

## **My Memories of Lanfranc by Len Dee.**

1960 was the year Croydon celebrated its millennium, the old parish church having been first established in the year 960. As part of the celebration schools in the borough took part in a huge pageant that was performed in Lloyd Park that summer.

In the top year at primary school I was allowed to take part as an extra in crowd scenes, and as such I played a street urchin from the Middle Ages, and sometimes (if I could change my costume) could play a Victorian street urchin. It involved 4 weeks of rehearsal and I think it was performed for 2 weeks. I have many fond memories of that time including my first kiss with a girl called Glennis Price.

I mention this Pageant because by then school exams were finished and I knew that Lanfranc would be my next school. Lanfranc played a major role in this pageant having choreographed a ballet around the Spanish Armada and the Elizabethan times. It was an impressive performance and the boy or should I say young man who played Sir Francis Drake was to become head boy at the next school year (1960 –61) and was also to become one of the victims in the plane crash. The saddest thing is however much I look down the list of boys killed, I can't remember his name and at the time was someone I looked up to as a role model.

So then in September I cycled to Lanfranc for the first time with Eggy and Clive. They had reassured me that though it was rough there it was *not too bad* and that they would look out for me. All I can really remember though is a seemingly huge crowd of new boys all huddled together looking around for someone they knew, or just a friendly face!

Memories can play tricks over the years, and many details are vague. Mr Cox was my form master in the first year there, and was the best form master I had, firm but fair as the cliché goes. He taught geography and I enjoyed his teaching, other teachers we had were, Mr Cook (Maths and PE), Mr Humphries (English and History) Miss Jones (Art and Craft) Mr Guppy (woodwork) and Mr Parkes (Music). Mr Beecham was our housemaster I was in Caxton house (red I think). I think I had already mentioned when I was steamrollered into taking part in the relay team for the school swimming gala, when I could hardly swim a width.

In the autumn term I had an accident at the school grounds. At the end of the junior playground was a shelter, an open iron bar frame with a corrugated asbestos roof, the crossbars were around 6 feet from the ground and though swinging from the bars was forbidden, boys would spring up to reach and

then swing along like apes. Being quite a small boy I could never reach to even try to swing, but one day a 3<sup>rd</sup> year boy lifted me up. I really don't know what happened but the next thing knew was lying in the first aid room with Mr Cook fussing round me. I had a fracture at the back of my head and was concussed for several days after. This may account for my fear of heights.

That first year was probably the best of my Lanfranc days, later memories seem coloured or discoloured with bad teachers, bad discipline and bad boys. In the 1980's when the TV series Grange Hill was first shown, I remember a lot of parents saying how bad schools had got if Grange Hill was a true portrait of schools today (1980's) while I was watching it and thinking how schools had improved, apart from I was sure Grange Hill's Mr. Bronson (the bully) was based on Lanfranc's Mr ? In an article in the *Sunday Mirror* magazine about new technology in schools, the opening paragraph was; *There was a time not so long ago when any Lanfranc boy would make the Bash Street Kids look like a bunch of swats.....*

The article went on to say how the school had improved and was way ahead of its time with computers in the classroom.

As an appendix I have a list of names that I remember from my year group.

### Boys

Chris Hartland, best friend still in touch

George Aylard, lost touch when I moved away

Peter Munt, ditto

Brian Gough, ditto

Maurice Poole, ditto

Eddie Ingram, lost touch after leaving school

Terry Collins, last seen as a Butcher in the Whitgift centre

Bob Wadey.

Graham Barret.

Peter Penrose.

James Hazeldean, - is he the actor?

Mike Marshall, - we worked our 1<sup>st</sup> job together at Doves garage then lost touch

Keith Ward, - we met up at a mutual friends wedding in the 70's

### Teachers

Mr Goodhew, form master and maths teacher 3<sup>rd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> year nickname *Digit*

Mr Oldershaw, history nickname *Yogi*

Mr Ethrington, science nickname *Maverick*

Mr Eden, social studies nickname *Yoghourt*

Mr Cook, my form master 2<sup>nd</sup> year. He taught Maths and PE, and was a 'ladies man' who singled out the boys with the attractive mothers at open days.

I tried going through my old school reports for teacher's names but the signatures are just initials or illegible.