

Colin Robert Precious

Memories of Moseley

I was born in Moseley Village on 16 July 1944 at the Sorrento Hospital and christened at St Mary's Church. I attended Moseley C. of E. Primary School and Queensbridge School.

I used to walk along Oxford Road from the village when I went to Moseley C. of E. Infant School. There was a large house on the corner of Ascot Road. The owners had two large Alsatian dogs that were always on the front steps. They used to petrify me and one day attacked and bit me on the side.

I lived with my family at number **2, Moseley Terrace** until the late 1960s. Moseley Terrace was located opposite the post office and is now a car park. There were nine terraced houses with shared toilet facilities and by today's standards would be classed as appalling. However now that I am nearly 75, they were the best times of my life.

The Gables

I remember the small hotel on the corner of School/Oxford Road, *The Gables*. (It is still there but no longer a hotel).

WWII

There were lots of people of a similar age to myself whose fathers were in the services for the duration of the Second World War. So Moseley did consist of both rich and poor families. Nevertheless there was always a community spirit, which I hope still exists in the village.

My friend lived in Mary Street, Balsall Heath. His name was **Robert Hokins** and he had three sisters, Ann, Susan and Vicky. I remember his father had regular deliveries to the house of alcohol from the company *Davenports Beer at Home*. We preferred to drink at *The Crown* in Vincent Street run by an Irish couple, George and Mary. I wonder if any of your other readers recognise the name, or if the pub still exists?

The Central Electricity Board, Wake Green Road

From the age of 16, I worked for the Central Electricity Board in Wake Green Road (opposite St Agnes Road). Initially I worked in the stationery stores, but the training officer thought I would be better employed in the Drawing Office. How right he was. It completely re-shaped my rather mundane life very much for the better and I am eternally grateful to the gentleman.

The Carnegie Boys Club

I have recently come across a copy of the Birmingham Mail dated 9th Sept 2006 sent to me by Roy Cross (the fruit and veg man). It refers to the closure of the Carnegie Boys Club in Alcester Road run by Mr Asman. Roy and myself plus many other local boys regularly attended the club. On one of my rare visits to the UK a few years ago I visited the club house. It is now a shop selling knitting wool etc., I think. Anyway It is only a few yards from a pub.

About 10 years ago a dear friend of mine **Roy Cross**, who was born and grew up in Edward Road, Balsall Heath, had fruit and veg shops in and around Kings Heath/Maypole. On one of his regular visits to Birmingham Market for supplies, he was shown a photograph of my Grandfather and Grandmother plus children, outside of his fruit and veg shop in Silver Street, Kings Heath (opposite the old Ritz ballroom as was). I have a copy of the photograph, which shows his name above the shop: small world.

Restaurants

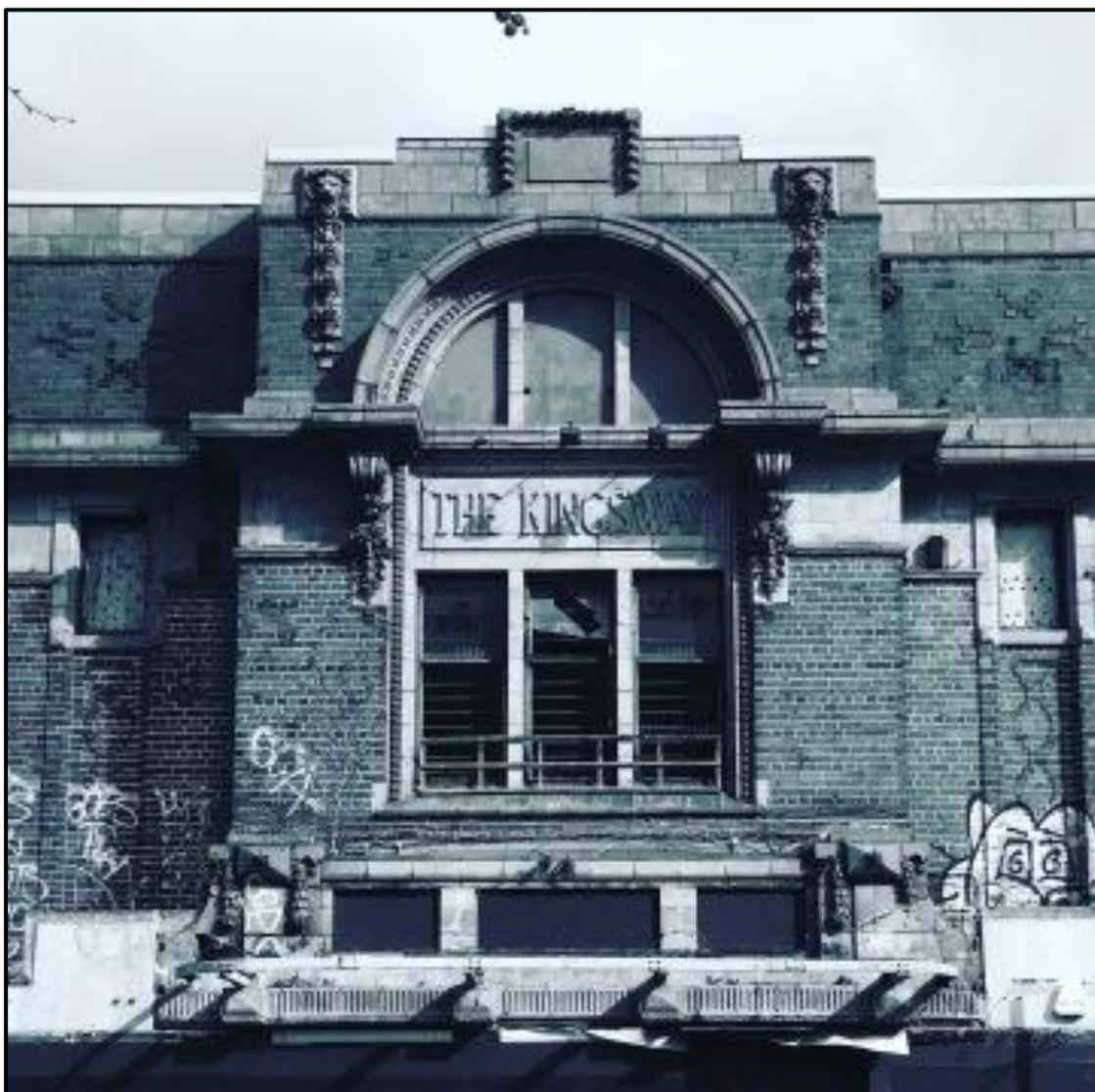
The curry house run by Mr and Mrs Cas was very popular. He was an ex-Gurkha who fought with the Brits and she was an Irish lady. They had a beautiful daughter called Joy, and a son we called Snowy (without prejudice?). When we were broke, which was frequent, Mr Cas allowed us to pay on a Friday (pay day).

The Ritz, Kings Heath

Living as I did in Moseley, Kings Heath was my regular stomping ground when I became older. It had three pubs and one of the best dance halls in Brum (*The Ritz*).

Cinemas

In the early 60s, there were three cinemas: *The Imperial*, Moseley, *The Alhambra* and the most popular, *The Kingsway*, located at the bottom of Kings Heath High Street. As youngsters our weekly treat was the Saturday morning matinee at *The Kingsway*. The manager at that time was a short man who always wore a dicky bow tie and was always referred to as Uncle Ernie. When I reached my early teens the films were then rated as 'U' (admit all ages), 'A' (under 16 accompanied by an adult) and 'X' (16 or over). If we wanted to see an A rated film we would ask an adult who was entering the cinema to take one or two in. To enter the stalls after purchasing your ticket you had to exit the building and enter down the side of the cinema. This prevented Uncle Ernie seeing us receive the tickets. Sometimes no one obliged and we had to depart when the film started. Thinking back this would be an almost unthinkable act in today's society.



Sycamore House, Park Road, Moseley

Several years ago, I read a book by Margaret Humphreys, titled *Empty Cradles*. It tells the horrendous incident of orphaned children that were transported to Australia and Canada in the 1950/1960s. I remember that at school there were several children from *Sycamore House*, Park Road, Moseley, which was an orphanage. I think it has only recently closed down. One of the boys in my class was named **Ian Grant**, who was a resident at the home.

He was, as I remember, a bit of a romancer. He was always telling me that his father was a Sea Captain and he was at the home only on a temporary basis. We used to smoke cigarettes in the Air Raid Shelter and one day caused a fire necessitating the Fire Brigade to be called out. He was my best friend during my time at Moseley. I now know that children from Sycamore House were also included in the transportation of children. I do not know whether Ian was one of the children sent. There are very few things in my life that I have not been able to handle. This story is sadly one of them.