

"A Bus Drivers Son, is a happy one" a tale from Birmingham

My Father started on the buses in 1931 as a Conductor, then going on to be a Driver, then an Inspector and last of all as a Cash clerk at Lea Hall garage from where he retired in 1971. His name was Arthur Eugene Smith, a good old Black Country name, as he originated from Smethwick, Dad was mainly known as Smudger to his friends.

The garages he worked at where Liverpool Street, Acocks Green, Washwood Heath and Lea Hall, at one stage when he was an Inspector he was a time-keeper in the Old Square, Birmingham.

He got married in 1936 from a house in Old Know Road, Small Heath, of course word got around that "smudger" was getting married, so being on a bus route, every bus that went past would stop and wish him luck.

When he was at Acocks Green garage during and after the 2nd World War I can remember all the Buses being parked along Fox Hollies road at night, could you imagine that in this day and age? Then there was the Football Specials going to St Andrews, and who can forget the sayings "pass down the bus please", "full up inside", "there's one behind"

Then there was the Pantomime trips from the garage and the trip to the Sports stadium in Kings Heath. I recall being on dads bus many a time, and a good driver he was to, you didn't get thrown around and there was never a noise from the old gear box.

He was also a keen gardener and every house we lived in had a large garden, off he'd go to work with excess vegetables for anybody who wanted them. I used to collect the used tickets, from which if you folded them right you could make a long concertina shape, I wonder how many other children did this.

When he was at Lea Hall he had a friend, another Inspector called Harry Bumpus if I remember right, and he used to visit dad at home turning up on this Huge, well it was in those days, Ariel Square 4 motor Cycle.

It was fun riding on the top deck, at the front and watching the buses coming the other way, as all the drivers would have these signs to say where they had seen an Inspector, I remember dad saying once, that a driver had told him, "its no use hiding in a shop doorway as your stomach sticks out"

He enjoyed his 40 years service, all ways smart, with shoes polished creases in trousers and a cap badge you could see your face in, we have his trowel hanging on the wall still after 35 years, it makes me feel proud of my Father, and now I have a Son who drives for Arriva.

Mr J M Smith