

### MAX WATTS

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The A5127 Lichfield Road runs between Birmingham and Lichfield, Staffordshire. For much of the route, the road follows the old route of the A38 which has since been moved to by-pass places such as Erdington and Sutton Coldfield and to form a relief road from Birmingham city centre to Spaghetti Junction.

For this project, I chose the section of the Lichfield Road that runs between Spaghetti Junction and Aston train station because some of my family memories are linked to the local area within the vicinity of Lichfield Road.

Living in Nechells, as a small child, I was fascinated by the constant rise and fall of the Windsor Street gas-holders on the Aston skyline, that formed the backdrop to our maisonette on Rupert Street.

While researching my ancestry, I discovered that my great grandfather had been employed as a gas work stoker there, having relocated from rural Staffordshire to Long Acre, during the industrial revolution. His family would frequent the Villa and Swan Pool Taverns connected by Holborn Hill. Due to the subsequent demolition of the slums on Long Acre, as part of the post war regeneration of the area, his family dispersed across the region; back along the old A38 route.

Much later, I returned briefly to the area, having been offered a summer job on Lichfield Road. Each day, I travelled to Washwood Heath bus station and walked to Nechells, crossed Long Acre, and ran all the way down Holborn Hill to my place of work.

This project has afforded me the opportunity to discover and record the remnants of the industrial past that still exist along the Lichfield Road today, while recalling my family history and our connections with Aston, Nechells and beyond.

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