

Nigel Moss April 2024  
The Curiosity Shop, Queen's Road  
and  
Moss Motors, corner of Aldergate Street and Bath Road

The Moss family have been in the wooden shops in Queen's Road for over 50 years. Their business selling second hand goods started in 1969 in shop No.10 (nearest High Street) and moved to No.14 in about 1980. Nigel left school at 16 in 1974 and was offered a job at Marling and Evans as an apprentice loom tuner at Ryeford. But he went for one day and it was too noisy for him. So he went to work for his Dad, Brian. Twenty five years ago, when Brian retired, he gave Nigel the business. Nigel is still his Dad's tenant but doesn't pay rent any more.



*Photo taken from Blicks 'Builders' Yard at the time that the shops were being built. The half-finished shop in the centre is The Curiosity Shop (No.14 Queen's Road). No.12 is a Wool Shop, No.10 may be Bramwell Parker, tailor.*

The shops were probably built in about 1924, from evidence in newspapers. The Baptist Chapel had already been built in 1908 on the land behind the shops. Most of the land alongside Queen's Road was owned by the Blick family, A. R. Blick and Son, who ran a building business. Andrew and his son Leo Blick built the chapel and later the row of shops. When Leo Blick died in 1960 the shops were inherited by his son, Alan.

In 1927 the row of shops was occupied by  
No. 10 Bramwell Parker (tailor)  
No. 12 O'Neill (confectioner) (previously a Wool Shop)  
No. 14 Garner (butcher) (previously Percy Cox (butcher))  
No. 16 Cicily Cullis (ladies outfitter)

No. 10 was where Bramwell Parker started his tailoring business which later moved, first to the opposite side of Queen's Road, and then to the High Street. By 1932, boot and shoe repairer Norman Payne occupied No. 10, where he stayed until his retirement in 1969.

Moss's shop – The Curiosity Shop - (No. 14) was originally a butcher's. Nigel says you can see where they hung the meat off the ceiling. The other shops have got tin roofs but No. 14 has a tiled roof. Nigel thinks this was because tiles kept the butcher's shop cooler.



*In this photo from the 1990s, taken by Valerie Blick from her house opposite, the tiled roof of No.14 can be seen clearly. Nos.10 and 12 are Equestrian Requisites and Pet Supplies, No.16 is Jasper's Dress Agency and a new shop has been built on the end - Studio 3, hairdresser.*

After Norman Payne retired in 1969, Nigel's mother Peggy Moss took over No.10, selling bric-a-brac.

Nigel remembers:

"My brother Ian had started school and my Mum wanted to get a job. Dad knew Alan Blick through the Motor Club and he was a customer at the garage so he let him know the shop was becoming vacant and my Mum took it on. By the time I was 14 I was big enough to help. I can remember going in there with my Dad to start tidying and painting it up. In the back area the walls were black and horrible from where Norman had the shoemaking.

We moved into No.10 and Wilf Postlethwaite had No.12 with his pet shop. They were lovely – my brother used to spend hours helping him as he had the animals out the back. He took over from Jack Anderson when he moved into the red brick shops a bit further down. Wilf Postlethwaite was a BP tanker driver and his wife ran the pet shop. This started because their terrier dog won a prize at Crufts and he became quite well known. They did dog clipping out the back. They had a toy terrier dog on wheels out the front as part of their sign. Wilf had a Cortina Estate which I used to wash for him.

We were renting the shop from Alan Blick. Dad still had the garage on the corner of Aldergate Street (Moss Motors) with his father until 1975 but at weekends he helped at the shop.

So from 1969 to about 1980 Mum was in the small shop (No.10). Next to that was Postlethwaite (No.12 All Dogs) and in this shop (No.14) was the ladies' hairdresser – Ros in the Vanity Box - and on the end was Mr. Sleeman gents' hairdresser. I went to Sleeman's for my haircut. He drove a pale blue Ford Capri which he parked outside. The hairdresser on Barnard's Parade was Mr. Fiddler – they were very similar. When I was a young lad I thought I might have something different but no chance with them! My Dad told me when I needed a haircut and he will still tell me that now!" (*Brian Moss, Nigel's Dad, is 90*)

Blick also owned three other wooden shops on the other side of Queen's Road next to his builders' yard. Nigel remembers Alan Blick demolishing the one next to the Midland Bank on the corner, so the bank could build an extension. When the builders' yard closed in 1966, the workshops and the wooden shops were replaced by three town houses. Blick also had three red brick shops built between the Post Office and the Comrades Club, one of which confectioner Jack Anderson moved into from No.12.

Nigel remembers:

"We moved to No.14 in about 1980 because it was a bit bigger and had the place out the back where Mum could sit and have a little cooker to do us some dinner. My Dad knew Alan Blick well. It was all agreed we could have the shop when Ros the hairdresser moved out. Alan and Valerie were on holiday so Dad got the key from Ros. We went in with a builder mate and cleared the place of all the sinks etc. When Alan came back he had a right go at my Dad for going in while he was away! He could be difficult to deal with sometimes."



1980s

No. 10 Turner washing machines, No. 12 All Dogs, No. 14 The Curiosity Shop  
No. 16 Paragon laundry



*Left - Brian and Nigel Moss unloading the van in the 1980s. Right - the garages in 2024.*

By the 1920s the Baptist Chapel had become the Comrades Club. The building, its yard and garages were still owned by Alan Blick. By 1980 the yard had become busy with cars parked by people visiting the club. They often blocked the garages which Alan rented out to various people. Nigel's dad said Alan was fed up with the hassle from the Comrades Club.

"All the garages had cars in – David Cox's grandfather, Mr Hill, had one, Noel Johnston from the thatched cottage had one – and they used to go banging on Alan's door saying, "I can't get my car out" because people from The Comrades had parked in front of the garages."

So in about 1980, Brian Moss bought the yard and garages from Alan Blick. After he bought the yard he tried to buy the shops, but at first Alan wouldn't sell. They were in a terrible state of repair but Alan didn't want to spend any money on them. But then some of the tenants got on to him saying they wanted work done. Alan didn't want any hassle so eventually he sold the shops to Brian Moss.

Later In the 1980s the Comrades Club became Top Cue. It closed in 1996 and Nigel and his brother bought the old building which they use as a storeroom for the shop.



*The old chapel building in 2025.*



*Nigel in the Curiosity Shop c1990.*

Nigel says:

“No.14 has not changed a lot since it was built. Blick built them in wood because building materials were in short supply and it was cheap. The decorative glass in the top windows is the same except for one panel which got broken by a football.

The shops need work now but it's difficult to convince my Dad who still owns them. When anything happens to him I expect we'll get rid of them.

At the moment the Taxi people have been in No.16 for 13 years, Jess with the mobility aids in No.10 for 9 years and Jeremy Bingham in No.12. If any of them go, who's going to want to rent a little wooden shop? It would be a shame to knock them down. I don't think there's room for houses. We don't really know what we will do with them.

We've always had a good relationship with our tenants – more like friends. My dad has always looked after them a little bit. It won't be for much longer – I shall miss it terribly.”



*Nigel in the shop in 2024*



*The Curiosity Shop 2015*



*The Curiosity Shop 2024*

## Moss Motors Garage



*Moss Motors on the corner of Aldergate Street ,1960s.*

Nigel remembers:

“My Grandad, Ernie Moss, was in the motor trade at first but then he had pubs which were successful, including the Beacon at Haresfield. My Dad, Brian Moss, was in the REME for National Service, then he worked at Wycliffe Motors. In the 1960s, Dad was renting the back of the garage at the bottom of Aldergate Street from Hyett Adams. They wanted to sell so Gramp sold the Beacon pub and bought the garage. Dad and Gramp ran the garage business and had the Rootes Group Hillman agency. It was a thriving business.

My Dad was running the garage. It was very busy – my Mum did all the bills and often they were working late trying to get it all done. It wasn't easy to get motor mechanics and if they were offered more money elsewhere, they went. Dad was a good motor mechanic so he ended up doing a lot of the work himself.

*SW 1/1/65*

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*Above - Adrian Moss with a customer.*

*Right - Nigel Moss with his aunt 1960s.*



Then the Rootes Group got taken over by Chrysler. They came round and said it all had to be modernised. My Gramp lived in the house next door and they said you'll have to knock that down and make it into a big showroom. They asked my Dad, "Who's your Chief salesman?" Our Dad said "That's me." "Who's your store man?" Our Dad said, "That's me." "Who organises the parts and equipment?" Our Dad said, "That's me." They said, "We can't have that. You've got to have different people doing these jobs." Well, it wasn't that sort of business. So they took the agency off them. The garage still carried on with good customers like Wycliffe College masters, Standish Hospital staff etc.

It was a Friday evening and my Dad was there finishing a job. The others had gone home. He was working on one of the vans from Hudson's Dairy and he had to get it finished because they needed that van for deliveries on Saturday morning. Dad was there and Clive Murray, who ran Lear and Lear estate agents in Aldergate Street, came over with a guy called Jack Shaw that owned Wessex Tyre Services in Stroud. So Clive asked Dad if he wanted to sell to Jack who was looking to open a place in Stonehouse. Dad said he might. Our Mum was doing well with the shop and Dad was working there a bit too, so he wanted to sell the garage. Gramp owned it so he had to agree and the garage was sold. But Wessex Tyres wasn't there that long and Hyett Adams bought all the land back and the garage closed in about 1975.

My Gramp lived in the house for a little while before he sold it and moved to a cottage at Stanley Downton. They knocked the big old house down for car parking and adapted the garage into the Bethel Church.

My Gramp was keen to help people set up in business. When the Stonehouse Brick and Tile Co. works closed, the land by the quarry belonged to a company called Hall & Keck. My Gramp rented the whole lot from Hall & Keck and then let it off in units to small businesses. Fred Clutterbuck did car painting, Adrian Moss, Dad's brother, was there with a welding business, my Gramp had a business making incubators for chickens, there were A & D Webb, metal polishers. My Gramp gave them all a bit of a start.

All our family were really in the motor trade. My brother still runs Moss Motors at Chalford with his wife and son. Although my Dad enjoyed working in the shop, his heart was really in the motor trade. He still did car repairs up at the Brickworks for a while but in the end he concentrated on running the shop. The land at the Brickworks was sold in about 1978/9 and Rosedale estate built.





*Stonehouse Brick & Tile Works Ltd. c1930s, coloured later.*

We used to play up at the Brickworks. I remember helping my uncle Adrian once. I would have been about 14. Adrian had this trials motorbike and he was riding it round over these piles of bricks. Anyway I got on it and had a go. Adrian went off to answer the phone and I thought I could ride over the pile of bricks! So I went to ride over it, fell off and the handlebar came round and hit me in the eye. I had a black eye! *"Oh crikey,"* said Adrian, *"your mother will kill me!"* When I got back to the shop I told my mother that I had been helping with car repairs and hit my head that way!

We had a storage place up there for the furniture. We were doing loads of house clearances and quite a lot of export stuff to America. We didn't actually export it but we sold it to a company who did. Charles Hubrey had a place at the mill at Eastington and a place in America. I used to go down there with vanloads of furniture and stuff. He got on really well with my Mum and Dad, so he always dealt with us face to face.

A few lads used to mess about with cars up there. One lad called Frank Noble rebuilt a Cannon trials car from the 1950s. I can remember watching him rebuild it and use it at the motor club. Then Frank finished with the motor club and I didn't see him for a while. But about 30 years ago I was playing skittles at the Britannia in Nailsworth when Frank was in there having a pint. So I went over and asked him if he still had the car. *"Oh yes. It's up the road in a lockup."* I said, *"You don't want to sell it do you?"* *"Oh no, I shall never sell it."* *"If you ever want to sell it would you give me first chance at it?"* *"Yes I promise you I will."* Anyway a week later he was on the phone. His wife had said they ought to sell it as their boys would never use it and they were paying rent on the lockup. So I went up on the Sunday and I bought it! It's out there in one of the garages now. I completely rebuilt it too. I've driven it a lot. It was a bit strange that I saw it being rebuilt and now I own it. When I took it to bits some of the aluminium was from old BP oil signs that he got from our garage!