

Memories of 1930s schooldays in Bidford

Marjorie Kitson

Walking from the garage in Bidford to the infants school – now the Church Hall – was quite an adventure. The first fright was when an old lady parted the bushes and said “Hello my pigeon”. I never walked on that side of the road again and I ran round the corner as fast as I could. A little further down the road some children sat in the trees and threw bits of twigs onto us, a bit further on we had to pass the butcher’s shop – Mr Pricket – he used to stand on the pavement and sharpen his knife and say, “I’ll have them curls”, I had curly hair! Getting to school used to frighten me.

By the time I was 7 or 8 it was off to school just up the road. I’d already spent 2 years at infant school, learnt my tables and knew all the shops in the street – very many more than there are now. Mr and Mrs Warner were in charge of the school and they lived in the School House. Peter Warner, their son, was already at the Grammar School. Mrs Warner taught the children who had just come up from the infant school, she was very kind. Mr Warner would get very cross indeed, so it was best to keep out of his way but by the time you got to the top class there was no escape.

We had a lovely time in the field at playtime. There was a large steep sandpit close to the school playground and we tended to play in the sandpit rather than the playground and of course there was the rest of the field in which to run about. Mrs Warner was very good at organising singing and dancing, she had quite a few tall Welsh hats and wraps and we all loved getting dressed up and dancing in the costumes. I wonder if anyone does that for small children these days?

Sometimes the water came up in the village, by the garage, opposite the bridge and over the bridge. We used to put on our wellies and walk through it, great fun until a bus came down the road and the water came up higher than our Wellington, so it was a very squishy walk back home and trouble when we got there.

Just a little way down from the bridge there was an island in the river, willow trees grew on the island and they were harvested. There was a plank from the river bank to the willows and I used to walk across it to the island. When my parents found out I was in trouble again. Mind you, my young brother used to walk across the river on top of the bridge. There was trouble again when my parents found out. Rodney is a *lot* younger than me. It I remember rightly, my mother used to walk Rodney to school, he was a little inclined to go exploring elsewhere.

One of the nice trips we had was on one of those Hollands boats down the river to Cleeve Prior. When you got there it was off the boat and into the café. If you fancied it you could walk along the plank across the river. There was only a metal rail to hold onto on our side and nothing on the other. Changing places was fraught with difficulty but I don’t remember anyone falling in.

The age of 10 came far too soon, we had to sit the exams and then, with any luck, it was off to the Grammar School. It was a 4 mile cycle ride to Alcester, often with Dorothy and Phyllis, no buses then, but we all survived it, until the war.