



## Memory of Stratford Road by Tas Bashir

June 1978 was a special summer – you could hear the sounds of *Muqadar Ka Sikander* and *Grease* everywhere. My dad had taken me to see Pakistan play England at Edgbaston and though we lost I will never forget the delirious support given to the team by my dad and his mates and all the other Pakistan cricket supporters. As we sat on the wooden seats munching on greasy Katlamas and drinking coke from glass bottles our joyous singing could not avert a dismal performance from the visiting team. Cricket was like a religion in those days so it's funny that we used to play our after school game outside a church on Ladypool Road.

Raised by a few steps off the street, the flat forecourt of Saint Barnabas' church was a surface perfect for bowling and batting. For the wickets, we piled up our school satchels against the church door. The building only opened on Sunday mornings so no one seemed to mind our 3 or 4 a-side games taking place there.

We bowled from the 'King Kong End' because a few years earlier a huge statue of Kong loomed over the second-hand car lot on the other side of the road. The broad chested, open-mouthed giant looked on angrily as he umpired our highly competitive games. Though he had disappeared we still honored him: If we managed to get the soft rubber ball to land in his former stomping ground that was deemed to be a six. More often than not we would hit passing traffic and annoy the odd driver.

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