I was apprenticed to the trade of Motor Car Body Manufacture at the Company British Light Steel Pressings a subsidiary of the Rootes Group Coventry, England.

I appeared on the first day in a three-piece custom-made suit when all about me were in overalls.

I learnt a lot during a five-year apprenticeship not only about manufacturing but appreciation of people who cared for one another like the skilled tradesman I apprenticed under. These men contributed their own money to build a fund for the apprentices who made little money.

In appreciation, the apprentice committee arranged and funded a Christmas Night Out for a few of the tradesmen, and I was on that committee.

We would visit select restaurants in London’s West End to select one based on quality, ambiance, price, and in striking distance of London’s Theatre District, since that’s where we would go after dinner.

We arrived at the restaurant on the night, right on time, as we were very organized and punctual as befit our trade.

The restaurant was the Guinea a Piggy. A guinea was used in those days as the currency to buy horses, paintings and other may I say . . .precious things. A guinea was actually one-pound sterling and one shilling.

We paid one guinea for the opportunity to eat like pigs, meaning whatever and as

much as we wanted. And what was offered was the finest food that most of us, especially the apprentices, had ever eaten or even seen this kind of food before.

The food was French with scores of offerings of vegetable dishes, fish dishes, meat and poultry offerings, and desserts to keep us all returning to the buffet.

 In all my travels hence and I’ve been to US, Canada, Thailand, Japan, Taiwan, Germany, France, Holland, Mexico Italy Wales, Australia, and Spain I have never seen the likes.

After that, us piggies made it to the show just in time . . .but there is no time to tell of the laughter that fifteen piggies can make.

Afterward, it was necessary for a night cap at the George and Dragon. Some had Bitter, some Guiness, and others had Brown and Mild, and most all didn’t make it home, at least not by direct routes or regular methods.

So many memories of that evening, but I must say the dinner will always be the highlight.

I’ve always liked piggies and I am glad that is not what we ate but what we were. And I am not proud to use the derogatory term just to tell you about that dinner.

And by the way during the dinner, we gave certificates and presents to the tradesmen present for their support and friendship, and much fun and laughter accompanied the prepared speeches, which were cut short so that we could eat our fill, as it would be a whole year before we would venture up to London’s entertainment district, and sample precious things again!

Cheers

This is a real cool memory with much in it that Americans wouldn’t know.

Even if this would be in a memoir, it still needs to be told like a story that has the reader feel what the author does, from his point of view. You have a little of the feeling, but could add so much more with the five senses. Especially since you’re talking about food with sights, smells, tastes, etc. Don’t forget what kind of weather in Coventry, England.

We need a proper setting with time and maybe even your age. Then you weave in the facts you want your reader to know so you can do more showing instead of telling. For example, something like this:

“I will never forget the Guinea A Piggy restaurant. It was 1956 (or whatever time). I was on the Christmas Night Out committee to find and fund our yearly celebration with dinner and theater. As an apprentice in motor car manufacture for five years at British Light Steel Pressing, I earned very little. Even the skilled tradesmen contributed their own money to build the fund for apprentices. Going out to eat was a special treat. When I walked into the Guinea, I almost passed out.”

Then you keep going with exact dishes, what they smelled like, tasted like. The variety, etc. Add some of your other information that’s exposition a little at a time, maybe interspersed with some dialogue and the kind of men you worked with. You could end your story with the sentence about your worldly travels in comparison.

It would be good practice for any kind of writing to rewrite this piece since it’s so interesting.

You might center the title and don’t put it in a header. A publisher would give you the specifics of formatting.

Good luck!

Denice

P.S. For some reason, the formatting was off, but that could be because of sending it through the interne.