

## Lost in London.

Tomorrow was to be a very exciting day as I would be going to London with my Mum and my older brother. So, early to bed and early to rise. We left the cottage in Dinton very early the next morning and walked up New Road to catch the bus to Aylesbury. There wasn't a bus shelter in those days but it was a nice sunny summer's morning in 1940. I was just five years old and there was a war on but this wouldn't stop mother from taking us to see her two sisters, our two Aunts, which she did every year. We were soon in Kingsbury Square where most of the busses stopped and our next bus ride would be on the Green Line coach to Victoria in London. The Green Line bus stop was in Buckingham Street which is a short walk from Kingsbury Square. This was to be my first time on the coach and it was all very exciting!

The journey was quite long but there was much to see. The roads were narrow and winding but there was very little traffic as petrol was in short supply and not many people owned a motor car. We soon arrived on the outskirts of London, the countryside quickly disappeared being replaced by lots of houses and the Green Line coach eventually pulled into Victoria coach station. It was time to get off and catch another bus to the Oval cricket ground in Kennington. It was all so very different from Dinton, no green fields only roads and shops and houses! This journey was fairly short and we soon arrived at my Aunt and Uncle's flat. It was nice to see them again and we were always welcome there. A short time later we had to walk about half a mile to see our other Aunt and then came the walk back. Both of these Aunts came to stay with us in Dinton from time to time but more so during the war. They were both born in Aylesbury but preferred to live in London.

As we were walking back to the block of flats my brother and I suggested that he and I raced back. Mother and our Aunt didn't mind as they knew that Frank knew the way back. He was five years older than me and much taller. He could also run much faster than I could and soon he was a long way ahead and out of sight. I ran into the block of flats area but he was nowhere to be seen and I soon realised that I was lost! My brother knew the way as he had done it several times before. I continued to walk and look around but I knew that I didn't recognise anything as all the blocks of flats looked the same to me so I left the housing area and went into the main road. (I know now that this was Kennington Park Road). There was very little traffic and very few people about so I ambled slowly along the road hoping that someone would find me. There didn't seem to be anyone who was remotely interested in my plight.

Although I didn't know it at the time there was someone who was interested and this someone had been watching me for a little time. I couldn't see him but he could see me. Up ahead I noticed that there was a Police box and as soon as I got within a few yards from it the door of the Police box opened and out stepped a very large uniformed policeman. He had been watching me walk along the road and he clearly wanted to know what was going on. He said "Hello young man and where are you going today?" I replied that I was lost. "So where do you live?" he asked. "Dinton" I said. "And where might Dinton be?" asked the policeman. I told him that it was near Aylesbury in Buckinghamshire. He said that I was a long way from home and asked me how I had arrived here. I told him that I was visiting my aunt who lived nearby and that we had come by bus that morning. "Tell me what is your Aunt's name?". I replied that it was Aunt Let (her name was Leticia but I didn't know that then). "And what is her other name?" he asked. "She hasn't got another name, we only call her Aunt Let" "Is there an Uncle as well?" the

policeman asked. "Yes and his name is Uncle Stan and he doesn't have another name either" I said. "Does anyone else live there?" he asked. "Yes, my cousin, but he is away at sea in the Royal Navy and his name is Lennie Cooke!" (This information was a good clue for the policeman but he didn't need it!). At this point the policeman looked up and down the road and asked me to look at the lady who was coming down the road and did I recognize her? She was looking very worried and yes it was my Aunt Let, she had found me, I was no longer lost! I was so pleased and relieved to see her again and after thanking the policeman who had been so kind to me we said our goodbyes which were followed by a tearful reunion with Mother. (I would never forget this day but over the passing years memories fade).

I cannot recall anything about the journey back home to Dinton, but I think that I probably slept most of the way but I didn't let loose of Mum's hand. There was plenty to tell Dad when we saw him and it really had been a very exciting day!

I always referred to my cousin as Lennie Cooke but I don't know why. He was sixteen years older than me but he spent a good deal of his school summer holidays each year living with us in Dinton, so many in fact that I really thought that he was my big brother. When war came he joined the Royal Navy and sadly he died at sea in July 1941. I was then just six years old.

Mother continued to take us to London annually throughout the war years and after, but by the time that I was fourteen I would go on my own to see both Aunts, sometimes staying overnight, but I never got lost again! Aunt Let and I were quite close as I was born on her birthday so we exchanged birthday cards each year and we never forgot birthdays or the day I got lost!

Gordon Weedon.