

Thank you Jeff for sending this in a great piece.

## THE LITTLE ENTREPRENEUR

Inspired by Sue's article of her childhood with her Grandma.

When I was a kid of about 8, I got quite friendly with the local 'dealer' who had an antique/junk shop. I got to know him when a lot of local street houses were vacated to make way for re development. As soon as the 'old houses' became empty, I was in there, any clothing in one bag, wollens in another, then off down the dealers, 6d a pound woollens & 3d other clothing. Then any pop bottles down the 'offy' 3d a piece. So I got to know the dealer Quite well. He then told me what to get him at the local jumble sales, & a timetable of opening times, as there would be quite a few on a Saturday. As a cheeky little Herbert the people in the queues let me get to the front. Little did they know, around 6d I would pay for elaborate picture frames & I got about 2 shillings a time. Always getting some bits & pieces for myself. Mainly Staffordshire pottery ornaments.



Always put them on my dressing table, my Mum always knocked them off when she was cleaning. I now realise she didn't like them and it was no accident. Although I got on really well with Mr Birch (the dealer), I once came back with an ornament I liked the look of. I paid 6d for it, Mr Birch hounded me to sell it to him, finally I gave in, he gave me 10/= for my lead ink well in the shape of a Welsh costumed lady. I then found out from 'the old girl' (Old Mother Riley look alike) who worked in his shop he sold it for £50. This incident didn't fill a young lad with confidence of people he trusted. However by the time I was 10, he used to do House clearances & I would help him. We were at the shop when a Rolls Royce pulled up outside. Out comes the Man & says his elderly parent had died & could we clear the house. He booked it in & took me with him. The son must have been so wealthy he hadn't gone through a lot of the stuff. Mr Birch told me to get all the clothing that was hanging on the back doors of each room & put them in the van. I told Mr B there was some loose change in the pockets, he said I could have it. But what he didn't know was each pocket was full of half crown & two bob bits. Guess I got my £50 back. Although I must have looked like billy bunter with my pockets full. Then I always looked forward to about a month before Guy Fawkes, so I could put some old big clothes & a mask on my little brother, & put him in the push chair for 'penny for the guy'. Then from the age of 10, I became the most popular kid in class before Christmas as I was soloist in the choir. So at the beginning of December I used to go Carol singing, & as I was the only one who could sing I took a different mate with me each night. This went on until I was about 15. While all this was going on I used to walk local peoples dogs for them. Shortly after this the local kennel, which was opposite my house asked me if I would be interested in walking her 'boarders'. Which I did for maybe a couple of years until Mrs Ward asked me, if instead of getting paid would I like her to teach me to clip poodles & strip wire haired dogs. Anyone that knows me will realise I am the man who says yes. I could learn on dogs that were boarding for 4 weeks or so, as my mistakes would grow out by the time the owners picked their dogs up. By the time I was 14, I was preparing dogs for Crufts dog show. Wire haired dogs had to be stripped with a cut throat razor pulling between forefinger & thumb, not with clippers. Crufts couldn't come round quick enough. I would wait outside my house model dogs made by the on the dogs we had pre-owner was nervous about ents, I can remember coming notes.



5am to be picked up, as we had a stall for selling brass 'kennel lady's' husband. Then I would do final touches pared. Take some of the dogs in the show ring if the doing so. Then keeping seats in the stand for our cli-home after the weekend with about £13 all in 10/=

One of my early memories of primary school was being asked to sell tickets to ones family & friends, when all the other kids struggled with one book of 10, I had sold over 100. When my teacher asked how I managed it, I of course replied 'I went round the streets knocking on peoples doors'.