

## **Memories from Old Lanfrancians of Lanfranc School and their school teachers.**

**Ivan Frances Bignall.** Yes I remember Mr Budd and Mr Beacham well they were good teachers and you are right about the cross country. It took place across Mitcham common and Beacham's brook was in the wooded area and was normally muddy.

**Roger Culley.** I remember the headmaster Mr Fowle died not long after, a broken man. He never did get over the tragedy. The teachers that died I remember very well. Mr. Budd was my form master in the third year, the school year before the accident. He was okay. A short stocky man with a balding head and always wore a suit. He took the science subjects. Mr. Beacham I remember used to teach RI (religious instruction as it was called). He also taught other subjects as I remember being at his classes an awful lot. He used to be great fun. If you misbehaved he 'd draw a red triangle on the blackboard in chalk and get you to stand with your nose against it ! You would have to stand there until the end of the lesson. If he saw you at any point during the day without a red mark on your nose he would give you lines. We used to carry red chalk in our pockets to put the mark back if we saw him in time. You couldn't imagine that happening now could you?

**Leonard Dee. (Len Dee.)** Of the teachers Mr Beacham was our housemaster and one memory I have was he persuaded me to take part in the swimming gala when I could just swim one width let alone a length, but he was a real nice guy without forsaking the discipline. I was sent to him once (for smoking in the playground) and in those days when corporal punishment was the norm he would ask (as he lifted the cane) "Hard or soft?" I was forewarned of this so I said "I suppose I deserve it hard" and it was never so hard as if you'd said soft!

Of Mr Budd I seem to recall him as a tubby chap going thin on top and he had a deep booming voice that carried across the playground. One anecdote of that Mr Fowl (headmaster) gave us on the first day back at school afterwards. Mrs Budd was worried about her husband flying and as he left the house his last words to her were "I could cross the road and be killed anytime."

**Ray Cattle.** Mr Budd stuck up for me when other masters took against - I wasn't an easy child at times - apt to 'push-it'.... Mr Beacham? - His epitaph has to be his unerring aim with a piece of chalk... (I guess he really would like that!)...but try flinging pieces of mineral about to quell the unruly in these 'PC' days - a thoroughly likable master, young in comparison with the mainstream. Mr Fowle? - being 'sent' to the headmaster was the ultimate punishment, a bit like a trip to the gallows at Tyburn really, especially the long wait outside his office and the cane always in one's mind....a great pity that corporal punishment isn't permitted these days, it didn't as they say do me any harm (long term view....taken here).

**William Hall.** I left Lanfranc at the end of July 1958 but remember both of them quite well. John was a maths teacher if memory serves me correct but also took part in other activities and was very popular with the boys. He was tall and quite slim so you could spot him a mile off. He was also one of the younger teachers of that time and had a wonderful personality which i am sure many others will endorse. George Budd was one of the elder teachers. I believe his main subject was science. And although older he also had a nice personality and was very helpful to all the pupils. Although science

wasn't one of our favourite subjects he had a way of getting your attention and holding it throughout the lesson. Two wonderful teachers who were no doubt greatly missed afterwards.

Oh yes I remember the infamous 'Beacham's Brook' something we dreaded every year, very muddy indeed especially if you fell into it which quite a few did, fortunately I don't think I became a victim.

**Del Meacher.** Mr Beacham taught us religious instruction and I will dig out my old school reports to assist my recollections and write to you again. He also took us on holiday to Belgium and I am sure I have a photo of him with Mr Budd.

**Michael Jones.** I was a pupil at Lanfranc (nickname Jonah) and was in the 4th year at the time of the crash. One of my best friends was Trevor Condell who was a very good cricketer. He played both for Croydon and Surrey Under 15's as wicket keeper. Mr first class teacher was Mr Beacham who used to have 4 pieces of dowel with numbers on the end. If you needed punishment you had to pick a stick and would then get whacked the same number. Mr Budd was my third year class teacher but taught biology (not my favourite subject) so I didn't know him too well.

**Anthony Jenner.** I was a pupil in the same class as some of the victims, but possibly fortunately I passed the 13 plus and transferred out in 1959. During the 2 years I was at the school 'Billy' Beacham was my form master. In those days corporal punishment was allowed and I received more than average strokes of Mr Beacham's cane. I probably deserved it and the cane was named after me and became known as The Generator. Once a year, the whole school had to take part in a cross country run on Mitcham Common. At various points of the course the schoolmasters were stationed to make sure we took the correct route. There was a small pond that had to be jumped and was known as Beacham's Brook because one year he had fallen in. I suppose it was thus named as one of the obstacles in the Grand National is called Becher's Brook.

'We called Mr Beacham 'Billy Beacham'. He was a nice bloke even though I got the cane a lot from him and it became known as 'The Generator' in my class.'

'Mr Gubby introduced Totem Poles. Thinking about it now I have no idea why they did it but we all had to do it. Mr Gubby produced the big stake and it was put in the ground. Every class had one and each boy had to carve his name on the totem and then it was erected in the grounds.'

'Mr Fowle was very keen on sport. I had to go and see him once or twice –( I was a terrible pupil) for a reprimand. It was like going in front of a magistrate or a judge – he was so serious. He never smiled when a boy was sent to him.'

'Mr Cook I didn't like. He was fond of the slipper and he would step back and take a run at you. Mr Budd – a short man with not a lot of hair. Angus Tarn – he was the youngest master and taught gymnastics. Mr Bonaud was my form teacher. In the classroom there was a store room for exercise books etc. Mr Bonaud rarely locked this door and I started leaving messages on the back of the door saying 'the phantom strikes again!' and stuck the note up with a pen nib. One lesson he gave us a lecture saying 'This has got to stop. I've had enough of it. Amnesty! It mustn't happen again.' Then he went into the store cupboard and the whole class laughed because stuck on the inside of the door was 'The phantom strikes again!' It was just an innocent prank.'

If there were fights in the playground as soon as one said 'I give in' the fight stopped. Not like nowadays. Mr Cox had the classroom next to Mr Beacham. Mr Cox was the invigilator for the 13+. I was in his class once. He was very precise and proper. He told us precisely what to do for the exam and he told us 'army style'! He never caned anyone. Mr Latham walked with a limp from a war wound.

**Mike Green.** I was at the school from 1954 to 1959 and knew Mr John Beacham very well. He and I lived in the same part of Croydon and travelled to school each day in the car of another master Mr James Hemmings (who was also my form teacher in year 5). The headmaster, Mr Fowle, felt personally responsible for the great loss of the students and his health suffered and he had to leave his post well before retiring age. 'Tommy Fowle was a super, lovely man. I was transferred from a private school and Tommy Fowle kept a fatherly eye on me. He took the disaster personally and it finished him off. Then the 'evil' Mr Harper took over. He had been the Deputy Head and was very strict. I never enjoyed his lessons. Harper taught us art. He was awkward to get on with. We had to draw the conical lamp on the ceiling. Mine fell to the floor and looked like a table lamp.'

Mr Jones taught us music appreciation. Tubby Mearns was a teacher about whom a story circulated that he was an old boy of the school who kept failing his GCE's and so stayed on. My class thrived on throwing him red herrings about WW2.

I was in the 'C' stream and teacher Ken Francis brought me out. He was a lovely bloke. I improved so much with him that I was allowed to take GCE. Mr Patterson was a control freak. Mr Hemmings taught us when a few of us stayed on for the 5<sup>th</sup> year, GCE's and RSA's. Clive Barlow was head boy then. We were the cream of the school.

I lived at South Croydon near Johnny Beacham in Birdhurst Road and we went to the same church. He lived in a big Victorian house and had a Lambretta scooter and he gave me a lift to school on the back for a while. Jim Hemmings (teacher) lived in Selsdon Road (South Croydon) and he'd come along to Birdhurst rd for Johnny B and then he'd pick me up at the bottom and we roared off to school together. After rehearsals (Julius Caesar 1957, Macbeth 1958, Twelfth Night 1959, Romeo and Juliet 1960) I'd get a lift home with him. One night it was a pea souper of a fog and I walked in front of the car to guide it!

Jim Towers and Mr Gubby... (Mr Gubby was a lovely old craftsman who would say 'come on boys! Go and mark out the wood and let me check it!' I made a jewellery box for my mother. I was taught metal work and I became a metal worker on the Tally Llyn Railway.

Ron Cox wrote on something of mine 'Ye gods and little fishes Green – your spelling!! Johnny Beacham was a disciplinarian. If you were naughty your name was written on the top left hand corner of the black board. When the next boy was naughty then his name replaced the first one and if a third boy was naughty then his name replaced the second. The boy whose name was left on the board at the end of the lesson got the detention!

It was a happy school. (This was pre 1961) We all got on as a team. Some teachers were wankers but most were good blokes. We did have a student teacher once and we gave him hell. He ran out of our class and out of school! We were told later that

he'd decided that he didn't want to be a teacher and had given up. We'd saved him!

**Colin Tinson.** Mr John Beacham (32) Birdhurst Road, South Croydon. Unmarried he lived with his brother. He had been master at Lanfranc for nearly 9 years, the whole extent of his teaching service, he devoted his time to the school. He helped to arrange the school trips abroad. Mr A T Fowle, the school's head master, said: "Mr Beacham was very popular and an excellent teacher." He taught Social Studies. Brought up in Bath he was an old boy of City of Bath Boys School. John was cremated.

Mr George Budd (47) Mead Way, Old Coulsdon. George Budd was 47 years of age, married with two sons, Geoffrey (17) and Timothy (9). He had celebrated his 24<sup>th</sup> Wedding anniversary three weeks ago. He was the Head of the school's Science Department. Mr Budd had taken boys on a number of previous school trips abroad, and went with a party to Austria last Whitsun. He taught at two other Croydon schools before joining Lanfranc, Portland Secondary and Benson Junior. The former headmaster at Portland School, Mr R C Butt, said "He was a very good fellow. Very keen on his job, he got on well with all the boys. He was what I would call a boy's man. He will be a great loss to the teaching profession. 'Buddy' as he was known to the boys was also very popular with his neighbours, Mr C J Swaine who lived next door, said "He was extremely fond of children. He was a nice man, a quiet, neighbourly type, who would always help if he possibly could". Another neighbour said: "We knew him as one of the kindest men you could meet. It's a blow to us all: a terrible shock. He was so kind, so quick to help anybody else in trouble." One of Mr Budd's pupils paid his own tribute to his master and friend when he said: "He made us work hard, but he was kind to us. I liked Mr Budd, all the boys did."

**Clive Grumett.** Beacham (John) was the geography master and also in charge of the school prefects. A slim and tall man with a direct approach to life, especially discipline which is probably why he was in charge of the prefects. Un-married, but I believe he had a girlfriend, he and Mr Budd were the key masters that arranged the school overseas trip each year. I went on the previous year's trip to Switzerland which was led by both Mr Beacham and Mr Budd. I didn't go on the last year's trip simple because my parents couldn't afford it.

He used to take 'detention' and had to deal with some of the more rebellious school boys. I was in detention in my 3<sup>rd</sup> year for some minor offence when Mr Beacham had to deal with one of the more rebellious guys. They got into quite a slanging match that I thought was going to lead to blows, and the boy walked out of detention. I remember being quite shaken by the event. Looking back I realise he was one of my role models in my younger years.

Budd (George) The chemistry master, a shorter and more rotund man with a gentle disposition. Rather a laid back attitude to teaching and difficult to make angry but had the ability to make his subject interesting. I always remember him showing us what happened when you dropped sodium in water (whizzes around in the water like crazy) and put a match to magnesium (burns incandescently and you can't put it out as it generate its' own oxygen). Mr Budd, Mr Taylor, the Physics master, and the Biology master (whose name I forget), shared the science labs at one end of the school. He and Mr Taylor used to arrange films of a scientific or historical documentary nature at the end of term to fill in the time after exams until school broke-up.

Mr Fowle - The Headmaster was a kindly man of average height, slightly portly, greying and balding. In my time at Lanfranc he made major improvements to the school in many areas including dress and discipline. When I first went there jeans were accepted as part of school dress and the school was seen as being at the bottom of the league in Croydon. By the time I left it had a better reputation; a small 5<sup>th</sup> form with academic success, regular school plays, contacts with local industry including the Thornton Heath Rotary Club and certainly a good boxing record. The tragedy must have been a severe blow to him as I believe he retired shortly afterwards and died shortly thereafter.

Mr Cook (Norman) he was the sport or physical education (PE) master who had a no-nonsense approach to us boys. Firm but fair was his approach and many of the boys including the tougher ones respected him. He was behind the school's success in the boxing area and instilled in me an appreciation of the amateur side of the sport especially Amateur Boxing Association events. Medium high fairly well built and pretty fit. He was at the school for 37 years and has a commemorative stone at the mass grave in Croydon Cemetery.

Mr. Taylor was the physics master and a role model too many of us. He had planned to immigrate to Australia and left the school at the end of the term as I and many on the trip did. I remember a group of us presented him with a leaving present at the school assembly near the end of term. Because of the tragedy he remained in the UK and returned to the school in September 1961. I never knew if he did finally emigrate.

In the darker days that followed the tragedy and after I had started work I visited him at his home a number of times and realise later what a great support he was in helping me put the tragedy in context with life and seeing my way forward without many of the friends I'd expected to share some of the future with.

Mr Gubby the woodwork master. Probably one of the longest serving masters when I started there in 1956. Had a quick temper if you did things wrong, which in carpentry with young boys was not difficult to do. But he also instilled in you the basics of the skill, which I remember to this day. He also treated you differently as you grew up and if you showed aptitude in his subject giving real encouragement and praise. He is also remembered with a commemorative stone at the mass grave in Croydon Cemetery.

**David Randle.** 'Mr Tarn (maths and PE teacher) was my form teacher but I didn't enjoy school. I wasn't academic or sporty or interested in drama. But in Mr Beacham's cross country I could get across Beacham's Brook because I had long legs.

**Philip Rose.** We both (Philip has a brother, David) settled in well at Lanfranc and had teachers like Mr Tarn for Mathematics, Mr Huggins for English. We did woodwork, metalwork, technical drawing, art, science, biology, chemistry and physics as well as PE but no languages. Our Art teacher was a lady, the only woman teacher in the school, forgotten her name now but most of the boys had a soft spot for her. Our age and hormones I suppose. There were rumours that she and another male teacher were having an affair but I never knew if this was true or with whom it was happening. Being close to Mitcham Common we often spent lunchtimes over the park having spent our pocket money at the local shop on things like Wagon Wheels and Jubbley's. Much bigger then or so it seemed. I think we got the cane a couple of times for getting back late.

Lanfranc was a good school and I enjoyed most of my time there. I remember Martin White, Roger White, I and some others bought pea shooters to school once and I was the unlucky one to hit our technical drawing teacher in the face for which I got six of the best with a Tee Square. I also remember that whenever it snowed we would have inter-playground snow ball fights, which some of the teachers would join in with. In those days the boys were separated with the older boys in one playground and the younger in another.

In metal work (I am struggling to remember but I think it may have been Mr Budd who taught us) the older boys built a working car from an old chassis and truck engine and the teacher and some of the boys ruined the cricket pitch by taking it for a spin. The cricket master was not amused, but we were. Although you were scared of some of the teachers they also knew how to have a bit of fun and had a good sense of humour. I remember that after the accident we were all moved around into different classes. It had a deep effect on the Head who developed a brain tumour. Whether there was any connection I do not know. He was a gentleman and well respected.'

**Patrick Wilson.** My form teachers were Mr Mearns and Mr Watt. It was an absolutely fabulous school! Mr Fowle was very badly affected by the crash. He lost the most. We were good kids. We had manners – still have fortunately. Now my grandkids say the other kids swear out loud in class. I remember playing truant and my dad took me to school to Mr Fowle and I got 3 on each hand and my dad stood there while he did it. The Staff were great, they took us to The Oval for the day to see England play. All on a bus up to The Oval for one whole day off school! This was the England cricket team of 1960-61.

**Bill Tarbuck.** I got the slipper from Mr Beacham and it was the biggest slipper you'd ever seen! It was done in front of the class and it hurt! I couldn't cry as I was a toughie. He gave 3 or 4 bending over. He was very well respected. I can remember his face very clearly.

Mr Fowle was a great headmaster. Norman Cook was the Croydon Schools manager for all Boxing, not just for Lanfranc. Angus 'Mac Tarn' or Mr Tarn taught us maths. He was my form teacher and I got on well with him as he was the football team manager and PE teacher and I excelled at all these. I can remember Mr Tarn in class and I was a favourite but I got a serious clip around the ear for talking in class! I felt humiliated. I wasn't given preferential treatment. I felt upset at letting him down. I've got a picture of him and the football team.'

'I can remember that the school lost its personality after the crash. Everyone was such a personality. We did well academically too. But the atmosphere after the crash was dreadful. Always that sad feeling there....

**Alan Foster.** I do remember vaguely the teachers, Mr Budd and Mr Beacham, who both taught me – although I don't remember the precise subjects. Looking at my old school reports they may have taught general science, woodwork or technical drawing, but there are only initials in the signature column. I also believe our form teacher was a Mr Tarn.

**Peter Muncey.** Mr Beacham was my form master for three years and Mr Budd taught me science. When I started at Lanfranc School Mr Beacham was my form master hence 1B. At that time Lanfranc was very strict on discipline and many of the teachers

could be quite intimidating. Mr Beacham however, although strict by today's standards brought a touch of humour to the proceedings. For instance, if you did something wrong that warranted a whack he had four small canes numbered 1 – 4 which he held at the end covering the numbers. You then picked your own fate. Number one equals one whack, number two equals two whacks and so on. Does any other pupil remember this?

When I was in the second year, (as it was then 2B), Lanfranc used to do big productions of Shakespeare. Mr Beacham and many other staff members worked tirelessly leading up to opening night. I would recognise that smell of greasepaint anywhere. I was a bit-part soldier and we had to walk across the stage, around the back and keep doing this to give the impression of a large army. One of Mr Beacham's first words as he came into class in the mornings around this particular time was "2B or not 2B" (classic).

I always thought of Mr Beacham as a very fair teacher even though I got whacked a few times. Mr Budd however was very strict and I have to say that science wasn't my favourite subject. On one occasion I needed to be excused (as we used to say) he said that I could if I lost five team points. Well, what does a lad do? I had to go. These are only my personal comments.

Mr Fowle, Mr Gubby and Mr Cook as you know are also there and after I left school I had several jobs. In 1965 I joined a window cleaning firm in Carshalton and we had a contract cleaning all the schools in Croydon so I found myself back at Lanfranc in a different capacity. One morning (we had to start early to do the classrooms before lessons) we were in the woodwork room and there was Mr Gubby and we chatted about things, he asked me if I would like a drink. Do you remember school milk? Well, he boiled two of these small bottles in a glue pot – ah memories! Mr Cook I knew out of school as he looked after Kensington Avenue Playing Fields in the summer months and he also took boxing and PE which was my forte.

**Michael O'Rourke.** I am not sure of the teacher's name that we had as a form master on our return to school that year (1961) but I know he hated me with a passion. He had a habit of hitting us boys over the head with the edge of a three foot wooden ruler and throwing blackboard rubbers – he used to cane us on leaving his lesson for misdemeanours seen or perceived – needless to say I got it every day! I remember him calling out the register and unbelievably it contained the names of boys who were killed. He actually read out their names... and we had to remind him why there was no response! I can see him now; always wore tweedy suits, I think he was from Yorkshire or somewhere, the insensitive little git.

Correct me if I am wrong, but I seem to remember we had Mr Budd for science? I think it was Physics. Both he and Mr Beecham were so very popular and poor old Lanfranc was not the same for their loss. In one lesson we were taught how to do nickel plating. He suggested we all used a Penny piece for this experiment. The upshot being the bus conductors got a bit fed up with all of us trying to palm them off as Half Crowns on the way home.....enterprise started early with our lot! With fifty years of life experience now behind me I now realise just how far down the 'food chain' Lanfranc was. With a teaching regime based a lot on favouritism there did not seem to be much available to the 'slower' learners. Some of the teachers tried really hard, Mr. Beecham and Mr. Budd were two of the best, but there are few other names that were committed to memory for their positive contribution to one's education. There were a couple who

were positively weird and it is best we forget about them!

One other teacher who came to mind was Mr. Funning. A large wire haired Welshman who tried to get us to play rugby, which I quite enjoyed, even being small, as I could run like hell! I think his dream was for Lanfranc to have a team in the Croydon schools league and go up against the grammar schools. I don't know whether he ever achieved his dream but it was worth a try - if you'll excuse the pun. He was quite a character and was even known to stand at the front of the class of 44 boys and perform a full rendition of the Haka, the Maori war dance! We had a woodwork teacher called Mr. Mearns. A wonderful old guy, I can see him now in his long brown work coat, who did his best to teach us woodwork. We always knew when we had upset him and he was angry as he had some long hairs on the end of his nose that would start to twitch. The woodwork room had all these little benches that were close together in two rows. Occasionally, he would stop at one bench and try to show the boy where he was going wrong. Because the benches were low and Mr. Mearns was quite tall, as he leant over his work coat would billow out the back and touch the bench behind. The dare was to 'nail' his coat to the bench! Needless to say too many of us were up for it - or even worse, that one of the other boys would keep you talking and someone else would nail him to YOUR bench. Hence, poor Mr. Mearns' work coat was full of holes around the hem.

**David Wade.** It was a tough school with some very hard characters. But they were good boys. It was certainly a baptism of fire for me... My form master was John Beacham who died with George Budd... Like all masters at Lanfranc John Beacham was a good teacher, and strict. You did not mess with him. I can see him even now. Possibly late twenties, six foot plus with glasses, and again like ost of them he knew how to give the cane. George Budd on the other hand was an exception to the caning fraternity. A slightly portly man, balding, possibly in his early forties, he had an amiable personality. I liked him and still think he was the best master at the school. He would run a stamp club after school for those who had an interest. Word was he was ex-bomber crew during the war. He had obviously seen enough violence then, so perhaps that is why I never saw him use the cane. The Headmaster was Tom Fowle, a ruddy complexion and shock of grey hair to boot. It was probably us lot that gave him the grey hair.

**Ian Bell.** Mr Beacham was our form master, he was a very likable master who endeared himself to us younger boys. We would take the old TV advertising rhyme about Beacham Powders and sing under our breath "Beacham Powders do the trick. Yes they do they make you sick" whenever we made our way into his class. Also, there was a fable told to all the new boys about a stream you had to jump over, or get very wet, on the school cross-country named 'Beacham's Brook' which Mr Beacham always supervised. I have copied a record of my spending money as allocated to me by either Mr Budd or Mr Beacham while in Bruges. I had 490 Belgium Francs, 10 Dutch Guilders & 3 French Francs to spend. I remember now visiting a market at Middleburg in Holland as part of the trip plus somewhere in France for a day.

**Dave King.** I liked Mr Beacham. I think he taught RE as well. John Alderton of 'Please Sir!' was like him. A pleasant teacher, we liked him. He was smart, fairly tall and slim. He had a voice like John Alderton too. He was straighter and more serious than Mr Budd. I warmed to him. Mr Budd was my form teacher. He had more humour about him. He was friendly to the kids and a lot more open. His was banter rather than sarcasm. My memories are very good of Mr Budd. He was livelier and allowed us to



go a bit. He was always relaxed. Mr Fowle was a very serious man. I can't remember him losing his temper. He was always kind. He was a broken man after the disaster. He should have retired. He died three years later. Poor man! It was too much for him. There was paranoia about school trips afterwards. Insurance had to be paid and everything had to be done by the book. My memories of school are all good.

**Mark Cottingham.** I didn't care for school but Mr Beacham was very nice. I enjoyed English. Mr Budd taught me science and I liked that. It was Mr Eugene St. John Gogarty who really got me into English. As for maths I didn't like Mr Cook. In the gymnasium we played a game in shorts and shirts and we played back to back. When the whistle blew we had to jump up and the last one up got a slap on the back from the other boy. Robert Roffey and I had a pact not to hit hard. Mr Cook was a 'slap fellow'. Mr Cox was a nice guy.'

**Ian Greest.** The whole sad business destroyed Tom Fowle. He was lovely and like a father figure to all the boys. It destroyed him. In the school immediately afterwards there was an air of despondency everywhere. There was a macabre feeling being at assembly in the hall where the coffins had been. We knew what it had meant to Mr Fowle and this transferred down through the school. We used to call Mr Beacham 'Billy Beacham'. I loved the school. It was a sad day when I left school and this was due mainly to the masters, Tom Fowle in particular.

**Bruce Guest.** Mr Fowle said he's lost the cream of the school and that no one would fly again. He didn't live long after. I'm sure he died of a broken heart. He'd been head master of Lanfranc a long time. He was a lovely feller, ever so well respected.

**Terry Barson.** Mr Beacham was my class teacher (I did not even know his name was John) and I went on a school trip to Bolzano in Northern Italy with him. I can also remember in the woodwork class we all carved our initials onto a wooden post, in fact several posts. These were then concreted into the ground in the school's garden to form a trellis. At Lanfranc, because of the large number of boys there, the discipline was quite strict and Mr Beacham had his own way of dealing with this. If he had to administer the cane he had 6 wooden sticks, each about a foot long and each was numbered 1 to 6. He would hide these 6 sticks up the sleeve of his jacket with just the ends showing and the recipient of the punishment would choose a stick, which meant that he could receive anything from 1 to 6 strokes of the cane. This was all taken in good spirits and formed some entertainment for the rest of the class!

**Peter Moore.** Mr John Beacham, who taught geography amongst other subjects, took my self and other pupils on a weeks' camping at a place called Pilgrims Fort, which is located on the North Downs outside Caterham a few years before and we had a fantastic time. He showed us many skills and encouraged us all to take responsibility for our own being, a difficult thing for those who had not been away from home before for such a long period as a week. It was a week under canvas with many long walks and healthy exercise (so he told us at the time). The area was to become very familiar

to me as my family moved to the North Downs a year after the camp and I used to go to the camp area regularly during the summer holidays to admire the views from a place called strangely enough VIEW POINT a steep sided hill that we had spent many a day climbing up on camp.

Mr Budd was one of the 'Old School' of teachers, a thing we are sadly missing these days. He would instil discipline and politeness and was a much respected member of the staff. I cannot remember a truly bad word being said of him, science and biology came to life and he made them exciting. I have seen the occasional chalkboard rubber traversing its way across the classroom towards a pupil not paying attention, but it was after all another teaching era.

Lanfranc School for boys headed by Mr Fowle had a competitive streak to it and the head and all the teachers encouraged this. School sports days with the predictable cross country running across Mitcham Common, was either to be feared or embraced dependant on your point of view of sport. As were the end of Term at Christmas boxing matches. School pupils were encouraged to take part in the annual plays put on, and join school choir, the quality and renditions for the parents must have made an impact that was not forgotten by those who attended these events.

I would like to think that all the boys who attended this school (although there will always be exceptions) gained so much whilst there and that it helped them grow in stature and confidence, qualities unfortunately so many were unable to use in their future lives because of the events that overtook them in August 1961.

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.

**Brian Gittins.** I attended Lanfranc between 1953 and 1957 and was taught by both Mr Beacham and Mr Budd. Mr Budd was a science teacher and relatively new to our school. He was a mild natured man with a great deal of enthusiasm for his subject. Mr Beacham was my form master for which I had a great deal of respect. He was very firm but fair. When he had had enough of our misbehaving he would respond by giving the whole class the slipper. I remember him as being quite young compared with other teachers.

I do remember Mr Fowle but only vaguely. I remember hearing that he became very ill after the disaster. Mr Gubby was our woodwork teacher. He was quite old as I remember but very much respected. My carpentry skills have never been that great but recently, at the age of 67, I made a router table and said to my wife, "Mr Gubby would be proud of that." I remember he caught me along with other boys smoking on the bus on the way home, how stupid was that. The next day we were lined up in front of the whole school and given the cane.

We used to do run cross-country around Mitcham Common starting at the school gate in Mitcham Road. The route was circular and ended back at the school gate. Me and my mate, John Clayton, decided that it was a bit of a bore and after leaving the start hid behind some bushes and had a 'fag' and waited for the rest of the class to come

back round. We were caught by Mr Guppy and of course were canned. After that Mr Guppy and My Spriggs (Metal Work Teacher) followed us round on their bikes.

One last thing about Mr Gubby - he got us to build a totem pole and position it at the front of the school. It was in my last year but I cannot remember why it was built. Maybe somebody else has mentioned this. The only other teacher I remember was my last form master Mr (Norman) Cook. He was ex Navy and spent a lot of time telling us stories of his exploits. He felt like a friend rather than a teacher.

**Graham Edwards.** I had been to Italy with Beacham and Budd in summer 1960. It was excellent. I remember the train journey with couchettes. We stayed in Bolzano and shared rooms. I was 14 going on 15 at the time. I was in class following the Italy trip when Beacham suggested going to Italy again as it was so successful. He asked if we would put our hands up to say who would like to go to Italy again and everyone who went wanted to go again.

Mr Beacham and Mr Budd were very pleasant characters. Both of them were more like friends than teachers. Norman Cook was a character – I liked him even though he wopped my backside with a slipper and made me take the books out of my trousers first!

I was generally anti-establishment but I thought Lanfranc a good school. I loved sport, football in particular. I was good at running cross country around Mitcham Common. I usually came in first or second. Beacham's Brook rings a bell! It was a good school.

**John Martin.** I made Mr Cox's globe into a 'Square World'. We made one at the end of the school year in 1962 and we put it in his office. He'll probably remember that! But we bugged up his racket. Mr Beacham played games. He had dowel rods numbered 1-6 and whatever number you got you had that number of strokes. Once we were all mucking about and he and Budd had a game too. We had fun and discipline! Mr Hemmings taught us English. He did drama and had slogans up from Milton and Shakespeare. He ran Am Dram and I joined after I left school. Mr Fowle was a lovely man, very gentle. He was stocky, and always a gentleman. The teachers did the discipline but if he had to cane you, then you always felt he was sorry he had to do it. I always thought the crash killed him. He was the last victim of the crash. It wasn't long after. He was a very considerate and nice man. He would have felt personally responsible for it all.

Lanfranc school may have been new but it was still rough with several gangs and bullying, particularly of first years, was common practice. I got picked on within a few days of starting, but I was the younger brother of a fourth (senior) year boy who ran one of the toughest gangs in the school. The bullying soon stopped.

The teachers kept control and discipline by the use of corporal punishment. Each teacher had their own spin on it. Mr Budd and Mr Naish used large slippers. Another teacher used a drawing board T square. Mr Beacham on the other hand liked to give you a sporting chance and used a set of six dowel rods taken from old school chairs. Rods were numbered 1 to 6, you chose a rod and whatever the number that was how many times he hit you with it.

The one teacher we were wary of was Mr Taylor or Mighty Mouse as we called him. He taught science with the aid of a metre rule. This was held over your head, thin side down, as he asked you questions such as 'define work', 'what is ohms law', if you got it wrong you got a whack on the head! This was not however why we called him Mighty Mouse, it was because although small he used the cane with painful efficiency and was the only teacher who could bring tears to the eyes of the biggest and hardest boys in the school. By contrast the history teacher Mr Cox would not raise a hand to a boy but give him lines to write out. We hated doing lines in our lunch break or after school.

It was another three weeks or so before we went back to school after the summer holidays. The press were waiting at the school gates. Once we got through the first assembly and we all had a chance to talk about the crash. The practicalities of school life took over. Prefects were needed to replace lost boys as was true of the school play. I stood in for died boys in both situations. I would also represent the school, along with others, at the memorial service in May 1962 when the monument at the grave was complete. The headmaster Mr. Fowle, was never quite the same after the air crash and died a few years later, the last victim of this tragedy.

It seems ironic to me now some 50 years later that this tragedy is probably best summed up by the closing words of Shakespeare's King Lear, which was the next school play.

'The oldest hath borne most. We that are young shall never see so much, nor live so long'.

I was in my last year of school. I had been made a Prefect, had a main part in the school play and was going to sit six O-levels in a few months. Life was busy and fun.

Mr. Harper was the first teacher to take my poor spelling problem seriously. Spending time trying to teach me the rules of spelling and encouraging me to read more.

As year's end approached there was talk of playing the odd practical joke. This was overheard by Mr. Cox who said the problem was that most pranks caused damage and showed no imagination. I was not one to turn down a challenge. We came up with a few ideas, two of which I was particularly pleased with. Mr. Cox had a globe suspended from his classroom ceiling. There was a TV program at the time called 'It's a square world'. We painted a square cardboard box with a map of the world and during assembly went into his classroom and swapped his globe for the painted box with a note saying 'It's a square world'. The second prank was a little more personal. During morning break I crept into the staff sports changing room, and swapped Mr Patterson's shirt and trousers for a dress from the drama wardrobe. Mr. Patterson had changed into his tracksuit ready for a PE class. I hung his cloths in the staff cloakroom. By mid-afternoon Mr. Patterson was still walking about in his tracksuit and becoming very short tempered. Eventually Mr. Fowle announced that leaving reports would be withheld unless the cloths were returned. I was on my way to the headmaster's office when the clothes were found. It was a brilliant last day.

**Geoffrey Parr.** Mr Budd and Mr Beacham were both lovely teachers. My form teacher was Mr Patterson the PE teacher. He was very old school and you got the cane from him for very minor things. It's ironic that the two teachers who died were in my view the nicest teachers there. Beacham was a tall man with glasses. He got on well with the nice boys – like me – that wanted to learn. Mr Patterson chucked the board rubber at

anyone talking in class. My dad had been at Selhurst but he got me into Lanfranc because it had a good reputation whilst South Croydon Secondary School had a terrible reputation.

### **Memories from Lanfranc teachers.**

**Colin Jones** (Teacher who arrived just after the tragedy). Mrs Grey was the school secretary and she ushered me up to the staff room to sit alone. After three hours I was briefly introduced to Mr A.T. Fowle. I was ever thankful to Norman Cook, Harry Barlow and Peter Funning. I was at Lanfranc from Sept 61 until July 65. I took over the position of master in charge of PE and was responsible for gymnastics, cricket, soccer, athletics, and rugby, all of which (with the exception of gymnastics) were vigorously supported and encouraged by other members of staff on an extra-curricular basis. Boxing in the main was the remit of Norman Cook, as was the soccer. Cricket was in the capable hands of Angus Tarn and Patterson who nurtured the game at every opportunity and to a very high standard. Rugby, a newly introduced sport, was the responsibility of an avuncular South Walesian by name of Peter Funning who coached and encouraged with a passion that was not evident in the English schools at that time. We even arranged a 'tour' to Resolven in the Neath Valley, Peter Funning's home town. We were very well received (but soundly beaten) as a large crowd gathered on Saturday morning to watch a Lanfranc XV play Resolven Grammar School. I do believe however that the centre of attraction was a Lanfranc pupil by the name of Black who was a minor sensation because of his speed of foot and even more so because he was of Afro-Caribbean extraction – a rarity to be seen in any of the valleys in 1962. ...Losing the mainstays of the school's athletic talent affected the school's status, leagues-wise, for many years, although there were signs of recovery during my short period of tenure.... Of staff members a number I can recall with great clarity. One of the foremost was Neville Mearns, the doyen of the staff. A tall though stooped elderly gentleman in the autumn of his teaching career. His abiding passion was cricket and he was a long standing member of the M.C.C. His whole persona was of a respected elder statesman who never rushed whatever the occasion and who chain smoked at every opportunity. I well recall a Monday morning in the staff room where I engaged Neville Mearns in polite conversation about the weekend. He informed me that he had been up to Lords to watch the England versus Australia test (for women). This was apparently a new experience for him and he progressed to extoll the prowess of the batswomen and their array of classical stroke play. Then came a classic one-liner delivered with absolute sincerity – 'Of course they can't play the hook shot, their T\*\*s get in the way!'

'Harry Barlow was a teacher of Anglo-Indian extraction, a bachelor in his middle 30's who lived at home with his widowed mother. A keen boxing fan he and I decided that we would stay up late at my flat to listen to transatlantic radio commentary of the Cassius Clay (Ali) v Sonny Liston championship contest. We duly ensconced ourselves with a suitable amount of liquid refreshment to await the transatlantic hook up at 1.30am. Sadly Morpheus overtook us both and we awoke to switch on the radio at 1.45am only to be informed that the contest was over – Clay by a knock out!'

Names such as Ken Naish, Syd Gubby, Diane Jones the only female I believe on the staff, John Edwards and George Harper A.T. Fowle's very able deputy who constantly

amazed everyone with his ability to add four rows of figures simultaneously (do you remember school registers?) The name Oldershaw also rings a bell but I think I should let Ron Cox enlighten you re Oldershaw if he so wishes.

**Jim Towers.** (Wood-work master at Lanfranc who was down to go to Norway but his wife became pregnant so he didn't go. He joined Lanfranc after being in the RAF. He was born in April 1931.) 'Johnny Beacham organised all the school trips. It was all done informally. I was asked but said I couldn't go. George Budd was a very generous man. He drove me to school for 2 years when I lived near Redhill. He was an affable man in his mid 40's. Nothing fazed him. He never raised his voice and he wasn't flamboyant like Johnny. No one could take offence at Johnny. He taught RE. He was a very strong disciplinarian.(Volatile). So was George, but quiet. He was very generous. So was Ron Cox – he just carried on with teaching with never a raised voice.

Teachers in schools those days were much more united because they were not divided into a hierarchy by salary scales as teachers are today. They were ALL low paid! (Jim was paid £8 per week but had been paid £10 per week as a carpenter and joiner previously. And most had to moonlight and have holiday jobs.). Only heads of department were paid on a higher scale – so when it came to the disaster they ALL came back to help except for the Deputy Head who stuck down in the toe of Italy with his family.

Both my wife and I accept things as they come. We were shell shocked at the news. At the time because of the bad pay I had a holiday job and was working at The Three Bridges where I got fantastic wages – but I only got them for three weeks as we all went back to school to rally round. All except for George Harper, who found it too difficult to return from the toe of Italy. Mr Fowler was the Head of Governors.

Rumour has it that Mrs Budd was awoken by the Press at 2.00 am in the morning. She didn't know the news. She had to escape to her neighbours via the back garden.

We used to take school trips of 40 boys and two masters would control them all easily. I dished out the pocket money every day. It was divided up so they had so much a day and it worked well. They could 'save up' for something special if they wanted.

I remember the (Crouch) twins. One was saving for a trumpet. He was more practical and was doing woodwork and metalwork.

We were left with a few good boys who got GCE O-levels, including boys from the Hungarian uprising who got English O-level. Tommy Fowle really got that school going. He would walk round the school with his cane under his arm, once in the morning and once in the afternoon, and if he found a boy outside a classroom.... Ron Cox would bring a boy back in again after 5-10 minutes. The boys knew they had to be good to get back inside.'

Most lunch times I spent in the workshops which had a kettle and it was my job to put the kettle on at ten to twelve. Then all the other teachers came in for tea, chit-chat, and a game of cards – 'Chase the Lady' or 'Black Bitch' (Queen of Spades). It was just for half an hour and then we'd go off again. We could get by trolley bus into Croydon during lunch time. I had glue pots in my workshop and so I could easily take the glue pots off and replace with a kettle for some tea. Johnny Beacham was a lovely, lovely fellow.

His family was very religious and so we didn't call the card game 'The Black Bitch'. George was... you just didn't know he was there – he got on with his work.

### **Memories from others who were not at Lanfranc School.**

**Michael Buckley** (Croydon RE Cadets ACF). I am not going to remember much, but as I recall Geoffrey Crouch had a brother - may have been a twin, and he was a member of the Army Cadets based in Mitcham Road Barracks. I am sure I must have attended the funeral, but have no memories at all. Denis Beacham, the brother of the Beacham that died was an Officer in the Cadets at the time.

**Michael Cooke.** One of the teachers who lost their lives was a Mr Beacham who had a brother (Denis Beacham) who was also a teacher at my school, Fairchildes in New Addington and who taught me English. In 1958, when I was aged 13, I was offered a chance to join a Lanfranc School trip to Switzerland as two places had become vacant. Mr Beacham of Lanfranc School asked his brother whether any of his pupils may like to take up the spare places. I accepted and experienced my very first trip abroad with the boys of Lanfranc and Mr Beacham.

**Reg Greenwood.** My link with this, for what it's worth, is I attended Ashburton Secondary School from 1951 to 1956 and Mr Beacham (Denis Beacham, brother of John Beacham) took our class for R.E. and History. I had great respect for him as a teacher and he was instrumental to me staying on the straight and narrow at a particular time in my early teenage years when I could have "gone off the rails".

**Ray Ives** (Croydon School's colleague). Beacham and Budd were very keen chaps! We met at the Teacher's centre in Croydon – it was a bit of a social club as well as providing courses. George Budd had a lot to do with it. I knew Norman Cook too.