



2. PAT WINDALE: Synagogue Street, Archie King's, Horns Lane schools, Morgan's Brewery, Christmas, Outings, St Julian's Sunday School, Father Sear

My family moved to 14 Synagogue Street in 1953 when I was two years old. My father worked at Morgans (later Watneys) Brewery and they owned the houses there. It was a terraced house. The kitchen opened on to the back yard. There was an outside toilet. Off the hall was a living room and front room. Upstairs my parents had the huge front bedroom, and my brother and I shared another double bedroom. There was also a small room immediately ahead of you at the top of the stairs. Our heating was coal so there was no heating upstairs and we only heated the rooms downstairs that we were using. The front room was only used on high days and holidays. That had a square of carpet and the three-piece suite. At Christmas my father would bring the television through (a 14" Pye, rented). We were lucky because we were semi-detached, with No. 12 to one side but to our right was the lorry park for the Coca-Cola factory. So we had a big front garden; Dad loved his garden and he could plant all his chrysanthemums and so on out there. We had a big area to play in as well.

I went to Horns Lane Infants School and then Horns Lane Junior School.

When Norwich City got to the semi-final of the FA Cup, the 1958-59 season, during the afternoon when they were playing the replay against Luton Town, our headmistress Miss Thomas actually piped the commentary through the large speakers in each classroom so we could listen to it. Sadly, Norwich lost 1-0. I played for the football and cricket teams, which were not very good because we only had such a small school.

We had good times as children at school. There were lots of characters around then. Black Anna, who ran a pub on Ber Street, used to bring her granddaughter down to the school gates and we'd run away because we thought she was a witch because of her shape and size, all dressed up in black with a mantilla and everything, quite frightening for young children of 7 and 8.

All the pupils came from the streets around the King Street area: Burley Street, Ashburne Street, Horns Lane, Thorn Lane, Stepping Lane, St. Johns Street just off Mountergate. Mariners Lane had a small street halfway up which was very old buildings, still using gas lighting and a water pump at the end of the courtyard which everyone had to use for water. One of the lads I was at school with used to live in one of those; it was one of those places that actually had one room above another and stairs going up the side. Another, Nicholas, lived in The Old Barge; I used

to come in to play upstairs. Another friend, Richard, lived in the Three Tuns at the end of King Street. We'd go fishing off the river bank, behind the Tom Watts shop where there was a large grass verge where the bridge is now. My mate Roy's father worked at the malt house in Synagogue Street, so we used to play in the malt house yard a lot. We had tons of wonderful places to play, because in the early middle and late 50s there were lots of empty houses from the war, allotments, air raid shelters. There was one behind the houses on Mountergate which when we found it was full of gas masks all boxed up which had never been used, which we obviously made use of. We made up games, usually wars, cowboys and Indians, one gang against another. We'd go round collecting old newspapers, Corona bottles and jam jars because you could get money for these. We'd go down to the shop on Prince of Wales Road called Gale & Galeys, which was a haberdashers and general store, and buy peasticks which we would make into arrows. The bows were made from elderberry branches because there were no end of elder trees around the malthouse and Post Office Yard. Then one gang would go and hide, the other would find them and we'd fire peastick arrows at one another. One lad, Mickey Brown, did get an arrow stuck in his head, he cried a bit and there was a bit of blood and he went home, then his mum came and told us all off and went round and saw the other mums and that curtailed our fun for a while.

My father worked for Morgans Brewery. My mum was at home looking after the house but when we got older she started doing cleaning at the brewery offices at Howard House. I also had two uncles who worked for the brewery - Uncle Charlie and Uncle Harry - and when my brother got older he worked first for Coca-Cola then for the brewery itself. There was never any idea of me going into brewing. By the time I left school in 1967 the brewery was dead; Watneys had sold up, made everyone redundant or sacked them. By that time the family had moved to Heathgate and my father had already been offered a job by a friend - he reckoned that at his age, going into vats and cleaning vats was not a healthy job - he took this job in a book and record shop at Yarmouth. We were the last family to move out of Synagogue Street, in 1964. I had gone to City of Norwich School and I got an apprenticeship in printing, working first at Page Bros. and then Jarrols.

My father used to help out the night watchman at the brewery sometimes by doing a round. At weekends or school holidays he would take me round with him so I used to know the brewery like the back of my hand. It was a wonderful place, beautiful smells, all brass and copperware. My father would check the hydrometers and so on. He would carry a little clock on a strap round his shoulder which had to have a little key inserted in each department to check that the night watchman had visited. Some places were quite dusty and spooky for a child

to go into, like one room where they kept the wooden soled clogs the men could wear when they were working. There were lockers there with old photos of footballers and so on taped up inside.

As boys we never had much in the way of bought games but my father would make little toys and games for us. Christmas was the main fun time because they weren't well paid but at Christmas if they'd done well they'd get a bonus and my father would blow all his bonus on Christmas. We'd always say, "Are we having a good Christmas this year Dad?" and he'd go, "No, sorry, sorry, we've had a bad year at the brewery, no bonus this year" so we'd go to bed on Christmas Eve feeling sad, no trimmings up or anything, and of course after we'd gone to sleep they'd get the tree up and so on and we'd wake up in the morning and there would be the pillowcase at the end of the bed with all our presents. We'd go into our parents' bedroom and get in between Mum and Dad, dragging these pillowcases with us, and they'd have to go through all our presents with us before we got up for breakfast, pretending they didn't know what we had. That was wonderful. Then we'd go into the front room where there was a cocktail cabinet with all wines on it. The brewery used to do this wine called VP and we'd always have cherry, apricot and a grape wine. As children we were allowed one glass each, in the evening. My father never used to drink much but my mum liked a drink and we had family and friends come round and of

course working at the brewery they could get their drinks cut price so there was always plenty for visitors.

My father won some money at bingo and bought a little Austin A35. We'd go to Yarmouth Dogs once or twice a week. Father liked a gamble and sometimes in the early days when they were married they'd have to hide up from the rent man because there wasn't enough money left. He kept racing greyhounds when he was young. There used to be dog tracks at Norwich, one on Sprowston Road and one at Boundary Park near the Whiffler on the ring road. Otherwise people mainly went to the pub on Saturday nights, one holiday a year - we usually went to a holiday camp like Warner's at Corton for a week. Father had an allotment with chickens and rabbits as well as vegetables. After his early shift he'd bike up to Newmarket Road, work on the allotment, then in the evening they used to listen to radio or watch telly. Sometimes they'd send us up the road to Valori's for some chips and if they were really flush, a bit of fish between them. Father was a good cricketer and footballer, he played cricket for Norwich Casuals for a lot of years so we'd get free days out to the coast, Cromer or Wells, because the club would get a coach and whole families would go.

Most of the people in Synagogue Street worked for the brewery, although our next door neighbour, Tates, used to own a shoe repair business on Magdalen Street and there was also a lady who was a retired schoolteacher.

At the end of the road was the St. Faiths Tavern and the site of the old synagogue which was blitzed in the war.

Some of the children from the top class used to be invited by Miss Thomas, the headmistress, to go away for a week at Trimmingham each summer. We also had a little Scout group - not that any of our families could afford uniforms for us - at a old chapel on Burley Street, run by a Mr. Buckingham. He was a lovely bloke in his late 40s and he used to teach us all the things you would learn at cubs and scouts, but instead of badges there was a board he would stick little hand-drawn labels on. We'd go to this church hall and do our tests and our oath to the Queen and then half an hour playing games, usually British Bulldog or five-a-side football, then during the summer months when the weather was nice a dozen of us would pile into his old shooting brake and he'd take us to Mousehold and he would teach us about wildlife, or Thorpe Green where he had this massive rowing boat and we'd all get in and row up and down the river. He even took us away on a camping holiday to Sea Palling. It would never be allowed nowadays but he was just a very nice man who was trying to do good by the community and we thought he was brilliant. Our parents used to idolise him because it got us out of their hair for an evening.

Once we slid in under the gate at Archie King's at Ber Street and came out with a load of decommissioned Bren guns

and Sten guns which they had stocked up to be destroyed; they just had a small split made in the barrel and the firing pins taken out. We played commandoes in the street and that was great fun until Sgt. Chang, as we used to call him, came by one day - he was the local bobby, with a wondrous walrus moustache - "What you boys got there?" and he confiscated them. Archie Kings got fined for that, apparently it was all in the News of the World and my older brother Norman had to go and give evidence at the local magistrates court at the Guildhall. A lot of the kids were regarded as troublemakers at the time, but we were in an area where we had nothing to play with except empty houses, dumps and air raid shelters and anywhere like Archie Kings who didn't lock up properly and left a two-foot gap under their gate, we went in there frequently and came away with stuff. "Sgt. Chang" wasn't very friendly to us but he was a good copper, used to know his area, the kind you don't get nowadays.

We went to Sunday School at St. Julians, which was run by the nuns. There was a nunnery and church hall there. The nuns all seemed elderly ladies to us; we wondered whether they wore ordinary clothes like us under their long black habits. They were just part of the neighbourhood. You made sure you went to Sunday School often enough to be able to go to the Christmas party and outings, which were a couple of times a year to a meadow to play and have a picnic. That was just part of growing up; have

your bath, put on your Sunday best and go to Sunday school. My parents were not churchgoers but we were sent to Sunday school, then we started going to St. Julians, which was high church, with incense and robes and all that, until one Sunday me and my mate Roy just decided we didn't want to go any more. When I was at the Horns Lane schools, Fr. Sears was living in the vicarage at Dragon Hall; he'd be in his doorway having a smoke and he'd ask us in and give us fruit squash and biscuits and ask how we'd been getting on at school. He was a lovely old fellow. In the evenings he'd go into the Barge and have a couple of pints. My brother and his wife had a blessing at St. Julians on their 25th wedding anniversary. Just like the old days, sitting there again, although it seemed a lot smaller. My brother and I also went to the Railway Mission on Prince of Wales Road, to meet some different girls. Later on me and Roy would go to the Castle Museum on a Sunday afternoon and see if we could find any girls. That was all that was open on Sundays - churches, museums and a few pubs lunchtime and evenings.

Youngs Crawshay and Youngs was the first brewery to go under. They were based at Wensum Lodge. The main breweries, the big four, were Youngs & Crawshays, Bullards, Morgans and Stewart & Patteson. Watneys bought up the remaining three and finished them off. There was a big outcry but it was too late.

The Cattle Market was where Castle Mall is now. When I was a child, we used to get on the window ledges of Howard House on a Saturday and watch the farmers herding the cows, sheep and horses down King Street to the market. Father used to buy his rabbits there. People used to go into the city to do their shopping on a Saturday morning. If father had a surplus from his allotment he would give stuff to the neighbours. Nothing got wasted.

Synagogue Street was pulled down because the brewery were building a lorry park there, so we had to be rehoused and the council offered us a 3-bed maisonette on Heathgate, which seemed like heaven because it had central heating, indoor toilet and bathroom. We were the last family to move out; they were already pulling down part of the street when we were living there. That was dreadfully sad. We loved it; I don't know what my parents thought, perhaps they were happy to get out of the place, but me and my brother, we loved the street, we loved the community. We'd heard about living in the tower blocks and how people were losing their friends. On Synagogue Street people used to leave their doors open, people would come in and see you, we would run errands for neighbours, and people were friends. As soon as they started moving people out, that killed it all off.