

ST IVO SCHOOL 1955 – 2005 50TH ANNIVERSARY



1950s Day

Friday 25th November 2005

On Friday 25th November St Ivo School turned the clocks back to the 1950s to try to recreate some of the flavour of a 1950s school day.



Many students and staff dressed appropriately for the day. The girls bemoaned the cold weather as they replaced their trousers with skirts and socks. Boys donned a tie, and the Sixth Form looked resplendent in suits, collars and ties.

The day started in the traditional manner with five “whole school” assemblies. These were held with a mix of year groups at each location. Year 13 students acted as prefects and of course pupils were expected to stand, not sit. A Senior Manager led each assembly, which began with a hymn and proceeded to a reading, prayers and finally notices. The attitude of the pupils was exemplary, and a pin could have been heard dropping whilst Mr Gilbert (left) “demonstrated” the old corporal punishments.

Students then proceeded to lessons, but with a twist as many of these were to be held in the style or with the content of lessons in the 1950s.

In Geography lessons involved learning about the British Empire. Pupils were expected to colour in a map to show the locations of colonies, and then completed a crossword. The department had a display of geography text books from the 1950s along with photos of St Ives in the 1950s, 50s music and old pathe news reels of major geographical events during the 1950s.

In the department of modern languages these were put to one side for the day and the teaching of Latin was returned to. Pupils had fun learning a few words of Latin, looking at the role of Latin in modern society and thinking about particular aspects of Roman culture and society. Some brave Year 10 and 11 pupils looked at first declension nouns and grammar whilst lower school pupils looked especially at Latin expressions we use even today. Year 7 pupils concentrated on learning Roman numerals and doing all manner of puzzles to practise them, Year 8 pupils followed Roman soldiers through their lives and responsibilities (the punishments especially appealed to them!), Year 9 pupils looked at what the Romans did for us whilst Year 10 pupils concentrated upon the role and benefits of Latin. The sixth form pupils of modern languages were particularly keen to learn Latin and tried their hand at translating some of Pliny's letters. The Year 12 pupils viewed with some amusement Pliny's views on women whilst Year 13 pupils worked at Pliny's ghost stories. We are grateful to a wide range of people for their support (financial and otherwise) for our Latin event but mention above all the patient pupils in Year 10 who stapled over a thousand booklets for the day and Ed Lawrenson who drew the entertaining cartoons for the classroom posters and the teaching booklets.

Economists in Year 12 studied nationalisation, and those in Year 11 studied rationing, an intricate part of 50s life.

In History all pupils researched an aspect of the 1950s – royalty, everyday life, sport, reaching new heights or entertainment. They then gave a presentation to their class who recorded the information, producing a small book on the 1950s. It was very interesting and some excellent booklets were produced.

Students with lessons in food technology turned their hands to a number of domestic tasks. Year 7 learned how to wash up correctly (glasses first etc) while Year 8 tried their hand at ironing after a demonstration. Year 10 caterers related their course to how it would have been taught in the 1950s. A traditional catering demonstration was given (complete with “cooking basket”).

The PE and Dance departments taught pupils 1950s style Rock 'n' Roll dancing. All pupils seemed to enjoy themselves – the dancing was a huge hit and has been requested to be taught more often in PE and Dance lessons!

In ICT pupils used their imaginations to swap computers for typewriters. They were taught to touch type on these, without of course being allowed to look at the keyboard. Some classes were split according to gender, with the girls studying department, telephone and formal introduction techniques. This was followed by learning the basics of writing in short hand and touch typing. The boys had their hands and fingernails checked for cleanliness before being allowed to enter the classroom. They then studied computers in the 1950s, comparing them to the technology of 2005. Having completed this they found the best way of presenting the information to children of primary school age.



At break and lunch times a number of 1950s activities were laid on for pupils - Year 13 prefects organised skipping, hopscotch and a record hop in the school playground. A 1950s lunch was produced by the canteen staff. It was also arranged for an old school bus (right) to be brought on site which pupils could look at. The Resource Centre (with staff in period dress) had a 1950s video playing and a number of displays for pupils to look at including "did you know" facts about 1955 with a timeline showing famous people and events. A book display covered growing up in the 1950s, famous events and information about toys and cars in the 1950s.

The main activity at lunchtime was a "taster session" of what a 1950s ballroom dance lesson would have been like. This took place in the school hall, commencing with an introduction by Mr King, a former Science teacher at St Ivo who taught ballroom dancing in the late 1950s. The dances students and staff attempted were the social foxtrot (which became a lively affair once Mr Perry and Mrs Leader joined in), the waltz and a disco



hustle (of which Mrs Slater and Miss Tedford proved to be the grand masters), with Mr and Mrs Bartlett first demonstrating each dance. The response was excellent, with some students requesting the creation of a ballroom dance club, which it is hoped will begin next term. The award for most professional dance has to go to Mr McGarry and Mrs Gosney, whilst the award for most enthusiasm goes to Mr Gilbert and Miss Morrison.

Pupils' thoughts on the day (thanks go to 7Bt)

"I thought 1950s day was really fun. I think it was interesting to see how different the school was then compared to now. I really enjoyed PE because we got to jive and it was so fun!"

"The activities were great. I enjoyed the skipping and the ballroom dancing also looked like fun"

"I didn't like that all the teachers were strict"

"I liked wearing a tie and learned how to tie one"

"I thought the lessons were really interesting especially RE because Miss Morrison was acting really strict and had a cane!"

"I liked the teachers best because they pretended to be strict. . . . I thought the lessons were very fun because Dr Craig tried to be angry. But it didn't fool anyone"

The day was a huge success, celebrating St Ivo's half centenary in style. Many thanks go to Judith Barnes, Gary Cole and all the other staff who contributed to the organisation of the day. All that remains is to wish St Ivo School another productive and inspiring 50 years of service to the youth of Cambridgeshire.