

## **10A Maynard Rd – by Valerie Brown (nee Coates)**

10A Maynard Road was one of a long terrace of mid-Victorian brick houses, three up, two down, with a tiny pocket-handkerchief front garden whose border railings had been removed during the war. I was nine years old when we returned to the smoky grey bricks and cement of Walthamstow from the green fields and fresh air of Barby in Warwickshire where we were evacuated for the duration of the war.

Maynard Road was a long street reaching from Beulah Road through to Shernhall Street with an alleyway running parallel to Beulah Road from Orford Road almost down to Grove Road. Near the top of Maynard Road, next to the alleyway, was a wood-yard. Opposite our house was a row of almshouses. Our main grocer was Nelson Pearce's in a small parade of shops just round the corner in Beulah Rd. Mr. Pearce always wore a white apron, even when he swept the pavement in front of his shop. We had to be registered with him during rationing. Opposite was a fish and chip shop and a favourite treat for tea was a tuppenny bag of chips – shared between three of us, of course.

Halfway down Maynard was another alley leading through to Shernhall Street, via Maynard Road School. Opposite the alley was a short street through to Barclay Road with an off-license on the corner. Mr. Robinson the Chimney Sweep lived around there and went to work with his brushes strapped to his bicycle. (I believe he cleaned windows too, in the summer).

The only shops I recall in Maynard were almost opposite the school alley. It was here that I had to take the accumulator from the wireless set to be recharged. Another of the shops was very small and had pinball and bagatelle machines, for which you used tokens. The shop sold groceries, sweets and cakes, and if you won on the machines your prize would be a cake with lots of shredded coconut on top. Right opposite, at the entrance of the alleyway was the "Penny drinks" shop that sold sweets, tobacco and fizzy drinks from a big machine. The shopkeeper first put a coloured flavoured tablet into a glass and then topped it up with fizzy water. Naturally, it cost a penny. Sweets were loose in large jars on shelves behind the counter and the whole shop smelled of tobacco and all kinds of confectionery – lemon sherbet dabs, pear-drops, clove sticks and during those dark days of sweet-rationing we would buy locusts and Spanish wood, liquorice sticks and dates from Iraq.

My aunt and uncle, the Willards, lived next door at No. 8. Uncle Perce had been the curator of the Vestry Road museum for some time. Aunt Lucy was a school dinner-lady and they had two sons: Clifford and Peter. Clifford played trombone in the Grenadier Guards band and Peter married and, later, lived with his family further down Maynard Rd. Aunt Lucy had "put in a good word" for us to the landlord and my family moved there after VE Day, but Victory in Japan had yet to be won before WW2 ended.

The housing situation was desperate then and the little house was already part occupied by an elderly lady, Miss Coppinger. She had the two upstairs back bedrooms and every morning she would come downstairs through our living room to empty her slop bucket in the outside lavatory and return with a large white enamel jug of fresh cold water from our scullery tap. We came to regard her being there as an intrusion. When she died a neighbour came in to lay her out and put pennies on her eyes. Although she lived very frugally, they found 1400 pounds stg. in notes tucked away in a cupboard, which went to a nephew who never visited her. Dad sealed her rooms and lit a sulphur candle to fumigate them before redecorating them as our bedrooms. By this time Mum and Dad had become owners of the house when the landlord put it on the market.