

SUMMARY

Name: Bob Ward

YOB: 1942 in Kingston

What did your parents do for a living? Father worked for Hawker Siddeley and mother was a Housewife.

When I was a child I would meet my father after work and we would go to the Elite Cinema which had the ABC Café, we would also go to the Granada where I remember the usherettes had blue and gold cloaks and led us to our seats with a torch. Never went to the Kinema as this only showed X rated movies. Used to go to the ABC across the road from the Bus Station on Saturday mornings for the kids show I remember we had a group of children on stage (I was one of them) and we sang for the audience. I recall the Odeon in Thomas Street had an upstairs room where bands played rock n roll. Sometimes went to the Odeon in New Maldon on a Saturday afternoon with a friend where they usually showed war films, remember seeing Danny Kaye on screen.

As a teenager I remember seeing Goldfinger a lot of times with different girlfriends. Memories of cinemas in Kingston at that time is that they smelt musty, went depending on what film was showing, could go in part way through the film and stay to watch the bit you missed in the second showing, cinemas ran a rolling programme at that time.

Snacks I remember were packets of crisps and ice creams bought from the usherettes.

Music in cinemas? Have an early memory of an organist playing a Wurlitzer or Compton organ.

My parents always paid for me to go to the cinema when I was young so no idea what the price was to get in.

Reputation of cinemas in Kingston, I know that the Kinema was known as the flea pit, I never went there.

Differences between cinemas, all the ones I went to were pretty plush, lots of gold and plasterwork, going to the cinema was an event! I loved all the cinemas I went to.

Films I remember from my youth, Crimson Pirate with Burt Lancaster and Court Jester with Danny Kaye, always two films a short followed by the main feature.

Courting, yes I remember taking girls to the cinema.

Films were mainly advertised on billboards outside the cinema and in town, can't remember seeing any adverts in the local paper.

On screen advertising was always Pearl & Dean, remember seeing Movietone News.

No real memory of cinemas closing, they did of course but I don't remember them going.

How does Kingston now compare with the past, well only one cinema with multiple screens, used to be five different cinemas in the past, much nicer event years ago. Whole ambience of cinemas has changed, no longer so much of an event.

Movies got into my blood when I went behind the scenes at the Odeon in Surbiton, saw inside the projection box, the arc lights and all the projectors, really made an impression.

Music shows, I can recall them taking place at the Granada, saw Roy Orbison walking to the Odeon to do a show!

Never went to Saturday Morning Pictures, but I now go to Silver Screen and have my cup of tea and a biscuit.