

JACKIE HODGSON

I wanted to include this district as it's been my stomping ground for a few decades. Memories are bound up on nearly every road and corner.

Friends live in the criss-crossing streets, all seemingly leading to the park. In those first years of the new millennium we watched Santa ride his bike from Liz's bedroom window, our excited kids yelling with delight, my Dad thinking they'd made it up when they recounted the tale. Shed-moving parties, kids' parties, marriages, civil partnerships, divorces, births and deaths. Long streets of red brick terraces, with a garage, a builder or a mortgage broker dotted in odd places.

York Road feels local - you know people's names. *Skill*, the electrical shop run by Zafor - who can fix or supply most things electrical. *Top Banana* where the whole family get kitted out with Converse. Even the ones just visiting! *Polar Bear* records where I used to get my Mostly Jazz Festival tickets, when they were actual tickets! *Julia's Scissors* where Martin has cut my and my children's hair for more than two decades. And of course the *Hare and Hounds* pub, my last gig before lockdown. At *York Supplies*, John and Stuart have furnished us with plants, washers, drill bits and obscure ironmongery, first where the *Kitchen Garden* now stands, then further along in larger premises. A new phase approaches: it's moving into cooperative ownership now that John is off down south.

York road is also a great spot for food and drink. *Cherry Reds* was a staple for brunches and cocktails, now *The Juke*. And curry houses galore. Henry and Sophie have made a success of first, Grace and James and then Poli. Most recently, York road has hosted Queen's Heath Pride - a fantastic community event and a rip-roaring day out.

And as I walked back from taking these pictures, wondering to myself exactly whereabouts in Kings Heath Joe Lycett lives, suddenly, there he was, walking towards me. "Nice Jumper!" I exclaimed. "Hello!" he replied, smiling and taking out an ear bud! That felt very Kings Heath!