

Dear reader

When I first came to live in Eltham in 1988 (that's a long time ago!), I had never heard of it.

I had been brought up in west London and worked in central London so I had never been to this part of the capital city. However, when I needed a place to stay a kind friend, Chris, knew of a flat to rent in her hometown, Eltham. It turned out that the flat was on Crieghton Road which I later learnt was the road in which the famous comedian, Bob Hope, was born.

It's always difficult when you're in a new place on your own. It can feel a bit lonely. So I made a point of trying to get to know my new town. There was the library to join, visits to the swimming pool, the cinema and meals out with my friend Chris.

The thing that surprised me the most was the green spaces around. There was the ancient and vast Oxleas Woods, the pretty Well Hall Pleasance, the hidden Tarn and nearby Avery Hill Park with its Winter Gardens. There was always somewhere to go when I had friends visiting.

I'm starting to like this place – I think I'll stay!

Now over thirty years later, I'm still here! Lots of things have changed though. Shops I knew have come and gone, for example the Alders and Co-op department stores have been replaced by new ones. One of my favourites was the Boers Art & Stationery shop, full of shiny new art materials – tubes of oil paints, blank canvases and every size of paint brush. The old art deco swimming pool has long gone but we've now got a bigger and better one. The many old cinemas gradually closed but now we've also got a new one of those too.

The other thing that's changed is that I moved to a different part of Eltham (closer to the woods!) and now have a family of my own. Years ago when I used to gaze out of my Creighton Road flat window at the Gordon Primary School directly opposite, little did I know that many years later my own two future children would be amongst those noisy ones in the playground!

Over the years I really became interested in the history of different parts of Eltham such as the Tudor Barn and Eltham Palace. It fascinated me that my little town was mentioned in William the Conqueror's Domesday Book of 1086. So I started a blog which included bits of history and news about Eltham.

I hope you enjoy living in your town and take time to learn about it.

Yours

Reeva