



From Moorhills Farm to the Winter Gardens



Win Salter was born in 1935 at Moorhills Farm in Whitwell where her father Fred Salter had followed his father Charles as the farmer. The photo here from the early 1920s shows Fred on his hunter, dressed as a huzzar and on his way to marshal the Ventnor Carnival.

When she was three, the family moved to Stenbury Lodge in Whitwell, where they were living throughout the second world war. Although she was only a child at that time, Win recalls that when Southampton was bombed you could see it alight from Stenbury. She remembers soldiers were billeted on the downs who sometimes came to the house for meals. Her father caught rabbits, and mother would make a huge rabbit stew, followed by apple pie, and the soldiers would park their rifles in a big pile in the porch and come in for the feast, bringing sugar for her mother, bits of chocolate for the children - and nylons for Win's elder sister. When D Day finally came the sky was black with planes, droning across all day long.

The family moved again, to Sussex Villas in Tulse Hill, and Win spent her teenage years in Ventnor. One of her passions was roller skating on the rink on the Eastern Esplanade (*see next week's article*) and she also loved

Carnival - there were so many more floats then, and stalls in Marlborough Road at the bottom of Tulse Hill where you could buy masks, balloons, and Carnival costumes. Her uncle was in the navy, and Win would dress up in his white tropical sailors' uniform, and complete it with a false beard.

Then there were the dances at the Winter Gardens. There was always a band on a Saturday night, often one of the big bands of the time, and people would come from all over the Island. She would walk down with her friends, in their long dresses and dancing shoes, every Saturday. It was very proper - her father would be waiting outside the doors at a quarter to eleven to pick her up and take her home, and they would be back in Tulse Hill by 11 o'clock.

In September 1954 Win married Paul Arnold at St Catherine's Church. She met him at the Winter Gardens; he was in Ventnor to visit his sister, Juliet, a TB patient in the RNH, and came to the dance that night. The wedding breakfast was held, very appropriately, at the Winter Gardens, this photo showing Win coming down the staircase in her wedding dress (the photo taken by Robbie, a beach photographer, who did all the photos of the day).

Clothes rationing was not long ended, and Win had bought the veil herself, which caused a row with Paul because they were saving up everything they could for their new home. But the wedding dress was homemade by Paul's mother who also embroidered the flower decorations and sewed on the seed pears. Win remembers buying the material from a stall in Tooting market in London, and Paul's mother rolling the bale of oyster coloured satin out across the floor, pinning on the paper pattern and then holding her shears to the cloth with the words 'Ready, Win?'

