

Saturday's Penny .

My first pocket money given to me by my father was one penny each week. This was an 'old' penny which was worth less than a 'new' penny that we use today! In those bygone days the week's work for most people was from Monday morning to Saturday lunchtime. They would receive their week's pay in cash usually on the Saturday morning and so every Saturday afternoon I would receive a penny from my Dad and this was my pocket money for the week to come. I didn't have to earn it by working for it but all of the four children in our family were expected to help in the garden or allotment throughout the year. There would be weeding and hoeing to be done as the crops of vegetables began to grow during the early part of the summer and at potato harvesting time it would take all of us in the family to help pick up and bag the crop to be stored in our wychert walled shed. The potato crop was expected to last us till next year. There were no sell or use by dates then!

I looked forward to Saturday and was always pleased to receive my Saturday's penny. But what could I buy for one 'old' penny? Five Woodbine cigarettes cost a penny then but my pocket money could not be spent on cigarettes even if I had wanted them. The shopkeepers in Dinton would not sell them to underage children and if had dared to ask them for cigarettes our Dad would have known long before the day was out and that would have meant an end to the Saturday's penny for a long time!

The first thing that I did was to change my penny into four farthings and by doing this they would keep me in sweets for most of the coming week and would also mean four separate visits to Mrs. Pratt's shop. Mrs. Pratt was a kind hearted lady and was always fairly generous to us younger ones when serving the sweets. There were not too many sweets for a farthing though and our parents did encourage us not to eat too many. We would normally choose the ones that lasted the longest especially aniseed balls or boiled sweets were favourites.



Mrs. Pratt's shop, (now a private dwelling and formerly the Boot Inn. Much earlier rooms within this building housed the Dinton library and were also used for the Dinton band to practise).

Mrs. Edith and Mr. Alfred Pratt in their garden. (They also ran the Coal and Coke business from here under the name of Pratt and Shuttleworth.)



In the early 1940s my father was badly injured in a car accident at the top of New Road whilst cycling from his work place in Aylesbury and he spent about a year recovering after a long spell in hospital. In those days there was no sick pay or social benefits to be had and so while Dad was recovering Mother went out to work and the Saturday's penny stopped. By the time Dad was well enough to go back to work my two sisters and elder brother had left school and had started to go to work. My Saturday's penny now became threepence. I supplemented this by running errands for people in the village and by waiting outside the Post Office to be able to deliver telegrams. Each telegram had a delivery fee according to the distance from the Post Office and the best distance was to the farm at Aston Mullins in Ford. I would cycle there and back and would be paid a grand sum of one shilling and sixpence (seven and a half p. in today's money), a small fortune to me but there were not many of them and this work was only available on Saturdays and during school holidays.

Sweets became rationed during the war and the extra pocket money was spent on hobbies such as stamp collecting and I often made model aeroplanes from wooden kits. The extra money helped to buy sheet music for my piano lessons and some would be spent on gramophone records. We had a wind-up gramophone at home and we soon acquired a good selection of classical music. As I was now earning my own

pocket money there was now no need for my Dad to give me any and as the 1940s came to an end I would work a few hours during the week but mostly on Saturdays at the bakery in Dinton learning how to make bread and cakes. This part-time job had to fit in with my school homework but brought in a regular income which enabled me to buy some of my clothes and pay for visits to the cinema in Aylesbury which in turn helped to alleviate the costs on my parents. I found this work quite hard at first but it was well worth it as when I became seventeen, the baker John Webb taught me how to drive a motor car and I eventually passed my driving test thus acquiring a driving licence all of which had cost me very little. There were no driving schools in those days. By this time I had now left school and was in full time employment in Aylesbury and luckily with no Saturdays so I could continue to work all day on Saturday mainly delivering bread around the village. John Webb was a much liked and respected Dinton villager, very kind hearted and generous and I was now able to contribute to the household purse.

On reaching the age of eighteen conscription took me into the Royal Air Force and away from Dinton. When I read of the seemingly large amount of the average child's pocket money today I always recall my Saturday's penny.

G.S.Weedon.