

## Memories by Kathleen Horrobin

My late husband Brian and myself moved into the Plantation Gate Lodges on Wigan Lane in the summer of 1970, a couple of months after we were married. Brian worked for the Parks Dept. and his first job when he was 16 years old was taking the fares to ride the Tractor from the gates up to the Hall.

The inside of the lodges were surprisingly larger on the inside than they looked from the outside. Looking at them from Wigan Lane. The left one was our living room and the right was our bedroom, we didn't have a bathroom just an outside toilet, so we had to have a wash at the kitchen sink and go to our parents for a bath.

There was a trap door in the living room heading down to a tunnel that we were told used to lead to the other lodge, but had been blocked off by then. We had to keep our door locked because people coming off the tractor and trying to come in assuming the lodges were public toilets!!

It was lovely living there in the Summer, but very quiet and lonely as Winter approached. I remember one morning a lady knocking on the door to ask if I was alone because there was a man exposing himself in the bushes. I asked her to wait whilst I got my coat and went to my parent's home for the day until Brian got home from work.



Tracy Horrobin and her mum outside their 1970's front door

I can't imagine now how we coped with no bathroom and having to go out in the night to the toilet. It wasn't easy but when you're young and in love I suppose you'll cope with any hardship, we were only 19 years old at the time. I have lovely memories of our time there but sadly no photographs (as we didn't have a camera). As I used to tell people we had the largest garden in Wigan. It would be lovely to see the lodges restored to their former glory and maybe made into a visitor centre or at least being put to some kind of good use instead of being left to decay.