

Some thoughts on the day...

Nicholas De Piro D'Amico Inguanez (1950-1955)

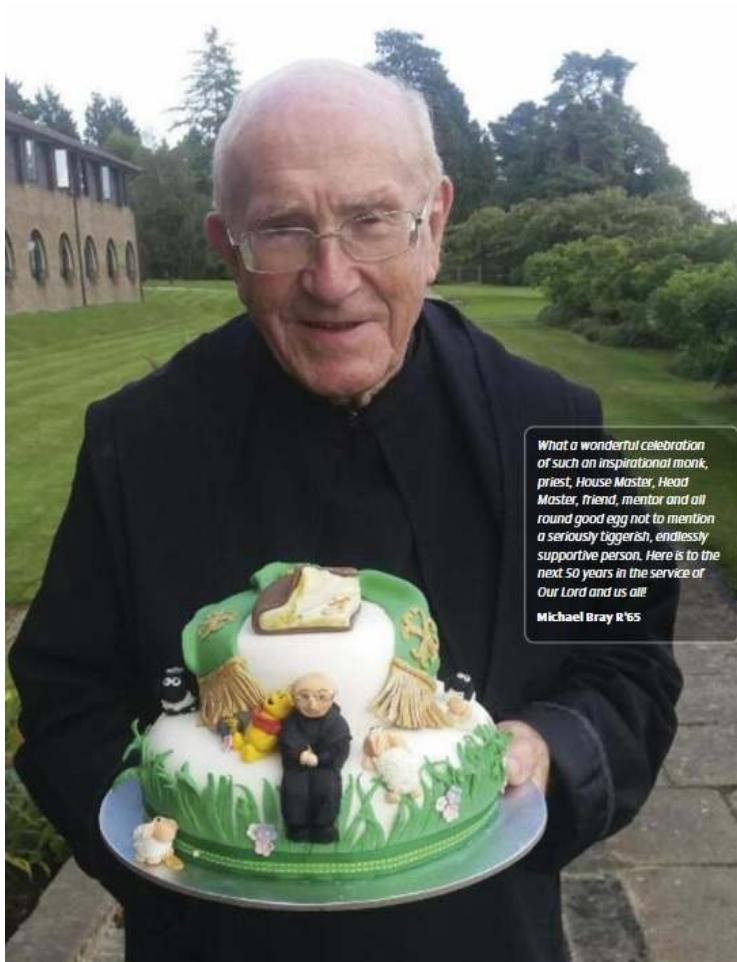


My visit to Worth left me weary with emotion both happy and sad. It brought back my youth so vividly that for a moment I almost forgot that I was now an old man. I missed seeing those who perhaps had the greatest influence on my life, and was moved by visiting their graves.

Fr Stephen - Richard Ortiger (1947-1953)

What a brilliant event; easily twelve out of ten! I see today as a landmark event, seriously important; you've struck a brilliant blow for all sorts of good things; hooray, hurrah and, most of all, thank you, thank you and thank you, in that order.

Fr Stephen after his Golden Anniversary Mass in August...



Ross Kilpatrick and Rupert Cuddon-Large



Ross Kilpatrick (1961-1966)

(At first) I was in Reception - Form 5 of the 5 year-cohorts. But causing disruption and dismay to the form teacher Mrs Cox. By week 2 Mrs Cox had had enough; she negotiated me into the year above - 4b - down by the potting sheds. Since I knew the rules of rugby I was equally rapidly moved from Under 9 to Under 10 for Games. Later, in the rugby world, I was promoted another year from the under 12s to under 13s. Hence I ended up with 3 x 1st XV photos : Capt Noddy St George, Capt Howard Davies, and Capt Ross K.

This may explain my wide acquaintance at Worth. I dormed with the cohort which arrived in 61-62, I classed for 3 years with cohort 60-61, and played games for some terms (and that is everyday) with cohort 59-60. I knew everybody. I volunteered for everything. In the classroom I eventually did 2 years in 2a (top of the fire-escape, straight on). First year in the front row '63-4 (English class heroes Busby, Polland etc hoarded the back). Then in the back corner, with window ledge, 1964-5 where Easter-Bruce's jackdaw would despoil my books. Then I realised that each year would bring along another bunch of talented competitors. All this precocious seniority was useless. We all moved down the corridor to the top of the internal stairs for 1S in 65-66.

Rupert Cuddon-Large (1961-1966)

What do I remember and why did I enjoy Worth so much ?

Answers on a blue paper:

I'd clean forgotten about Mr Pearce, he was an interesting teacher who seemed to genuinely enjoy his job.

Mr Lazarus' geography classes in No 1, Potting Sheds were fun and I was good at those. He seemed to have an endless supply of toffees to throw at you...

Ditto French with Mrs Cox which I think we had in Austin House across the field from Tower House.

Most subjects were fun for me in the first couple of years but when I needed to knuckle down when they weren't so easy, I didn't do so well, and I was easily distracted....

Sport and the beautiful grounds of Worth were great loves of mine. Strangely, I used to wander across the road and watch the Senior school cricket first XI at any time I could - they seemed so grown up to an awe struck child of 11 or 12.

I remember the early days of learning rugby with father Jerome and of being worried about having to tackle someone large and "important" like Etherington-Smith.

Having to endure Mr Bristow being cross with all of us in his scholarship Greek class, when I really would have preferred to do Geography.

Random memories: watching Snitch (Fr Michael) swing an axe in the woods with considerable ease; bush babies being fed strange looking worms; trams, Melampus' missing whiskers, rubber Minibrix.

Those dodgy looking black rubber capes, the smell of the old farm buildings; queuing up to show Miss Sweetman and Miss La Marche clean hands every evening, having The Hobbit read to us outside on warm summer evenings before bed - there's a long list.

I was really surprised to bump into Helen Sweetman last Thursday too.

George Hutchins (1962-1966)

What did I think of the day? It is a different being to myself who doesn't approach such events with at least some trepidation. 51 years is a long time and even given Aristotle's adage, 'Give me a child until he is seven and I will show you the man', change, if not in attitude then certainly in physique, is inevitable. As it turned out, those who attended the day were a lovely lot (and those who left in '66 the loveliest of the lot!). Yes, Worth has changed and yet, in the best of senses, it remains the same. The biggest difference from those early years, other than the introduction of girls, is in the buildings. The obvious is that there are new builds on site. The less obvious is that it seems that every cavernous space of our youth - rooms, dormitories, courtyards, and corridors, has been divided, partitioned, sealed off. No longer ranks of cast iron beds and plywood lockers. Now secure and cosy cubby-holes for work and play. And remains the same? Look at the joy of those who attended the day. Look at the cedar trees on the lawns. Look at the views from the Whitehead Room across to the South Downs. And how right to end the day in the monks' cemetery, to remember those who were so much part of our lives at Worth half a century ago.

Adrian Holmes (1962-1966)

You can leave Worth, but Worth will never leave you. I'm sure it's been said before, but that's exactly what I felt as I parked on the quad under the still-spreading boughs of that magnificent cedar of Lebanon. Yes, it was a delight to see the old place again - and a real pleasure to meet my fellow Junior House leavers from 1966. It seemed we had all survived the intervening half a century in remarkably good shape!

The School likewise appeared to be positively flourishing - and we all agreed it was an excellent thing to find there were now girls in the Sixth Form. Of course, the real shock was seeing all the new buildings which had sprung up, with what I can only describe as architectural impertinence ('but that's where I flew my glider!'). Happily though, most of the old familiar landmarks were still there, and you could hear our group positively wallowing in the delicious nostalgia of it all.

'Ah yes, here's where we queued for Sister Edey's surgery' ... 'Aren't these the potting sheds where Mr Lazarus chucked toffees at us in geography lessons?' ... 'Surely this laundry used to be Mr Renouf's art class?' ... 'That's the lawn where Mr Blake staged his French plays' etc etc.

One sad note was struck for me - or rather wasn't. I really missed hearing the bells from the Tower clock, whose cycle of quarter chimes I can still recall note-perfect to this day. They were the soundtrack of my time at Worth - please bring them back!

Most touching of all, though, was our visit to the Monks' Cemetery. It was quite sobering to see so many familiar names from our past carved on their simple crosses in the grass: Fathers Benedict, Alban, Edward, Michael, Bruno, Roger, Thomas, Dominic, Victor ... all wise and gentle stewards of our formative years.

I confess I don't really say 'God bless' anymore. But standing there, I felt I should make an exception. My thanks to them, and my thanks to Worth.

'66 Leavers...

*Peter Agius, Rupert Cuddon-Large, George Hutchins,
Ross Kilpatrick, Adrian Holmes*

