



Pam Coppin

Pam came to Queen's Park aged eighteen and started work at the Honey Hill Lido Café. At nineteen, she started work in the Allens' canteen. She now lives in Bromham.



Foster's Island was opposite the Lido Cafeteria. The bridge leading to the island no longer exists.

My contact with W.H. Allens' canteen started in 1950 when I applied for the position of storekeeper to Rayner and Elkin - the catering company managing the canteen. I was shown the storeroom where I would work; it was full of huge bags of flour, sugar and all the necessary ingredients to cater for large numbers of people. The store was situated behind the kitchens and had no

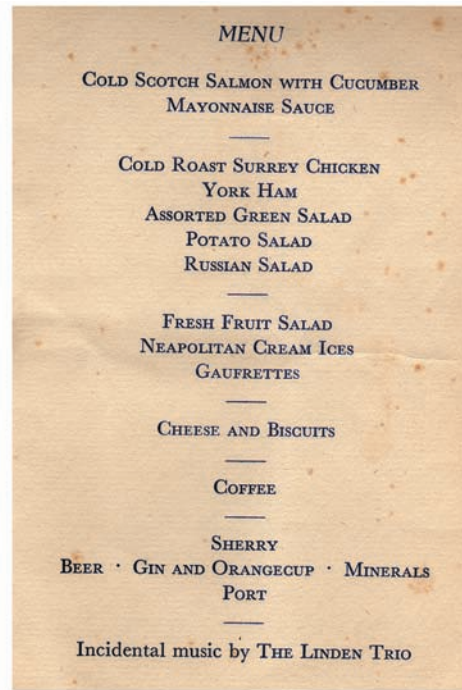
windows. It had a stable door with a shelf attached from which was issued the necessary ingredients, which had to be noted on cards, as the stock take was made every Friday.

I remember the first day when the horn blew for lunchtime, the double doors in the centre of the canteen were thrown open and the workers poured in. Suspended from the roof, central and opposite the door was the menu board; it could be pulled up and down to write the menu each day and to change it if the dish was sold out. It became my job to do this and it took a long time to get used to the cheers that filled the room. This also happened to the girls clearing the dirty dishes; if they dropped anything everyone cheered, so embarrassing but very funny.

Things were still strict and the menus were quite plain but wholesome and filling. Most days we served stew and dumplings or a steamed meat and onion roll, cottage pie or meat pasties, liver and bacon, Spam fritters and a special which was roast beef or pork etc. All served with a choice of vegetables such as cabbage, swede, carrots, mashed potato or chips. On Fridays it was always fish and chips. Also sweets - steamed jam roly-poly, Dundee puddings, jam sponges, apple pies, all served with custard.



W H Allens' Christmas party 1953. Held in the canteen



I remember the children's parties, the apprentices' teas when they received their diplomas and the visit of the Duke of Edinburgh, which caused a great stir; everything had to be just right.

This stone urn was used to take barley water to the men in the Sandblast Shop



The ingredients we used for making large amounts of pastry were as follows:

*6 lb plain flour
Baking powder
1 lb lard
2 lb margarine
1½ lb sugar
1 pint hot water (as opposed to the usual cold water)*

Method

Rub the fat into the flour and sugar until it resembles fine breadcrumbs. Mix in the water to make a soft dough. Use as required.