

BENSKIN'S HOUSE

by

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I moved from Weston-Underwood near to Olney in Bedfordshire with my parents in 1932. They were to be caretakers at the Benskin's House. I was aged seven at the time.

Our facilities in the house were a lounge in the basement, and our sleeping quarters on the top floor. I used to count the steps up to bed every night – 77 I think!

I can remember when Watford FC held the meetings in the house with Bill Finlay as manager and T L Simmons as the club secretary. He was also secretary to the brewery. I can remember the offices of the different directors – Col Briggs, Master Kilby and later Mr Kilkenny and Aden Briggs. The other uses of the house were for secretaries, typists, clerks, cashiers and transport. The transport office was built on to the main building at a later date, with showers for the drivers.

I can remember the gateman, named Sid, ringing a bell at 8am, 1pm, 2pm, and 5.15pm each working day to start and finish work. I remember the house being floodlit and decorated for King George V's Silver Jubilee and for Queen Elizabeth's Coronation.

We were moved to new quarters in 1939 to 202a High Street; the reason being the architects wanted more room, so used our sleeping quarters at the house. 202 and 202a were a grocer's shop and house owned by Fletchers. Cyril Fletcher was born in this house.

My father died in 1946, and my sister helped carry out caretaking duties with a person named Mrs Woolnough and my mother. Mrs Woolnough's husband was the night-watchman. My mother, sister and brother-in-law were moved to a Benskin's house in The Crescent, as the brewery wanted more room for the architects. I had got married in the meantime, so did not reside at the Crescent address.

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