

Yes, I remember the game of jacks at MEPS and how passionately we girls played it!

Problem was, a set of jacks (five little metal thingies and a small rubber ball) were often in short supply. I remember one year – probably 1956 – we only had a couple of sets of jacks between the lot of us girls in the two top classes. The two girls who owned these were VERRRRY popular! I remember nagging my parents until they went into Hussein's bookshop in Salim Road and ordered some (I think they also tried the toy shop further down the road). Hussein's obliged but we had to wait until they could be shipped out from UK or somewhere with a whole lot of other toys and stationery stuff. Oh how we longed and waited for our jacks to arrive. We had to improvise – my father and one of our servants managed to carve some out of bones (from the roast!) but of course these were not quite as good as the real thing.

Anyway, at last the great day came and word went round the town like wildfire – the jacks have arrived at Hussein's. Off I went, clutching my pocket money in my (usually) grubby little hand. And oh, I can still remember it after all these years! Carrying that precious parcel back to our house in Kizingo Road and taking it off to school the next day for a sneaky game of jacks during our morning break. After school, myself and others with similar parcels gathered down near the exercise bars (remember those?) and played a few games. Myself, Jill Stafford, Deirdre Purchase...can't remember who else.

I think the jacks craze died pretty quickly after that and we were into hopscotch. Or throwing two balls against the walls. Or hoola hoops.