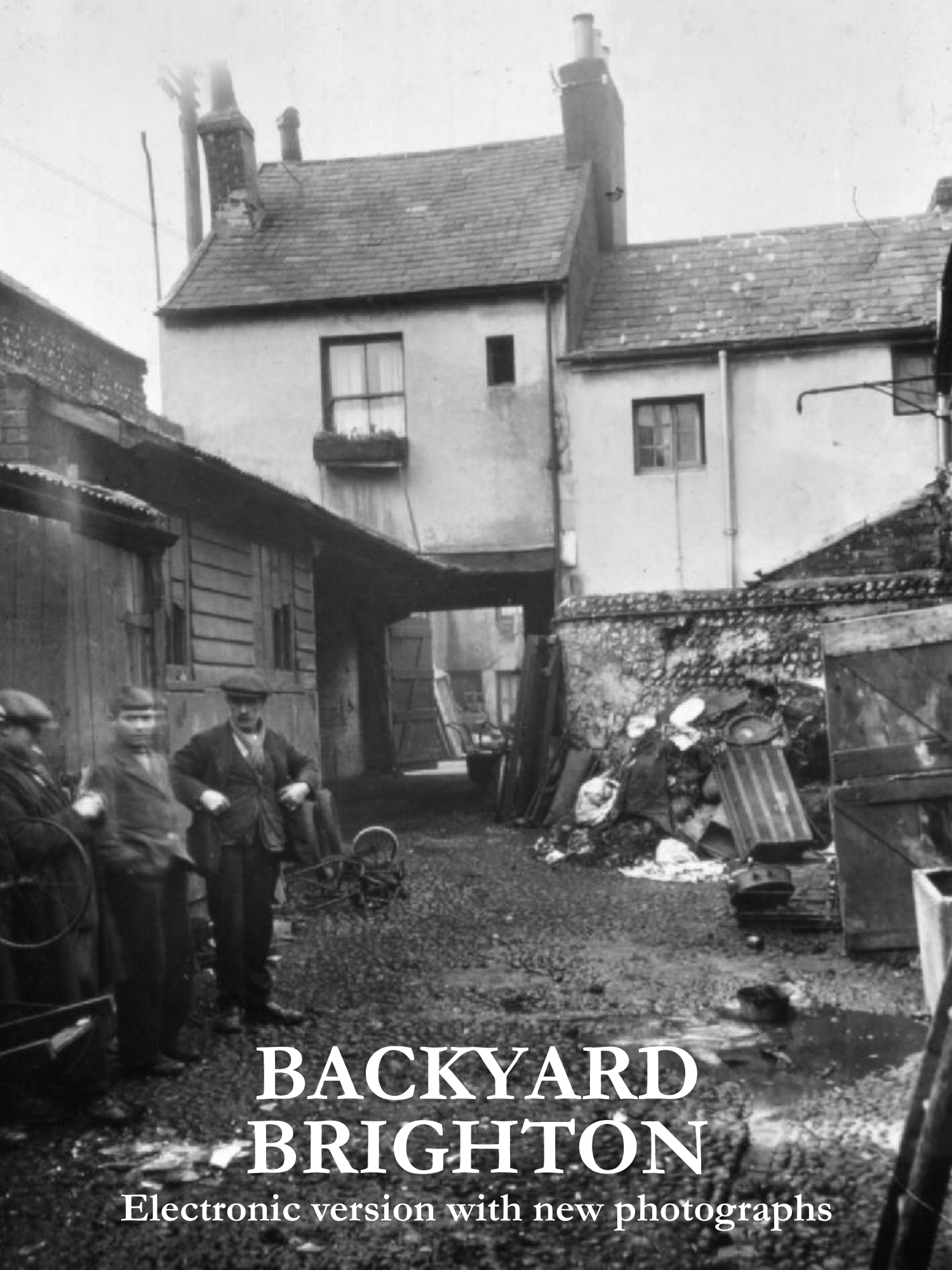

BACKYARD BRIGHTON

Electronic version with new photographs

Photographs and Memories of Brighton in the Thirties

Lewis's Buildings

Introduction

Backyard Brighton: photos and memories of Brighton in the thirties is based on a collection of photographs of buildings demolished at that time, belonging to Brighton Borough Council Environmental Health Department; the department has generously made them available for this publication. The photographs were commissioned from the photographer Vawdrey of 16a Dyke Road, 'principally to form a collection of records relating to clearance, and also for internal use to demonstrate those features of unfitness upon which the cases for clearance were based, i.e. most of the photographs demonstrated elements of disrepair, dampness, lighting, ventilation, sanitary arrangements, and bad arrangement... they have been used more for demonstrating unfitness both internally and within the council than for any other purpose.'

The photographs are remarkable in a number of ways; many are beautifully composed, some are dramatic. Was this intuitive, or did the photographer recognise the quality of his images? Few of the photographs contain people, and when they do the people are often out of focus, for they were, after all,

a record of the buildings that had been commissioned, not their inhabitants.

The photographs are of places which were not portrayed in the seaside postcard (though many of the buildings are beautiful), so they will be unknown to many newcomers to Brighton, as they would have been to tourists and the well to do in the town in the thirties.

A book-making team was formed, comprising people who had worked in the past on a QueenSpark and Lewis Cohen Urban Studies Centre project about the history of Carlton Hill, and new volunteers. We decided to focus on the 1935 photographs (and to save the 1950s photographs for another publication), and selected about one third of these for the book. We then sought appropriate passages for each photograph: from interviews, responses to newspaper articles and documentary sources.

As a result of articles in the Evening Argus, the Brighton and Hove Leader and broadcasts on Radio Sussex, people who knew and lived in the streets depicted in the photographs have written down their memories, or described the scene to us. Much of the text about the Carlton Hill area came from a series of interviews held in 1984. All have provided us with a

close focus view of their lives just half a century ago. In numerous ways the contrast with our expectations of life in the 1980s is dramatic. The inhabitants were united by poverty, and built up strong support networks within the community to help them survive the rigours of their lives; not everyone had extended families, but everyone had neighbours. The demolition of a neighbourhood is not just the destruction of buildings, it is also the destruction of a complex social system. People felt they belonged to an area of the town, (a small collection of streets around their home) and everyone knew where that area began and ended. Although almost all the buildings only survive as photographs, memories of living in 'Backyard Brighton' are very much alive.

Thanks are due to the contributors: Georgina Attrell, Gladys Stenning, Ivy Bone, Benjamin Bowman, Ernest Whittington, Bert Nelson, Peter Wood, Charlotte Storrey, Matilda Wheeler, L Scarborough, Charles Yeates, A C Lambert, Dorothy Betteridge, E Kirby, R J Weedon, Amelia Scholey, Matilda Weaver, Rosina Sullivan, Winnie Wheeler, Edie Haynes, Lisa Page and Roy Grant.

In A Social History of Housing 1815-1970 John Burnett writes:

'The foundations of modern slum clearance were laid by the Greenwood Act, passed by the Labour Government in 1930 as the economic depression moved into crisis. The Act for the first time introduced an Exchequer subsidy specifically for slum clearance and, importantly, related the subsidy to the numbers of people displaced and rehoused. The intention was to prevent the pre-war practice of demolition by local authorities without replacement. Also by basing the subsidy on people rather than houses, it would make it easier for councils to deal with the problem of large, poor families, since the subsidy would increase with the size of the family rehoused. For urban areas, the subsidy would be £2 5s 0d per person for forty years and an additional £1 5s 0d per person for forty years, when the cost of acquiring sites was unusually high and rehousing would have to be provided in flats. Finally, Local Authorities were required to submit programmes of their slum-clearance plans with a view to solving the problem, if possible, within five years.

Owing to the economic crisis of 1931 and government changes, the scheme did not properly

begin until 1933. This made it clear that the government's policy would be to 'concentrate public effort and money on the clearance and improvement of slum conditions', and that private enterprise would mainly be relied on to provide further supplies of ordinary working-class houses. Official policy had implicitly abandoned any general responsibility for housing, thus overturning the policy of the Wheatley Act, in exchange for the promise for a strong commitment to slum clearance. The great loophole of the 1933 Act was, however, the absence of clear guidelines to Local Authorities as to what constituted a slum requiring demolition and rehousing.'

The following letter was sent to Brighton tenants:

Town Hall,
Brighton

Dear Sir,

I enclose herewith formal Notice etc..... I have to inform you that this Notice is required to be served under the provisions of the Housing Act, 1930, and you will observe that the Notice specifies that you are required to give possession of your property on the..... day of..... 193..
I am instructed to inform you that my council expects to be in a position to offer you rehousing accommodation at..... by this date, and that if no such offer is made to you prior to the date on which you are required to give possession of your property, my Council will not take any proceedings against you for the recovery of possession thereof until the Council does make an offer to rehouse you in which case you will be required to give possession of your property and to accept the offer of rehousing accommodation.

Yours faithfully

The following 2 notices of motion in the name of Councillor Cohen were on the Agenda for the meeting of the Council of 28th February 1935, but were not moved.

1. That the Health Committee be instructed that, in future, notices should be given to tenants of slum clearance properties requiring them to vacate the premises until alternative accommodation can be offered to them.
2. That the Health Committee be instructed that, in future, notices should be given to tenants of slum clearance to vacate their premises, informing them that the Corporation will not require possession of their property until they can offer them alternative accommodation either at the Manor Farm Estate, or elsewhere.

The Committee desires to stress the fact that it has not been customary in the past to cause any hardship in the slum clearance activities. It has been the custom of the Committee to provide rehousing for all the displaced tenants and not to require possession of condemned houses until such rehousing accommodation is available for displaced tenants.

The only exceptions to this custom have been as follows:

1. Families consisting of 1 or 2 persons only in which case it has been considered that it would be uneconomical to provide rehousing accommodation as 2, 3 & 4 bed roomed houses, but not 1 bed roomed houses, are provided by the Health Committee.
2. Families which would be over-crowded even in a 4 bed roomed house.
3. Families which are found to be undesirable because they have been known for some time to the Health Department as dirty or whose houses and furniture are bug infested.
4. Families who have preferred to find their own accommodation.
5. Families consisting of a woman, with or without children, who is apparently leading an immoral life.
6. Families who have already had a Corporation house and left owing the sum of £20 or more in rent.
7. Families in which the working members already reside a considerable distance away from their work, and if rehoused on a housing estate will be still further away. Of the 226 families which were

last cleared from condemned areas, 179 were rehoused in Council houses, 44 sought their own accommodation and 3 entered the Poor Law Institution.

The Medical Officer of Health's Reports always started as follows:

'The dwelling houses in the Area are by reason of disrepair or sanitary defects unfit for human habitation, or are by reason of their bad arrangement, or the narrowness of the streets, dangerous or injurious to the health of the inhabitants of the Area, and that other buildings, if any, in the Area, are for a like reason dangerous or injurious to the health of the said inhabitants; and that the most satisfactory method of dealing with the conditions in the Area is the demolition of all the buildings in the Area'.

Evening Argus 8 July 1988:

Poor, but it was so cosy.

Regarding your article and pictures of the houses in old Richmond Street, Carlton Hill and surrounding streets in Brighton, I object to them being called slums. The people who lived in these houses were good, clean, working-class people. They kept their

houses spotlessly, and the front doorsteps and each bit of pavement was swept and washed nearly every morning. In the summer evenings we would sit out on the front steps enjoying a laugh with our friendly neighbours with a jug of beer at 4p a pint. No filthy litter or vandalism like today and no fear of thieves. These streets were far from slums. They were cosy houses for happy families.

R.J. Weedon, Hollingdean Road, Brighton

William Street

William Street

Some people have described William Street as a 'slum', but I remember it quite differently. The houses have long since gone, I remember them as being quite large by today's standards, most of them had basements with two or three storeys above. Ours was a small room, lit by an oil lamp, with an open grate that burned winter and summer. We had no gas or electric stove, so cooking was done on the open fire. The room boasted only the barest of essentials: a double bed, a table, some kitchen chairs and an old fashioned heavy chest of drawers. There was a small mat in front of the fire and the rest of the floor covered with what we called 'oil cloth', the forerunner of linoleum, but it was home and I loved it.

We had the use of the wash house or scullery once a week to do the washing. The 'privy' was a little brick built shed at the end of the back yard, with a step which was always scrubbed white, up to the wooden seat.

Wash day was a mammoth affair and was always on a Monday, come rain or shine. Mum and Gran got up at dawn, or so it seemed, lit the brick built copper

with the galvanised pan. They kept it stoked with the rubbish collected from a local sweet shop. Two great wooden tubs were hauled into the yard and filled with boiling water softened with soda crystals, and with the scrubbing board and a stiff brush battle commenced. They wore aprons that had been made from empty sugar sacks scrounged from the grocer at the end of the street, and in this attire they scrubbed and rubbed everything in sight. The 'whites' were put into the copper and boiled with a twopenny packet of Hudson's washing powder and a bar of Sunlight soap. The clothes were stirred and boiled till the place was like a steam bath. Tubs were emptied; one was then filled with clear water and the other with the blue water. This rinse was made with a penny Reckitts Blue, (a blue block of powder tied in a little muslin bag), and was swished about in the tub of water. It made the rinse that gave the clothes that 'whiter than white' look that we hear so much about these days. Starch came then in chalky lumps, mixed smooth with boiling water and then with the cold water added afterwards, it produced a bluey grey glue-like substance that stiffened everything from Dad's collars to the pillow cases. Both Mum and Gran took pride in the wash and got great pleasure in seeing the clothes

pegged out on the line. They took it in turns to turn the handle of the great mangle with the wooden rollers. Why they never finished up with hernias I'll never know. But looking back it was a way of life and no one seemed to complain. It wouldn't have done any good anyway, they were resigned to their fate. Fishing was the dominant occupation in William Street. Most fishermen lived life with all the dangers and even death that fishing from open boats can bring. It was lovely to sit on the beach when it was dark and watch the lights on the boats bobbing about as they fished for herring. As a small child I got to know what a 'mackerel sky' looked like.

Carlton Hill in 1921 was a haven for foreign refugees and immigrants. The 'hokey Pokey' trade, (ice cream) was very common. I watched for hours while 'Mr Pip' Pirolli made and mixed his product. I seemed to become aware of the words hardship and poverty. We were always hungry, or so it seemed. Looking back it must have been a nightmare for my Mum and Dad. He had been demobilised from the army and gone into the building trade as a labourer and a hod carrier. School time was always welcome, as we were always warm there, teachers understood our plight and would encourage us to run and

exercise in the small playground. I hated being poor though and even now I can remember the times when we had holes in our shoes. During prayer times in the hall, we had to kneel on the floor and I was always conscious of the state of the soles of my shoes. I never blamed my Dad for these things. How could I? I loved him very much and after all most of the kids in our school were in the same boat.

I remember the opening of the canteen in Southover Street. Each day at school, Teacher would give out tickets; one pink, one white. One ticket was for a penny and the other for five pence, old pence of course. For the penny one you were given a basin of soup and for the other five penny one you were given a roast meat dinner. My brother George had by this time started school, and we would have to take a basin or a dish to the canteen. When we collected it we would hurry home and share it between us.
In summer my Mum would take all of us kids down to the beach for the day. We had bread and margarine for dinner, and lemonade made up from yellow powder which we bought from a little shop at the bottom of William Street. We'd watch the boats taking the trippers out to sea and we would help the fishermen pull the boats up onto the beach between

each trip. If we were lucky, old Mr Rolf would take us out for a ride.

My brother George and I would take Dad's dinner down to him at midday. It would be wrapped in a cloth, and steaming hot in a basket, together with a jug of tea. It's a small wonder that we never got burnt, as the tea would be freshly made and the dinner just cooked. This was so that Dad didn't have to leave the job as they worked on bonus work. Poor Dad's hands were always chapped and raw and he always carried something called a Melrose Tablet in his pocket, it looked like a ball of yellow grease and he used to lubricate his hands. They were lovely times when Dad was in work. We used to go for bus rides along the front and to Rottingdean. There was a little single decker bus like a charabanc that used to run from the top of Elm Grove to Woodingdean; we got off at the Downs Hotel and walked down the Falmer Road to Rottingdean and then on a bus home. This idyllic situation was not to be long lived, however, for the start of the thirties once more brought unemployment and hunger.

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I used to go with my Dad sometimes to wait in the long queue in Steine Gardens at the bottom of Edward Street for the dreaded Parish Relief. We never got money or if we did I can't remember it, they gave you tickets for bread and the groceries. We used to stand over the grating of the bakers while Dad got the bread. A warm breeze came up from the grating, and the smell, when we were hungry, was out of this world. Grocery tickets were cashed at Gibson's the grocers at the corner of Kensington Gardens. When things got really bad, and you couldn't get your shoes mended we would be issued with another ticket for some new boots from Lacey's in Trafalgar Street. Both boys and girls got long black boots with laces.

Conditions were terrible in those days, proper diets were non-existent and fresh milk was a luxury we couldn't often afford. A lot of children died young. Rickets was a prevalent disease, when little legs

became like broomsticks and were often crooked. Consumption, or TB as we know it now, was a dreaded word, with the damp houses and bug infested bedrooms, children grew up with the smell of dankness and illness.

Times were good when Dad worked, and we were fed like kings, meat puddings and pies, stews, bacon puddings, new bread and bread pudding. We didn't have an oven then, so everything that had to be baked was taken down to Greenfield's the bakers at the corner of Steine Gardens. For a penny he would cook it in his bread ovens, we had to collect it when we came from school.

Not many people saw the doctor then as that cost money. If he came to you it was half a crown, but you could get a ticket to the Dispensary in Ditchling Road and the doctor there would make you up something for a shilling. As money was so tight you can guess that people had to be really bad before they went to the doctor.

We made all our games as we went along. The greengrocer gave us the sisal yellow rope that came around the boxes of oranges and we would throw one end over the arm of the lamppost, tie a knot and sit on it to swing. Woe betide you though when the

lamp lighter came round. Marbles or 'alleys' as they were called, were played in the gutter, and 'buttons' were played on the pavement. You drew a box with chalk up against the wall, and then wrote OXO on it. On the edge of the kerb you drew a ring for the start and then shot the buttons in the box with your thumb and forefinger. Boys made 'four wheelers', a box fixed to a straight plank of wood, mounted on four wheels.

My Mum knitted a lot, and sometimes spent all night sitting by candle-light knitting, so that she could earn a few shillings making jumpers. She used to knit fisherman's jerseys too, and as they took longer, she got more money for them. She also sewed, and made me clothes when she could afford it.

At about this time, the great slum clearances of the older areas of Brighton got under way, and as we were now becoming too large a family for the William Street lodgings we were offered the chance of a new house at 33 Whitehawk Crescent. For some reason my parents declined this offer and instead the house was given to a friend of my parents. We in turn went to live in their old house at 23 Claremont Row, a turning off Richmond Street backing onto the school.

Times were very hard, but there was always

'Uncles', the pawn shop in Edward Street, which had a never ending queue of people on a Monday morning. The little office where we took the things to raise the money to feed us all for the week was round at the side and back. This entrance was in fact in Henry Street, it led into a dark gloomy little room with a very high counter. You passed the items over the counter; Dad's best suit and shoes usually, and the spare sheets and blankets that could be spared in the warmer weather, occasionally there was some of Gran's jewellery. The pawnbroker would write the tickets with a funny contraption of a pen that wrote two tickets at once, one he would give to you and the other would be attached to the things you 'popped'. If the things were clothes these would be wrapped in bits of cloth and secured with a special pin, these we knew as 'pawn shop pins'. On Fridays we would get them out, unredeemed pledges were of course sold off. Many's the time I've seen something that belonged to us for sale in the window of the shop in Edward Street. I hated the place and was very ashamed to be seen going in. If there was anyone there that I knew I would walk around until they had gone before I ducked back in again, but of course as soon as anyone saw you go down the road they knew

where you were going if you were carrying a bundle. Times were really bad when my mother pawned her wedding ring. There always seemed to be a lot of them for sale in the shop, so I guess there must have been a lot of unredeemed pledges.

If you went down to the Fish Market early in the morning you could watch the catches of herring and mackerel being sold off. Fish was very cheap and formed, I suspect the staple diet of many us as children, I never liked it much and when times were hard Mum made a dinner from conger eel and parsley sauce. I hated it, but it was better than being hungry.

The Fish Market was the scene of great jollity on Good Friday every year. There they would have the great scaffolding ropes, which must have been nearly two inches thick. The men would turn the ropes, one across the other to form the cross, and the grownups and children would skip in the middle. It was painful if you missed a skip and the ropes hit your legs. We'd all sing, 'one a penny two a penny, hot cross buns'. When it was dinner time out would come the sandwiches, thick as door steps, with chunks of cheese and corned beef, cold tea from a bottle for us kids and beer for the men. How I loved Good Fridays and weeks before we would count the days.

The excitement was terrific. We'd talk about it for days afterwards. It didn't matter what size the Mums were, they all had a go in the ropes. I wonder what's happened to those lovely family outings that never cost a penny? Concerts in the back yards were another excitement, we'd sing all the popular songs of the day and we all seemed to like to dance.

Our breakfasts were bread and margarine in the summer and in the winter toast made by the kitchen range, with margarine or if we were lucky dripping. We never had bacon and egg for breakfast unless Dad had picked up a good week. We only had fresh milk on Sunday, when George James came round with the churn.

In Carlton Row there were the 'Herring Dees'. These little houses were where they smoked the herrings that were caught locally. They were strung in rows on long poles and hung in pairs over the smoke from the fires. We were sent for 'twopenn'orth of Tie Tales'.

Fish and chips was a real treat. There was a lovely fish and chip shop in Edward Street near Henry Street where you could buy a bag of 'scraps' for half a penny. Crispy bits of batter fell off the fish when it was fried, and then drained from the bottom of the

fryer. Lillywhites the fruit shop on the corner of Steine Gardens sold twopenn'orth of 'specks', this was fruit that was bruised or soft, and when you cut off the bruised parts you had a lovely feed. Giggin's the bakers in Grand Parade was where we got our clean pillowcase filled with stale bread for fourpence each morning before we went to school. The grocers shop that I remember best was Corder's, on the corner of William Street and Carlton Hill. This was like an Aladdin's Cave, you took your bottle to buy the vinegar, and a jam jar for jam. Everything was loose and had to be weighed and put into thick blue paper bags. Sugar, rice, soda and all the dried fruit came in hessian sacks. We used to buy soap in a long bar, about ten or twelve inches long, and what you required was cut off. Soap was always bought long before you needed it and stored so that it went hard, this way it lasted longer. There was no toilet soap then, you washed and cleaned the house with yellow household soap.

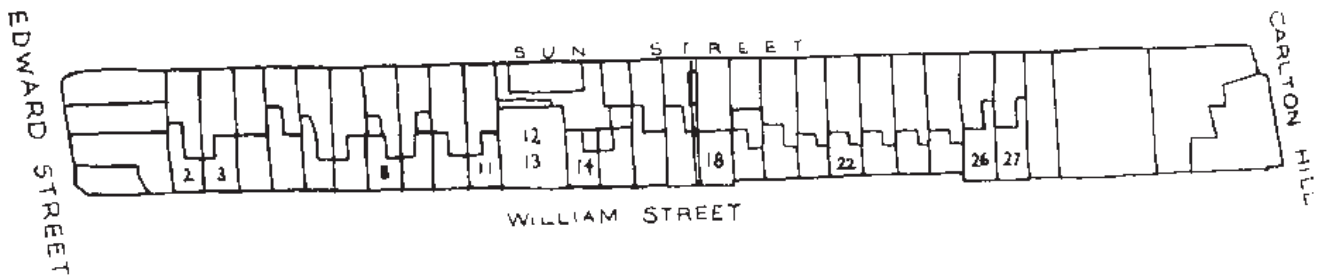
William Street stretched from Edward Street to Carlton Hill, and was for its time a wide and airy street, by the 1920's it was doomed to become part of a massive slum clearance programme by the local council. Its occupants were by now all working class;

fishermen mainly, but also labourers, general dealers, and a bakers at 29. Five houses: 26, 27, 30, 31, and 32 were lodging houses.

Life for a child in the 20's and 30's was on the whole extremely happy, grown ups looked after them well, and they were protected and loved. The 'Ladies of Pleasure' in the street were always good to us, and usually gave the kids a party near Christmas time.

By 1938 most of the street had gone. The remaining houses were mostly on the left side leading from Edward Street, their little gardens and back gates faced onto Sun Street. By 1940 numbers 2 to 28 still remained but the other side of William Street had then become Freeman's the sack merchants.

Georgina Attrell



Nelson Place

Nelson Place

'Nelson Place. Do you know it?...'

'....He could have drawn its plan as accurately as a surveyor on the turf: the barred and battlemented Salvation Army gaff at the corner: his own home beyond in Paradise Piece: the houses which looked as if they had passed through an intensive bombardment, flapping gutters and glassless windows, an iron bedstead rusting in the front garden, the smashed and wasted ground in front where houses had been pulled down for model flats which had never gone up.'

'In Nelson Place from which she had emerged like a mole into the daylight of Snow's restaurant and the Palace Pier, she had never known a boy with enough money to offer her a drink... A two penny ice from an Everest tricycle was the whole extent of her knowledge of luxury.'

'He found the house in Nelson Place... Rose had spied him through the broken glass... In the awful little passage which stank like a lavatory she ran quickly and passionately on.'

'The Boy crossed over towards Old Steyne walking slowly. The streets narrowed uphill above the Steyne:

the shabby secret behind the bright corsage, the deformed breast. Every step was a retreat. He thought he had escaped for ever by the whole length of the parade, and now extreme poverty took him back; a shop where a shingle could be had for two shillings in the same building as a coffin-maker's who worked in oak, elm or lead: no window-dressing but one child's coffin dusty with disuse and the list of hairdressing prices. The Salvation Army Citadel marked with its battlements the very border of his home. He began to fear recognition and feel an obscure shame as if it were his native streets which had the right to forgive and not he to reproach them with the dreary and dingy past. Past the Albert Hostel ('Good Accommodation for Travellers') and there he was, on the top of the hill, in the thick of the bombardment - a flapping gutter, cracked windows, an iron bedstead in a front garden the size of a tabletop. Half Paradise Piece had been torn up as if by bomb bursts; the children played about the steep slope of rubble; a piece of fireplace showed houses had once been there, and a municipal notice announced new flats on a post stuck in the torn gravel and asphalt facing the little dingy damaged row, all that was left of Paradise Piece. His home was

gone: the room at the bend of the stairs where the Saturday night exercise had taken place was now just air.'
Brighton Rock by Graham Greene
Published by:
William Heinemann, Ltd. & The Bodley Head, Ltd

We didn't want to move. Mine was the only house standing in Nelson Place.

My Dad wouldn't move until they gave him a bottom flat in Milner Flats, because it had a yard with running water for the watercress. They offered him a top floor flat first.

Sunday they would take a barrow (of watercress) around. You used to get a newspaper full for a penny for sandwiches for Sunday tea. My Dad sold watercress and took bets. The business was in my family for a hundred years.

My Dad went to the watercress beds in Surrey in a van; started at 4.30 am taking the watercress that had been bunched up the night before for sale at the market at the Town Hall. It was a good living. All the children helped their Dad with the watercress.

They smoked herrings in Nelson Place, there were two deeses. Herring dees was a big yard where they

smoked the herrings into bloaters. They used to hang them up with a stick through the heads, when the heads fell off you used to buy three penn'oth of headless bloaters. My Mum used to send us over there for two penn'oth of tie tails, the ones that fell off, that's why they were tie tails. We used to have them on toast.

Amelia Scholey

Nelson Street 7.2.35

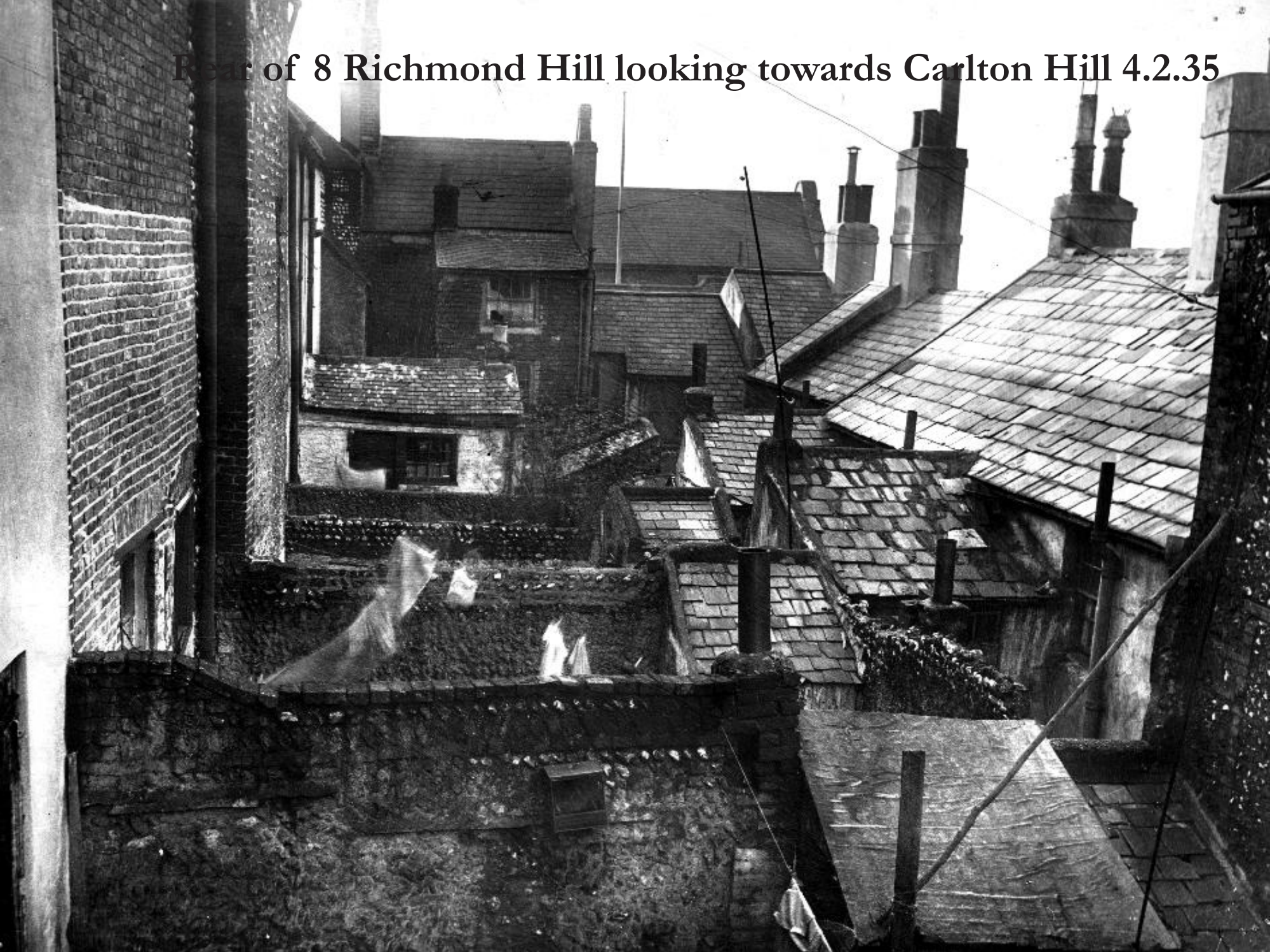
Nelson Street

My mother was born at the bottom of Carlton Hill in a little close called Ivory Buildings. Her father was a fisherman and Ivory Buildings contained many fishermen's families. My father was born in Hereford Street and his father was a costermonger who stabled his ponies in Richmond Hill.
My mother had 11 or 12 children who were all born in Nelson Street, Nelson Street was very poor. We had very little furniture, just a table, 2 chairs, an iron bedstead and a mattress.

When I was four years old my mother went to work at the Royal Sussex Hospital rolling bandages for 2/6d a day. Our neighbours kept an eye on the children when they came home from school.

I can remember the sanitary man visiting the area. He would walk into the house without knocking, our doors were never locked, and walk straight up to the bedrooms and pull back the bedclothes to check for bugs. My mother used to protest that we were still in the beds but he would say it was the best time to check, when the bed was warm.

My parents ran a shop at 116 Sussex Street and I worked for my parents when I left school at 14. I did


Rear of 8 Richmond Hill looking towards Carlton Hill 4.2.35

not ever work outside the home. I was 19 when I married, and I went to live at Herbert Road with my husband, but I didn't like it and returned to live with my parents when my mother became poorly. We lived with my parents from then on and I ran the shop. We were very unhappy when we had to leave the area because of the demolition as we had a good business there, being the only shop in that particular area. My mother died before we were moved, but we took my father and younger brother with us to Pankhurst Road, where we lived for the next 40 years.

I can remember the pubs in the area. One in Nelson Place was called the 'Ivory Barn', another in the area was called the 'Lion & Unicorn' or the 'Blue House' which was a bugbear of a place. Many soldiers and sailors drank there and there were always fights. We had a lamppost outside our window and they used to swing on it as they left the pub, as kids we would watch the shadows through the window. Women had fights as well and I remember one woman, who had a fish barrow in Clermont Place, being hit with a poker by another woman. It used to be called 'murder alley' up there. I also remember a murder in Riding School Lane, a young girl was sent to collect wood and was found murdered. They

never caught the murderer.
After we were moved my father opened a small lock-up shop in the area. My brother also had a shop on the corner of Claremont Street and Sussex Street. The sad thing was that these properties stood empty for 14 or 15 years before they were demolished so we needn't have moved.
Charlotte Storrey

County Borough of Brighton Health Committee: 10.10.35

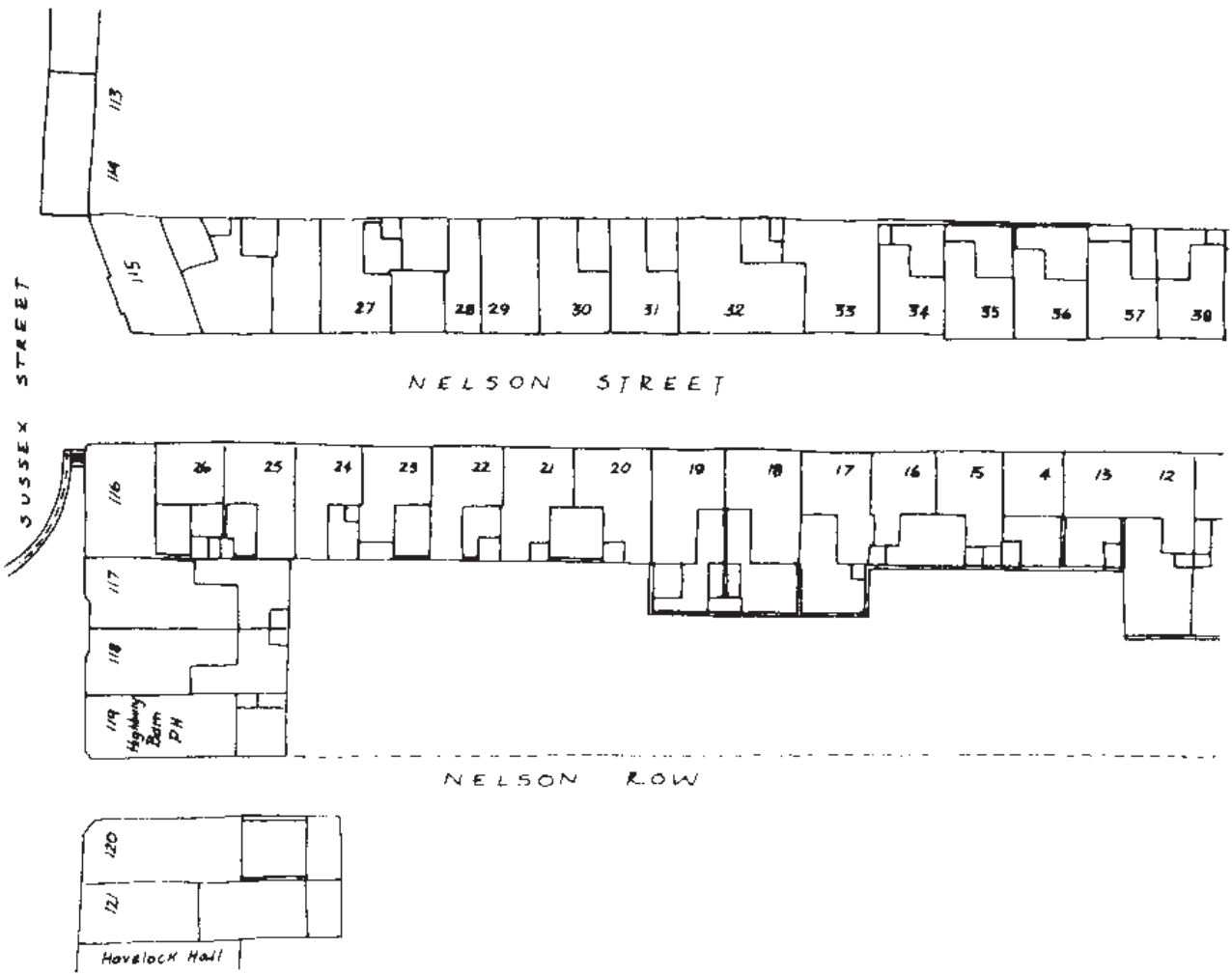
Nelson Street, Carlton Street

This is a congested area, and the houses are variously characterised by low-pitched, unhealthy basements and small well-like yards. Many of the houses are old and becoming derelict and from time to time boulder walls have to be replaced by brickwork. Nelson Street - by reasons of disrepair or sanitary defects - unfit for human habitation...

Letter received 8.10.35 from the owner of Nos 32 & 33 Nelson Street prepared to sell for £250 plus surveyor's fees (£11.4s plus proper legal costs) - resolved.

Committee recommended the purchase of 117-

121 Carlton Hill and Havelock Hall which together with the properties Nos 22-25 Carlton Hill restrict the development of Nelson Row / Nelson Place Area, required for erection of flats for rehousing.



Dorset Buildings

Dorset Buildings

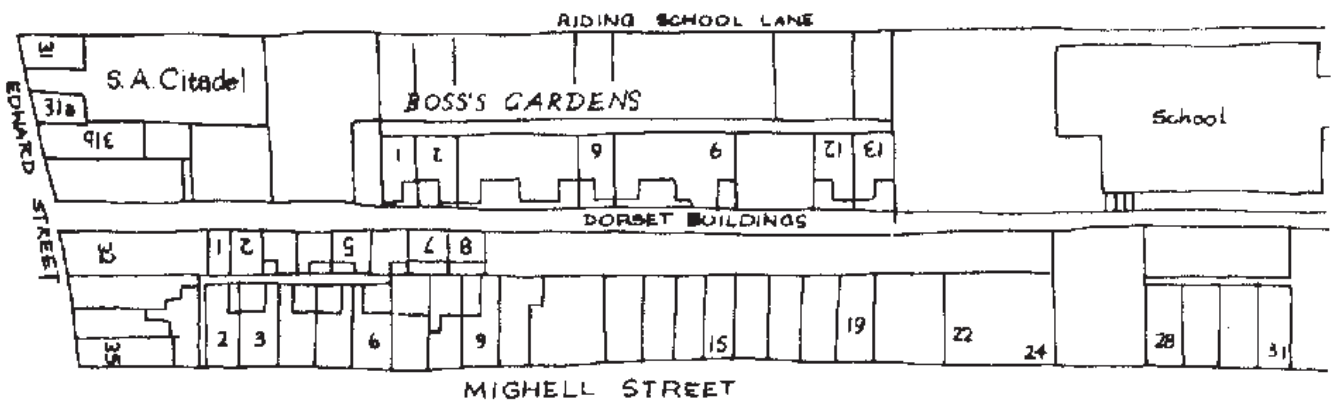
Brighton Borough Council Health Committee
Report: 29.11.34

Nos 9-15 Dorset Buildings

Nos 9-12 inclusive are damp walled houses with unhealthy slip rooms and small sculleries opening onto very small yards.

No 13 is a damp walled house and although it has a large garden to the north has only a small confined yard.

Nos 14 & 15 are damp walled houses opening onto very confined yards.



31 Mount Pleasant

Mount Pleasant

Kelly's Directory 1935 from 69 Edward Street to Carlton Hill

No 8 - Butcher

No 14 - Coal dealer

No 19-39 - Coal Merchants

County Borough of Brighton Council Agendas: 30.11.33

Unhealthy Areas: Mount Pleasant & Park Place Area: unfit for human habitation Mount Pleasant - from 69 Edward Street to Carlton Hill.

The depth of the two rows of houses including the width of the street is 58 feet. In the middle of the street the distance from house to house is 14 ft 10 in. Properties Nos 1-11 are about 18 ft 3 in from front to back and have an average frontage of about 12 feet.

The houses on the east side abut onto the pathway of Park Place this causes the yards of these houses to be mostly 'open' though small. The houses on the west side of the street have either no open yard or very small enclosed yards with high walls.

2 Houses (Nos 8 & 14) are without yards.

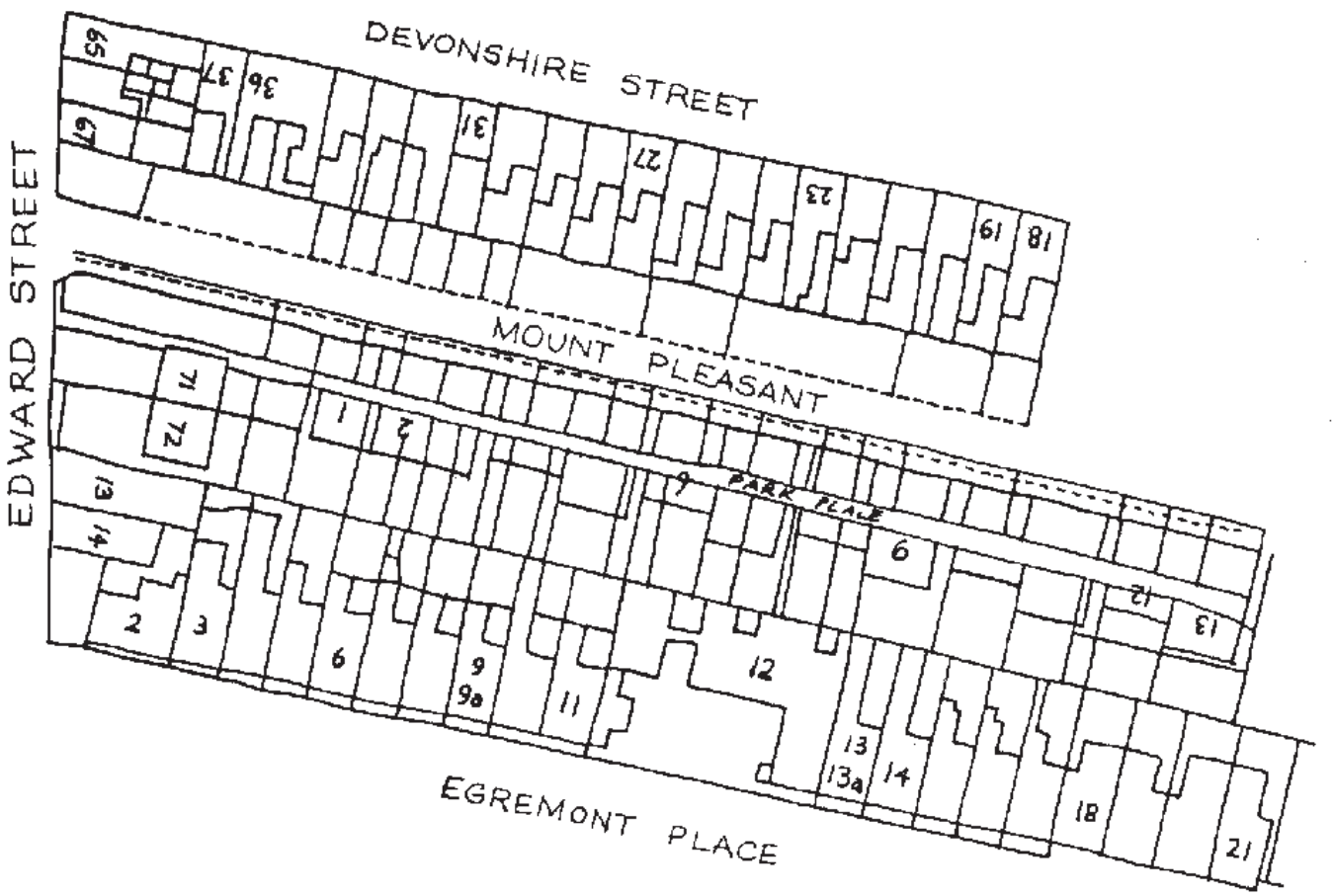
8 Houses (Nos 1-7) have tiny yards, partly covered in.

20 Houses are without sinks.

In 3 cases a yard and WC are common to two houses. (Nos 20, 21, 29, 30, 38 & 39).

22 Houses are without windows on the staircase.

34 rooms are without fireplaces.



Park Place

Park Place

County Borough of Brighton Council Agendas: 30.11.33

Unhealthy Areas: Mount Pleasant & Park Place Area: unfit for human habitation from 70 Edward Street to Upper Park Place.

Nos 2-21 each open into a garden forecourt. 18 feet deep which leads into a concrete paved inclined passage way 5 ft 2 in wide. On the west side of the passage are the back additions and yards of the houses in Mount Pleasant. Nos 22-29 are houses with basement rooms entirely underground (2 of these basement rooms at Nos 26 & 27 were in use for sleeping in Nov 1933) with 1 room each on the ground and first floors. The top rooms of Nos 24-29 are approached by very awkward, narrow, dangerous staircases. 2 of these houses are being used as shops - the room on the ground floor has been partitioned off - the front portion is used for a shop and the back as a living room. In these cases the living room is so small (7 ft 3 in x 7 ft 9 in) that one has to move furniture before being able to approach the staircase. The rooms in the houses (Nos 22-29) have damp, cold walls. The back walls are mostly of brick-bats

and when built were continued up from an old garden wall.

Yard Space - Nos 2-6 have narrow yards situated on the sides of the houses and ranging from 3 ft 6 in to 5 ft in width. Nos 8 & 9 have a common yard and No 10 is without a yard. Nos 11-21 have an average yard space (including WC) of 35 square feet; all these yards are confined, airless well like yards. The yards of Nos 22-29 are fair sized, but are situated along the side of the houses. That of No 30 is 4 ft x 13 ft (very confined) and No 31 is without a yard and is practically a back-to-back house.

Sculleries - The sculleries of Nos 2-21 are small, dark, low pitched, airless and the houses are badly ventilated.

Scullery Sinks - 15 Houses are without scullery sinks, the water tap in the yard in all these, excepting two where it is in the scullery. At No 15 there is a stone sink in the yard.

Staircases - Nos 2, 6 & 8 have central, dark unventilated staircases.

Bedrooms - Nos 2-21. There are 67 bedrooms of which 32 are between 6 ft 7 in & 7 ft in height and 18 are 6 ft 6 in or less. 20 of these rooms are without fire places - this is usually the slip-room.


Ivory Place 7.2.35

Carlton Hill Area

I worked for a silversmiths in Sun Street when I first left school, his name was Henry (Harry) Jacobs and it was a seven year apprenticeship starting at 9s a week. J.J.G. Saunders had the ground floor of the building and upstairs there was Brighton Boys Club. Later the firm moved to Henry Street and many people will remember H.P. Jacobs repairing and restoring silver. I used to be sent to Marshalls Row to hire a barrow and load it up with silver and push it all over Brighton to return goods. I would leave the barrow unattended outside shops and never had anything taken. Henry Street was a mixture of professions. I can remember the tall brick chimney of the kipper drying factory, the owner and his wife would thread herrings on birch rods, the smell was delicious. Opposite us was a warehouse where the onion sellers used to stay during the season, they came from Normandy in boats and brought the whole family with them. During the day the family would sit stringing the onions together while the man of the family went off on his bike to sell what he could. One year, I think it was 1925, there was a terrible tragedy, after a successful season the families were travelling home by boat and a storm

destroyed the boat, and everyone was drowned.
My mother's family had a shop at the bottom of Edward Street called 'Hughes' which was a saddle and shoe makers. My mother had been born at a beer house called 'The Little Wonder' and she and her sister Min would dance on the counter for the customers. Her maiden name was Wink.
The one memory that holds in my mind is the sight and sound of childrens' bare feet flapping on the ground, something that I have not heard since. Many men drank heavily, including my uncle, but often this was the only escape from poverty and deprivation.
Charles Walter Yeates

I lived next door to Billetts sweet factory at 67 Albion Street and at the back of Tamplin's Brewery stabling. Opposite the house was the Albion public house where they played cards, darts and shove halfpenny. They had a piano in the back room and we could hear the music coming from there in the evenings. We didn't have much trouble from the pub as most people wanted to enjoy themselves there.

My mother was a housewife and my father was a freehand painter at the Lancing Carriage works. I had two brothers and a sister, who were much older than

me, and a twin sister Gladys, or Midge as we called her. Unfortunately she died when she was seven from diphtheria. It was a custom on May Day to dress up in paper and go out to see people. Midge complained of a sore throat after we had been Maying and she was buried on 6th May. I then became very close to my mother and would sleep in her bed. When we heard my father's footsteps coming from the pub I would quickly run into my own bed.

Some of the most enjoyable times were spent in Brighton Girls' Club which was in Claremont Row. It was run by Miss Peggy Prior and I stayed there until I was 18. I can remember dressing in a pale blue knitted jumper with the club badge on and a short navy blue skirt to take part in exercises on a Sunday morning on top of the Aquarium to advertise the club activities. We also made and sold paper flowers for the club funds. I was conscious that Albion Street was considered to be better than Claremont Row, which my mother considered a slum. She didn't really like me walking along there but I wanted to go to the club. The houses didn't look any different from ours. After attending the club we would sometimes go to Edward Street to buy pease pudding. As we walked

back along Claremont Row we would flick some of this onto the windows of the houses. I can remember Richmond Buildings having many shops including Croydons the newsagents and Marshalls the sweep. It was bombed during the war, and Mrs. Ming, who lived near us was blinded.

When I was younger I attended Richmond Street School and transferred to Circus Street after Gladys died. When I was eleven I went to Pelham Street where I did quite well with my lessons and came top of my year. I don't remember anybody sitting for the secondary school examination, and we all assumed that we would leave school at fourteen. I went to work for Singers in Western Road when I first left school, but I was tempted away by a shop in Over Street that offered better money. My mother made me leave this position because the woman put on me to do all the housework. During the war I worked in a laundry cleaning uniforms.

Dorothy Betteridge

Carlton Hill Tea Party held at the Lewis Cohen Urban Studies Centre at Brighton Polytechnic May 25th 1984

The following excerpts are taken from the tapes made of the conversation at the tea party:

Most of the women lived in Carlton Hill or Carlton Row. They remembered the animals being sent up Carlton Hill every week to the slaughter house on the corner of Mighell Street (now Tate's Garage). Their mothers used to put gates up in case any of the animals escaped and they never wore red on that day.

8-9 Carlton Hill was a common lodging house. It cost 1/- a night for a bed and they had to find their own food. It was very clean, and they can remember one of the rooms that jutted out into the street which always looked clean and neat. Lou Morris also ran a lodging house in William Street.

The houses were all rented, Cartwrights were the agents for most of the houses in the area but they were not the landlords, we never saw them.

The buskers came round the streets of Carlton Hill. There were always people standing on corners, there were tons of people on the streets. They used to sit on their steps in Riding School Lane.

Now my Mum used to stand indoors, she never went out and she used to say: 'Go over there and get me that bit of beef that you can see in the shop window', and we used to have to stand outside the shop window opposite our house, and keep pointing to the bits of beef. The kids did all the shopping, because shopkeepers took pity on the kids. My Mum never went out, but she had a very nice backyard.

Nobody moved into the area, because nobody moved out. Neighbours used to sit on the step and talk to passers by. This is why people didn't want to move; the community was there. They married people who lived almost next door. The community feeling went when we were moved out to Whitehawk.

The muffin man came round on Sunday tea time with a big tray of crumpets on his head. He used to make his crumpets and lived at the top of Carlton Hill; he had a big bell. The milkman used to carry his urn all the way up Carlton Hill, selling milk for a penny a pint. Pudding came round with the fish barrow, they used to sell big lumps of ice, they pushed the barrows round and called out. You could buy a big pan of sprats for a tanner, they used to come round with winkles. You could buy anything from a barrow.

Sometimes on Sundays my mother took the white bowl with dinner to the little bakers on the corner of Edward Street, so that he would cook it in his oven.

There were shops everywhere, all around us, you didn't have to go to the town to get anything. People didn't come from other parts (to the shops in Carlton Hill).

On the corner of nearly every street there was a pub. 'The Rising Sun' on the corner of Sun Street, 'The John Bull' on the corner of John Street, 'The Foresters' on the corner of Henry Street, one on the corner of Riding School Lane and 'The Sack of Shavings' on the corner of Richmond Hill. Every Saturday night there were fights. We used to watch for the men to leave the pubs so that we could see the fights. They used to fight amongst themselves and they never interfered with us; the women fought too. It was all right walking about at night, murders were very rare.

We went every week to North Road Baths, it cost 2d. We used to have a tin bath at home, but it was quicker to go to North Road.

My mother wouldn't send us to the Baths, it was cheaper in the tin bath at home.

We were all poor. People were poor because they had big families, nearly everyone had big families, but we had a happy childhood.

We did cartwheels and acrobats all down Carlton Hill, we used to go happy jacking under the pier. As teenagers we used to walk along the seafront, it used to be choc-o-bloc with people.

When we had whooping cough, when we were kids, we never had medicine; we used to have to go and stand over a tar barrel and smell it.

Smell the pitch and tar?

My Mum used to buy tar rope, and you used to have a piece of tar rope round your neck. I say it's a wonder we are all still here.

Carlton Hill was supposed to be a bad area, they were supposed to be slums. We were poor but we were clean, we weren't lousy. Their places were immaculate.

My Mum had lino, no fitted carpets, and if there was a bit of lino that wore out, the bit of wood underneath had to be scrubbed.

And our ordinary wooden table had to be scrubbed.

Every year the gipsies came down, and they used to


Marine View 7.2.35

sell those rush mats... The fair sized ones for one and six each, my Mum used to have three, one for each bedroom. We renewed them every year, we were posh when we had new.

The houses were cold upstairs and we had overcoats on the beds. It was warm downstairs because of the kitchen range.

You never had a lock on your door, nobody locked their doors. We pulled a leather strap through a hole to lift up the latch.

When we lived in Carlton Street we had the whole house, we had a sitting room and a wash house. The sitting room was the best room, we had a nine piece suite, all velvet, a round table, an over mantel, a mirror, a piano (bought for five bob a week). We found a harp in the cupboard, we had a gramophone, but we weren't a musical family. My Mum used to have lace curtains and when she washed them she starched them, she always had nice windows. Every six months we wallpapered the passage and we always scrubbed outside. We had bugs in the house and my Mum used to paraffin the beds. Nearly all the houses had vermin.

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These chests of drawers had no paint and no varnish, when we were kids we used to have to scrub them. We had a bucket of water with a hand full of soda, there was no such thing as detergents. And what about the sills? We cleaned the doorstep every morning.

My Mum had Monday as washday. She used to have a great big wooden tub in the middle of our back yard. She used to stand out there and she used to say,

'Go down to the oil shop and get a bar of Sunlight soap, two penn'oth of soda and a penny bag of blue'. Down John Street there was a wood shop. She boiled all the clothes in the wash house, then rinsed them, then blued them.

My Mum was always standing at tubs washing.

My Mum used to have to do all the washing for the creech. (Tamer Land Nursery School)

They did have a hard life didn't they?

No washing machines.

All they washed with was soda and a bar of Sunlight soap. My Mum would stand there all day in a big sack type apron with a big mangle out at the back.

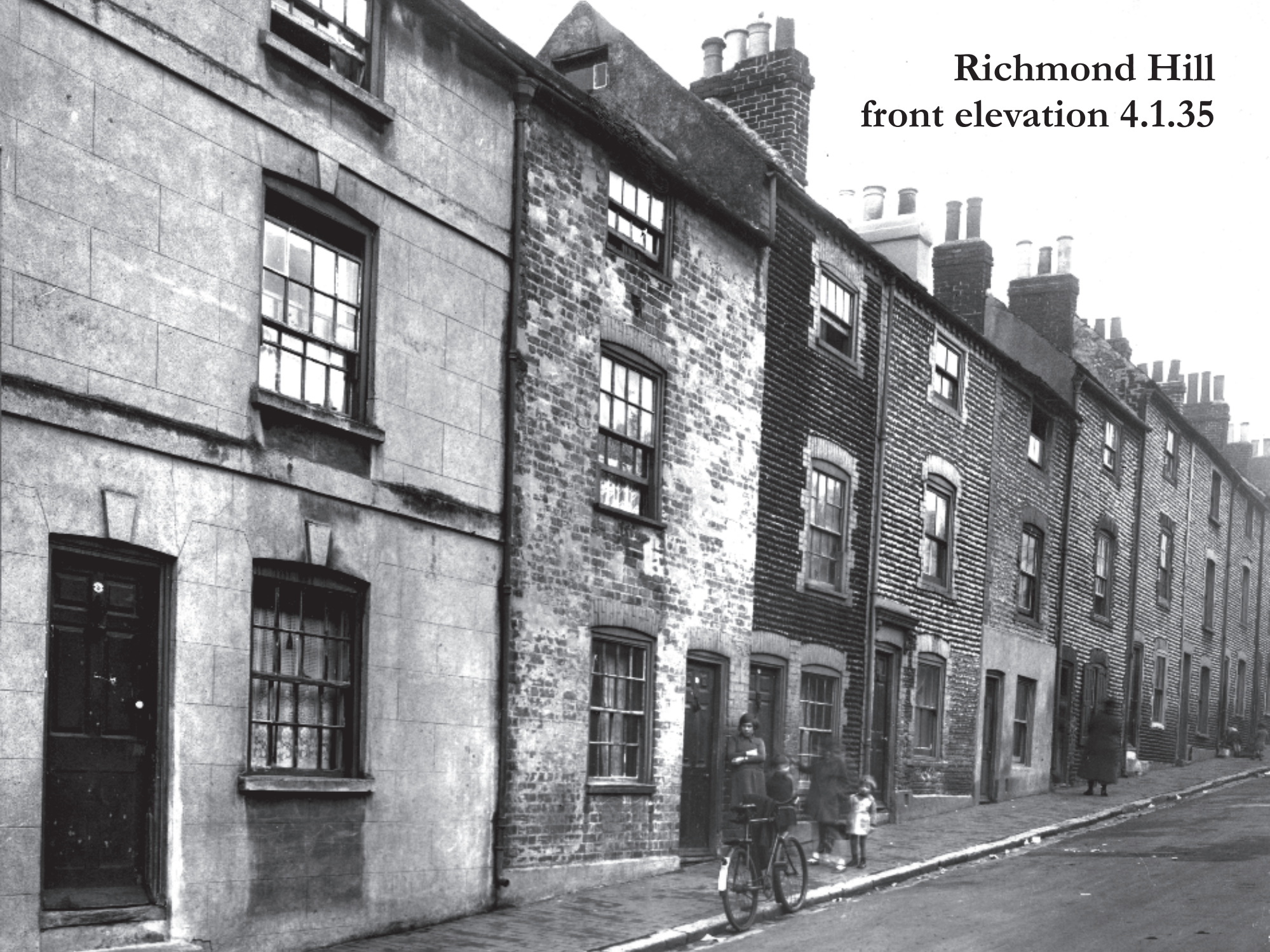
And I used to have to stand and turn the handle.

My Mum never went out to work.

My Mum stayed in a lot. Not a lot of women went out after they were married.

Didn't she go out for anything... shopping, a walk?

No they were stuck at home, stayed at home most of the time... we had a yard, a big yard out the back, and she used to go out in the yard, backward and forwards, scrubbing down...

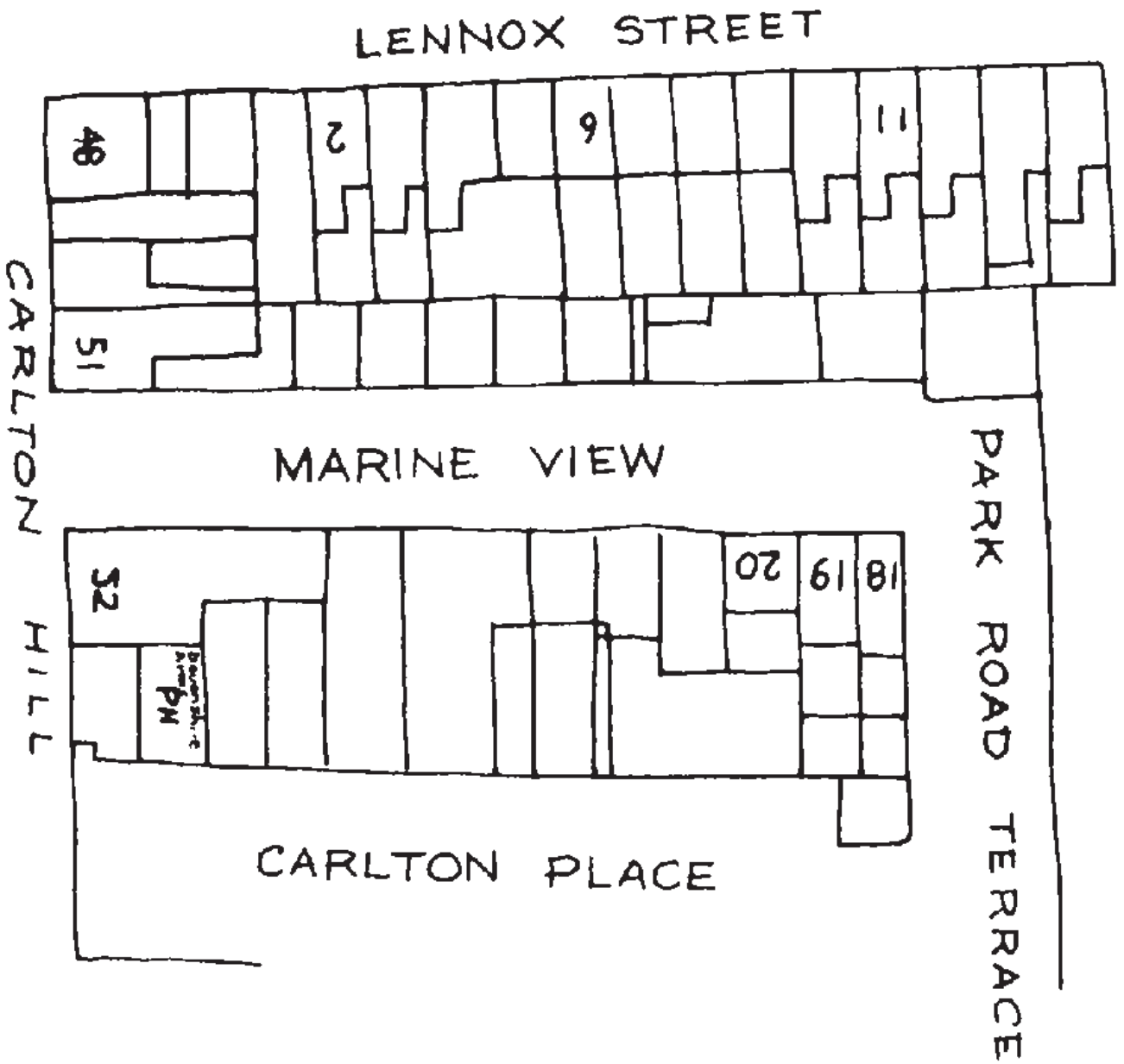


Richmond Hill
front elevation 4.1.35

My Dad wouldn't allow us to get into debt. Everything my Mum had she had to pay for. That's why we never had anything.

When my Dad was in hospital my Mum used to have to go on the parish. If you were on the parish they used to come in and say sell that... sell that. They gave you a ticket for coal. When they gave you parish shoes they used to punch holes in the side so you couldn't pawn them.

I never knew an office worker or anything like that. Most of the girls worked in a laundry, the boys worked on the building. You used to see people cleaning shoes on the sea front. You used to see people making alligators and things in the sand, with stones for eyes. You're not allowed to do things like that now, you'd have to pay for a pitch.


LENNOX STREET
48
2
9
11
51
CARLTON HILL
MARINE VIEW
PARK ROAD TERRACE
52
20
19
18
CARLTON PLACE

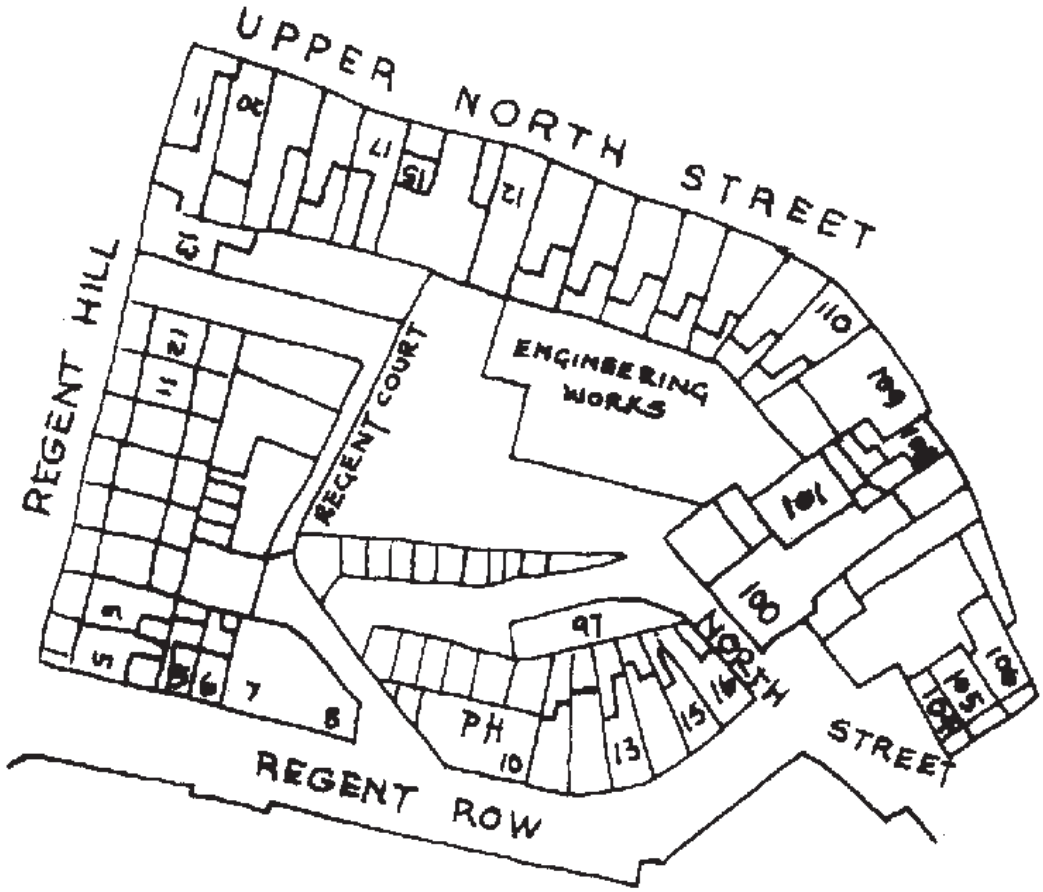
Back to back house in Regent Court

Regent Court

County Borough of Brighton Council Agenda: 27.11.33

Regent Court Area Nos. 1-6 - Regent Hill

These 6 Houses have 24 rooms, 16 of which have a height of less than 7'. Only 1 house has a yard and WC. 2 Houses have sinks with taps; the other houses have no sinks and the tenants have to go to the end of the courtyard for their water. The WCs of 5 houses are close together at the end of the public court. These houses are practically back-to-back.




Regent Court

Edwin Place

I lived at No 4 Edwin Place from the age of one to sixteen when we had to move because of redevelopment. There was my mother, father and sister who was 13 years older than me. Edwin Place was a pretty little street, our house had two bedrooms, parlour, kitchen and an outside WC. There was no bathroom and no hot water, only a cold tap and a copper for washing. We used to go and collect cardboard to light the fire under the copper, sometimes we went to Eversheds the candle factory to get this. To have a bath we had to heat the water and pour it into a metal bath in front of the fire. We had a range in the kitchen, which mother used to cook on and this kept the room warm as well. There was an open fire in the parlour and one in the front bedroom, there was no fire in the back bedroom. The staircase to the bedrooms was very dark because there was no window, but we had gas lights in all the rooms both downstairs and upstairs.

The front of the house faced north onto the back of Eastern Road and garages that were used for private car hire. When I was young there were horses kept there, but later it was only cars. The backs of

the houses in Eastern Road opened into Edwin Place, my sister married Ernie Brown whose back door opened opposite our house. The back yards faced south and my father kept chickens and grew vegetables there until Fyffes Bananas built a large warehouse from the beginning of the street to about No 6, this blocked out all our light and made the kitchen dark. My father was very cross about this and complained along with the others, but nothing was done. He painted a large board white and put it on top of the wall with the words 'ancient lights' written in large letters. This was his only way of protesting then.

Not all the houses in Edwin Place were the same as ours, some had basements and some had three stories. We also had very nice gardens and took great pride in them. My father had a rose garden, roses over the door, and chrysanthemums in the autumn. During the summer months the gardens looked a picture. At the end of Montague Street there was a large wall which all the children used for playing ball games against, this is now Mike Deasy's antiques (then Kemp Town Brewery garage and stores at the back of 112 Eastern Road).

I also remember a pub in Montague Street. My


Edwin Place 7.2.35

mother would send me to The Stag Inn (still there, one of the few old buildings to remain in this area) to buy half a pint of stout for 4d. When it went up to fourpence ha'penny my mother refused to buy it any more.

We had the same neighbours all the time we lived in Edwin Place, and I still keep in contact with some of the children whom I knew. We had lovely street parties in the yards with all of the children; everyone was very friendly.

Our landlord was George White, he used to have a rent collector who came round every week for the rent. I can't remember how much it was. We received notice that we would have to move and we were offered a house on the Manor Farm Estate, but my father said it was too far away from his work (he worked at the Royal Crescent Hotel as a kitchen porter and had to work funny hours and weekends) so they offered us a flat in a new block opposite the Stag pub, on the site of the old Crescent Cottages. They were lovely flats.

I don't think any of us objected, we just accepted what we were told. Most people were fascinated by the thought of having electric light and bathrooms, but many have moved back to the area now their

families have grown up. I think the redevelopment has improved Kemp Town, but it's not homely any more. That was comfort, that house in Edwin Place was lovely. This flat is very nice but blessed cold, we were never cold in Edwin Place. I've got central heating and everything but it doesn't come up to the standard of those little houses. If they'd put a bathroom and electricity in them it would have been lovely, it was such a pretty street.
Gladys Amelia Jane Stenning

Our house was a two up, two down, with a couple of cellars underneath, a scullery out the back with a copper, and a toilet across the back yard. I can't remember our house being any bigger than the other houses in the street apart from the two cellars. Numbers 9 and 10 had basements that they used, but our cellars were too old and damp to live in, we used it in the summer for putting extra coal in. We had an old black stove in the kitchen fuelled by coal and the back scullery had a fire. The rooms were small with just enough space in the two bedrooms for a big bed, but with very little space to move around in them. There were five of us living in the house until my sister left to go into service at fourteen.

The rooms were lit by gas mantles but there weren't any in the hall or on the stairs, so it was very dark as there were no windows either. If a door was left open downstairs the light would allow us to see up the stairs but if not it was very dark. We had gas mantles in the bedrooms. If mother was out when we returned home we were not allowed to touch the mantles, so we had to sit in the dark. Not only were they too high to reach but they were very fragile and would crumble easily. Our parlour was kept for special occasions, and I remember our next door neighbour's baby died very young and we had the little white coffin in what we called the living room, at the front of our house, for them, because it was a spare room and they lived in all their rooms. In those days you always kept bodies in the front room (parlour), and my mum helped with the laying out of the body. Everyone came into our house to visit the baby, including the children.

Another neighbour's son and daughter-in-law owned huts on the beach, and for some extra money my brother and I carried their hot dinner down to them in our school dinner hour. We had lots of friends in Edwin Place and Eastern Road whose yards backed onto the backs of our houses. On Good Friday we

had a great big scaffold rope which we would turn, and both mothers and children would skip.

Our parents were friendly with each other as well, we were very trusting and never locked our doors, the insurance money was left on the table for the insurance man to come in and collect himself.

Our landlady was a real 'So and So', she wouldn't repair the house, I can remember my mother wanting quite a few things doing. The houses were old and I can remember them being condemned long before we moved out. The atmosphere in Edwin Place was very warm and friendly. When one of us was really hard-up and we had holes in our shoes, the man at number 2 would mend them for us. He wasn't a cobbler by trade, but mended the neighbours' shoes to help them out.

My father worked for Davis & Sons in North Street as a furniture porter, he used to collect furniture from houses that were being cleared and deliver it. It was a secure job despite the very poor pay, and he worked there until he was seventy. My Mother didn't work full time outside the home, although when new houses bought by Dad's firm were being made ready to move in to, she would help by scrubbing them out and making them clean.

Before she got married she was a cook in service which she was very good at. My Father's wages were about £2 a week and out of that the rent was 8 shillings a week, sometimes it was a terrible struggle to get by, but some families in the street were better off than others.

Until I was eleven I went to St Mary's Church of England school by Upper Rock Gardens, then I went to Park Street School. Even if I'd have passed the scholarship my Mum and Dad probably couldn't afford to send me to the Grammar School anyway. At my school we were taught how to make our own school uniform, I made my own gym slip skirt and blazer, of which I was very proud.

I left school at fourteen, there wasn't much choice of jobs to go into. I wanted to be a hairdresser at first and my Mum took me for an interview to a shop, but you had to pay £50 to be trained and when I found this out I said I didn't want to do it. My Mum said that Dad could borrow the money off his boss, but I didn't want them to get into debt over me. What would happen if I didn't like it? So, at first I did daily work cleaning houses, but I didn't like it. Then I went into service as many girls did. I went to work in Grand Avenue where I lived in, I was an 'in-

between maid', which meant I helped in the house in the morning and the kitchen in the afternoon, doing any jobs which were needed. I was only there for a matter of months, I didn't like it at all. I had to get up at 6 am and the other girls weren't very friendly towards me. Then I went to work for a couple in Lewes Crescent for five years, and they were very nice to me. The Marshall's used to teach Siamese boys English at their house. After there I worked at St. Dunstan's in St. George's road, and then at the new site when it moved, where I slept in.

We were moved from Edwin Place to number 5 Cowfold Road. It was a two bedroomed new house with an indoor toilet and bathroom. But my Mother didn't want to move, and she had a nervous breakdown soon afterwards because she wasn't happy living there. I think she felt very lonely and isolated up there and missed all her friends from Edwin Place. We never stayed long enough in Cowfold Road to get to know any of the neighbours, no one in Cowfold Road was very friendly. Edwin Place was a nice environment and my Mum knew all the neighbours there but we were given no choice about where we were to be moved to.

We loved the friendliness of the community in

Edwin Place. The walls were very thin and you could hear if the neighbours raised their voices. I think we had to do our own decorating, I can't imagine the landlady doing any.
We made our own entertainment; the top and whip was a favourite toy, we used to whip the top all the way up and down the street. We also used to play hopscotch and buttons, drawing numbers on the pavement and flicking the buttons onto the numbers.
Ivy Helena Bone

I remember Edwin Place. My Parents lived there from 1917 to 1935, when they were given a council house in Cowfold Road. The houses had been condemned for about ten years, in spite of which they were still kept spotlessly clean. The neighbours were friendly without being in and out of each others houses at all times, but were always there if anyone was ill or in trouble.

I left Edwin Place in 1923 to go into service, but my sister and brother stayed on. My sister still sees her friends from Edwin Place, and we remember most neighbours' names.
E. Kirby

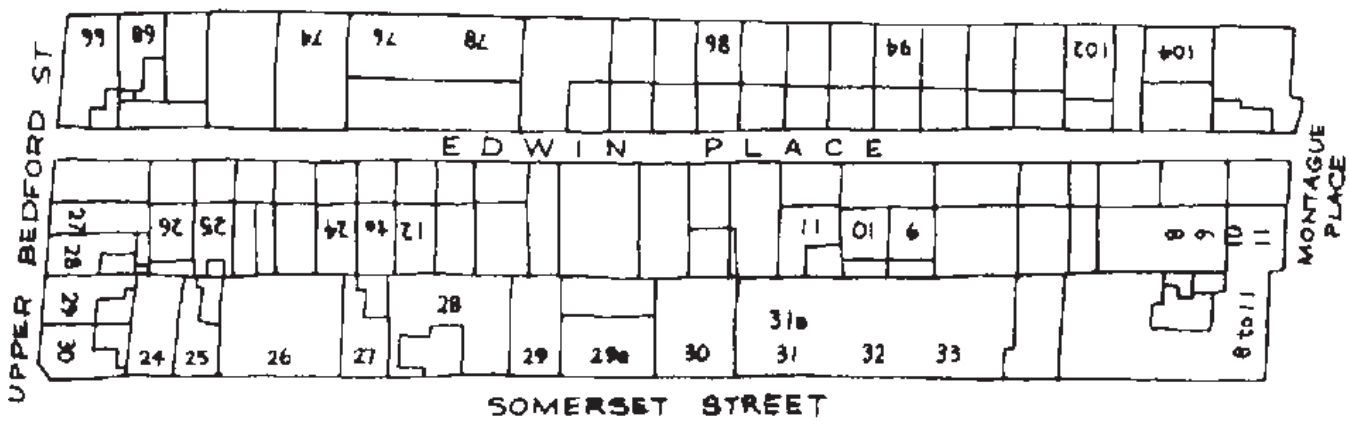
County Borough of Brighton Health Committee Report: 29.11.34

1-8 Edwin Place

There are 8 houses in the area with 25 persons, of whom 3 are under 10 years old.

The Ministry of Health submitted the following notes regarding the Edwin Place No 1 Area. Nos 1-8 Nos 12-24.

These 2 areas consist of 21 houses with very confined yards. 19 of the 21 houses have damp walls, 14 are without windows on the staircases. Some of the back rooms are very dark, especially on ground floors and basements, whilst the houses have enclosed yards to the south, the larger rooms in front face to the north.



Willow Cottages

Hayllars & Willow Cottages

22 Marlborough Place, Brighton

6 December 1937

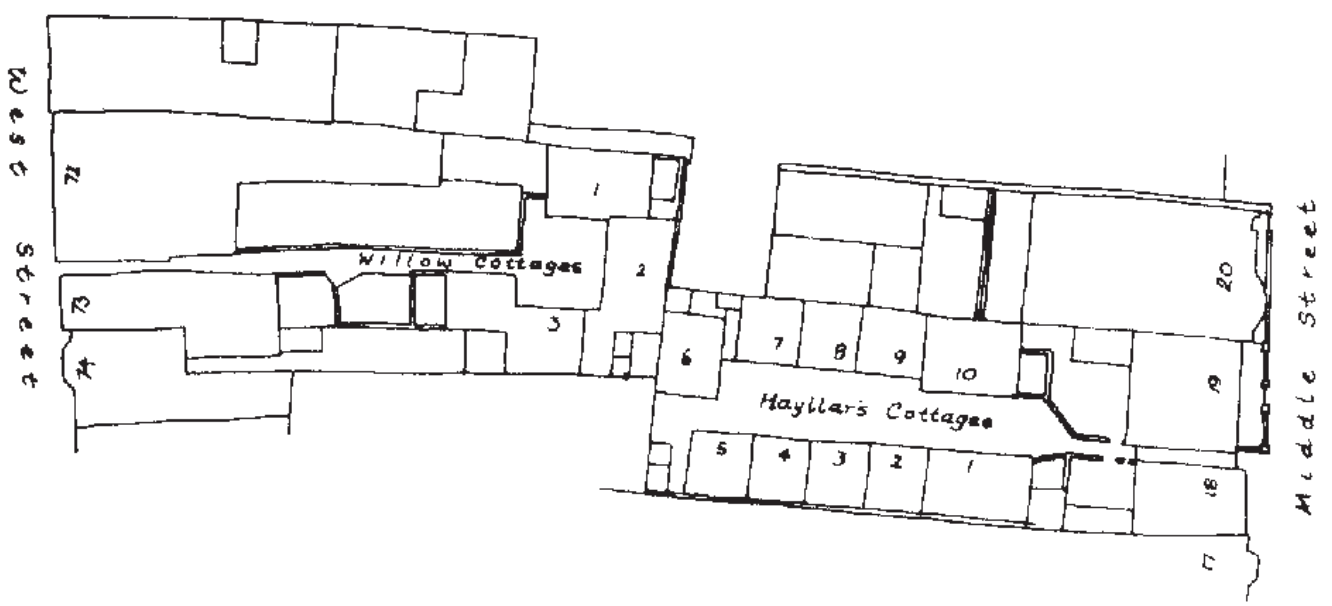
Dear Sir

1-5 Hayllars Cottages
It appears that on the 25th July 1935, the Council by resolution decided to acquire the above property under a Compulsory Purchase Order for the clearance of the site as a slum area. This subject of an Enquiry held by the Ministry of Health on the 4th December 1935, and on the 5th June 1936, notice to treat was served on the owners. After prolonged negotiations in March of this year the property was eventually purchased by the Corporation at the sum of £575. In September of this year the Corporation intimated to the late owner's agent, through Mr. H P Nye the Estates' Manager, that they had no immediate use for this site, and would be prepared to resell it, and as a result of negotiations the property was offered to the previous owner (from whom in

March the Corporation had compulsorily acquired it for £575) for the sum of £1100.

These facts appear to be completely substantiated by correspondence which has been handed to me. No doubt there is some good reason for the matter being dealt with in this way, but I cannot understand how the Corporation came to purchase these premises for demolition at the price of £575 and expect in six months time to resell the bare site to the same owners for the sum of £1100. Will you kindly bring this matter to the notice of the appropriate Committee, with the request that they kindly supply me with the reason for this site being dealt with in this manner.

Yours faithfully,
B. Dutton Briant



Hayllers Cottages looking west January 1935

Hayllers Cottages showing entrance from street (east) January 1935

Preece's Buildings
showing the entrance from Church Street

Preece's Buildings

My parents were tenants in Preece's Buildings in the 1930's. Preece's Buildings were in a cul-de-sac between Gardner Street and Regent Street with a narrow entrance in Church Street.

There was a solicitors office, a bakery, approximately ten cottages and two communal wash houses on the left hand side of the lane, and the toilets were opposite the houses and looking on to Regent Street. Cottage No. 12 was at right angles to the other cottages and completed the cul-de-sac, and faced down the lane to Church Street. There were no gardens or bathrooms, so most people used the public baths in North Road.

Most of the children attended Central School in Regent Street which also had an entrance in Church Street facing New road.

A.C. Lambert

There were four in our family, two older sisters who were both married by the time I was about ten years old, and a younger brother called Eric. I had an older brother who died before I was born. My parents were Romanys and lived all over Sussex before they

settled in Preece's Buildings. My father was a horse trader, but my parents had a horse and cart and were selling coke when my mother decided that she'd had enough and wanted to settle in a house. Our neighbour at number seven must have known my parents, as she told them that number six was going to be empty and my parents went to the landlord, who lived off Russell Street (now demolished to make way for Churchill Square). They got the house, on the condition that they decorated it themselves, for a rent of five shillings a week. I was the first child to be born in a house. My father became a labourer and a scaffolder, and took what work he could get. My mother went out cleaning in a house in Powis Square and in two pubs, the Spotted Dog in Middle Street and one at the end of Black Lion Street.

Our house had three floors and was cobbled outside, it wasn't very well made. Our neighbour slammed the door one day, and the front of the building fell off. My father was out of work at the time and he got the job of repairing it. As I said it had three floors with only one small room on each floor, these being eight feet by nine feet square. The very top room was even smaller than this as it had a sloping roof.

As you came into the house the stairs were straight in front of you, you turned right through a door to the downstairs room, and this was the only room to live and cook in. My mother cooked on the fire and the black grate by the side of the fire. We had no back door and no yard, as our house joined the cork factory which supplied the cork shop in Gardner Street. We would lie awake at night and hear the machinery going. There was only one way in and out of the house and that was through the front door. My mother lived until she was ninety-seven and often said she didn't know how we coped and we could have been burnt alive as there was no exit.

We didn't have much furniture in the downstairs room, just a table and ordinary kitchen chairs around. There was just room to pull the chairs out and sit down at the table, so you can see how small it was. When the coalman came to put the coal under the stairs, he had to open the door to this room and we had to move the table over to make room. At the top of the first flight of stairs was a door to the right and this was my parents bedroom, but they couldn't light a fire because it would have set the bed alight as it was so near. To reach the top floor you had to go through a door and mount a curved staircase to the

top bedroom, the children slept here in two beds, we top and tailed. The floor space was even smaller here and the room was very cold. We never had a light in this room even when gas mantles were put into the other two rooms and we continued to go to bed by candle light until we left the house in 1936. Until 1927 the only lights in the house were oil lamps and candles, after this we had two gas mantles fitted, one over the fireplace downstairs and one in my parents' room, there was never any light in the hall or staircase.

As there was no backyard we had no running water and no WC. These were opposite the houses. You would have to go out of your house to get a glass of water. Each house had its own WC but we had to share the wash house. The women had to use the washhouse on a rota system. I think my mother had use of it on a Monday or Tuesday. On these mornings the boys would collect enough wood to put under the boiler to light it while the girls would collect all the dirty linen together. By the time we went to school and my father went to work, the boiler would be full of water taken by buckets from the water taps, and the fire lit. We then left it to our mother to do the washing with her scrubbing board

and tin bath which we used on bath nights to bath ourselves. This tin bath was put on one of the sollidges (concrete bases by the boiler) and when the clothes were clean they were rinsed and put on one of the lines across the street. I don't remember there ever being any rows about the rotas or the use of the lines. When we came home from school on Mondays and Tuesdays we had to dodge in and out of the washing to get to our front doors. If it was wet the washing would be draped over lines inside the house which obviously caused discomfort.

Our neighbours stayed the same for years and I can still remember who lived in which house:

Nos. 1 & 2: The Bakery.

No. 3: The Lamberts with Alfie and his sister. We used to play together, Alfie and I, and we played a silly little game one day with canes and arrows. Unfortunately we had the bright idea of buying a pack of needles and putting them on the end of the canes. I misfired my arrow and it went into Alfie's eye and I think he was blinded.

No. 4: An old man and his son.

No. 5: A couple and their three sons, Dick, Jim and Sid, also a daughter but I can't remember her name. Their father was a fish hawker and had a

barrow which he left outside his house (it is in the photograph).

No. 6: Ann, Ellen, myself, Victor and Eric.

No. 7: A woman and her elderly father.

No. 8: Another fish hawker who also had a barrow, when he died his widow remarried, but I can't think of what her second husband did for a living.

No. 9: A couple with two children; the son in the RAF and killed in the war. His father drove a lorry for a wholesale grocer in Jubilee Street.

No. 11: A fisherman who had a boat on Brighton beach. Before Good Friday this would be cleaned for the trippers and used as a pleasure boat.

No. 12: Jim also owned a boat. They had boats on the beach and they were called Perseverance and Flower of the Fleet but I can't remember whose was who. As kids we would live down on the beach in the summer and sometimes the local kids would have a free ride.

Everyone helped each other in those days. We didn't have much and it was hand to mouth existence but everyone was the same. Sometimes the rent money would be late and I would have the job of taking it round to the landlord. If kids were ill the neighbours would rally round and help. There were

arguments amongst the adults but this would be expected as they lived on top of each other but they were short lived. Generally all the kids got on.

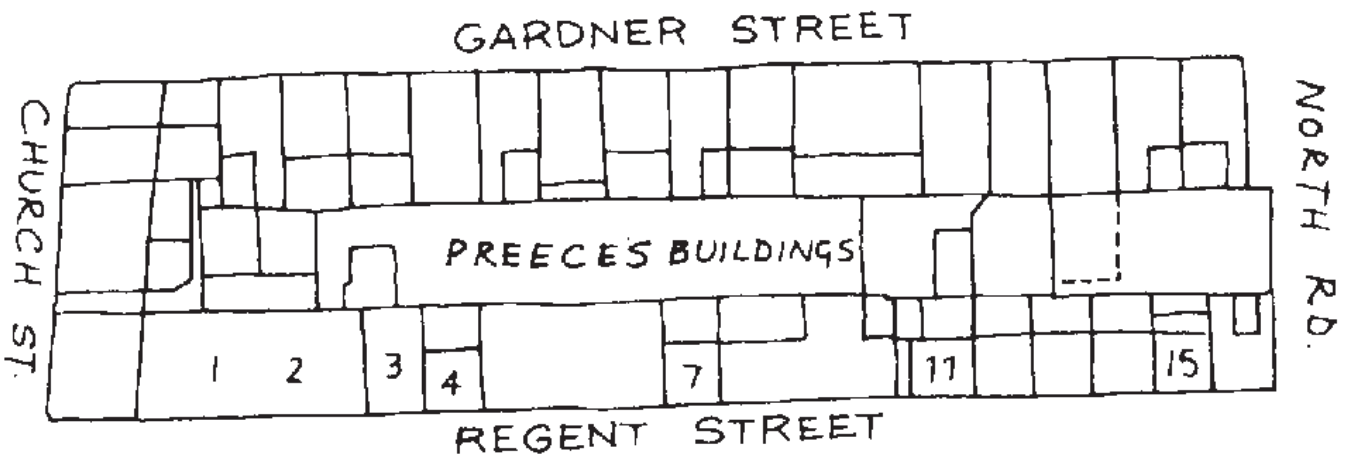
I went to Middle Street School and then Pelham Street. I had a friend who lived in Orange Row who was a boxing champion. When I left school at fourteen I went to work in Dudeney's the grocers on the corner of Gardner Street. Later I went into the regular army.

In 1936 my parents were told they were going to be rehoused as Preece's Buildings were going to be demolished. They were quite happy to go as they had no real amenities in their house. Manor Farm was the area we were to be moved to and I went three times with my father to the estate. He said 'if we have to be moved we will choose where to move to'. He asked the builders and they told him that no house would be built after 61 Manor Hill so that's what we put in for and got. As far as I know no houses have ever been built there. These houses were like Buckingham Palace compared with the Preece's Buildings, with running water, a bathroom, plenty of living and sleeping space and electric light with just a switch. They also came with an electric cooker with the Corporation crest on it and an electric kettle. My

mother was always afraid of electricity and didn't want to use them.

We had a lovely view up there not like Preece's Buildings where we looked out of the downstairs room onto a high brick wall with ladders across and barrows left either side, toilets and wash houses at both ends. My parents were very happy with their new house. My father retired but then went back part time because he was bored. He was killed working on the convent in Manor Road. My mother lived to ninety-seven years old. I didn't see much of the children I knew after we moved because the war started, some were killed but many moved away from the area and never returned.

Victor Henry Cox



Russell Place

County Borough of Brighton Health Committee: 28.11.35

The Medical Officer of Health reported the existence of nuisances, (the details of which appear in the Report Book of the Sanitary Inspector now submitted), at the under mentioned premises, and has recommended that notices should be served on the owners or occupiers of the premises on which the nuisances arise, requiring them respectively to abate the said nuisances within the period hereafter prescribed in respect of each of the said premises, and to execute such works and do such things as are respectively prescribed, within a period of 14 days.

7, Russell Place

Letter was read from the minutes of the Health Committee, dated the 14th November 1935, stating that in pursuance of the powers conferred upon him by Section 65 (2) of the House Act, 1935, the Minutes authorises the submission forthwith and without previous publication or service, of a clearance order with respect to those buildings included in the Brighton Corporation (Russell Place) Company purchase order 1935.

101 North Street

From my 1867 sewage map, which gives some house numbers, I have succeeded in exactly positioning the fisherman with the white-washed windows. The house was behind the present Marks and Spencers in Western Road. What is interesting is that houses numbers: 104, 105 and 106 were all built in front of it and therefore out of sequence. The interpretation is that houses 104 onwards were an unplanned later addition when the housing was extended to meet Dyke Road and Upper North Street.

Houses numbers 104 and 106 were connected to the main sewerage system and by the look of the gulleys covered with boards, number 101 might have had some access to it. 101 was also connected to the main water supply.

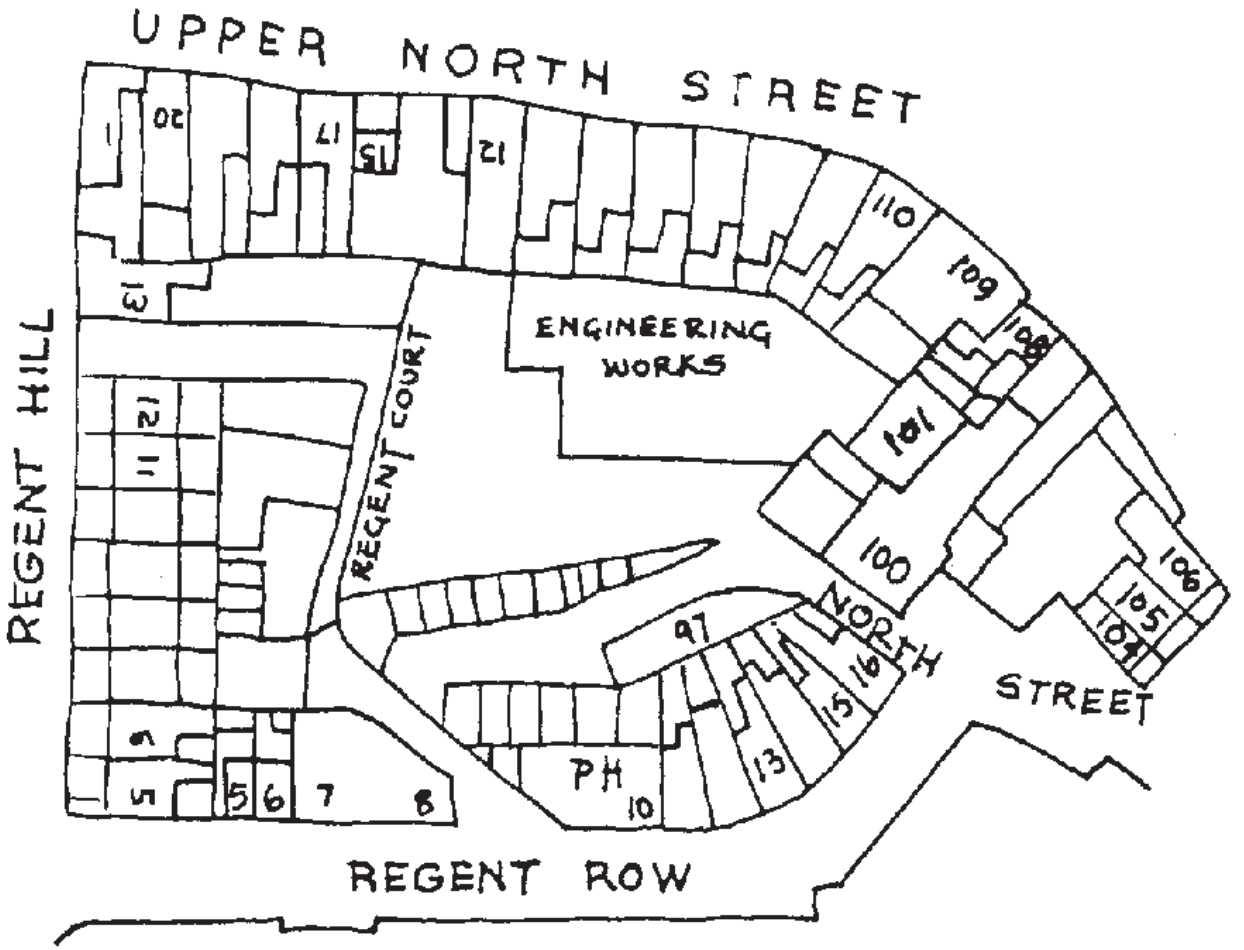
A social note is provided by the broom, see how clean and tidy the yard is. I would suggest that the fisherman ran his home like he ran his ship and all was kept neat and tidy. Although his social conditions radiate poverty, there is never the less the feeling of the pride of this man who has made the best of what little he has.

Roy Grant (student thesis on public health in Brighton)

County Borough of Brighton Council Agenda: 27.11.33

North Street Area 101, 102 & 103 just below Upper North Street

There are 3 houses in the area with 10 persons, of whom 2 are under 10. These houses are back-to-back with low-pitched rooms. The houses have a common washhouse and a common water tap. There are 2 WCs for the 3 houses.



Oxford Court

Oxford Court

The scullery had a corrugated roof so that when it rained it made a terrible noise. We lived in the front room, which other people kept as their best room, because my father Ernest Bowman was a boot repairer and he would work all day in his room. I remember him sitting at the table with his hammer in his hand and his mouth full of nails. As he used this room the old black range was never used for cooking by my mother, we had an iron kettle which hung over the fire in the front room, and an old iron gas stove in the scullery, which she used to cook on. My memory of that house was that it was cramped, the rooms were very small and as my father worked at home it left very little room. It was not a shop, but an ordinary house, people would knock on the door to bring and fetch their shoes. We had an outside toilet across the small back yard but no front garden as the house opened straight onto the street. All my father's family were in the boot repair business, but I didn't fancy it and never thought of joining my father.

The Oxford Street area was very busy and full of shops. At the top of the street was the pub, 'The Bat and Ball' (still there but has been rebuilt), and then

there was Oxford Place which was a narrow lane at the back of Oxford Street, which contained very small houses with paths outside, and a small garden in front. Going down from Oxford Place I remembered Aarons the hairdressers, a cobbled fronted house (still there), a watchman, Hoare's the hardware store and Arbuary's the grocers on the opposite side of the entrance to Oxford court from us. Lower down towards London Road I remember Tully's the removal people. On the north side of the street: Macklin's the cycle shop had two shops, one at each end; the Oxford Arms; Clarkes bread shop; Bellman's hosiers, who later had the big store around the corner (now Gateways); Mrs. Ford's confectioners, who sold home made sweets and toffee apples; the jellied eel shop; Pip Perrolli and his icecream; Oxford Street Chapel; a tea room on the corner of London Road and the Premier Seed Shop.

Our house was on the south side of the street, the Court opened out and several trades were carried on there. Behind us there was a huge storage area which stretched almost to London Road where the parents of Bellman's the hosiers had a sack business for quite a time; beyond this there was a slaughter yard. The cattle would be driven down Trafalgar Street from the

station, along London Road and into Oxford Street past our house and into the Court; from my bedroom I could see them being slaughtered. Having the slaughter house there encouraged the rats, and that, with the bugs in the houses, made it an unhygienic area. At one time, it was known as 'The Black Spot of Brighton', and I seem to remember it had something to do with children dying. One family that lived in Oxford Court, lost several children while they were still young. I remember rats being caught in the sewers and released on the Level for the dogs to catch them, I believe this was on one of the Bank Holidays.

Another man in Oxford Court cut up logs and sold them from his horse and cart, he slept in the field and shed with his horse. A greengrocer also lived in the Court. There was always fighting after they had been drinking. The area was fairly poor and it was not made any easier by the number of pubs around. There was a problem with drink. Ruby Wine, had a bad affect on some members of my family. It caused a lot of problems, and on Monday mornings there was a stream of people going to Lanes the pawnbrokers (No 32).

As a young boy I remember the Saturday market being in Oxford Street. It must have been open until

late because I can remember lanterns hanging on their stalls. An assortment of things were sold but a lot of food. Stalls were set up right outside our house, just like the market in Upper Gardner Street. It later moved to the Level and later still to its present site. Harry Cowley helped get that set up.

I don't think that my parents were sorry to leave that house because it was so cramped. When I left Pelham Street School I went to work at Princes Laundry in Whippingham Street. I went from van boy to driver and later got a job as a chauffeur. I was pleased to live in, as the accommodation was good. The house in Oxford Street was 'live' and we never seemed able to get rid of the bugs. Sometimes they would come and take the furniture out and fumigate the whole place, but the bugs still came back. My mother was pleased when she got notice to move to a new house in Maresfield Road, on the Manor Farm Estate, and I think they settled quite well.

They had their own bathroom there which they didn't have in Oxford Court where we had an old tin bath. They also had electric light instead of gas mantles. My father got a job with the Parks and Gardens and never did boot repairing again.

Benjamin Paulett Bowman

Oxford Court

I lived at 14 Oxford Court, a cul-de-sac off Oxford Street from 1914-35 with my parents Rose and Albert, my two brothers, Albert and Dick, and my sister Bubbles (Irene). When all Oxford Street went under the bulldozer to make room for Bellman's store, which is now Gateways, Boots and the car park, many of the residents were moved to the new estate at Whitehawk.

Oxford Court was a little community tucked away behind the London to Brighton Road, it was rather a quiet place. The houses at the bottom of the Court, where I lived, had a front room and a kitchen with a big coal fire range, used for cooking and heating. The kitchen was always cheerful and warm in spite of being rather dark, as the slaughterhouse wall extended right to the top of our roof and was only five feet away.

A door led out of the kitchen to the washhouse or scullery, this contained a coalfired boiler for heating the bath water and the weekly wash. It consisted of a large iron cauldron in a brick surround, with a doored grate beneath. One of our favourite jobs as children was to go around the shops to collect rubbish and then to stoke the boiler pretending we were firemen on the old steam engines. The boiler held about

twenty gallons of water and had to be filled by bucket from a tap in the sink.

There were just two bedrooms upstairs and a low attic room with a small window, which we used as a playroom. The toilet was outside opposite the scullery. Our next door neighbours brought up twelve children in one of these little cottages, their father worked in the railway yard in Fleet Street.

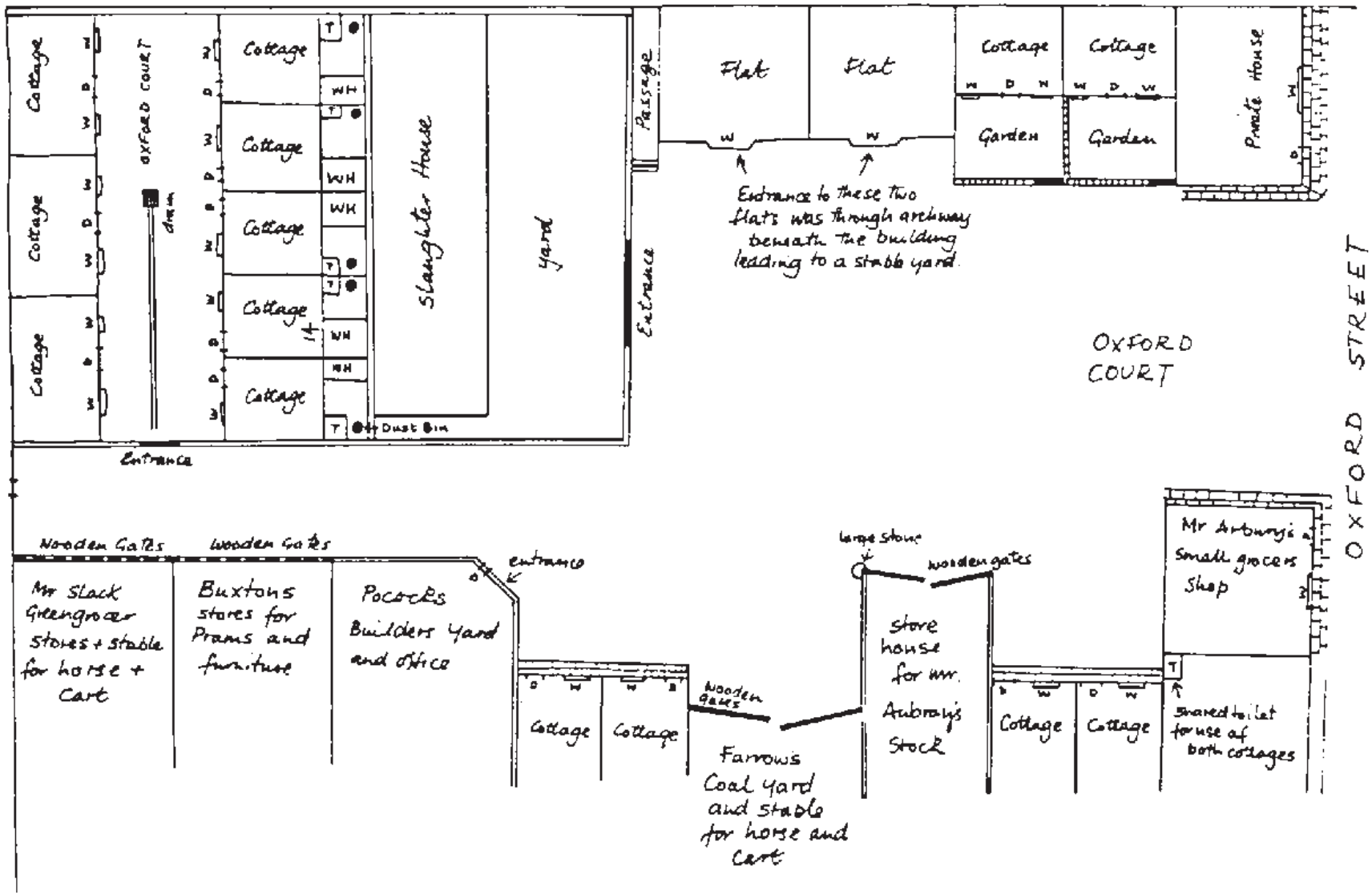
The slaughter house was in use for most of the time. We could hear the bleating of sheep and the mooing of cattle, shots as the animals were killed, day and night for several days at a time; then it would be quiet for a week of two. The farmers would bring the sheep or cattle (75-100 at a time) into Brighton Station by train, and then drive them through the back streets, down Ann Street, across London Road, along Oxford Street and into Oxford Court. The animals were herded into the bottom end of the cul-de-sac, with two men behind them, to stop any escaping while the slaughter-house gates were opened to allow a few in at a time. It was bad luck if anyone wanted to get out of their front door, as it was impossible to push a way through all the animals. The women and children were often upset by the cattle pushing their noses against the window and

peering into the houses. When I was a child I remember waking up to see flames and smoke billowing out of the slaughter-house roof.

The post office in Oxford Street is on the site of Mr Arbuary's grocery store. It was a cramped little shop with room for only about two customers at a time. The bread was kept in a tea chest next to the door, and every available space, including the counter, was stacked with boxes. We could buy a halfpenny-worth of salt, which Mr Arbuary cut from a block with a rusty saw. The blocks of salt were kept on a hand cart in the street alongside his shop.

The neighbours were all very friendly and my mother specialised in reading their fortunes in the tea leaves, when they dropped in for a chat.

Ernest Whittington


Cottage
Cottage
Cottage
Oxford Court
drain
Cottage
Cottage
Cottage
Cottage
Cottage
WH
WH
WH
WH
Slaughter House
Yard
Dust Bin
Entrance
Passage
Entrance
Flat
Flat
Entrance to these two flats was through archway beneath the building leading to a stable yard
Cottage
Cottage
Garden
Garden
Private House
OXFORD COURT
OXFORD STREET
Wooden Gates
Wooden Gates
Mr Slack Greengrocer stores + stable for horse + Cart
Buxtons stores for Prams and furniture
Pococks Builders Yard and Office
entrance
Cottage
Cottage
Wooden Gates
Farrows Coal Yard and stable for horse and Cart
large stone
wooden gates
store house for Mr Aubrey's Stock
Cottage
Cottage
Mr Arbury's Small grocers Shop
Shared toilet for use of both cottages

Gloucester Terrace

Starting from the bottom of Gloucester Street, the end near the Steine going up on the right hand side, first came Levett's stables where they stabled two horses. There was a corn merchants on the other side called Levett's, then came the second hand bookshop, then St Georges Mews which consisted mainly of small workshops and about four cottages. One of the workshops was woodworkers, and we used to go along for chippings for the fire, and every year the man would give my brother and me a whip for our toys. On the corner of St Georges Mews was a pub, next came Gloucester Terrace where I lived.
It consisted of ten houses and ended in a cul-de-sac. The side wall of the pub faced the front of our house. There were small gardens, then a brick path outside the houses; all the houses were the same. The houses consisted of a front room, which we were only allowed to go into on a Sunday, and then only if we sat and read a book, or played Ludo, or Putt and Take, or Snakes and Ladders. Open the front door, and on the right was the front room, then down the passage was the back room, which was a kitchen cum living room. It had a big range that had to be black

leaded every day before the fire was lit, and it was done before my brother and I got up in the morning. Above the fire place was a cupboard which was used to air the clothes. There were also two cupboards next to each other, one was used for china and food, the other was used for coal. If you happened to be having a meal when the coalman called, you had to get up from the table and move the chairs so the coalman could put the coal in. Apart from the table and the wooden chairs, there was a chiffonier or sideboard as they are called now, ours was a black ebony one with red glass doors. Under the window was a black horse hair sofa that used to scratch the back of our legs when we sat on it unless we had a blanket on it. The fire was used for cooking in the winter, but in the summer when it was too hot to light we had to use the scullery. The scullery or outhouse was reached by going into the passage out of the back door and past the kitchen window. It was brick built and had a concrete copper with a wooden lid, a black gas stove and a stone sink with a brass cold water tap, so that even in winter you had to go outside for every drop of water.

The stone copper was used on Mondays and Fridays, there was a place underneath for a fire which

would burn almost anything. Oranges used to come in wooden boxes and the greengrocer would sell the boxes for 2d each, which we used to buy to burn in the copper, along with any rubbish, including old boots or shoes. On Mondays it was lit for washing. First the washing was rubbed with wet soap, especially collars and cuffs. Then a handful of soda was put in the water, the copper having been filled with buckets of water from the top. After the washing had been boiled the big wooden lid was taken off and the washing was lifted into the sink with a big wooden copper stick, and it was then rinsed in cold water. Tablecloths, collars and cuffs were then starched, along with white pinafores that all the girls wore in those days. Then it was hung on the line to dry, and if it was a nice day it was ironed in the afternoon. When the weather wasn't so good, the washing was put through the mangle which had big wooden rollers. The ironing was done with flat irons, as we had no electricity in the house. You usually had two irons, one getting hot while you were using the other one.

The lavatory was at the bottom of the yard, it did have a pull chain but the seat was a large wooden one with a hole in it which went from wall to wall. The

stairs went up between the two downstairs rooms which made them very dark. There were gas jets downstairs with white mantles but no lighting upstairs, so we had to use candles with large enamel candle holders with a drip tray for safety. There was a gas jet at the bottom of the stairs that always had to be lit before anyone went up the stairs.

There were three bedrooms upstairs, the front one and two small ones in the back. The front one was shared by my Mother and Grandmother (my father's mother) and the back bedroom was a large 'L' shaped room which was divided by wooden partitions to make two rooms. My bedroom had a double iron bed, with a brass rail and brass bedknobs, which my brother and I used to unscrew and leave notes for one another when we were old enough to write. There was also a cupboard that held mine and my brother's clothes, and a marble washstand with a jug and basin, not that we ever washed upstairs because it would have made more work carrying water upstairs. So in the winter we washed in a bowl that was put on the kitchen table and in the summer we washed in the scullery sink. We also had a chamber pot under the bed, as it was too dark and cold to go downstairs and out into the yard at night.

All the floors were covered in lino, the only rug was one in front of the fireplace in the front room, and a strip by the bed to put our feet on, as the lino was cold. We had no heating upstairs, but we thought we were lucky as we had a hot water bottle each. They were made of stone and you had to be careful that you didn't jump into bed too quickly, because if you hit your foot on it, it didn't half hurt.

There was no bathroom, but we had a long tin bath that used to hang on a nail in the yard, and was brought in every Friday in front of the fire. The copper was lit at tea time, but before we could have a bath every drop of water had to be fetched in from outside and heated up. No wonder several of us were bathed in the same water. First we had our hair washed in a basin, then we had a bath. I used to have the first bath, as Mother said I didn't get as dirty as my brother. You had to be very careful in the bath as the side facing the door was cold but the side by the fire was very hot, so if you happened to touch the side you either froze or burnt.

After our baths we were given a dose of syrup of figs whether we needed it or not. I loved it, but my brother hated it, so if Grandma or Mother wasn't looking I used to drink mine quickly and exchange my

empty spoon for my brother's full one. It was ages before I realised I was having a double dose, though it never seemed to do me any harm. We were always given a sweet after the medicine and although I often used to drink my brother's medicine I never got his sweet.

When we were about 12 years old we were considered too old to bath in front of the fire, so we used to go out before we went to school in the morning and run errands for old people, or clean their front steps for a halfpenny. By Saturday we had earned about 3d, so we used to go to North Road Baths, and have a bath there for 2d. Then Mum used to give us a penny and with the penny we had over we used to go to the silent films. We got in for twopence which included a bag of unshelled peanuts, we used to sit on forms ankle deep in peanut shells.

Going up Gloucester Street a bit further, there was a dairy, and then Gloucester Cottages, which was very much like Gloucester Terrace, except where Gloucester Terrace ended in a blank wall, Gloucester Cottages had a house at the end. In this house lived a lady we used to call Granny Smith, I don't know if she was a widow or a spinster but she lived alone. I suppose in these days she would have been a social

worker, and every set of streets had an old lady that people went to for help.

In those days you didn't go to hospital to have a baby unless you were rich. You had your baby at home, with a midwife in attendance. You had to find somebody to look after the family, and large families were normal, many had a child every year. My mother finished up having nine by her second husband. It was also not uncommon for two or three to die before reaching school age.

Granny Smith would come in and look after the mother and any other children, cook the dinner and do the washing for 6d a day and her dinner. When the father came in from work he was expected to take over, also on Sundays as Granny Smith only worked on Sunday if a baby was born that day. Some people were so poor that they didn't have any sheets on the bed and they were ashamed to let the midwife see they had no sheets, so Granny Smith would loan them a pair for 3d a week.

She would also lay people out if they died, everybody kept a starched white nightdress, or for a man a starched white nightshirt wrapped in paper for their funeral. Granny Smith would charge a shilling to lay the body out, as in those days the funeral

parlour used to charge more. She would wash the body, close the eyes by putting pennies on the lids and dress them in their funeral clothes.

Although people couldn't help being poor, it was looked upon as a disgrace if you had a pauper's funeral, which meant a plain horse and cart would come and take the body away in plain unvarnished box, so most people would pay about ld or 2d a week into a funeral club. They couldn't afford insurance; 3d a week, paid into a funeral club would cover the mother, father and up to 6 children. Funerals cost about £3 for the hearse and consisted of a black carriage pulled by two black horses adorned with big black plumes. The relations followed behind on foot. The price of the funeral included a polished coffin. People either side of the house where the person had died would pull their curtains closed as a sign of respect, and men in the street would take off their caps until the coffin had passed by. I used to love to watch a funeral with the horses and their long black plumes and the men in frock coats and their top hats. Everyone going to the funeral wore black, and if a wife lost her husband she wore black for a year, then went into half mourning for another year, which meant she could wear mauve.

If anybody was ill you called Granny Smith in, as she had a lot of home made remedies. You had to be almost dying before you saw the Doctor as it cost a shilling. And if you were well enough to go to the surgery you weren't sick enough for the Doctor to visit. It cost two and sixpence and you had to pay him first before he would look at the person who was ill. Of course there was always the Parish Doctor, but you could only have him after they had been into what money you had coming in, what they call the means test. Even then you had to pay a bit towards the medicine. When Granny Smith wasn't working she would make lovely toffee apples, a halfpenny for one on a stick and a penny for two. She would also lend you money if you were hard up, she would lend you half a crown, then when you paid her back you would give her two shillings, eight and half pence, a penny in the shilling interest. There used to be a rumour going round that she had stacks of money in her cottage, whether she did or not I don't know but she never refused to help anybody, even if at the time they couldn't pay her. But it was a matter of principle to pay her later.

The pawn shops did a good trade in those days as most men had a Sunday suit, and on Monday you

would see the women queuing up to pawn their husbands suit, then on Friday they would queue up to get them out of pawn so the husband could wear it on Sunday. Then back to the pawnbroker they would go on Monday. The pawnbroker would charge a penny in the shilling interest.

My mother never did her weekend shopping until 6 o'clock on Saturday evening, as the butchers didn't have fridges in those days and at 6 o'clock they would start selling the meat off cheap. There were two butchers in Sidney Street next to one another and they used to vie with each other. For two and sixpence mother would either get a big joint of beef or a whole leg of lamb. Then she had the cheek to say,' I want something to cook it with'. So the butcher would give her a lump of fat free. We used to have lovely dripping on Mondays from the joint. Then she would go to Upper Gardener Street and get 141b of potatoes for a shilling, two large cabbages for 3d and half a carrier of what we called pot veg for 6d: carrots, onions, parsnips, turnips or whatever was in season. The butcher often didn't open on a Monday as most people had cold meat on Monday with bubble and squeak, and the fresh meat didn't reach the shops until Tuesday.

If Dad had had a full week, (they didn't get paid if it rained and they couldn't work), she would buy us some apples or oranges. I, being the eldest girl, had to go with her to help carry the shopping home. In Summer I would get a halfpenny cornet and in winter a pennyworth of hot chestnuts from the man that used to stand at the corner of Kensington Gardens, with the instructions to eat it before I got home and don't tell the others, as she couldn't afford to buy for all of us. Ever tried eating a cornet carrying two bags of shopping? If I was sent to get three penny worth of bacon pieces, Mum would take the best cut for Dad's sandwiches. The rest would make a bacon pudding. No wonder I can scrape by now on my pension.

Opposite Gloucester Terrace, in Gloucester Street, was a grocer where you could take a cup and get a pennyworth of jam or a pennyworth of syrup straight from wooden barrels. There was very little tinned stuff altogether, the only food I can remember in tins was pineapple, sardines and tins of biscuits at Christmas. Everybody had fly papers hanging up in those days, they were a penny each and when you bought them they were in a roll with a bit of string on top. You held them over the heat, and as they got

warm you pulled them out, then hung them up. They were sticky and the flies were attracted to them.

You could tell the time by the postman, he came three times a day, eight o'clock, twelve o'clock and four o'clock, and was never late. You could set your clock by him. Not that we got many letters, but you could see him go by the window. Some people didn't have a clock or they had pawned it, so they used to rely on neighbours to knock on the wall to get them up in time for work and school. Most people were up by six in the morning, they used to go to bed early as there was nothing much to do when the work was finished.

You were considered well off if you had a wireless. We didn't have but we did have a wind up gramophone with a big horn and about six records. The children were not allowed to touch it as it had to be wound up for every record and the grownups were afraid we would over wind it or drop the records and in those days they were breakable.

We learned most of the new songs from the errand boys, who would go round on their bikes whistling them. You could always tell a new errand boy as they wore short trousers. After they had been at work a few weeks they had earned enough money

to buy their first pair of long trousers. My brother got his first pair of long trousers on his 14th Birthday, but was only allowed to wear them on Sunday until he left school.

When the men were out of work the families had to go on relief, which meant somebody from the council would come to your house. If you had a rug or clock or any ornaments, sometimes even furniture like a sideboard, they would say 'you can sell those before we give you anything.' So if a neighbour had to go on relief they would knock on your door and say, 'the relief man is coming, can you look after a few bits for me?' No one ever refused and in would come the treasures, probably only worth a few shillings but worth more to the owners. Then after the relief man had been and seen they hadn't anything to sell, as they had to leave them with beds, table, chairs and pots and pans, they would give them vouchers for groceries and coal, according to how many were in the family. You got five shillings for each adult, and three shillings for each child, they would also give you a list of shops that took the vouchers. They never gave them money in case they spent it in the pub. They used to get a little bit of dole money, which was usually just enough to pay the rent and put money in

the gas meter. We used to welcome the gas man because Mum always got a rebate which meant we got a treat, either jelly and cream for tea, or fish and chips for supper. The gas meter was for 1d, 2d or 1/-, as most people put pennies in, the gas man's bag must have been heavy.

If the children needed clothes, they were given a card to take to the clinic in Princes Street, where there was a room with second hand clothes. You had to take the children with you and they would be given one of everything, like one vest etc. I don't know what the children were supposed to wear while they were being washed, perhaps they thought the poor didn't wash their clothes. Most of the poor kids were fairly clean but of course there were some about that were dirty.

One day at school we were told that we were going to have milk at lunch. It came in one-third pint bottles, with a cardboard top and a straw. We had to pay half pence a day for it, the poor and fatherless children got theirs free. I got mine free as I was the only child in the class whose father had been killed in the war.

We did not look upon ourselves as being poor, as the poor people had no lino on their floors, just bare

boards. When my father was killed in the war Mother and Grandmother had very little money. My Grandmother was getting seven and sixpence widows pension. My Mother got a little more as she was a war widow. She got ten shillings for herself and seven and six for my brother, as he was the eldest child, and five shillings for me. Their total income was one pound ten shillings. Out of this they had to pay twelve shillings rent, which included rates, two and six for a hundredweight and a half of coal, and four pence a day for gas, only leaving thirteen and twopence for food and clothes.

My Mother and Grandmother finding it hard to manage decided that my Grandmother would look after us while my Mother went out to work. She got a job as a tram conductor at ten shillings a week, later being promoted to tram driver at twelve and six a week. Saturday night was our treat night, Mother or Gran went to the open market in Upper Gardener Street and they used to stay there until about nine o'clock at night. When it was dark they used to tie torches on to the barrows, they were like the torches the bonfire people use. Mum or Gran used to bring us back fish and chips, a 2d piece of fish and 1d worth of chips each, and a 2d bottle of lemonade

between my brother and me.

One of our jobs on a Sunday morning if it was wet, was to sit at the table after breakfast and cut up squares of newspaper. Then we used to make a hole in the corner and thread string through to hang up for toilet paper. In those days the print didn't used to come off like it does now which was just as well as I might have had the winner of the three-thirty on my backside. Bread was wrapped in a thin piece of tissue paper which we also used to save for the toilet.

The police used to come round the streets two or three times a day on foot, and if he saw a child misbehaving he would clip them round the ear with his gloves. You daren't tell your Mum, as she would only say you must have been doing something to deserve it. The sort of thing you would get a clip for was climbing a lamp post to put the light on, or chalking on the wall. I think children were better behaved in those days, we were taught to respect our parents and teachers. If you answered a teacher back you would get a ruler across your knuckles. There were quite a few tramps about in those days, mostly men, and my mother would never refuse one. If she couldn't afford to give him money, she would give him or her some food, even if it was only a slice of

bread and dripping. She had a saying: 'there but for the grace of God go I'.

We used to go to Sunday School every Sunday and my brother was in the choir. He used to get two and sixpence every three months for being in the choir and if he sang at a wedding he used to get an extra shilling.

Our treat was the Sunday School Treat. For weeks before we used to try and save up a few pence and each Grandmother would give us a penny. We had to take our own dinner which was usually corn beef or jam sandwiches, a bottle of drink which was usually a halfpenny worth of lemonade powder put into a bottle of water. We also had to take an enamel mug with our name tape sewn round the handle.

We would meet at St Peters Church and march up Trafalgar Street to the station where we would get a train to Hassocks Tea Gardens. The swings were free but the other rides were a halfpenny or a penny. At four o'clock a whistle would blow when we would all rush to the trestle tables and forms that had been put up at one end of the gardens. That is when we used our mugs, they would come round with big pots of tea with the milk and sugar already in it, just too bad if you didn't take sugar. Then they would come

round with the sandwiches which were always strawberry jam. You could have four of those, then they would come round with the cakes which were a halfpenny currant bun and a penny iced cake each. After tea you could go and play, and there was always a rush for the free swings as everybody had spent their money by then. Parents were allowed to come, but had to pay for themselves on the train etc. At six o'clock another whistle would blow and the children would know it was time to go home. We would line up to be counted to make sure nobody was missing, then we would be marched to Hassocks Station to catch the train home. The older children were allowed to go home from the station, but the younger ones would be marched back to St Peter's church where their parents were waiting to collect them. I suppose we must have had some wet days on our treat but I can only remember one and that didn't happen until we were coming home.

I started school at Pelham Street School when I was five years old. It was a big school with separate entrances for infants, juniors and boys and girls. Infants and juniors didn't wear uniform, not until you were eleven and went into the seniors. The boys only had to wear caps and ties in the school colours green

and yellow; the girls wore navy blue tunics summer and winter, the only difference being they wore white blouses with green and yellow ties in the summer and green jumpers in the winter. Most of the infants wore navy blue serge dresses with white starched pinafores, the boys wore short trousers coming down to the knee. There were no school dinners in those days; every child had to go home at dinner time. School hours were from nine until twelve o'clock then from 2o'clock until 4o'clock for infants and juniors and four-thirty for seniors.

I had only been to school two months when I caught scarlet fever, which in those days was a killer disease as they had no antibiotics, and very few other drugs. I was taken to hospital at nine o'clock at night, but it was like the middle of the night to me. My mother had to have the bedroom fumigated, as well as my clothes, as it was very contagious. I was put into the fever hospital, which is now Bevendean hospital, and I was not allowed any visitors. My mother and grandmother had to stand outside and look through the window. Visiting hours were Wednesday and Sunday afternoons. At the height of the illness I went blind for three days. I can remember sitting up in the cot screaming that I

couldn't see, they put me in a small room and pulled the blinds so that the light wouldn't hurt my eyes. After three days my sight started coming back and I started getting better. I was allowed to get up and sit in a chair each morning. Eventually I was allowed home, but was very weak, and not allowed back to school for some time. When I was, it was only on condition that I didn't do any drill, as P.T. was called in those days, or run or play games, as the illness had left me with a weak heart. If only they had seen what I used to get up to when I was playing with other children!

I was very disappointed when I went back to school as I was six years old and was put in a higher class. In the babies' class we had learned by playing with toys, one of my favourites had been a wooden Noah's Ark with wooden animals. We didn't have books and pencils, but slates and chalk, and when we wanted to clean them we had to go to teacher, who would look at what you had written, then give you a damp sponge to wipe your slate.

Most of our work was learnt by repetition. Teacher would write something on the blackboard, then we all had to say it out loud as teacher pointed to it. When she thought we knew it, she would rub it

off the board and pick out a child to stand up and say it. We had the same teacher for all our lessons. You only got a new teacher when you went up a class.

We used to play games according to the season, at Easter it was skipping and hoops. In those days scaffolding was tied together with very thick rope, if any of us had a dad in the building trade he used to bring us home two pieces of rope. It took at least five of us to play the Easter skipping game, we would cross the ropes with one girl at each end, two would stand on the opposite pavements, and two in the road. There was not much traffic about in those days, it was an event to see a car down our road. On the odd occasion when one did come down, it didn't go very fast, and we could always hear the horse and carts coming, and get out of their way in time. We used to run in when the ropes were being turned and the others used to chant a rhyme, at the end of the rhyme we had to run out. If you happened to catch your foot in the rope as it turned, it gave you a nasty bruise across the back of your legs. At Whitsun it was top and whip and marbles. The boys used to play marbles in the gutters, which were quite clean as the road sweeper used to come round every morning and sweep the gutters, and after him would come the

water cart, even in the small side streets.

We always had new sandals at Whitsun. They were leather tops with crepe soles. They cost two and eleven pence a pair, and were always bought half a size too big, as they had to last us all summer. It meant we had to have a sock in them when they were new. If we did wear them out before August we had to make do with a shilling pair of plimsolls. Before we went back to school after the August holiday we would have a new pair of black lace-up shoes that had to last us all winter. They were leather soles and uppers, and if they wore out the boot repairer would repair them in two hours unless he was very busy, then you might have to wait; but you always got them back the same day as you took them. He used to charge two and sixpence to repair a pair of men's boots or shoes, two shillings for ladies and one-and-six for children, and an extra threepence for boys. If they had what we used to call horse shoes on the heels (that was a piece of steel shaped like a horse shoe set into the heel) it saved the boys wearing the heels down so quickly. I used to envy the boys because they used to strike their heels on the pavement and make sparks.

We used to get six weeks holiday from school each

year: one week at Easter, one week at Christmas and four weeks in August, an odd half day in mid-term and one day on May Day. Not having a May pole we used to sling ropes over the arm of the lamp posts and dance round them. Most of our amusements were homemade, for example four wheelers for the boys, consisted of a wooden soap box, a plank of wood, a piece of rope and four wheels off an old pram. The only ready-made amusements were the swings and slides on the Level. As soon as you were eight you joined the cubs if you were a boy, or the brownies if you were a girl. You didn't have any choice, you were told to go by your parents and you went. You never thought of disobeying them.
L. Scarborough

Gerrard's Court

Gerrard's Court

I lived at No.1 Gerrard's Court from my birth in 1927 until we were moved in 1936, in the name of 'progress'. Until a few years ago the site and surrounding area was used as an open wasteland car park!

I lived at No.1 with my parents and maternal grandparents. My grandfather, George Dann, had been a fisherman for all his working life and fished from his own vessel from Brighton beach off the Fishmarket Hard. An extremely hardy and weather beaten old salt, he lived well into his eighties, in spite of smoking dark coarse uncut shag tobacco in any of his many claypipes, long 'churchwardens'. My grandmother, I would recall, as a formidable soul, well built as seemed to be the way of things in those days. No.1 adjoined a public house situated in King Street and was, I believe, called the Running Horse. I can still recall my grandmother striding up the passage which led to King Street, and returning very gingerly with a quart jug filled to the brim with dark brown stout; a daily occurrence. Soon these forays were to be curtailed and replaced with, (as a boundary wall of our backyard also served the pub), a solemn

handing over of an empty jug, and then a joyous receipt of the jug duly filled.

Gerrard's Court, or the Court as we called it, was an appropriate square bounded on three sides, North, East and South, with houses, the fourth, and west side, was formed by a wall. To a youngster it seemed to be enormously high, but historical evidence may disprove this. Looking back I would see it as about 30ft high and this wall played a prominent part in our lives. It could almost be termed our Olympic stadium, for against it we would throw balls, play cricket and football, we would run against it and jump at it, we would chalk on it and ride tricycles and scooters at it. Had we the tools, I believe we would have dug under it.

Gerrard's Court could be entered and exited from King Street to the west and Church Street to the north, the passage from King Street emerged straight into the court which then opened out to the South. Continuing straight on past two houses, Nos 1 and 2 or 3, one would then walk maybe 10 or 12ft and then a sharp left would reveal a passageway to the north and into Church Street. Along this passageway were sited 3 or 4 cottages but of course they were not counted as belonging to the Court. The entry into

the court was by passage approximately 20ft long and 5ft wide, and to the left as one entered was the pub, the Running Horse, to the right a row of houses. These houses backed onto the court and at the back of their yards was our 'Wall'. The houses on the North face of the court were faced with pebbles, not any of your little namby, pamby pebbles, but good round large ones, cobbles I suppose, about 3" to 4" in diameter. These were symmetrically placed in the manner of bricks, and formed an extremely durable building. I believe that the houses on the southern side were also of the same construction but those on the eastern side were rendered and scored to look like blocks. I recall No.1 as having 3 floors and that access to the first and second floor was by an extremely narrow and enclosed twisting wooden staircase.

We had a front parlour which was of course, as was the fashion, used only on Christmas Eve or to allow for the laying out of the body of anyone in the family who died. The parlour had a black, leaded open fireplace with a high mantel decorated with a cloth overhang and fluffy bobbles. Of course no electricity, just hissing and popping gas lights which were so delicate, and needed changing frequently.

Here the woodwork was all a dark brown and the wall covering embossed and again of a dark shade. In those days wall coverings were pasted to the wall with a flour and water mix which was just about adequate but not easy to use. It seems that it was also the fashion to clear varnish the covering once it was in position, to protect or help it stay in place maybe, but making it one heck of a job to remove. I recall that my grandfather, having made an extremely good job of preparing the hallway, then proceeded to varnish it, with brown varnish and not clear. The hallway was always rather dark after that.

We also had a scullery (I wonder if the term is much used these days) which in one corner contained a huge built in copper, not made of copper but of concrete, and fuelled beneath with wood. On was days, which were always Mondays, the bubbling and steaming and heat was something to experience. Then of course the lifting out of the washed items with the 'copper stick' (a length of wood, circular in section, and very sturdy, bleached white by constant immersion in boiling water liberally laced with soda) and into the sink for rinsing, from here to the back yard and through the mangle. Turned by a handle on a sidewheel of perhaps two foot diameter, the two

huge wooden rollers would squeeze out and squelch out almost every drop of water which would pour, with much splashing and gurgling and sploshing into a strategically placed zinc bath underneath. This same bath incidentally served for the personal bathing in front of the kitchen stove. What bliss to emerge from the water in front of a blazing stove and be towelled dry in such glorious warmth.

The yard was small, maybe fifteen foot by four, and contained at one end the little room. A bit of a misnomer really because it was neither little nor a room. It was tiny with whitewashed walls and a wooden door which allowed a gap at the top and bottom between it and the door frame. The 'seat' was a wooden plank with a hole cut in it. The place was definitely not somewhere to sit and reflect on the day's events, no lighting or heating was here and nor super soft tissue. A candle stub was required and whatever paper was available, cut into approximate squares and hung up by string attached to a nail. In the depths of winter and on wet dark nights this was surely not the place to be. However, since in those days we children were always dosed with Syrup of Figs in order that we should 'go', trips were a necessity.

I recall life in the Court as one of utter bliss. It seems we had only sun and long hot summers, no rain, wind or snow. Of course an illusion, but then life here was just magic. The Court seemed to be all protecting and we were a little colony not caught up in the outside world. Indeed this may be extremely close to fact, we lived our lives here and we played in the Court and it was our World. I cannot recall any intolerance, and considering the very close proximity we enjoyed, the harmony seemed to be unbroken. As children we seemed not to move far from the bounds of the Gerrard's Court. We attended school, at first as infants at Upper Gardner Street and then on to the Central School situated on the north side of Church Street opposite New Road, this site is to this day derelict and unused!

Shopping for food was done at the grocer's on the west side of King Street about forty yards down from the entrance to the court. I recall the name as being Stenning's and here we would leave a list of our needs which could then be collected or delivered, a much more civilised method than today's battle of trollies at the supermarket. The milkman would arrive daily in King Street pushing a cart containing tall gleaming churns of milk, and festooned with shiny measuring

jugs of varying capacity. His forthcoming appearance would be announced from afar by a cacophony of sound as though of the percussion section of an orchestra preparing to play a major musical score. People would then arrive with their jugs and, upon having their needs fulfilled, would bear them carefully away to be placed on the stone slab in the larder, no fridges in these houses. The jugs would then be covered with a lace or muslin device to which were attached, about the edge, numerous shiny glass beads in order to weigh the lace or muslin down and so form a reasonable cap.

Television or hifi equipment was unknown which maybe was the reason for so much peace and quiet. Lighting was by gas lamp, paraffin lamp of candle. Probably the only technical device in the home was the radio, but of course no 'pop' music. Peaceful! These radios were powered by accumulators which were glass containers and carried by a handle attached to an encircling steel band. These accumulators would need recharging, and to this purpose we would be entrusted with taking them to a garage situated in King Street and almost opposite Stenning's the grocer. We would be admonished as to the dire consequences of dropping the device and sent on our

way. Now this seeming chore (how many children like to run errands in their leisure time?) but was in fact rather of an adventure. Firstly we were being allowed out of the Court and secondly we were being instructed to enter 'the garage'. Now in these times we encountered very few motor vehicles and so of course this was another 'great adventure'. Oddly enough, in retrospect, I cannot recall seeing any motor vehicles in that garage, but, in the event, the real 'adventure' was not in seeing at close range a car, or cars. The real, heart thumping, eye popping, blood racing object was 'The Lift'. One has to bear in mind that we were in the very early 1930's and, to us wee ones, who were not as worldly wise as today's young, this was going to be the ultimate experience. How values change, to us a piece of wood could become, in our imagination, many things. This experience of 'The Lift' never left us, no matter that we did the trip many times. 'The Lift' was a goods lift and large enough to transport motor vehicles, it seemed to us the size of a ballroom, and we would ride it to, I believe, the top floor, two or three floors up. Now one may ask what all the fuss was about over the a ride up and down in a lift, but I can only repeat that at that time and in our kind of lifestyle, this was the

ultimate. Perhaps, had we the knowledge we now have, we would have thought that we were astronauts but in those days we were certainly adventurers of some sort.

King Street featured largely in our lives and, bearing in mind that there was little or no road traffic, we used this through fare as an extension of our playground from the Court. Here we would play 'whip-and-top' where we would whip and twirl our wooden tops with much gusto, and here also we would propel our hoops (large circles of wood) up and down the street with much shouting and squealing. Another game which was extremely popular was 'alleys', these alleys were, of course, glass marbles, multicoloured and much to be coveted. I recall the so called 'blood alleys' as being the favourite, and these were white with swirls of red through them. We would bring out our alley bags, which we would have coaxed our mothers to make (these were of any piece of highly patterned cloth and with the mouth capable of being closed with a drawstring) and into King Street we would troop. Up and down the gutters we would play, each youngster trying to win as many alleys as possible. Much shouting and cries of pleasure, or dismay, dependant

on how one was treated by lady luck. Occasionally an alley would pop onto the pavement and then invariably roll down into somebody's 'area'. These 'areas' were spaces, perhaps extending from the front of a house into the pavement by about a foot, and were covered with a grating, their purpose was to allow light into the basement room. Many cries of dismay followed this event, until someone, who was in favour with his mother at that time, was persuaded to return home and beg the use of the clothes prop and a piece of soap. A quick hoist of the prop upwards and the alley would be retrieved. Dash home with the prop and off would go the game again.

King Street would also provide its own free entertainment each day. Street lamps were, of course, gas lamps, and there was much running up and down the street when the lamp lighter used to be due. He would appear on his bicycle, riding one handed and bearing in his other hand the mark of his trade, his lamp lighting pole. With, it seemed, not a pause in the pace of his ride, he would deftly prod the switch on the top of the lamp post and 'pop', the lamp would shutter into life. No Don Quixote ever had such flair of style as he, he earned all the applause

and shouts that greeted each successful encounter, though I doubt that he enjoyed our attention much.

Returning to Gerrard's Court another thrill to be enjoyed was 'watching'. Adjoining the wall which formed the Eastern boundary of the connecting passage between Gerrard's Court and Church Street was an extremely large garage. This garage was used to house charabancs (there is a name to conjure with, a much happier word than coach) and we would stand and gaze for many a contented hour, watching these gleaming monsters and smelling the distinctive fumes as they were shunted back and forth, in and out. I believe the name of the coach firm to be Timpson's. What far places did they visit? How privileged the passengers were!

It transpired that if we behaved, and attended Sunday School regularly, we could become one of the privileged and enjoy a ride in one of these craft. This annual event would be a visit to a place far outside our World, farther than we could ever imagine, and the projected date would ensure, for weeks in advance, much good behaviour and attendance to detail. I believe that this Shangri-La, to which we would be magically transported, was as far away as Hassocks. Here, after a noisy and heart stopping

journey, we would have free rides on tricycles and toy motor cars, swings, slides, roundabouts and all the other delights which can now be enjoyed in any local park. A free sit-down tea, with bread and butter and jam, (at home we only ever had bread and jam no butter), cakes, jellies and lots of other goodies, and then the ride back. This contrasted sharply with the ride out in that it was much quieter with many sleepy heads and not a few queasy tummies. Roll on next year!

It would seem that we led a very cloistered existence, and this no doubt, in part, was true, we were very sheltered. We appeared to be in an oasis, a refuge from outside events. Here in our World we had comfort, shelter, peace and tranquillity. Of course this has been a child's viewpoint of life from Gerrard's Court and an adult's view would embrace the economics and politics of existence where wages (if any) were low, and social services nonexistent. Of course, in spite of earlier comments, we did have rain and cold and discomfort, but these, to a child, are not a problem: they pass.

Perhaps, having rambled on for so long it is time just to sum up and say that for me Gerrard's Court was, and still is in memory a Utopia. Were we to be

still living in Gerrard's Court would we be peaceful and friendly? Would we still count the Court as our World, and provide an object lesson in living together in harmony? Would not our Gerrard's Court provide a solution to the quest for peace?
It may be deduced from the foregoing that I loved, and still love the memory of the Court. Ghosts abound, and not just of people, but also of places and events. When I am in the vicinity of King Street my ghosts can still draw me back into those lovely warm childhood days.
Bert Nelson

I was born in 1920 at 37 King Street, Brighton, and lived there until going into the army in 1939. The house was owned by my parents who also owned a tiny two-roomed cottage at the rear which fronted onto Gerrard's Court and was, I believe, number four.

This cottage was tenanted by various people whose names I cannot recall but, partly because I delivered newspapers to some of the people in Gerrard's Court, and partly because the 'Court Rules', as they were known to us, used to play in King Street, I got to know some of the families who lived in the Court.

Gerrard's Court had an entry from King Street and

another from Church Street. The King Street entry was a narrow lane between a little pub and one of the many cobble-fronted houses in King Street. The lane gave access to a small square on to which fronted about five or six cottages. After the square the lane continued and turned sharp left, past our cottage, and emerged in Church Street between Brown's fish shop and Harrington's garage.
Peter Wood

County Borough of Brighton Council Agenda: 30.11.33

118 Gerrard's Court area, from 40 King Street Nos 1, 2, 3, 7, 8, 9, 11 & 12

There are 8 houses in the area with 41 persons of whom 16 are under 10 years of age. The houses are situated on a square at the rear of King Street, which is entered by passage ways from King Street and from Church Street. One house (No 10) is now used as stores and is not included in the area. The houses are old and worn out, all the rooms in the houses, with one exception, are under 7 ft in height, the attics are of much lower pitch. Nos 1, 3 & 9 are without scullery sinks and the water taps are in the yard. Nos

7 & 8 have a common yard and WC, Nos 11 & 12 have a common yard. Nos 1, 2 & 9 have yards of an average of 49 square feet. No 3 has a yard of 42 square feet.

About this Book

Backyard Brighton was originally made by: Georgina Attrell, Sarah Clarke, Jacqueline Connatty, Marion Devoy, Lavender Jones, Peter Messer, Selma, Alice, Piran & Sukey Montford, Elfrida Oldfield, Lisa Page, Bob Taylor, Alistair Thomson, Jayne Tyler, and Brighton Borough Council Planning Department.

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For over thirty years, QueenSpark Books has been telling the stories of the people of Brighton and Hove, promoting the lesser-heard voices of the city via oral history interviews, one-off projects, creative writing programmes, long-term development work, and latterly the use of video and new media.

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