

## Thomas Reginald KING



Reg was born in 1906, and died in 1991. He kept the shop at 193 St John's Road, Walthamstow, along with Vi King, probably from the late forties until he retired – I can't remember when that was, because he continued to live in the house.

The shop was an Aladdin's cave – things were stuck on walls, hung from the ceiling, were piled on the floor – there didn't seem to be any worries about shoplifting, because everything was within reach of the customers. As a sideline, he took photographs of people, then displayed them in the window, so that they could order copies if they liked them – I guess not everyone had a camera or the facilities to develop photographs. His fingers were permanently brown from the developing fluid.

His proud boast was that he didn't give 'tick' (credit), but they were both cheerful & sociable, and always had time for a chat. They would also 'open up' at night if anyone knocked on the window because they had run out of something vital – again, there seemed to be no fear of getting robbed.

The house itself was very basic by modern standards – no bathroom and an outside loo, & the kitchen was just a butler sink and a gas burner right at the back. No central heating, of course! St John's Road was a friendly place, though, and had a nice atmosphere – people liked living there.