

MEMORIES OF CATISFIELD Gill McMillan 6/22

My first memories of Catisfield were in 1950 when I was a very young child. My grandparents lived in Catisfield Lane in the large Georgian House called Elmshurst. My grandfather, Mr H.O Fletcher, was the Fareham dentist and had his private dental practice at Elmshurst. My grandmother had been a Fareham Councillor and was involved in other Fareham activities.

The house was huge & frightening at times for me, as was the spinney in the very large garden which had two lawns, a walled garden and a kitchen garden which was looked after by 'grandpa Tucker' (no relation) but who to me looked very old and was probably only in his forties. I still have the sundial which resided in the kitchen garden where two paths crossed.

The front walled area of the house still exists where numbers 41 & 43 Catisfield Lane are built now with their driveways coming in through the original brick pillared entrance from when my grandparents lived



there. Number 39 to the left is built where the walled garden was and the building to the left front of the house was originally the coach house and stables which was appropriate at the time as my sister and I had our rocking horse there! To the left of the pillars and inside the entrance at number 41 there still grows a yew bush which my sister and I used to climb and put our heads out at the top. The picture attached, is the front of the house which shows the front door which took you into a large hall with, to the left, the

breakfast room with a bell to call the staff and on through to the kitchen area. There was also a staircase to the staff quarters, not that my grandparents had any staff! To the right of the hallway, were the dining room and drawing room beside a lovely staircase to the upper floors. Beyond this, a passage led to a conservatory visible on the right in the second picture, which also shows the windows of the dining and drawing rooms. To the far right was a lovely mulberry tree. Opposite Elmshurst lived Mrs Streten and her son Alan in Catisfield House which is still there and converted into



apartments with further buildings around which used to be a large garden with fields leading down to the river Meon and Titchfield. Harvester Drive did not exist. There were also fields beside Elmshurst's gardens to the right where a large horse which was a Dapple Grey was kept

The frontage of the property and gardens, covered the road side area from number 39 to the house called Garden Lodge where Mrs Evans lived. I met her again in later life and we would reminisce about Catisfield. Her full name was Vera Kathleen Grimaldi Evans and she told me she was related to the Monaco Grimaldi family.

Catisfield Lane was Catisfield Road when I remembered it and was a continuation of what is called Catisfield Road now, Highlands Road ended at Catisfield Road. The buses would use the road and emerge from the entrance to the A27 which was opposite Ranvilles Lane. One day I fell over in front of the bus opposite the church and was rescued by Mrs Ponsonby who was passing by and who lived at Catisfield

Lodge with her daughter Honey. She took me back to Elmshurst to be patched up, luckily the bus had stopped when I fell in front of it! Catisfield Post Office was well used and St Columba's Church was situated where the new road, Samuel Mortimer Close and buildings to the right towards Catisfield Memorial Hall are now. It was a corrugated building but with lovely wood panels inside, I used to help my grandmother with flower arranging at Easter & Christmas and would also sometimes go to Sunday School if I was at my grandparents on that day. A stalwart of the church, Justina Gardner, took the classes and I ended up working with her in Lloyds Bank Fareham. The area of Fishers Hill has not much changed and was always a pleasant walk down to the river although I'm sure the Anjou Bridge was more of a curved bridge 70 years ago, I think the road levelling has changed it.

Elmshurst unfortunately had dry rot discovered and was effectively condemned. I'm not sure of the actual demolition date but was probably 1959/60 as my grandparents had sold it and moved to Kiln Road. However, they loved the Catisfield area so they had Kynance Cottage (now Shelley's Cottage) built in about 1962 so they could move back. At that time the cottage had a dirt track to the left for access to the fields beyond. Catisfield village was still very rural then and I enjoyed visiting them at Kynance.

My next memories of Catisfield were when my parents had a house built (number 43) in Catisfield Road on



land belonging to Mr and Mrs Green who owned Langbourne and Langaller, 37 and 39. Mr Green was the MD of White & Co. the removal company. The left hand picture, shows the back of number 43. The coach house belonging to his property which was now on our land became our garage. The second picture shows the house front with the garage to

the left. The house was very modern and open plan for its time as my father, an electrical engineer, had put in under floor heating which was bliss having moved from a house where the pipes froze every winter and ice formed on the inside of the windows.



We moved there in 1959 from 219 West Street Fareham where we had lived next door to Doctor and Mrs Hilton and their son Phillip. That house is opposite Aldi which back then was the garage called Boniface & Cousins. Although we were very familiar with Catisfield, it was a shock for my sister as now being a teenager she needed a bus to get into Fareham to meet her friends at the Cresta Run coffee house! However, she joined the Youth Club at Catisfield Hall where she and her friends played table tennis and learned dancing, she remembers whoever locked the hall at night had to return the keys to Mrs Pink at Applegarth as mentioned below.



Catisfield Road was still a country lane which had ditches either side & if you came home from school at the wrong time you would meet a herd of cows being driven along the lane from the fields to, I believe, the farm in Appleton Road. Our new home backed onto fields, some owned by Mrs Pink who lived in the house called Applegarth with her sister Miss Grayson. Mr Pink who had died was originally the farmer but Mrs Pink kept a few cows in the field behind our house one of which was called Marigold shown in the picture with her calf called Daisy. The picture was taken at the end

of our garden and on an area which would now be the back garden of number 23 Cherrygarth Road, the road I assume being called after the farm?

Catisfield was changing in the 60's. A new St Columba's Church had been built in Hillson Drive and the old church was now the 106 Club run at some point by Hugh Curtis (Curly) who lived at 29 Catisfield Road which was a chalet bungalow then and not the size it has been extended to now. Cherrygarth Road did not exist and the large house to the right of 29, The Croft, was one property owned by a doctor. Beside the 106 Club, Daphne and Dick Downes who owned the land and the club, had the wine store built and there were a few shops and a car park next to the pub The Limes, which is now demolished. I believe Mr Metherell, owned the land off Catisfield Road which was then developed as Hunters, East and South Lodges, even more building and changes happening a year after my grandparents had sold Elmshurst for development.



Changes also happened at number 43. My parents decided to convert their garage and extend it to make an annexe for my grandparents to live in and build a new garage to the right of the house, this was the late 60's early 70's. My grandparents had now been living in the lower flat next door, Langaller, so I was very familiar with the large gardens there and also from having played in them in the early 60's with Mr and Mrs Green's grandchildren in their part of the garden which stretched to the fence of the Croft's

garden and is now the garden belonging to the house to the right of The Croft. At that time there were no houses as the Croft had yet to sell their land for development. The photo represents this; the rural view is where the first three houses on the right in Cherrygarth Road are now built. However, times were moving on and the land behind The Croft was developed along with the fields behind number 43 so Cherrygarth Road was opened up and The Timbers was built from 1974. My grandparents were now living in the Annexe to number 43 and were there to celebrate their Diamond wedding anniversary in 1972 before they had both passed away by the end of the 70's.

My parents now had the problem of an annexe which although rated separately, could not at that time be sold separately so they decided to downsize, the garden at number 43 being rather large to manage. My husband and I at that time, were living in Southmead Road and did consider a move to 43 but in the end my parents sold the whole property and ended up just moving around the corner to The Timbers in 1979.....they also liked living in the Catisfield



area. I well remember helping my father move the goldfish in a bucket around to the new pond he had dug for them in their new property, the large carp trying to jump out as we walked along the road. The picture shows the pond in the front garden as it was then before the annexe was eventually sold as a stand alone property and the frontage changed. The gate you can see is the entrance to number 43. My parents enjoyed their short time in The Timbers. They lived next door to Dick & Barbara Hawkins, he being R.L. Hawkins, the Gosport builder and they became good friends.

Finally, after both my parents had died by 1984, my husband and I moved to their house in The Timbers and have lived there ever since.