

The Lime Tree

Some of my earliest memories are the smell of the lime tree that was at the back of the playground of Conington School. I was born and brought up in Conington and attended the Village School from the age of five until about eleven. Its funny how you remember certain things like the powder paint we used to use and then washing the paint pallets in a little back washroom. We also used to listen to the wireless in conjunction with booklets, ie: for Nature study or Travel talks. After school we had various activities depending on the time of the year. In spring and summer we would build dens in the wood, have a fire and roast potatoes. This would annoy the Gamekeeper so he would chase us out, sometimes with the local Bobby. In the Autumn we would collect conkers and play with them, pickling them in vinegar before stringing them to make them extra hard .. We would also start collecting rubbish for a large village bonfire for Guy Fawkes Night on November 5th. We would collect anything that would burn. In between that we would cycle over to Holme to buy fireworks from Mrs Flanders shop with the money we collected going round "Penny for the Guy ". On Bonfire Night after school we would go around the village collecting newspapers to light the bonfire. Most of the village would then congregate around the fire with a joint collection of fireworks. The next day we would be poking around the still burning embers of the fire. The winter always seemed to be colder with snow and ice. We would make slides and used to see how long we could make them on the ice in the playground. We would always get wet through snowballing.

The Wartime Water Tower at the top of Conington Lane used to have the biggest Icicles hanging off it that you were ever likely to see, they were massive. Another of our pastimes was to play in the old Wartime buildings around the Aerodrome which was the home to the 457th Bomb Group in the 1940's. There was an old open air swimming pool, part of a Cinema and a big building with no windows which was really dark inside, we really used to scare ourselves in there. We used to dig up old bullets, split open the case and burn the cordite, looking back on

it, how silly and dangerous was that!

The harvest was another big part of life back then. Seeing the binder being set up and cutting the corn, the sheaves being put into stooks then collected up and put into a stack. When the stacks were built they would be thatched on the top to keep the weather out until the thrashing took place in the winter. I used to frequent the Blacksmiths shop. An old chap named Bob Buxton was the blacksmith and he used to get me to pump the bellows to get the fire hot for him. Conington had a "Hut" the old name for a village hall in which was held various events such as whist drives, beetle drives, parties and dances. One Saturday evening three groups played there, one was an American group of musicians, the village was heaving with people for that one. As I got a bit older we used to go to Peterborough on the bus on a Saturday afternoon to the Pictures as it used to be known and you always got two films for your money back then.

So they were the so called " good old days".....were they really? As the years roll by the one thing that still sticks in my mind is the smell of the lime tree.

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