



**5. LINDA JONES: King Street,
Heydon's bakers, St Peter
Parmentergate, Father Sear**

I was born in 1944 at my father's bakers shop in King Street (later Bennett's Electrical shop). He'd taken over the business from his father who had died in 1928. We had the shop in the front, at the left as you look from St. Julian's Alley, and to the right of that was my father's bake-office which housed two big working surfaces and a coal-fired oven, which never went out. He got up at about 4 every morning, having gone to bed after midnight having put his doughs on to prove and he would bake all morning. Mother would open the shop at 9 o'clock and there would be rolls for all the little business round here, ready at 9 o'clock hot. After lunch and a sleep he would start his deliveries to customers all over Norwich, who had been re-housed from King Street to council estates but still wanted his bread.

He was famous for Hovis. He had "Hayden for Hovis" written above the door because he had won many prizes from the Hovis Flour people. He made all shapes and sizes of loaf and rolls. He got the idea in the early 50s to diversify into having filled rolls - which really were the first - and all the businesses around here, Plumstead's in particular, used to come and order in the mornings and he would have them ready for lunchtime. At Christmas he also used to cook people's turkeys etc.

for them, and their cakes. I used to go in the van with him at Easter, with the hot cross buns, which I'd helped bag up. Our living accommodation downstairs was extremely small - one room. Mother did not have a kitchen or an oven - she did all her baking in the bakery oven and had a little ring for saucepans in a hearth and a curtained-off sink for washing up. The yard at the back had an outside toilet and eventually a garage for his van and our small Austin 7 car. They never actually owned the building.

My childhood playmate was Steven Hall, whose father was the landlord of The Old Barge (and a pre-war Norwich City goalie). We used to play behind the yard where the cottages had been pulled down or bombed. One of the few things that made my father angry was finding me at closing time hanging out of my window talking to people coming out of the pub; they were often rather drunk, sometimes shouting or fighting. The women used to come to get their husbands home, shouting at them. My grandfather liked a drink and I can remember grandmother coming up, "Arthur! Will you come home!".

My grandparents kept the fish shop next door to us: Arthur and Annie Barber - wet fish and a fried fish & chip shop - they were 125A and we were 125. My mother had moved to the fish shop when she was 5 and my father was 8 years old and living in the bakery. I did not go to the schools in King Street - my father had a low opinion of Horns

Lane and sent me to Lonsdale - but I played hopscotch, skipping etc. with a lot of the children in Sherbourne Place, which was a safe little area with no through traffic. Upstairs in No. 125 was a beautiful area - two very big bedrooms, small boxroom and a small bathroom (still an outside toilet!). So I had a huge bedroom for myself with lots of room to play when friends came round.

Downstairs there was one big long running beam through the living room, but not upstairs although the outside is timber framed. Our ovens were over 300 years old. One side of our living room wall was the exterior of the oven so it was like central heating in winter but a very hot living area in summer.

Sundays were quiet. My father did not work on Sundays and we had an outing in the car most Sunday afternoons. I used to go to St. Peter Parmentergate Church when Fr. Sear was here and kept that connection after we had moved. I also belonged to a little guild called St. Julian's Guild for Girls, run by the nuns. Sister Kathleen Paul, who was very formidable, a tall gaunt woman in her black nun's habit, and we had fun, we'd have a little prayer and hymn and then play games. We met in the little parish hall in St. Julian's Alley.

I came into the pub as a child to play in the upstairs part and also the rectory when Fr. Sears was here - Brian and I had our little prep talk there before getting married. Fr. Sear was a lovely

man. I enjoyed my time at St. Peters. It was extremely high Anglican. We used to go up and ring the Angelus with the nuns. Fr. Sears married us in St. Peters and my daughter was christened in St. Julian's. My parents had been married there, in the old church, in 1938.

We used to still have the horse-pulled brewery dray come down King Street and they rolled the barrels down into the cellar of The Old Barge. As a child I remember lots of little shops; Aldous on the corner, where we got our greengroceries; Hales the ships chandler, Bircham's the butchers, Swatman's butchers on the corner of St. Anne's Lane, a chemist on the corner of Rose Lane. My father sold groceries as well as bread - cold meats, cheese, tinned stuff. Nothing was pre-wrapped. Cakes in the window, boxes of flour and sugar, cheese in a slab, biscuits in a big tin to be weighed out and bagged. There were a couple of seats. People would bring in a little book with their order for the week and Mum would box everything up. And men would come into the shop from working on the river. There was one my father called the wherryman, who used to come in and tell stories.

Swatman's had the old scrubbed wooden counter, sawdust on the floor, and Mrs. Swatman, who was a very demure tiny little lady, used to sit in a little wood and glass office structure at the end; he would give you the meat with the price written on and you would go to her to pay. When the

Swatmans' daughter got married he wanted to make her an eiderdown from all these duck and goose feathers he had saved, and they had to be cured first, so my father put them in the bread oven overnight.

My mother said she could remember five cottages in this building - there are five doors - but I can only remember the pub and butchers.

It was a busy, bustling street, although most of the actual traffic was down to the breweries. Streams on people on match days, my father would ice his buns the colour of the visiting team. No buses, but people walking to and from work, especially Carrow Works. I remember bikes being lined up outside Plumstead's the engineering works opposite.

I think King Street looks better than it did when I was a child, in some ways. With the new buildings they have been reasonably sympathetic. So much of it was derelict in the 1940s and 50s, there were hoardings with advertisements around empty spaces. Some of it was quite bleak so it is nice to see it being lived in and used. The main living area when I was a child was further down. All the little roads that went up - Garden Street, St. Julian's Alley, Horns Lane, Sherbourne Place, Thorns Lane, Stepping Lane - all had houses. The main street was more industrial. I think they have done the new houses quite nicely. It was idyllic for me as a child but there was an awful lot of poverty. That way of life

couldn't go on. It was a time of transition. I remember my father being very worried. People didn't want that kind of bread any more, but the Sunshine Bakery mass-produced "plastic loaf" - now of course it has turned full circle. And supermarkets were beginning to come on to the scene. But I still meet people who remember my parents and the business very well.

Linda Jones