

How much has Leeman Road changed over time?

Heather Bulmer



Image: H Bulmer

Did you live in the Leeman Road area when you were growing up? How long ago was that?

What was it like growing up here?

Yes, I grew up here. I was born 62 years ago.

It was lovely growing up here; everyone knew everyone. It was like a big family. I played in the parks and swam in the river. I also used to build rafts and go fishing. I even used to fire a catapult at the church bell!

When it flooded, I would row down the streets in my boat. I got pulled along by the army and helped rescue people.

Did you go to St Barnabas School? What do you remember about it?

I liked going to St Barnabas School. There was a boys' playground at the back and a girls' playground at the front.

The toilets were outside. We used to ask to go for a break from lessons, a change of scenery. There were big radiators in the classrooms and we'd sit on them to get warm.

The canteen where we had lunch was at the top of Albany Street. I liked going there.

I don't miss the stairs! People used to say they were haunted! When I was caretaker I used to make one of the teachers, Mrs Graham, wait at the bottom of the stairs while I cleaned them as fast as I could.

We still have streets of terraced houses. How have the houses changed?

More of the houses are rented now and people don't stay as long.

There were no bathrooms when I was growing up. We had a tin bath that was kept on a nail outside. On Saturdays we went to the slipper baths (where the vet is now) for a treat. I had three sisters and we had to get cubicles next to each other so we could share the soap.

We'd buy sachets of shampoo from the corner shop.

Monday was wash day. We had a twin tub and a pulley over the fire for drying clothes.



I lived at 8 Jubilee Terrace. There were eight of us plus Mum and Dad. The boys were in one bedroom. Three girls shared a bed in the same room as Mum and Dad. The eldest had the box room until she moved out to get married. Then the next eldest got it.

What shops were there?

There was a shop on every corner. There were also two working men's clubs and two pubs.

Are there any other ways in which the area has changed?

There used to be a Sunday school in the school. We paid a penny and had a scrapbook and got stickers with Jesus on.

We played scraps and marbles.

There were summer fayres at the vicarage. We would dress up and parade around.

Mr Meek, the leader of the Girls' and Boys' Brigade, used to come and knock on your door if you weren't there when church started.

We have a new school.

I don't know people any more.

What would be the same if your younger self could visit?

It's still recognisable.