

## HOLY TRINITY SCHOOL IN THE EARLY 1950'S BY DAVID BENNETT

I gather that Holy Trinity School, part of the fabric of Charlotteville for many years, has celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. Based in Addison Road since the 1970's the school as I remember it as a pupil was situated at the foot of Pewley Hill where the Victorian building still remains to this day. It was located at other sites before that. Sadly, I have no photographs of my time there but I do still have my school reports, my school scarf (knitted by mum) and my memories. The school admissions register records that I started my school life at Trinity on 19 April 1950 (aged 4  $\frac{3}{4}$  yrs) and that my last day there was 27 July 1956. In between, I learnt to swim at the old Castle Street baths, developed a love of books, an appreciation of history and made lots of friends.

I was walked to school on my first day by my mum who had lived practically her whole life in Addison Road and, together with one or two other children who were starting in the Summer Term, was received by the form 1 teacher, Miss Vickery who guided us to the rows of tip-up wooden desks with inkwells. I was the youngest in the class. Mum left but she would be back to collect me in the afternoon and all would be well. There was no such thing as the "school run" then. In austerity Britain very few families possessed a car. The mums waiting outside the school gate at quarter to four had walked there, from nearby streets such as Addison Road, Cline Road, Brodie Road, Bright Hill and Hill Place. This was long before the houses in Bright Hill and Hill Place were demolished to make way for the Bright Hill car park. I can still smell the damp raincoats hanging up in the cloakroom, and the bottles of milk thawing out on the coal fired boiler in the classroom. I remember the playground with a fence down the middle to separate the boys from the girls even though the classes were mixed, the air raid shelters, dark and forbidding around the perimeter and the games we used to play – marbles, five stones, hopscotch, conkers, racing each other's dinky cars – innocent games for more innocent times. On wet days we would stay inside and read the Dandy or Beano, the Knockout or Radio Fun. How things have changed in the fifty odd years since I left, the town has changed almost beyond recognition, most of us enjoy a far better quality of life than we did in the early "50's" when rationing still prevailed, and yet....

Charlotteville had its own church (St Luke's – where Addison Court now stands) and was served by at least half a dozen shops. The pub was where the locals gathered, there was a thriving community spirit, and if you looked up or down Addison Road you would be hard pushed to see a single car. Some of that spirit which undoubtedly existed then, borne out of the privations of the 1930's and the war that followed, has been revived in recent years and it is good to see. Good too that Holy Trinity, my first school, has survived all the changes of the last half century and more and continues to play an important role in the life of our community.