

SPARKBROOK - SPARKHILL (AREA 3)

RIFFAT BASHIR

The Walford Road area evoked childhood memories of growing up In Sparkhill /Sparkbrook in the 1960s and 70s. I revisited old haunts, where I played as a child with local school friends and neighbours.

The neighbourhood previously had a large Irish population, who came over to help with the post war expansion of Birmingham and the road network. It had many churches and local shops. Now the area's population is mainly of Pakistani descent and many of the churches have been converted into Mosques. Old pubs are now restaurants. The housing stock is predominantly red brick terraced housing with little or no frontage on long roads. The large buildings are either former churches or schools.

My old secondary school, Golden Hillock School is now Ark Boulton Academy and is a typical red brick Victorian school building. The Mermaid Pub with its 1960s mermaid stone plaque is now Farro's with ornate red brick building has now been updated into a restaurant called Farro's with it's a black bull. I will never forget the excitement of buying my first bottle of Coke for 25p from a shop opposite.

© Riffat Bashir

16th May 2023