

STONEY LANE (AREA 3)

GRAHAM EVANS

Stoney Lane is in Sparkbrook. The Spark Brook used to run along the Stoney Lane until it was culverted towards the end of the 19th century.

‘The brook running along Stoney Lane was a delightful fishing place for the young anglers of that generation, and often one could see the boys with glass jars and bottles containing the tiny, darting minnows caught in the brook, being taken home to be placed in the window to be admired by passers-by.’¹

Most of the houses along the road were built in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The road runs south from Stratford Road to the Yardley Wood Road for roughly one kilometre. There are about three and a half thousand residents, many of whom are of south Asian descent. It hosts an array of local businesses including supermarkets, chemists, car washes, estate agents, restaurants, grocers and off licenses. The Nelson Mandela school borders Stoney Lane and was opened by Archbishop Desmond Tutu in 1987. It was visited by Madibe himself in 1993. There is a green space called Spark Green Park opposite the Stoney Lane plumber’s merchant.

The Roscoe’s fast-food restaurant is on the site of the Royal Oak pub that was run for many years by John McGrath in the 1970s and 80s. Adil’s restaurant was one of the first balti houses in Birmingham. They are still going strong whilst most other balti houses on Stoney Lane have closed. If you want really good vegetarian food, try the Milan sweet centre.

The Army reserve site has been there for over 100 years. My Dad learned to drive with the territorials there in the 1930s.

The road is quite scruffy at the Stratford Road end and gradually improves as it reaches Yardley Wood Road.

¹ Wilbert Orson in the South Birmingham Advertiser Thursday September 22nd 1921 (recalling the 1860’s)