

Setting the Scene

This is a researched account of a town... covering a period just before I was born, in 1935, and later times, lived through and remember. It attempts to describe a ten year period 1929 – 1939... to give a feel for the age and times. Others, more learned, have stamped the time ‘The Great Depression’. Here is one place where the saying didn’t apply... North Harrow was designed for a new generation of urban dwellers - a consumer society full of hope.

I mustn’t colour the picture too cleanly or make it too sharp, for memory can play tricks. However, we must keep it in mind that this was a brand new garden town, built with the latest materials in the architectural style of the period. It was peopled by individuals from every corner of England, working, in the most part, for businesses in London.

It was a young community starting out in life ready to make a go of it. Very few were unemployed... the majority of women stayed at home - looking after the house, and children. No child went to school without shoes or socks; there were no soup kitchens or riots, pickets or disturbances. It was calm and tranquil, clean and bright.

The town had a full range of shops, and one cinema. There wasn’t a theatre, factory, office block or car park. The policeman walked his beat; the road sweeper swept the leaves into the gutters – the piles defying the wind. It was a time when the rag-and-bone-man sang his call... whilst along the road peddled the onion seller and knife grinder... shouting ‘scissors to grind’... as he rang his bell!

The pram, with the new arrival, was out front catching the morning sun. The frill of the stretched sun-shade fluttered gently. Leading down the tiled front path the bow topped gate swung on its hinges. Not a sound disturbed the sleeping youngster...