

# OKS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE OKS ASSOCIATION • Nº 13 • SPRING 2024

## DELIVERING EMERGENCY CARE

How Nick Maynard is making a difference as a volunteer in Gaza

## KING'S IN 2024

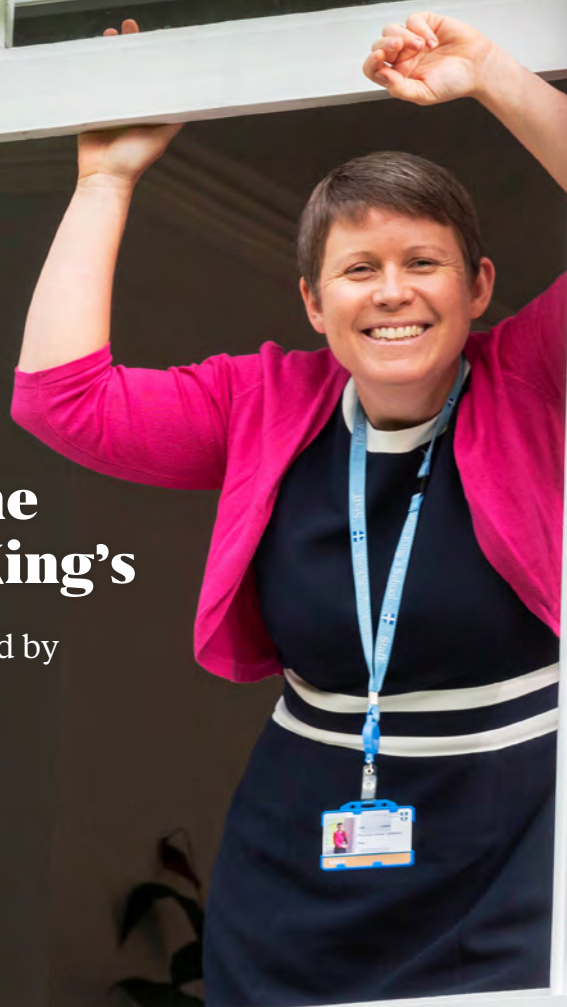
Mark Taylor answers frequently asked questions about King's

## A CARIBBEAN STARTUP

Nick Curtis tells us how he started his luxury rental company in Aruba

## Introducing the new Head at King's

Jude Lawson is interviewed by the Captain of School



## From the OKS Office



ON 14 MARCH in Central London, we held the first OKS Breakfast Networking event in two years at Ruffer LLP with a focus on financial careers. It was a great success and wonderful to meet lots of OKS in various stages of their careers. Thank you to India White-Spunner for hosting this event. Another highlight was the Brahms Requiem, also in March, where 35 OKS sang with the School chorus in the Cathedral. The singers were delighted to return to King's and proud to sing with the School once more. We look forward to welcoming them back to sing again in 2025.

This Summer, we are excited to launch a new OKS event during King's Week. Taking place on Saturday 29 June, the OKS Summer Festival is a family friendly event, open to all OKS. We hope that you will join us for drinks and a barbeque at

Birley's, with the opportunity to enjoy the King's Week atmosphere including sports matches, classic cars and much more. We especially look forward to welcoming 2023 leavers to celebrate one year since leaving King's.

Finally, if you are considering postgraduate study, you may be interested in applying for an OKS Postgraduate Award. The scheme offers a small number of awards up to £1,000 to help OKS wishing to undertake postgraduate studies. Applications are invited by the end of May 2024. To find out more, please contact the OKS Office: [oks@kings-school.co.uk](mailto:oks@kings-school.co.uk)



**Molly Burgess**

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## From the OKS President



AS YOUR NEW OKS President it gives me the greatest pleasure to welcome you to the Spring 2024 issue of the OKS Magazine. I have introduced myself in a little more detail on page 28, so will start by thanking my predecessor, David Peters, on behalf of you all. David steered the OKS through the pandemic and set in train what we both hope will be the renaissance of the OKS over the next few years. His assistance to the School has been invaluable in so many ways, and I know he will be greatly missed.

This issue focuses on the new Head: Jude is a blast of effervescent energy and fresh ideas. She has a clear plan to navigate King's through what is likely to be one of the most challenging periods the private education sector has faced. Most excitingly, she has a clear understanding of the value and potential of the OKS, and I can't wait to work alongside her to realise this.

The rest of this issue fizzes with the energy and creativity that has always infused life at King's and so clearly continues in the lives of so many OKS.

Have a wonderful summer.



**James Phipson**

Cover: Jude Lowson waving from her Lattergate office

# In this issue

## From the Head

**T**HE SCHOOL HAS been full of life, energy and endeavour over the past term. Over 50 pupils took to the Malthouse stage to perform *Loveland*, an eclectic range of the best love songs from musical theatre. One parent wrote to me after the event that “Everything about it was a joy”. The enthusiasm of the performers was infectious and had the sell-out audience dancing in their seats. The term then concluded with a spectacular performance of the Brahms Requiem. I do not believe that any other school in the land could produce such a sound, with almost a quarter of the school involved in either the choir or the orchestra. It was a remarkable achievement: ambitious and inspiring in equal measure.

The School was inspected by the Independent School Inspectorate over a week in February. A team of 20 Inspectors across all three sites saw everything from risk assessments, history lessons, litter picks, Kidaco and the IC Cultural Fair to rocket launches and everything in between! The inspectors very much enjoyed meeting many staff and pupils and commented on how open, engaging and articulate they found our pupils to be in the various focus groups they undertook. We eagerly await the final report but can already reflect with great pride and satisfaction on a week where we showed off all that makes this school the place that it is.

It was a pleasure to attend the Walpole House Leap Year reunion in February. This small group of OKS have been meeting every leap year since 1984, and it was special to see them reunited once again at King’s for lunch and tours of the recently renovated house, reflecting on what had changed, and what remained a constant in the intervening years. I am looking forward to meeting even more OKS at the upcoming Linacre House reunion in June.



**Jude Lawson**



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**We want to hear your news and so do your fellow OKS.**

Fill in the form on the address sheet or contact **Molly Burgess**.

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The OKS Magazine is produced by an editorial committee chaired by **Jenny Grant** (*Director of Development and Alumni*). The Executive Editor is **Molly Burgess** (*OKS Coordinator*) who is assisted by Associate Editor **Stephen Woodley** (*CR 1969-98*), **Peter Henderson** (*School Archivist, CR 1969-*) and **Susan Tingle** (*Deputy Director of Development*). Unless otherwise credited, photographs are by **Matt McArdle**, the contributors, or from the school archives. The magazine is designed by **Nick Ebdon** (*nickebdon.co.uk*).



## THE MORPURGO SOCIETY

On Thursday 9 November Sir Michael Morpurgo spoke to the newly formed junior literary society that has been named after him and to many others who filled the Science Auditorium. His reminiscences, reflections on writing and readings were followed by a frank and entertaining question and answer session. History was repeating itself as in 1929 the Caterpillars Club was founded as “the junior branch of the Marlowe Society” and they asked Hugh Walpole if they could name themselves after him. The first secretary was Alan Watts and an early member was Patrick Leigh Fermor. Michael and Clare Morpurgo were in Canterbury for a War Horse Concert in the Cathedral on the Friday in aid of their charity Farms for City Children.



## TRIPS & EXCURSIONS

Overseas trips have long been regarded as an essential part of an all-round education. During the Autumn half term, both the Classics and RS & Philosophy departments visited Rome in pursuit of the timeless legacy of the Roman Empire and the religious and classical heritage of the Eternal City; the Economists went to New York to experience the global business culture; and Modern Linguists went to Seville to immerse themselves in the Spanish way of life.

At Christmas, the Germanists experienced the culture of Hamburg, from music to football; RS & Philosophy went to Amsterdam for a visit with particular emphasis on the Jewish experience; and there was a skiing trip to Les Deux Alpes, France. Then in the Lent half term the Geologists visited Northern Ireland, especially the Giant’s Causeway, and younger scientists combined serious study with some fun at Disneyland Paris.

There will be more: Portugal, South Africa, Iceland, India and Canada are among the forthcoming destinations.

## DRAMA AND MUSIC, ANCIENT AND MODERN

In November the School Play, directed by Rebekah Frances and James Musgrave, was Moira Buffini’s *Welcome to Thebes*. This addresses present day issues by drawing on themes and characters from Sophocles, Euripides and Aristophanes. The Malthouse was able to accommodate a helicopter landing and Grecian pillars rising in a drama whose theme is the rebuilding of a nation after destruction.

In the first half of the Lent Term, *Loveland (A Night at the Musicals)* was a hugely popular song and dance spectacular from over fifty performers. Opening with ‘Loveland’ from *Follies* and ‘Where is love?’ from *Oliver!* and closing with ‘Lay all your love on me’ from *Mamma Mia* and ‘Elephant Love Medley’ from *Moulin Rouge*, with twenty more numbers in between, this was a treat for lovers of musical theatre. “A special showcase of joy and talent” said the Head.



Then on 5 March the Crypt Choir sang the Service of Choral Evensong at St Lawrence Jewry, London, including the anthem ‘O Vos Omnes’ by Pablo Casals. That evening, at the same venue, the musicians showed their versatility as Nick Todd directed a performance of Purcell’s *Dido and Aeneas*, with an orchestra of six – including ‘thunder sheet’.

**THIS AND THAT**

The School’s Support Staff raised over £5,400 in 2023 for their charity of the year, The London Asbestos Support Awareness Group. A variety of events culminated in the popular and well supported Christmas Raffle. This year’s charity is the Evie Dove Foundation.

The annual dinner in aid of the Charity of the Term, Médecins Sans Frontières, was held in November. Dr Barrie Rooney spoke about her

work on neglected tropical diseases and an auction enabled the event to raise nearly £5,000.

The ‘Running Wild’ Wednesday Activity is a new scheme of voluntary work in the community. Among the places to benefit have been the churchyards of St Stephen’s, next to Birley’s, and St Dunstan’s on the corner of the London Road. Gravestones have been cleaned, weeds and other waste cleared, and some new perennials planted.



Staff leavers at Christmas included Geoff Nelson, chemist and Head of Science Outreach and Research, who moves to Rugby. Tom Sherwin

arrives to be Head of History as Claire Anderson steps down. Mark Lascelles (Common Room 2009-12), Head Master of Dauntsey’s, has been appointed Head of Epsom College from September 2024. 🇬🇧

Photos, clockwise from top left: Michael Morpurgo’s talk; Welcome to Thebes; pupils volunteering as part of ‘Running Wild’; Loveland

# Introducing the new Head of King's

## An interview with Jude Lawson

*Current Captain of School **Liza Barkova** (LX) interviews the new Head, Jude Lawson.*

**LB** *Good morning, Ms Lawson. I'd like to take you back to your time at school, moving from Belgium to Sevenoaks School as a boarder. What was the move like for you, and did you enjoy boarding school?*

**JL** I had a great time in Belgium in a very international school, but I was keen to board as I was drawn towards the greater independence that I thought would come with boarding. When I was 13, I moved to Sevenoaks School and I was enormously fortunate to have a housemistress who was extremely dedicated and created a wonderful atmosphere in the house. We all had this belief as pupils that we were her favourite year group, but every other year group thought that too, because she made us all feel so special. It was a very influential experience for me and certainly built my sense of how boarding should be; boarding should be friendly, supportive, and a home from home, and new boarders should feel able to immediately slot in with welcoming friends and in an environment in which they feel comfortable. That is certainly my goal for our boarders at King's. Having this positive

experience as a boarder left me with a love of living and working within an institution, which meant that I have felt very comfortable coming back to work in boarding as a teacher.

**LB** *Later on, you studied History at the University of Cambridge. Why did you choose this course, and would you choose differently if you could now?*

**JL** I mentioned the positive experience with my housemistress, and the same applies to my old History teachers. I had an amazing sixth form History class with two brilliant teachers. I found the subject, its stories and its characters just fascinating, and relished the debates and discussions. I loved that History felt like a very diverse degree, from the Medieval to Modern, and that it draws from experiences from all over the globe. Going to Cambridge was a real privilege, as you are surrounded (and tested) by experts and have access to incredible libraries and rare books. You asked if I would choose another course, but I would love to do it all over again! I am so lucky in my role now to be able to →





← observe lessons and pick up interests in many other subjects.

**LB** *After university, you started a career in advertising. Could you tell me more about this?*

**JL** I think I was drawn to advertising as a career because it is such a creative industry. My role was as a strategist, so I would analyse the business problem for a brand and then work out how to solve the issue or grow the business through communications and advertising. Seeing an idea come to life through an advertisement or campaign was really gratifying, and I worked with all sorts of brands like KFC, British Airways and Google. A lot of what I did was evaluating the commercial effectiveness of the work that we were creating, and I think that financial grounding has been invaluable for me in working in leadership in education. It was also a lot of fun and a great job to have as a new graduate.

**LB** *You made the switch to a career in education. How did this come about?*

**JL** Towards the end of my time in advertising, I found myself missing History and the skills I had learned at university. I also started to realise that the part I was enjoying most about my job was the human side. I had taken on oversight of the graduate recruitment scheme and very much enjoyed developing joiners new to the profession. I soon realised that it was this that I was valuing above all else in my work. I was fortunate to have some friends who were in teaching, and I went on to do a taster day at a school where I immediately got a buzz from being in a classroom and faced with real live pupils. I then took on a role at a school in Croydon where I was able to gain a teaching qualification alongside starting immediately as a full time teacher. I was very much in at the deep end, but it was an exciting place to be. The energy of a classroom is unlike anything else. There is a palpable sense of potential in the class and in the people in front of you. You find yourselves wondering “what could this pupil become?” and “what role could I play in helping them achieve their potential?” I think of so many pupils that I have encountered over the years who have exceeded their expectations and overcome difficulties. It is hard to think of anything more rewarding. I have never stopped being excited and energised by being able to speak to a room of pupils about a subject that you love and to engage with them in discussion about it – you don’t get many opportunities to do that in many other jobs.

**LB** *I am really glad to hear that. In September you moved to King’s with your wife, Ms Coffin, and daughter, Heidi. Are they enjoying it as much as you are?*

**JL** It is wonderful to have the opportunity to move to King’s and experience it as a family. I’ve always thought that the more you give to and invest in a school community, the more you get from it. I love the fact that living on site I can dip into so many school events. There is always so much going on and experiencing that as a family is a real joy. My daughter Heidi started in Year 1 at JKS and she could not be happier. She’s very into nature and loves the fact that the school has its own river running through it and is so connected to environment surrounding the school. She has felt warmly welcomed there,

Left: the view from the Green Court

Right: Jude Lowson speaking to pupils





and my wife has felt welcomed as a teacher at King's too. So we have all experienced the sense of community and warmth which is so central to the King's ethos.

**LB** *Going more into the ethos at King's, what are the unique strengths of King's and how do you plan on preserving them?*

**JL** I think we are incredibly fortunate to be at a school that is distinctive, and that distinctive nature is seen through the history, heritage and unmatched surroundings. I think these things have an impact on how this school feels and how it is experienced by pupils – you cannot escape the inspiration that comes from being in a place such as this. You are acutely aware as a pupil here that you are playing your part in the long history of this place, and that you are part of something special.

I also see that King's does a superb job of enabling pupils to experience holistic education. The school develops the whole person through the curriculum and co-curriculum but also

through the relationships and friendships that are forged here. We have one of the broadest curriculums of any school, and an equally broad range and depth of activities beyond the classroom, and pupils do not feel they must fit a particular mould. Each pupil is able to tread and to follow their own unique pathway through the School and that is something I would like to sustain and strengthen. There is also the unique strength in being the first school in the country, possibly the world. We are the original education pioneers and the cradle of learning in this country. We have always been leaders of education and I am excited to rearticulate this for the modern era, ensuring that our practice and our school is at the leading edge and that we are a leading voice in education.

**LB** *How will the School honour and balance tradition with the adapting needs of pupils and society?*

**JL** I suppose some might see valuing tradition as being at odds with seeking to meet the modern →



Canterbury  
Cathedral Cloisters

← needs of pupils but I do not see this as a conflict. I think we as a community are inspired by our past, but we are not constrained by it. As leaders, we need to articulate the value of these traditions in a new way, for a new generation of pupils. I feel that the traditions at King's feel incredibly relevant and powerful. For example, the fact that we have space in the week for community reflection in our Cathedral services is remarkably pertinent in a world where so many institutions are trying to carve out time for reflection and connection.

I also love the fact that our purple gowns have been passed down from generation to generation. It is a visible reminder of the legacy and leadership of former pupils and helps our current cohort to understand the importance of their role. The current custodians of the gown feel a sense of responsibility, duty and stewardship. Then there are those elements of our school that are distinctive and unique like our uniform. Our winged collars, brooches and striped trousers may be seen as traditional, but

they distinguish us from other schools. They are signifiers of our pride in our school and of what we stand for. It is important to retain these traditions and as a community, recognise that we are fortunate to be part of this place with its storied past and to contribute and engage with its present and its future.

**LB** *How do you see yourself engaging with the pupils at King's on a personal level to understand their needs?*

**JL** One of the things I have most enjoyed so far at King's is getting to know the pupils. I am conscious that it will take a while to know everyone, but I've been struck by the many informal interactions that I have been able to enjoy every day. Pupils will stop you for a conversation around the Green Court, walk with you through the Cloisters and tell you about their day. They're great company! I have a programme of lunches and breakfasts with different pupils – every week I'll have lunch with one year group and then breakfast with a year

Left: Jude Lowson

Right: Jude and colleagues during assembly



group from a house. These are really enjoyable, and pupils always share their ideas and are confident to do so. That means they're brilliant at understanding and reflecting on what the School is doing well and sharing their thoughts on how this can be strengthened further. There is a wonderful sense of mutual respect and of trust, and pupils feel empowered to speak their mind, and I certainly want to encourage this. Next year, I'd like to see myself back in the classroom to experience that front line of a King's education for myself.

**LB** *King's has a large network of OKS. In your vision, do they play an important role in the overall identity of the School?*

**JL** King's has such a powerful sense of connection with our former pupils. I often find myself reflecting on what a range of expertise of talent, interest and experiences our many OKS have. We have an opportunity as a School to act as a point of connection between these brilliant people and their experiences. Our role

is to help former pupils stay in touch with each other and to help strengthen and sustain these connections, as well as to offer them things that are relevant to their careers and lives today. We can offer a network and events to help them to continue to forge their path. That idea of the school helping each pupil to find their unique path continues after they leave us too.

**LB** *Finally, what is your one goal that you'd like to achieve during your time as Head of King's.*

**JL** I'd love to go to the top of Bell Harry and into every single room, including hidden ones, at the School! More seriously, it is hard to pin down one goal. King's is great at facilitating each pupil's journey. If there is one thing I should be doing as Head, it is making sure that we do this as well as we possibly can. It's about every interaction, conversation, lesson, and activity, and making sure they're all as brilliant as they can be. I want us to be able to support the needs, interests, desires, and passions of each individual throughout their pupil journey. 🏰

## Leave a lasting legacy: From one generation to the next

**Richard Ashworth** (SH 1960-64), Chair of the Robert Rose Society, re-introduces the Society to OKS and shares how, thanks to the generosity of our community, gifts in wills have shaped generations of King's pupils.



**T**O ALL OKS, staff, parents, or indeed anyone whose life has been touched by King's, the Robert Rose Society is here for you. Formerly we were known as the Legacy Club, because that's what we do. Through legacies and bequests, however large, however small, together we can, and we do, change people's lives.

For King's, this is a moment of challenge and change. Challenge to manage steeply rising costs, inflation and threatened charitable status. Change to ensure that the very special culture, ethos and diversity that make King's education what it is today, will still be there for young people of tomorrow. To make that future possible, there is a vital role for the alumni and friends of King's. By working together, we can ensure that those opportunities that so enriched our lives can be extended to future generations of talented

young people, including those for whom a King's education is currently totally out of reach.

Robert Rose was one such person. In 1541 the school was granted a royal charter. The Charter decreed that there would always be at the school 50 poor scholars "*both destitute of the help of friends, and endowed with minds apt for learning*". Robert Rose was one of the early scholars. He spent his lifetime involved with the School and at the end of his life he gave back, endowing four university exhibitions for local pupils.

Now, 500 years later, we are following in those footsteps. By 2041 our new Charter Awards Fund will permanently provide 50 such bursaries, supported by an endowment fund.

The Robert Rose Society presents an opportunity for all those people who, having benefited so much from King's, can now put something back. By working together, the members of the society are supporting areas of the School that are filled with special memories for them and building the endowment fund. As chairman of the Society, I extend my heartfelt thanks and admiration to the many members who have already answered that call. Through their remarkable generosity and altruism they are truly transforming people's lives. That is a very special thing to do – please join us.

## IN THE LAST YEAR ALONE, GIFTS IN WILLS HAVE:

Founded **The Charter Awards Bursary Fund**, transforming the lives of more pupils than ever before. We have already welcomed our first Awardee and another three recipients will be starting in September.



Enhanced our world-class teaching and learning environment – one that is rich in social, sporting and cultural activity – through generous support to **Music**, **Fencing** and our historic **Collections**.

## Introducing Robert Rose: *King's Scholar, Lower Master, Benefactor*

**R**OBERT ROSE WAS one of the School's early King's Scholars, studying here from at least 1560 to 1562. Archbishop Cranmer had only recently died in 1556 and his decree that *"there be always in our Church of Canterbury fifty poor boys, both destitute of the help of friends and endowed with minds apt for learning"* would have still been a strong ethos and directly influenced the course of Robert's life.

Rose went on to study at St. John's College, Cambridge but his love of King's meant that by 1572, he had returned to the School as Lower Master. He remained so until around 1585 and may well have taught Christopher Marlowe. After he ceased to be Lower Master, he remained just outside Canterbury, residing in the small village of Bishopsbourne. As a neighbour of Richard Hooker, he witnessed the will of *"that learned and judicious divine"* on 26 October 1600. He was still in Bishopsbourne in 1618, when he assigned 26 acres of land in Romney Marsh to the School. This was to support four university exhibitions



### THE ROBERT ROSE SOCIETY MEMBERS LUNCH

Join us at our members lunch on the Green Court on 19 May 2024 to find out more about the society. Contact Bryony to RSVP.

for King's Scholars, with a preference given to boys born in or near Canterbury.

Rose was buried in the Cathedral on 31 May 1620. By his will, made only four days before his death, he bequeathed £100 to the Blue Coat School, which was in the Poor Priests' Hospital in Stour Street. The boys of this school used to attend the Mayor when he went "in his formalities to the cathedral" and were familiarly known to the King's Scholars as "the little policemen".

As we have returned full circle to the wishes of Cranmer with the inauguration of the Charter Awards, we have begun to welcome a new cohort of 50 King's Scholars from all backgrounds to the school, just like Robert. We continue to honour his legacy to this day. The Rose exhibition is still awarded 400 years after his death and in happy symmetry, the 6a pupils, just like the ones Robert supported in 1618, wear a red rose on their ceremonial dress on Commemoration Day. 🏴󠁧󠁢󠁥󠁮󠁧󠁿

**We know leaving a gift in your will is a big decision that you'll want to think over carefully.** If you would like to find out more information or have any questions, please contact our Development Team.

Bryony Dutta, Head of Philanthropy  
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Supported the magnificent **Raising Science Centre**, with the flagship auditorium being named in recognition of the support of generous legators, Tony and Joan Venner.

Inspired and developed the interests and talents of our pupils by creating and endowing Prizes, Exhibitions and Scholarships. This year, we welcome the **Barbara Fielding Art Prizes** and **Lock Travel Scholarship**.

# A Caribbean startup

**Nick Curtis** (GL 2012-17) tells us how he found himself in Aruba.

**L**eaving King's in 2017 was a sad moment, but I look back at my time incredibly fondly. I started life in a nine-man dorm, that was nothing short of pure chaos at all times. I ended up being the Head of House in Galpin's, which came with the privilege of having the bedroom at the heart of the house: the Harry Potter-esque cupboard under the main staircase. I loved everything about King's, was given the honour of running the 6th form ball, and even managed to blag my way to being captain of tennis.

I left King's and went to Oxford. I was somehow convinced to trade playing rugby for the King's first team in South Africa for ultimate frisbee. At Oxford, I realised that most colleges throw balls (large organised parties, with unlimited food and drink) every so often. I went to St. Catz, and we have a ball every three years. It was only a chance conversation with a friend when I learned that the balls are organised by the existing students, with next to no governance.



“

*There is no substitute for hard work and dedication*

”

Which 18-year-old doesn't want free rein to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds without the slightest bit of supervision?

So I ran the college ball, called the Catz Ball, and was labelled President. Oxford has a wonderful way of slapping a title on things to make them sound more impressive than they really are. Naturally, we broke this mould and called our ball something far more down to earth. The "Continuum" ball was born. We sold over 2,000 tickets and prepared ourselves to get used to spending what seemed at the time like astronomical sums of money.

My Oxford journey ended pretty abruptly in the midst of the pandemic. I sat my finals at home and celebrated with the dog in the garden. I always knew I wanted to start my own venture; I just would never have guessed I'd end up in Aruba, in the Caribbean. I had been to Aruba once before with my family, for our uncle's wedding. I was playing around with business ideas with my brother, James Curtis (GL 2010-15),



to start managing apartments. It was then an even more natural step to start managing entire apartment buildings. It was just our luck that perhaps the nicest building in Aruba right now, O Condominium, was looking for a solution.

O Condominium on Eagle Beach became our flagship: one property with 43 privately owned apartments. We managed the whole building, from maintenance to concierge. Bookings flooded in, and we knew we were on to something special. It was at this point that we realised the opportunity we were looking at. There are hundreds of stunning apartment buildings being built around the Caribbean, with the default aftercare solution being a hotchpotch of local Mom-and-Pop management companies.

What we now realise is that we're following the booming second home ownership market. More and more private homeowners are buying properties, both domestically and internationally. It would be fair to say that the Great British Dream isn't so much owning

your home, but instead owning someone else's. There are many companies globally taking different angles on the second home market, with companies such as Pacaso in the US raising hundreds of millions of dollars trying to grab market position.

Now, three years in, we manage 120 properties in Aruba, and have an incredible team of 50 people. We're launching in the stunning island of Curaçao in the next few months, starting with our new flagship project called One Mambo Beach, and have our sights set on expanding to a third island in 2024.

and we realised two things that we thought were important:

1. Aruba hadn't locked down, and
2. US tourists were still travelling to Aruba in their tens of thousands.

So we packed up and booked one way flights to Aruba, and our company, Bocobay, flew into existence with us. The idea was simple: we manage private homes on behalf of homeowners and rent them to tourists on Airbnb, keeping 25% in the middle. We were able to convince one homeowner to sign up the beautiful Tree Tops Villa, and we still manage it to this day.

Bookings started flowing nicely, and we signed up some more homeowners. It was clear at this point that Bocobay had legs. The more properties we managed, the more existing homeowners referred, and the more we signed. It was a natural progression to branch out from just villas, and



Above: Nick (left) with brother, James

Centre: the Bocobay team

For anyone thinking of starting their own venture, I've learned one key lesson: there is no substitute for hard work and dedication. It takes a lot of energy to get a business off the ground and keep it running.

Feel free to get in touch if anything above resonates with you. [www.bocobay.com](http://www.bocobay.com) 🇵🇸

## Breakfast Networking: Financial Industries

*The latest event in our breakfast networking series took place on Thursday 14 March 2024.*

**A**FTER A SHORT break, we were thrilled to bring back OKS breakfast networking with an event focused on careers in finance. The event took place in the smart London offices of Ruffer LLP, just a stone's throw away from London Victoria, and saw over 50 OKS and current parent attendees from a variety of career backgrounds.

After enjoying delicious pastries, coffees and breakfast fruit pots, it was time to delve into a panel discussion, chaired by India White-Spunner (LX 2005-10). The panellists were Tobias Bushell (MR/GR 2013-18), Alfred Butrous (MR 1999-2004), Sophie Mowll (MT 2012-14), Darin Manney (KSC Parent) and Guy Pengeley (GR 2004-09). Tobias opened a conversation about questioning practices and creating value by changing the way things are done, to which India shared a favourite quote: "The status quo is not acceptable." The panel also discussed the importance of networking and Darin encouraged attendees to be open with their colleagues about how they would like to progress in their careers. The discussion



was followed by a Q&A session, with Alfred answering questions on workplace culture, Guy speaking about the importance of communication and Sophie sharing her view on the gender divide in the industry.

There was plenty of time for networking after the panel, and many LinkedIn details were exchanged. With special thanks to India White-Spunner for hosting us at Ruffer LLP and being a fantastic panel chair.



## Brahms Requiem

*On Friday 15 March, 35 OKS sang with the School at the annual choral concert in the Cathedral.*

**F**OLLOWING A HUGE successful OKS Evensong in 2023, OKS were invited to come back to Canterbury and join the King's Chorus for a performance of the Brahms Requiem. Rehearsals took place in London and Canterbury throughout February, led by Nicholas Todd, Chorus Master.

On concert day, OKS were welcomed at the Mint Yard Gate and taken to the Cathedral for an afternoon of rehearsals. A well-deserved break was taken in the Main Dining Hall, where OKS enjoyed eating supper with pupils in the very hall they used to dine in. After a quick change, OKS returned to the Cathedral and performed. It was a wonderful concert and we were especially pleased to have so many talented OKS sing. We look forward to welcoming OKS to join the School once more at next year's concert, Elgar's Dream of Gerontius.

Robert Raffety (SH 1966-71) said: "In addition to the orchestra's exceptional quality and the School's singing, many of us OKS were struck by the obvious enthusiasm and enjoyment shown by pupils. A lot of work had gone into producing the performance and it was a privilege to have taken part. I hope to be there next year!" 🇬🇧



# Upcoming Events

**WE HAVE ALREADY** held a number of OKS events in 2024 including the OKS Fencing Challenge, Boat Club Dinner, Walpole Leap Year Lunch and OKS Breakfast Networking. We look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming events.

## April

### SCIENCE BUILDING OPENING

Saturday 27 April 2024

*Celebrating the completion of the new science building. By invitation. We are delighted to be joined by guest speaker and scientist, Lord Robert Winston.*

## May

### ROBERT ROSE SOCIETY LUNCH

Sunday 19 May 2024

*A lunch for members of our Legacy Club, the Robert Rose Society. By invitation. For more information on the Society, please contact Bryony Dutta [b.dutta@kings-school.co.uk](mailto:b.dutta@kings-school.co.uk)*

## June

### LINACRE HOUSE REUNION

Saturday 8 June 2024

*Tours, drinks reception and lunch for Linacre House OKS. Guests and family welcome!*

### OKS V. OLD PRIORIANS: CRICKETER TROPHY

Sunday 16 June 2024

*Men's cricket match at St Benedict's School, London. Contact the OKS Office to sign up to play.*

### OKS V. KING'S: WOMEN'S CRICKET

Saturday 29 June 2024

*Join us at Birley's and play against the current King's 1st XI.*



### OKS SUMMER FESTIVAL

Saturday 29 June 2024

*A drinks reception and BBQ amongst the King's Week fun at Birley's for all OKS. We are extending a special invitation to the Leavers of 2023 to celebrate one year since leaving King's.*

## December

### OKS CHRISTMAS DRINKS

Thursday 5 December 2024

*A favourite on the OKS event circuit, we'll be taking to the Cavalry and Guards Club for a festive catch up.*



## Coming soon...

- **LEAVERS OF 2014**  
10th anniversary reunion
- **LEAVERS OF 1999**  
25th anniversary reunion
- **LEAVERS OF 1984**  
40th anniversary reunion
- **OKS 2025 AGM AT THE HOUSE OF COMMONS**  
Thursday 6 March 2025

Opposite page, left: Networking panellists; right: OKS singers with conductor Will Bersey

Boat Club Dinner (top and right) and OKS Fencing Challenge winners



# KING'S IN 2024

*Mark Taylor, Bursar at King's, answers frequently asked questions about King's*



## HOW MUCH DOES KING'S COST TO RUN?

In round terms, for the year 2022/23 King's cost us £29.9M, JKS cost £7.7M and the International College cost £2.8M. Our main costs are salaries, utilities, catering, welfare, premises, teaching support and of course pupil activities.

## WHAT IS THE INCOME FOR THE SCHOOL?

For the year 2022/23, King's income was £32.9M, JKS was £7.3M and the International College was £3.2M.

## WHAT INCOME DOES KING'S HAVE OTHER THAN SCHOOL FEES?

At King's we are pushing all our non-fee income opportunities as hard as we can through King's School Enterprises Limited (KSEL). KSEL incorporates the School Shop, The Malthouse Theatre and lettings. KSEL generated just over £1m in revenue for the school in 2022/23. Income from KSEL goes straight back into the school finances to help keep school fees down.

The Recreation Centre and Birley's only cost about £280k a year to run. Community membership income provides for the bulk of the costs of running such an expensive facility throughout the year. The income is ploughed straight back into the Recreation Centre to provide a much lower cost facility for the School.



## HOW MUCH DO THE OVERSEAS SCHOOLS COST TO RUN?

King's does not invest any capital into our international schools (China and Cambodia). These schools are investor-funded: the investor identifies and purchases the site, completes the build, and operates the school.

King's however is involved throughout the process from the initial site selection and design of the school. In return for our brand, governance, guidance, and quality assurance, we receive an annual royalty payment. This is a percentage of fee income and there is a minimum payment value for the years the school is growing to capacity. In addition, each of our international schools have an accreditation from the Council of British International Schools.

## DOES KING'S HAVE A LARGE ENDOWMENT?

We have endowed funds of around £11.5M overall, with a portion of it reserved to support our core bursary provision, and a further proportion made up of donated funds: this is The Charter Awards. The interest from this fund is being used to support talented children who would most benefit from an education here but for whom it is currently wholly out of reach. Generated by donations, this fund currently sits at just over £5M, having increased from £3.95M

Above: Mark Taylor  
Left: The Bursary at King's

In 2001/2, King's had almost 100 fewer pupils in the Senior School, but the proportion of day vs. boarders is similar to today

TOTAL	BOARDERS	DAY
873	664	209
↑	↑	↑
774	616	158

# 271 / 298

JKS has also grown, with 298 on roll last year, compared to 271 twenty years ago

The girl/boy ratio has changed slightly although we still have more boys than girls: from 358/416 twenty years ago to 426/446 now (from 117/154 to 128/171 in JKS)



18 months ago. Through fundraising, we aim to grow this part of the endowment to a sufficient level to provide permanent funding for 50 full, means-tested bursary places at our school by 2041. If you'd like to hear more about the Charter Awards, please contact our Director of Development and Alumni, Jenny Grant, on [j.grant@kings-school.co.uk](mailto:j.grant@kings-school.co.uk).

### SO HOW MUCH IS SPENT ON BURSARIES AND SCHOLARSHIPS?

Twenty years ago, we offered only £887,000 worth of bursaries – now we offer £1,972,000 of means-tested partial bursaries to families who need extra support. This core provision of bursaries is provided by the School itself and is extensive and, in 2022/23, it benefited 72 families.

This bursary provision has now been supplemented with donated funds via the Charter Awards: we supported our first full-fee Charter Awards pupil this year and we have three more starting in September. We're hoping to get more people donating regularly to this fund via our new 1541 Regular Giving Society – if every OKS gave £5 a week for 1 year with Gift Aid, we would raise nearly £3.6 million each year, funding 3.5 full bursary places for talented and deserving children, forever!

### WHY DOES KING'S OWN SUCH A LOT OF PROPERTY?


At senior King's, as with other comparative schools, we look to provide accommodation

to academic staff for their first two years. This means we do have a large portfolio of accommodation dotted around Canterbury.

### HOW MANY MEMBERS OF STAFF DOES KING'S HAVE?

King's is a big organisation spread across five large sites. Many of our support staff are part-time however, so although we have approximately 1000 staff, the actual full-time equivalent is much less. We do keep our staffing levels under constant review and check our pupil teacher ratio against anonymised benchmarked information – we wouldn't want to compromise on this.

### WHAT DO YOU THINK THE IMPACT OF VAT ON SCHOOL FEES WILL BE?

The School has been looking carefully at the impact of VAT on parent affordability. Our key aim is to try to do what we can to mitigate having to apply the full 20% hike in fees. We have modelled the level of VAT reclaim we could expect as well as looking to be able to go back 10 years and reclaim further VAT through the Capital Goods scheme. In addition, we are undergoing a detailed review of all our expenditure as well as seeking to dramatically increase the level of our non-fee income activities like holiday lettings, fundraising and international franchise schools. We are committed to ensure that we review very carefully any opportunities to operate efficiently and in a cost effective way, without undermining or detracting from the offer and all which is at the heart of the educational provision at this school. 

# Delivering emergency care in Gaza

**Professor Nick Maynard** (WL 1975-79) is a Consultant Upper Gastrointestinal Surgeon based in Oxford. Since 2010, he has been visiting Gaza and recently he has been delivering emergency care to those affected in the Israel-Hamas conflict.

**H**aving left King's in 1979 I trained in medicine at Oxford University and Guy's Hospital Medical School. Following surgical training in Guy's Hospital and various hospitals in the Southeast, I was appointed as a Consultant Upper GI Surgeon in 1997 to establish oesophageal and gastric cancer surgery in Oxford. Having started single handed, we have just appointed our seventh Consultant and are one of the biggest units in the UK and Europe. I have just finished my two-year term as President of the Association of Upper GI Surgery of Great Britain and Ireland.

I have spent a considerable amount of time in the Occupied Palestinian Territories, initially in the West Bank and predominantly in Gaza. I lead a group of Oxford Doctors specialising in surgery, medicine, paediatrics, and obstetrics to Gaza each year to teach medical students from the Islamic University of Gaza and Al Azhar University. In recent years I have also worked with Medical Aid for Palestinians (MAP) as part



“

*I struggle to find the words to describe the true horror*

”

of their surgical team to travel into Gaza to carry out and teach advanced upper gastrointestinal surgery for cancer and benign diseases.

Following the horrifying events of 7 October 2023, I was asked by MAP to lead the first UK Emergency Medical Team into Gaza. We entered via Rafah on Christmas Day and worked at Al Aqsa Hospital in Deir al Balah in middle Gaza for 2 weeks. I struggle to find the words to describe the true horror of what I witnessed in Gaza. I spent most of my time operating on terrible explosive injuries. Al Aqsa Hospital was operating at 3 to 4 times normal capacity. There were nearly 10,000 people there, in a hospital designed for 200. It is impossible to describe the overcrowding. Every square foot of the hospital was covered by patients and their relatives, some in beds, most on the ground. I saw appalling injuries, terrible deep burns and multiple traumatic amputations in children that I would never have expected to see in any health care setting. We had to operate with very limited instruments. There was often no pain relief and



antibiotics, and the infective complications we saw were appalling. On some days there was no running water, so we had to “scrub” up using alcohol gel, and on many days, there were no sterile drapes to use whilst operating so we had to make our own from gowns and other materials. The number of casualties coming in at times was so high that the triage process broke down completely and patients died due to a lack of capacity to treat them. Our work at Al Aqsa Hospital was cut short by two days after a missile attack by the Israeli Defence Force on the Intensive Care Unit whilst I was operating.

We stayed in a building in Al Mawasi. The land, air and sea attacks by the Israeli Defence Force were continuous, and it was impossible to sleep properly at night. We were often kept awake by ground machine gun fights less than 1 km away. A week after we left, the house where we were staying in was directly targeted by an Israeli F16 aerial attack. Miraculously, the MAP team that had replaced my team suffered only minor injuries.



Photos, clockwise from top left: Nick in the operating theatre; with colleagues in Gaza; Nick & Sara; Nick & Shaimaa Arafa (the first female surgeon trained in Gaza)

Friends I have made over many years have been killed, and most of the hospitals I have worked in have been destroyed. Gazans are beautiful people. My wife Fionnuala and I have an “adopted” Gazan daughter Enas. I trained her as a doctor and managed to get her out of Gaza six years ago. She is part of our family, and in the absence of her real parents in Gaza (whom I visit every time I go there), we have been her substitute parents. I gave her away when she got married, and Fionnuala looked after her when she was pregnant with her first child. We are currently trying to get her family out of Gaza.

I am returning to Gaza in April 2024 for three weeks. Rebuilding the healthcare system in Gaza will take years, and with MAP I will be helping with this rebuild. We will need volunteers from all aspects of healthcare. If any OKS would like to volunteer, please feel free to contact me on [nick.maynard@ouh.nhs.uk](mailto:nick.maynard@ouh.nhs.uk) and I would be delighted to chat further. 🇬🇧

## Give a helping hand

*Charles Bird (GR 1980-84) tells us about his trip to Tanzania and the work he is doing with Team Tactics to make a difference to those with missing limbs.*

IN JANUARY 2023, due to the inspiration of Team Tactics founder Tina Bird, our family business joined forces with a company named The Hand Project. The Hand Project provides free functional prosthetic hands and arms to people in developing countries. We launched an event called Give a Helping Hand, a combination of team building and charity, and in December 2023 I took part in a flying visit to Tanzania.

I joined the team in District Hospital in the Hai Region, Kilimanjaro, where over 80 people had been booked in to receive a prosthetic hand. The fitting team had flown in from various locations including Ghana, South Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. Fittings run throughout the day, with appointment slots from early morning until late at night. Upon arrival at the hospital the recipients and their relatives were waiting for us to arrive, some having travelled over 100km to reach the hospital. Travel in Tanzania is wildly different compared to the UK, there is no National Express and the ‘coaches’ are what we would call people carriers full to bursting. A lot of the recipients we met had lost limbs in traffic accidents, and after seeing the conditions in which they travel, it was no surprise.

A major thing I will take away from my trip is that in the whole time I was there, I didn’t see any complaints, moaning or whinging. We are training these individuals up so they can carry on with these fittings in their own countries, and we at Team Tactics will continue to host team building events with our corporate clients to fund and build the prosthetic hands to send out to them.

These kind and happy people have very little in life, and the help we can give them shines through. Each recipient receives two hands – a mechanical hand and a 3D printed hand. It’s often taken for granted that we have the NHS.



These boys and girls have no access to healthcare or prosthetic limbs, so their only hope of prosthesis comes through charity organisations or finding a large sum of money to fund it, which is often unlikely.

I want to share some examples of people I met during this experience: Rebecca, 21, was attacked by hyenas when collecting water and lost both arms and suffered terrible facial injuries. Ayesha was born without any arms. In her village, this was seen as bad luck and resulted in lifetime ostracization. She gets very scared around adults due to being beaten and disciplined with sticks. Ayesha is just six years old – I hope she takes to her new arm and hand fitted by the team. What I will remember about Lisa is her infectious smile. From the minute she arrived at the hospital she did not stop smiling and was such a pleasure to be around. She was so pleased to get her new arms and was eager to learn how to use them.

**THE HAND PROJECT** provide mechanical prosthetic hands to people in developing countries completely free of charge, restoring their dignity and life opportunities. The prostheses are assembled during corporate team building events, and then delivered to countries where local orthopaedic technicians are trained to fit them. For more information, visit [handproject.org](http://handproject.org)



## Hospitality and History

*Mary Kemp (JKS Staff 1981-2002) reports on her trip to Sydney via Singapore.*

**M**UCH AS I love living in Canterbury, I loathe the long dark winters, so it was with excitement that I considered the possibility of accepting an invitation from Lawrence Lo (WL 1985-88) to visit him in Australia. I taught Lawrence at Northbourne Park Prep School for two years and then we were desk partners in the King's Orchestra for three years under the memorable baton of Colonel Paul Neville.

There were difficulties, both financial and practical, to this trip but Lawrence swept these aside and with his amazing help I set off on a most wonderful holiday first to Singapore and then to Sydney.

Lawrence organised Brian Sun (MO 1987-91) to meet with me in Singapore. Since retirement, I have been very involved in World War history.

Brian had studied Law and History in London and although I had never met him before, he was more than willing to take me to Kranji cemetery to pay our respects to William Sampson (GR 1932-36) and David Agnew (MR 1936-37) who are remembered there. Brian was a most wonderfully enthusiastic guide. He introduced me to a fascinating museum in the old Ford Factory and took me around a Japanese cemetery. After a couple of days exploring other delights, I flew on to Sydney.

The next three weeks with Lawrence and his lovely wife Annie were a delight of walks, concerts, art exhibitions, research in the beautiful Art Deco Mitchell Library, delicious meals and great conversations. I also managed a brief trip to Melbourne to photograph graves of VCs for my friend Ed Holman (MR 1963-68), who is a fellow history buff.

I really value my friendships with OKS and am always delighted to hear news of them, but to be invited to stay and be part of a family for a month was very special. Thank you, Lawrence and Annie. 🇺🇸

Photos, left to right: Charles Bird; Mary Kemp with Brian Sun and his son; Mary Kemp and Lawrence Lo in Sydney

# I didn't exactly plan this...

**Toby Ward** (MR/MT 1979-83) is an artist whose work includes portraits and luminous narrative scenes. He is also a trustee of the Cleary Blackfriars Trust, which supports the Art Department at King's.

**I** liked to draw with biros and then colour in with felt pens. The subjects I chose were things that interested me, usually discovered on TV, such as football, cricket and the adventures of Jacques Cousteau. I concentrated hard on this until education confronted me, first JKS then King's, where I greatly enjoyed myself on the sports fields and avoided burnout in the classrooms, leaving with a pair of science A Levels at modest grades and an interest in the history of architecture. Not enough to follow my friends into the better universities but enough to get me to The Royal Military Academy at Sandhurst. There, surprisingly, I was encouraged to draw again. We had to keep journals, a page per day, which could include sketches and diagrams and as I was keen to avoid onerous writing, I filled my journal with drawings of my daily life. This led to various little commissions for amusing sketches of departing instructors and notable characters around the place. I was unpaid but these little favours kept me out of some of the trouble that I seemed to attract!



“

*I dedicated myself to learning the trade*

”

I spent six years in the Army before deciding to move on, applying to art school with a handful of sketchbooks containing tiny scenes from my adventures in different parts of the world. Happily, these were enough. I left Tidworth Barracks at 8am one September morning and enrolled at The City and Guilds Art School in London at 10:30 on the same morning and started living in Brixton: different but so exciting.

Throughout my time at Art School I kept thinking how I was going to use my new skills to make a living. For anyone who can draw and has an interest in people, portrait painting could work so I dedicated myself to learning the trade. Painting a portrait means coping with all the complex drawing problems presented by the human head, painting the subtleties of colour and light of a changing face while keeping the sitter looking alert with conversation. It's quite difficult, like doing a maths exam at a cocktail party, but exciting.

After some early triumphs followed by some



disasters of overconfidence I settled into the business steadily, always painting from life, getting to know my subjects, their homes and families well. Portraits are usually commissioned out of love, respect or admiration of one person by one or more others which is always a positive driving force behind the project.

As a student, I also noticed that very few people liked drawing moving subjects, and thought this might be a gap in the market into which I could squeeze. I took my sketchbook everywhere and practised drawing on the streets and in the bars and pubs of London until I could draw figures in action without thinking too much.

Someone from the National Trust saw this and I was sent to record the conservation work at a property they had just acquired in Oxfordshire, Chastleton House. I worked alongside scaffolders, builders, electricians, archaeologists, conservators and a few different layers of management, recording their work in A4 drawing books with pen, pencils, charcoal, watercolour



← and chalks. I got used to working alongside my subjects, often in the worst possible conditions of light and space.

That project led to another: to record the redevelopment of the Royal Opera House in Covent Garden. More of the same followed and I have been making paintings out of building sites on and off for the past 30 years. The most demanding of these was a series of drawings of the development of the new museum in the triforium of Westminster Abbey, a three-year project to make 40 images of all aspects of the construction.

In a similar vein I have also been able to record Royal tours, Presidential visits and even ski racing in the Alps.

My Army connections have led to a range of commissions over the years, memorably including two trips to central Bosnia in the mid-1990s to record the lives of the British soldiers working with the UN Peacekeeping Forces. I had the uneasy but stimulating experience of drawing whilst wearing body armour in some of the areas worst affected by ethnic cleansing. It's an odd but important tradition we have in this country, to make art from conflict.

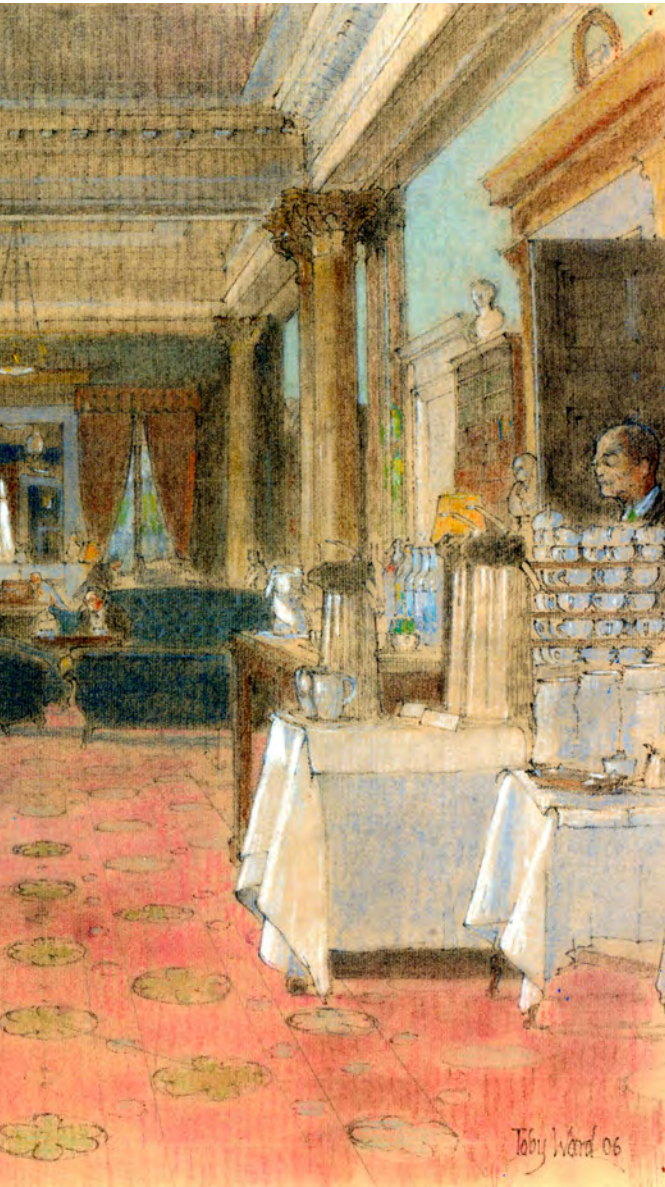
After about ten years of portraits and building sites and all the other demands of commissioned work, I started to experiment with my own paintings. It was like being a child again with my felt pens, exploring what interested me. Only this time with training and experience, which is both a help and a hindrance. Nervous about showing them to anyone, I kept them face to the wall until a dealer who had come to see something else asked about them. This started another strand to my work, exhibition pieces which are made almost entirely from fragments of memory glued together with imagination, it is a place to play with style and subject.

As artists don't retire, I don't know how far through my career I am. Despite all the things I've done, it still feels as though I'm just getting the hang of it! 🇬🇧

• *To see more of Toby's work and to contact him, please visit [www.tobyward.net](http://www.tobyward.net)*



- ① Emily Michael
- ② The Drawing Room of the Athenaeum
- ③ The Paint Frame, Royal Opera House
- ④ HRH The Duke of Edinburgh
- ⑤ Soldiers resting, Central Bosnia 1995



## Meet the new OKS President

*James Phipson (SH 1988-93) joined the OKS Committee in 2023 and in January 2024 was elected OKS President.*



I was therefore (very) surprised and delighted when invited to be your OKS President. As someone who has remained so closely connected with King's, it's always surprised me how little of this connection was through the OKS.

I LOVED MY TIME at King's. I was a sporting disaster (although excelled at match teas) and my dramatic career came to a shuddering halt when cast in *Cabaret* playing Auld Lang Syne on my bagpipes. Appointed Head Sacristan, I remain consumed with guilt after becoming "unwell" on two bottles of cooking sherry purchased through the holy booze account. I set up my first business, restoring and selling old red telephone boxes, at King's. Post-King's, British Rail sponsored my theology degree at Bristol (utterly undeserved); I sold two businesses (the phone boxes, and a business managing troubled nightclubs); started a new one (I'm the first non-lawyer permitted to own a law firm – Dragon Argent); and still serve as a Special Constable (currently a Special Commander in the City of London Police).

King's has been a constant. As well as my three younger siblings attending King's, I've been inveigled into offering careers advice, kept up with a surprising number of friends and staff, returned to Canterbury, and been to occasional reunions.

The last time I truly focused on it was with outrage when the OKS tie was added to my parents' final bill. This is what I want to change as President. Lots of you enjoy and interact with and through the OKS, but too many don't, shown clearly by low engagement rates from those aged around 40 to 50 and the fact that less than 1% of current pupils are children of OKS. I'd like the OKS to offer a meaningful and lifelong connection to Canterbury, King's, present and former pupils, those who tried to teach us, and their families. It should mean something to all of us – a "club for life" – structured around interaction with the institution and people with whom we spent some of our most impressionable and formative years.

Whether you are thrilled or nonplussed by a rejuvenated OKS, it should be there for you as a gateway to people to whom you matter, and the memories and opportunities they represent.

We have lots of ideas about how to do this (and want to hear yours) and it will be my great honour to lead and transform your OKS over the coming years.

### Submit an article and be featured in the School Magazine, *The Cantuarian*.

**ALTHOUGH THE CANTUARIAN** is largely about current pupils, current pupils love to read about OKS. They are fascinated to know what you got up to when you were at King's, and what you have been doing since.

In 2021, Peter Kirby-Higgs (GL 1961-64) shared his passion for Portugal; and in 2022, on page 44, Peter Pinder (GL 1967-69) told us about his extraordinary life out East in his article

called *The Maker's Tale*. You can read all of these pieces online: [www.cantuarian.co.uk](http://www.cantuarian.co.uk)

This year, for *The Cantuarian 2024*, and every year from now on, we would like to publish some more letters from OKS about their time at school or about their lives since. So, if you have any memories or observations or anecdotes to share, we would love to hear from you. Send your letters to [oks@kings-school.co.uk](mailto:oks@kings-school.co.uk)

**Anthony Lyons** Editor of *The Cantuarian*



Left: James Phipson

Right: Alexander Ferguson and friends during their visit to King's

## Reunited after half a century

*Alexander Ferguson (SH 1972-77) writes about his trip to King's, with 15 other OKS, in October 2023.*

**O**LD HABITS DIE hard. When 16 OKS toured the school in October they greeted their guide, sometime resident tutor Peter Henderson, with “Sir” or “Mr. Henderson”, despite pleas to use “Peter”. They came from as far away as Austria, Bermuda, Mexico, Norway, South Africa, and the USA to mark the half-century since many of them started at School House and their enduring friendship.

They navigated the warren of corridors from Galpin’s House to School House, the entrance of which was shut by building works. The few vestiges of the past were in the nooks and crannies of the old building: the upstairs toilet where some sneaked a smoke through its handy skylight; the laundry room, once stacked with starched wing collars, now a bedroom and study.

In the Common Room, they looked at memorabilia from the old days, which many had never seen before. They took group photos in the Mint Yard and Memorial Court, holding a picture of Martin Cooke, who is no longer with them. At a long lunch at Posillipo, they traded school memories and updated each other on the last 50 years. There was still plenty to discuss despite their digital bonding since 2019 with more than 14,000 messages and 5,000 photos in their WhatsApp group, the inaccurately named “School House Chaps” that includes several women.

Lunch turned into drinks at the Miller’s Arms, a 1970s drinking haunt of some, before everyone dispersed.

“It was like a book fell open and all the characters there rose up and began to walk and talk and hug and laugh,” said Mike Nicholas. “And then, one by one, they lay back down whence they came, and the page was turned.”

“What a wonderful day,” said Sarah Gurr. “I think perhaps that we shouldn’t leave it so long before we next meet!” 🇬🇧



### ARRANGE YOUR VISIT

Contact us today to book your tour of King’s, including access to boarding houses and iconic spots such as the Shirley Hall. Large groups and families are welcome!

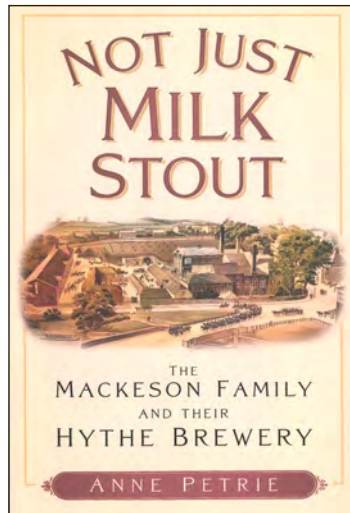
Email: [oks@kings-school.co.uk](mailto:oks@kings-school.co.uk)

## 1800s

Anne Petrie kindly sent us a copy of her book *Not Just Milk Stout: The Mackeson Family and Their Hythe Brewery*.

Eleven Mackesons joined the School between 1800 and 1879 and there are interesting details from the lives of many of them. Six were brothers:

**Henry Scrope (1821-23)**, **Frederick (1821-24)**, **Thomas (1821-22)**, **George (1821-?)**, **William Lawrence (1827 and 1830-34)** and **Julius (1831-32)**. There is a memorial to Frederick in the Cathedral and **Philip Mackeson (1800-02)** left his mark by carving his name there. The brewery also built the malthouse at St Stephen's in Canterbury, now the Malthouse Theatre.



An exhibition on *The Red Shoes* at the BFI and a lavishly illustrated book *The Cinema of Powell and Pressburger*, edited by Claire Smith and Nathalie Morris, were among the treats for cinephiles.

## 1940s

**Henry Rands (SH 1944-48)** writes: "Is there anyone out

there – whether dependent on a zimmer or not, it doesn't matter – who attended King's for the last year (1944/45) at Carlyon Bay Hotel, Cornwall before returning to bombed out Canterbury? My brain is still as sharp as a freshly stropped razor and I have a host of memories of those days. I was one of four 'lost' new boys crammed in a tiny single bedroom with just one small wash basin – but with a stunning view across the bay.

"Headmaster and Canon Residentiary, the Revd F J Shirley, MA, PhD, widely known as 'Fred'; School House Housemaster, the Revd S B R Poole; the Revd A D R Brooke, School Chaplain known as 'The Tank'; Head of The Grange and Vice-Captain of School, David Edwards, later to become Dean of Southwark Cathedral; and Head of School House and Captain of School, A A Kneller, complete with gold-washed wire spectacles, looking the very image of a Gestapo interrogating officer."

Paul Cockman, son of **Patrick Cockman (SH 1945-49)**, visited the School in October accompanied by **Oliver Woodforde (GR 1980-85)**. He presented the Archives with a magnificent collection of items from his father's time in School House.

In particular there is a scrapbook, with over a hundred programmes, photographs, fixture cards, sanatorium admission notes, press cuttings, exeats, and much more documentation of schoolboy life. There is even a note from FJS to KACG about a bugler for Remembrance Sunday: no doubt Patrick did the honours.

The photograph shows the School House cast of

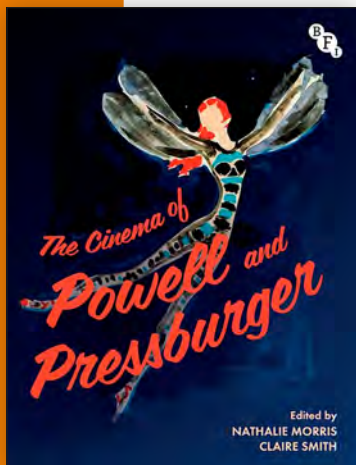
## 1910s

Peter Martland's *Lost Generations* has been published by Corpus Christi College, Cambridge in 2023. It records the lives of those members of the College who died undertaking military service during the First World War. One was **Robert Grant Crosse (KSC 1908-13)**, killed in

the Somme Offensive in July 1916. An appendix with details of those known to have served in the armed forces includes **Graham Dawbarn (KSC 1907-12)**, the distinguished architect who was responsible for some work at Corpus. The College sent the School a complimentary copy of the book.

From October to December the British Film Institute organised 'Cinema

Unbound: The Creative Worlds of Powell and Pressburger'. This was an opportunity to savour the films of **Michael Powell (KSC 1916-19)** at the Southbank, London and around the country.





'The Distinguished Gathering', winners of the 1945 Drama Prize: back row: Leary, Halsey, Hulse, Parkin, Manning-Press, Waller, Pares, Burt; front row: Moreau, Granger, Hearth, Kneller, Leighton, Dudgeon.

Above: The cast of The Distinguished Gathering

Below: Peter Kirby-Higgs

## 1950s

**Oliver Ford Davies (LN 1952-57)** was made Officer of the Order of the British Empire (OBE) in the 2024 New Year Honours for services to drama.

He said in a statement: "I am honoured to be honoured after 60 years of acting, which has stretched from 35 productions for the RSC to defending Queen Amidala against invasion in *Star Wars* and murdering Roger Ackroyd in Agatha Christie's masterpiece on *Poirot*. But I'm not done yet – next autumn I shall be playing Malvolio for the Orange Tree Theatre in Richmond. Then maybe another shot at *Lear*?"



## 1960s

The International Club of Portugal is the largest and most prestigious business club in Portugal. On 12 October 2023, the Club hosted the Ambassador of Ukraine Maryna Mykhailenko. **Peter Kirby-Higgs (GL 1961-64)** "con-socio" of the Club, welcomed the Ambassador to the Club, thanking her for her presence, and congratulated her as representative of her people for their courage, determination and nobility. He also referred to the positive contribution that over fifty thousand Ukrainian refugees and immigrants had made to the Portuguese economy.

Peter asked her how Portugal could provide assistance to Ukraine going forward. The Ambassador replied that the aid and assistance that Portugal had already provided was disproportionately positive, including unequivocal support in the European Parliament and the UN, whose

← Secretary General is Portuguese. She affirmed that the Portuguese Government and particularly the President Marcelo Rebelo de Sousa had consistently lobbied countries of the Southern hemisphere, notably Brazil, to adopt a more positive attitude towards the interests of Ukraine and the West. The Ambassador was honoured as a Permanent Member of the Club. **Andrew Balanda (GL 1974-78)** was also present at the event, after being connected with Peter via the OKS Office.

**Tony Berry (LN 1963-67)** sends this update: “Having spent 23 years in the banking arena (mainly with Citibank) and living in and around London, I escaped to the Cotswolds with my family (wife, four children, two dogs and a cat) in 1991, becoming a director of a fleet and fuel management company (also American!). After five years there I fell out of love with corporate life and became self-employed (consulting) until retiring in 2010. I was persuaded in 2015 to stand as a local District Councillor and having been successfully voted in, three years later ended up leading the Cotswold District Council for eight months before becoming Leader of the Opposition in Council. Having lost my seat in 2023, and some 55 years later than it should have been, I am now up at Oxford University studying for a BTh, determined to complete the course before age overtakes me!”

**James Webb (LX 1969-74)** writes: “I was in a Lloyd’s Underwriting agency for 25 years. The 20 years as a teaching assistant at a Catholic secondary school, St Peter’s in Guildford, was most rewarding. Recently retired at 67, I am slightly handicapped with Parkinson’s disease, unmarried and now settled in the East Sussex village of Rushlake Green.”

## 1970s

**Paul Sheridan (LN 1971-76)** is Vice-Chairman of Oman Cricket and the Oman men’s national cricket team has qualified for the T20 World Cup in June. As Vice-Chairman, Paul will be attending these matches.

**Bruce Hosking (LN 1973-79)** shares this update:

Right: Wesley Stace's upcoming UK Tour



“Leaving King’s I went on to study agriculture and then irrigation engineering before giving that up to follow a career as an Army Officer for 20 years before retiring to rural Norfolk with my ex-Army Officer wife of 34 years, Sue, in 2004. We are in the process of overseeing the building of our new house in Norfolk, due for completion in April 2024.”

**Michael Bennett-Law (WL 1973-78)** has kindly sent us recordings of the Chamber Orchestra from 1977 and 1978. He plays the first movement of Bach’s Concerto for Keyboard BWV 1052 and the Walter Leigh Concertino for Piano and String Orchestra. Also sent is the ‘Two Piano Recital’ by himself, now OKS, and **Andrew Strivens (GL 1976-80)** from 1980.

**Dominic Spenser Underhill (LN 1975-80)** was appointed an Honorary Professor in the School of Law, Queen Mary, University of London with effect from 1 January 2024. Still a solicitor, he has not given up his day job of sitting on international arbitration tribunals.





Above: Ben Finn and his wife, Catherine, on their wedding day

**Richard Pollok (GL 1979-83)** is now Professor of Gastroenterology at St George’s Hospital, sub-specialising in inflammatory bowel disease. He keeps in contact with **Richard Biddle (GL 1978-83)** and **Gary Oliver (SH 1978-83)**. His father **Alistair Pollok (LX 1945-51)** passed away in 2012.

**Wes Stace (MO 1979-83)** is touring the UK in May with dates in cities including London, Manchester, Glasgow, Birmingham and Bristol. It is his first UK tour in 15 years. Tickets are available at wesleystace.com

## 1980s

**Ben Finn OBE (SH 1982- 86)** married Catherine Kiwala, an American lawyer, in a secret ceremony beside a glacier in Iceland. They married on Ben’s birthday, having got engaged on Catherine’s birthday.

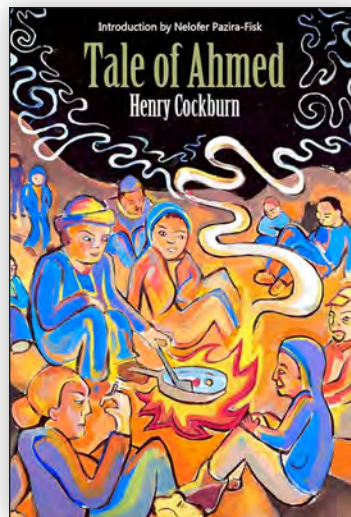
**Baroness Kate Fall (WL 1983-85)** was made Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE)

in the 2024 New Year Honours for services to culture for her work as Non-Executive Director of the Cultural Recovery Board.

**Fiona Shoop (WL 1987-89)** has used memories of her sixth form at King’s wisely and incorporated some of them into her tasting notes as a drinks writer. Fi presents The Cocktail Hour radio show where she blends music and talk and mixes original cocktails, as well as reviewing bottles and drinks festivals. She’ll be attending The Whisky Exchange Rum, Whisky and Champagne Shows in London later this year and sharing her adventures on air.

## 1990s

In September 2023, **Tom Collins (MT 1991-96)** took part in a relay swim across the English Channel. The team raised over £5,500 for the Brompton Foundation who support children’s cardiac, respiratory and intensive care at Royal Brompton Hospital.



← **Henry Cockburn (MT 1995-2000)** published a new book, *Tale of Ahmed*, in April 2024. This is a fictional account of the dangerous journey of a boy, Ahmed, who travels from Afghanistan to seek refuge in England. It is written in the form of an epic poem and is also illustrated by Henry. The book is available to purchase at [orbooks.com](http://orbooks.com)

**Rebecca Snow (BR 1996-98)** is the writer and director of a new film, *The Boy in the Woods*. Rebecca says: “I have been making documentaries for 20 years, and a number of years ago I came across this incredible Holocaust survival story while making a documentary for History Channel. I felt so strongly that it had to be made into a movie. It was the story of a young Jewish artist hiding in the forests of eastern Poland. The survivor is still alive – living in Canada (where I live now) – and so I acquired the rights to his memoir and wrote a screenplay based on his experience in the woods in 1943. It’s a tragic, beautiful, thrilling story.

Above: Rebecca Snow directing

Centre: Henry Cockburn's latest publication

I’ve always been interested in history (ever since studying A-level history at King’s) and fascinated by the individual human stories from the past. My husband is a movie producer here in Toronto, and we worked together on the film. It was my first dramatic film, and I directed it as well as wrote it. We shot it all in the woods of northern Ontario which luckily resemble the woods of eastern Europe. I was fortunate to work with a number of fantastic actors including Richard

Armitage. *The Boy in the Woods* premiered at the Toronto International Film Festival in September. I am currently travelling to festivals with the film until its release later this year. You can follow me on Instagram @Snowdocs”

## 2000s

**Magnus Resch (GL 2000-01)** is a world leading art-market economist and best-selling author. In February 2024 he released his latest book *How*



to *Collect Art*. From working with galleries and art advisors to attending art fairs and auctions, this book demystifies the art market and how to navigate it. The book is available on [phaidon.com](http://phaidon.com)

Effra Nyx was born on 9 July 2023 to **Janessa Rhys Jones (née Bobby, HH 2001-06)**. A sister to Elwyn and Eris.

**Sam Middleton (TR 2001-06)** and **Jessica Stanion (LX 2005-10)** married on 12 May 2023 in Portugal. They were introduced to each other by mutual OKS friends, **India Lyons** and **Oli Lyons**.

OKS attendees at the wedding included: **Emi Eldridge, Jess Burley, Maddie Cryer, Lucy Leigh-Pemberton, Sophie Middleton, Millie Jessel, India Lyons, Sophie Shearer, Tunji Lawson, Harry Osborne, Oli Lyons, Charlie Harvey, Paul Dixey** and **Dom Berry** (all pictured).

**Joachim Wilcke (LN 2003-05)** is the European

Left: Magnus Resch

Right: Sam Middleton and Jessica Stanion with OKS wedding guests



candidate for Volt Europa in the 2024 EU Elections. He is currently a parliamentary assistant for Volt Europa MEP Damian Boeselager.

After huge success with the *Skandar* series, **Annabel Steadman (MR 2005-10)** has announced that she is currently writing an adult fantasy trilogy series which will be published by Simon & Schuster in 2026. *TimeLess*, the first in the planned series, will be set in an alternate version of Cambridge, frozen outside of linear time.

**Robert Stephen (MO 2005-10)** had an article published in *The Sunday Times* in April 2023 about social media in relation to sports. He writes: "There is now an unavoidable struggle between the real and online worlds, between physical and virtual games, and so between real sport and the addictive but unfulfilling distractions permanently available on our smartphones. It's time to fight back." Robert teaches Classics and is Master in Charge of Cricket at Tonbridge School. →



## 2010s

← In February 2024, **Eliza Batten (HH 2011-16)** and **Pip Durell (BR 2005-10)** attended a fashion founders lunch at 10 Downing Street, hosted by Prime Minister Rishi Sunak and his wife, Akshata Murty. The event saw 20 founders of independent fashion brands gather to celebrate the UK fashion industry.

Eliza is the co-founder of *The Cirkel*, a resale platform for womenswear. *The Cirkel* aims to reduce the environmental impact of fashion by elevating the second-hand experience.

Pip is the founder of *With Nothing Underneath*, a sustainable shirting brand for women. Akshata Murty herself was wearing a shirt from *With Nothing Underneath* at the event.

A group of **2017 leavers** were on holiday in Marrakech in September 2023 when a 6.8

Above: Eliza (left) and Pip (middle) with Akshata Murty  
Picture by Simon Walker/No 10 Downing Street



Centre:  
2017 leavers on holiday in Marrakech

magnitude earthquake struck Morocco's High Atlas Mountains. In response to the earthquake and devastation it left behind, the group of OKS undertook a 24-hour relay, collectively covering a distance of 240 kilometers, symbolising the size of Marrakech.

The group raised over £13,000 for the Red Cross Morocco Earthquake Appeal.

The OKS involved were:

**Samuel Poole (CY 2012-17)**  
**Vihan Patel (CY 2012-17)**  
**Edward Streeter (TR 2012-17)**  
**Freddie Williams (TR 2012-17)**  
**Tom Westlake (TR 2012-17)**  
**Matt Barker (TR 2013-17)**  
**Antonia Brown (HH 2012-17)**  
**Molly Buchanan (HH 2012-17)**  
**Phoebe Robertson (BR 2012-17)**  
**Zofia Olszowska (WL 2012-17)**  
**Fallon Mondlane (BR 2015-17)**  
**Helena Weatherseed (LX 2015-17)**  
**Mikaela Mondlane (HH 2015-17)**

## Canterbury and Bermondsey

**Lavinia Cohn-Sherbok** (*Common Room 1980-87*) reviews *Bright the Vision: Public School Missions from the Victorian Age*, edited by Malcolm Tozer.

IN THE 1980s it was not unusual for affluent teenagers to voice the idea that poverty no longer existed in South East England. It was an evil of the past. Such an opinion would have been impossible in the King's School of a hundred years earlier. Northgate Ward, which almost borders on the Mint Yard, was notorious for its squalor and filth. Even the countryside was not immune. King's, along with many other public schools, could no longer avoid the conclusion that the education of a Christian gentleman must include interacting with the Poor. Charitable donation was not enough. Privileged young people needed to mix with their less affluent contemporaries. They had to know them personally if they were to have some understanding of their lives.

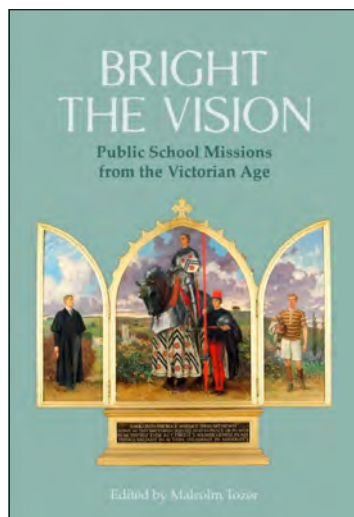
It therefore became the fashion for public schools to found Missions in slum areas, Unused buildings were converted

to provide leisure facilities for local boys. Money was raised, missionaries employed and parties from the schools visited regularly. The movement is described in *Bright the Vision*, a new book edited by Malcolm Tozer. He himself taught for several years at Uppingham, the school which, in 1870, pioneered the whole initiative. The activities of twenty-two schools are described. Accompanying the text are splendid photographs of idealistic clergymen, wholesome indoor games, football matches, sing-songs, summer camps and colossal teas. It is, of course, impossible to say how much was achieved, but it is probable that the experience did enlarge the outlook of those involved.

The King's chapter, written in scholarly detail by School Archivist Peter Henderson, is fascinating. The School came late to the

game, only participating in the Canterbury Club in South London from 1911, with the last visit of Bermondsey boys to Canterbury taking place in 1939. Nonetheless there is no doubt that the sense that privilege carries responsibilities has remained.

*Bright the Vision* is a timely reminder of this and it may prove vital if the public schools are to survive as charitable foundations in the future. 🇬🇧



### OKS POSTGRADUATE AWARDS 2024

The OKS Association, in conjunction with the OKS Educational & Benevolent Trust, launched this scheme to offer limited financial support to OKS who are looking to undertake postgraduate studies.

A small number of awards up to £1,000 will be available to OKS members.

Successful award holders will be required to make some contribution to the King's community in the form of an article, talk, performance or workshop. Their names will also be listed in the King's School Speech Day programme. Applications are invited by the end of May 2024.

To find out more information on the application process, please contact the OKS Office: oks@kings-school.co.uk

# George William Hughes D'Aeth: *Master's Mate at Trafalgar*

**G**EORGE WILLIAM HUGHES was born at Marylebone, Middlesex in 1786. His father was William Hughes, gentleman of Betteshanger, who had died the day before George was born. Hence his mother's family proved more influential in determining his career. Harriet Hughes was the daughter of Josiah Hardy, governor of New Jersey and consul of Cadiz, and granddaughter of Vice-Admiral Sir Charles Hardy. Harriet's ancestors on her mother's side included several naval officers, notably Admiral Sir John Narborough, Commissioner of the Navy in the 1680s.

George was at King's from 1795 to 1798, and he joined the Royal Navy as a first class volunteer in 1799. His first ship was the *Amethyst*, captained by his uncle John Cooke, who was married to his mother's sister Helena.

After several years' service on the home station, he rejoined Captain Cooke, now on HMS *Bellerophon*, in August 1805. He was thus a Master's Mate at the Battle of Trafalgar, where

his ship was in the thick of the fighting. (An exact contemporary on board was Midshipman John Franklin, later famous as an Arctic explorer.)

With around 27 killed and 123 wounded, the *Bellerophon* suffered some of the worst British casualties. The fatalities included John Cooke. When engaged with the French ship *Aigle*, he was told that wearing his epaulettes made him easy for French marksmen to identify. Cooke apparently replied: "It is too late to take them off, I see my situation, but I will die like a man." He was shot while reloading his pistols. A painting by the prolific maritime artist Thomas Whitcombe entitled 'Situation of the Bellerophon at the moment of the death of her gallant commander Capt<sup>n</sup> Cooke' was engraved by Thomas Sutherland for James Ralfe's *The Naval Chronology of Great Britain* (1820).

The *Bellerophon* was chosen to escort the *Victory* carrying Nelson's body back to England and for his own conduct in the battle Hughes was promoted in 1806 to a lieutenancy in HMS *Ruby*.



His career thereafter was relatively orthodox. He was involved in the expedition to Copenhagen (1807) and served for several years off Lisbon and in the Mediterranean. He was promoted Commander in 1811 and was in charge of the troop-ship HMS *Bucephalus* deployed in the 1814 attack on New Orleans. He was then promoted to Captain. He eventually retired in 1846 and became a Rear Admiral in 1850, Vice Admiral in 1857 and full Admiral in 1862.

Meanwhile in 1808 he took the additional surname of D'Aeth, when he inherited the estates of Sir Narborough D'Aeth, 3rd baronet. He thus acquired Knowlton Court, near Betteshanger, and in 1816 he married Harriot, daughter of Sir Edward Knatchbull of Mersham Hatch.

When he died in 1873, most obituaries focused on his naval career – sometimes, inaccurately, stating that he was the oldest surviving officer from Trafalgar – and on his family connections. The *Dover Express* added: “He was greatly respected by all classes in his position as a

country gentleman, was an active county magistrate, and a prominent member of the Conservative party.” There are family memorials in St Clement’s Church, Knowlton, and Knowlton Court is now available for ‘exclusive country house hire’. George’s descendants include Bruce and Kirsty Seymour-Ure (Mitchinson’s 1982-83 and 1982-84). 🇬🇧

Above: engraving of Thomas Whitcombe’s painting of the *Bellerophon* at Trafalgar



## Ben Birnberg

(SH/MR 1945-49)

*Benedict Michael Birnberg, sometime Honorary Solicitor to the OKS Association, died on 13 October 2023, aged 93. His daughter, Ariadne Birnberg (LN 1987-89), wrote this tribute.*

**W**HENEVER I ASKED my father, Ben Birnberg, why he went into the law, he'd say, mildly, it was in the family. His uncle and grandfather had both been lawyers. It was a family tradition, in other words. But there was nothing traditional about the firm that Ben founded, in 1962. 'Birnbergs', as it became known, became a byword for radicalism in the legal world. Ben would take on the cases most other firms would decline. He represented gay activists, civil liberties campaigners and minority rights groups long before it became fashionable to do so. Over the years the firm would become famous for overturning miscarriages of justice. Derek Bentley was 19 years old when he was hanged for a murder he didn't commit. Ben wouldn't give up on the case. He worked with the family for nearly forty years to help clear Derek's name, and in 1998 his efforts were rewarded when the murder conviction was finally quashed.

Ben attended King's as a day boy in the 1940s. He excelled at history and scooped several prizes. He also put his instincts for justice to use by campaigning (successfully) for a house for day boys – Marlowe. I should add that his case was helped by the sweetener of a box of cigars for the Head, Fred Shirley. Ben seems to have known how to get things done from an early age.

On first hearing of his passing, the Law Society Gazette ran what they termed the equivalent of full military honours in Ben's name. Lord Paul Boateng, a former articled clerk, described him as 'one of the greatest lawyers of his generation'. Gareth Pierce, the firm's senior partner, described him as 'fearless and quietly ferocious'. Ben was a 'trailblazer and inspiration to generations of lawyers', according to another former articled clerk. Mum and I were left in no doubt just how highly Ben was thought of as a lawyer.

As a father, Ben was my biggest fan. He'd tell me that all would be well and make me believe it. He was a delightful, quirky, eternal optimist who took pleasure in the small things, like shelling peas or queuing for the Proms. He had a gift for enjoying life. Mum and I stroked his arm as he passed, quietly, after a short illness, at King's College Hospital on 13 October 2023.



Left: Ben Birnberg

Below: Alan Pedder

## Alan Pedder

(GR 1945-51)

*Alan Pedder died on 10 July 2023, aged 91. His daughter, Pamela, sent this tribute.*

**A**LAN WAS A world authority and internationally recognized scientist in the field of Devonian paleontology. He was born on 30 April 1932 in Miri, Sarawak, Malaysia where his father was working as a geologist. The family eventually returned to England, settling in St. Ives, Cornwall.

Alan attended The King's School, Canterbury from 1945-51. He loved rugby and played in the 1st XV's of 1949 and 1950. Upon graduating from The King's School, Alan attended Pembroke College, Cambridge where he studied the Natural Sciences, obtaining a BA with Honours in 1954 which he followed with an MA in 1962.

After graduating, Alan accepted a position with British Petroleum which took him to Canada where he met his wife, Lou. The couple moved to Armidale, Australia where Alan obtained a PhD in Geology from the University of New England in 1968. After the birth of his third child, Alan

took a position with the Geological Survey of Canada in Calgary. It is there at the GSC that Alan began a career in which he would establish himself as a foremost expert of Devonian corals.

Alan's work was largely based on fossil collections that he excavated himself. He led several expeditions into Western and Northern Canada, the United States, Australia, Britain, Belgium and Germany. His research resulted in major reappraisals of Devonian tectonics and paleogeography of the

Devonian world and led to substantial revisions of many geological maps and structures in Western and Northern Canada as well as in Eastern Australia. His legacy includes the development of the world's most comprehensive computer database for Devonian fossil coral occurrences, which has become an invaluable tool for coral biostratigraphy and paleozoography.



In 1994, Alan retired and moved to Sidney, British Columbia. He continued his research, however, long into retirement. Throughout his prolific life, Alan collaborated with scientists from around the world and wrote over 100 scientific papers, with his last being published posthumously in September of 2023.

Alan will be remembered by his friends and colleagues as a brilliant, witty and gracious man. He will be dearly missed by Lou, his children, Richard, Lindsay and Pamela and his grandchildren, Geoffrey, Kari, Afra and Ryan.

## William Lamb

(MO 1949-55)

*William Theodore Lamb died on 2 November 2023, aged 87. His son, Henry, sent this tribute. William was a member of the Legacy Club and we are grateful for his support.*

**W**ILLIAM, A FORMER Consultant in Oral Maxillofacial Surgery at Addenbrooke's and Peterborough District Hospital (APDH) for 28 years, fully retired in September 2003. He spent his 20-year retirement in the Rutland hamlet of Brooke.

He was born in Charlton, London, to Captain Harold Theodore Lamb (Merchant Marine) and Rhoda Mary Lamb (née Clark), a head teacher in the Royal Borough of Greenwich. Having lost his father at the tender age of six and a half to the Second World War, in 1942, he was very fortunate to go to school with his brother and cousins at The King's School, Canterbury, due to the generosity of an uncle, who was responsible for the 'PhotoMe' booths found to this day at stations, post offices and the like, and the aircraft strobe navigation lights used on all aircraft today.

He greatly enjoyed his school days, rising to become a School Monitor. His education and upbringing there formed the backbone of his moral compass and his drive for excellence in all that he undertook.





Left: William Lamb

and postgraduate education and in 1974 he was appointed Regional Postgraduate Dean for the Dental Specialties, a post he held until 1980. He was very keen on the establishment of a Clinical Medical School at Addenbrooke's and he worked with many others to bring this about.

In 1976 he started monthly joint head and neck oncology clinics at Peterborough and also regular joint meetings there with the histopathologists.

Throughout his 32-year appointment to APDH, he provided an on-call emergency service for patients who had sustained facial and jaw injuries across Cambridgeshire and South Lincolnshire. This extended further to his being one of the first Consultants to volunteer for the 'Mid-Anglia General Practitioner Accident Service' (MAGPAS) as 'Medic 22' in the early 80s; his route between Cambridge and Peterborough being the source of most of his emergency casualties. He continued to volunteer for several years before work pressures made it impossible to predict his availability at short notice and he had to step back from regular service.

Bill was elected President of the Eastern Counties Branch of the British Dental Association in 1982, a position he was very proud to hold. Upon retirement, he undertook a master's degree in medical law at Hertfordshire University where he graduated in 2001 with much pride, somewhat raising the average age of the graduation ceremony.

His relaxed and friendly manner, his communication skills, wide experience and expertise will be greatly missed, especially by his head and neck cancer patients, with whom he developed a special relationship. He will be sadly missed by his wife Margaret, his sons Henry and Edward and his four grandchildren.



← Bill, as he was known from an early age, qualified in dentistry and then medicine and surgery at Guy's Hospital and after junior appointments in these fields, including a stint as a Casualty Officer, he was appointed rotating Senior Registrar at the 'Plastic and Jaw Injuries Centre' at The Queen Victoria Hospital, East Grinstead and at Guy's Hospital, London.

In 1969 he was seconded, for six months, to Kaduna, Nigeria during the Biafran civil war to develop and run that country's only maxillofacial surgery unit, which was attached to the Armed Forces Division 1 Base Hospital.

In 1971 he was appointed Consultant at APDH and took on the task of establishing a maxillofacial surgery unit at Peterborough, with satellite units in Stamford, Wisbech, King's Lynn, Papworth and Doddington. During the 1970s he advised on the design and later oversaw the commissioning of a new Maxillofacial Surgery Department at Peterborough, which incorporated for the first time a fully equipped Day Surgery Unit, including a Recovery Ward within the Maxillofacial Surgery Outpatient Clinic Suite.

Bill was a member of several Regional Committees, including those for manpower

Right: Frank Pilcher



## Frank Pilcher

(MR 1951-56)

*Frank Pilcher died on 2 February 2024, aged 85. His family sent this tribute.*

**L**IVING IN NEARBY Herne Bay, Frank attended King's as a day pupil and belonged to Marlowe House. His passion for Classics flourished in the sixth form, and he demonstrated a natural aptitude for athletics, particularly enjoying running.

After school, Frank joined the RAF for two years of National Service. He was stationed at various locations around the UK, including RAF Kenley. Upon completing his National Service, he read Economics at Durham University. His professional journey began at Lloyds Bank, where he dedicated over 25 years, steadily climbing the ranks. It was at the Young Conservatives Club that Frank met his wife, Liz, and they married in 1971. Frank's career took the newlyweds to Sussex, where their four children – Jenny, Steve, Rose and Andrew – were born. In 1982, they returned to Kent to be near family, and Frank continued his career with the bank. Frank remained with Lloyds Bank until the early 1990s

banking crisis prompted a change in direction. He transferred his financial expertise to a new career in the NHS, where he filled several roles until his retirement in 2009. Post-retirement, Frank found fulfilment in volunteering as a Trustee for the local Citizens Advice Bureau and other community initiatives. He was a member of the Round Table, and later the 41 Club. An avid reader, he spent countless hours immersed in books and took pleasure in cultivating his garden.

Frank passed away peacefully on 2 February at Pilgrims Hospice in Canterbury. He will be remembered as a devoted husband, father, and grandfather, leaving behind a legacy of love, dedication, and community service. His impact on those around him will be cherished and remembered with deep fondness.

## Robin Williams

(WL 1952-58)

*Robin Humphrey Williams died on 24 October 2023, aged 84. His wife, Barbara, sent this tribute.*

**R**OBIN WAS A member of Walpole House. He went on to study law at Christ's College, Cambridge. Robin was part of a group of OKS from Walpole who meet for lunch every four years on the day of the leap year. This tradition started in London and in later years the group started to meet at King's.

Robin was born in what is now Malaya and sadly his father died in a prisoner of war camp. His mother never re-married, but Robin did have a younger sister. He worked as a probate lawyer all his life and continued to work until shortly before his death. He enjoyed his time at King's, remaining great friends with some of his contemporaries who attended his wake.

Robin sadly died on 24 October 2023, having suffered from a variety of conditions and then lastly from a nasty fall. Robin was married for just over 51 years to Barbara and had four children (one having passed away as a baby). He is very much missed. →



Christopher Barker (second from the left, back row) with the successful VII team, Rosslyn Park 1962

## Christopher Barker

(WL 1958-1962)

*Christopher Barker died on 24 April 2022, aged 78. Nicolas de Jong (WL 1958-62) and Laurence Scott (GL 1957-61) share this tribute.*

← **C**HRISTOPHER BARKER MADE his name as a writer and as a photographer. His other main interests were music and poetry; and sport, at which he excelled at school. Christopher played in the school 1st XV rugby team from 1959 to 1962; and he was captain during his team's last successful season. He then led King's to the finals of the Rosslyn Park Sevens Tournament; moreover, in 1962 he was chosen as captain of the Public Schools XV. While still at school, Christopher played for Rosslyn Park's 1st XV, and he continued to do so until he started his studies in literature at Princeton University in 1963. Christopher was also prominent at school as an athlete: his long jump record of 20ft 11½ inches lasted until the early 1970s.

On his return from Princeton he trained as a photographer, and soon set up his own distinctive photography studio, earning numerous commissions from publishers and media organisations, and for which he travelled widely.

During the 1980s, he maintained his particular interest in post-1930s poetry; and he decided to compile a photographic record of the then most prominent British poets. His first book, *Portraits of Poets*, was published by Carcanet Press in 1986 and consisted of his own portraits of some sixty leading contemporary poets, all in striking settings together with signed extracts of their own works. They are all very fine portraits, and particularly outstanding are his photographs of Sir John Betjeman, Paul Potts, John Heath-Stubbs and Ted Hughes. Christopher's own work now forms part of the National Portrait Gallery permanent collection.

Much had been written about his parents (George Barker and Elizabeth Smart), but in the 1990s Christopher decided to write his own life story.

He began with a short piece, 'Life at Tilty Mill', for *Granta*, about his early childhood in Essex. Encouraged by its reception, he later wrote *The Arms of the Infinite*, a candid analysis of his relationship with his parents, of theirs with each other, and he also included his time at King's. *The Arms of the Infinite* was published by Pomona Press in 2006 and was very favourably reviewed. In the *London Review of Books*, it was said that Christopher was 'brilliant at summoning the fear in the atmosphere, and at these points his prose is textured with shards of glass'.

Christopher divided his time between London and Norfolk (where he lived with his family), living life with passion. He was always enthusiastic, always optimistic. Notwithstanding the loss of an eye and other injuries he had suffered in a car accident in the 1980s, he loved life; and that will remain his memorial.

## Christopher Hudson

(GL 1960-64)

*Christopher John Hudson died on 27 September 2023 at the age of 76. A full obituary appeared in The Daily Telegraph on 6 October 2023.*

**C**HRISTOPHER HUDSON WAS the adopted son of John Hudson, a civil servant in Uganda. He attended Entebbe European School and later Harewood School, Bexhill, from where he joined King's in September 1960. He was a Christina Mason Scholar and a committee member of the Marlowe Society.

He read English at Jesus College, Cambridge, where he was one of a distinguished generation that included David Hare. He was supported by an award provided jointly by the School and the College and rewarded their trust by his academic and early journalistic success. As he wrote to Headmaster Peter Newell: "I'm sure my First was as much of a shock to me as it was to everyone else, particularly as I am now busy editing 'Granta!'"

There followed a notable and varied literary

career. He started at Faber & Faber, moved to *The Spectator*, and then turned to screenwriting. *Overlord*, co-authored with the director Stuart Cooper, won a Silver Bear at the Berlin Film Festival, though their script based on Hudson's 1980 novel *The Final Act* was not filmed. More novels followed: *Insider Out*, *Colombo Heat* and *Playing in the Sand* as well as a novelisation of Roland Joffé's film *The Killing Fields*. He returned to journalism with the *Evening Standard* and *The Daily Telegraph* and wrote *Spring Street Summer* (1992), which was among other things a reflection on his year in America as a 1976 Harkness Scholar.

He married Kirsty McLeod in 1978 and they had one son, Rowley. She died in 2020. The *Telegraph* obituarist summed him up as "a gentleman journalist: well-mannered, thoroughly decent, scholarly, amiable".

## George Facer

(Common Room 1961-67)

*George Herbert James Facer died on 26 October 2023, aged 86.*

**G**EORGE WENT TO Epsom College where his father was Head of the Chemistry. He did his national service with the East Surrey Regiment and read Chemistry at St John's College, Oxford. Joining King's in 1961, he was a resident tutor in Luxmoore, coached rugby, hockey and cricket, was a Captain in the CCF and involved in music as performer and manager. As Ken Yates put it, "clearly he had inherited blood rich in chalk dust as well as litmus, and he rapidly reached a state of highly dynamic equilibrium in many of the School's activities".

After two years at Dulwich College, he went to Sherborne as Head of Chemistry in 1969 and spent most of the rest of his career there. He became Head of Science, housemaster of School House, was fully involved in the CCF (first the Army, then the Naval Section), ran both rugby and hockey, and found time to be front-of-house →

← and orchestral manager for Dorset Opera and Chairman of Sherborne Round Table.

From 1990 to 1993, he was deputy head of Kamuzu Academy in Malawi, followed by a year at Phillips College in Massachusetts and another at Tabor Academy, before returning to Sherborne. He finally retired in 1997 but continued his involvement in education with a series of Edexcel A level Chemistry textbooks.

## Brian Wilson

(Common Room 1965-73)

*Brian William John Gregg Wilson died on 10 November 2023, aged 86. His daughter, Emma, sent this tribute.*

**B**RIAN WILSON WAS born in Singapore and lived in Kuala Lumpur until he was almost five. With his mother and sister, he narrowly escaped the Japanese invasion of Malaya, leaving his father and uncle behind, the one interned in Changi, the other torpedoed in a prison ship en route to Japan.

Educated in Northern Ireland and England, he became a scholar of Christ's College, Cambridge and a lover of Classical and English literature, choosing not to follow his parents, both consultant surgeons, into medicine, nor his archbishop grandfather into Holy Orders, though theology was a lifelong interest of his. Instead he became a schoolmaster, teaching in some of the country's leading independent schools – Radley (1960-65), The King's School, Canterbury, and Eastbourne College (1973-77) before becoming Headmaster of Campbell College, Belfast (1977-87), during a challenging period of educational as well as civil disturbance, and then deputy head of St. Mary's, Wantage.

He was an 'A' level Chief Examiner in Latin and Ancient History, a religious broadcaster for the BBC for twenty years, a local councillor, an author and a translator who lectured on Mediterranean cruises. He also served for a time on the Central



Left: Brian Wilson

Right: Robert Barber

Religious Advisory Committee of the BBC/ITV. He married Sara Hollins (died 2022) whose family firm invented Viyella, and had two children, Anna and Emma, who survive him, together with his four grandchildren. He was a much-loved gentleman who will be missed by many.

## Robert Barber

(GR 1966-70)

*Robert David Romer Barber died on 30 October 2023, aged 70. His wife, Jaine, wrote this tribute.*

**R**OBERT WAS BORN in Sylt, Germany on 30 March 1953. His childhood had been marred by the death of his mother when he was a baby, and his father's career in the RAF meant a peripatetic childhood. His time at King's was undistinguished, but he did make a lifelong friend in William Harrop (GR 1966-70).

Robert's work as a photographer began in 1972 and he quickly became a sought after assistant,



working primarily with the late Terry O'Neill. An early marriage to Mimi Shore ended in 1977 and resulted in four years working in the US with Terry and his then wife Faye Dunaway, shooting countless Hollywood stars and legendary musicians.

Moving back to London in 1982, his independent career in portrait photography flourished and included many commissions from international publications. He has work in the permanent collection of the National Portrait Gallery and held several exhibitions.

Robert met his second wife Jaine McCormack in 1987 and they had nine years in London, before Robert's health collapsed and he was found to have serious heart failure. The shock

realisation that his career in photography was over was handled in a typically stoic and resourceful way, and although his work had been abruptly curtailed, fate intervened and a fortuitous job offer for Jaine meant a move to the Chilterns in 1996.

Robert became involved with serious nature and environmental work, including becoming an active member of the Ashmolean Rare Plant Society. He frequently referred to his biology teacher at King's, Ivor Wilkinson ('Wilkie'), who would have been amazed at his late flowering! Robert ended up co-founding a local Environment Group, *Watlington Environment Group*, and ran it for over 20 years. He also spent 16 years on the local Parish Council, and became a trustee of two local charities, immersing himself in the local community.

The development of digital photography allowed a new career in Interiors website photography, working with a few special clients who understood Robert's medical limitations. His creativity was unbounded and he also exhibited as part of Oxfordshire ArtWeeks to great acclaim.

His Quaker inspired funeral held in Amersham on 20 November 2023 was testament to the love in which he was held by so many, not least his and Jaine's 10 nephews and nieces. Various initiatives are in progress to commemorate his life and recognise the role he played in mentoring and inspiring others. 🇬🇧

#### IN MEMORY

**Glen Simmons**  
(GL 1953-58)

11 December 2023

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**Simon Dee**  
(MR 1974-79)

25 June 2023

# Sport

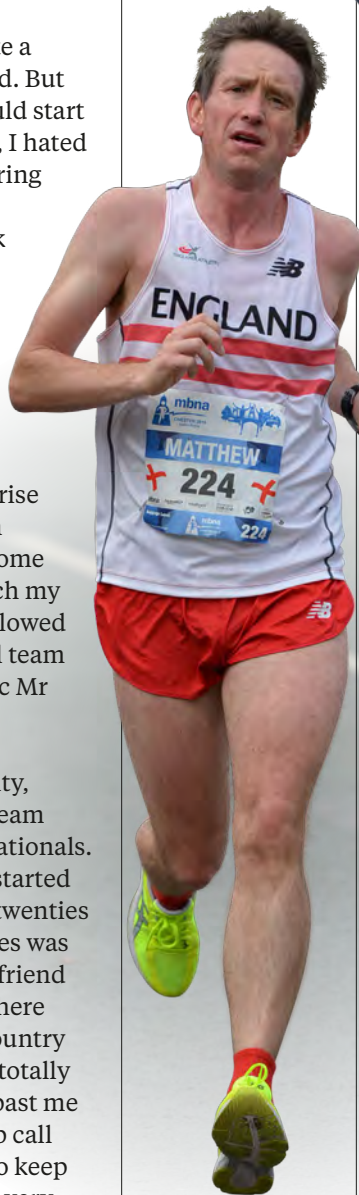
## From Couch to 10k to World Championships

*Matt Willifer (TR 1987-91) tells us about his running journey.*

STEPHEN WOODLEY ASKED me to write a few words about running for England. But when I sat down to write, I felt I should start before this. Because the strange thing is, I hated cross country at prep school. I was suffering from asthma and a touch tubby, I would usually be found languishing at the back of the pack, wheezing and miserable. Consequently, I spent my first year at King's trying to avoid running – a strategy that worked well until I was roped into the inter-house cross country competition in the Removes. By that stage I had grown out of my asthma, and much to my surprise (and the surprise of everyone else) I won the race comfortably. I had, it seemed, some physiological aptitude for running, which my asthma had hidden. In the years that followed I loved my running at King's. The school team did very well and was led by the fantastic Mr Holland ("Chuck").

I went on to be a keen runner at university, running in the Blues race at Oxford – a team that also finished second in the junior nationals. However, my fitness unravelled when I started work (a familiar story). Free time in my twenties was spent in pubs; free time in my thirties was spent raising kids. In my early forties, a friend suggested I ran a 10km race with him. There was to be no repeat of the house cross country heroics: I trailed in outside 40 minutes, totally exhausted, and with my friend surging past me in the closing stages. This was a wake-up call – not just to get back into running, but to keep healthy as I entered middle age; it could very easily have gone the other way.

Over the next couple of years I went back to training and got back some speed. I was in the 45-50 year age group, and running about 34



Above: running for England

Above right: Matt (right) at the World Championship podium



minutes for 10km, and 2 hours 40 minutes for a marathon. Pleasingly, it didn't matter to me that I was much slower than I was as a youngster, and that the inevitable longer term trajectory was downwards. I just mentally recalibrated what I was capable of, and became passionate about it.

I set my sights on an international call up. To get into the England team I would need to finish in the top five in my age group in one of the four major UK marathons. I duly qualified for the team; in 2018 I ran for England in Marathon. Then, the next year, I ran Half Marathon for Great Britain in the Masters Athletics World Championships ('Masters' is a kindly rebranding of "Veteran") in Poland – finishing 9th overall in the 45-50 age group, and our British Half Marathon team winning Gold. It was an inspiring event. Over 80s shot put? Yes, it's a thing.

So, it's never too late to go back to what you love. And you're never unfit enough not to get fit. With the right training, you could even get to be an over 80 shot put world champion... 🇬🇧