

Prefab Memories

## Childhood Home



Growing up in a prefab in East Dulwich, South London

**John Chinery, 2016**

The home I grew up in up until the age of 17 was 198 Underhill Road, East Dulwich, a lovely two bedroom Prefab.

I was only about six months old when we moved into a Prefab in Underhill Road, there was a shop just across the road that sold practically everything, if you wanted some cheese it would be cut on a board with wire and then wrapped in brown paper, the name of the shop was Derek Stores Ltd, a Grocers shop at 212 Underhill Road/corner of Friern Road, it was there around 1960, at the back of the shop it had a high wall around the ground with a garden shed, when it closed I used to go in there with a couple of my mate's and played Cowboys, we made out it was "The Alamo"

The first time I met Francis Rossi (Status Quo) I was 14 years old, Francis was 17, he was sitting on the ground in the garden of 200 Underhill Road, this was the Prefab home of my next door neighbours, Mrs Smith and her two daughters Pat & Jean. Francis had his back up against the coal shed next to the dustbin, he was reading those little war books, they were called "Commando", he was going out with Jean at the time.

We moved out of our Prefab when I was 17 years old because of the damp, I loved living in that Prefab and just did not want to move, Dad was offered 9 Greendale Close, just off East Dulwich Grove, a three bedroomed semi detached house, it was brilliant, but not a patch on our lovely Prefab.

Extracted from John Chinery's memories, available on our website.

## Prefab Memories

# Abbots Gardens



Growing up in a prefab in Abbots Gardens, Shrewsbury

**Peter Ford, 2016**

I was born in a prefab at 48 Abbots Gardens, Shrewsbury in 1951 and lived there until our family, the Fords, moved to a new house, built by my Dad, Joe, in 1960. The new house was bigger, much bigger, and in a nicer part of town but I have always looked back on number 48 with affection and longing. I don't think I have ever since felt so closely connected to a community of neighbours and friends as I did during those early years of my life.

I know that feeling is partly the result of a deceptively warm glow of nostalgia, but there is a strong core of truth behind it. Our house was one of a collection of 1940s-constructed, detached, prefabricated bungalow houses, or "prefabs" as they were popularly called, built to help solve the post-war housing crisis as the returning heroes looked to establish their new war wives and families.

The focus then was on using what you had as much as possible. So, the kitchen table was the party table in the garden on my fourth birthday and the kitchen chairs doubled as car seats when we children travelled in the back of Dad's van.

I am not saying life then was better, and I am sure that in many ways things were tougher and more difficult, but perhaps things were a little simpler and freer from "the tyranny of choice".

Extracted from Peter Ford's memories, available on our website.