

Chairman's Report: 16 July 2020

So, I'm sitting here again wondering what to fill my column with. I asked Tara in the office for inspiration and I have decided on memories of Shepton Mallet. There are many people newer to the town than I who probably won't know that Whitstone's Fish and Chips used to be a garage selling cars, which it was when I worked in Clarks shoe factory in the late 80s.

Do you know that Tesco sits on the site of the Clarks shoe factory? Amongst other things we made the Clarks T bar sandals, most of us born in the 50s to the 80s probably had a pair at some point! I remember in my first few weeks walking up Cannards Grave Road thinking I might get a pint at the Field Inn, only to find it had closed the year before and I wasn't local enough to know this! So I would go for a lunchtime pint in the Clarks Social club which was over towards the Argos end of the Tesco site, it was great, it even had a full size snooker table.

We all know the derelict building opposite the Salvation Army and probably love to hate it, but 25 years ago it was a busy café. I worked for a greengrocer in Wells at the time and would deliver about 12 sacks of potatoes a week to it, yes it was busy! My memories of the centre of town are hazier, I didn't go there that often but I do remember Luxe and Twine was a Gateway supermarket. Who worked there when Mr Scott got moved from the Wells branch where I worked?

The centre of Shepton has certainly changed in the time I have known it, from cycling from Priddy to do my Christmas shopping in 1978, to watching Ghostbusters at the Cinema in about 1985 in The Centre, now known as The Amulet. Although not a local 'local', I am aware of the fall, and now I believe rise, of Town Street, I do genuinely believe that things are improving.

If any born and bred Sheptonian would like to tell me of their memories of the town, you will usually find me round the market on a Friday morning, if you fancy a chat and a coffee from a safe distance.

Edric Hobbs, Chair, Shepton Mallet Town Council