

Memories

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Al Barclay -- 1946 - 54

I attended MCGS from 1946 to 1954. I did an extra year in the 6th Form which meant eight years at the school. I thought some of my own memories might be of interest to you.

Having read the In Memoriam list I immediately spotted the name of Fred Swaine whose name, if it is the same person, was Jack and he became School Captain in Sept. 1947 in succession to Ernest Potter. The next three successors to Potter had names which rhymed: Swaine, Blaen and Lane. Blaen was known as "Icky" because of his initials which were I. K. In order the school captains during my time at the school were:

1946-7 Ernest Potter, nicknamed "Pansy" after a character in the Beano or Dandy; Pansy Potter, the Strong Man's Daughter, a girl with prodigious strength who sorted out the bad people.

1947 - 48 Jack Swaine

1948 - 49 I K (Icky) Blaen

1949 - 50 Lane, first name forgotten.

1940 - 51 Mick Rowland, an authoritarian and fearsome character.

1951 - 52 Tom Gillard, Bob's older brother.

1952 - 53 Mike Maberley

1953 - 54 Jack Laming

When Mr. Doig left in 1952 he was succeeded by Gerald Courtney who always signed his name as G.J.P. Courtney who came from Manchester Grammar School where he was Head of Modern Languages.

He quickly fell out of favour with everyone as he wanted to dispense with some of the established school traditions such as the annual G and S operas which had such a high reputation correspondents from The Times and Telegraph came each year to report on the productions. His aim was to replace them with plays. In the end a compromise was reached and in alternate years there would be a play and a G and S opera. After The Mikado which saw Mike Maberley give a virtuoso performance, came Shaw's "The Devil's Disciple" set during the American War of Independence with Brian Godbold in the lead role as Dick Dudgeon.

Gerald Courtney's other gripe was that the Honours Boards in the hall were out of date and should be turned into house notice boards, an unpopular move when first mooted but quite popular eventually.

I came to know him well and I found him much more human than Doig. He was approachable and he had a ready smile and a great sense of humour and could take a joke as well as give one. He became my A-level French teacher and gave me so much support and encouragement. I am still grateful to him

Paddy Carpenter -- 1954 - 62 -- Mitcham - By Any Other Name

On the opening day of our first term at Mitcham Grammar we received what passed for a welcome - an assembly in the old hall - the only one I remember being held there; I think the gym was used from then onwards for the daily ritual with the hall reserved for lunch. For some reason the headmaster spent several minutes of this first gathering reading out a list of the new first-formers' surnames. I can't imagine why, as what followed could have been predicted, but the tedious recital passed without incident until he reached the Ms.

One of the most famous people in the world at the time, certainly in terms of male interest, was the actress Marilyn Monroe, and among our number, though not yet known to most of us, was Les Munro - 1L Whitford. When Mr Courtney intoned that provocative surname it was inevitable that an audible titter would run round the ranks of the fourth and fifth forms, and probably on upwards, as far as some of the younger masters, if truth be told.

Had it not been a very first assembly, I'm sure that the first smirking face that the head's beady eyes spotted (not for nothing was he known as Mr Toad) would have been angrily ordered from the hall to wait in the top corridor for the head's return, to be followed by an energetic six of the best. But this was the first time that sixty or so tremulous newcomers had experienced anything like this oppressive formality. Remember that all of us had, in the previous term, the last at our primary schools, been the oldest and the most recently successful pupils - top dogs. Now we were right at the bottom of the pecking order in an alien environment where everything was new and unknown. Probably this was not the moment for the head to display any despotic taste for sadism, lest a good proportion of nervous new boys should melt into quivering wrecks on the hall floor.

Toady played it cleverer. He stopped the list and his humourless eyes ranged round the far end of the hall as if mentally noting the name of every boy whose face was a single degree less than totally impassive. The murmur stopped faster than it had begun.

Welcome to MCGSB. Eight long years started thus.

The list that the head read out indicated a change in our lives; in our very identities. For our surnames now took precedence. The warm personal names used at home and our schools up to then were now officially buried, replaced by the cold and the curt. Brian and Leon became "Forsdick" and "Horowicz" - I was a rarity in being "Carpenter AR", the extra initials accorded due to there being a contemporary in the person of "Carpenter BC". Masters were naturally addressed as "Sir" and referred to as "Mister" from Mr Lewis to Mr Woodiwiss. Later the school would ratchet up to having a couple of "Doctors".

Not only were the Christian names of masters unknown; they were in the main unknowable and secret and guarded, as if to learn them would instantly shatter the disciplinary framework of the whole establishment. Needless to say, boys being boys, what was unknowable was quickly replaced by something invented and most masters were invested with a nickname. This time the secret was ours - and was equally guarded, for revelation could have had dangerous consequences. Some of the staff inevitably did get to know what they were called in the ranks, but others, such as the Toad, never could.

Certain names were automatic: Mr Marsh was going to be Boggy in any establishment and the unusual name of Purbrick had long been abbreviated to Pubs, in tune with lavatories and public houses being major sources of schoolboy humour. Mr Hallam, I think signed, himself J Harvey Hallam so he saved us the trouble of inventing something, whether it was a forename name or not. There were assigned names which may or not have been connected with actual monikers; thus we had Chas Madden, Stan Judge, Joe Martindale, Ted Gwilt (the art master who, to our delight, dressed with the strong hint of a teddy boy) and from the second form, Jim Prowse. One long-running name, appropriate to the subject he taught, was irrevocably attached to Latin master, Mr Law, known to all as Lex. There was also a Hum and later would come a Chicken, a Piggy, a Drac and a Beggarnets, but perhaps we shouldn't reveal all the names behind the names.

I was never taught by him and I think he retired by our form two but there was a white-haired master called Cooke who went by the nickname of Gaffer. He was known for three things. One was lunchtime dozing on fine days in Mitcham's answer to a sun-trap, in front of the fifth-form classroom windows. Two, was for reaching and leaving this favoured spot, not a short walk, with his master's carver chair held by its arms and clamped to his backside rather as a snail carries its shell. Third was his fabled inability to remember all the classroom names and his habit of therefore referring to most of his charges as "Colonel".

Incidentally, we never knew where Gaffer actually came from and went to with his wooden carapace for he inhabited the upper corridor from which first-formers were banned, unless for access, which we rarely needed. When we did we found the air frequently heavy with venomous odours from the chemistry lab. That was the lair of two masters of whom everyone in the school seemed to be frightened, Messrs Samuels and Hopton. Whether they were actually fearsome or we in our ignorance were subliminally equating laboratories with Frankenstein and Quatermass we never found out, as they had departed before it was time for us to study chemistry.

At our end of the corridor was the prefects' room, later to be the printing room. We were allowed to venture to its door, if asked to, but you didn't want to be asked, as it probably meant punishment. The same went for the head's study at the far end.

Prefects' first names were kept just as secret as those of masters, making them a second mysterious élite. For example, at assembly, when all the boys were in place the School Captain would turn to his deputy with "Thank you, Hobson," which was his signal to go and summon the masters waiting in the library. Some of the prefects were treated to nick-names too, like Squinting George and Fatty Forrester, the latter being the ample sergeant-major of the Combined Cadet Force, as well as a prefect. Imagine - an armed prefect.

Perhaps because our own Christian names were of no account as far as school was concerned, many of us also became known by aliases, generally monosyllabic. Thus in our year were found Oz, Pert, Nerik, Hairs, Barrel and Guffy among others. Some were ascribed alliterative names in place of their real ones; thus Keith Dymott became Danny, usually shortened to Dan, Alan Wilson became Will by the same process, while actual names were mostly abbreviated - Sam, Les, Tom, Al, Jed, Geoff and so on. We Carpenters were Baz and Pad, mine being a shortened form of what was itself an assumed name bestowed earlier by a teacher at primary school. A few went by a version of their surname, so Chris Sargent was Sarge, Peter Mackay became Mack, Dave Couzens was known as Cuzzy or Cuz. I never knew classmate Saunders' first name as to us he was always Sandy or Sand. In one case initials came into play, thus David I Gerrard got Dig.

Actually of course it's only in films that names feature much in face-to-face conversation. There they are frequently repeated to ridiculous excess. You'll notice it now that I've mentioned it and it will forever drive you mad, as it does me. In real life names are mostly only used when calling to someone or in the subject's absence.

For completeness, we shouldn't forget the school staff. Jovial caretaker Mr Perry was actually named Jim, I think, but Jim he certainly was known among his eager customers at the tuck shop. And did anyone actually know any proper names of the gardener and groundsman? I certainly didn't and always referred to him, as everyone did to my knowledge, as Fert. Fert was an aloof and a very tall man. At least I think he was tall, for he was mostly seen bent double over the flower beds with long straight legs and what looked like a very bony bottom clad in very ample, not to say oversize, flapping flannels.

Fert also maintained the school playing field, a fair walk from the school, where those of us who were not natural sportsmen were tortured with rugby in the Autumn and Spring, with athletics and cricket in the Summer term. The pitches were reputed to be on a covered over waste tip (much of Mitcham' attractive and characterful common would later be buried forever in similar officially sponsored acts of vandalism). There were rumours in the school that in the past buried items had risen to the surface of our field after heavy rainfall. Other stories said that among the dumped artefacts were retired London tramcars. With a great interest in transport in general and tramcars especially, coupled with my distaste for playing sport, I had two good reasons for fantasizing about arriving at the field for, say athletics, and finding it unusable due to a beautiful antique horse tram having appeared from muddy depths. Even the taciturn Fert might have been moved to make utterance at such an apparition.

Strangely and sadly the one sport I might possibly have been half-reasonable at was abandoned by the school just before my year arrived, possibly the term before, as I have a feeling we were the first first years to occupy a new breeze block block at the back of the school behind that original prefects' room. As I understand it, the white edifice was built on the site of - you've guessed it - the tennis courts - even though there was adjacent grass that could have been utilised. The decision meant that no Mitcham FP was now ever going to play in a final at nearby Wimbledon. What the world may have missed!

As first formers, we were reasonably well-behaved during our year in the white block outpost even though it was an out-of-the-way backwater where few masters or prefects ever ventured. There were no outstanding acts of defiance or insurrection that I can recall. Plenty of those would come later in our school careers.

For one thing only is the building particularly memorable, due to the 1M form room also being the music room. Mr Holmes was responsible for both and he ran a lunchtime music club at which senior pupils would introduce and play some of their favourite music, inevitably given the context and customs of the time, mostly classical. At home I had always been exposed to a fair variety of musical genres; my father liked both thirties' dance music and ballet while my mother enjoyed light music and the popular classics. Nevertheless I credit one meeting of the lunchtime club with beginning the process of developing my own musical preferences. It was definitely the first year as the presenter was Jackson, the School Captain of the time. (See, I have no idea what his first name was!) Whatever else he played, it was fifth movement of Beethoven Six that set me on a voyage of discovery which has continued ever since.

I didn't enjoy school, principally I think because I didn't like Mitcham itself much. Even though my friends were there, I was happier in other places. North Mitcham felt physically claustrophobic and the school psychologically so, but perhaps it had to. I've decided since that you need to experience at least a taste of the bad or unpleasant to appreciate what is better. Mitcham's visual mediocrity taught me to love unspoiled places while the unfairness that was regularly a feature of school life gave me a respect for fairness and justice. So nothing is wasted. Also, almost in spite of my strenuous efforts, I somehow received an education which turned out to be far better than I ever imagined it was at the time.

Perhaps most importantly of all, Mitcham gave me friendships which in several instances have lasted through the intervening years and which in others have been re-established in very recent times.

In some cases, I've at last even got to know their first names.

01-Oct-18

Trevor Jennings -- 1957 - 65

The tradition of 2nd formers rolling 1st formers down the air raid shelters on Mitcham Common - some sort of initiation ceremony! Bingham abolished this and got the air raid shelters removed!

I was in Lodge House and recall the house masters quite well: W T J Purbrick - who said on our first meeting ' Hello Jennings, where's Derbyshire? '.

N N Morris - who wrote on my mock O-level paper '95% is not good enough - you must aim for perfection!'. I am pleased to say that I followed in his footsteps - teaching maths and becoming Chief Examiner for Further Maths A-level with Cambridge University.

R (Bob) Bateman: who resurrected my rugby career in the upper sixth, to the extent that, in a game for the 2nd XV against Sutton GS, I scored a try, which I converted, kicked a penalty goal and a drop goal - thus scoring the only 11 points in our 11 - 0 victory. I also recall kicking two long range drop goals at Reigate GS - watched by 'Piggy' Tweddle, as our coach was absent in order to play for Rosslyn Park or Yorkshire.

Bob was also an excellent cricket coach for the 1st XI and my batting improved enormously under his tutelage.

A A Jackson - who was housemaster during inter-regnums. He was an excellent form master during O-level year; a fine musician and always willing to drop Barrie Harper and myself off on the Sutton by-pass, if buses weren't running!

Ernest Potter -- 1940 - 47

We worked in groups for various farmers. One day we were in a wheat field that had been cut and the farmer decided to burn the stubble. Unfortunately the wind turned 180 degrees and the flames rushed towards us. The fire brigade had to run hoses across several fields. No one was hurt but a corn stack and a reaping machine were burnt. When I returned to camp I found that my shirt was full of holes where burning straw had landed on me.

Subsequent camps were held at Cowdray Park. Mrs Doig did the cooking and we ate well. One boy remained in camp each day as camp orderly to peel potatoes, slice bread etc. One year I fell and injured my knee so I became the permanent orderly.

We went out in groups each morning, usually taking sandwiches but sometimes, on the nearer farms, Mrs Doig would bring sandwiches and tea out to the workers. Sometimes getting to the work site meant walking a long way, otherwise transport was provided. The farmers paid for our help. The money went into a central fund and we were paid weekly, including the camp orderly.

Work was varied. I remember going out, I think with Bill Woodhouse, with foresters who were felling oak trees. There were no chain saws and everything was done by hand. It was there that I learned how refreshing cold cocoa can be.

The staff were very good. They didn't work, so I don't know what they did all day, but they helped the camp to run smoothly. As well as Mr and Mrs Doig with Clive and Jennifer, Messrs Marsh, Lewis (and I think Purbrick) and Miss Jewett and Miss Whiteleg were regular helpers.

We enjoyed our recreation, much of which was in the Midhurst School swimming pool. There are many happy memories from those days.

1946 Midhurst





J B Pritchard -- 1935-40

I was still at Mitcham County School for Boys when I joined the LDVs on 23rd June 1940, aged 16. With the fall of Dunkirk...thousands of civilian occupations wished to do what they could to defend England in the invasion which everyone was expecting that summer. I was signed on as a dispatch rider...I did my first guard duty at the Canons ARP post. There were two of us, one armed with a 12 bore shotgun and two cartridges and the other with a tin hat! Our sole item of official uniform was an LDV armband....

J B Pritchard of Mitcham – writing about his memories as a 16 year old during World War II

The LDV or Local Defence Volunteers was the original name of the Home Guard

LAPs/Mit/War /Quote1

We had to turn out every time the Air Raid warning sounded, which was every night during the Blitz and we watched the heavy raids on London which lit up the whole sky. We saw planes lit up by searchlights and some shot down by Anti-aircraft guns – always a great boost to morale. When bombs dropped in Mitcham we turned out to guard damaged shops and factories against looters.

J B Pritchard of Mitcham – writing about his memories as a 16 year old during World War II

LAPs/Mit/War /Quote2

LAPs

On the night of 26th April 1941, when members of B Company were on duty at their headquarters in the Tower Creameries in Commonside East, they were alerted by what they thought were two parachutists descending on the Common. Unfortunately the parachutes were mines dropped by German aircraft. In all 15 members of B Company lost their lives that night. They were buried with full military honours in war graves at London Road Cemetery...their names recorded on a bronze plaque unveiled at the Creameries in 1962.

J B Pritchard of Mitcham – writing about his memories as an 17 year old during World War II

LAPs/Mit/War /Quote3

Jack Simmons -- 1949-54 - a Memory of Mitcham.

I moved to Mitcham in 1941 as a 3 year old having been "bombed out" elsewhere. Many of the memories in these pages are similar to mine. But perhaps not this- As a ten year old my mate Tony Burls and I lived near the Swan Inn. We went for a swim in the Seven Islands one fine day. We hid our clothes and towels in some bushes and had our swim, more of a paddle really. Unfortunately someone stole our clothes and towels and we had to walk back home almost naked, past Fair Green and Monarch Parade. It still causes merriment to this day.

I lived at 2 Bond Road, the "Balsa Wood Factory", making Skyleada model airplane kits, was over the back fence. When the workers went home I used to jump over the fence and scrounge scraps from the incinerator and their dump to make my models.

We later moved to Maple Close where I found a friend in Derek Bentley, two years my senior. Derek was a great aeromodeller and I learnt much from him. We flew on the green off Oakleigh Way until the neighbours complained about the noise. We were banished to the Common, later Epsom Racecourse. The passion for aeromodelling led to a career in aviation.

I went to Mitcham County Grammar School for Boys between 1949 and 1954. The Headmaster was the haughty Mr Doig. My favourite was history teacher "Charlie" Madden. Others were "Rusty" Norton, Jones the French and Jones the Art, "Colonel" Cook, "Blind Pew" Judge. He was almost blind and once mistook a raincoat hanging up for a boy walking about. One very brave soul put him right. Mr Woodiwiss once attacked a boy with a piece of wood; he left shortly after with a brain tumour. "Podge" Ayerst left in "unfortunate" circumstances about a boy. I didn't understand then but I do now. Poor M. Debevere tried to teach French but couldn't control the class. Mr Doig swept into the room one day and nominated three at random for a caning. I was one. We never complained about anything, it was shameful to do so. M. Debevere lost his job.

We were always exercising and having showers, we were very fit and clean. I never really liked school but I now admit they did a good job of giving us a general education, fitting us for a varied life.

I also went to the Baptist Church on London Road, a very worthy institution. One of my favourite place was the Library. It was a lovely place, all polished wood and leather seats in beautiful condition. I loved the books and the Newspaper Room, I spent a lot of time there, reading, browsing, and dreaming.

I left for Australia in 1961. I visited Mitcham in 1995; it had gone downhill - too many cars, litter everywhere. Monarch Parade, once so fine, was more like a Third World place.

But I still think of Mitcham as home. An interesting place with many curious memories.

Apr 2nd, 2013

Jack Simmons -- 1949 1954 -Mitcham County Grammar School for Boys

Memory is a selective thing, the best is easy, but the mind glosses over the worst. Some things recollected as certainties turn out to be not quite so. These are things that I remember although I can't guarantee their accuracy.

I lived in Bond Road behind the "Balsa Wood Factory" actually Skyleada Model Aircraft Kit manufacturers. I went to Bond Road Primary School then Western Road Secondary School. In 1948. I failed the 11 plus exam that year but my friend Howard Lidiard passed. In 1949 I scraped in after an interview with the headmaster, Mr Doig. It was quite an ordeal never having met such a lofty person before. Howard accompanied me on my first day for which I was very thankful.

Some of the boys in that 1949 intake.

Ralph Smith, Smith MG, Smith MJ, Ken Collins, John Davis, Jack(?) Davis, Brian Moore, Ken Meade, Michael Poncia, "Chick" Henn, Brian Foster, Harold Scotting, Robert Bristow, Fielder, Coward, Hunt, Skinner, Gillett, Watkins, Moyce.

Teachers.

Some of the teachers over my five years in descending order of preference-

Mr "Boggy" Marsh - Maths and General Science. A great teacher with relaxed control over the class. His interest was astronomy and he was easily led astray from the lesson to discuss his pet subject. I can still hear him saying "at last a red herring" as a question was deliberately asked which had a reference to astronomy.

Mr "Charlie" Madden - History. I don't know why he was called Charlie, maybe something to do with the comedian Cheerful Charlie Chester. I liked his fresh and breezy manner; I like history to this day and am grateful to him for getting me interested. I would have got an "O" level easily but the GCE paper had subjects I had never heard of. I was definitely cheated.

Mr Hallam - Geography. No nickname! I liked geography and still do. I got an O level. A triumph for him more than me.

Mr "Rusty" Norton - English Language and Literature. We were fans of Geoff Duke and Ray Amm on their 500cc Manx Nortons in the TT Races, hence "Rusty". Don't know why. He must have been a good teacher because even with my apathy to study I got O levels in those two subjects.

Mr "Tim" Harper - General Science. He had the habit of closing his eyes for several second whilst talking. There was a chemistry teacher who was a bit sleepy. They were known as Weary Willie and Tired Tim after two cartoon characters. Despite that he was an engaging teacher of an interesting subject.

Mr Holmes - Music. Taught classical music but did play a boogie woogie number once which went down well. We were assembled in the gym once for a musical treat. In came this stocky, bearded singer who sang "You'll forget the Little Ploughboy" in soprano. It was so funny we got the giggles and we just couldn't stop. There were mutterings of retribution but it's just wasn't that easy to stop a whole row of us choking back the laughter. He was Alfred Deller. I heard a programme about him recently, apparently quite famous for his voice all those years ago. I still smile at the memory of that performance.

Mr Jones - French. Known as "Jones the French". He was OK; we all struggled with interest as we thought that it would be more useful if the French learned English. We had a book once about some French criminal called "Slim Kerrigan". I used to be known as "Sim" but Michael Poncia started calling me "Slim" a name that stuck. I'm not slim now.

Mr Jones - Art. Known as "Jones the Art". Harmless but not very engaging. He had a 1920s Austin Seven, an open tourer. Somebody tied some tin cans under it and he clattered off down the road to hoots of laughter. Apparently he took it all in good heart and didn't seek retribution.

Mr "Pepper" Wright - Mr Samuels. Maths. Can't remember anything much about them. Couldn't have been too bad. I did get an "O" level which was the most useful thing I got from school.

Mr "Pubby" Pirbright - I remember his voice but not what he taught.

Monsieur Debevere - French. He was Polish and just couldn't control the class with many students getting silly, but not me. Mr Doig swept into the class one day, total silence fell. He pointed to three boys at random and told them to stand outside his office where they later received three strokes of the cane. In a grave miscarriage of justice I was one. Poor M. Debevere left shortly afterwards. I felt sorry for him and hoped he found a more suitable position; he was much too gentle for adolescent boys.

Mr "Marty" Martindale - PT. Not a very pleasant person, I suspect he didn't like his job. But we were fit and clean.

Mr Judge - Latin. Unkindly known as "Blind Pew" because of his almost complete blindness. I found his lessons unpleasant, he was always listening intently for any misdemeanour. We all understood his problem but there was always tension. He once told a boy to sit down and pointed at him. One brave soul told him it was a raincoat hanging up at the back. Grim Silence. I must confess that once Ken Collins and I were hopelessly behind with our homework. We sneaked into the class at lunch break and copied Skinner's usually excellent work (sorry about that, Skinner). We put in a few deliberate mistakes. Mr Judge listened to homework in alphabetical order, Ken and I got through but Skinner coming later roused his suspicions about copying and we nearly had a catastrophe. Fortunately he let it go.

Mr Woodiwiss - Woodwork. Most unpleasant. He once told us he had a brain tumour. I remember him attacking one boy with a piece of wood for some error in his work. He left shortly afterwards, I believe he died from that tumour.

Mr "Podge" Ayerst - Maths. I don't remember much about him except that I was glad I didn't have him after the first year. He left in "unfortunate circumstances". I didn't really know what that meant then but I do now. He was alleged to be the Vicar of Titsey in Kent; you can imagine the hilarity that caused. When he died a year or two later some boys cycled up there to check on his grave.

Sport and Fitness.

Rugby, cricket, cross country running, athletics, swimming. You couldn't complain about lack of sport. Plus PT. With showers after everything we were very clean. One of my abiding memories was having a wet towel in my satchel most days. I am most impressed with the way everyone was expected to participate, only one boy being excused with a doctor's certificate.

The Grand Cross Country and the Grand Relay each year were great examples of total participation.

My introduction to rugby started with the ball being kicked into my solar plexus. I went down in agony and heard some boy saying "Please Sir, Simmons is injured" The reply was "Get on with the game, he's only winded". I survived. I enjoyed rugby, sloshing about in the mud on that ground near the windmill. "Chick" Henn was our Black House Captain being built for the game. I was fleet of foot and played on the wing, occasionally scoring a try.

Our introduction to swimming consisted of Marty assembling us on the side of the pool at Mitcham Baths and simply saying "jump in and hold onto the side". A very effective start, I think most of us quickly learnt to swim. Some of us use to go before school, at twopence a time it was good value.

Manners and Discipline.

School uniform was an absolute necessity. All teachers were addressed as "Sir" and we doffed our caps when meeting them outside school. Only the Head and his deputy could wield the cane but I can remember getting a cuff from Mr Samuels for fooling around at lunch time. I have no idea what goes on in schools nowadays but I doubt that it is anything like that.

There was an assumption that we were nearly all Protestants, as the Head said "Jews and Catholics are excused" at Assembly. Only a few walked out and we sang hearty Protestant Hymns.

A special treat was the outing on the day the 11 Plus exams were held. We went to Hampton Court one year, a hike in the South Downs another. My favourite was the Natural History Museum at Kensington. I was fascinated and I went on my own later. I also went in 2015, it was still good but overrun with tourists.

Finally

There was no effort to enlighten us as to what to do with our lives after leaving school. I didn't have a clue and since National Service loomed only 12 months after leaving I wound up in an Office in the City. Having got into the RAF I eventually wound up in Australia on the nuclear tests. This later lead to working in private industry on guided missiles and with electronics companies in Adelaide. My academic achievements at Mitcham Grammar were decidedly modest but they got me through my working life.

Well done Mitcham County Grammar School for Boys.

30-Sep-16