

10. Philip at School

DA: And Philip was still at school wasn't he? He has just started his secondary school?

MA: He was going to ... he went to two schools. The first one was a prep school – Swanbourne, which had a great reputation – socially as well as academically, and nowadays if I ever mention to any of the ex-heads of public schools who live in Pelham Square¹, that Philip went to Swanbourne, they say, "Really? Oh tremendous, tremendous place. Was Evans in charge then? Lucky boy. Lucky boy". It was considered one of the prep schools in those days.

DA: Did he like it then?

MA: Did he like it? Yea, I think so because one of the Evans' sons was an expert on submarines and had a lot of experience at submarine warfare, and kept the boys entertained with account of submarine warfare. Which Philip rather liked. Then he went to Wycombe Grammar School, which he didn't find terribly stimulating except for one thing. For many years after the war there was a shortage of newsprint in this country. So not only did you have four-page newspapers, but you also had a shortage of comics. And, to young school boys in the first form and second form, this was a terrible handicap, to be without comics. So, Philip organised a Comics Exchange [laughs].

DA: Ah, typical!

MA: I don't know if there was a rake-off for him, he probably read all the comics for free [laughs].

DA: I am glad to hear that he read comics.

MA: Oh, of course he did. That, I think was the most important thing in his life at Wycombe Grammar.

DA: Was that a boarding school as well?

MA: Yeah.

¹ Mark and Jean's Brighton home, 12 Pelham Square

DA: And he'd what, come out for holidays

MA: Yea. *[Telephone rings...]*

DA: We were dealing with the time between 1946.



Mark Abrams (approximately 1950)