

Back in Time - 39 - Reminiscences from Our Members

10th May 2020

Over the last 38 days while I have been sending EPRA Members the Back in Time emails I have received a number of kind comments and lots of reminiscences relating to the articles. With the consent of those people who have sent me comments and reminiscences I thought it would be interesting to make them available to all the EPRA members.

Can I thank those members who sent their thanks to me and said how much they had enjoyed 'Back in Time' during the March/April 2020 Covid-19 lockdown.

Back in Time - 2 - Cavendish Road and the allotment

I moved into 9 Ravensdale on August 14th 1952. The street lights were like Toc H lamps. Very spooky at night. I think Adelphi House owned all that land. Plus the first house on your right as you come up Cavendish from Monton Rd. Hope my memory is not playing tricks.

Hello John. How interesting. I had an allotment on Cavendish Rd for many years. I always thought the land was owned by the Church. They had a home where the Sheltered housing now stands. My memories are a bit vague but we had some wonderful times on the allotments with everyone helping each other.

The old house opposite Wharton Lodge was owned by the lady who also owned The Wendover Pub. She was known as "Old Ma Potts".

Morning John... I hope you derive as much pleasure doing these history pages as I do reading them.

June

I remember the Victorian Wharton Lodge, as a pair of semi-detached houses. One of them, when empty, was used for an address, for a postal based fraud.

Nick

The map and photos are really interesting. I remember the pair of Victorian semis on the site of the Wharton Lodge houses. I think Stoddart Reid lived in the right hand of the pair: he was a Scot and worked in banking in some capacity: his wife had trained as a concert pianist. Mary Reid Kemball who became an Alderman on Eccles Council and later Chaired Lancashire County Council came to live with her brother and his wife when her parents died. She was an early social studies graduate of Manchester University and Chair of Governors at Adelphi House in later life.

I seem to remember a large arts and craft style house on the left which was demolished to build Mistral Court. Tom Bergin, editor of the Salford Reporter, lived there with his wife. They moved to Hanover Court in Worsley.

It's quite possible that the Faithful Companions of Jesus owned the allotments on the right, or possibly the Diocese of Salford. Along with many other local children I attended school in the original Monton House which was a feeder school for Adelphi House on the Crescent in Salford. The white detached house next to the sheltered housing at the beginning of Cavendish Road on the right was the gardener's cottage to Monton House. There were coach houses and a kitchen garden close to the gardener's cottage. The grounds of Monton House ran through from Cavendish Road to a field on Stafford Road with the main driveway onto Monton Road and rear gates onto Cavendish Road adjacent to the gardener's cottage. Eventually land was sold off to fund building a more modern school on the field belonging to Monton House. Branwood House School transferred there from Clarendon Crescent/Chatsworth Road around 1983 when the FCJ sisters withdrew both from running schools in Salford and their Teacher Training College at Sedgeley Park in Prestwich which transferred to GMPolice.

Mary

The large house on the left of Cavendish Road is where I grew up, Highfield was No: 15, the right hand semi would have been No:17. My family lived there from about 1915 when my Grandfather bought it until we moved in 1953. The road up the side gave access to the garage (the old stables) at the back and now gives access to Ravensdale Gardens. My father sold the house to Mrs Potts who owned the Park Hotel in Monton, she changed it into flats. As a matter of interest Mrs Potts also owned the house next to the railway bridge in Monton where she would offer bed and breakfast to 'commercial travellers', that house was called Wendover and was later developed as the hotel. The other Victorian semi photograph is the house opposite Highfield. I know the Cunliffe family lived there at one time but I recall a Mrs Ried living there. She had been a concert pianist in her life and I remember my father standing in the front garden listening to her play.

Thank you for the pictures, I too would like to see more. In the meantime here is a picture of Highfield, you can see the stables at the top of the garden (the left hand gatepost is still there).



John

Back in Time - 3 - Stafford Road and the Froebel Family

Also, I noted an advert for Carlton House School underneath the advert for Froebel kindergarten. I've had this old photo for a while....Carlton House was in Gilda Brook Rd, which I think was in The Park rather than Ellesmere Park. I have an old map which puts it almost opposite the Polygon.

Alison

Thank you for splitting the photos into an acceptable size for my email, I am very much enjoying seeing and reading about the local history. I'll also be printing them off for my Dad, 89 this year and Salford born and bred and still resident at the Height, so he will be fascinated to see and hear everybody's stories, and will help to reminisce whilst in self isolation, please keep them coming.

Patricia

Back in Time - 5 - 1940 Aerial Photographs

John as a child I would play on the fields behind Highfield which went across to the railway line. I also played in the fields behind the houses on Monton Road which is now the site of the houses on Dovedale Avenue. Behind where the Wendover Apartments are there was a ruined house which I believe had been hit by a bomb, the map you sent shows a building on that site.

I know a house on Monton Green was also hit, there are two new houses on the site just up from the Blue Bell pub, they were built in the 1950's. I also think one of the ponds on Worsley golf course was formed by a bomb.

The theory is either the German bomber missed his target of Trafford Park and just unloaded his bombs or he was just a bad shot. If you draw a line from Clarendon Road to the pond on the golf course you will see the line goes more or less straight through all these points. There may be other sites on the same line.

John

Back in Time - 6 - Ellesmere Road and Isherwoods

You may know this already: my father told me that Arnold Isherwood began selling petrol from a pump installed at his home on Wellington Road in the 1920s. The house is in one of the photos featured in the history of VIP: there are 2 pumps shown opposite a street crossing. I assume the house was demolished as part of the M602 development, but the houses opposite in the picture still stand.

Mary

I remember Isherwood's garage very well. It was on the corner of Wellington Road and Monton Road just over from the bridge which is still there next to the St Andrew's medical centre (which in turn stands on the site of the old Conservative Club). All that area was lost to the M602. After work started on the M602 the business moved and became the VIP petrol station on the corner of Trafford Road and Church Street. I believe the houses shown in the picture are on Monton Road leading to the junction with Half Edge Lane. I also believe the Isherwood family lived in Stafford House on the corner of Ellesmere and Stafford Road.

John

How we have enjoyed your write-ups and photographs of early E.P!! On our short daily walks, (as per government rules), we have been looking more carefully at the houses which are still in existence. My husband, Jim, was a teacher then at Ellesmere Park Secondary School since 1958 (when Chatsworth Road was much like your photograph of Cavendish Road today) and we moved here in 1967 from Tyldesley, when our twins, (now both in Australia) were born, we had to move to a larger home nearer our workplace, hence our arrival in Chatsworth Road in 1967. I was then teaching at Clarendon Road Primary School with deputy head teacher Lilian Farmer and headmaster Gordon Sandham. She lodged during the week on Wellington Road with Mrs. Ivy Benson about three doors away from Isherwood's petrol station. We then had a motor bike and filled up with petrol using Isherwood's pumps (pictured yesterday), where petrol was an old penny or tuppence cheaper than elsewhere. We can remember much of what you are portraying and recalling so much of it!! Many thanks.

Brenda & Jim

I used to buy my petrol from Isherwood's their manager called Jackson lived on Ravensdale Gardens in the 1950s

June

Back in Time - 7 - The Elms and the Ermen Family

Thanks again for keeping us interested as we do a walk-about each day to follow up your fascinating series "Back In Time". After your photographs in No. 7 - I contacted a friend, Susan Kay, re your photograph of how Cavendish Road used to be! She used to live near the end of Cavendish Road. The house was No.55 then, but was changed to 57 when the new houses were built. It is on the left, near the end as you walk towards the college. As a girl growing up there from when she was born in 1939 (her parents, Alf and Molly Kay, moved into that home when they were married in 1936, when it was new), and she does not remember the road being unmetalled and so full of puddles! She now lives in Tamworth, since she and her husband used to holiday on their houseboat which was moored at the bottom of their garden on the canal. They travelled a lot and visited Berlin in 2015, taking the enclosed photograph, which I thought might be interesting to you.



The Marx and Engels Statue at the Marx–Engels Forum in Berlin

Brenda & Jim

My Mum and Dad moved to Bradford Road in 1964 when I was 5 but I don't remember Cavendish Road being such a bad surface so I am guessing this must be very early 1960s. I went to Monton House School whilst it was still in the original Monton House until I was 7 when I went to De La Salle Preparatory School on the corner of Weaste Lane opposite the entrance to Buile Hill Park.

Nick

Back in Time - 15 - Aerial Photographs of M602 - 1973

Dear John.....you are doing a wonderful job showing us all these old photos and reviving old memories. I look forward to them every day and have a coffee whilst I browse. I seem to remember that it was Fred Dibnah who demolished Monton Mill, but I do not have anything concrete to back it up. I do remember my husband saying what a waste of time and money the M602 was as no-one would use it!! How wrong can you be? I remember the old railway bridge in Monton. The trains from Astley ran at the back of our house (now the walkway) and were always a thrill for our children to watch. I worked as a Nurse in A&E in 1951 at the old Hope Hospital. How it has changed. The Ward Sister on H1, which was the old children's ward also lived on Ravensdale. Memories, memories...I wish I had kept better records. Thank you again, I am sure your emails will give many folk a lot of pleasure and something to chat about.

June

Back in Time - 14 - Hope Hospital

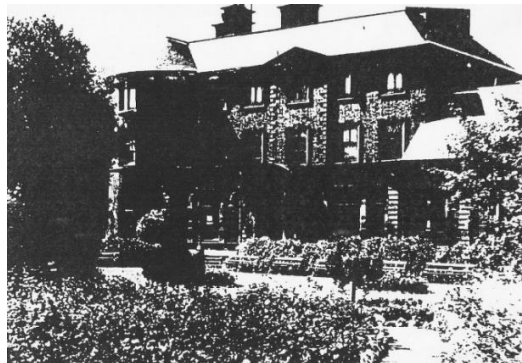
I was interested to see the hospital buildings intact in the aerial photograph. When I worked at SRH we used to have post lunch tea/coffee in "A" block, the one nearest Stott lane. Coming back towards the main part, "B" block was missing. This was said to have been blown up by a parachute bomb with loss of lives. This was commemorated by a stained-glass window placed in the corridor linking the new building development to "E" block, before it's subsequent demolition.

Nick

Back in Time - 16 - Ellesmere Road and Didsbury House

Over the years I've seen quite a number of photos of Ellesmere Park, but never any of the section of Ellesmere Road between Sandwich Road and Victoria Crescent, where I live, until now! So thanks for that!

You mention Walton House, which was the house previously on the site where my house and 4 others were built. On the 1888 OS map, the house was Walton House, but by 1905 it had been renamed as Brackley House. In 1936 our houses were built on the site. I have attached a scan of a photograph of Brackley House which I've had for a number of years. It's a pity the quality (of the photograph, not the scan!) isn't better, but it shows the style of the house. The path going behind the camera leads to the garden gate of the present house on the corner.



David

Back in Time - 17 - Cavendish Road Allotments

I'm an old boy of Monton House (1963-65), during the days when it was the Faithful Companions Of Jesus school.

"FCJ", I mention, used to be everywhere - on our cap badges, our blazers, stamped on books and so on. One day, being no older than seven, as that's when I left, I asked my older sister, two years ahead of me, what did FCJ stood for?

"Fellows Can't Join," I was informed.

Ged

Back in Time - 19 - Tax Office

My husband, Ron, when a 15/16 year old pupil at Eccles Grammar School, worked at the Inland Revenue on Ellesmere Road as a paid "Schoolboy Help" in the long summer holiday. He says that he did clerical work. He can also remember playing football in the back garden during the lunch break.

Ron has always said that he thought the Inland Revenue moved from Manchester because their premises had suffered bomb damage but he doesn't know when Holcombe closed as an Inland Revenue Office. Ron has always said that he thought the Inland Revenue moved from Manchester because their premises had suffered bomb damage but he doesn't know when Holcombe closed as an Inland Revenue Office.

Hilary

I remember the Tax Office. Back in the early 1950s my Dad, a Chartered Accountant, pointed the house out to me and said he had to go there every now and again on business. It was a hot day when we walked past, and the bay windows were open and we could see the folk at work.

David

Back in Time - 20 - Houses for Sale

My Grandfather bought Highfield in 1915, 20 years after the auction, the family moved there from their previous home on The Polygon. My family continued to live there after my Grandparents moved to Cleveleys at the outbreak of the war and remained until 1953 when we moved to Monton Green on the day after the Queen's coronation.

John

Back in Time - 25 - Eccles Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society

My grandfather and my father are on the member's list; I don't think they did any singing. I recall my bank manager at the Royal Bank of Scotland in Church Street telling me that 'Honorary Treasurer of the Operatic Society' was included under the terms of his job. He was none too pleased about it.

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John

With reference to the List of Members of Eccles Amateur Dramatic and Operatic Society, my mother and grandfather and my grandfather's younger brother are all mentioned, as is my childhood family doctor. They all lived in Ellesmere Park, my grandfather and his brother being partners in the family firm of Chartered Accountants which they established on Deansgate, Manchester. My mother and grandfather lived at 'Rushdale', 23 Westminster Road (opposite your house!), and my grandfather's younger brother lived at 'Melrose', 16 Ellesmere Road, the house with the wall-mounted Victorian letter-box which you featured last Friday. His middle surviving daughter of three, whose family home it was, died only last month just three days short of her 99th birthday (not from Coronavirus).

My childhood family doctor lived at 35 Ellesmere Road and kept geese in the adjoining field on the corner of Cavendish Road where a new house has recently been built. My grandmother used to take my sister and me to see the geese, no doubt to give our mother a break!

Susan

Hi John,

My old Eccles chum John ("Lil") has passed on to me several items from your EPRA archive, including the latest, *The Student Prince* program from the 1936 EADOS show. A great many of my family's activities centred around "Eccles Operatic" (as it was always known) and I think many of my parents' friends met their spouses there. Not sure about the great and the good but they certainly kept the Eccles Liberal Club (now the Gilda Brook Social Club) afloat for decades - the rehearsal rooms were in the (long gone) Albert Street schoolrooms across Wellington Road.

I recognised several names in the members' list, and even remember some of their faces. Here are a few notes, to the best of my recollection. E&OE!

- My family lived at 6 Chatsworth Road from 1954 to about 1972.
- One of the Gardner widows lived at 2 Chatsworth Road, on the corner of Portland Road, but she died in the late 50s.
- I believe the Bishop of Middleton(?) then bought the house but I never met him.
- I emigrated to Vancouver in 1967 and have been in Canada ever since, moving to Victoria, Vancouver Island, in 1984. We are now retired and live in nearby Sidney, BC.
- I was once taken on a tour of the Gardner plant while at Bolton School.
- Many years later I was in the engine room of one of the ferries operated by British Columbia Ferries, in connection with my work. They were powered by massive German diesels, but in there in the engine room was a smaller diesel, spotlessly clean. It said "Gardner, Patricroft" on the side. It was the auxiliary power plant, in case the main diesels ever quit. "Best and most reliable diesels in the world", said the engineer.
- My parents were long-standing members of EADOS and participated in many shows. They met there and were married in 1939. Mum, Ella (Fielden) Jones, probably joined in 1937. She was in the dancing troupe, Wardrobe Mistress and Assistant Accompanist at different times. I believe she received a special award from the Queen Mother for being the longest serving member of the National Operatic and Dramatic Association (NODA) - some 60+ years. Dad (A R Jones) was Front-of-House and Business Manager for many a year.
- I participated in three productions, very small parts in *Annie Get Your Gun* about 1950 and *Kings Rhapsody*, a few years later. I had a much bigger role in *White Horse Inn* about 1957 or 58 and even got my picture in the program!

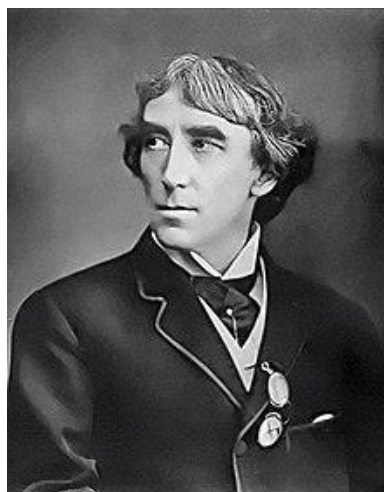
- Some of the members whose names I remember are - Harry Wood, still Musical Director in my day, Bernard Ashton, G Coop, Mabel Buck, Fred Hartley, Lucy Hiley (Hiley's tripe shops), Harry Hindley (Harry's Cafe in Monton), J B Kenyon, T Lewtas, Harold Maude, Frank Mottershead, John Prestwich (Davey miners' lights family in Monton, and lived The Aviary in Worsley Woods) Alan Wallwork (lived on Cavendish Road and long-time director of Salford Rugby Club. He always called me "Meredith" - never knew why!). Frank Wilkinson, John Wooller (Dad's best man and brother (or nephew?) of the famous Welsh rugby star, Wilf Wooller.)

Chris (Victoria, B.C. Canada)

Second email from Chris

Something I forgot to mention. One of the first Presidents of EADOS was Sir Henry Irving, the first actor ever knighted, and owner of the Lyceum Theatre in London. How he came to be so I have no clue and have sometimes wondered. Irving's business manager was an Irish lawyer by the name of Bram (Abraham) Stoker. If you don't remember Stoker for being the man who wrote *The Duties of Clerks of Petty Sessions in Ireland*, and who wouldn't, you might remember him as the author of *Dracula!* For which Irving was said to be his chief inspiration. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henry_Irving

I must admit Irving did look rather like Christopher Lee!



Chris (Victoria, B.C. Canada)

Hi John, Thanks for all the lovely photos.

I just wanted to say that I really loved seeing the one of Old Ossy Unsworth in the Eccles Operatic Programme. He was the father of Young Ossy, who appeared in so many of All Saints shows, his father was one of the founders of All Saints. Young Ossy lived in the Park. Happy memories.

Kath

Back in Time - 26 - Bazaar Souvenir Booklet

Your mention of the Protector Lamp and Lighting Company Limited rang a bell - my former neighbour Mary had once mentioned that the previous owner of my house (Dennis Leresche, 35 Cavendish Road) had been involved in a miner's lamp business. A few minutes on Google later and it turns out that he was indeed managing director of that company, seemingly until his death just before we moved in back in 1987. Proving that there is no subject too arcane for a book, I have just ordered from Amazon a second-hand copy of the First Hundred Years of The Protector Lamp and Lighting Company. If lock-down continues for another few weeks I might just get round to reading it.

David

Back in Time - 28 - Quaker Bridge

Many thanks for your series "Back in Time", they are very interesting and informative. This latest ones showing Quaker Bridge and the Patricroft to Clifton Junction Line, through the Black Harry Tunnel, brought back memories. We used to live in Eccles Road, Swinton and the line ran through the fields next to the golf course. I remember my Father saying that the tunnel was not wide enough, or there was a curve that was too tight for coaches to pass, so it was only a line for freight that had a shorter wheel base. The only passenger service that ran along the line and through the tunnel was a Bank Holiday Special and there would be one out in the morning and return in the evening to avoid the passing problem. I remember the tunnel collapse the closing of the line and the lifting of the track. For a period of time there would be a rake of empty waggons left on the line as a form of sidings.

On a totally different subject, my Father told me that there was a "Gun Emplacement" near the bottom of Chatsworth Road, which would be about where the Special School is now built. My Father said that it fired on occasions during an Air Raid and the ground shook. I remember as a child walking through the fields to Eccles and passing some abandoned brick buildings on the left hand side as I went into Chatsworth Road.

Martin

I read somewhere that the Three Sisters site was once a mined area, with the mine called The Three Eyes Mine and that Quaker Bridge was built to allow access to the mine to continue once the railway was constructed. I've looked to find that again to no avail, would be interested to know if you've heard that at all.

Alison

My dear friend Joe rang me and we talked about the collapse of the Black Harry tunnel. He was a young man in 1953 and lived in Swinton. He vividly remembered going to Temple Drive and seeing the massive hole which was once two houses. Joe said that initially the local population thought it must have been a bomb which is not really surprising. The last time houses were destroyed in such a catastrophic way was during the WWII air raids over Manchester.

John R.

Back in Time - 29 - Victoria Road

Thought you would like to see these photo's. My daughter took them when she was doing an art project at Eccles College in the early 1990s. They were later demolished and the site cleared to build Queenscroft flats on Victoria Road. It's such a shame all these lovely old properties are disappearing.

I have really enjoyed reading all your Back in Time emails. Its been something good to look forward to while we have been in lockdown. Thank you so much for sending them.



Gill

Yes I remember the tree; it was there sometime. Sorry I don't have a picture.

Nick

Back in Time - 31 - Cavendish Road Nursery and Sports Ground

Your maps are interesting for another reason. They show the development of Monton Bowling Club. Not present in the 1893 map, but seen in the 1908 one. The club was incorporated as a limited company in 1896. The site of the club lies just across the old railway line from Ravensdale Gardens. Now known as Monton Bowling & Social Club, one of the oldest bowling clubs in Greater Manchester.

Nick

I recall as a child the field behind Highfield being used as a cricket ground but have no idea who used it, it was certainly not Monton Cricket Club (now the Sports Club). I also remember number 13 Cavendish Road which you have featured in a previous 'Back in Time'. During the 1940's and 50's the Rothwell family lived there and they had a tennis court at the rear of their house, it is marked on the 1936 map. It disappeared when the houses on Bedford Road were built.

John

Back in Time - 34 - Monton Road and Monton Bridge

Dear John – Just to let you know that we are still religiously following your items to EPRA members every day and my husband, Jim, who has built and run live steam locomotives at Abbeyfield Park, Urmston, for over 50 years, was deeply interested in today's info. (railway oriented), which caused us to walk through the Park to Monton.

As I am printing each of your daily items to eventually make a journal to send to our twins in Australia but who spent their teenage years and more, here and played lacrosse at Monton Sports Club, (Back in Time 23), for many years, I thought you might be interested to know that my grandfather's brothers came here from the Norfolk area. Almost everyone worked in the agriculture industry there at that time, but when the price of corn dropped so dramatically in the mid 1800's, they lived at 5, Partington Street, working as labourers. I found this out whilst investigating my family tree. Since this address is less than a mile from where we live, it was easy to look into it all further at the Local History Library in Peel Park. The first reference to members of the family being residents at number 5, was in the rates book dated 2nd October, 1899. At that time, there were 14 houses lining both sides of Partington Street, those numbering 2 to 16 and 5 to 15 all being owned by an R. L. Harrison. The rates book showed that 12 shillings, 4 1/2 pence each year was paid, at 1 shilling and 10 pence in the pound as the rateable value was an annual £6. 15s.

Hope you find this an interesting little additive to the stack of information you already have. Many thanks for all the fascinating things you are bringing to our attention, which are an enormous talking point and ease this dreadful lockdown situation so much. In addition, we have met and chatted to so many neighbours we have never normally met or seen in the 52 years we have lived here, as we usually speed past in the car.

Brenda and Jim

Back in Time - 35 - Joseph Stevenson's Diary - 1933

Fascinating. You may have done this already, but from the list of characters I have identified the musical play as "The Marriage Market". http://www.guidetomusicaltheatre.com/shows_m/marriagemarket.htm

Ray

Back in Time - 37 - The Bradshaw Legacy

Marvellous, John! Sounds utterly credible and solves a mystery that has bothered me since I first noticed Irving's name in an EADOS program, probably about 1960 when I first read Dracula! In my day they printed the names of all the past presidents in the programme.

Here's another acting curiosity, not particularly about EPRA but about Eccles! John Wilkes Booth, the well-known US actor, assassinated Abraham Lincoln in 1865. Someone once told me many years ago that Booth came from the Booth family of Eccles, Worsley, Boothstown and Booth's Hall Museum. There were apparently several "Booth's Halls", at least two in the Worsley area. Any thoughts?

Chris (Victoria, B.C. Canada)

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