

I remember Edward Prosper- by Peter Moore.

That day the 9th August 1961 was a tragic day for so many people in the Croydon area. I lost a dear friend Edward (Eddie) Prosper in the Lanfranc School air disaster that occurred on the hilltop of Holtaheia the 1800ft high mountain in Stavanger Norway. Eddie's mother and father (Daisy and Albert) were long time friends of my parents and Edward's mother Daisy was part of the 'in' group that used to go around together in her youth with my mother.

I had left Lanfranc at 15 years of age at the end of term in July 1960 and Edward was 1 year behind me when I left. Before my family moved from Thornton Heath, I used to go to his house after school to play on many occasions and in those days we did not have the electronic gadgets that are available today to entertain us. The television was our main source of entertainment from 5.00pm onwards in those days.

I can remember Fridays, as being special when visiting Eddie after school as his father was a butcher and Friday was meat day for their household.

Eddie and I used to meet up in the school holidays after my family had moved to a place called Aldersted Heath near Chaldon and on one occasion Eddie & I decided that we were going by bike to Brighton in the summer holidays. Now we knew that Eddie's mother would not really like this idea, so we arranged it in secret. On the day Eddie cycled from his home to meet up with me at Merstham, to begin the daunting trip to Brighton. All went well on the outward trip but it was to say the least very tiring and the long slow climb up the South Downs on a bike is not something I would recommend. When we arrived the weather had turned to become wet and cold and I was not prepared to cycle back again but Eddie was so we decided to meet up at Redhill and cycle together back to Merstham and then he would cycle back home after we had parted. The rain was coming down as I waited for Eddie at Redhill (he had left earlier than me from Brighton, but by train I still beat him) and when we joined up we had our cycle capes on and it was an unpleasant ride home. Eddie, as I remember, arrived home about 8.00pm and of course his mum and dad wanted to know where he had been as it was late. Not a good finish to an otherwise fun day out but boys will be boys as they say.

The burial of so many young people from one school was an upsetting experience to so many people and it was undertaken with so much dignity by those so closely involved.

Mr Fowle our headmaster was an inspiration I believe to all that had the experience of his headship at Lanfranc and to this day I can still remember the outstanding qualities this man had and I for one am glad to have had the chance of being just one of his pupils. Together with Mr Budd and Mr Beacham who both helped shape the paths of so many pupils, he made Lanfranc a name to be proud of.

The names of school friends – David Hendley - Peter Boyes - John Bradbury Edward Guider - Derek Goddard - Geoffrey Brown and Brian Robert Mitchell also lost on that fateful day, live on in the memories of those more fortunate than them.

As the reporter Sidney Williams writes in his editorial on the 10th August 1961 for the Daily Herald --- 20ft higher and they would have cleared the top of Holta hela. - If only. Eddies Mum and Dad made the journey to Stavanger in the following May to commemorate the unveiling of the memorial to the Lanfranc School for Boys and both were presented to Sir John Walker, The British Ambassador to Norway at this sad occasion.

The words put together by Mr G E Manning Head Master of Ashburton Secondary Boys School titled - **IN MEMORIAL** - and published in the Advertiser (a Croydon newspaper at that time) on Friday the 18th August 1961 the day after the burial were a fitting tribute to both the school and the pupils and masters.

Both of Eddie's parents are now reunited with their beloved son.