

Harry Mellor RIP

Harry Mellor was a great Old Xaverian.

I first really got to know Harry in the early 1982. It was the time when the Diocese realised that the Clapham College Playing field at Norbury would be ideal for the siting of a new primary school. Against the threat of losing the complete ground and clubhouse the Association needed to enter into legal discussions with the Diocesan solicitors. Our aim was to preserve the clubhouse and maintain a senior football pitch. Harry, a vastly experienced solicitor, responded to our call! He had previous dealings with the Diocesan solicitors and warned us that entering into legal contract with the diocese would be expensive. Harry played a 'blinder' he drew up two agreements with the solicitors: a lease on the clubhouse and buildings and a licence on the pitch. These agreements were signed in the early 1983 and are still every bit effective today as they were thirty-five years ago.

Harry was a true benefactor to the Association. He waived all his costs and wasn't wrong on the size of the diocesan bill! He managed to reduce the other side's costs by line by line scrutiny. He was surely dealing with a fellow Catenian but would never have said so.

Since that time of getting to know Harry, he was a wonderful supporter of the Association. Always attended our functions especially the Chairman's lunch and latterly our pilgrimages to the Somme battlefields. Two years ago we toured the five landing beaches of 1944 Allied invasion of Normandy. Harry was on every beach. A difficult task for a man his age as we were often walking on sandy beaches and steep dunes but not for Harry! He was brilliant. Nothing was too much bother and I'm sure he was saving himself for the end of day debrief in the restaurant and bar.

Harry was a regular at our annual mass of remembrance. Who could forget at the World War One centenary mass four years ago when Harry movingly talked about his evacuation to East Grinstead in 1939 when the school was mobilised. The walk to Balham Station, his rations packed in a box (which he subsequently had eaten before he reached East Croydon) and life in the countryside thereafter.

He had a passion for both Millwall FC (a season ticket holder) and Surrey CCC. He could remember matches, names goal scorers, bowlers, batsmen of a bygone era. He had a memory that took my breath away.

Harry was indeed a devoted husband, father and grandfather. At quieter moments I would ask after his wife, a dementia sufferer. On occasions he would be visibly upset as he told me that she didn't always know who he was but nonetheless he always visited and cared for her. His love knew no boundaries and was always a loving husband.

Until shortly before his death Harry was an active member of the Friday Club, the bimonthly meeting group (Alec Morrish, Ted Hayter and Brian Sanders), meeting in local hostelrys for a meal and a pint.

Harry was a loyal friend to his school, his Association and the Catenians. He had a deep faith and a love of his religion. A true gentleman.

Rest in peace Harry. Please pray for his soul. He will surely see his eternal rest.

Eddie