

## Memories of Harlow College

I attended Harlow College from 1951 to 1956 as a day-boy. My recollections of the teachers and the frequency of their replacement suggest that the school must have been ranked near the bottom of private schools in the UK at the time. I have since thought of the school as the male equivalent of "[St Trinian's](#)" of movie fame. During my attendance, there was a scandal involving a master and the Art mistress which made it to "News of the World."

Survival at Harlow College was certainly training for later life. I started the school as a pudgy boy, frightened of bigger boys wielding sticks with nails on the ends and catapults with heavy-duty staples as ammunition. I was picked on by prefects and others for a while until I was left alone to be a nerd. Later, I became a prefect, which gave me some independence and responsibility.

The succession of Mathematics teachers stuck to the O-level syllabus but managed to stimulate sufficient interest for me to work ahead on my own. The History teacher was impressive and inspired my interest. He had been a WWII prisoner of war. I remember a couple of occasions in the Upper Remove classroom when he lost his usual calm in reaction to a swastika drawn on the blackboard by a student. My worst teacher was George, the Science teacher. He did a terrible job with Biology - especially human reproduction - so he was given a very hard time by the class.

Towards the end of my time at the school I was called Loggy because I had mastered the logarithm. I was not a sports person - playing football in the cold and mud and, even worse, getting "stitches" cross country running around the marshes and old Roman Temple (now a developed historical site) was not fun. In the summer of my last year (I think), I was appointed captain of my House third eleven cricket team. I remember the boredom of the matches, the wasps buzzing, and getting hit by the ball several times from lack of attention. Instead of these sports, I would really have liked to shoot on Mrs. Dames' archery range, play tennis, or go sailing, skiing or climbing, but such dreams were not to be realized until later years.

Other memories are of the repetition of the morning line-up around the circular lawn, the parade into the Church, the assembly and subsequent dispersal. I remember Mary, a pensioner in the cottage next to the Remove schoolhouse. I remember that most boys were very pleasant and considerate to her. The highlight of my Harlow College experience was the day I left from home in Sawbridgeworth and rode my bike to School. As I started up Station Road, I noticed smoke coming from the area of the school. The science building was on fire. I was delighted, thinking the whole school would go, but it did not.

Boys I knew well were Fred Scatley (became a sports photographer and died 2002-2003) and Alan Laycock (a neighbor in Sawbridgeworth who followed his father into Accounting). Going down the lists of old boys on the Old Harlovians website, I remember classmate Madsen. I remember classmate Clark(e?) with fair hair and pale complexion who was very intelligent. I met Colin Porcher in Old Harlow a number of times in the early 1960's but did not know him at school.

I left Harlow College with good O-levels and went to Cheshunt Grammar School and Queen Mary College (QMC), University of London, where I obtained a first in Electrical Engineering in 1961. I then worked for two years in the declining UK electronics and telecommunication research laboratories of the 1960's. I married Marie Dargan, whom I met at Harlow Tennis Club (adjoining Marigolds cricket field and near the Green Man). In 1966, I completed my PhD, joined Bell Labs, and moved to the US.

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