

Lanfranc Memories by David Underwood

When the message went out advertising the trip my close friend and I said we would like to go and so asked our parents. My Mother and Father however were planning a holiday in Jersey at the same time so could not afford both. And as my friends parents also said no, I did not pursue it.

I heard the news of the crash whilst in Jersey and recall that relatives we were holidaying with, met us the morning the news broke and said what they had heard. I remember going up to man sitting in St Helier town square and almost snatching his paper to read the report. Of course I was stunned but it also affected my Mother particularly when she attended the lying in state in the school hall before the funeral. Also some time after the funeral my Mother saw a Mother of one of the victims and went over to offer her condolences, with some trepidation for what can you say in such circumstances. But the Mother warmly thanked her as she said she had been hurt seeing some people cross the other side of the road when they saw her.

The school memorial assembly at the start of the new term was very sad and I recall how broken our headmaster, Mr AT Fowle looked. I heard later that sadly he blamed himself as he allowed the trip to go by plane for the first time and I believe he never really recovered.

I read with interest the memories submitted by Ian Bell as they jogged memories of my own. I was one the poor saps who, in spite of the pre match terror which went with the occasion, climbed into the boxing ring for the annual schools boxing championships organised by Norman Cooke. Others who did the same were John Goddard and John Wells as well as many others.

Another favourite after school function was the badminton club run by the woodwork master Norman Blackmore. Quite a few of the victims also played including John Goddard, Trevor Condell and John Wells to name some. It was very popular especially as some of the teachers, Norman Blackmore, Norman Smith and Angus Tarn would also allow us to play Badminton with them at lunchtimes.

I remember lunch time indoor cricket with the same masters and how John Wells and John Goddard who were particularly good with the bat, often frustrated Norman Smith's bowling so his deliveries to them got faster and faster.

The school play which Ian Bell recalls reminds me of the time that whilst practising badminton with John Wells at the back of the assembly hall, as there was no room in the gym we occurred the wrath of the then school play

director rehearsing Taming of the Shrew which also included girls from our sister school. He bellowed at us, as Directors do, to get out, because he could not rehearse with this constant flap - flop going on. We of course were really embarrassed being bawled out in front of the girls but it didn't do me any harm as a few years later the leading lady became my girlfriend for awhile.

There was the annual pupil v master football and cricket matches and during one of these football matches Norman Blackmore kicked the ball to goal but only succeeded breaking a gym window. On the occasion of the cricket match Norman Smith -English Master, hit a massive strike which was heading for a certain four but against all odds John Wells caught it, which made him the hero of the hour, even though his hands were stinging for a long time afterwards.

I recall Mr Budd being our Chemistry Master and at the start of his lesson he would conduct his brain warming up exercise complete with a metre ruler. This exercise was for him to walk up down the rows of science room benches and ask each pupil in turn the chemical names of things i.e. Water= H_2O . If you got it right fine if not then you received a "tickler" which was a tap to the head from the edge of his ruler. Woe betide those who put their hands to their heads for protection because you would then get one across the knuckles as well. But it was all taken in good spirit - heaven help a teacher who did that today of course.

I also was a victim of Beachers Brook, Ian Bell refers to and remember its namesake standing by urging runners to jump. Those who appeared less muddy or who gave the impression they were not participating in event fully were often helped across or through it with some coaxing from his shoe.