elbow. Fortunately Mr (Gordon) Bosson who lived across the road was around at the time and was able to drive him straight to the War Memorial Hospital in his Ice Cream van.

This photo (from Google) is of the War Memorial Hospital taken in the mid 1950s.



## 1957

In 1957 I became 9 nine years old so would have been playing with many of the local children. A bit before this I recall that I spent most of my time with Peter Boston who was younger than me probably by one year. I would have played with other children from the lower part of the Avenue most of the time, there were many of a similar age. I can recall going into the houses of Lucas's directly opposite us where Christine and Michael were closest in age. Peter Boston was next door to them. I have a memory of calling for Peter when my elder brother Raymond was taking the 11+ exam, Mrs Boston (Barbara) responded to my knock on the back door by asking if Ray was with me and I responded by saying "no he's sitting today", which implies that the school closed except to those taking the 11+, this does seem strange. A very short memory but it is one of so very few! Peter and I played "gates" football, that was two opposite gates on the road were goals – there were no cars around. The goals would be Lucas's and our gate or Peter's and Batson's gate. Claude Batson did not like the idea as he was very particular with his garden which was always in pristine condition. It was probably the football that introduced us to Robert Egerton who lived at Number 4 (I think he still does) and the three of us did spend a lot of time together.

I started piano lessons at an early age – probably around 7 years old. Initially with Miss Pickford who was already teaching my brother Dave. She lived in Wilbraham Road or Borough Road (Tin Town). She married Gordon Waller (an architect) in 1958 and decided to give up with her piano teaching, initially she continued with David only as he was at an advanced stage with his exams. I was able to carry on as "Dave's brother!" this continued for a few years and then I was taught by Mr Dixon initially he lived in Hightown and later in an old peoples bungalow on Havannah Street Buglawton. In the early days I walked from Tall Ash via Tommy's Lane to Miss Pickford's parent's house where she gave her lessons. One week there were some older children who made a joke about my "piano case". It was close to the bridge over Tommy's Brook and I was advised that my case was to be thrown into the brook!. I turned tail and ran home. The following week I set off as normal and when approaching the bridge the same group of older children were still there. Also walking from the other direction was my Grandad - he asked if this was the group has that accosted me the previous week I replied "no not them" probably saving face. I was not troubled again. My daily 30 minute piano lesson at home earned me the nickname Ping Pong, this was later changed to Pongeye (thanks Edgely!) which stayed with me throughout my schooldays, I don't like the word "hate" but I did hate that name and the need to not respond to it in a negative way – the consequences would not have been nice.

### 1958

Outside of school and in addition to piano lessons I attended Sunday School at St John's Buglawton and around this time and was starting confirmation classes one evening in the week. I did this with Robert Egerton, we were confirmed together. Many years earlier we were also christened on the same day – one of Robert's favourite jokes – "Phil went first and then I had to dive in and save him". Once confirmed we agreed that we would attend communion at the early 8 am service where there were no hymns – a quick half hour service. This suited us as a new youth club was planned and attendees were supposed to attend church at least once a week.

At home I was expected to start a part time job and was delivering milk to people in Tall Ash Avenue. I used a hand cart or trolley – something else that I wasn't happy with but kept quiet about. Albert Leech (the milkman) left the milk in crates at the end of Tall Ash Avenue, I pulled the trolley up to the top of Tall Ash, loaded up the crates and set off down the road. This was seven days a week. I was very pleased one day that the trolley was broken and I therefore I couldn't complete the daily delivery again. Later the same day my dad, with pride, told me that he had saved my job and repaired the trolley, I didn't like to complain so carried on as normal – I don't know whether or not my disappointment showed. One Sunday morning I arrived at the end of the road with my empty trolley just as Robert Egerton turned the corner ready to go to the early church service, he was a little early but his face did show disappointment that I hadn't yet completed my deliveries. I quickly made the decision – church first, milk second. This wasn't well received at home where my parents were convinced that I had the time to deliver the milk first and had let my customers down. Rob Egerton and I did spend a lot of time in "House's field" especially playing football – Mr House (Cyril) understandably didn't like us in his fields. Once when we in his hay field (through the gate and by the sand quarry) we "ducked" into the hay so he couldn't find us. We also played in the sand quarry. Sam Frodsham of Tall Ash seemed to be it's only employee.



## Buglawton Junior School

### School layout:

Looking at the school from above on a modern Google Map below. There are 7 gables in the photograph facing the road. Originally there was no access to the school from the front. There was a boys access on the left hand side and a girls and infants access on the right hand side. Classrooms were accessed from the rear either from the Hall or corridor. The rooms were (I think) from the right hand gable:

1. Infants – Miss Taylor – there was a sandpit outside with railings around it next to the road.
2. Mrs Pedley – the first class after infants was the headmasters wife, divided room in gable 1.
3. Mrs Farthing – was the wife of Tom Farthing one my secondary school teachers – gable 2.
4. Mrs Glover – rather stern I recall – she sat behind a high desk like a lectern – gable 3.
5. Mrs Dixon – she lived across the road and facing the school in High Low Avenue – gable 4.
6. Mr Pedley – later Mr Ball, Mr Pedley probably spending more “headmaster” time – gable 5.
7. The boys cloakroom – gable 6 this entrance gave access the headmasters office and to the hall. The photo on the following page shows my father Harold in the garden of the school, this would be shortly after the school first opened in the late 1920s, before this date Harold attended Brook Street School. The boys entrance can be seen in the background. No doubt the girls wouldn’t be allowed in the garden. When I attended there were air raid shelters in this area, the area is now covered with additional classrooms. The embossed brickwork stating “Girls & Infants” entrance is also still visible on the opposite side of the building.

The playground area was split with iron railings down the centre, girls and infants one side and boys on the other side. The toilets were against the wall opposite the school hall (literally across the yard). these were uncovered (apart from the cubicles), the urinal was against the wall facing the main building, this meant that boys facing the urinal would say “*see how far you can wee up the wall*”, the object being to get right over the top of the wall on onto the playground.

The earlier photos taken from inside the school hall looking towards double doors that lead to the corridor towards the boys entrance. The single door was the access to Mrs Dixon’s classroom. I believe that lighting in the school was by gas when I arrived, electric lights being installed soon afterwards. I can’t recall the heating but don’t think it was open fires, although they were probably fireplaces in each class room, I think there was a solid fuel boiler and radiators.



The following photo is a good indication of how the School was in the 1950s. Probably taken shortly after the school opened (my Dad is on it). It is looking towards the Boys entrance in what was then the garden and before the second world war air raid shelters were built which were still prominent during my time at the school. The area is now covered with additional classrooms.



### Sportsday:

Two more pictures from Allen Brown - team photos from the School Sports of 1960 when Buglawton Boys were champions. I do have a happy memories of this occasion, Allen was the boys captain as seen in the photos of just the boys and then the whole team.



Boys photo - Back Row – John Green, Alan Fowell, Phil Walton, Alan Shufflebotham, Malcolm Gregory. Next Row – David Fowell, ? Howard, Chris Booth, Dave Davenport, Peter Hopkins, John Barton, Mark Barton. Next Row – Martin Dale, ?, Colin Brown, Allen Brown, Peter Boston, ?, ? Bantik. Front Row – Roger Mellor, Phil Gooders, Freddy Cotterill, Walter Hewitt, David Cotterill.





Extra names for the Girls & Boys Photo. Back Row - ? Nixon, Dianne Turner, Jane Pedley, ? , ? , ? . Next Row ? , ? , ? , Caroline Houldsworth, ? . Next Row – Anne Yoxall, ? , ? , Sandra Green, ? , Pat Lowe. Front Row – Jenny Dale, ? , ? , ? , ? , ? .

### **1959 – including what used to be called “Pen Pics” in Football Programmes**

At the start of each day in junior school we were required to recite our names in age order and the teacher recorded this with ticks in the register. I can still remember the call for the 13 boys – Shufflebotham, Walton, Biddulph, Beech, Davenport, Brocklehurst, Green, Brown, Fowel. Shaw, Hopkins, Webb, Harrop. I didn't have any special concerns at primary school and don't recall any issues with others in my class. So in age order excluding me:

- Shufflebotham (Alan) - for a time my closest friend. He lived in a bungalow on Weathercock Lane close to the row of cottages and near to the weather vane at the junction of Crouch Lane. I recall walking to his bungalow to visit/play – it was a long way for walk as I was probably 9 or 10 at the time. I didn't walk along the road so must have walked over fields and then over the Canal foot bridge. I believe Alan and his family moved to Biddulph Park around the time we transferred to secondary schools. I also believe his family owned and ran a corner shop on the road junction at Biddulph Park. A small shop and I have no recollection of ever going in it. If ever I travel through the crossroads I still think of “Shuff”!
- Walton
- Biddulph (Stephen) – I lost touch with Stephen when we went our separate ways, Stephen to Sandbach Grammar and me to Congleton Boys Secondary. I can only recall meeting him once – outside Astbury St Mary's Church following the funeral of David Davenport – see below. I was talking to my old friend Robert Egerton and also Philip Davies another old Buglawton friend – one of them said to me “you know who this is don't you?”. With my terrible memory for faces I had to be informed that it was Stephen – we exchanged a few pleasant words – it was good to see that he seemed fit and well.
- Beech (Alan) – I'm struggling with this name – I think there were two Alan Beech's – one is on the photo above and lived in Timbersbrook whereas the one in my class lived initially near the “Finger Post” at the junction of Buxton Road and Middle Lane and then later on St John's Road, I believe he was part of a large family. I am not confident with this memory.
- Davenport (David) – another close friend at Primary School. I recall Dave being very lively and with a wonderful singing voice. After going to our separate secondary schools – Dave was another pass (selection!) we still kept in touch as we both attended Sunday School at St John's in Buglawton. I recall Dave saying to me on many occasions “when are you going to pass to go to Sandbach so that we can go to school together?” My reply was “well I'm taking the 12+ exam, if I pass I can transfer” and later “I'm going to take the 13+ exam

and if I pass I can transfer". I didn't pass (was't selected) from either of them. On many later occasions I met an always cheerful Dave when we would recall our younger days. One of Dave's good friends was Rob Barker who I met a few times in the Blue Bell pub in Kidsgrove, on one occasion I saw Rob and he explained that Dave was very poorly, it was not long after that Dave sadly died.

- Brocklehurst (Jeremy) – seems to be called Jerry these days although I always think of him as Jeremy which we must have called him at Buglawton school . He was another happy one always telling jokes. I met him at a beer festival in Congleton Leisure Centre, unable to recognise him Kath spotted him as Kath had worked with his mother in Woolworths she had talked a lot about Jeremy. He has helped me in recent years when I was working on 6 Ivy Gardens. Jeremy did a lot for Congleton Town and lives in Astbury Street. Further information from Allen Brown – Jeremy (locally called Jezza) lived on Havannah Street and his family ran the Throstles Nest pub for many years. Allen recalls staying there as his father (also Allen) was a good friend of Jeremy's father.
- Green (John) – was I believed called "Johnny" or "Basher" Green and was what was then known as "cock of the school" – in our final year in Buglawton. John was another 11 plus pass and I can't recall seeing him again after Junior School – Allen Brown tells me he emigrated with his wife and children to California in the US they had kept in touch, John worked in the mining industry. John is another one who is sadly no longer with us. Allen also recalls that John lived on Havannah Street across the road from Sandra Kettle who lived next door to Malcolm Gregory.
- Brown (Allen) – of my former class mates Allen is the one that I have been in the most contact with since leaving Buglawton. I was in the same class as him at Secondary School. I wasn't sure where he lived, Allen has now confirmed *"I originally lived on Havannah Street, my Dad, also called Allen, was friendly with Jeremy Brocklehurst's dad (Cyril) and helped out at the Throstles Nest, I also spent some time there, we moved to Craig Road when the new estate was built"* . Allen was a keen footballer after school years and being of the same age in future years I still see him as he lives close to me – I would bump into him occasionally and can recall when the fair was in town, various pubs and the Majestic Cinema in Macclesfield.
- Fowel (Alan) – Alan was also in the same class as Alan Brown, Eric Shaw and myself at Congleton Boys Secondary. I recall he did "pass" the 12 plus examination and transferred to Sandbach for the second year at secondary school. I think he lived on St John's Road and was a Stoke City supporter and I have vague memory of talking about this in later years.
- Shaw (Eric) – Eric also went to Congleton Boys Secondary School and was in the same class as Allen Brown and myself. I recall him living in a house near to the former Lord Nelson pub (where my mother was born) at the bottom of Brunswick Street. He invited me and I think the rest of our class to his birthday party one year – this was very unusual at the time as birthday parties were usually small family only occasions. There was a problem though and at the last minute it was called off so I never did get to go to a kids birthday party (except family ones). Allen Brown adds – Eric also lived on Clayton Avenue and worked with him for a time when Eric worked for Bel Industries. I believe Eric has always lived in Congleton and have met him a few times over the years – I can recall in an off licence and at the War Memorial Hospital.
- Hopkins (Peter). I recall that Peter lived on Eaton Bank which can be approached by foot only over the River Dane bridge on Havannah Street or by vehicle from Macclesfield Road via Jackson Road. Peter's parents had a Mill at the bottom of Town Bank and Church Bank, I think it made paper bags. The Mill later become Congleton Engineering and is now housing. Peter went to Sandbach Grammar and I came into contact with him later when I was a student at Crewe Further Education College, it was when I was completing my HNC. I believe he was working at Foden's as a Student Apprentice and was therefore selected for HND at Stafford College , however Peter decided that the HNC would be best for him.
- Webb (Bryan) I think it was Bryan or Brian, apologies to him anyway as Robert Potts (who went to St Stephens school) told me that he was in the same class as we were in Secondary school and his signature inside of the cover of my leaving bible seems to confirm this, I also have a faint recollection of him.
- Harrop (John I think!) I think he lived in the Bromley farm estate or Tin Town area. I have a memory of meeting him many years later while we were both waiting for cars at Burns

Garage in Canal Street. I also have a memory that tells me one of his children lived next door to my son James in Obelisk Way sometime in the 00s.

### **1960 - Year of the 11+**

Oh dear! – that didn't go down at all well. My memory tells me that we took the 11+ exam in February. I recall completing some preparatory work as one of the oldest in the school and being confident with IQ type tests I wasn't too concerned.

I can recall the day that the results arrived in the post. In those days the post was always on the doormat when we woke up. The letter indicated that I was "selected" for Congleton Boys School – I hadn't been selected for Sandbach grammar – it didn't say I had failed but everyone knew. No one said "where have you been selected for?" it was always "have you passed?". Mum was disappointed but didn't make a fuss other than confirming that the new bike was now definitely not going to happen. On arrival at school it was all that everyone could talk about. I was still confused especially when finding out that out of the 13 boys in my class 6 had passed, an excellent pass, rate (grammar school selection rate) for the school, and were going to Sandbach Grammar School, the rest of us to Congleton Boys Secondary. This was a very high percentage of passes – from memory five of those that passed were Shufflebottom, Biddulph, Davenport, Green and Hopkins I can't work out who the sixth was so maybe it was only five. When I arrived home there was an anxious atmosphere waiting for arrival home of Dad from work, he wouldn't know the result until he was home as he had left home before the post arrived on that day. I do have a clear memory of Dad's response he couldn't hold back his feelings it was along the lines "three of you, we've done our best, and you've all failed". It certainly stuck in my memory.

I was happy at Buglawton School, the work wasn't difficult, no homework – in fact I had no homework set for me during my entire time in junior and secondary school days. In addition to "sports day" mentioned above the other main highlight was playing football against the other primary schools – home games were played on what was then the Buglawton Wolves pitch just off St Johns Road, there was no grass at Buglawton School, the field between the school and the A54 was then farmed by Bill Davidson (or maybe he just used it for hay. We were allowed to use it I recall on occasions but it would be just roughly cut grass. St Stephens and St Peters and possibly St James away games were on Hankinsons Field adjacent to Congleton Park. We would walk to Hankinsons field, when we played Mossley school we caught the Biddulph bus at the bottom of Park Lane and got off at Mossley. Their pitch I recall was also in a small field somewhere close to the school. Fred Whitehurst has confirmed that the Mossley pitch was on Copper Hill Road and there were slots in place to allow the temporary installation of goal posts for the inter schools games. All of the four games we played were against Church of England (C of E controlled) schools as Buglawton was the only primary school in Congleton controlled by the local authority. I also have a memory of playing football at Danesford School on West Road. This was a boarding school operated by Manchester Education.. I may be confused with timing and this could have happened when I was at Waggs Road School.



## The Congleton Years – Secondary School

**1961 -62**

### Waggs Road Secondary School

The build up to secondary school was underwhelming. My brother Ray's contribution to this was to pass on his thoughts of his two years there. Two "stories" that stuck I recall was his advice to keep quiet and out of the way to start with because sometimes the "big" boys liked sport which included arranging themselves in two lines and forcing the new ones to run between the lines while receiving kicks and punches from either side. Also if you "upset" one of the "big ones" they gathered coke (in those days this referred to coal with the impurities burnt out to obtain Town's Gas – it was rough coal with holes and sharp edges), this was placed on the victim's back under his vest before he was pushed to floor on his back and rolled around. Of course none of this actually happened, there were the usual school bullies but most boys were able to form self support groups that looked out for each other.



There were four school years at what were then known as either Secondary Modern or Secondary Technical Schools, these were designed for those not "selected" for Grammar School i.e. failures. It was and still is a common misconception that the School I attended in Waggs Road was called "Congleton Secondary Modern School for Boys". It was actually called "Congleton Boys Secondary School" as it fulfilled the roles intended for both "modern" and "technical" schools. The first two years were streamed into four classes with the final two years streamed again into four classes but separated into two "technical" streams, a "rural" stream and a "practical" stream, these names give an idea of what the thinking was behind the teaching in preparation for boys going out into the world at the age of 15. I believe that my three years (and only three years) did prepare me for the outside world. Homework was unheard of and maintaining discipline was the greatest concern with most of the teaching staff.

To satisfy my curiosity regarding the origins of Waggs Road school I referred to the “History of Congleton” by W B Stephens – his chapter on education refers to 1920 when *“The Board’s statistics showed that Congleton was in a most unfortunate position. They were almost at the bottom of the list judged by the amount they spent on education per child. The level of elementary education was so low as to be hardly compatible with the Board’s requirements. Three of their school buildings had for years been in a most unsatisfactory condition”*. Stephens goes on to say *The council agreed to build a new school at a cost of £27,000:00 to take the children from Wagg Street and Brook Street, both long condemned*. The new school was built in New Street. *In 1930 the council put forward a scheme for the construction of another senior school and the reorganisation of the non provided schools as junior schools. The Churches were loath to give up their senior departments but after protracted negotiations they agreed. A new Boys Senior School opened in Waggs Road in 1937, and the New Street Council School became the Senior School for Girls*.

Waggs Road Senior Boys School was twenty four years old when I arrived. Our first form teacher was Albert Bayley, the classroom (form room) was Science Room 1. I recall that Mr Bayley was introduced to us as the first “old boy” to return as a teacher. The school could not accommodate all of the sixteen classes although a quick count of my own recollection of the classes seems to indicate that there should be enough classrooms. It was complicated though as woodwork classes were split into two and metalwork was split into two (with Art being the other half) as extra supervision was required for practical subjects. This was sensible as it was then “proper” woodwork and metalwork with the associated sharp tools and hot metal working, good preparation for later years. In order to accommodate the shortfall in classrooms Wagg Street schoolrooms were used for two classes – this is the same Wagg Street school that was reportedly long condemned in the 1920s. In fairness there was nothing wrong with the buildings which are still in use today – the problem in the 1920s was trying to fit 296 pupils into a schoolroom with room for 180. A further complication was the six day timetable, so week 2 started with day 6 and week 3 started with day 5. One year after I left in 1963 a new much larger school opened in Box Lane. Waggs Road School was closed and reopened after a complete refurbishment (including removing the large side to side slope on the football field) as Marfields Primary School.

I was able to leave school at the end of my third year at secondary school aged fourteen. While I was at primary school old photos suggested I moved school years (stayed where I was) around the age of seven. As mention earlier on page 15 at some point the start date of the academic year was moved from the beginning of September to the beginning of August it must have changed back again soon afterwards but those of us who had moved stayed where we were). I became one of the oldest in my year rather than one of the youngest. So at the end of the school year in 1963, when I was in the third year, I was fourteen but would have been 15 when the next school year started so I could just leave.

The words above might suggest I wasn’t happy at school, this isn’t true. There was no stress, the school work was not difficult and I can’t recall any pressure to succeed and we had fun. Towards the end of year one and year two I attended on a Saturday morning to take the 12+ and 13+ “selection” tests. I failed these also, correction – I was “not selected”. I believe that Alan Fowell was selected from the 12+ test.

Other memories of Waggs Road School that I believe are worth recording, I will leave out the Teachers names.

1. The school canteen was in a separate building close to the road entrance. There were two sittings to accommodate all the pupils. We had a main course and pudding. A single teacher was on duty inside the building to maintain discipline. We sat along either side of long tables on benches, once sitting we had to remain seated unless collecting our meals on a self service basis. Boys on one side of the table collected the main meal for himself and the person opposite him. Boys on the other side of the table collected the pudding for himself and the boy opposite him. One particular teacher was unpopular because he did not allow any conversation within the canteen. Anyone speaking would be punished. On one particular day I spoke to the boy opposite me when he departed to collect our puddings “please don’t get me any custard”. The strict teacher heard me speak and told me that

after I had completed my meal I was to stand outside his classroom until the end of dinner time when he would punish me. It was a long wait as “dinner time” was one and a half hours. While waiting at the door several older boys asked me what I was doing standing there and when I told them they all advised me to clear off because the teacher would forget. I was unsure about this so decided the safest action was the long wait. On his return the teacher asked me what I was doing there – he did seem to have forgotten. When I told him he took me into his classroom where the pupils were waiting so that he had an audience to witness his two strokes of the cane to each of my hands. It hurt.

2. During all of my schooldays all pupils had free school milk which everyone was expected to drink. It was stopped in 1971 by Margaret Thatcher who was the education minister at the time (Thatcher Thatcher milk snatcher!). One day I was with a group of boys who were throwing stones towards the bottles (they were delivered in one third pint bottles in metal crates) some bottles were smashed as a result. A teacher observed this and sent everyone there to wait for the assistant headmaster who would punish us. In our defence I recall one boy stating he did have a stone but it just slipped out of his hand – in reply the teacher (torturer?) said “oh dear my hand slipped as he brought his cane down onto the boys hand, he seemed to think this was very funny. When it was my turn my defence was that I was only standing watching and should therefore not receive any punishment. It was clearly time for another funny comment as I was advised that I was bigger than most of the boys throwing stones and therefore should have stopped them, so another dose of the cane followed.
3. I was obliged to wear short trousers when I started the school, one by one boys would turn up in long trousers looking very pleased with themselves now that they had grown up to long trousers. As I was one of the tallest in the class this was embarrassing. I believe that the short trousers continued until my second year, I can't remember exactly when but I can remember that when I finally got long trousers there was only one boy in my class left in short trousers, thanks Jimmy Barber, Jimmy though was one of the smallest in the class.
4. I couldn't swim. Rob Egerton was a good swimmer and was regularly at the local outdoor swimming baths with many of our friends. As time went by I found this more embarrassing, secretly blaming my piano lessons for getting in the way. It was difficult to learn through the school as the baths only opened for a couple of months before the end of summer term. We had a lesson once a week and each week when I returned home from school the first thing my mother asked me was “can you swim yet?”. As I had been self consciously splashing around in the 3 foot end it wasn't going to happen, I can recall a teacher telling us non swimmers to hold onto the side and kick our legs but it all very half hearted. One week I arrived at school with my towel and trunks and Kevin O'Reilly who was in my class was upset because he had forgotten his trunks. I told him not to worry he could use mine. So I became the one who had forgotten the trunks. Kevin was supposed to return the trunks to me before we went home, it didn't happen for some reason and the next day he announced that his mother would not allow him to return my trunks to me unwashed because he had used them, he would return them after his mother had washed them. This left me the problem of finding a different excuse each night when my mother asked me for my trunks. I finally learned how to swim in my 30s – Kath and were shamed into joining adult classes so that we could join in and swim with our young children..
5. There was a mad professor type schoolteacher. Very nice man but unfortunately he couldn't control a classroom. During my time in his class a group of boys sat at the front and no doubt picked up some scientific information. For the rest of us we played a shove halfpenny game (or our football version of it) on the desks at the back of the classroom. There was also bullying and I recall on one occasion we forced a boy into the glass cabinet at the back of the room and turned the gas on. I have always been ashamed of this event although I am confident that we would not have harmed anyone. It is though an example of what can happen without adequate control. The same teacher had a large “American” stilet car. The boys in the final year were “allowed” to use this nearly new car and to drive it onto the football field. Throughout the year bits kept disappearing of the car.
6. Teachers didn't always get their own way. Another old friend Fred Whitehurst reminded me recently of one teacher who decided he would cane a boy who was probably what in those days was called “Cock of the School”. We were all in awe of him. The pupil refused to be caned and took the cane from the teacher and broke it over his knee. My memory tells me

that the cane was actually cut into small pieces by the pupil but that may have been a separate incident. A difficult situation for the teacher – it wasn't easy for them.

7. I believe that the culture at the school had been deteriorating for some years and was self-perpetuating. My eldest brother Dave who had just left the school (transferred to Sandbach Grammar School along with 5 others from his class) as I started. Dave had attended in a school uniform, some boys in the later photo of a trip to France (twin town Trappes) are wearing the school blazer. I have never owned a school uniform. Also in Dave's final year there were prefects, head prefects and a head boy. My memory is that all this had disappeared, most boys wore ties and were smartly dressed, this was probably due to dutiful parents rather than dutiful teachers. There were some though who wore denim trousers and jackets. One senior teacher visited the Railway Inn every lunchtime. He had a very red face and always returned sucking a mint. I can't recall any out of school activities. At the end of each school day with no out of school activities or homework marking many teachers had left the school and were driving past pupils before they had walked to the main gate. The photo of Dave's final year is what I believe was a rare school photo, some of the boys (Dave included) have a school badge on their jackets and there are also "Prefect" type badges. Dave gave me the names for this photo a few years ago he had apparently been in contact with Clive Wright who clearly has a good memory.
8. My final teacher comment. The worst bully. In our geography class the teacher always dictated notes from a text book. We were tasked to simply write down his dictation, that was his teaching method. However, presumably for his own sport, he would dictate at a faster and faster pace while carefully watching the class to see who could not keep up. Eventually he would stop and ask one of the struggling pupils to read what he had written, if it was wrong the pupil was accused of not paying attention and punished. I think he hit the pupil with a pump which was always considered to be a lesser punishment than the cane.
9. My final school comment. Relaxed rules and a ninety minute lunch break allowed for unrestricted excursions. One such excursion I and others, who I recall included Rob Potts, Dave Hancock, Derek Cooke and Dave Cotterell, took us to Woolworths first to seek out the mother of a friend from the school year above (Steve Morrey) who's Mum worked on the biscuit counter. Steve's garden adjoined Rob's garden so Rob knew Steve's mum very well. Our request for a bag of broken biscuits resulted in a large bag of, not very broken, biscuits at a very low cost. On to the band club in Worral Street next where the Steward was the father of one of Rob Potts's other neighbours - Graham Wassel also in the year above us. Rob thinks Graham must have been with us, certainly on the first visit. We were therefore able to enjoy a game of Snooker at a very low cost. To this day I still like biscuits and I am still rubbish at Snooker.
10. Allen Brown recalls enjoying his time at the school, especially the sports and the four house system (Georges [red], Davids [yellow], Andrews [blue], Patricks [green]). Years 1&2 and 3&4 played each other at football, school sports day was always looked forward to. I was happy for Allen to remind me that I was good at high jump. His recalls though that my landings were "awful (like an earthquake)". I recall one teacher pulling me up about this and insisting that I jump with the "scissor kick" method not my preferred "western roll", this seriously affected my performance (the landing was into a sand pit). Allen adds that in the 4<sup>th</sup> year (I had left) there was a school captain (Steve Foster) and Allen was "Georges" house captain tasked with team selection for sports day, with this in mind he was allowed to enter any class and request the teacher to allow a boys attendance. There were also football and badminton matches against other schools. Allen partnered Fred Whitehurst at badminton. Allen correctly points out that these were out of school activities. At the end of year four Allen along with Steve Foster, John Buckley, Kevin O'Rielly & Chris Jacob transferred to Sandbach Grammar school (my big brother Dave had done the same 4 years earlier). It didn't work out for Allen though – in his words "I hit my rebellious period"!



There weren't many photos taken at the school at the time I was there. The ones following are:

1. A photo of brother Dave with his final year class. Note the prefect badges, these were abandoned soon afterwards I suspect they created more problems than they resolved.
2. A fabulous photo taken on a speech day, there are also images of a report referring to this event which was is from the Congleton Chronicle, under the headline "Boys look forward to lap of luxury"
3. The teachers, photo taken about the time I started. This is taken from a book by Joan P Alcock – Images of England - Congleton
4. Finally – the inside pages of my leaving bible.





A section of the crowd of pupils who were present at the ceremony.

## LAST SPEECH DAY IN OLD PREMISES?

WHAT may be the last—or at least, the next to the last—Speech Day in the present Congleton Boys' Secondary School, before the school moves into the new building at Box-lane, was held before a large gathering of pupils and parents on Monday. They heard the headmaster (Mr. H. Shanassy) describe the new school as "the lap of luxury," and compared with the present cramped accommodation, the description seemed to be no over-statement.

There was one familiar face missing from the proceedings, that of the chairman of the governors, Ald. W. H. Semper, who is in hospital, and his place in the chair was taken by Coun. A. Pollard. He congratulated Mr. Shanassy and his staff on their work and thanked the parents for their co-operation, for, he said, the success of a school depended on the way the influence of parents influenced the school itself.

The guest speaker was the Rev. E. Lincoln Minshull, a Congleton man who is now Superintendent Minister, Manchester and Salford Methodist Mission.

Mr. Shanassy's report reflected the school's varied activities, particularly in sport. He reported during the year they had had fewest pupils since the school became a four-stream one; this was caused by a low birth rate in 1950-52, and an increase in grammar school places, but the full was temporary, as primary school figures had shown. Speaking of the new school, Mr. Shanassy said it should be ready for September next year.

"In addition to having a form room for each group—something we have never had—it will have a wide variety of specialist rooms, including four workshops, two for wood and two for metal, two art and two craft rooms with a pottery bay, separate rooms for geography, technical drawing, rural studies, music and a large, fully equipped gymnasium," he told parents.

### ALL FOUND JOBS

During the year's staff changes they had lost Mr. Wigglesworth, Mr. Williams, Mr. Moore, Mr. Morris and Mr. Field, and were pleased to welcome Mr. Griffiths, Mr. Cookson, Mr. Hutchinson and Mr. Kirkham.

All 152 boys who left school secured employment, three boys in the fourth year were transferred to Sandbach School, three boys entered full-time training in college of further education, and many boys were granted release from school for further studies. Mr. Shanassy reminded parents that boys could stay on at school beyond their legal time, so that they would not be the rush for jobs; if a suitable vacancy occurred later, then they could leave school immediately.

### NEW EXAMINATION

About examinations, Mr. Shanassy said 1962 was the last year the school could enter boys for the Pre-craft course examination of the U.L.C.I.; 33 were entered, and 11 obtained first class certificates and 17 second class, one boy, Alan Billington, obtaining an award of merit with an average of 90% for the four subjects. This certificate was the first rung of the ladder towards technical qualifications. During the year they had devised a Macclesfield and District Regional examination, which covered all academic, as opposed to practical, subjects.

The headmaster spoke about the various school clubs, and thanked the staff for giving their time in organising them. He also thanked the canteen staff and caretaker for their service, and paid tribute to the governors and to Mr. H. L. Morris (education officer).

### A REAL MAN

The Rev. E. Lincoln Minshull had the boys enthralled with his witty, yet profound address. He told them: "If you did not manage to get into the grammar school, it isn't the end of the world or your education. You can still go places. With such facilities you can rise to the top of an academic career. Of course, it will mean a lot of hard work."

Amid laughter he said: "You may be late starters. But don't be too late!" He recalled his own school days when he attended Wagg-street and New street schools. Although he was among the "duds" he learnt to be a man, which was the most valuable lesson any boy could learn.

"What is a man?" Mr. Minshull asked. One could not answer that by finding out what he was made of, his origin or what he was worth. A man was someone who could be trusted and depended upon. "If you cannot be trusted, then the world will write you off," he said.

He spoke of the quality of being loved and living for others. The quality of being good—which was not effeminate or did not mean being "square"—was the quality of a real man.

"Unless this country finds the vision of what it is to be a real man—and that means morally clean—it will go to the dogs. A large number of babies are being born out of marriage. This kind of community is the way to decadence," he concluded.

Earlier, the choir, conducted by music master Mr. A. Dale, had given an excellent rendering of "Let my people go" and "Dry bones." The verse speaking choir, led by Mr. T. Farthing, was word perfect in "Inversnaid" (G. M. Hopkins), "The grape gathering" (Mona Swann) and "Reynard the fox" (J. Massfield). The pianist was Coun. G. A. Ball.

### PRIZEWINNERS

Mr. Minshull presented the prizes, as follows:

First Year One: 1st form prize and maths, Edward Hurst; 2nd form prize and English, Stephen Hibbert. Two: 1st form prize and maths, Ian Stanway; 2nd form prize, Robert Sproson; English, Robert Barker. Three: 1st form prize, Brian Dale; 2nd form prize, Philip Buxton; English, Stuart Webb; maths, Brian Banks.

Practical: 1st form prize, Michael Lacey; 2nd form prize and English, Frank Pointon; maths, William Stanway.

Subject prizes: History: James Hibbert. Geography: Martin Tomlinson. Art: Derek Gavin. Science: David Broster. Rural Science: William Higginson. Religious Knowledge: Paul Evans.

Second Year One: 1st form prize and history, John Buckley; 2nd form prize and tech. drawing, Stephen Foster; English: John Thomas; maths, Alan Robinson. Two: 1st form prize, John Daniels; 2nd form prize, Robert Hiscock; English, Paul Dale; maths, Barry Shenton. Three: 1st form prize and English, Martin Cunningham; 2nd form prize and maths, Duncan Cope. Practical: 1st form prize, Jeremy Brocklehurst; 2nd form prize, Keith Wolf; English, Stephen Brocklehurst; 2nd form prize, Keith Wolf; English, Stephen Pedley; maths, Kenneth Pass.

Subject prizes: Geography: Michael Greer. Art and Woodwork: Alan Bell; Science: Christopher Jacob. Rural Science: David Townley. Religious Knowledge: David Booth.

Third Tech. A: 1st form prize and religious knowledge, Philip Simcox; 2nd form prize and Geography, Graham Buckley; maths, John Gorman; English, David James. Tech. B: 1st form prize, John Heath; 2nd form prize, Clive Heather; English, Michael Worthington; maths, Peter Eaton. Rural: 1st form prize and maths, Dennis Bowyer; 2nd form prize and rural science, Garry Joynes; English, Robert Minshull. Practical: 1st form prize, Brian Wassall; 2nd form prize and maths, David Lucas; English, Robert Weaver.

Subject prizes: History: Robert Dale. Art: Peter Beard. Science: Graham Dingle. Metalwork: David Worth. Woodwork: Stuart Hibbert. Tech. Drawing: Jeffrey Goodwin.

Fourth Tech. A: 1st form prize and maths, Alan Billington; 2nd form prize and English, Roger Hollowood. Tech. B: 1st form prize and maths, Alex Shield; 2nd form prize, Raymond Walton; English, Keith Galley. Rural: 1st form prize and woodwork, Malcolm Mitchell; 2nd form prize, Stuart Taylor; maths, John Harding; English, Michael Hughes. Practical: 1st form prize and English, John Beech; 2nd form prize, Philip Brown; maths, Alan Townley.

Subject prizes: History: Russell Davies. Geography, Peter Bowers. Art: Michael Clarke. Science: John Minshull. Tech. Drawing:

The Chronicle, Friday, 24th May, 1963

### Boys' School looks forward to "lap of luxury"



I was sent the speech day photo some years ago by Martin Tomlinson, together with some names. Various other people have helped with the names including Allen Brown and Graham Cheetham. Subsequently I found the "Chronicle" report that applies to the photo. Note – my brother Raymond arrowed.

(Chronicle photo: 472/63)

David Birchall. Rural Science: Brian Foster. Religious Knowledge: Alan Whitter. Metalwork: Keith Jones.

Special prizes. Attendance: Allen Yates (100% attendance for 4 years). Music: Jeffrey Goodwin (who has been accompanist at Wagg-street Assembly for 31 years). Geography: Frederick Yates.

Jeffrey Goodwin (school captain) presented Mr. Minshull with a wooden fruit bowl made by the boys of the woodwork department, and proposed a vote of thanks, which was seconded by David James.

Afterwards parents toured an exhibition of work and couldn't have failed to be impressed by what they saw. In the art and craft sections, there were paintings, woodwork, pottery and metalwork on display and a large canoe perhaps attracted most interest. In the rural science room, there were day-old and six weeks-old chicks, goldfish and examples of leaves. Also on show was a large map showing Cheshire schools with Young Farmers' Clubs. One pressed a button and a light on the map showed where the school was situated.

The following morning, the boys had a chance to see their own exhibits in full for the first time, as did the staff of Congleton Grammar School for Girls.

**Speech Day Photo on the previous page: Rows 1 – 8 all second year**

**1<sup>st</sup> Row** - Dave Minshull, Paul Bailey, Peter Dawson, ?, Alan Parker, Keith (Sid) Buckley, Stanley Procter, Stephen Jarvis

**2<sup>nd</sup> Row** - Donald Venables, J Nixon, Peter Clowes, Paul Foster, Michael Lambert, Clive Ball, John Roberts (owned Bike Shop opp Grapes, Graeme Cook, ?, Michael Hulme

**3<sup>rd</sup> Row** - Ian Pass, Raymond Morris, Christopher Topham, Philip Dale, Brian Dale, Frank Burgess, Anthony Whitmore, Raymond Mellor, Colin Brown, Timothy O' Reilly

**4<sup>th</sup> Row** - Roy Bentley, Frank Pointon, ?, Robert Sproston, Keith Higginson, Stephen Hibbert, Alan Pemberton, Martin Tomlinson

**5<sup>th</sup> Row** - Michael Lacey, Stuart Webb, Kenneth Holding, Philip Patmore, Brian Leese, ?, Robert Cunliffe, Desmond Davies

**6<sup>th</sup> Row** Ian Stanway, Robert Barker, David Broster, James Hibbert, Neil Aherne, Terrence Brown, Brian Worrall, Paul Jones, David Cotterill, Kenneth Billington

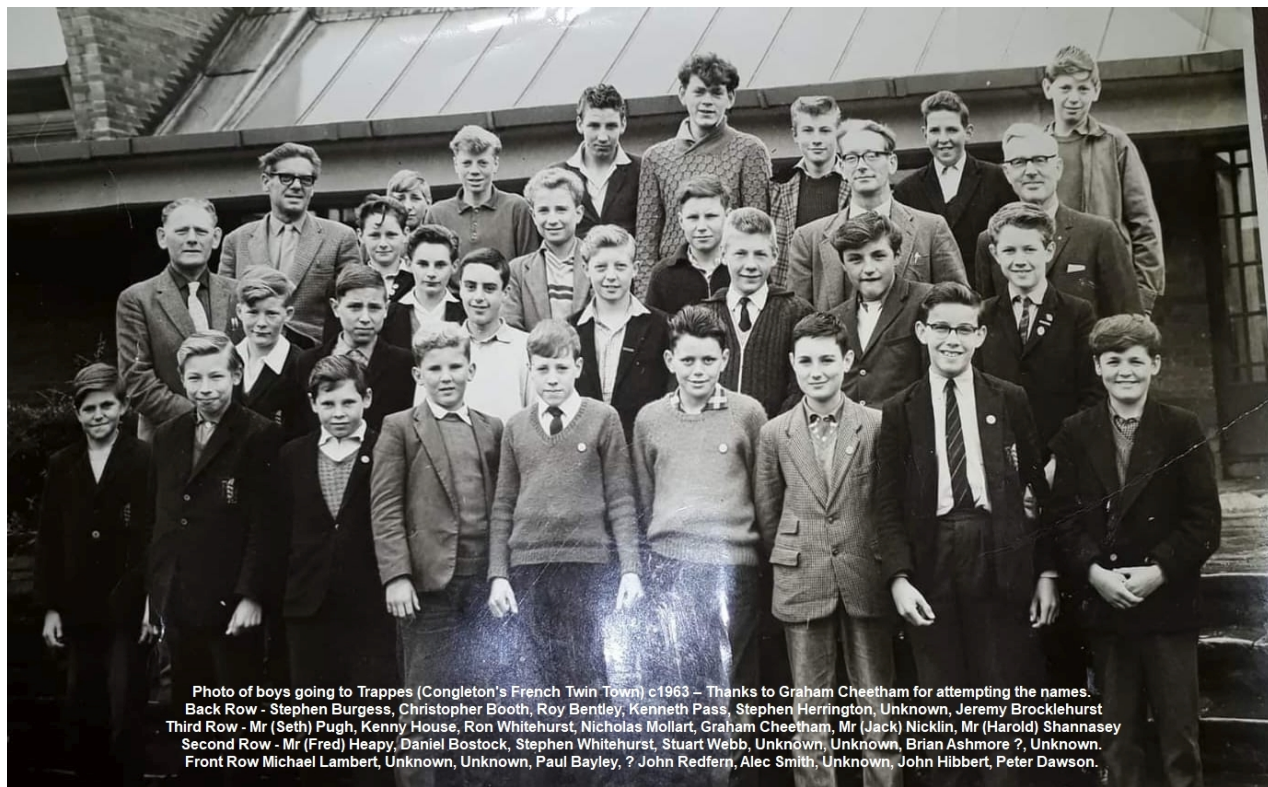
**7<sup>th</sup> Row** Richard Bloor, Graham Cheetham, Stephen Holland, Chris Booth, Martin Steele, Alan Crankshaw, Christopher "Sammy" Shone, Roy Woodward, Roger Mellor, Walter Hewitt

**8<sup>th</sup> Row** Raymond Vallenti, Peter Thorley, Trevor Park, Freddy Cotterell, ?, ?, John Buckley, ?

**Now Third year boys Row 9** ?, Alan Robinson, David Morris, Chris Jacob, Phil Walton, ?

**9<sup>th</sup> Row** found me with glasses Roger Howard.





I did convince myself that there was little attempt by staff to arrange any out of school activities. Clearly this was not the case, it is/was my slanted view, the above photo shows a group of boys who visited Trappes (Congleton's French twin town). I am assuming that this is to be 1963, there is a mix of school years. For example three who have helped with my memories are on this photo John Redfern, Jeremy Brocklehurst and Graham Cheetham. The photo is taken looking towards the row of classrooms 1-5 from the central area of the school (known as "The Quad"). In the centre of The Quad was a pond and My memory told me that Roy Bentley (who is on the photo above) actually dived into the pond one day, Alex Smith (also on the photo) confirmed this commenting "Roy was giving a demonstration of how to dive in at the swimming baths". When I showed the photo to Jeremy Brocklehurst he recalled he also went on a holiday to Norfolk with the school. The photo on the right also seems to be from 1963 and shows a group of boys visiting what will be their "new school". Waggs Road continued in operation for one more year after I left, so my class mates also never got to attend Box Lane, I am assuming that they didn't get to visit Box Lane when the above happy bunch did as they were leaving school before the move.



John Murray who is regular attendee at Biddulph History meetings also gave me a positive view "I always found the teachers fair but strict – there was an assembly every morning in the Hall which also doubled as a gym. We had a 90 minute lunch break... could walk into town mainly to view the 'talent' on display from the Mill girls".



Why take photos of the students when the teachers are obviously more attractive!



The staff at Congleton Boys Secondary School, 1960/61. In the photograph can be seen the headmaster, Mr Shaughnessy, Fred Heapy, Arnold Gibson, Eddie Ollier and Roy Swinson.

The teachers at my time there. This is taken from a book by Joan P Alcock – Images of England - Congleton With the help of Robert Potts and Allen Brown we believe their names are from the left:  
 Back Row - F. Amos, A. Dale, F. Heapy, H. Pugh, A. Bayley, J. Kenworthy, A. Kelly, J. Snelling, A. Morris, Charlesworth, Jones, supply teacher?, A. Gibson  
 Front Row: Unknown, J. Nicklin, Wigglesworth, E. Ollier, H. Shanassy, Moore, G. Mortimore, Swinson, T. Farthing

I left Waggs Road School age 14 years and 11 months with happy memories, friends for life, much tougher, ready to move on with no academic qualifications and a bible.

The bible inside pages are copied below, signed by Teachers on the left, class friends on the right and (a very nice touch) by the kitchen staff in the middle.

With all good wishes for the future:  
 H.B. Pugh. Farthing 19 July '63  
 A.C. / secy. E. Ollier.  
 M.H. Higginson. S.A. Nielson  
 J. Kitham. A. Gibson  
 J.B. Snelling. J. Snelling.  
 J. Nicklin. Ag Bayley.  
 19 VII 63  
 G.W. Mortimer. G.P. Mortimer  
 E.C. Jones 1963. J. Kenworthy.  
 G.A. Cookson.  
 Best wishes  
 R. Heapy  
 A.D. H. 19. 19. 19. 19. 19.

CHESHIRE EDUCATION COMMITTEE  
 CONGLETON BOYS' SECONDARY SCHOOL.  
 This Bible was presented to  
 PHILIP WALTON  
 upon leaving the above School  
 H. Shaughnessy  
 Head Teacher.  
 19/7/63  
 Best Wishes for Your Future Mr. Walton  
 A. Mortimer  
 M. Oulton  
 M. 13. 13. 13. 13. 13.  
 G. E. Webb

J. Farley P. Durrant R. Potts  
 A. Robinson R. Hiseock  
 Christopher Smith.  
 M. Cret John Gibson  
 S. Bailey B. Webb  
 J. Danish  
 H. Marshall Eric W. Shaw  
 D. Wood George Daniel B. Potts  
 D. Cooke D. Colter  
 (F. H.) Fred R. Hiseock  
 John Buckley  
 N. Bann  
 S. 19/7/63



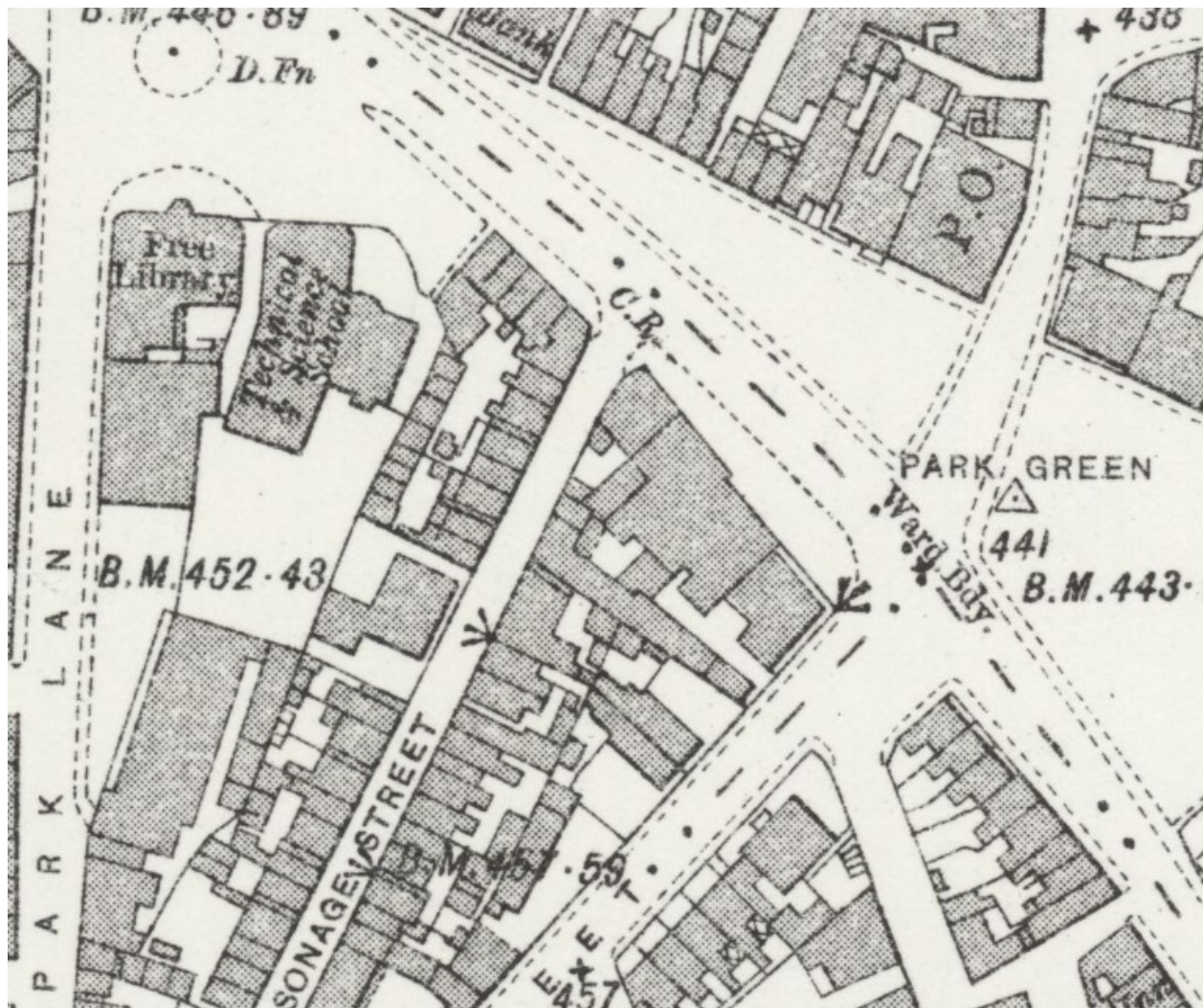
**1963**

During the early part of 1963 I was preparing to leave secondary school. I was encouraged to apply for apprenticeships and had already decided it would be engineering although my dad would have liked to see one of his boys join the building trade. I was wary of going straight into the workplace as I was a shy and reserved fourteen year old. I consciously “lost” some apprenticeship application forms on my way to the post box as I was aware that there was a one year general engineering course available at Macclesfield College of Further Education. A new college building was being constructed on Park Lane, Macclesfield that would initially be for Engineering and Building. I applied and was asked to attend the existing (old) college around March time when I was still at school, this was the year of the bad winter.

I recall going to Macclesfield on the top deck of the bus with the snow at the sides of the road as high as the top deck. I was asked to visit the college, I can't recall if it was a test or interview at the old college building, it might have been neither, just a “get to know what it will be like” meeting. My memory is standing on the staircase in the impressive entrance hall which had large wooden memorials on the walls. The entrance was on Park Lane next to the library – the main college building was around the corner but I recall you could access all of the building from the Park Lane entrance.

When I arrived at the College in September my lessons were in the new purpose built college at the top of Park Lane about a mile away although we had to walk to the old college at lunch time for the canteen. The college was good for me, the lessons weren't especially hard and I was able to catch up with the things I had missed at Waggs Road and I had homework to complete for the first time in my life! I effectively did a full time General Engineering Course first year which those that had gone straight into work had to complete on a day release part time basis. Part of the old college (facing park green) is now a Wetherspoons pub, part of it (entrance on Park Lane) is the Silk Museum.





I was in a class (all boys in those days), who were friendly, they all older than me having spent four years at secondary school compared to my three years. One other (Dave) was from Congleton who I knew from Waggs Road school. It was more relaxed than school, the best part was the large new workshop and a very good lecturer who we nicknamed "Hill Billy Brian". I assume we all passed the examinations towards the end of the year. When the exams were over we were told to return each day for further lessons. I didn't see any point in this so I just disappeared from the college.

My brothers were progressing - Ray was now in his second year as an apprentice at Radway Green and Dave had started to study textiles at what I believe was then the Bradford Institute of Technology -, later to become Bradford University. Outside activities still included attending Sunday School at St Johns, this meant I was able to attend the Youth Club which had started in the church hall on Friday evenings, I was usually with Rob Egerton for these. My regular visits to Stoke City had started when I was at school - also with Rob and other school friends including Derek Cooke, these took over from attending Congleton Town games and just across the road from there Congleton Cricket (Booth Street) in the summer. One nice memory of the "Town Ground" was that there were then two tea huts one behind the stand and one behind the goal at the bottom of what was then a pronounced slope. Each time we visited we always asked the serving ladies for two penny cups of tea. They always obliged even though the actual charge should have been at least two pence.



**1964 - 1969**

It would have been a quiet summer in 1964 following the submission of apprentice applications (which I did not lose this time) and interviews. In the football season I was probably attending all Stoke City home games as they were guided to the first division by the 50 year old Stanley Matthews, he was just plain Stan at this time, his knighthood arrived in 1965. Friday evenings were spent at the "Youth Club", Rob Egerton and myself were original members and so avoided the cut when the more sophisticated older members applied an eligible to attend age. This probably happened in 1962. My apprenticeship applications included, in addition to Radway - English Electric (at Kidsgrove which later became GEC) – Crewe Works (Railways) – A.V Roe (Aeroplanes) and Rolls Royce cars in Crewe (now Bentley). I suspect I also applied to Fodens and ERF (Lorries) but I can't recall visiting them so maybe I had been offered Radway Green by then.

At Radway all applicants completed a written test, the successful ones following up with an interview. The interview was interesting as it was in front of the "Apprentice Board". Radway did take its apprenticeships seriously and the "Board" members included senior engineers, representatives from Crewe and Stoke Colleges of Further Education, trade union representatives and of course personnel representatives. During the interview I was shown examples of the tool set that all apprentices had to make during their first year in the Apprentice Training Shop. We also had to take along examples of our work. At the end of the interview I had to ask for one of my examples (a vee block support and clamp!) which I had made in the workshop at Macclesfield College to be given back to me as one of "board" members had mistakenly put it with the Radway tools. This mistake though must have been made by a "non hands on" board member as my Macclesfield College work would never have been passed by the Radway training staff.



It was Rob Barnett who gave me a copy of the above photo, he is in the front row was also from Congleton [same year as me at Waggs Road] and we started our apprenticeships on the same day. Rob must have had a contact in personnel as we apprentices were not allowed copies,

as the photo was for record purposes only. Not named on the photo are the “Apprentice Supervisor” in the centre (Gordon Smith) and the two “Trainers”, it is Jack Parker on Smith’s left, Stuart Hart told me that the other trainer is Roy Hammand I recall working with him later in the “planning” department, I’m sure he must have found all those 15/16 year olds very taxing. The training shop was isolated from the main part of the factory in what was called the “loading bay” area. We were allowed extra “walking time” to cover the distance from the main entrance before we “clocked on” (literally).

The loading bay area was where the explosive was added to to the 762 (7.62mm diameter) rounds as the bullets and shells were joined to become live ammunition. This was done in small areas where access was carefully screened (non sparking tools, no matches or lighters and rubber soled shoes), each area was surrounded with earth bunds to ensure that any local explosion would be contained (I don’t think there were any explosions). The area also had it’s own canteen which was across the road from the Training Shop. The main canteen was located next to a large hall complete with stage and marked out badminton court, all this harked back to the war days when the factory employed 15,000 workers. There were probably as many as 1500 working there when I did. Being two years in front of me my brother Ray was well established. The “Training Shop” was self contained and actually had it’s own stores and storeman, Rob thinks his name was Reg, we each had a tally disc (mine had 915 stamped on it) and this number was used to record the issue of any tools or materials and stayed with me throughout my time at Radway.

On my first day at Radway we were introduced to some older apprentices who asked if any of us had any family working there – I mentioned Ray who received a “yeh, he’s in B block – he’s OK” comment. Rob recalls that where we met was close to the Training Shop and this was also used for training purposes – initially we were taught how to use micrometers and the “correct” way of using hand tools like calipers and set squares. There was an expectation of accuracy and precision from day one – all the apprentices produced a set of personal tools, Any blemish or lack of precision and the piece would be rejected with a simple instruction “start again”. Rob Barnett recalls that when we had completed our personal set of tools we were allowed to make a model from copies of a magazine with designs for the manufacture of scale models, we apparently chose a steam engine. Once we had completed our (perfect) set of tools we could chose which of the remaining parts to make.

Some apprentices were from other parts of country and housed in Alsager village in a place called Milton House, I believe that four in the photo were in this number Eric Mitchell, Graham Buckley, I.K Jones and Stuart McCue. I was jealous of what I perceived as the freedom they had living away from home. I was clearly mistaken as I have never enjoyed being away even for short courses.

To continue with my education I attended Crewe College of Further Education starting with “G2” which was the follow on to “G1” I completed in Macclesfield. This General Engineering course was intended to select the most appropriate route through college, there were three options – National Certificate, Technicians Certificate or Craft whose names indicated the emphasis with each option. The main building at Hightown in Crewe was similar in many ways to what the “old” college was in Macclesfield, a grand Victorian building oozing quality. The photo below is recent – it is now residential apartments. As had happened in Macclesfield this was soon replaced with a purpose built modern college on Dane Bank Avenue in Crewe.

We also had lessons at two other locations in Crewe. The Mechanics Institute was another grand Victorian building







I had originally incorrectly identified the Mechanics Institute. Stuart Hart advises me that the pictures above are correct, indeed the one of the left appears to be from the 60s – I may have been inside at the time!. The photo on the right clearly shows it's sad end. My memory tells me that the classrooms we used were on the second floor, on the first floor was a large Ballroom showing considerable wear, it was probably magnificent in its early days although it did still contain a grand piano. As part of its 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018 what is now "Cheshire College – South & West" reported that *"In 1887 the new Technical Institute and School of Art was opened on Hightown"....A handsome sixteen room building it was to become a serious rival to the Mechanics Institution.....origins of further education in Crewe can be traced back to 1843 when workers and their families were settling into their new homes in Crewe where the Grand Junction Railway Company had established its brand new workshops.....Many of the workers were from Edge Hill, Liverpool and the GRD Directors thought a Reading Room should be provided as the men had been accustomed to using the Mechanics Institute in Liverpool....This came to be called Crewe's Mechanics Institution.*

Totty's Hall was an annexe to the college and contained the workshops. In the 60s there were advertisements for 10 weeks practical courses for things like "Farm Welding". The college took students training in nursing, building and agriculture in addition to engineering. There are photos from the time on the next few pages. The next page shows a still from an old promotional video – it shows Radway Green Central Avenue with the offices on the left, the Drawing Office was on the first floor. Below that is the apprentice associations entry into the Crewe Carnival "Radway's Rocket". I became the chair of the Association around 1967 aged 18 or 19 - there was not a rush of applications for the role! It was probably 1968 when we entered the carnival procession. I recognise Ian Thompson and Des Davies by the control desk, Stewart Hart in the "spacesuit" did the nice artwork of the "No 10" door, sorry but I can't remember who was standing at my side. My main contribution was including a barrel of beer into the control desk at the last minute. One of my main tasks in role as chair was organising a twice annual trip to Blackpool, the following two photos below are taken from one of these trips in 1967. On the left is one on the south pier, I look worse for wear and am sitting on the left, the person on the extreme left is brother Ray by the bar. It wasn't long after this that Ray married Megan. Ray had met Megan at Radway where she was working in "A Block". "A Block" can be seen on the right of Central Avenue in the photo from the old promotional video. There are two "professional" photos, one where I am receiving a prize (set of compasses) which I still have, also a leaving presentation where I am representing the Apprentice Association as the apprentices made the planter. Below those is Ray & Megan's wedding at St Mary's Alsager. Following on again are two adverts one from that time one which appeared as I applied to be an apprentice and one advertising the role I was employed in when I left Radway Green in 1970.







### Congleton apprentice is best of year



Philip receives his award from Mr. Cook, watched by Mr. W. Middleton (Director) and Mr. S. Hibbert (Chairman, Apprenticeship Board).



**CRAFT APPRENTICESHIP**  
**ROYAL ORDNANCE FACTORY**  
**RADWAY GREEN.**  
 APPLICATIONS are invited from boys who wish to be considered for Craft Apprenticeship in the following Mechanical and Electrical Engineering Crafts:  
**TOOL AND GAUGE MAKER, MILLWRIGHT, TURNER MILLER, ELECTRICIAN.**  
 Candidates should be 16 years or a little over on the 1st September, 1964. Apprenticeship will commence 31st August, 1964. Suitable candidates slightly under 16 may be considered as pre-apprentice learners. Opportunities exist for Craft Apprentices to obtain regrading to Student Apprenticeship.  
 Application forms and further particulars may be obtained from The Secretary, Apprenticeship Board, Royal Ordnance Factory, Radway Green, near Crewe, Cheshire. Completed forms should be returned not later than 7th March, 1964.

**MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (ARMY DEPARTMENT)**  
**ROYAL ORDNANCE FACTORY, RADWAY GREEN**

Applications are invited for the post of

## DRAUGHTSMAN

Applicants should be of British Nationality and of British born parentage, must possess ordinary national certificate or equivalent qualifications, have served a recognised engineering apprenticeship with suitable workshop experience and have at least one's years drawing office experience. (Applicants who are without the requisite drawing office experience, but possess an aptitude for this type of work, may also apply).

Pay scales for 42 hours, five-day week (including meal breaks) £766, at age 21, rising by annual increments to £1,263 per annum. Maximum starting pay £1,154 at age 28 or over.

Application forms from Director, Royal Ordnance Factory, Radway Green, Crewe, Cheshire, or through the Ministry of Labour.





Photo from Stuart Hart shows auxiliary firemen from the 64-65 Radway Green apprentice intake - from the left Vic Tarrent, Mel Picford, Stuart Hart, Eric Mitchell, Phill Walton



The photo immediately above is from Stewart Hart and shows some apprentices who joined the auxiliary fire service at Radway Green, the site had its own on site full time fire service, On the photo Vic Tarrent, Mel Pickford, Stuart Hart, Eric Mitchell and myself. Above that photo is a newspaper report from the time showing other auxiliary firemen from other apprentice years. My memory thinks I won the "Individual one man hydrant" competition at Chorley, with the winners cup later proudly on display in the drawing office!

The other photo was from a month away mainly at Woolwich Arsenal probably in 1969 with Apprentices from other Ordnance Factories or Ministry of Defence establishments. On the following page is an example of my work while in the Drawing Office.

A Congleton student apprentice has gained the title of "Best Apprentice of the Year" at the Royal Ordnance Factory at Radway Green.

He is Philip Walton, of 36, Tall Ash-avenue, who received his prize from Mr. J. Cook, B.Sc., F.R.I.C., Deputy Controller, Royal Ordnance Factories. And Philip had a double role to play, for after receiving his award, he had the duty, as chairman of the Apprentice Association, of proposing the vote of thanks which was accorded to Mr. Cook.

If there was a prize for the town with the brightest apprentices at Radway Green this year, it would undoubtedly go to Sandbach, for its boys gained no less than four awards—more than its big neighbour Crewe.

Among final year student apprentices, P. Bourne gained first prize, being awarded the Higher National Certificate, Mechanical Engineering, with a distinction and two credits. Another first, for second year craft apprentices, went to P. J. Hulse, while P. Bourne (a student apprentice) gained the Malcolm Latham Memorial Prize donated by the Apprentice Association, for the best essay on a works visit, and J. A. Coppenthal (craft apprentice) gained the L. Flatman Cup for marksmanship.



Form E 74. Code 5-74-0

#### OFFICIAL SECRETS ACTS DECLARATION

Declaration to be signed by members of Government Departments on appointment and, where desirable, by non-civil servants on first being given access to Government information

My attention has been drawn to the provisions of the Official Secrets Acts, which are set out on the back of this document, and I am fully aware of the serious consequences which may follow any breach of those provisions.

I understand that the sections of the Official Secrets Acts, set out on the back of this document, cover material published in a speech, lecture, or radio or television broadcast, or in the Press or in book form. I am aware that I should not divulge any information gained by me as a result of my appointment to any unauthorised person, either orally or in writing, without the previous official sanction in writing of the Department appointing me, to which written application should be made and two copies of the proposed publication be forwarded. I understand also that I am liable to be prosecuted if I publish without official sanction any information I may acquire in the course of my tenure of an official appointment (unless it has already officially been made public) or retain without official sanction any sketch, plan, model, article, note or official documents which are no longer needed for my official duties, and that these provisions apply not only during the period of my appointment but also after my appointment has ceased.

Signed

P. Walton  
31 AUG 1964

Date

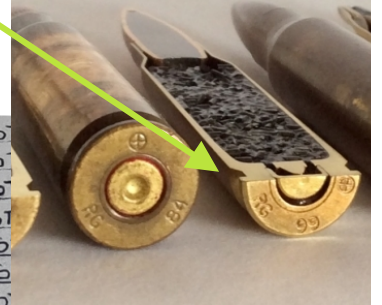


### The differential screw thread and how it helped with fine cutting adjustments.

Item 7 - Differential Screw has two threads, one clockwise 20 tpi (threads per inch) & one a-cw 25 tpi. One turn of the screw moves the screw connected to the 20 tpi thread 1/20 inch forwards (0.05").

A cutting tool connected to the 25 tpi thread would move 1/25 inch the opposite way (0.04").

The net movement of the cutting tool would be  $0.05" - 0.04" = 0.01"$  (10 thou in old speak), this enables small adjustments to the cutting tool. The cutting tool cuts this groove in the bullet case. This photo from a metal detecting site shows a Radway Green (RG) 7.62 round. The whole thing brass case, copper/lead bullet made and assembled on site.



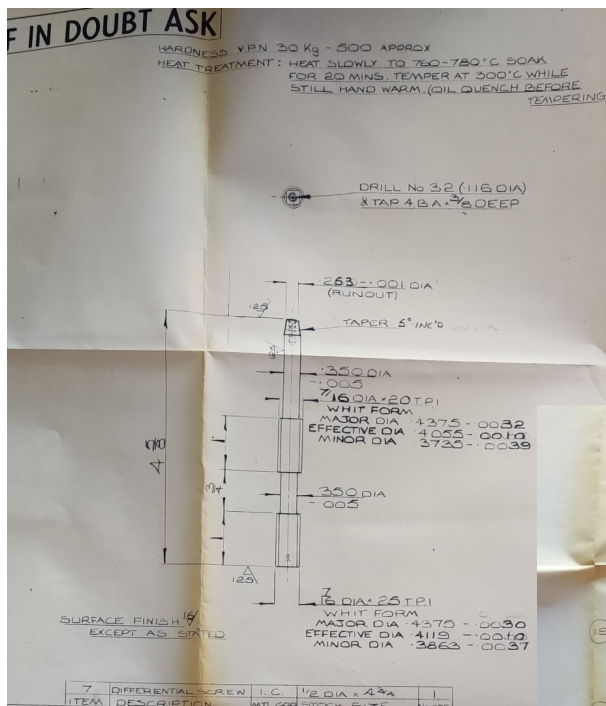
This as an example of my work in the drawing office at Radway. The drawing shows the clarity & accuracy expected (everything is in imperial measurements). Before this modification the adjustments were made by tightening a holding clamp and then hammering the tool holder to move it slightly until it was accurately set.

The manufacture involved copper & brass foundry workers, machine setters, toolmakers, millwrights and many others. I was up on the first floor of the office block, I might have been better placed working closer to those on the shop floor doing the "proper" work.

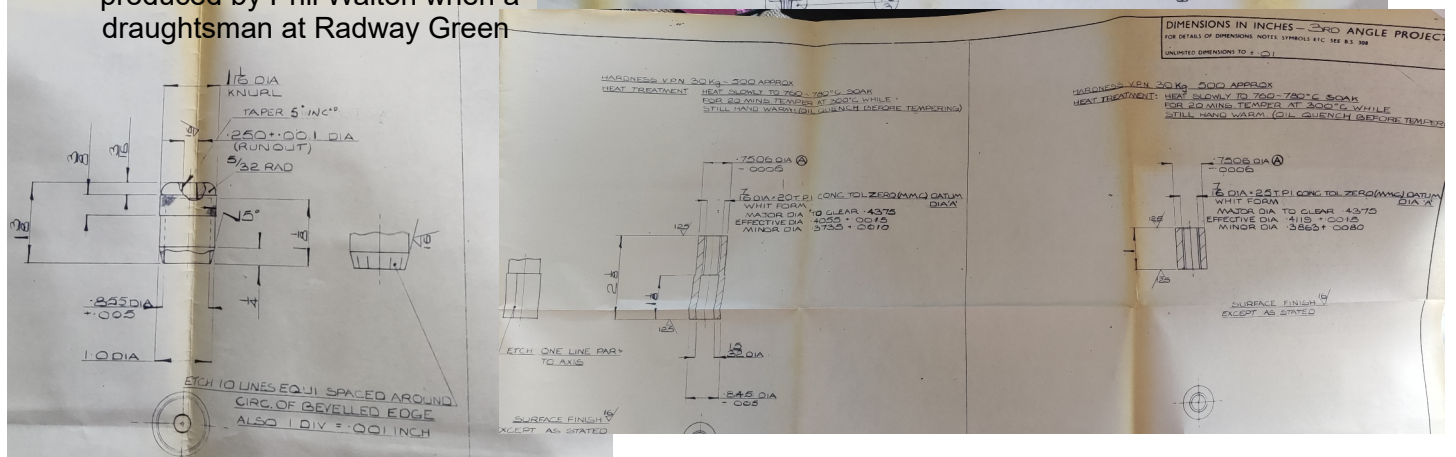
20	TAPER PIN	S			
19	SKT. HD. CAP SCREW	S			
18	BOLT	S			
17	HEX HEAD SCREW	S			
16	SKT. HD. CAP SCREW	S			
15	WASHER	S			
14	NUT	S			
3	13 CLAMP	M.S.	5/16 DIA x 7/8	5/8 DIA x 5/8	1
3	12 BOLT	M.S.	5/8 DIA x 3 3/4		1
3	11 STUD	M.S.	3/4 DIA x 3		1
3	10 BARREL	M.S.	1 1/4 DIA x 1 1/2		1
3	9 NUT	I.C.	1 DIA x 1 1/4		1
3	8 THIMBLE	I.C.	1 DIA x 2 3/8		1
3	7 DIFFERENTIAL SCREW	I.C.	1/2 DIA x 4 3/4		1
2	6 CLAMP	M.S.	3/4 x 2 5/8 x 4		1
2	5 CLAMP SUPPORT	M.S.	1 x 1/2 x 3 3/4		1
2	4 HOUSING	M.S.	1 1/4 x 1 1/2 x 1		1
2	3 TOOL HOLDER	M.S.	2 1/2 x 1 1/2 x 6 1/2		1
2	2 TOOL SLIDE	M.S.	1 3/8 x 1 x 7		1
2	1 M.C. SLIDE	STD			1

SHT No	ITEM DESCRIPTION	MTL	GRF	STOCK SIZE	No
	STANDARD FOR 7.62mm CASE				
			BASED ON DRGS No		
				SURFACE ROUGHNESS	
				✓ ALL OVER EXCEPT AS STATED.	
3	157A SEE SHT. 2	PLT.	SCALE 1-1	DRAWN BY P.V.	
2	15470 SEE SHT 3	P.W.	MATL	TRACED BY	
	ISSUE DATE	AMENDMENT	C.N. No	CHECKED BY	
	M.C. PART FINE ADJUSTMENT		APP.D.	DATE 17.2	
	R.O.F. (R.G.) HEAD TURNING TOOL		DWG No.	SHEET No. 1 OF 2, SHT	
	T&C M.C. (H.T&R)		ED(M) D.1073		



Extracts from a 1970 drawing produced by Phil Walton when a draughtsman at Radway Green





Apart from work and study and Blackpool trips all connected with Radway in the 1960s other things were happening. Although I claim no part in the 60s sexual revolution, I did spend a lot of time trying to attract girls with limited success. One of my popular approaches was the Civil Defence card copied here and looking tired and worn so I was clearly was trying very hard. Friday nights was Buglawton Youth Club most of the time playing table tennis usually being well beaten by Robert Egerton and as Allen Brown has recently reminded me by the late David Davenport who was another good player. That was until the Bulls Head became my preferred destination on Friday's. The same location also became my preferred destination on Monday's. Wednesdays, Saturdays and Sundays. Maybe occasionally on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Many times it was a meeting point before moving on to other pubs or the nightlife of the Potteries, mainly the Crystal, other times Top Rank or The

Place or other such. Fred Whitehurst reminded me recently of a time we decided on a change and went to the Golden Torch in Tunstall. On this occasion there were about six of us to travel but only my car (Ford Anglia). The only way to make this work was to put someone in the boot. Paul Durrant volunteered. Paul was in the same class as me at Secondary school, he had moved away for a time living in at hotels where he working as a chef, at this time he was back in Congleton and I believe working at The Crown in Goostry. When we drove past unsuspecting girls on the journey there was cheering and this prompted Paul to raise the boot lid and make himself visible. Also there were regular visits to Stoke (footy) and the Crystal initially with Rob Egerton then later with many of the Bulls Head regulars.

I spoke with Rob Barnett trying to remember places that we visited when apprentices, here are some of his recollections:

- There were regular Friday lunchtime visits to local pubs, usually the Plough but sometimes The Lodge or the White Lion at Barthomley
- Evening visits especially on Fridays to Crewe but mainly to Nantwich at the Boot & Shoe. This predated the breathalyser and the stigma (rightly) attached to drinking and driving was almost non existent at that time.
- Rob confirmed my memory of the Band Club in Congleton, it's my old pre decimal test - Rob, Bryan (Jones) and I could buy three pints for five shillings (aka 5 bob) – so how much a pint? The answer if you want to try it first is at the end of this list.
- Rob mentioned that early in his apprenticeship Bryan and himself met John Redfern in Congleton, John had also mentioned this questioning why I didn't attend – it was the motorbikes – I didn't have one and never have.
- Rob and I recalled holidays – Stuart had reminded me that we went to Devon on year with the idea of camping with ended up hiring a caravan – I'm not sure who was with us but Rob doesn't recall this although he went to Cornwall – so different holidays. He also mentioned a holiday in a family caravan that Bryan Jones was able to secure in Abergele, we were definitely on that holiday together.
- I also asked Rob about how he travelled to work, his memory was better than mine and he recalled travelling on the bus (as Ray and I did). However once Ray passed his test he became the driver of "Dad's" Mini. If only one of the scary moments we recalled had been witnessed by Dad it would have resulted in immediate withdrawal of the car use.
- Three pints for five bob answer - Five shillings divided by three is one shilling and eight old pence – today's equivalent 8.33 new pence.

I left Radway Green with my Certificate, some qualifications, more friends and a very smart leaving card (the next two pages). The card had this poem on the back:>>



Phil Walton leaves on Friday, 8th May  
to take up post as Engineer at the  
Gas Board.

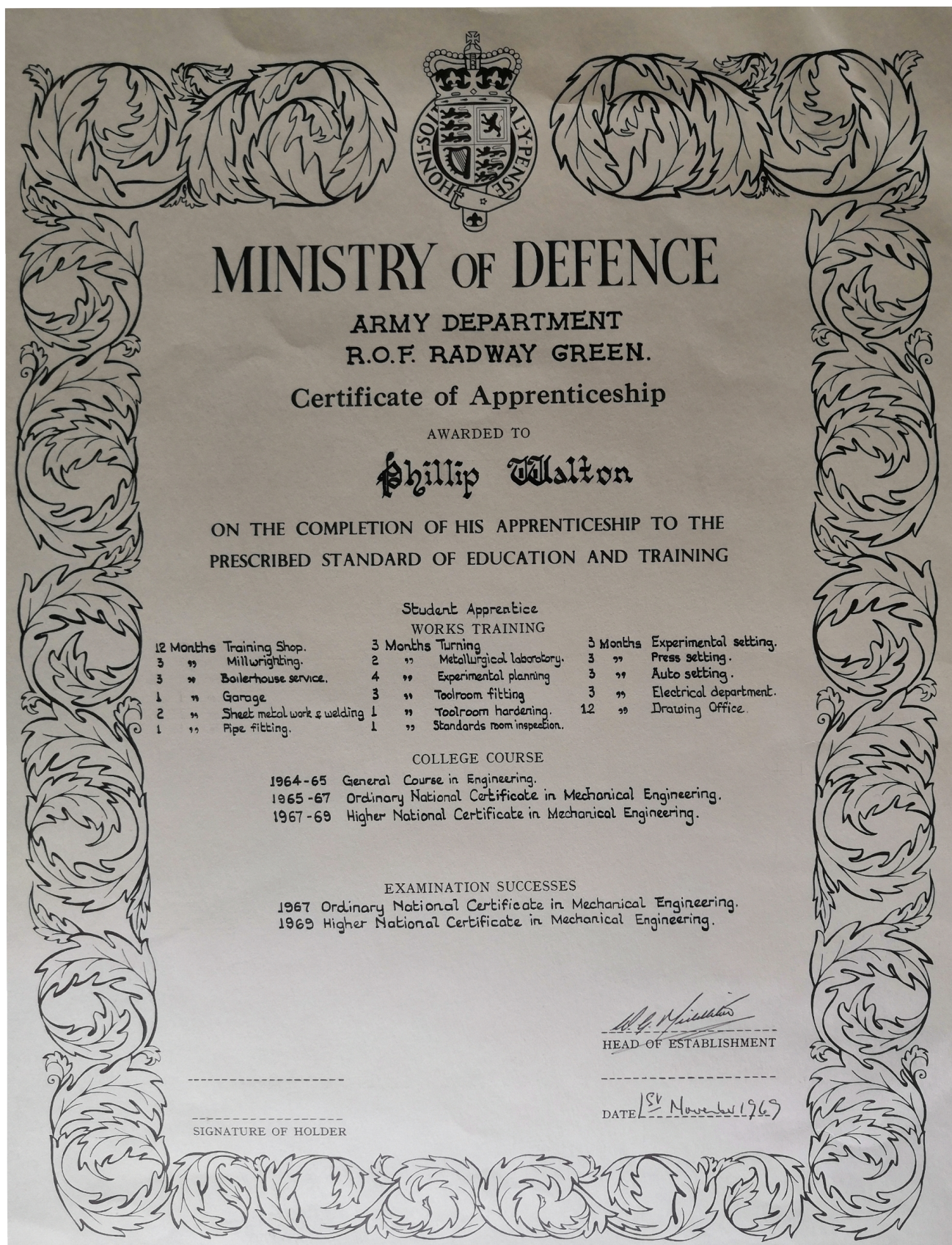
Phil Walton's not the "Man from Mars",  
But he is the one who gets through cars,  
Vans, Anglias, Rapiers, it's all the same,  
To "Write them off" is just his game.

His favourite pub at which he calls,  
Is busy knocking down it's walls,  
So's he can drive up in his car,  
To give his orders at the "Bar".

At present a Cambridge is what he drives,  
To take his girls to his many "Dives",  
The Crystal is one of which we know,  
Where one can get some "Yo-Ho-Ho".

With this gift we try to say,  
To you Phil, on your last day,  
We hope that in your new appointment,  
You find success and much enjoyment.





Two large pictures - above a copy of my apprenticeship certificate (still not signed) and following is a much more colourful leaving card – hand made my memory tells me by fellow draughtsman John Copenhall. With signatures on the back of the card was a poem which is also reproduced above.



YOUR CAR RUNS SO SMOOTH  
WE MIGHT BE FLYING PHIL! PHIL! PHIL!



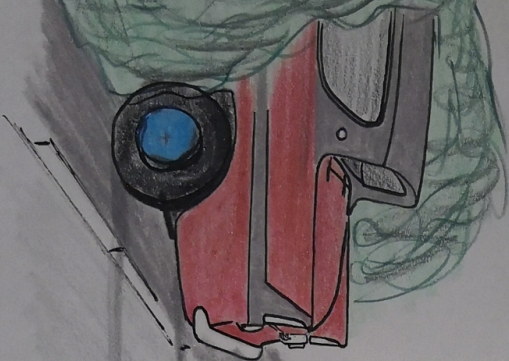
THE BEST OF LUCK IN YOUR FUTURE  
CAREER WITH THE HOPE THAT IT IS  
PROSPEROUS, HAPPY AND ACCIDENT FREE.  
FROM YOUR FRIENDS AT RADWAY GREEN.

THAT LITTLE CHUBBY FACED LAD



*Prince of Passion!*

WHATEVER  
ELSE IT MAY  
BE A NIGHT OUT  
WITH YOU IS  
NEVER BORING



I'VE GOT A CAMBRIDGE COMING IN SHORTLY!!

I. SCRAP & P. WALTON PARTNERS  
**SCRAP YARD**  
HIS TODAY  
MINE TOMORROW



THEY SAID HES GOT A STOMACH  
LIKE A TANK  
BUT I TOLD THEM  
YOU CAN FILL A TANK !!



IT'S JUST PHIL OUT FOR A SPIN  
IN HIS DADS 1100



YOUNG PHILIP LEANED OVER THE GAS TANK,  
THE CONTENTS OF WHICH FOR TO SEE,  
HE LIGHTED A MATCH TO ASSIST HIM,  
OH BRING BACK POOR PHILIP TO ME!





Car's and car driving – very important during my late teens and early 20's. There aren't many actual photos so the ones here are generic copies from Google. To help fund the cars I did have a part time job around this time on Sunday afternoons, working in the park in charge of the putting, tennis and bowling green. I will always be grateful to my Uncle George for setting me up with this job - a game of putting – golf ball and putter included cost two old pence – less that one new pence! Friends didn't actually pay – this did make a mess of my accounting for the takings. Uncle George took great trouble in visiting me at work one Sunday and very kindly correcting me.

Cars:



- Our first family car was an early Ford Anglia – similar to the one in the picture and definitely black. It was known as the “sit up and beg model”. Dad didn't have a driving license – he did have one when he was in the army (no test involved) but had let it lapse. Grandad did have a license as his last job was delivering for the Co-op. Dave learned to drive first, I'm not sure if he had lessons (no one else did) but he spent a lot of time learning with Grandad in the passenger seat. Dad learned to drive next, then Ray with Dave as the “driving instructor”.
- When it came to my turn Ray was the “instructor” – however Dave provided a lesson for me when he was home from university, I recall him telling me to pull over when I was driving along Bromley Road. Dave proceeded to explain the things I was doing wrong – it seemed to me that I was wasn't doing anything right! Anyway I did pass first time so thanks older brothers – you were clearly placed on this earth to teach me how to drive. It the years that followed I “taught” Kath and then James both without the use of a driving instructor. It did stop then – teaching my daughters became a step to far.

- The second family car was a Mini – it was red and an early version as it had external seams, external door hinges, sliding front windows and pull chords to open the doors from the inside. Wonderful car.
- The second family car was an Austin 1100 british racing green like the one in the photo. Very modern with its “ribbon” speedo and front wheel drive.
- Meanwhile Dave is car hunting. I’m a bit confused as Ray and I shared a Austin A35 Van with rear seats (no rear window). I can’t recall if Dave used this first, It didn’t have a heater (until we fitted one, we also fitted a valve radio). It was same colour as the one in the photo with the quirky single rear door.
- A sky blue and white Austin Metropolitan was definitely Dave’s. Austin produced it for the American market, it had a bench front seat and column gear shift.
- MGA pillar box red – one evening when I was dropped off at home by Barry (from the same HNC course) after attending Crewe college an MGA was parked outside our house and I joked to Barry that “they have probably bought it for me”. It was though another Dave car, later to become a Dave, Ray, Phil car with Ray and I completely rebuilding it. Rebuilding was on a budget, an example was the lay shaft in the gearbox which had a gear tooth broken off – I was quoted £7 & 10 shillings by Peppers of Hanley for a replacement lay shaft so Ray took the old one to work and “built up” the missing tooth with electric arc welding and then grinding it to size. In did stop the clonking which was replaced by an acceptable muffled tapping. I have written more about the MGA on pages 59 - 62
- Ford Anglia 105E – this must have been my first solo car registration 862 KTU. The actual colours were accurately shown by John Coppenhall on my Radway leaving card – it was red and grey with a yellow bonnet. The yellow bonnet was added by me following the hitting head on of a lamp post on High Lane Burslem. I hit the lamp post with enough force to form the number plate into it’s exact shape. The car (and I) were quickly repaired, the only “Anglia” bonnet in the scrapyard was yellow.
- My Sunbeam Rapier, who’s colour was like the one in the photo, was bought from Dave Cottrell for £30. Although it was worse for wear, in the way that cars did at that time, full of rust holes and fibreglass repairs it was great. The front and rear windows both wound down and there was no central pillar which created a fully open side. Twin carburettors and an electrically operated overdrive on 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> gears. It was great while it lasted (not very long) I sold it to Peter (I think) Lacey who was running his dad’s scrap yard on Back Park Street alongside his popular tyre and exhaust fitting shop there. I think Peter paid me about £5, the next time he saw me he told me “it was only worth that for the twin carbs” (twin Zenith Carburettors) by the time he had gone to remove them someone else had beaten him to it and stolen them.
- Many Austin Cambridge’s (usually two tone grey) – I had one, both my brothers also had at least one each. They must have been good cars – surely we didn’t all get it wrong!
- My first newish car was a Mini – a white one, it had been in an accident which I foolishly hadn’t spotted until a couple of days after I bought it. Later while driving along a yet to made up Naseby Road (at this time I was engaged to Kath) the low sump on the Mini smashed into a raised grid. My amateur attempts at a fibreglass & resin repair had very limited success and there was a continuous oil leak. Eventually I sold it back to the same garage (Pepper’s Hanley) that had sold it to me as part exchange for a brown Ford Cortina estate. Karma.
- The final car picture above is a Ford Cortina Estate the same colour (brown) as mine.

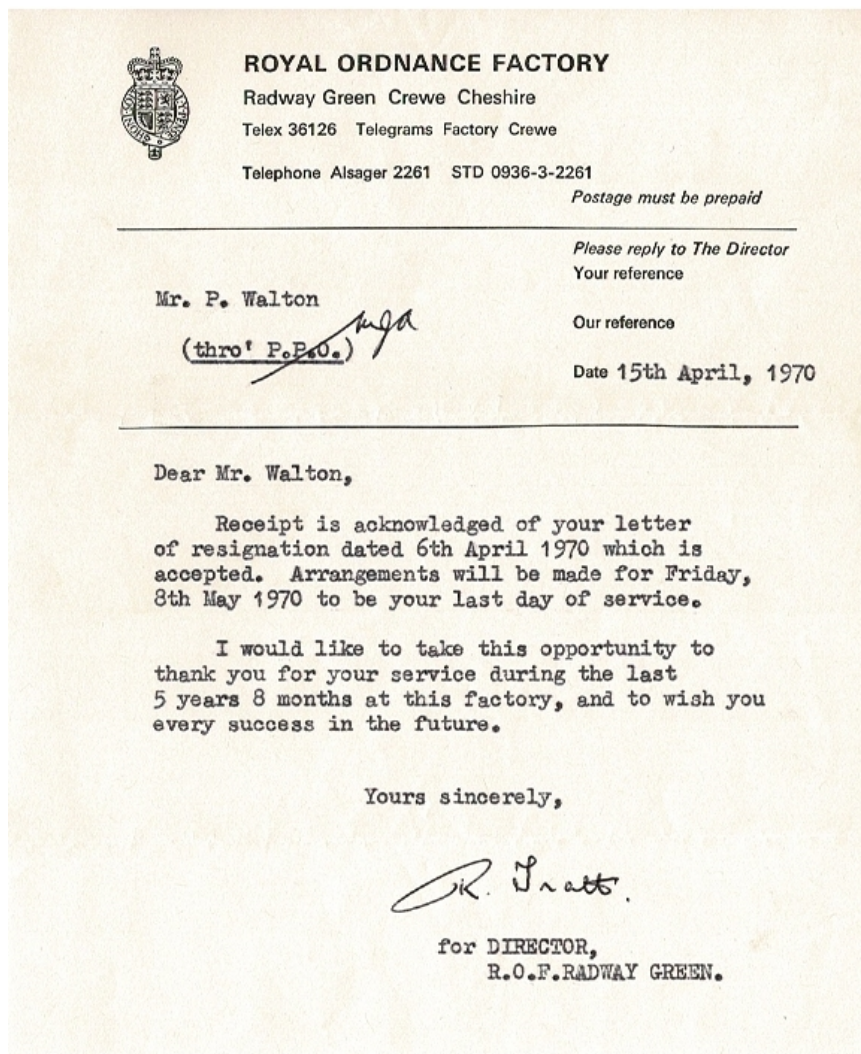


## After Radway -

Should I stay - or should I go?:

1. The Ministry of Defence are good employers – West Midland Gas also seem to be.
2. I know and like lots of people at Radway Green – A chance to meet new people.
3. The work is interesting but factory based – Lots of site work, I will have wheels.
4. I was being allowed to continue to attend college – WMG agreed to honour this.
5. Steady pay progression – Similar defined pay structure, however it's more money.

Number 5 is clearly the main reason, I was also keen to be able to be outside (of a factory) during the working day. Friendly it was but I personally did feel it was claustrophobic.



Here is the acceptance of my resignation. The resignation letter would have been hand written so there is no copy.

Looking back as I write this I feel a huge debt of gratitude to the many people who helped me during my time there.

I would like to mention the first year training school staff Messrs Parker and Hammond it was a difficult role taking on a bunch of teenagers fresh out of school and expected to be mature. Arthur Yorke who was my Lead Draftsman (immediate boss in the drawing office) in particular the efforts he made in providing me with copies of the "Differential Tread" drawings. I used these as examples of my own original design when attending job interviews. When originally tasked it was Arthur who said to me "I think a differential tread may be useful for this – read up about it".

Arthurs boss was Bill Elliot – he had very exacting standards, I was once guilty of trying to falsely justify three of us (all apprentices) arriving late back to the office after lunchtime drinks. Sorry Bill, I certainly didn't try it again. Bill also provided me with an excellent reference when I successfully applied for a role at the Macclesfield and District Water Board.

The offer of my new job with the "Gas" is on the following page.

	WHARF LANE SOLIHULL WARWICKSHIRE
west midlands <b>GAS</b> board	
	TEL: 021-705 6888    TELEX: 33656 EXT. 8206 REF. 94.27    YOUR REF.

12th March 1970.

Dear Mr. Walton,

Following your recent interview, I have pleasure in offering you an appointment as a Trainee Engineer, in the Distribution Department, North Region, based at Chesterton, Newcastle, at a commencing salary of £1085 per annum in Grade G7 of the National Salary Scales for Gas Staffs, subject to satisfactory references.

After approximately 12 months satisfactory service, you will be re-graded to G8 which has a salary ceiling of £1355 per annum. Subsequent promotion will depend on your applying for more Senior positions in competition with other Engineering Assistants.

After a few months in the office, you will be required to be mobile and in using your car on Board business you will be paid a mileage allowance, the details of which can be found in the enclosed pamphlet.

The appointment is subject to normal staff conditions of service including the passing of a medical examination and membership of the Staff Pension Scheme, the main provisions of which are described in the enclosed booklet. Salary is paid monthly by bank transfer and you should indicate the name of the bank and branch into which you would like your salary to be paid in your reply.


The contract may be terminated by one months notice on either side.

Concerning your part day release at South Cheshire College until June of this year, this is acceptable if you are prepared to work the time lost in overtime.

Would you please confirm in writing, whether or not you wish to accept this offer and if so, indicate the earliest date on which you can commence employment.

Yours sincerely,  
*P. E. Donovan*  
 C.E. Donovan  
 Senior Personnel Officer.  
 (Engineering)

Mr. P. Walton,  
 36, Tall Ash Avenue  
 Buglawton  
 Congleton  
 Cheshire

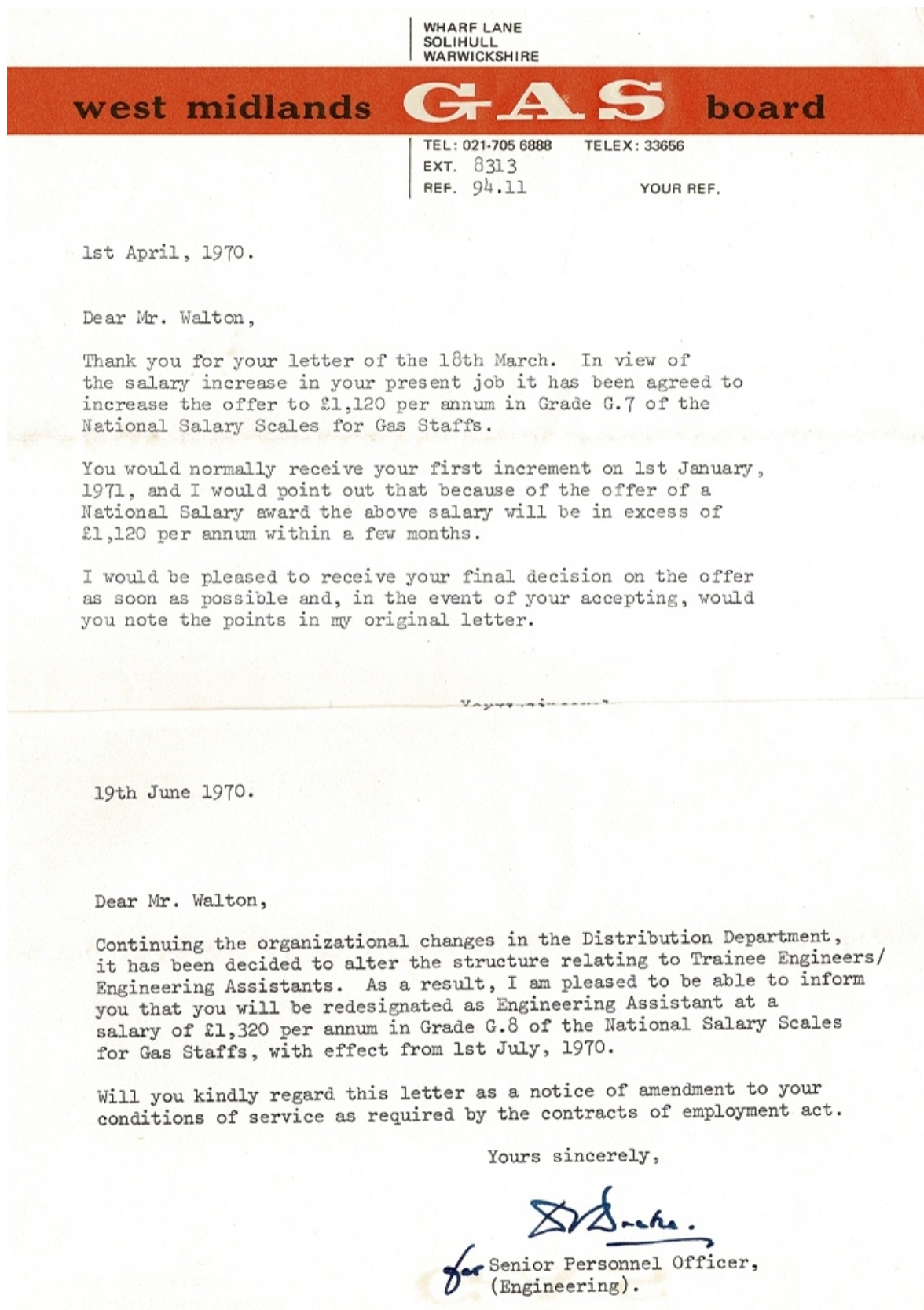
  
 SIGNATURE OF HOLDER  
*P. Walton*

FINDER: PLEASE RETURN TO ONE OF THE BOARD'S  
 OFFICES OR THE NEAREST POLICE STATION.

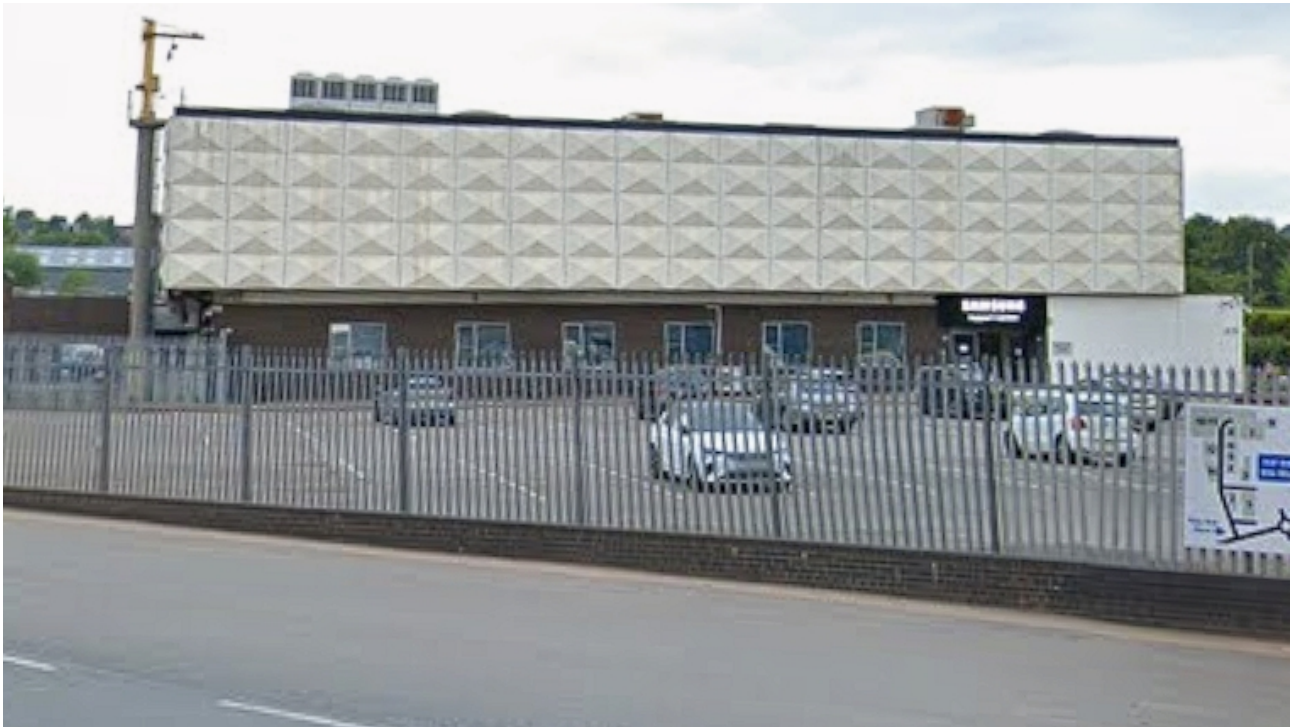
This was my first "photo" identity card.



During the time between my application, interview and job offer I had been awarded a pay increase at Radway Green. I had already concluded that the main reason for the application was related to pay so I took decided to raise the prospect of a pay increase with the Gas Board before I had started. It worked! The letter below is the revised offer, also just below that a further pay increase due to restructuring. I was fortunate to receive a pay increases of more than 20% within a couple of months.



The following photo shows the office I worked out of when at West Midlands Gas. It is on Holditch Road, Chesterton, Newcastle, Staffs. The office was built on the site of the former Chesterton Gas Works probably in the 1960s. It was called the “egg box”. Egg boxes do not have windows, in their wisdom WMG decided that having windows in the sides would distract the staff from their work. My memory is that the ground floor contained some individual senior management offices and a large workshop used by Gas Fitters. The vast majority of the staff worked on the first floor which had no windows and no natural light. Ironically lots of areas at Radway Green had no natural light as the entrance doors were “light blocks” fitted a remnant of the construction design during world war 2.



Regarding the “Egg Box” I recall that during my time there on two of the sides not visible in the photo some windows were retro-fitted after staff complaints about lack of natural light.

When I started I was part of quite a large group of young, but older than me, engineers. There were also a small number of “older” engineers who had worked in the industry when it produced its own gas. Town’s gas production hadn’t yet finished but our main task was to convert all of the distribution network from Town’s Gas to Natural Gas. The basic engineering is quite simple – a system of mains pipes and service pipes to all premises and then to their appliances. However, natural gas was at a higher pressure and all gas appliances had to be converted. What was (and no doubt still is) scary was that if everything was not done correctly and results in leaks or air in the system then the gas can explode. This part of the job I did worry about.

Personal changes for me were dealing directly with, domestic, business and industrial customers. Organising time for telephone calls, site visits, designing and providing estimates for mains and services. Dealing with and supervising direct or contract labour to complete projects, I was a new boy and had to task people who had in most cases years of experience, this was very rewarding, I gained a lot from forming new friendly working relationships. I like to think I was good at listening and working with people certainly not just instructing or tasking. Another abiding memory was the very big and friendly canteen (that was on the ground floor of the Egg Box),. Lunch started at noon each day and I think all of the “younger” engineers liked to arrive at noon and gather around one of the large dinner tables to put the “Gas Board” and probably the world to rights. Stoke City and Port Vale were also always on the agenda, Stoke going well with Tony Waddington still in charge, Gordon Banks in goal and John Richie scoring 14 goals in the 69/70 season and 13 the following season despite missing for 3 months with a broken leg.



## About wages, salaries & expenses.

I started “proper” work in September 1964. My year at Macclesfield College meant I left there age 15, my birthday was in August meaning I starting work age 16 and a couple of weeks. The apprenticeship was for five calendar years with completion on 31<sup>st</sup> August.. Looking at my certificate it was signed by the MOD on 1<sup>st</sup> November, that is probably just the day that someone got around to issuing it. Many of the “craft” apprentices starting on the same day as me would still be 15 years old when they started. My memory is that they were initially employed as pre-apprentices, not becoming official apprentices until their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday and the apprenticeship was for five years starting at age sixteen.

Many people make the effort to keep their first pay packet as a keep sake. It was an actual pay packet as most people were paid weekly in cash. I can’t recall when I was first paid monthly it may have been when I was redesignated as a “student” apprentice aged around 19 ½ but most likely on completion of my apprenticeship when I became a draughtsman. I recall conversations with other apprentices at the time when we discussed the wisdom of the method used to bring the wage packets to site. One of our 3 month training slots was in the on site Garage (a very popular slot as we apprentices were allowed off site with the mechanics when they were road testing vehicles). It soon became clear to us that one of the site based large green Bedford vans left site each Friday morning and was driven to Crewe where the pay packets for over 1,000 staff were collected (or perhaps they just collected cash and the wages were made up in the wages office). There didn’t seem to be much additional security, (maybe one more member of the site security men), most of the journey was on country roads, from memory the vans had light bodies and sliding front doors. We did waste some time discussing what would be the best method and location to intercept the van on its’ return journey.

Back to my first pay packet, my memory tells me it was around £4. I do have some early P60 forms – the one below is for the year 1966-67. It is pre decimalisation and I received Three Hundred and Fortysix Pounds 13 Shillings and 11 pence before tax. The tax payable being Seven Pounds and Fifteen Shillings only. This does confirm why we had to change to decimal currency – taking away the tax amount from the gross pay when there are 20 shillings to one pound and 12 pence to one shilling is a complicated sum. I calculate that it leaves £338, 18s, 11d. as net pay. Divide this by 52.25 (the average number of weeks in a year) gives a weekly pay packet containing (by my calculation) £6:12s:1/2d. The halfpenny was probably rounded up or down, it is the equivalent of 0.002 of one new pence. At this time the I recall that apprentice pay was calculated as a percentage (dependant on age) of a craftsmans pay.

R.B. Ltd. 52-5173 Jn. New Tax Form P60 CERTIFICATE OF PAY AND TAX DEDUCTIONS ARMY FORM 03462  
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE (A.D.)

1966-67

WALTON P. 1

198.1538

205

R.O.F.

RADWAY GREEN

CREWE, CHESHIRE

Special Cases	Payments	Tax
Payments not reported on P45	£	£
Amount earned in previous tax period but taxed at present rates	£	
Superannuation Contribution	£	
Weekly rate (s) of National Insurance Benefit	£	

National Insurance No., Name and Pay No., Tax District Ref. No. and Tax Code  
Tax Year and Date of leaving Army Department Employment if before 5th April

PAYMENTS IN TAX YEAR			TAX DEDUCTED (SYMBOL "R" OR "CR" DENOTES REFUND)		
Employees National Insurance Contributions in this Employment	Total Taxable Payments to 52nd week and 53rd week pay when applicable	Payments reported by your Previous Employer	Payables from Army Department funds	Total Income Tax Deductions	Income Tax Deductions made by your Previous Employer
	346.13.11		346.13.11	7.15. 0	7.15. 04

10/6



The main office block at Radway (central office) contained a wages office on the ground floor. In the wages office there were lots of (mainly young girls) comptometer operators. They operated machines like the ones above. This is before electronic calculators and these wonderful electro-mechanical machines (and wonderful operators) could automatically calculate wages in British Sterling (£sd). In the example above there are extra keys on the right (pence) column to allow entries of up to 11 pence. There is also a single key in the third from right column to take account of shillings between 10 and 19. There are two numbers on each key – one is for addition and one

for subtraction. Old pence were abbreviated to d (not p) because the Latin word for the coin was denarius.

I can't recall which of the two options for dealing with weekly pay I agreed with my Mum (it always seemed to be mothers when dealing with household things). The usual options were a) pay a fixed sum (board) and keep the rest or b) hand over (known as "tip over" an unopened wage packet and receive back a set amount of (pocket) money. I think it was option a). This would be preferable for me – my basic pay was low but any expenses were of course at the same rate for everyone. My expenses were almost entirely from college attendance. Travel to Crewe would involve a 7 a.m. start bus to Congleton, second bus to Crewe. A full day at the college followed by a night school on the same day. Night school was at Totty's Hall so potentially two more bus trips. Finally buses back to Congleton and then home. I would be back home around 11 pm. It was a sixteen hour day – so lots of meal allowances and bus fares shorter bus routes (Totty's Hall and to Home) were often walked. I did some night classes on a separate day to the day classes, same day was usual and preferred. When I started the National Certificate courses it was only possible to attend with day release. However there were some students to which day release was not available and were still completing their National Certificates – they would in more advanced years than I was, (some employers could not or would not fund day release). In these cases the students could take the course over three nights each week. This slightly affected me at end of years examinations which were always in the evening. I recall once having three two hour examinations over three nights during the same week. It was tiring having an early work start each day and then going to Crewe at the end of the working day. I have always been in awe of those who completed National Certificate courses by attending evening classes only. The examinations would finish at nine and I immediately went with college friends to the Earl of Crewe pub which was close by for a very welcome pint.

### **The "Golden Generation"**

Despite having to walk across town as a teenager to catch a bus each weekday and work 44 hours for a weekly wage of just over £4 (annual salary was around £250.00) I was a part of the "Golden Generation". Five years later at the end of my apprenticeship I was earning approximately £1,000 a year. I recall a conversation when I was about 19 years old and I latched onto another young draughtsman's target. His comment went something like "twenty pounds a week, that will do me I can live well on that – it's a thousand pounds a year". We were still thinking it terms of weekly pay, of course many people still are. I had to reach my two targets they were to complete my HNC before the end of my apprenticeship and to earn £20 a week. All I had to do now was carry on in the same manner, the future was rosy!

### **Back to the "Gas Board" days:**

I need to briefly return to my younger days as I have so far not mentioned girlfriends. I only ever attended single sex schools the preferred option in Cheshire. Add to this becoming nervous and reserved during my adolescence means I was a late starter. I did try to make up for lost time in my later teens and was lucky enough to have a number of girlfriends. These were mainly short term relationships, but some lasted longer than others. This was all to change on Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> December 1969. I was twenty one and as happened regularly at this time I went to the Crystal Ballroom in Newcastle Under Lyme. I know that I drove there that night and that Fred Whitehurst was with me, as while we were there Fred teamed up with Elizabeth Snelson and I was with her friend Kathleen Mayer they returned home to Congleton with us. Kath and Liz had travelled there on a Bostock's bus – a Bostock's bus left each Saturday evening at 7:30 p.m. from their garage in Spragg Street Congleton with a return bus journey at 12:30 a.m. the following morning.

A few days later (on boxing day) I was in the Bulls Head, Congleton, Fred was also there. There was an announcement "telephone call for Fred Whitehurst". It is worth remembering that in those days telephone contact was difficult, most of us did not have home telephones. Kath and Liz were at a party at Astbury Village Hall and were inviting Fred and I to join them. It did not take us long to get there. This all happened 54 years ago, Kath and I are still together and so are Liz and Fred.

The Crystal Ballroom had opened in 1958 as a venue for "smart" people! – men had to wear a tie and a suit and have short hair. There were three floors with Bali Hai over 21's in the basement a



resident band (the Peter Chell Orchestra) in the main ballroom and smaller bands in the "Brunswick" on the top floor. The main Ballroom had a revolving stage which turned around with DJs sharing with the band.

If there is a defining moment in my personal history then this is it. No longer was it what shall I do, it became what shall we do.

Staying with the The Crystal, two photos below show its sad demise, it did change its name to Zanzibar and Ritz during the decline. The photo of the dance hall band (Peter Chell) is courtesy of the Sentinel in 2018.

One of the serious issues once inside the Crystal was the lack of bar staff, it took ages to get a drink and the only draught beer they sold was Watney's Red Barrel Keg (aka "Grotneys". It was usual to drink better and cheaper beer before hand in the Bandstand pub (later called the Rigger) across the road. The advert below was a regular feature in the Evening Sentinel at the time.

**Dancing and Entertainment**

★ **C** ★ **CRYSTAL BALLROOM**  
MECCA DANCING  
Tel. 64701

—  
**TO-NIGHT**

5 BARS  
4 BANDS  
3 BALLROOMS

DANCING & LICENSED UNTIL 2 A.M.  
All For One Admission

—  
**CRYSTAL BALLROOM:**  
**PETER CHELL**  
THE BEST IN BANDS  
— Plus —  
**HOT ICE**

—  
**BALI-HA'I:**  
DANCING FOR ADULTS ONLY  
to the  
**KEN WOODLEY BAND**

—  
**BRUNSWICK SUITE:**  
**THE BIG BEAT BALL**  
starring  
**CASTERS CROWD**  
with **LEE**

70



**Macclesfield & District Water Board:****1973**

This part of my past seems to fit better here rather than following my marriage to Kath in 1972, this will follow alongside finding houses, adding children and generally being more responsible.

Below is a copy of my hand written application for the role of Engineering Technician. As I write I notice that I have spelt "Chronicle" incorrectly – and they still took me on. The reason I have a copy of this letter is that I stumbled across it in the cellar of the Water Board offices – a wonderful old building called Ivyholme, I copied it for historical reasons only – at last I am using it.

1000. Walter.

29 JAN 1973

BTS ERF AH

A. 29/1/73

25th January 1973

Dear Sir,

I would like to be considered for the post of Engineering Technician as advertised in the Congleton Chronicle on Friday 19th January 1973.

I am 24 years of age and was educated at Buglawton County Primary School, Congleton Boys Secondary School, Macclesfield College of Further Education and South Cheshire Central College of Further Education. At the latter of these I gained both an Ordinary National Certificate and Higher National Certificate.

As indicated on the letter my appointment was at 10:00 a.m. after which I was asked to hang around with the other applicants while the interviews were completed. I was lucky to be the first choice and I duly accepted. The other applicants were then sent on their way and I was offered lunch with Bryan Smith (the Engineer & Manager [BTS on the above letter]) and his deputy Ernie Ford [ERF] at the Leathersmithy which is in Macclesfield Forest a fabulous area many parts of which including four reservoirs were controlled by the Water Board. It was nice lunch – I have good memories of the people I worked with in Macclesfield in addition to quite a lot of pub lunches.

The main reason for my move was again the salary which was close to £2,000 so double my original ambition of £20 a week. We were now though into the high inflation times of the 1970s. Macclesfield was one of many small "Water Boards" at that time, larger conurbations had larger undertakings for example Manchester Corporation Waterworks (who Ernie Ford had previously worked for) and Liverpool Corporation Waterworks (who Bryan Smith had previously worked for). Technical staff were generally from a Civil Engineering background (Dams and Reservoirs) and Chemists (Water Quality). My desire at this time was to be a Mechanical Engineer. Ernie Ford later confided that their interest in my application was my mechanical background as a longstanding employee at Macclesfield (Joe Knagg) was due to retire. Joe looked after all the waterworks operators who managed the many pumping, filtration and chemical dosing installations. The plans of me taking over from Joe did take longer than expected as Joe carried on working past his retirement age. From a progression point of view this was good for me as I was able to concentrate on technical design and change thereby delaying my inevitable move into the operation and management side of the water industry.

Going back to the day of my interview - on our return to Ivyholme I was introduced to Jim Taberner a sort of office manager. Jim was light hearted and likeable. and had prearranged for me to go to a surgery in Macclesfield where I was required to provide a urine sample for a Widal test. He made a



jokey reference about leaking sample bottles and making sure the top of the sample bottle was securely fastened. When I went to the surgery the vessel I was given to provide my specimen wasn't a sample bottle. I assumed the surgery new all about sample bottles and the securing thereof. I was therefore surprised to receive the following letter a few days later:-

ENGINEER AND MANAGER  
BRYAN T. SMITH, C Eng., MICE, MIWE

TELEPHONE: MACCLESFIELD 26251

IVYHOLME  
KENDAL ROAD  
MACCLESFIELD  
SK11 8PQ

IF TELEPHONING PLEASE ASK FOR  
Mr. J.P. Taberner

OUR REF JPT/KPW/G/3/7

YOUR REF

22nd February 1973

Dear Mr. Walton,

Widal Test Sample

As mentioned to you on the day you were appointed accidents sometimes happen with Widal test samples. The urine specimen you gave to the Board's Medical Adviser did not have the cap screwed down sufficiently and this resulted in the escape of the sample you submitted.

I would be glad if you could supply another sample of urine and post it to the address shown on the enclosed carton.

It goes without saying that you should ensure that the lid is screwed down tightly on this specimen.

All went well with the second sample:-

## MACCLESFIELD DISTRICT WATER BOARD

ENGINEER AND MANAGER  
BRYAN T. SMITH, C Eng., MICE, MIWE

TELEPHONE: MACCLESFIELD 26251

IVYHOLME  
KENDAL ROAD  
MACCLESFIELD  
SK11 8PQ

IF TELEPHONING PLEASE ASK FOR  
Mr. B. T. Smith

OUR REF BTS/AH/Appts.

YOUR REF

27th February, 1973.

Dear Mr. Walton,



Appointment of Engineering Technician

Now that I have received your satisfactory medical report and as the result of your widal test you undertook proved to be negative, I am now able to offer you formally the post of Engineering Technician.

The appointment will be subject to the Conditions of Service agreed by the National Joint Committee for the Water Industry (Non-Manual Staffs), the Local Government Superannuation Acts and to the following:

I have a few pictures from my Macclesfield days:-



Both the 1979 photos below were taken in the garden at Ivyholme. I recognise many of the people and will single out in the larger photo Bryan Smith second left mentioned earlier and John Keizer fourth left who married my mothers cousin and was a very good friend. On the second photo is John Peever extreme left, we have both lived in the same road for many years and worked together for a long time.







The photos below I believe were taken by Ray Baker, he was the one that usually took the trouble to turn up with a camera. I worked for Ray for a few years when Macclesfield Water Board became part of the North West Water Authority. Ray was Distribution and Supply Engineer and I was Supply Assistant. In the photos we are setting up a hook gauge “drop test” (looking for a leak) at Hollins Service Reservoir, Macclesfield. In the photos are Charlie Tebay, Arnold Downes, Bob Woodruff, Arthur Worthington Ian Jones and myself. When North West Water turned up a new I.D. card was needed.





## Moving On – Marriage

### 1971 – 1972

Busy times – learning about the Gas Board and its ways, lots of overtime, still enjoying regular visits with my many drinking friends to the pubs of Congleton – this had to fit in with what was most important at this time - developing and planning my future with Kath.

An engagement announcement came in 1971, the other photo's show me with Kath and her step Mum Winnie in thier garden at Biddulph Road and with my parents at Tall Ash Avenue.

Meanwhile my brothers and I had a plan reagrding the MGA – Dave owned it so Ray and I would make it roadworthy and we would then all own one third each. Version 2 of the deal arrived when Dave and I bought out Ray's third to help Ray and his family with their emigration plans – they did emigrate to Canada in 1973. I was driving a white Mini which I had bought “nearly” new from Peppers in Hanley. Unknown to me it had been in an accident and the repair, carried out by Peppers, was botched. I hadn't spotted it until I took Kath out for a picnic one day to show of my new car when I finally noticed the paint runs or sagging on the bodywork. Peppers, as expected, claimed it was fine. A few months later, just before our wedding, Kath and I were driving along Naseby Road checking out our planned new house when we hit a raised grid which did serious damage to the Mini sump and gearbox. This time I carried out a “botch” repair and part exchanged the Mini for a Ford Cortina Estate at Peppers in Hanley. I was very nervous when finalising the deal. The “Peppers” salesman was required to road test the Mini, if he had driven it normally for a few yards he would have heard the very odd noises coming from the gearbox. His actual road test consisted of running in it a low gear at very high revs “thrashing it” – perfect for masking any unusual noises. So I was able to complete a very satisfactory arrangement. Another fall out from this was that our Honeymoon travel plans changed and we toured Scotland in the MGA not in the Mini as we had originally planned.

One notable event in 1972 was the league cup final between Chelsea and Stoke City. It resulted in what is probably Stoke's only major trophy win despite being formed in 1863. I made a decision not to attend – saving for a wedding! And I could always go to the next one - I am still waiting!

WALTON—MAYER.—The engagement is announced on 12th June, of Kathleen, only daughter of Mr. and Mrs. W. Mayer, 162, Biddulph-road, Congleton, and Phillip, youngest son of Mr. and Mrs. H. Walton, 36, Tall Ash-avenue, Buglawton. — Congratulations and best wishes from both families. 5116

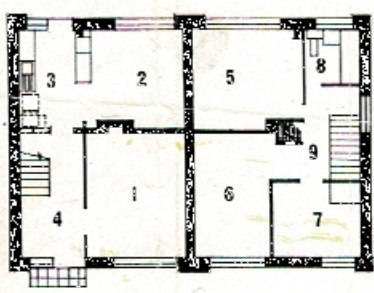




Finding a house was much simpler in the early 70s, mortgages were relatively easy to find and there was good availability. Kath and I finally homed in on a new semi in Naseby Road which would be ready a few months before our planned wedding. There was a big difference in culture regarding marriage between then and now. A common saying, used by many of our generation applied to us “we had to get married so that we could go on holiday together”.

4150

## THE WALTON



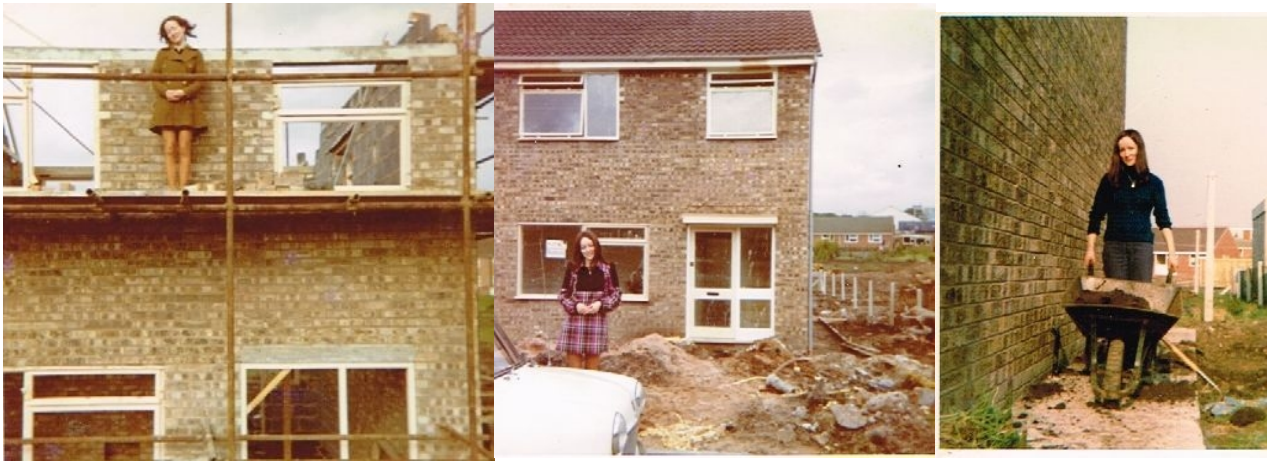
	Imperial	Metric
1. Lounge	12' 0½" × 11' 1½"	3·672 × 3·388
2. Diner	11' 1½" × 10' 7"	3·388 × 3·227
3. Kitchen	10' 7" × 6' 2½"	3·227 × 1·892
4. Hall		
5. Bedroom 1	11' 1½" × 10' 9" <i>5'</i>	3·388 × 3·278
6. Bedroom 2	12' 0½" × 8' 6"	3·672 × 2·592
7. Bedroom 3	8' 7½" × 7' 6"	2·630 × 2·287
8. Bathroom	6' 0" × 5' 7"	1·829 × 1·702
9. Landing		
10. Linen Cupboard		

This popular compact semi-detached house has three good bedrooms and a bathroom on the upper floor, with a ground floor providing a pleasant lounge and a large combined dining room/kitchen well equipped with cupboards and working surfaces. Hot water for bath, basin and sink is supplied by a back boiler in the lounge fireplace. The house is also wired for night storage heating.

The house type was actually called “The Walton”. It was being built by Janes Builders on Naseby Road as Number 2. The one we bought was a right hand one so the floor plan above was “handed”. Another significant difference between then and now were the safety measures on building sites. The site were effectively left open, it was possible to visit outside of the working day to check on progress. It was of course possible to visit during the working day, most conversations were “friendly banter” type. This was very useful to me as there was no central heating included, also the description says that it was wired for night storage heating whereas that was becoming very unpopular and wasn’t included. Most people were retro fitting central heating, or maybe the builders offered it as an extra. There was a back boiler in the lounge fireplace so I could monitor the installation and formulate a plan to install radiators and connect them to the back boiler myself once the house was handed over. I say myself but it was a team effort as my brother Ray was still living not far away in Parson Street and he spent many hours helping me.







# I

TELEPHONE: DUNSTON CRENCH 226

TELEPHONE: RUSHTON SPENCER 226

# The Fox Inn

Rushton Spencer, Staffs.

Proprietors:  
Mr. & Mrs. S. HANCOCK

Mr. MAYER W. R.  
9.9.1972

Appetisers		
Soups		
Fish		
Main Dishes	@ £ 1.50	109 50
Vegetables		
Sweets and Cheese		
Coffee	FLOWERS	200
	£	111 50
Wines	12 x 36	24 00
Liqueurs	5 HERRIES	14 60
Cigarettes and Cigars		150 10
		150 0
Table No.		165 10
	01362	

Handwritten notes on the left margin: "Long lunch for 16" and "S. Hancock".







Away on honeymoon from Buxton to Scotland.

On more wedding photo our niece Lorna with Mum and Dad – our “little” bridesmaid



The other three photos below are at Duart Castle, Oban and Glen Nevis near Fort William. We travelled around calling at bed and breakfast guest houses or small hotels. They all realised immediately that we were honeymooners, the lingering confetti being the give away. Our final stop was in Edinburgh and the confetti was gone. Were pleased that we were now a young couple on holiday not honeymooners – that was until we were leaving and the nice proprietor asked us “have you had a nice honeymoon then”.



## 1972 -1976

Kath and I were settling very happily into married life. Kath was still at Alsager College (1971 – 1974) and I was moving from West Midlands Gas to Macclesfield Water Board – see earlier pages. Higher Education in 1972 was easier to arrange – and importantly there were no tuition fees. Local Education Authorities had a legal obligation to pay tuition fees and provide a maintenance grant for living costs. None of this had to be repaid – effectively resulting in free higher education. One peculiar aspect of this was that the grant paid to students was means tested, for Kath it would have been a few hundred pounds, however, as Kath was under twenty one it was based on her fathers income – not her husbands. There was a really silly aspect to this – the means test confirmed how much of the grant Kath was entitled to (paid to her by the local authority) and how much her father



had to top this up by to meet the full amount of the grant. We were expected to ask for a top up from Kath's dad after we were married. We did not.

The furnishing of number 2 was very much a diy project with a few visits to sale rooms and building home made wardrobes, I recall my Dad helped with this. The stand out item for Kath was probably the purple wall in the main bedroom, Christmas 1972 was spent at number 2, we did set an early pattern of having both sets of parents on alternative days over Christmas day and Boxing day. There was usually an added extra – my grandad came with my parents and Kath's "Aunty" Jessie came with Kath's parents.



The three pictures below are from 1973 Nephew's Paul and Nicholas outside the front door of Number 2 and a holiday in Jersey courtesy of Persil washing powder. My memory tells me the deal was that when you bought a ticket to anywhere in the uk one of the passengers travelled free if you presented two Persil tops at the time of booking. The clever bit was booking a return from Crewe to St Helier in Jersey, as the ferries from Weymouth to the Channel Isles were then operated by British Rail, hence two for one tickets from Crewe to Jersey. It was a little bit like going abroad, neither Kath nor I had ever been abroad by this time.



I probably used my "I've never been abroad" comment as a "look at me statement" in the same way that I have used "I left school age 14" comment. It was continued into 1974 as our choice of holiday was another boat trip this time to Ireland. Technically the Republic of Ireland is not in the UK and there are other oddities like spelling police as "Garda". Importantly we still didn't need a passport.





1974  
Pictures



Pictures from Ireland above, the first at Galway Bay. below I am best man at the wedding of long time friends Liz & Fred

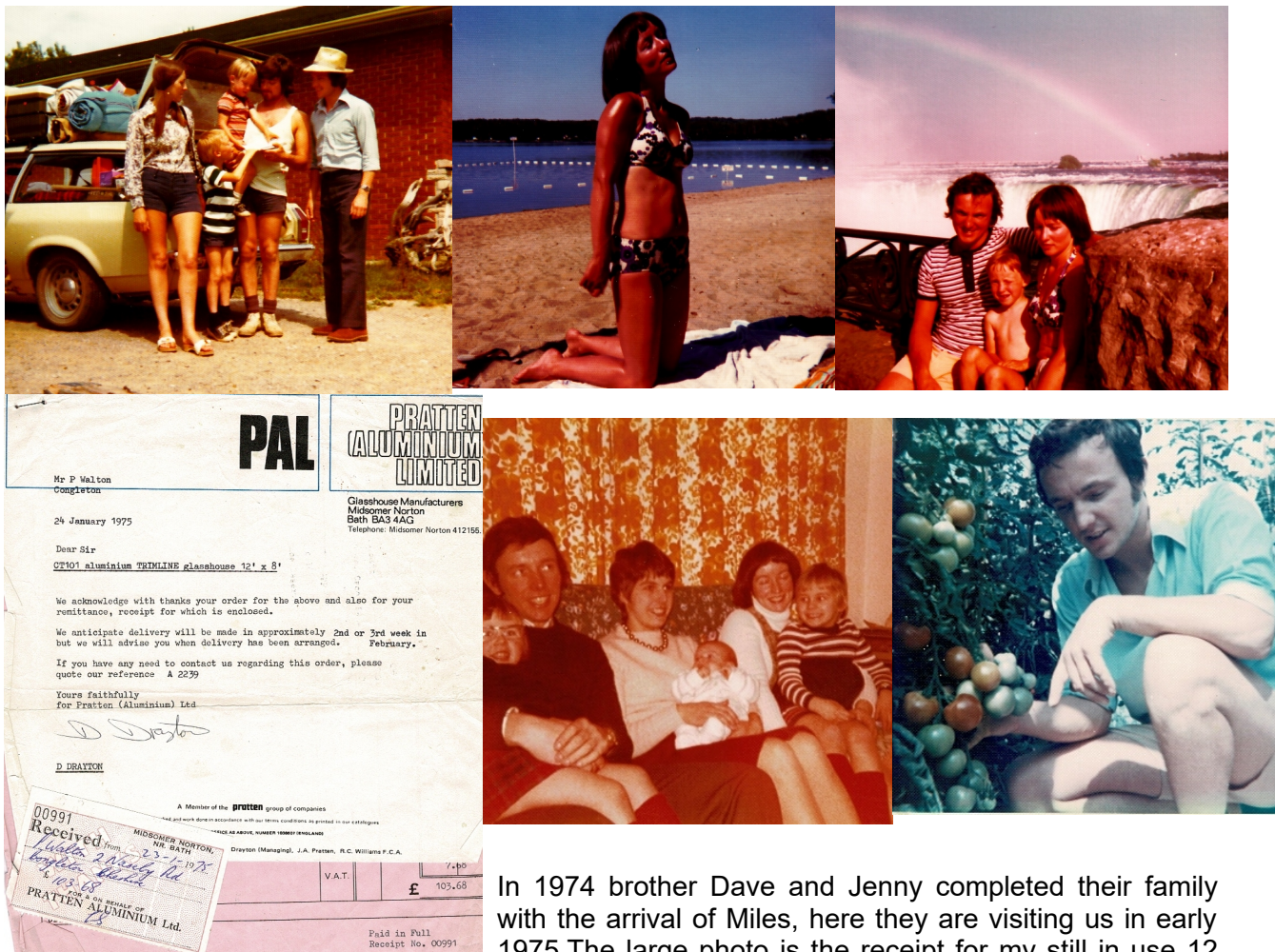


The garden at No 2 continues to progress, a lawn appears at the back where we also pictured our Nieces Lorna and Emma with their Mum Jenny. The front garden below is becoming colourful, this must be just before our garage was built by Alan Hammond. My Dad put us in touch with Alan who he worked with at the time, Alan lived just across the road. Finally Kath with Vincent who twice spent Christmas with us. He lived at Cranage Hall hospital. Kath had joined the staff there as a Teacher in September 1974. Vincent was severely disabled and he had a lovely smile.





In 1975 we finally made the big step and left the UK – just for three weeks – there's no need to get carried away. We made the decision to pay a visit to Ray, Megan, Paul and Nicholas in Canada. Jim Laker had introduced a "no frills" transatlantic service - he clearly had me in mind. The first picture below is six of us setting off for Lake St Peter – Kath was behind the camera. Note how loaded up Ray's car is even without the people! The second photo is Kath at the lake and finally we are with Nick on a separate trip to Niagara Falls.



In 1974 brother Dave and Jenny completed their family with the arrival of Miles, here they are visiting us in early 1975. The large photo is the receipt for my still in use 12 by 8 Alluminium Greenhouse. On Gardeners World Percy Thrower recommended "Alicante" Tomatoes, these were our 1975 attempt.

After our visit to Canada in 1975 my parents ventured there in 1976 using the same airline the first photo below is at Manchester Airport with my Grandad Henry (then 83) who went with us to see them off. Our Naseby adventure was ending and a new one about to begin.





## 1976 – Open University and moving on...

Back in the year 1974 during a chat at Macclesfield with Ray Baker he mentioned that he had enrolled with the Open University. The “University of the air” had been set up during one of the “Wilson” governments in 1969. The original plan was that course material would be transmitted by television. This was never really an option as at that time there were only three television channels – BB1, BBC2 and ITV. Programmes (very good ones) were made for the courses and were shown on BBC2 at very early or very late times when there was transmission space that was outside of the normal working day. To add to this programmes could not be repeated (lack of time) or recorded (the technology was not yet available). The main content of the courses was written material sent to each individual student – it was more like a correspondence course.

The concept interested me and after talking it over with Kath we both agreed to have a go. We applied in 1974 and started early in 1975. The OU academic year ran from January to November, we were ‘E’ students with our enrolment number prefixed with an E, original 1970 students were prefixed with an ‘A’, and five years on the letter ‘E’ was reached.

What was and is really inspiring is that anyone can study with the OU – there are pre qualifications required. An OU degree is completed by achieving credits, the credit numbers are different to the ones when we studied. The principles do seem to be the same. We were required to achieve six credits, previous full or part time study could be used for credit exemptions. My memory is that Kath’s teaching degree (three years full time) entitled her to three credit exemptions. My part time study for National Certificate (four years part time) entitled me to one credit exemption. We were both awarded degrees at the end of the 1980 academic year and we had the joy of graduating together. We didn’t quite manage the original target of one credit per year. However during the intervening years a lot had happened – we moved house, had two children and Kath was ill for a long time. In spite of what happened we still had lots of fun and our degrees were a part of many wonderful rewards.

Perhaps the main driver for my OU study was to gain more understanding. While studying for National Certificate I was driven by passing each course each year. To have an HNC at the end of my apprenticeship aged twenty one. It was about passing exams more than learning. If it improved my chances of passing an exam I would deliberately ignore parts of the syllabus and concentrate my efforts where I believed I would pick up the most exam marks. With the OU it was all about learning, spending time on all the material – even the parts I found difficult.

Years earlier when I was working through the National Certificate some students a few years older than me were seeking to join the Institute of Mechanical Engineers which was then possible. However the Institute decided that part time study was insufficient and closed that route. It was the Institutes decision and I understood it although it was a disappointment as it was something that would have inspired me. I was a couple of years late. So after I had completed my first year with




the OU with my quest for learning heightened I wrote to the Institute explaining my plans and seeking advice on which of the OU courses on offer might at some time in the future provide an access route into their ranks. They did reply quickly with a one sentence letter, I considered their letter to be rude and did not keep it, the sentence was something like “The Institute of Mechanical Engineers do not recognise Open University degrees”. No mention of what the future might hold for them or myself, my immediate response was and still is “well s\*d you then”. Having just written this I checked what the current position is and it seems that since 2011 “Graduates with an OU undergraduate degree in a STEM subject can join the IMechE as an Associate Member”. There we go, it only took 42 years.

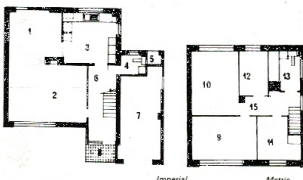
On the left our Graduation at Preston Guild Hall

**1976 again - and time for the house move:**

In 1975 towards the end of our first year of study Kath and I had a days holiday for revision work just before the end of year exam. In the afternoon we were both tiring and decided that a walk would help. The estate that we lived on was only partially complete and our route took us past the estate office which doubled as a sales office, there was a lull in housing demand at the time and builders were offering incentives to try and sell houses. Looking at the current plans for new houses we were shocked at the size of some plots for the planned larger houses. I had read earlier that a councillor on the local housing committee had complained that the builders always worked on seven houses to the acre and he felt that some areas should be five houses to the acre. To match this Janes had adjusted plot sizes, the largest corner plot looked perfect for us, Although a bit early for us, we thought an opportunity like this was too good to miss. Janes, were, offering a big price reduction if we signed early and promised to build it to order in 12 weeks.



**THE BLENHEIM**



	Imperial	Metric
1. Dining Room	11' 4" x 10' 3"	3 500 x 3 200
2. Lounge	17' 5" x 13' 0"	5 372 x 4 012
3. Kitchen	12' 3" x 10' 3"	3 757 x 3 200
4. Cloaks	5' 5" x 4' 1"	1 660 x 1 260
5. Front Store		
6. Hall	15' 10" x 6' 3"	4 800 x 1 885
7. Garage	17' 9" x 8' 0"	5 180 x 2 738
8. Lobby		
9. Bedroom 1	11' 4" x 13' 10" x 9' 10"	4 270 x 3 035
10. Bedroom 2	11' 4" x 13' 13' 9" x 10' 17"	4 222 x 3 088
11. Bedroom 3	11' x 12' 10" x 9' 10" x 9' 10"	3 035 x 2 987
12. Bedroom 4	6' 9" x 9' 4" x 5' 17"	2 029 x 2 851
13. Bathroom	6' 10" x 8' 9"	2 077 x 2 630
14. Linen Cupboard		
15. Landing	13' 9" x 4' 11"	4 150 x 1 450

A spacious four bedroomed house. The large lounge can be combined with the dining room to provide an interesting 'L' shaped through room.

Leading off the hall but with direct access to the dining room is a kitchen fitted with melamine covered units. Also off the hall is a cloakroom with handbasin and low level toilet.

A gas boiler in the kitchen provides domestic hot water and heats the radiators and towel rail/radiator in the bathroom.

Luxury specification includes.

- Stylish kitchen units with doors and drawers faced in laminated plastic and working surfaces topped in the same material.
- Stainless steel sink top.
- Choice from selected range of colours of bathroom suite and tiling.
- Choice from superior range of thermo-plastic floor tiles.

**The JANES Group**

**THE BLENHEIM**


A SPACIOUS  
FOUR BEDROOMED HOUSE

**The JANES Group**

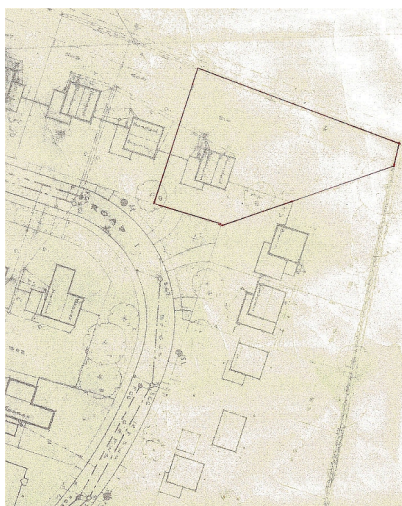
**PRICE** including Freehold Land and Road Charges

LEGAL CHARGES will be paid by the Company in accordance with the accompanying notice. These particulars and drawings provide only a brief description of the property and are not to be taken as part of any contract. Elevations may vary from plot to plot.

H. C. JANES (HOMES) LTD JANSOL HOUSE LUTON LU2 7XJ



It did take a little longer that 12 weeks, most importantly it was before Kath gave birth (by two weeks!). We hadn't read or appreciated that moving house when expecting is not recommended. Although we were moving from one part to another part of the same housing estate it was about three quarters of a mile. Once again we could watch the house being built, I did get to know some of the builders and the site foreman (Sid) quite well. As Janes were then building to order and we were the first order for that particular corner there were no other houses around when we moved in. Soon afterwards Janes became a part of Barratt Homes. Our next door neighbours, Janet and David, had a Janes designed house built by Barratt's. Our plot 510 was a "handed" version of the "Blenheim" and we were able to negotiate a good reduction to the approximate price. The photos below and the first on the next page show the location of plot 510 and the house being built.







Meanwhile preparations at Naseby include tomatoes in pots and dismantling the Greenhouse so it and the tomatoes could move with us. It's rebuilding is also shown with the help of Rob Potts.



Moving day seems to have been Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> June I had hired a van and enlisted the help of brother Dave and Fred Whitehurst. Pictures below show the action, the table is being loaded at No 2. Small pictures show Tomato arrival, Kath leaving No 55 on 13<sup>th</sup> July, then returning, finally an early view from the lounge window.

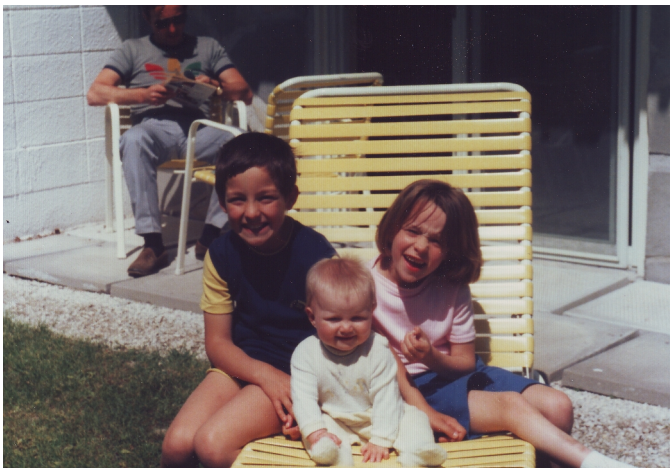




This seems a good time to draw breath and conclude this part of my personal history.

After 1976 it seems to be less personal – there will four more people who have their own histories.

So I complete this with some group and individual pictures:





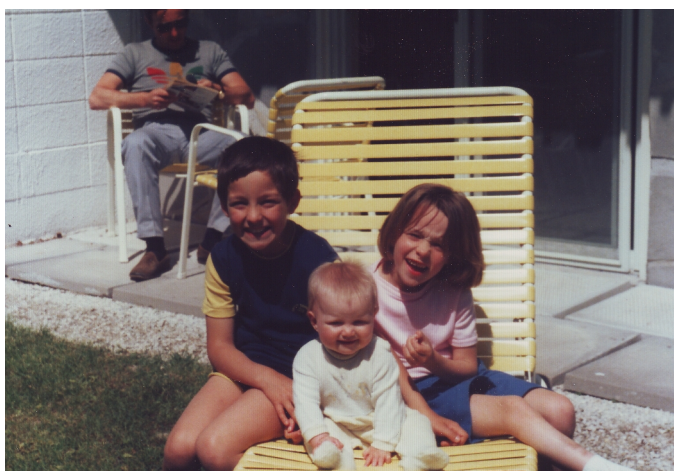






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Phil Walton

Buglawton Boy

Produced December 2024