

WORK LOVE AND SPORT



A postcard view of River Way

In 1950 I was fifteen years old, living at home in River Way Ewell with my Father (E.A. Tong) and Mother (Lilian). Dad was the manager of Nuttings the grocer shop in Ewell Court. My Brother Michael was away doing National Service. Two years in the R.A.F. Both Michael and I attended Danetree Road School, it was my last year in 1950. I did get chosen to play football for the School along with Johny Dougherty who later played professionally for Fulham. The family in 1950 did not own a car, have a telephone or a TV set. We had radio and a wind up gramophone player.



Ewell Court Shops c1950

It was a good community in River Way. I remember many of the family names in the road. The Browns and Murphys either side of us, others were the Crumps, Robinsons, Carters, Beers and the Hadcocks. Alan Carter who now lives in Australia was my first playmate. At this time I earned 5 shillings delivering groceries from Nuttings shop, plus tips normally 6 pence although one customer would tip me 2/6. The teachers I particularly remember are Mr. Williams, Mrs. King (choir), Mrs. Aldridge (English) and Mrs. Hopkins (history), Mr Blore (PE) had quite an influence on my ability as a football player.

In 51 I became employed at the Scout Shop, Buckingham Palace Road, pay £2 10s 0d a week. After train fare and a £1 for my up keep it did not leave much. During the three years at the Scout Shop King George VI died and the Coronation of our Queen was to happen. One not so pleasant time was whilst I was sent to work at the Clapham Branch, this coincided with the smog outbreak, trying to get home became very difficult, it was quicker to walk than take the bus to Clapham Junction.

As a family we were active with the 1st Ruxley Scout Troup. At one stage Dad was the secretary, Brother Michael deputy scout master, I patrol leader. I have very fond memories of the Scout Master George Frost (Jack) who had been a prisoner of WWII under the Germans.



1st Ruxley Scout Hut

I started working for Selfridges in 1954 in the Tailoring Department as a junior salesman. I was to gradually go through the various sections of men's wear to work alongside Mr. Ellis raincoats, Mr. Scott suits, Mr. Dalton trousers Mr Wolf overcoats who had the joke played on him on 1st April some years of phoning Regent 1234 [*Regents Park Zoo*] and ask for Mr Lion.

Not long after joining Selfridges I started playing football from the Store. It had a super sports ground at Preston Road Wembley. My football had been with Court Athletic 51/53 Epsom 54/55 in the A team, but Epsom were to discontinue this level after only one or two years. I am still in touch with Stan Williams who I played with at both Court and Epsom. I was to have more success for the Selfridge team than the previous two clubs. There were a lot of social activities at the Store. I was to get to know my future Wife Eileen in 1956. Eileen played table tennis and netball. Next year, 2012, will be our Golden wedding.

I was to stay at Selfridges till 1997, having worked in menswear, ladies hosiery, art needlework, handbags and finally the sports dept. From 1952 I played cricket for Wimbledon Park CC at the Old Hailyburians rugby ground off Ruxley Lane. Early on I was the youngest in the 1st eleven and later became the oldest. Today the Club is called [Deando Ruxley](#) and I am a Vice President.

Colin Tong ©2011