

Happy Adventures

Summer holidays were mostly spent at Earlswood lakes; however we did visit Lymington in Hampshire where one of my mother's sisters lived. We stayed a few days and it was really a nice place with plenty of water and things to occupy us they were really happy days. Crab fishing was my favorite from a small jetty just down by the rivers edge, In 2002 I paid a return visit and young children were still fishing in the same place 50 years later.

Sometimes during the summer school holidays, and weather permitting, we were allowed to put up a small tent in the garden to camp out overnight. This was always a great adventure for me. We had a friend living in the avenue, Peter Maynard, his nickname was Banger. He also camped out in the garden; we often arranged to meet in the night after the adults had gone to bed. This meant staying awake until well after midnight. Then going out onto the railway embankment walking along the back gardens of neighbor's houses until we came to one that had no garage at the side of the house, we would then climb over their fence, walk carefully through their back garden and out into Wimbourne Avenue. Often this was complete darkness, especially if we did not have the benefit of moonlight. There was no street lighting after midnight; we had to be so quiet and very careful.

We would either meet Banger in the street, or go through his garage {which he left open} to meet up. Or he would come to us taking the reverse route. Either way we really had some children's adventures. One summer night we met up in the usual way. Banger decided we should go fishing, he had a rod but we had nothing. However we decided that it was a good idea so we made plans.

Everything went fine; we met in the usual way and walked out of Wimbourne Avenue, and along the Brighton Road, into Three Arch Road. Then to a local pond situated in the white bushes area, this pond was on private property.

Nothing was caught and we decided to give up and return to our tents in the garden. We returned by the same route, well that was the intention, as we walked along the Brighton Road I noticed a movement like a shadow moving towards us, it was my father. We had made prearranged plans for this type of event, they were that we would all run in different directions therefore reduce the risk of all of us all being caught. RUN! Shouted Banger, I took a roundabout route back home and arrived before my brother Charles, the plan worked well. But what a walloping we got, in the garden at about two in 2am with my fathers leather belt.

I was bruised but it could have been worse, in the darkness he missed a few times, and there were two of us dodging about the garden. He soon got tired and the neighbor's lights were coming on he gave up and went to bed; I did not sleep well that night. Nothing much was said in the morning about our night time outing and it was soon forgotten. I went out as soon as I had eaten breakfast; I thought it best to keep out of the way. At these times I was always happy our adventures seemed well worth the risk of being caught and the odd punishment we received.