



KING EDWARD'S SCHOOL  
BIRMINGHAM

# OLD EDWARDIANS

GAZETTE 2026

## *In this issue...*

### *Careers Focus – Business Leaders & Entrepreneurship*

Insights and lessons learnt, and  
what is next for our pupils

### *Old Eds around the world*

Discover where our alumni are  
and read about their journeys

### *475 years of King Edward's School*

A brief history since the school  
was founded, as well as dates  
for your diaries

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This page: Chris Thouless (1978) and his enviable office in Kenya.

On the cover: The stunning portrayal of the Chapel Ceiling on the front cover was painted by Sam in Sixths.

'The depth of the piece should immediately strike you, with the focus around the central axis. There is symmetry alongside the vivid strokes of watercolour juxtaposing grandiose with the mundane and the subtle angle in an upward perspective replicates the same effect as moving your neck to appreciate the ceiling as a whole.'

The views or opinions expressed in the Gazette are solely those of the individual authors and do not necessarily represent those of the School.

# Kirsty von Malaisé

## Chief Master & Principal, KES & KEHS



carries obligations beyond self-advancement. These partnerships enrich our pupils and affirm the School's civic role within Birmingham.

One of the most significant developments has been the continued progress of some joint teaching at A Level across our schools. What began as a carefully considered ambition has matured into a collegiate reality. Pupils are benefiting from broader subject choices, while staff enjoy deeper professional collaboration. This shared endeavour has strengthened academic culture without compromising the distinctive identity of each school, a balance we continue to guard carefully.

Looking back on the year, there is much to be proud of: purposeful leadership, strong results, curricular clarity, and a community that has embraced change with thoughtfulness and resolve. We are also quietly planning for the future, including long-term estate development and future-proofing our campus, to ensure that our physical spaces continue to support outstanding education for generations to come.

Next year, we will see a renewed focus on Business and Enterprise education, both within school, and across the wider Foundation, creating a virtuous circle of connection and influence within the city. Ultimately, our aim is not simply to prepare pupils for careers, but for lives of contribution, reflection, courage, and fulfilment. In this, the Old Edwardian network is one of our greatest strategic assets: a living example to current pupils of where a King Edward's education can lead, and a powerful source of connection, mentorship, and inspiration.

None of this is possible without exceptional people. It is right to recognise that the real strength of the School lies in those whose vocation leads them to work here, colleagues whose expertise, care, and commitment shape pupils' lives every day. Their professionalism and generosity of spirit have been central to the year's success.

As we honour 475 years of history, we do so with confidence in the School's direction, fidelity to our values, and optimism for what lies ahead. I hope you will continue to stay engaged, connected, and proud, not only of what King Edward's has been for you, but of all it continues to become.

With warmest wishes,

Kirsty von Malaisé  
Chief Master & Principal, KES & KEHS

As we prepare to celebrate the School's extraordinary 475th anniversary, it feels especially fitting to reflect here on a year of consolidation, and confidence.

At 475, King Edward's remains deeply anchored in its heritage, our values - scholarly rigour, service, and integrity - and our enduring sense of community. The strong sense of belonging boys have within the school was noted as a coveted 'Significant Strength' in our ISI Inspection this academic year. We are a living community with deep roots: my trip across the pond with Laura Salt, Development Director, earlier in the year was testament to the great bonds of affection that OEs continue to hold for the school. Whilst the world changes around us, the task entrusted to each generation is to ensure that our values remain potent and have impact on individuals, our city, and beyond.

A central strategic commitment remains our ambition to widen access. At a time when

the independent sector faces challenges, we are proud to have continued expanding opportunity for talented pupils from all backgrounds. This is possible only through the sustained generosity of our supporters, and I extend heartfelt thanks to all who believe, as we do, that ability and potential should not be limited by circumstance, and that talent fulfilled has a wider impact than just on an individual.

Academically, the School remains focused on developing critical thinkers and independent learners: young people who question intelligently, read widely even in this age of screens and distractions, and take ownership of their lifelong intellectual development. Our pupils are challenged not simply to succeed in examinations, but to engage thoughtfully with complexity, uncertainty, and ethical responsibility.

Beyond the classroom, we have continued to strengthen partnerships, service, and collaboration, recognising that education

# Ed Swanwick Second Master



It is a privilege to join a school with such a distinguished history and such a strong sense of purpose. Throughout my career, I have been motivated by a deep belief in the transformative power of education, and by the opportunity to work alongside young people whose energy, curiosity and unfiltered perspective make schools such invigorating places to be. That sense of purpose has guided me from my early years in Australia, through a range of schools in the UK, and now to King Edward's School.

My professional journey has taken me through a variety of educational settings, from boarding and day schools to co-educational and single-

sex contexts, in both Australia and the UK. Across these different contexts, one constant has remained: the primacy of relationships. It is through strong, respectful and supportive relationships that schools are able to bring out the very best in their pupils. For that reason, it has been particularly heartening to discover how strong the sense of community is at KES. It is something that cannot be manufactured; rather, it is built patiently over time through shared values, mutual respect and genuine care for one another. It was therefore especially pleasing to see this recognised in the most recent ISI inspection as a 'significant strength' of the school.

There is much about KES that makes it both distinctive and compelling. Its long-standing commitment to academic excellence sits alongside a rich and varied co-curricular programme, creating an environment in which pupils are encouraged not only to achieve but to grow. Equally important is the school's proud record in promoting inclusion and social mobility, an ethos that challenges outdated assumptions about independent education and reflects a deeply held belief in widening opportunity.

Another defining characteristic is the School's close partnership with King Edward VI High School for Girls. It is a relationship that offers pupils the best of both worlds: the focus and identity of single-sex education alongside meaningful collaboration and shared experience. It is a model that is both distinctive and forward-thinking, and one that I feel strongly privileged to help sustain and develop.

As I look ahead, my aim is to build on this strong foundation while ensuring that the School continues to evolve in ways that prepare pupils for the demands and opportunities of the modern world. Intellectual rigour and curiosity will remain central, but they must be accompanied by adaptability, creativity and independence of thought. Alongside this, there is an ongoing responsibility to ensure that every pupil feels known, supported and inspired.

A particular priority for me is the continued development of character education. Academic success opens doors, but it is character traits such as judgement, resilience and integrity that determine how those opportunities are used. The co-curricular life of the school plays a particularly vital role here, offering pupils the chance to develop these qualities beyond the classroom.

I am also acutely aware that the life of a school extends well beyond its current pupils and staff. The alumni community is an essential part of its identity, carrying forward its traditions, values and spirit across generations. The pride and affection with which former pupils regard KES are among its greatest strengths, and I feel a deep sense of responsibility in becoming part of that ongoing story.

As I begin this chapter, I am committed to listening carefully and learning from those who know the School well, including its alumni. I hope that you will continue to feel closely connected to the life of the School, whether by sharing your experiences, supporting current pupils or helping us to think ambitiously about the future.

Schools such as this are defined not only by what happens within their walls, but by the enduring relationships and values that continue long after pupils leave. It is that lasting sense of belonging which makes KES so special, and I look forward to working together to ensure that it continues to flourish for generations to come.

Edward Swanwick  
Second Master

## A brief word from: The Chairman

### It is a privilege to share the 2026 Gazette with you.

This time last year, I was writing my first note as Chairman, having taken over the role from James Martin (1979). It is hard to believe that I now write this paragraph. As many of you will know, James sadly lost his short battle with cancer in July last year, a life cut tragically short. I asked James' brother, Simon (1981), to write an obituary for the Gazette, which can be found on page 37. I had the pleasure of spending many hours with James at OEA events, and he should be remembered as one of life's true gentlemen — a man who gave his time and support to so many and asked for nothing in return. Our condolences remain with James' wife, Clare, his son, Nick, and the whole Martin family.

Looking ahead, the Committee is reviewing the events diary with the Development Office to ensure we provide ample opportunity for OEs to connect with the community we share. Many have asked about the London Dinner, and we are working closely to plan a spread of events which engage all OEs over the course of the next couple of years. We of course have our OE London drinks on 25th June and I very much look forward to seeing many of you there. Your support for these events is invaluable.

Working alongside the Development Office, we are preparing for a bumper 475th anniversary celebration, and you will have seen many events already planned in 2027. Further details will be shared by Laura and her team in due course, but in the meantime, I would encourage you to book early if you can — this really helps the team with the delivery of these events.

Following a number of emails and calls received by the Committee, we are introducing a new 'buddy' system for OEs. We all know that there are times in life when a friendly conversation can make all the difference, and we would like to offer a supportive presence for anyone who may wish to speak with a fellow OE. The Development Office will be sending out details of how to enrol later this year.

Finally, we are always keen to ensure that the Committee represents as broad a spectrum of alumni as possible and continues to bring fresh ideas to the OEA. If you would like to join the Committee, or share any thoughts, please contact me via [oldeds@keschools.org.uk](mailto:oldeds@keschools.org.uk). Regards,

Tom Burn (2006)  
Chairman of the OEA

## Gemstones Reunion

Saturday 28th February 2026

February saw us hosting the Gemstones Reunion, bringing together some of our oldest Old Edwardian from both KES and KEHS with representatives from the Classes of 1966, 1976 and 1986 as well as Old Eds from other year groups. The event was a wonderful celebration of shared memories, filled with nostalgia and laughter.

The day began with a talk from guest speaker, Lucy Smith (KEHS 2020), who delivered a fascinating talk on codebreaking at Bletchley Park and its historical links with KEHS. Archive activities, a delicious lunch and tours of the schools followed.

The day finished with a special performance from Old Edwardian band Ken Wood & The Mixers! A perfect finale to a day full of warmth, conversation and shared history.



### Dates for your 2026 and 2027 diaries

Monday 6th July 2026 at 12.00  
OEA AGM – Online

Friday 11th September 2026  
University Networking – Were you part of the KES class of 2021 or later? Join us and offer valuable advice to the class of 2027 from both KES and KEHS on university options, degree choices and more.

Saturday 27th February 2027  
Gemstones Reunion – Special reunion for the classes of 1957, 1967, 1977, 1987 and Old Edwardians from all year groups from KES & KEHS.

Monday 22nd March 2027  
Symphony Hall 475 - An unforgettable evening of music at Birmingham Symphony Hall, featuring exceptional performances from KES / KEHS pupils and an opportunity for Old Eds to be part of it.

Tuesday 20th April 2027  
Tolkien Lecture – Jim Grant (1973).

Saturday 15th May 2027  
Milestone Reunion - Special reunion for the classes of 1997, 2007 & 2017 from KES & KEHS.

Friday 25th June 2027  
475 Careers & Networking Day – bringing together alumni, parents, partners and friends of both KES and KEHS to share insights, offer guidance and build meaningful connections across generations.

Saturday 26th June 2027  
475 Gala Dinner – Enjoy a spectacular dinner and entertainment as we reflect on our heritage and raise a toast to the many years ahead for KES.

Sunday 27th June 2027  
475 KE Community Day - Enjoy an anniversary cricket match alongside family activities, food, games and entertainment.

Date to be confirmed  
Former Staff Lunch – Open to all former staff for an afternoon tea.

### Watch our 475 film!

475  
KING EDWARD'S SCHOOL  
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## Overseas Alumni Events

In October, the Chief Master & Principal, Kirsty von Malaisé, and Development Director, Laura Salt, travelled to Canada and the United States to meet alumni from both KEHS and KES.

The visit was long overdue, and it was wonderful to reconnect with Old Edwardians in person. Highlights included a brunch in Toronto kindly hosted by Nick Collins (1964), and drinks in Brooklyn hosted by Catherine Mackay (KEHS 1985). The trip concluded with a fascinating evening at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, with a tour of the Rockefeller Wing, made possible by Sir Paul Ruddock (1976).

It was a real pleasure to meet those who attended, share our plans, and hear their valuable thoughts and feedback. Thank you to everyone who joined us. Our sincere thanks go to all those who helped make the trip possible, it could not have happened without you.

*Top photo: Brooklyn drinks (Host Catherine Mackay (1985), with Kirsty von Malaisé and Old Eds  
Bottom photo: Toronto brunch (Host Nick Collins (1964), with Kirsty von Malaisé & Old Eds.*



## Tolkien Lecture Tuesday 28th April 2026

In April, we were delighted to host the second Tolkien Lecture since the series resumed.

We were honoured to welcome back Old Edwardians, Vikram Banerjee (2002), and Anurag (Ragi) Singh (1994) as guest speakers for the evening.

Vikram opened the lecture with an engaging presentation exploring the evolution of cricket from its traditional roots to the development of 'The Hundred', offering insight into how the sport has adapted to changing audiences and the modern world. This then set the scene for conversation with Ragi, in which they both reflected on commercial strategy and the challenges and opportunities facing cricket today. The lecture concluded with a lively audience Q&A, where guests posed a range of questions, extending the discussion to topics such as the future of the game and fan engagement.



Keep an eye on your inbox for details of events as they are announced, or visit: [oldeds.kes.org.uk/events](https://oldeds.kes.org.uk/events)

## Old Eds' Events during 2025-2026

### University Networking Friday 12th September 2025

Our fourth annual University Networking event in September was another tremendous success. We had recent alumni join us to answer all the questions about university and the Class of 2026 found it extremely helpful! Thanks to all the Old Edwardians who gave up their time to help with this event.



Our most recent Old Edwardian event, the Milestone Reunion, took place in early June, bringing together Old Eds from both KES and KEHS to celebrate their anniversary years. We were delighted to welcome back the classes of 1996, 2006 and 2016.

Although the weather was not always on our side, it certainly didn't dampen the spirit of the occasion. Guests enjoyed guided tours of the school, followed by a warm welcome from the Chief Master & Principal.

### Milestones Reunion Saturday 6th June 2026



Between the downpours (just about!), year group photographs were taken - a huge thank you to everyone for their enthusiasm and willingness. These photos not only serve as treasured mementos but will also become an important part of the School's archives for years to come.

The celebrations then moved to the Dining Hall for dinner and drinks, where it was wonderful

to see both new and long-standing connections being made, rekindled, and celebrated. A spirited rendition of the school song was, of course, a highlight of the evening, before guests continued to the Ruddock Performing Arts Centre - and, for some guests, beyond there!

Thank you to everyone who joined us. We very much look forward to welcoming you back for your next decade reunion.

### KE Community Christmas Monday 1st December 2025

In December, we proudly hosted our second KE Community Christmas event which brought together pupils, parents, Old Edwardians and staff for a celebration that showcased the creativity and talent within our community. Guests enjoyed browsing a wonderful variety of stalls offering unique gifts, delicious treats and handcrafted items and everyone embraced the warm spirit of the festive season.



### Class of 1986 Reunion Saturday 14th March 2026

We were delighted to welcome back 50 Old Edwardians from KES and KEHS in March as they celebrated 40 years since leaving school.

As a group that usually hosts their reunion away from school, it was a delight to have them choose to return to school this year!



### Strava Cycle Sunday 17th May 2026

May saw Keith Phillips once again host the Strava Cycle. Old Edwardians, past parents and former staff enjoyed a cycle through the beautiful Worcestershire countryside before finishing up at The Victoria for the important post-ride hydration. Everyone had a great time, and we are already looking forward to next year!



# School news

## Maestro Max

KES pupil Max (Sixths) has been honoured with the 2026 Dr Weir Legacy Award from The Keyboard Charitable Trust. This prestigious award will support him as he embarks on the next chapter of his musical journey.

Dr Kenneth Ross Weir established the Keyboard Charitable Trust to annually present an award to one exceptionally talented international keyboard player aged between 12 and 20. This initiative aims to help these young musicians build international careers. The award is not

open to application; instead, the Trust's artistic directors identify the deserving candidates. This is particularly beneficial for Max, who will be leaving us at the end of this term to pursue a full scholarship at the Royal College of Music. He will be studying Piano and Composition from September 2026.

An interview film featuring Max will be available on the school website shortly. In it, he'll share his experiences and explain how KES has propelled his musical journey to new heights.



## Founder's Day

At last October's Founder's Day, we were delighted to have Old Edwardian William Cadbury (1995) as our guest speaker and to present the awards.

William shared invaluable insights and inspiring reflections from his own journey since leaving King Edward's School and how his time at school had influenced many of the life choices he has made. He challenged the pupils to: get involved - experience builds skills; seek and offer support; and to never stop learning.



## National Intermediate Schools' Challenge

On 17th May KES celebrated a remarkable double success in the National Intermediate Schools' Challenge.

The A team, Ashar (Fourths) (c), Pranav (Fourths), Aryan-Sebastian (UM) and Anthony (UM), travelled to Winchester College for the National Finals and delivered an outstanding performance. Competing against some of the strongest schools in the country, the team progressed to the final and secured a superb victory over The Perse with a 570-520 win, earning the title of National Intermediate School Challenge Champions.

The B team, Alex (UM) (c), Andrew (Fourth), Bertie (UM) and Thomas (UM), competed in the Intermediate Plate Finals online. They won all three matches, including a dramatic final against Bryanston School, clinching victory 340-330 in extra time to complete a clean sweep and secure a second national trophy!

## May Day Dawn Chorus

On May Day, pupils at KES and KEHS and many of their parents and teachers were up with the lark to experience the wonders of the Dawn Chorus, something everyone (in my humble view) should experience at least once.

In the resplendent Winterbourne Gardens, our enthusiastic and humorous guide Glenn helped us learn to identify different bird calls and behaviour. The Merlin App was cast aside, and we learnt to listen, 'lobing' our ears as amplification devices. We will all remember the

Radetsky March thrush call, the Countdown theme blackcap, the 1984 Casio blue tit, the Strauss waltz blackbird, and the troglodytic wren. Personal highlights may vary, but the standout moment was arguably a jubilant greenfinch, olive and yellow against the burgeoning dawn light.

It was an uplifting, convivial and memorable experience.

*Kirsty von Malaisé*



## Taekwondo Champion

Congratulations to Elias (Shells), who was crowned the Boys' European Lightweight (Black Belt) Taekwondo Champion over the Easter break, competing in Switzerland.

## KES Fencing on the front foot

KES fencers delivered an outstanding set of results at the British Youth Championships in Sheffield over the first May Bank Holiday weekend.

The highlight came from Carlino (Rems), who produced an exceptional run to be crowned British U14 Boys' Foil Champion 2026.

There was further success for the U14 épée team, with Jion (UM) finishing an impressive third place nationally.

Strong performances across the U16 and U18 categories rounded off an excellent weekend, with KES pupils competing with distinction against the best young fencers in the country.



## KES U14s EDF Rugby Cup Winners

Our U14s produced a thrilling and unforgettable performance to secure victory in the EDF Cup final against KES Five Ways, in a match that went right down to the wire.

Played at Kingsholm, the iconic home of Gloucester Rugby, the game showcased determination, skill, and resilience from both sides. Our attacking prowess was evident throughout, led by an outstanding hat-trick from Josh, alongside crucial tries from Chidera and Ryan. Despite fierce opposition, they stayed within reach, setting the stage for a dramatic finale.

A last-minute try brought us level, leaving everything resting on the final kick of the game. Hugo held his nerve to slot the conversion, sealing a remarkable victory for King Edward's sparking jubilant celebrations among players and supporters alike.



## Tell us your news!

Thanks to all Old Eds who have sent us their news. Unfortunately, we cannot publish everything we receive but please continue to keep us posted! We are always open to ideas for future issues of Gazette. So if you have a story that would inform, educate or entertain the Old Edwardian community then please contact the editor.

Debbie Macleod, Editor of Gazette 2026  
Email: [editor@keschools.org.uk](mailto:editor@keschools.org.uk)

## Can you help us find any KES 'Old Boys'?

We have lost touch with a number of Old Edwardians. If you are in touch with someone who doesn't receive communications from us but would like to, please ask them to send their details via email to: [oldeds@keschools.org.uk](mailto:oldeds@keschools.org.uk) or complete our contact form at: [oldeds.org.uk/stay-in-touch](http://oldeds.org.uk/stay-in-touch)

## Badminton

Huge congratulations and well done again to the U16 Badminton Team: Punit, Michael, Samuel and Jia Yi, for winning the Victor School Sports Magazine National Finals on Wednesday 11th March.

They won 5:1 against Altrincham Grammar in the semi-finals and then 6:0 against Reading School in the finals, crowning us National Champions! Which completes the set alongside their regional and county titles this season.



# Leaving School Captain's Reflections

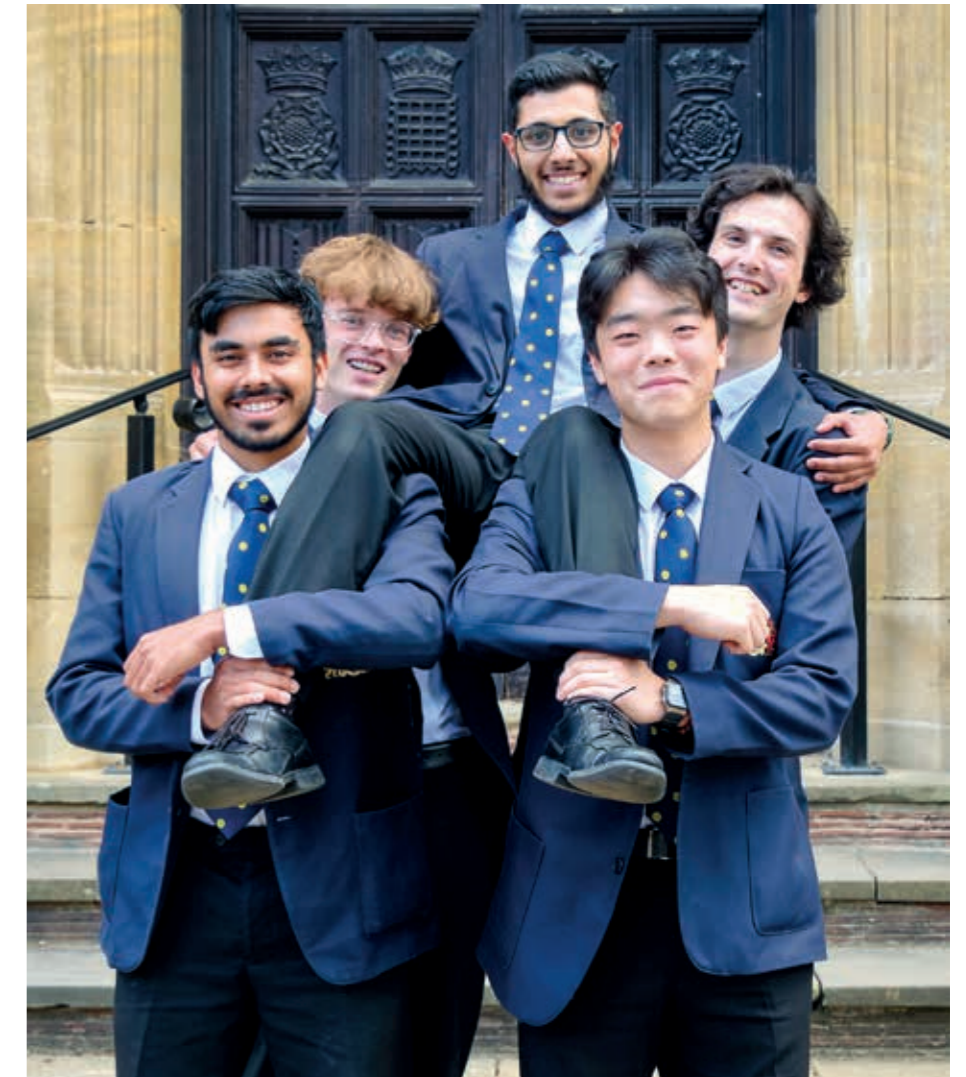
Standing at the front of Big School for the first assembly of the year, I was given a piece of advice I hadn't expected: the nerves don't go away, you just get better at ignoring them. Having now delivered the better part of a year's worth of assemblies, I can confirm this is entirely accurate - and that it applies to rather more than just public speaking.

This year has been marked by both continuity and change. The introduction of VAT on fees has undoubtedly presented challenges, but the school has met them with a resilience that speaks to its underlying strength. At the same time, we mark the conclusion of the International Baccalaureate, a qualification that has shaped the academic experience of many recent cohorts. Whilst its departure signals a shift, the ethos it fostered - intellectual curiosity, a willingness to engage beyond the confines of a syllabus, and the ability to function on concerningly small amounts of sleep - remains very much embedded within the school. These changes, alongside the continued evolution of the school under its current leadership, serve as a reminder that while KES is deeply rooted in tradition, it has never been particularly fond of standing still.

That same sense of energy has been evident across all areas of school life. On the stage, the Senior Production of *The Great Gatsby* once again demonstrated the remarkable quality and ambition of drama at KES, while House Shout continues to be one of the most anticipated events in the calendar. This year saw Cary Gilson securing a second consecutive victory - a fact I mention entirely objectively and without bias whatsoever (although you may be able to guess my house affiliation!). Their success was aided by the kind of wholehearted commitment that included a wig and dress worn with absolute conviction.

Beyond this, the intellectual and co-curricular life of the school remains as vibrant as ever. Debating has reached the national stage, and Model United Nations, now in its third year, has significantly advanced, both in the number of schools involved and in our own participation. This year also saw our World XV rugby team take to the field on Eastern Road against Toronto RFC; an event that would have seemed improbable not long ago, and yet now feels entirely in keeping with the school's growing profile.

In writing for the Old Edwardian Gazette, it is impossible not to reflect on the sense of continuity that runs through the school.



Whether through the history that surrounds us or through presentations and talks delivered by Old Edwardians, it is clear that we are part of something far larger than our own time here. Hearing about their diverse, global careers has been both reassuring and inspiring, offering a vivid sense of what it means to belong to this wider community; while much has changed over time, the character of KES remains remarkably consistent, sustained not only by those within the school but by the continued support and example set by Old Edwardians.

As my time at KES draws to a close, it is difficult to fully appreciate the impact that these past seven years have had. Serving as School Captain has provided opportunities extending

well beyond anything I had ever imagined at the outset. It has been a privilege to represent the school and witness first-hand the talent and enthusiasm that define this community. I leave with the conviction that KES is in an excellent position moving forward: ambitious and firmly grounded in its values.

For that, and for the countless experiences that have shaped my time here, I am immensely grateful.

With best wishes,

Mufaddal Kaderbhai  
School Captain



# Business Leaders & Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is no longer just a career path, it's a mindset, a way of approaching problems with creativity, resilience and ambition. At King Edward's School, we see those qualities reflected in the journeys of our alumni who have carved out their own ventures across diverse industries. In this edition, we are delighted to showcase three Old Edwardian business leaders, each demonstrating imagination, determination and adaptability. Their stories reveal not only the challenges, but also the excitement, risk-taking and personal growth that comes with stepping into the world of innovation.

Alongside their insights, we hear from Mr Watson, Head of Economics and Business, who explains how and why we cultivate entrepreneurial thinking within the school, ensuring that every pupil, whether or not they choose to found a business one day, learns to think independently, collaborate effectively and embrace opportunity.

## Mitul Modi (1993)

When I left King Edward's School back in 1993, I could never have imagined that my career would eventually take me from Birmingham to Dubai and ultimately to the United States, working at the intersection of healthcare, strategy, and leadership.

Today, I serve as Chief Strategy Officer for Healthcare at Korn Ferry, where our work goes far beyond recruitment. We help healthcare organisations build talent ecosystems that support leadership, workforce transformation, physician strategy, organisational culture, and ultimately better patient care.

A defining chapter of my career was moving to Dubai and helping build a healthcare talent business designed specifically for the Middle East. It was an entrepreneurial opportunity in a rapidly evolving healthcare landscape and taught me the importance of cultural understanding, adaptability, and building solutions that genuinely reflect the communities they serve.

My move to the United States brought a different perspective. American healthcare faces extraordinary challenges around workforce shortages, burnout, access, and affordability - but also extraordinary opportunities for innovation and transformation. What motivates me most is knowing that our work ultimately impacts patients and communities. Whether supporting leadership appointments, workforce redesign, or physician engagement, the objective is always larger than business alone: helping create a healthcare system that works better for everyone while advancing quality, equity, and access to care.

My own experiences have shaped that perspective profoundly. Going through my own cancer journey, healthcare stopped being an abstract industry and became deeply personal. It reinforced the importance of empathy, resilience, and supporting the people who dedicate their lives to caring for others.

Looking back, many of the foundations for my career were established at KES. The school fostered curiosity, confidence, communication, and independence of thought - skills that remain essential in leadership today. Equally important was the discipline the school demanded and the principles it instilled: integrity, accountability, perseverance, and the expectation to always strive for excellence. Those values have stayed with me throughout every stage of my career and continue to shape how I lead today.

Perhaps what makes this moment even more meaningful is that, almost 40 years after my own journey at KES began, history is repeating itself. My nephew will join the school this September. Watching him begin his own chapter at KES fills me with enormous pride and excitement for everything that lies ahead for him. It is a reminder of the enduring impact schools like KES can have across generations - shaping not only careers, but confidence, character, and possibility.

In a world changing faster than ever, I still believe the greatest competitive advantage is people, and helping individuals and organisations realise their potential remains the most rewarding part of what I do.

**'The school fostered curiosity, confidence, communication, and independence of thought - skills that remain essential in leadership today.'**



## Tom Marchant (1997)

One of the things I remember most vividly about my time at KES was the sense that there was a big world waiting beyond the school gates. I remember becoming increasingly fascinated by people, different cultures, ideas and experiences outside my immediate surroundings. The curiosity that was encouraged so well by the school was undoubtedly the earliest spark that eventually led me towards both travel and entrepreneurship.

What excited me about travel was never simply the idea of holidays. It was the idea that experiences could change how people felt. That seeing different parts of the world could shift perspective, build confidence, create connection and leave people fundamentally altered in some way. That belief ultimately became the foundation for Black Tomato, the luxury travel company I co-founded shortly after university and where I remain co-CEO today.

When we started the business over 20 years ago, luxury travel was still largely focused on

destinations, hotels and logistics. We felt there was an opportunity to build something more emotionally driven. To focus less on where people were going and more on why they were going and how they wanted to feel when they got there. That thinking shaped everything we built from there, from pioneering expeditions where travellers are dropped anonymously into remote locations with only survival training and coordinates to guide them, or creating deeply personalised family journeys all over the world.

Building a business over two decades has been both exhilarating and humbling. We started Black Tomato with very little beyond ambition, instinct and a willingness to work incredibly hard. Along the way there have been major highs, but also moments that tested us enormously, from the financial crisis through to Covid, which brought the travel industry to a complete standstill overnight.

Those experiences taught me some of the most important lessons about leadership. Stay calm during uncertainty. Communicate honestly and protect culture at all costs. And never lose sight of the original reason you started. I think my approach to leadership has evolved from believing leaders need to have all the answers,

to understanding that leadership is often more about creating belief and resilience in the people around you.

Today Black Tomato continues to evolve as the world changes around it. We are increasingly exploring how technology and AI can help create even more intelligent and personalised experiences, while still recognising that human connection remains at the heart of great travel. The challenge now is not simply helping people travel more, but helping them travel better and in ways that genuinely enrich their lives.

Looking back now, KES gave me so many things that proved invaluable in business but two things really stand out. Confidence in independent thinking and confidence in communication. Entrepreneurship is often about seeing opportunities others do not yet see and then convincing people to believe in them with you. Both of those skills were encouraged during my time at school by inspiring teachers who promoted the need to have an open mind and to always ask questions. Without those brilliant people I would not have been able to pursue my entrepreneurial dreams and I will forever remain hugely grateful for that.

Tom at Speech Day 2025



**'Looking back now, KES gave me so many things that proved invaluable in business but two things really stand out. Confidence in independent thinking and confidence in communication.'**

## Chris Atkin (1990)

I became a CEO by accident. That's probably not what you expect to read in a piece like this but it's the truth, and if you're staring down the barrel of your A Levels wondering what comes next, it might be the most useful thing I tell you.

My early inspiration was watching my father. As lead partner in a small accountancy firm, he worked with owner-managed businesses across many sectors in Birmingham - jewellers, manufacturers, printers - and seemed to play a meaningful role for them. I wanted that variety. What I didn't want, I discovered quickly, was a career defined by tax returns and bank manager meetings.

I joined a Big Four firm in London, qualified as a Chartered Accountant and recognised quickly that I was on a different path entirely. I was seeing inside large, complex, global businesses across many industries and this captured my interest. The qualification opened a door into consulting which opened another door to Sydney secondment - working on the 2000 Olympics. I said yes to that opportunity. And then the next one.

What followed was, on the surface, incoherent: a tech startup during the dot-com boom, a brand management role at Diageo, then CFO of Leo Burnett - an iconic global advertising agency. London, Sydney, back again. But looking back, the thread was always there: the intersection of technology, media and brand. It just wasn't that clear at the time.

The pivot I'd been working towards came when I stepped into my first CEO role at a listed business in Melbourne. General management - being accountable for the whole thing - was what I'd always wanted, even before I had the language for it.

The hardest test came during COVID. Leading a travel-tech business through two years of near-zero revenue taught me more about leadership than anything before it. We came out stronger and leaner but only because the people in the business chose to commit when they didn't have to. That's not something that happens by accident. You earn it.

Every challenge along the way - managing different generational expectations, navigating hybrid working, now trying to make sense of AI - has required the same thing: adaptation along with honest self-assessment. Always alongside a genuine belief that every business is, at its core, a people business.

That's what drives me. Creating environments where people do their best work, where the customer is genuinely at the centre and where doing the right thing isn't optional.

Much of that foundation was laid at KES. Mrs Cook in Economics and Mr Roden in Geography didn't just teach subjects - they connected ideas to the real world in a way that stuck. KES also taught me something less tangible but equally valuable: that standards matter, that leadership is learned not just inherited and that you're capable of more than you think.

The path rarely looks like the plan. Follow the opportunities and back yourself. Ultimately, pay attention to what genuinely interests you - that's the most reliable signal that you have.



## Graham Watson

Head of Economics  
& Business Management

Given the diverse career paths of the three Old Edwardians, what's perhaps most striking are the common themes articulated. That the leading school in "The City of a Thousand Trades" has produced successful entrepreneurs shouldn't be a surprise; it reflects the way a King Edward's education, not least in Economics and Business Management, imbues its pupils with integrity, curiosity, and the resilience to overcome challenges.

Currently, A Level Economics is thriving, with nearly one-third of the Sixth Form studying the subject. Additionally, alongside KEHS, we are launching The KE Enterprise Exchange, for Years 9 and 10, allowing our pupils to interact with entrepreneurs and develop their first commercial ventures.

For the KES community - irrespective of whether you work in the tech sector, global healthcare, hospitality or public service - individual teachers across the disciplines have helped forge certain habits that resonate for a lifetime, giving all three entrepreneurs the qualities that have enabled them to thrive.

At KES we want boys to develop a moral compass grounded in integrity, perseverance and a commitment to high standards. Consequently, the journeys of Chris, Mitul and Tom are marked by authentic leadership and a desire to do something purpose-driven rather than simply for financial gain, be it creating transformative travel experiences, improving patient outcomes or building organisations based on doing the right thing. In moments of crisis, we default to learned behaviours, reinforced throughout school life, to navigate beyond the inevitable setbacks we face.

All three reflect on how their time at the school developed certain key traits.

Curiosity and a sense of intellectual openness have provided a starting point for careers that have spanned continents and industries. They are inquisitive, want to ask questions and seek new and varied perspectives.

In an age where information is abundant, but insight is rare, they are independent thinkers, unprepared to take things at face value. Ultimately, business success depends upon seeing previously overlooked opportunities and having the conviction to act when others waver.

All are communicators able to clearly articulate ideas in persuading investors, leading teams and shaping organisational culture. At KES, we expect our boys to develop a quiet confidence in being able to express their views and bring others along with them. It is an essential part of our lived experience.

I hope that like Chris, Mitul and Tom, all KES pupils leave the school with the belief that they are capable of more than they initially imagined and a willingness to embrace risk. Whilst you'll always be a KES boy, where that takes you - both geographically and in terms of your career - is entirely up to you. But, as these stories attest, there's a good chance you'll make a success of it, whatever you choose to do.



**'At KES we want boys to develop a moral compass grounded in integrity, perseverance and a commitment to high standards.'**

# Archive *matters*

KES on New Street in 1936, pre-demolition



KES in the 1950s with the very dapper straw boaters



**A full programme of events, activities & opportunities for alumni to reconnect, reminisce, & contribute to the next quarter century of the KES story is on page five**

## The History of the King Edward VI Foundation

**For nearly five centuries, the King Edward VI Foundation has shaped the educational landscape of Birmingham - and at its heart stands King Edward's School, the Foundation's original and founding institution.**

**The story begins in 1392, when gifts of land were first donated to establish the Guild of the Holy Cross, a religious organisation that provided, alongside their regular holy duties, civic support to Birmingham's people. Over time, this early tradition of philanthropy evolved into what would eventually become the Foundation.**

The Foundation was formally established on January 2nd 1552, when Birmingham's parishioners successfully petitioned King Edward VI to return confiscated Gild lands following the Reformation. The King granted a Royal Charter for a 'free Grammer Schole' and restored income specifically for education, creating the legal and financial basis for what became King Edward's School, Birmingham (KES). From that moment, KES has been the originating school of the entire Foundation, the institution from which all that followed grew.

Throughout the next three centuries, as Birmingham transformed, becoming by 1791 'the first manufacturing town in the world', later known as the 'City of a Thousand Trades' and King Edward's School grew alongside it.

To reflect the city's rising national importance, the governors commissioned leading architects

Charles Barry and Augustus Pugin to design a grand new school building, which opened in 1839. This landmark development, created on the original New Street site of the Guild of the Holy Cross, signalled the Foundation's ambition and civic role.

In 1883, the governors made one of the most significant decisions since the School's foundation: the creation of six new King Edward VI schools, including King Edward VI High School for Girls (KEHS) and five grammar schools: Aston, Camp Hill Boys, Camp Hill Girls, Five Ways, and, later in 1911, Handsworth Girls.

Their aim was pioneering: to create an 'open path for every able child in Birmingham', guiding them from early schooling through grammar education to university. This commitment to academic excellence and social mobility has remained central to the Foundation's mission ever since.

During the 20th century, several Foundation schools relocated from their city centre origins: KES and KEHS moved from New Street to Edgbaston, Camp Hill Boys and Girls moved to King's Heath, and Five Ways moved to Bartley Green.

From 2011 onwards, the Foundation began to grow again, this time welcoming academies into its family: Sheldon Heath Academy (2011); Handsworth Grammar School for Boys (2017); Handsworth Wood Girls' Academy (2018); Balaam Wood Academy (2019); Northfield School for Girls (2021); Lordswood School for Girls (2022) and most recently King's Norton School for Boys (2024).

Today, the Foundation educates more than 11,000 pupils across Birmingham, which is around 1 in 10 of the city's secondary age children, making it one of the most significant educational charities in the region, it has a

Big School under construction



clear mission: to raise aspirations, widen access, and deliver outstanding education for Birmingham's young people.

The Chief Master & Principal of KES & KEHS, Kirsty von Malaisé, also serves as Headmaster of the Foundation, working with leaders across all schools to advance shared priorities of access, excellence, and collaboration.

As we move towards the 475th anniversary of our founding in 1552, every school in the Foundation will mark this extraordinary milestone in some way. At KES, the celebrations will be especially meaningful, honouring our origins as the School that sparked an educational movement, and celebrating generations of Old Edwardians who have shaped the Foundation's values through scholarship, leadership, service, and philanthropy.

See more: [www.kingedwardvi-kes-archives.org/](http://www.kingedwardvi-kes-archives.org/)

# Looking Ahead

We are delighted to have welcomed three new trustees to the KES Trust this year.

**Andrew Mendoza (1982)** read classics at Keble College, Oxford, before a career in strategy consulting that started with Bain and co and ended with OC&C Strategy Consultants via Andersen Consulting/Accenture. Since 2009 Andrew has worked primarily with early stage growth businesses in the digital space with a particular focus on learning, training and edtech. Andrew is Chairman of HubBox, an eCommerce enablement SW business and currently spends most of his time as Chief Strategy Officer of OxEd, an Oxford University spin-out that focuses on improving oral language for 4-7 year olds which leads to much better literacy outcomes.



**Ragi Singh (1994)** attended Cambridge University to read Law after King Edward's, whilst balancing a very successful cricketing career. He played first-class cricket from 1994 until 2006 but had already moved into law by 2000, initially as a tech lawyer with Gowling WLG LLP (then Wragge & Co). Ragi is now a Partner there, and co-leads their Corporate Team. He specialises in domestic and cross-border M&A and Private Equity and whilst M&A lead for Gowling WLG's advanced manufacturing team and Head of their Sports practice where he advises across multiple sectors.

Welcome to Andrew, Ragi and Srikar and thank you to all of our trustees for your support, guidance and drive to make a difference.

**Srikar Karri (2015)** left King Edward's to study Maths and Economics at LSE. He followed this with his first role with Mercia Ventures as an analyst working his way up to Investment Manager. He moved to YFM Equity Partners in June 2025. Srikar was on an Assisted Place himself and therefore brings first-hand experience to the board of the difference this can make.



## Our long-standing mission

As we reflect on the extraordinary legacy of generosity that has shaped King Edward's School for nearly 475 years, we also turn our attention to the future, to the next chapter of ambition and shared purpose. Philanthropy has always underpinned the remarkable education offered here, and thanks to our alumni, parents and friends, its impact today is greater than ever.

In the past year alone, philanthropic support has transformed the lives of countless pupils. Your gifts, whether to Assisted Places today, the Assisted Places endowment, campus improvements, co-curricular activities or academic enrichment, have enabled talented boys to flourish.

Every donation matters. Every legacy changes a life. Every gesture of support strengthens the school for future generations.

To all who have given this year: thank you. Your belief in the enduring values of scholarship, opportunity and service ensures that King Edward's School will continue to thrive.

## Our priorities in the next 25 years

As we look ahead to the next quarter century, a period that will define KES's future path and impact, our priorities are clear:

- Expanding access even further, so that ability, not background, determines opportunity.
- Continuing to build our Assisted Places Endowment, securing bursaries for generations to come.
- Investing in exceptional teaching and facilities, ensuring that KES remains one of the most inspiring environments in the country.
- Strengthening our connections with Old Edwardians across the world and celebrating achievements.
- Growing a legacy of community action, ensuring that the long philanthropic tradition that founded the school continues far into the future.

To realise these ambitions, the School will launch a major fundraising campaign during our anniversary cycle, a campaign that builds boldly on the foundations of the past, speaks to the needs of today, and prepares the school for tomorrow.

With your continued support, we will ensure that King Edward's School remains a place where talent is nurtured, horizons are widened, character is forged, a school in which every boy can fulfil his promise.

Thank you for your generosity, your loyalty, and your belief in the future of KES. Together, we will build a legacy worthy of the next generation.

'When I was at the School, most of us were there because we'd passed the exam and the local authority paid our fees - it didn't matter how much money our parents had. So a much wider range of boys from Birmingham and beyond could benefit from all that King Edward's had to offer. For a period, that wasn't the case, but the Assisted Places scheme is again giving many more people the chance to come to the School, both to benefit and to contribute to the breadth of community. I'm delighted to be able to donate, to help give others the chance which I had.'

**Andrew Hudson, Class of 1976**

## A Sustaining Community

It is not only financial support that transforms the KES experience. Every Old Edwardian, parent, or friend of the school, who gives their time, through talks, seminars, work placements, mentoring, or sharing career insights, helps to ensure our pupils are truly future ready. The Gazette highlights all the wonderful and diverse journeys our pupils take after leaving and they are inspired by the Old Edwardians that go before them. We are deeply grateful for all the ways in which you give back.

This year you can be part of the school-wide careers and networking day which is taking place on 25th June 2027. Every pupil will have the chance to take part in a dynamic workshop, seminar, or networking session, all carefully tailored to their age and stage.

If you are able to offer the pupils your expertise on this day, please use the QR code to sign up.



If you are interested in learning more about getting involved in any way, the Development Office is here to connect with you. We would be delighted to have a conversation, without obligation [oldeds@keschools.org.uk](mailto:oldeds@keschools.org.uk).

Together, we can continue the tradition of opportunity that has defined KES for nearly five centuries, and ensure that the brightest boys can thrive here for generations to come.

**Laura Salt**  
Development Director

# Our Global Network

## Old Edwardians

### Around the World

For generations, King Edward's School has nurtured young people who go on to make their mark far beyond the school gates. Today, over 8,000 Old Edwardians (though not all of whom we are in touch with unfortunately) are living and working across every corner of the globe. From medicine and engineering to the arts, academia, business, technology, sport and public service, Old Edwardians contribute their skills and expertise to an extraordinary breadth of fields.

Though paths and professions are varied, Old Edwardians remain connected through their time at school and the enduring bonds formed there.

As mentioned earlier in the magazine, in October 2025, Chief Master & Principal, Kirsty von Malaisé, together with Development Director, Laura Salt, travelled to Canada and the United States to meet Old Edwardians based overseas. The visit offered an invaluable opportunity to listen to alumni reflections, their journeys since leaving school, their perspectives on KES today, and the generosity they continue to show in supporting the school community. One particular highlight was introducing Old Edwardians to one another locally, often for the very first time, and helping to strengthen networks in the cities they now call home.

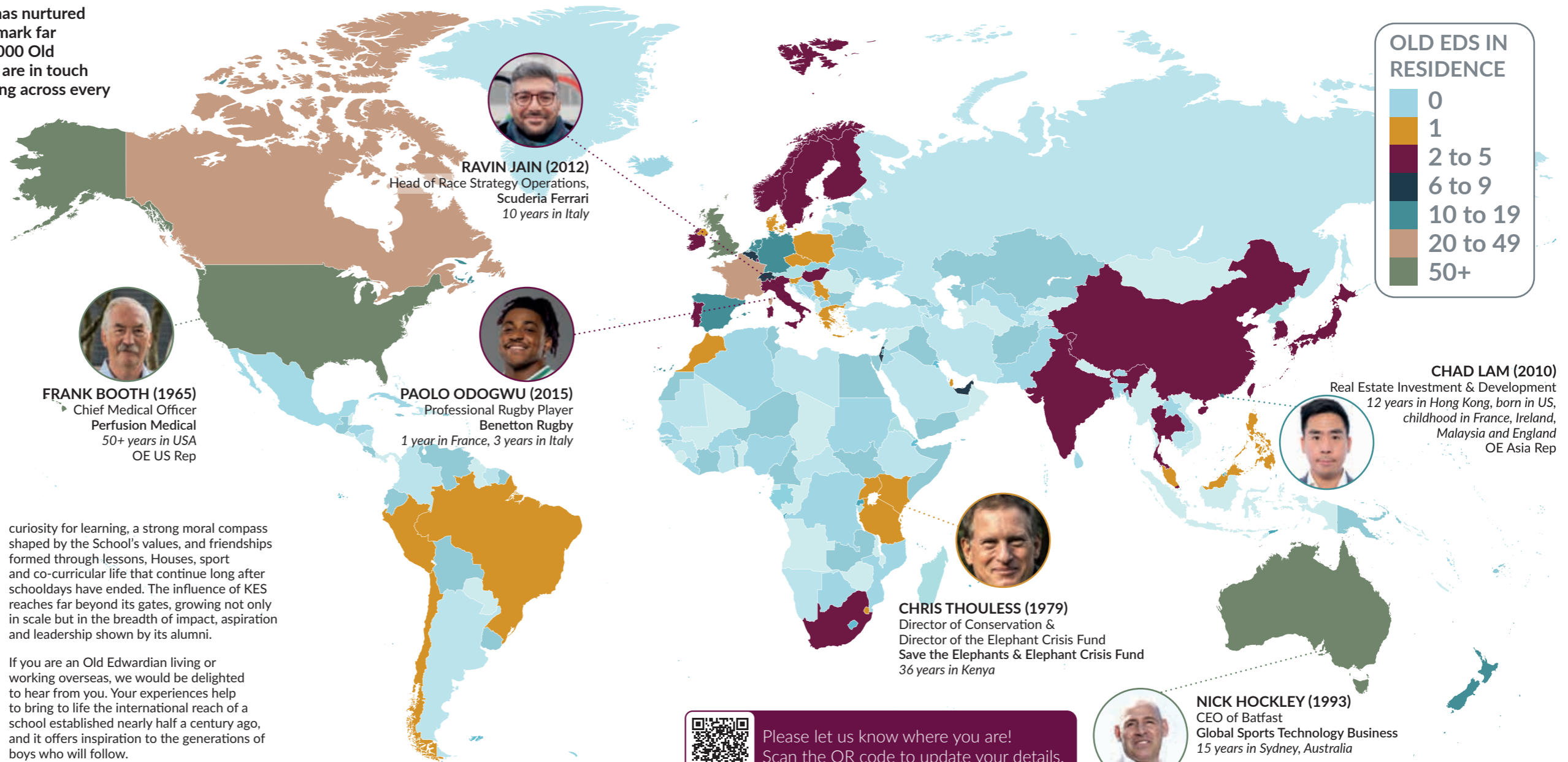
As we look ahead to our forthcoming anniversary year, we are keen to recognise and celebrate this remarkable international community, shining a light on the global reach of King Edward's School and the people who form it.

In this feature, we hear from Old Edwardians around the world, discovering how their journeys unfolded and where life has taken them since their shared beginning at KES.

No matter where life has taken them, Old Edwardians speak with remarkable consistency about the foundations laid at KES: an enduring

curiosity for learning, a strong moral compass shaped by the School's values, and friendships formed through lessons, Houses, sport and co-curricular life that continue long after schooldays have ended. The influence of KES reaches far beyond its gates, growing not only in scale but in the breadth of impact, aspiration and leadership shown by its alumni.

If you are an Old Edwardian living or working overseas, we would be delighted to hear from you. Your experiences help to bring to life the international reach of a school established nearly half a century ago, and it offers inspiration to the generations of boys who will follow.



Please let us know where you are!  
Scan the QR code to update your details.



**FRANK BOOTH (1965)**

I first came to the United States when still a medical student to do an elective rotation in neurology at the University of Maryland. Part of that facility was the Maryland Institute for Emergency Medicine (MIEMS) known universally as Shock Trauma. I already had an interest in that side of medicine having been stimulated by a talk given at KES by Mr William Gissane, one of the early leaders at the Birmingham Accident hospital (The first facility in the world devoted to trauma). At that time the Maryland Shock Trauma Unit was staffed almost exclusively by British doctors as American surgeons could not be persuaded to do trauma care (not a serious academic discipline and too poorly reimbursed!). They persuaded me that I should come and work there after qualification which is what I did!

I have enjoyed a very varied and interesting career, first in trauma and critical care as a surgical trainee, later on the faculty at Johns Hopkins and SUNY Buffalo. In recent years I've travelled the world working in drug development trying to refine and bring to approval treatments for the injured and critically ill.

I became more deeply involved with KES, inspired by former Chief Master John Claughton (1975). After a lively correspondence I became aware of how vital the assisted places scheme is. Having myself been an Assisted Places boy (albeit 100 percent assisted by the state in the direct grant era) I certainly felt an obligation to help repay for the enormous benefit I received from KES.

I didn't exactly apply for the job of US representative – it had been done informally for many years by another OE – Graham Kinsman (1959) – I think he was only too happy to let someone else step up. At any one time there are between 80 and 90 OEs in North America (that we know about). My main activity is to serve as an additional link for keeping in touch with the school and in assisting in any way I can, those who want to contribute to the assisted places scheme. Please reach out if you are not in touch [oldeds@keschools.org.uk](mailto:oldeds@keschools.org.uk).



**CHRIS THOULESS (1978)**

I moved overseas in 1986, after I had finished my PhD on Red Deer in the Hebrides. My first job was to reintroduce the Père David deer to China. Misunderstandings between institutions led to three months of confinement in a prison farm on the edge of the Yellow Sea, and this gave me a swift introduction to the complexity of international relations. After looking after the late King Khalid's gazelles in Saudi Arabia, I moved to Kenya in 1990 to study elephants.

My Kenyan girlfriend agreed to marry me if I would make Kenya my home. We have been based here ever since, although I have worked in many other countries in Africa and Asia, doing a variety of jobs, including studying lions and wildebeest in the Kalahari, supporting sustainable tourism and community conservation in Namibia, and rebuilding the National Museum in Nairobi. For the last 11 years I have worked for Save the Elephants, and I manage the Elephant Crisis Fund, which provides support for elephant conservation across Africa.

We raised our children in the house we built 25 years ago on the northern slopes of Mt Kenya. There is nowhere else I would rather be. We have near-perfect weather, beautiful views over the plains and mountains of north Kenya, and lions, elephants, rhinos and other wildlife visit the waterhole at the bottom of our garden.

Apart from my brother Michael, who lives in Michigan, and Andrew Balmford, who also works in conservation, I have not knowingly met any other Old Edwardians in the last 40 years. The rest of my family moved to the USA during my last year at King Edward's, as my father had been encouraged to leave Birmingham University, because of the perceived irrelevance of his work in theoretical physics (for which he later won a Nobel prize), and this broke my connection to Birmingham.

I am grateful to KES for giving me a first-class education that allowed me to go to Oxford and then Cambridge, providing a head-start for my career, and the Natural History Society gave me access to the wonderful Edgbaston Pool Nature Reserve, where my desire to become a naturalist was nurtured on Friday afternoons.



**NICK HOCKLEY (1993)**

I've lived in Sydney for around 15 years across two stints. I first moved to Australia in 2003 with PwC on a two-year secondment in their corporate finance team. It was during that time that I met my wife, Lauren, who is from Sydney. I then returned to the UK and spent six years working on the London 2012 Games, following which we moved back to Sydney and have been here since.

My first visit to Australia was actually with King Edward's. I captained the KES World Rugby Tour in 1993, where we played Sydney Boys High. It was an incredible trip and the biggest the school had undertaken at the time, thanks to Mr Gutteridge & Mr Phillips. I loved the place from the outset, particularly the sporting culture.

I've been fortunate to build a 20-year career in sport and am currently CEO of BatFast, a global sports technology business. Prior to this, I served as CEO of Cricket Australia from 2020 to 2025, leading the game through COVID,

major media rights agreements and a period of on-field success and before that as CEO of the ICC T20 World Cup in 2020, at which a record-breaking crowd of 86,174 attended the Women's Final at the MCG.

My career has taken me around the world, including ICC Cricket World Cups and the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. A highlight was returning to Edgbaston for the 2023 Ashes, catching up with Old Edwardians and watching the final day of the Test with my Mum.

What I love most about living in Australia is the combination of ambition and lifestyle. The sporting culture plays a powerful role in driving a high-performance and merit-based culture whilst also bringing together a young, multicultural society.

Living and working overseas requires adaptability; the ability to build relationships quickly and a level of cultural awareness. The community-minded nature of KES helped build that confidence early on.

For anyone considering a global career I would say be open to opportunities, back yourself in unfamiliar environments and invest in relationships. I've crossed paths with lots of Old Eds around the world which reflects the School's global reach.

Looking back, many of my strongest memories of KES are on the rugby field; learning how to lead, handle setbacks and be part of a team. Travelling on that 1993 tour certainly helped broaden my perspective and sparked a lifelong connection with Australia.

**CHAD LAM (2010)**

I am currently based in Hong Kong, where I have lived since 2014. My international journey began early: I was born in the United States and spent my childhood moving between France, Ireland, and Malaysia before settling in the UK at age 10. I joined King Edward's School, graduating with the Class of 2010, and later completed my undergraduate degree at a London university. As part of my studies, I undertook a placement year in Singapore with a French bank, which provided my first professional experience in Asia and helped shape the direction of my career.

My move to Hong Kong was influenced by both family and professional considerations. Following the passing of my grandfather, my mother wanted to be closer to her own mother, which brought our family to the city. Having grown up across multiple countries, the transition felt like a natural continuation of an international life. At the same time, Hong Kong's role as a global financial hub and gateway to Asia aligned closely with my professional interests, making it an ideal place to build my career.

I now work in a family office, where my role has developed significantly over time. I began with a focus on investment analysis and research across financial markets, building a strong foundation in evaluating opportunities and managing risk. More recently, my work has expanded into real estate investment and development, including hands-on involvement in projects such as a boutique hotel in Hong



*L-R is Chad, Isabella Cheung (2013), Kelly Lam (2011), Jackson Lam (2011) at a recent meet up in Hong Kong*

Kong and luxury residential properties in Tokyo. This progression has broadened my perspective from purely financial analysis to a more tangible, asset-driven approach.

Having lived and worked internationally, I have developed a strong sense of adaptability and cultural awareness, both of which shape how I approach decision-making and opportunity assessment.

For students considering a global career, I would encourage embracing uncertainty and remaining open to unconventional paths. International careers are rarely linear, but they often lead to the most rewarding outcomes. Building a global network early and stepping beyond familiar environments can be invaluable.

My time at KES was instrumental in shaping my outlook. It fostered intellectual curiosity, instilled rigorous critical thinking, and gave me the confidence to form and express independent views - qualities that continue to underpin my academic and professional journey. I also remain in touch with a few classmates, many of whom have become lifelong friends.

Chad is the our OE Asia, Hong Kong, Rep. If anyone would like to be connected with him and join their meet ups please contact the Development Office on:

[oldeds@keschools.org.uk](mailto:oldeds@keschools.org.uk) and we can connect you.



## RAVIN JAIN (2012)

I am currently based in Modena, Italy, where I have lived since 2016 after graduating from the University of Oxford. Living and working in the heart of Italy's 'Motor Valley' has been both professionally rewarding and personally enriching.

Although I never formally studied overseas, my first taste of working abroad came during a three-month summer internship at Scuderia Ferrari in 2015. That experience whetted my appetite for living and working internationally. After completing my degree at Oxford, I returned to Italy to take up a permanent role with Ferrari and have never looked back.

The opportunity to work at Scuderia Ferrari was the primary reason for my move. What began as an internship developed into a long-term career, allowing me to combine analytical problem-solving with a deep passion for Formula 1 at the highest level of the sport.

Since moving abroad, I have always worked at Ferrari. I began my career in the Mathematical Modelling group before transitioning to Race Strategy Operations. I started out as a factory-based strategist, gradually building experience before moving into a trackside role in 2021. In 2023, I was appointed Head of Race Strategy Operations. Today, my role takes me around the world, attending up to 24 races per year across five continents.

I love the city of Modena: it's beautiful, the weather is great, the food is incredible, and there is so much within a two to three hour drive: from the Alps and Dolomites to beaches to cities such as Venice, Milan and Florence. Italy truly is a treasure trove. Living abroad offers a brand new perspective on life; it forces you to learn new languages, meet different people and experience the world through a different lens. It is hugely enriching.

I wholeheartedly recommend taking opportunities to live abroad. Embrace the challenges, stay open to new cultures and people, and be willing to step outside your comfort zone. Living in another country can be tricky (Italian bureaucracy is certainly an adventure!) but you'll quickly discover if it's right for you when the positives outweigh the negatives.

I have crossed paths with several Old Eds during my travels, including reconnecting with school friends now based in the USA whilst I have been over there for work. KES gave me the confidence to grow and instilled the belief that no challenge is insurmountable.

## PAOLO ODOGWU (2015)

I first moved overseas in November 2022, living for 10 months in Paris, then for three years in Treviso, Italy.

I moved to Paris initially after my previous rugby team 'Wasps', in the English Premiership, went into administration during the season. At the time it was a very stressful period of uncertainty, as I felt so at home at the club, and with being based in Coventry, I was able to commute from Birmingham, which at the time was perfect.

Fortunately, I received various contract offers from different teams, some being in England, but I chose to move to Stade Français in Paris, as I saw it as a perfect opportunity to experience a new country. After finishing the season in Paris, I made the decision to move to Benetton Rugby in Treviso, Italy, having represented Italy in the Six Nations and then being selected for the World Cup 2023 for Italy. Having made that first tentative step to Paris, and loved the experience, I thought it would now be the perfect time to go to Italy to fully embrace the culture there and my Italian heritage.

The lifestyle and the beauty of Treviso, and the slower pace of life than in England made me appreciate it even more. Also the location! Living one hour from the Dolomite mountains and the beach, is amazing, and the scenery is incredible.

Learning to speak Italian and to be able to communicate with people who have grown up in different countries has expanded my view on the things I value from life. Leaving the relative bubble of living in England, as well as the experience of being out of your comfort zone and having to start from scratch with a local language, and a new environment.

My advice to any student considering a global career would be: immerse yourself in the culture and the language as quickly as possible, as the more you do that the less you'll feel like a foreigner or tourist and more like you belong.

It's been a pleasure to come across a few Old Eds on my travels whether they've been former coaches or fellow pupils.

I'm very grateful to KES for giving me the opportunity to start playing rugby, and the confidence on the field in such a sporting environment to pursue it further; fulfilling my potential to play professionally. Equally, my language studies at KES gave me the belief that I could learn 'on the go' and fully embrace my time abroad.



# Old Edwardians

## News in brief

### 1940s

#### Peter Coates (1947)

After a long association with the former African business of Unilever, which I joined as a graduate trainee in 1954, I was made redundant in 1980 - as a result of the progressive independence of the countries in Africa - and decided at the age of 50, to seek a new career in the field of education administration. After one unsuccessful interview at Harrow, I was appointed Bursar of Brighton College, where I spent 10 very happy years, before retiring in 1991.

My first wife and I were married for 60 years before she died following three to four years suffering from dementia. We had two sons who were both successful in their chosen fields.

I remarried five years later to a lovely Polish lady, and because she is much younger than me, her love and daily help and encouragement have kept me going for over 11 years.

I am a very happy man and hope to carry on for a little longer, if at all possible.

I often think of my happy times at KES and thought you might be interested in a potted account of my long & enjoyable life.



### 1950s

#### Robin Richardson (1955)

Robin has recently published an online archive about his career since 1960. He was a teacher in the 1960s; an author, adviser and inspector on various educational topics in the period 1970 - 1990; director of the Runnymede Trust think-tank on race relations and equality in 1990 - 1995, and a consultant on equality and diversity for various local authorities and government departments in the period 1995 - 2015.

The principal themes in his archive are law, peace, race, belief, development, schools and story-telling, and these are recalled and explored through a range of his personal moments, memories and memoirs since 1960. References to Birmingham include an address to senior officials at the City Council, tributes to individual authors, activists and projects in the West Midlands, several articles and blogposts relating to the Trojan Horse saga in the city's schools in 2014 - 15, and a eulogy in honour of an Old Edwardian, Alan Donaldson, a close friend of Robin's, who died in 2012.

Should you wish to have access to Robin's archive, please email: [oldeds@keschools.org](mailto:oldeds@keschools.org) and we will pass on your message to Robin.



#### David Harrison (1957)

After school I spent two years at the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and was commissioned into the Royal Artillery. My first posting was with a regiment in Germany, and in 1965 I became Adjutant of 277 (Argyll & Sutherland Highlanders) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery, Territorial Army. By then I had married Jane and was developing a strong interest in motor

sport, which led to competing in the Army Team in the 1966 RAC Rally - we won our class in a three-litre P5 Rover.

I next served with the Junior Leaders Regiment Royal Artillery in Nuneaton, during which I secured an entry in the London to Sydney Marathon: 10,000 miles in 10 days. I competed with fellow JLRRA officer Martin Proudlock in a works Ford Cortina Twin Cam, finishing 30th out of 100. With two children by then, I returned to Germany with 4th Field Regiment, but eventually decided I had seen the best of the Army and left.

I joined Birmingham-based Linread Ltd, where I spent 25 years, rising to Managing Director of one of the operating divisions. We lived in Edgbaston, from where I could actually see my old KES classrooms! Motor sport remained a passion, and Martin and I completed another London to Sydney Marathon in 1993 in a Ford Cortina Twin Cam.

In 1995, following a takeover, I found myself unemployed and so started a company with support from a German friend. It thrived, and I even found time to complete a third London to Sydney Marathon in 2004 - possibly the only person to have completed all three! I ran and grew Titgemeyer (UK), the new company until 2009, helped with a further acquisition in 2012, and finally retired in 2015.

We had moved to Bearley, near Stratford-on-Avon, in 1995. Very sadly, Jane died in August 2023, just three weeks before our 60th Wedding Anniversary. I remain in good health and active: planning trips in my 1955 MG ZA Mquette, and entering the 2024 Rallye de Fougères in May 2026, in one of my 1947 Rover tourers.

My grounding at KES and Sandhurst served me in very good stead!



## 1960s

**Tim Austin (1961) & Maurice Haseler (1961)**

For the past decade a group of OEs from the Classes of '61 and '62 have gathered for a springtime reunion to renew friendships and revive memories from more than 60 years ago. Those were the days of the fearsome Rev R G Lunt as Chief Master, of Common Room characters like V J Biggs, M A Porter, Bernard Guy, Willis Grant, P G D Robbins and the wonderful Tony Trott; of Saturday morning school; of caps (or boaters) being obligatory headwear out of school; of short trousers until the Upper Middles; of compulsory Latin; of no female teachers; and definitely no phones.

We have met, with our wives and partners, in hotels from the Cotswolds to Aldeburgh, from Dorset to Kidderminster, from Tewkesbury to north Somerset, for two or three days of eating and drinking, of enjoying excursions to gardens and steam railways and stately homes. Participants – including several members of the original Wanderers football team – have been Andy Packham, Ian Plenderleith, Tim Austin, Tom Shippey, Neville Tindale, Rod Pinner, Chris Jordan, Maurice Haseler, Peter Stinton, David Powis, David Webb, Roger Pritchett, Alan Loach and Geoff Taylor. Sadly, we have lost two key figures along the way, Jim Evans and Richard Greenhall, both greatly missed.

From 13th to 15th May this year, we met for probably the last time – just 14 of us left, including partners – at a hotel in Oxford. Illness and general decrepitude are taking their weary toll. But in the spirit of the school song, we never mind the cheers or hooting and continue – in Churchill's immortal phrase – to 'Keep Bugging On'.



Although the reunion was a great success, it was somewhat overshadowed by news of the death in Spain of Neville Tindale, a regular member of this group, during the night before we assembled. He will be greatly missed.

**Pat Ferns (1963)**

I have always loved hybrid forms: some of my best television and film productions mixed drama and documentary, married stage and screen, paired divergent talents, and above all, encouraged co-production between companies and countries. Mixing different elements inspires creativity. So, it is hardly surprising that my recently published book is itself a hybrid, combining my memoirs with a history of the industry in which I worked throughout my career.

The book is called *The Big Picture – A Personal History of Independent Television Production in Canada*. It includes an account of my time at KES and at Cambridge. Though I returned to the country of my birth, my formative years in England were my bedrock. Some of my best work was for BBC, Channel Four and various ITV companies.

Over the course of more than five decades, I watched as the dominance of large public and private broadcasters was overtaken by specialty channels enabled by cable and satellite technology, which was itself replaced and enhanced by a digital revolution. This has seen global streamers assert their dominance over the established players. But throughout this period of disruptive change, what remains at the heart of the industry are the creators, the storytellers who keep us informed, entertained and hopefully inspired. They shape our culture and make us who we really are.

**Alan Coustick (1966)**

Sixty years ago, King Edward's School had an ongoing link with St Mark's College, Mapanza in Zambia. I was the link from September 1966 to August 1967.

For those twelve months, my only communication with my parents was by a faithful, regular exchange of letters.

I was 17 when I arrived, and the legal coming-of-age was still 21, but once I started teaching, nobody believed my age, so it was not an issue! I was to be Form-Master of a Form 1 class; teach Maths to classes in Years 1, 2 & 3, and have additional duties including being an Assistant Housemaster, an Assistant Scout Leader, and Leader of the Chess Club.

Mapanza was founded as an Anglican Mission Station. St Mark's College had been a teacher training college but was now a Boys' Secondary School. It included a Church, a Hospital, a Homecraft Centre, and two Primary Schools.

I stayed in the bachelor quarters. There was no kitchen as all our meals were eaten at the Mission's common mess for the expatriate single members of staff – about six of us.

The school had a telephone but it was a shared party line which included the local police station. I requested only one call during my time there, though I had to wait over a day for my turn to be connected to the travel agency in Lusaka to finalise my journey home.

It proved to be a formative year in my life. I never managed to return to Zambia, but I was later posted as a VSO graduate teacher to Nigeria. As a Methodist minister, I requested an overseas appointment, expecting to return to Africa, but I was seconded for six years to the Methodist Church in the Caribbean. I draw on my life experience when I am asked to speak on behalf of the relief and development charity, Christian Aid.

I am deeply thankful for the privilege of going to Zambia and for my years at KES which had equipped me to do this, both through the School's academic teaching and through the opportunities to develop skills of leadership and self-reliance in the school's Scout Group.

**Clive Owen (1966)**

I enjoyed my time at KES. I represented the school at rugby, cricket, athletics and cross country and captained both the cross country and chess teams and won the School Chess Championship.

After poor A Level results I joined Price Waterhouse straight from school. Shortly afterwards my father's job moved North East to Darlington, and my articles were transferred to Peat Marwick Mitchell where I qualified as a chartered accountant. I was approached by a client and became regional finance officer at the National Bus Company.

At 29 I was appointed finance director at the West Riding Automobile Company in Wakefield with over 3,000 employees and a department of 250. Four years later my father died unexpectedly. My mother was ill, so I moved back to Darlington and became finance director of an engineering company.

I met my future wife, Margaret, the best thing that ever happened to me, and we married in 1980. We had three children, Ruth, Kenneth and Christopher. Tragically, Ruth was born with severe complications and died shortly afterwards. Then seven years ago, Christopher had a freak event which ended his life far too early. Kenneth gained his doctorate at Oxford and now heads the history department at Illinois University.

Margaret persuaded me to start my own chartered accountancy practice just over 40 years ago. It has grown beyond my wildest dreams. Now a top 100 practice with offices in Darlington, York, Durham, Middlesbrough and Newcastle. My varied job career proved invaluable.

I have played bridge for the England senior team and Christopher, played for England juniors. Together we won many county and national competitions.

I have chaired the North East Bridge Association, the English Bridge Union Youth Committee and my local rugby club and served as a governor for many years at Yarm School.

**Stephen Drinkwater (1967)**

I'm keeping busy. It has been 16 years since I retired from work with the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority, but I haven't let the grass grow under my feet!

I'm involved with the Friends of the Pembrokeshire Coast – an independent charity which acts as a Critical Friend or watchdog – to the Authority. (I was the FPC Chair from 2016-2023.) In addition to that, I'm helping to organise walks and events for the Pembrokeshire National Trust Association, which raises money for the NT locally.

I'm still helping to supervise camping expeditions for young people across the county for the Duke of Edinburgh's Award. (See Gazette 2023.)

Added to that, I work as a volunteer for part of every week in term time in a local primary school, mainly hearing children read. Then I participate regularly in Creative Writing workshops with two separate groups of adults.

I walk in the countryside frequently, as well as attending classes locally studying the Welsh language and also Painting and Drawing. Maybe that's enough for now – I need to draw breath.

**Richard Green (1968)**

Support for the annual Birmingham Hospice Treecycle campaign was very much in evidence from the Old Edwardians Golfing Society and Edwardians RFC, once again, in January 2026. Despite a heavy snowfall and hard frost creating the worst road conditions experienced in the 15 years of collecting used Christmas trees, we raised a record £165,000 for local Hospice care and took the cumulative total past £1million.

The benefits aren't just vital fundraising as the trees are chipped and recycled into biomass fuel for electricity generation, and the bulk collection eliminates thousands of individual trips to the tip, reducing congestion and vehicle emissions.

I particularly appreciate our use of the great facilities and hospitality at Streetsbrook Road – a feature of the collection weekend for many years

The campaign, which I have mentored since 2014, relies on over 300 volunteers every year, many of whom come back year after year and Birmingham Hospice is incredibly grateful for their support – together we make every moment matter.



## 1970s

**Mike Buckland (1972)**

Since retiring from a career in human and computer languages, I have devoted my time to family (three children, seven grandchildren, mother and brother in Birmingham) and to voluntary activities in the community of Wargrave, Berkshire, as a volunteer driver, librarian (helping to save our public library from the axe), local magazine editor, ambassador for NGOs that advocate ForB (freedom of religion or belief) and climate justice, Parish Church Council member, occasional preacher and nature conservationist (I manage a rewilded area and help on two others).

For relaxation I do puzzles, go walking with Angie my wife since 1982, and enjoy reunions with friends from Cherry Orchard School (1961 - 65), KES and Downing College, Cambridge (1973 - 77, MA 1980). I have also suffered the joys, and more recently the slings and arrows of supporting West Bromwich Albion since 1963, helping the campaign to save this historic club from administration in 2023 - 24!

Following the loss of one of our seven grandchildren to a brain tumour at the age of four in 2023, I am happy to be contacted by anyone who has struggles because of similar experiences. I may not have answers, but I do have a listening ear.



**Phil Alldridge (1974)**

In July 2025 I retired from Sikorsky Aircraft as a Lockheed Martin Engineering Fellow after 27 years with the company. This ends a 51-year career in designing and testing helicopters in three countries - England, Canada, and the United States.

I left King Edward's School in 1974 to begin my apprenticeship at Westland Helicopters while studying Engineering with French at Bath University.

When an opportunity arose in 1981 to work for Canadair in Montreal, Canada, I jumped at the chance, and after a brief foray into fixed wing aircraft, or 'planks' as I often refer to them, I was fortunate to return to the field of helicopter research and development working for IMP in Nova Scotia, Bell Helicopter in Texas and Montreal, then McDonald Douglas Helicopters in Mesa Arizona, before finally settling down with my wife and three children in Jupiter, Florida, home of the Sikorsky Development Flight Center.

I have flight tested helicopters all over the world and in all climates, and it has

been a most rewarding experience - and the last few years as an Engineering Fellow, mentoring the next generation of experimental flight test engineers has been an absolute joy.

Whether working on offshore oil aircraft in Norway, testing extreme cold temperatures in Alaska and the Northwest Territories, or testing to qualify helicopters in icing conditions across North America, I have loved every minute, and marvel at the path I have taken since being a 'Sherring' at KES. Fun times still lie ahead!



**John Hemming (1978)**

John, who was an MP from 2005 - 2015, returned to parliament in January to present his new business 'Hemming Biohacking' to the Science, Innovation and Technology Select Committee of the House of Commons.

Hemming Biohacking researches techniques to use small molecules (under 1 kDa) to modify gene expression and improve health and wellbeing.

He presented his hypothesis to the committee based upon the importance of acetylation of nuclear proteins which is the same hypothesis that he presented at a conference at Imperial College in November 2025.

To access John's presentation please go to YouTube and either search for his name or the title of the video below: 'Science Innovation and Technology Committee 20 01 26 Biohacking Presentation'.



**Guy Perry (1979)**

LOOKING FOR FORGOTTEN SPORTS HEROES!

As I study our archives online from my base in Kerala, please tell me if you have special memories of KES sports stars from the past who have perhaps slipped by in the sands of time. Robert Darlaston, for example, contacted me about his recollections of inspirational England international (and British and Irish Lions selectee) Peter Robbins - our Languages teacher - doing leg presses with his briefcase in class time! Ferd's son, Andrew Freeman was a champion swimmer. Do you remember him?! Or our other British Isles Lion, the great Peter Jackson.

Let's hear your stories, too, about your time at school. Memories burn bright, so let's capture your stories while we can. Email them to 'oldeds@keschools.org.uk'



**1980s**

**Nick Varley (1986)**

Nick was diagnosed with Motor Neurone Disease (MND) in November 2024 after beginning to have difficulty speaking.

'It can be very emotional because your voice is such a big part of you.' Nick is using artificial intelligence (AI) technology to communicate using his own pre-recorded voice.

The technology has been created by the MND Association and a California-based tech firm called 11Labs.

'It's amazing because when you get your diagnosis, part of you thinks - my life is over,' he said. 'And being able to still work, still talk, and still participate is amazing.'

MND affects nerves found in the brain and spinal cord, which tell your muscles what to do, which leads them to weaken and stiffen over time and usually affects how you walk, talk, eat and breathe. The 58-year-old said he felt, 'terrible shock and fear' after his diagnosis.

Since then, the former journalist has been involved in fundraising for charities connected to MND.

His participation in the 2025 Moonlight Walk by Hospice in the Weald, which had been caring for him since his diagnosis, raised more than £11,000. In December, he also took part in a charity run in Leeds, raising more than £10,000.



**1990s**

**Oliver Johnson (1992)**

Oliver was named in the inaugural cohort of 100 Fellows of the Academy of Mathematical Sciences. He is currently Head of the School of Mathematics at the University of Bristol, where he is Professor of Information Theory.



**Gareth Weetman (1995)**

Given that the conventional court attire of a barrister is a somewhat eccentric outfit, it's no surprise that the dress code for appointment as King's Counsel is a deeply eclectic mix. Buckled shoes, tights, breeches, waistcoat, frock coat, white gloves, elasticated frilly sleeves, frilly jabot (cravat), silk's gown, black rosette and, to literally top it off, a full-bottomed wig. Naturally my son found this all hilarious. There follows a ceremony at Westminster Hall (bowing to the Lord Chancellor and receiving one's 'Letters Patent') and another at the Royal Courts of Justice (bowing to the Lady Chief Justice and being called to the 'Inner Bar'), before a champagne reception back at my chambers, 7BR.

At the latter I reflected on the fact that if you'd told a 9-year-old me in a Shard End council estate that one day I'd be walking the streets of London dressed in tights and a long curly wig I might have been somewhat bemused. I will always be grateful to King Edward's for the excellent and happy start to this journey that it provided.



**David Saunders (1997)**

After 17 years as a curator in the Department of Antiquities at the J. Paul Getty Museum in Los Angeles, I am now Curator: Greek World at the British Museum.



**Tauseef Mehrali (1998)**

In October 2025 I was appointed VP of Regulatory Affairs at Flo Health, the world's leading femtech app used by over 70 million women globally. My remit is to build the regulatory function and bring a new portfolio of Software as Medical Devices to market across the EU, US, and UK.

Getting here has been an interesting journey! I left KES for Cambridge to read pre-clinical medicine, then came back to Birmingham for clinicals. I trained as a paediatrician first, then retrained as a GP, eventually becoming a GP Partner in London. I spent 15-odd years seeing patients, which I loved. But I kept being drawn to the question of scale. In clinic you can have a real impact on the people in front of you. In digital health, a well-built, properly regulated product can reach millions. That tension is what eventually pulled me out of full-time clinical work and into medtech.

I still do one NHS session a week. Old habits.

If any fellow Old Eds are early in their medical careers and wondering whether a move into medtech might be for them, I'd be delighted to have a chat.



# 2000s

## Tom Clarke-Forrest MBE (2003)

Congratulations to Old Edwardian, Tom Clarke-Forrest, who was recognised in the King's 2026 New Year's Honours for his outstanding services to young people. Inspired by his love of sport and the West Midlands, Tom founded Sport 4 Life UK in 2006 with no staff and no funding. Since then, he has grown it into the region's leading sport-for-employability charity, supporting more than 25,000 young people through sports sessions, accredited qualifications, mentoring, and employability workshops.

Tom commented 'I'm deeply honoured to be receiving an MBE in the 2026 New Year's Honours list. Recognition and awards were never the purpose behind Sport 4 Life UK, and there's certainly never been any expectation. Almost 20 years ago, S4L started with a simple idea: an unwavering belief in the power of sport and a passion for supporting young people. From that spark, we've been on an incredible journey culminating in over 25,000 young people meaningfully supported and £14m invested into the communities we serve. This award is as much for the incredible colleagues - past and present - who have shared our vision and given so much skill, energy and passion to the cause. To all the funders, partners, trustees, staff and young people who have backed our mission, believed in our work, and joined our movement - thank you.'

Tom also commented that his positive experience of sport at KES was fundamental in creating Sport 4 Life UK. He is keen to connect with Old Eds to share more about the work he does, as well as engage with anyone who is interested in getting involved. If you would like to find out more, we can connect you.



## Ian Sheldrake (2006)

Since leaving KES in 2006, I've spent the last decade living and working in the South of England (from 2014), completing specialist medical training in Anaesthesia and Intensive Care Medicine (amongst other things!). I've now started a full-time post with an Air Ambulance organisation in the Midlands - something I've worked towards for many years.

Outside of work, life is busy in the best possible way. My wife and I have three young children aged eight, six and four, so spare time is in short supply! Alongside medicine we also started a property investment company three years ago. We have managed several big developments, which has been a steep learning curve, but refreshing working with people outside of our usual professional circles.

I've often found myself coming back to King Edward's School's ethos, particularly the value of hard work and the resilience to keep going when things are challenging. It's been genuinely special to return to the region after a long time away. The Midlands feels both familiar and new, and it's a real privilege to contribute to local communities in a role that combines all the skills and knowledge I have worked hard to acquire over the years since leaving KES. No two days are the same, and I'm loving the challenge!



# 2010s

## In-chan Kim (2011)

I had a very sought after job at a prestigious consulting firm. For many, Bain & Company is a dream job. And it was mine, too. I remember how happy I was when I received my offer, and I remember my pride at my @bain.com email.

On 16 January 2026, I left to start my own company, 'Jungdam' - Curator of Korean artisanal products, to share the experience of Korea's craftsmanship and heritage. I've always been fiercely proud of my Korean heritage. I grew up in the UK when people thought Korea was in China and it seemed to me that Samsung and Hyundai were seen as laughing stocks.

Recently, it's been incredible to see the change in awareness and perception of Korea: K-Pop, K-Beauty, K-Food etc. It's been comical and complimentary seeing many restaurants and supermarkets take a slightly spicy, red sauce, and label it 'Korean-style'.

But I could only see the mass made products. We have so many artisans in Korea whose craft descends through generations. And yet, what is available outside Korea is the equivalent of, in my view, a bar of Cadbury's, i.e. it's popular, but not the finest. I want to shout about Korea's craftsmanship and heritage and share that experience. I want people to base their perception of Korea on the finest of Korea.

You can see more online at [jungdam.co.uk](http://jungdam.co.uk), and on our Instagram @jungdam.uk Ganjang (soy sauce) with 370 years of family legacy; Gochujang with seven generations of expertise, and Yakgwa (traditional Korean biscuits) made in the same tradition as were for the Kings and Queens of Joseon.

What I want to share is scarce in the UK. Don't miss out on a unique experience.



## Stephen Thatcher (2012)

My wife, Amanda, and I were delighted to welcome our daughter, Josephine, into our family in September 2025. We're currently living in Kennington, just outside Oxford, and are settling well into life as a family of three!



# 2020s

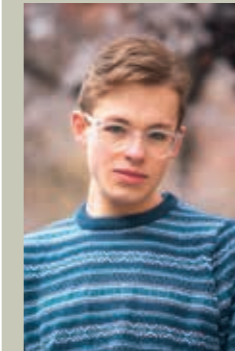
## Aabid Ali (2021)

I have been serving in the Royal Air Force since 2022 as an aircraft engineer. I am currently stationed at RAF Marham, working on the F-35 jet. I also served on the Prince Of Wales Aircraft Carrier on a detachment.

My photo shows me in my No 1 uniform collecting an award for 'The avionics technician who has achieved the highest overall marks whilst completing the aircraft engineering technician foundation training Avionics Course - DSAE Cosford'.



## Christopher Churcher (2022)



Christopher has recently released his debut album, *Moonrise*, on the Resonus Classics label, recorded with Somerville College Choir, Oxford. The album brings together choral music written during his undergraduate years at Oxford, including his choral cycle 'Pride Motets', composed for Somerville College's yearly LGBTQ+ Pride contemplations, alongside a wider programme of sacred and secular works.

The album was launched with a special contemplation in Somerville College Chapel on 10th May and has already received national attention, being selected as BBC Radio 3's Album of the Week on Essential Classics. Christopher's music, described as 'shimmering' (The Scotsman) has previously been performed and recorded by ensembles and artists including the BBC Singers, VOCES8, Anna Lapwood, and Southbank Sinfonia.

Christopher is currently completing his studies at Oxford and will join Genesis Sixteen, the young artists' programme of The Sixteen, later this year.

## Larry Havill (2025)

After leaving the South Field for South Side Chicago after seven years of rugby, I doubted that I would play the beautiful game ever again. Yet, four months later my rugby career has reached heights I could only dream of during my 2nd XV days.

The University of Chicago Men's Rugby Team was established in 1933 and plays in Division 2 in the Great Midwestern Conference. The team is roughly split between former American football players (easily identified by their unorthodox tackle technique) and international students.

I picked a good year to join as we went undefeated in the regular season, to top our conference. This led us to the playoffs - uncharted territory for the club. I mean that quite literally too, as we found ourselves driving eight hours to Springfield, Missouri via Route 66 for the quarter finals. A win booked us a place in the Final Four hosted at Houston's Major League Rugby stadium. We breezed through the semi but came up short against a strong Vermont side in the final.

Playing for the Maroons has been the unexpected highlight of my first year in Chicago and has immersed me in the culture of this great nation. I owe it to the KES Sports Department for equipping me with the attitude to continue playing across the pond.



# Former staff



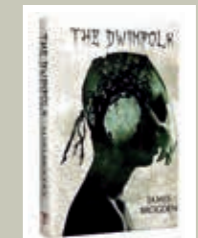
## David Ganderton (1964-74)

Since I last wrote to The Gazette, I have continued to enjoy retirement years in Manchester both as a JP and a Samaritan; but neither of these have been important compared to the death of my wife, Patricia (in October 2025). We were married for 57 years.

## James Brogden (2017-25)

James has been busy in the worlds of fantasy and science fiction. Last year he was one of five judges for the World Fantasy Awards; had a series of short stories published in Warhammer's monthly 'White Dwarf' magazine and is currently working on his first novel for them - an epic saga of dwarfs and orks set in the perilous lands of the Old World.

In the meantime his self-published folk horror novel 'The Strandling' has been picked up by French publisher Maison Pop to be the first in their new collection of horror titles, and most recently he is proud to announce the publication of his new novella 'The Dwimfolk' from PS Publishing. It is a darkly magical tale of supernatural forces hiding in a holloway near an isolated village. Both titles are available online.



## Deaths

Please see below a list of those Old Edwardians who have sadly passed away in the past year.

Stephen J Blood (1947)  
 Rodney Spencer (1947)  
 Clifford Reese (1948)  
 John Alexander (1950)  
 John D Goode (1950)  
 Max Harper (1950)  
 Richard Allan Tomlinson (1951)  
 Neil Gardner (1954)  
 Cecil 'David' Haynes (1954)  
 Anthony Ivor Rees (1954)  
 James A Stockwin (1954)  
 Graham Elliott (1955)  
 William Shrimpton (1958)  
 Michael Allport (1963)  
 Paul Quinton (1963)  
 Anthony Monk (1971)  
 Simon Vickers (1976)  
 James Martin (1979)  
 Simon Korsak Middleton (1992)  
 Benjamin Pesian (2018)

Former Staff:  
 Karl McIlwaine (1965 - 2000)

## The Laughland Family

The death in November 2025, of Pamela Norman (née Laughland), (Obituary: *KEHS Keynotes 2025-26*), was the last in the line of an eminent family of a sister and three brothers, all pupils of the King Edward's Schools - three having attended the original Charles Barry New Street building.

All came to represent everything that is best about boys and girls from our Schools. The siblings were:

Russell (1937)  
 RAF, DFC & Bar. British Airways pilot, Jumbo Jets.  
 Pamela (1941)  
 left in 1939, RAFVR, Speech Therapist, Magistrate, Founder Alcester Civic Society  
 John (1943)  
 left in 1941, RNVR killed in action 1944. (On Chapel War Memorial.)  
 Bruce (1949)  
 School Captain, K.C. Barrister, Old Bailey Judge

(Pictured are Pam, Russell and John on front row)



\*denotes those with additional tributes or eulogies within the Members' Area of the website. If you have not signed up to the Members' Area, you will need to create a log-in. Scan the QR code to log in or set up an account.

## Clifford Ray Reese (1948)



Ray was born in October 1930 in Welshpool, Wales.

His father sold advertising for the county newspaper and his mother owned a small tobacconist/sweet shop. Ray did well at school, gaining top marks in Wales for his 11-plus. After a year at Grammar school, an Uncle suggested that he try for a scholarship at a Private School. Ray attained the scholarship and was enormously proud to enrol at King Edward's School.

At King Edward's Ray began playing rugby and started his lifelong addiction to the game - always supporting Wales in the Six Nations.

Later, he attained a scholarship to St Johns College, Cambridge to study Physics/Natural Science. However, before going to Cambridge, he elected to do his National Service and joined the RAF where he trained in Radar.

In 1950, Ray started at Cambridge where he discovered rowing, going on to row in the Lady Margaret's Cup (his children still have his oar). On leaving Cambridge, he joined Standard Telephones and Cables, where he worked on radar and early aviation electronics. He also met his wife, Frances; they married in 1956 following a (typically for him) 'romantic' proposal in a garage. A marriage that was to last 65 years.

Ray and Frances had three children; Gavin, Lisa, and Rachel who all trained in law much to his chagrin, though he never stopped taking their free legal advice!

In the early 1960's, Ray joined a new company, Elliot Brothers, an avionics company in Kent. After a short stay in Sutton Valance, he purchased what was to be the family home for 45 years in Pluckley.

Ray worked at Elliot's for 40 years finishing his career as Assistant Managing Director. Ray's career involved many projects including Apache helicopters, Sky Hawk jets, and Concord. He travelled the world to China, Hong Kong, Russia, Japan, Australia Canada, USA, and all over Europe.

At weekends Ray was an active man, taking his children to rugby, flying and to rehearsals in the amateur dramatics' society!! He also somehow found time to acquire a clarinet and become a competent jazz musician.

On retiring from Elliotts (then called GEC Avionics), Ray and Frances travelled to France regularly and then further afield to: USA, South Africa, Antigua, Australia, and New Zealand. Ray continued to play his beloved rugby until he was 70 and continued flying, ending his flying career as a tug pilot at the local gliding club aged 80.

Ray continued to be busy until 85 when he developed a degenerative illness which he sadly succumbed to at 94; to the end he remained his optimistic self.

Ray passed away peacefully in October 2025; he is greatly missed by his children and grandchildren.

Rachel Reese (daughter)

## Professor Richard Allan Tomlinson FSA (1951)



Professor Richard Allan Tomlinson, distinguished British archaeologist and scholar of ancient Greece, passed away peacefully on 27th January 2026. Throughout his distinguished academic career, he made significant contributions to the study of classical archaeology and ancient Greek architecture.

Richard was born on 25th April 1932 in Leigh-on-Sea, Essex. Having survived being strafed by a German fighter plane in Upminster while with his younger sister, Richard's family moved to Birmingham in 1941 after their house had been hit by a German bomb. He joined King Edward's in 1943 where he was a keen member of the Scouts Group. He was awarded a scholarship to study the Classics Tripos at St John's College, Cambridge, where he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree.

Richard began his academic career in 1957 as an assistant in the Department of Greek at the University of Edinburgh. The following year, he joined the University of Birmingham, where he would spend nearly four decades. He was appointed Professor of Ancient History and Archaeology in 1971, a position he held until 1995. From 1988 - 1991, he served as Head of the School of Antiquity.

Beyond his own institution, Richard was deeply committed to advancing the study of Hellenic culture. He served as editor of the British School at Athens Annual from 1978 - 1991 and was Chairman of its Managing Committee from 1991 - 1995. He served as Director of the British School at Athens from 1995 - 1996. He continued his association with the institution as vice-president from 2001.

In recognition of his scholarly achievements, Richard was elected Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in January 1970. He also served as Chairman of the Birmingham Branch of The Victorian Society from 1975 - 1978.

In 1957, Richard married Heather Murphy, with whom he shared 52 years until she passed away in 2009. He leaves behind four children: three sons and a daughter.

Edward Tomlinson (1983) (son)

## Professor J A A (Arthur) Stockwin OBE (1954)



Arthur Stockwin, who died aged 90 on 7 January 2026, was born in Birmingham in 1935, the only child of Wilfred, a dentist and Edith, a paediatrician.

Following evacuation from Birmingham with his mother for two years to escape war-time bombing, Arthur attended Wylde Green College before entering King Edward's School, where he came to focus on Classics and History.

Arthur spent much of his compulsory military service on an intensive Russian language course before taking up a scholarship to Exeter College, Oxford, reading PPE and graduating in 1959. He married Audrey Wood in January 1960, and they moved to Canberra where he pursued doctoral research in international relations at the Australian National University (ANU). His interests soon shifted from Soviet foreign policy to Japan, a country that would become the focus of his life's work. From 1964 - 1981, Arthur worked as Lecturer,

Senior Lecturer and finally Reader at the Political Science Department of the ANU, where he taught Japanese politics and other politics-related courses.

Having become Australian citizens, and with four children, it was a huge decision when Arthur was offered a professorship at Oxford. Returning to the UK in 1982 he was appointed the founding professor and director of the Nissan Institute of Japanese Studies at St Antony's College, Oxford.

Over the next two decades he transformed the institute into a world-leading centre for the study of contemporary Japan. He embedded Japan firmly into undergraduate and graduate teaching, developed one of the largest doctoral programmes in the field, founded a weekly seminar series, and established the Nissan Institute/Routledge Japanese Studies publication series, which published more than 100 volumes under his stewardship. These initiatives created enduring networks linking British and Japanese scholars, institutions and ideas.

Arthur's role as a bridge between the two countries was formally recognised on both sides. He served as President of the British Association of Japanese Studies in 1994-95. In 2004 he was awarded the Order of the Rising Sun, Gold Rays with Neck Ribbon by the Emperor of Japan, for his contribution to promoting Japanese studies in the UK. Five years later he received an OBE for services to academic excellence and the promotion of UK-Japanese understanding.

After retirement from Oxford University in 2003, Arthur continued to research, translate and write books, including the 'Dictionary of the Modern Politics of Japan' (2003), 'Rethinking Japan' (2017), and 'Thirty-odd Feet Below Belgium: An Affair of Letters in the Great War' (2005). His memoir 'Towards Japan: A Personal Journey' was published in 2020.

The Oxford University obituary is accessible by scanning the QR code at the bottom of the page.

Kate Stockwin (daughter)



## Cecil 'David' Haynes (1954)



David was born on 5th May 1937 in Northfield, Birmingham, and passed away peacefully at home with his family on 21 August 2025, aged 88.

His earliest memories included spending the summer getting the harvest in with the Italian prisoners of war during WW2.

He also recalled 'One day playing at the front on a service road I was machine gunned by a German plane flying

very low, I could see the pilot's face, he had three runs'. He also recalled the bonfires to celebrate the end of WW2.

When asked what the most valuable thing was his parents taught him, he said it was probably patience with others, perseverance and the need to do one's best to get on and help the rest of the family, education and hard work through adversity. David had these qualities in spades, and he firmly believed in social mobility through education.

Having passed the 11-plus, David went to Five Ways School. He had been unwell on the day of the test for KES, but took the 12-plus, passed, and switched after one year. He told us he went from being the top of the class to the middle of the class at a school which had the brightest of Birmingham.

He spoke fondly of the opportunities at KES and said that he was proud to represent the school at rugby and athletics. His happiest memory of school was beating Rugby school at rugby!

He left school in 1953, started an apprenticeship in 1954 at the Rover company, graduating with a first from Aston University in Mechanical Engineering. His first job was at MIRA (the Motor Industry Research Association) just outside Nuneaton, where he focused on research on emissions and car engines. He moved to British Leyland as Chief Engineer, then to Jaguar as Head of Engine Development where he retired at age 65.

Cars and motor racing were a big part of David's life. He loved Formula 1 and many Sunday roasts were interrupted to watch the start of the race. Cars weren't just for watching though, he borrowed many interesting ones from work for trips out at the weekend.

David spoke fondly of his days at KES and the wonderful opportunity he had in attending. He believed fervently in the transformative and life-changing power of education. He loved rugby, cars, history and literature and walking in the Peak District with his wife Pam. He lived life with a curiosity, humour and a spark of adventure and we miss him enormously. David was married to Pam for 64 years. Together they had two children, Ian and Sarah, and five grandchildren whom he adored (Jess, Celia, Rupert, Eric and Zoe).

*Sarah (daughter)*

## Neil Gardner (1954)



If ever Wordsworth's words: 'Give me the boy and I will show you the man'; were true, these apply to Neil, who died in November, 2025.

At school, Neil, the boy, was always quietly industrious, never flashy, fun with a great sense of humour; effective as a team player and leader; being ultimately a CSM in the CCF Army section; school prefect and fly-half in the rugby XV.

Neil, the man, built on these attributes, taking an Electrical Engineering degree at Birmingham, (known to friends as 'George the Electrician'), then joining the General Electric Company under the demanding direction of Arnold Weinstock. He progressed rapidly in GEC Rectifiers Division, working in Stafford, Birmingham and South London. He continued playing rugby of some quality for the Old Edwardians and ultimately the Saracens in London. Subsequently he returned to the Midlands as Managing Director of Avery Scales.

Taking early retirement, he purchased a company making continuous stationery for computers. He boasted that he once stopped the manufacture of Rolls Royce cars, when he refused to deliver to their production site because they were late paying!

He was married to Elaine, a QE nurse, who he met at a Saturday night Union hop and is succeeded by two daughters, Jane and Elizabeth.

Neil was an active supporter of the KES Assisted Places scheme and always held the school fondly in his heart – as evidenced by the photograph taken at a 'Return-to School' event in 2021, with life-long school friend, Alf Manders.

*Alf Manders (1954)*

## Graham Elliott (1955)



Graham was born in Liverpool in 1937 then grew up in Birmingham, where he received a scholarship to King Edward's and attended there from 1949 to 1955. He did well academically and was good at gymnastics and Eton Fives. He did two years national service (RAF), working with radar and also learning Swedish from linguaphone records in his spare time. At Queens' College in Cambridge he gained a maths degree and a Certificate of Confident Knowledge in Swedish. He enjoyed college life and excelled at punting on the Cam.

After graduating Graham got a job with IBM in Sweden, where he lived for five years and where

he married Kerstin in 1963. In 1965 he was offered a job in a computer software firm in London, so they moved to England (Camberley) and later to St Albans where they remained. Two sons were born in 1965 and 1967.

In CAP (Computer Analysts and Programmers) Graham became Personnel Manager (HR) and a Director, but took early retirement in 1986, then working as a consultant and for Leadership Trust. He also trained and worked as a Teacher of The Alexander Technique.

In St Albans he joined Round Table and Rotary where he was Chairman of their International Committee and very instrumental in organising exchange visits with a Swedish Rotary club during 45 years. Being bilingual in Swedish helped! He also spoke some Hungarian and good French and German.

Graham loved reading; Dickens, Richmal Crompton (Just William), PG Wodehouse (a favourite), detective stories, French and Swedish literature in original languages, etc. He enjoyed listening to music e.g. Boheme, Gershwin, Berlin, Ella Fitzgerald, Scott Joplin. Films were another interest, the older the better.

Ambitious DIY did not daunt him and he was a brave man whether climbing a tall ladder to fix the guttering or do parachute or bungee jumps. He used to play squash and enjoyed golf. He was a very good skier and was a popular rep for the Ski Club of Great Britain for many years.

He supported many charities, was generous and interested in people, good at keeping in touch with friends and family, a wonderful husband and family man, an inspiration to his sons, daughter in law and six grandchildren.

Amazingly he survived three open heart surgeries over 30 years and died from heart failure on September 13, 2025.

*Kerstin Elliott (wife)*

## William Shrimpton (1958)



Bill Shrimpton started at KES in the Upper Middles, coming from KEGS Aston. He studied French, Spanish and English and having passed all his A Levels he left school in 1958 and started at The University of Birmingham to take a three-year course in commerce graduating in 1961.

While at university, he started playing for the Old

Edwardians quickly establishing himself as first choice scrum half for the 1st XV. He was a very courageous player famed for his dive pass. A great deal of his play was instinctive as his eyesight was not the best. Bill (and I) had the distinction of playing in the very last game at the County ground and the first game at Streetsbrook Road. That game was played against Moseley who had six internationals playing for them and the Old Eds had Peter Jackson, an English International and British Lion, playing for us. We lost narrowly 9-5. Bill continued to be the scrum half of choice until 1965 when his extensive travel for work meant he couldn't fully commit.

Bill was also a talented cricketer and played many times for the Old Edwardians and served as their president for a year.

After university Bill joined IBM as a graduate trainee. He quickly moved into management and had a number of major accounts. He resigned from IBM in 1969 and joined a data processing consultancy.

In 1972 he was headhunted by a company called Logica which grew very quickly over the following years. Bill spent a lot of those years on aeroplanes including several transatlantic journeys on Concorde.

In 1984 he was appointed Executive VP of Logica Inc in the USA based in New York. He was then asked in 1985 to move to Australia where he was appointed MD of Logica Pty. The next year he moved back to the USA and in 1986 was relocated to San Francisco to oversee a major project for them. In 1988 he was asked to return to New York but declined, as the California lifestyle was more to his liking, so he resigned his position and undertook consultancy work in the industry. He retired in 1991 aged 52.

Bill had lived in La Jolla, California, since then and kept himself busy by playing for a rugby team made up of old internationals from many countries but mainly South Africa. Not only did he carry on playing until he was in his late 70's, but he also organised all their overseas trips to numerous countries around the world including Brazil, Chile, Argentina, Cayman Islands, Australia, etc.

I feel lucky having been a friend of Bill's for over 70 years and he will be sorely missed by all his family, friends and associates.

*H J R (Spike) Stevens (1958) (close friend)*

## Mike Allport (1963)



Michael Clifford Allport (Sports) passed away in December 2025. He was a proud alumnus of the great King Edward's School in Birmingham. He loved his rugby and when he wasn't head down in Latin or History, he could be found staring longingly out of the classroom window over the rugby playing fields.

Mike secured a regular place as a King Edwards 1st XV centre, and the highlight of his school rugby career was when touring Northern Ireland, he scored the winning try against Belfast Methodist College, a team which included a couple of future British and Irish Lions.

Mike left King Edward's School in 1962 and went straight into employment, but as at school, rugby was foremost on his mind, and there was only one club he would join ... Old Edwardians FC.

Mike was a good player, but as his appearances for the 1st XV were limited due to the number of excellent centres at that time, he became a regular in the Extra 1st XV (equivalent to the 2nds today), who were playing most of the local 1st XV's.

Mike soon became involved with helping to run the club. Club fortunes are cyclical throughout the country, and I am assured that in the mid to late 80's when The Eds was going through a very difficult period, it was Mike who saved the Club from going under. It is no understatement to say that the club without Mike as President would have ceased to exist.

When Mike spoke at his 80th birthday party last year, he spent more time talking about KES and the 142-year-old rugby club than he did about himself. That was 'Sports'. A proud Edwardian, both of school and of Club. He remained President for eight years up to 1995.

When Mike took on the social side of the Club, his events and gatherings were legendary. New Year's Eve parties and the infamous Cocktail Club. He would always include any new crop of young players, members and partners, and I know that we've all benefitted from his warm welcome and cheerful bonhomie.

For many years, Sports sat on both the Rugby and Sports Club Committees and was also the Club's incumbent representative for the Old Edwardian Association.

Sports was a wonderfully loyal man with a heart of gold, who would staunchly defend the Club and its members. He would always uphold standards and always fight for what he believed to be right. He only ever wanted what was best for the Club.

Many, many messages received have talked about a true Edwardian Legend, the Club's finest stalwart, the ultimate club man.

Sports, thank you for your friendship, your advice, your encouragement and your support, from everyone at Edwardian FC who had the privilege to know you.

With our heartfelt condolences to Sue, Jan and family, Matthew, Edwardians, and rugby friends.

Brian Chappelhow (President, Edwardian FC)



To read Brian's full eulogy to Mike, please scan the QR code

## Simon Vickers (1976)



Those studying at King Edward's at the same time as Simon will remember him fondly. A no nonsense rugby player and core member of the 1st XV, Simon always made an impression wherever he went. The wide trousers, the platform shoes, curly hair, and House tie worn at half-mast with a large, defiant knot: a fashion of the day and carried with confidence. A larger-than-life character and well-regarded by those around him.

After leaving school, Simon channelled that same energy into building something that would last.

A career in property development saw him found Rectory Homes in 1995 which for over three decades grew into a business with a strong reputation for quality across the Home Counties. By the time of his passing in April 2026, he had built many hundreds of homes across the region, each one a testament to the vision he had pursued from the beginning. Rectory Homes continues to operate as a family-run business today, built on the standards he set, the structures he put in place and the people he brought along with him.

Rugby remained a constant thread throughout Simon's life. At Chinnor RFC, the local club he proudly captained in his prime, Simon's contribution went far beyond the pitch. Under his stewardship as CEO, Chinnor rose steadily through the national leagues, earning promotion to the Championship in 2024 and a journey that mirrored his approach to most things: determined, purposeful, and ultimately successful. The club's tribute to him as "the foundation upon which this club stands" spoke not only to his achievements with the first team, but to a deeper commitment to rugby as force for bringing people together.

That same instinct for community found wider expression through the Rectory Foundation, a charity he established alongside his business to support causes within the areas he lived and worked. The organisation lives on today, committed to giving back and guided by the same principles that shaped everything Simon did. He also gave quietly to King Edward's, supporting two boys through the school via Assisted Places, extending the opportunity that was once offered to him.

Simon's legacy lives on across the homes he built, the club he helped transform, and the lives he shaped along the way. He will be greatly missed by his wife Sarah, his children, and grandchildren.

*Family Member*

## James Martin (1979)



When Tom (Chair of the OEA) asked me to contribute an obituary to my brother James for this issue, he kindly said 'James was a truly great man, and he is sorely missed by everyone at the OEA'.

I am glad that others see him as I do. Growing up in a home that had witnessed its own setbacks, James was always the big brother you wanted: someone to look up to and to look out for you (OK, we fought like cat and dog, but he wouldn't let anyone else bully me!). Ours was always a happy home, thanks in large part to James.

Most readers will know James for his twenty years on the OEA Committee, with two stints as its Chair, and as Chair of the KES Trust. Many may not know that his love of KES and his adult life-long commitment to the school derived from just two sixth form years. Yet he put in heart and soul in that time: not just academically or as a Prefect, but as School Captain of both Squash and Tennis, two sports at which he excelled equally in both skill and grace (he was also no slouch with a hockey stick nor as occasional full back for the 2nd XV).

As OEA Chair, James gave great impetus to the Assisted Places Scheme, frequently driving across the Midlands to attend meetings (though, to be fair, as a committed bon-vivant, he normally managed to splice in a 'business' lunch or dinner along the way, and always tried to drop in on our mother in Sutton).

There are, as Tom testifies, abundant stories of James's heroics in OEGS colours. I like in particular that shared by Tim Ireland (1981), of James – nominally unavailable one year for the Cyril Gray tournament – standing in at the last moment, driving from Derbyshire to Surrey at crack of dawn, playing two rounds, formal dinner and a swift glass of red before driving the 150 miles home, barely in time to turn round for a breakfast business meeting. Such commitment to school, friends and good living is hard to match.

There was, though, a serious side to James, as a Chartered Accountant and Insolvency Practitioner – a bloody good one – though I sometimes doubt it was pure coincidence that he found himself excelling in a profession which provided ample opportunity for a good lunch or a golf day.

Here, too, he gave more than most: he was 19 years with PWC before building insolvency practices at other Midlands' consultancy firms, then setting up his own consultancy. He was regional head of R3, the professional body of the corporate recovery sector.

It was my sad honour to accompany James's son Nick in receiving the R3 President's award in James's name last Autumn, where he is remembered as a 'bastion of integrity', as well as for setting up an annual R3 golf tournament at Edgbaston GC, which now proudly carries his name.

And it was to his wife of 40 years, Clare, and to Nick and Nick's sister Sarah, whom we also tragically lost last year, and his grandson Charlie that James was wholly devoted. James and Clare's home was always a sanctuary of love and mutual support, which makes his loss the harder to bear.

I should like to remember my loving and loyal brother as a wonderful, caring and talented human being and to raise a glass, as the OEGS did at this year's Halford Hewitt:

'To James, a proud Edwardian'

*Simon Martin (1981) (brother)*



## Simon Korsak Middleton (1992)



Simon Korsak Middleton was a complete one-off, a free spirit, one of those people who are once met, never forgotten. I was lucky enough to know him for the majority of his life, having met on our day-before-day-one of school, in the Concert Hall as we were segregated into House groups, sitting together, nervously, in oversized blazers, plucking up the courage to speak, and quickly discovering a mutual love of Motown and Stax/Volt soul music that lasted a lifetime.

The Concert Hall was to provide the backdrop to one of our last acts at school, a winning House Music entry of Another Brick In The Wall, which we felt was a shockingly rebellious choice. Simon's passion for music was only topped by his love of travel and discovering new

places, especially by the sea, and a portion of his life was spent in South America where he would pitch up in a strange location and using his charm, boyish sense of fun, and his constant companion (his guitar) would have the locals eating out of his palm and offering him gigs and accommodation and who knows what else.

He lived for many years in the Canary Islands, having started his professional recording and performing career in 1999 in Tenerife, and the wonderful tribute concert organised by his excellent former band was testament to the huge amount of love and fandom that he inspired wherever he laid his hat. His favourite pastime was the regular jam session at his bar-restaurant in El Medano, where he loved to play with anyone and everyone, his ecstatic smile lighting up the stage.

His last year was spent in Bahrain, reconnecting with family and recording once more – if you watch the YouTube video of him playing an original song Thanks To Love you will see the best of him: spontaneous, focused, generous, joyful, a truly gifted singer, songwriter, and bandleader. It's wonderful to watch the seasoned professionals he is playing with respond in the moment.

Our last conversation took place soon after, and he was feeling blessed and truly content. One last music-related anecdote will suffice to sum him up: my surprise 40th birthday party was organised to take place for some reason in a very rural backwater of Devon. Notwithstanding the terrible travel requirements, Simon flew in from distant parts and proceeded to gift me his precious handmade guitar, saying "This Taylor belongs to a Taylor". We laughed and drank and sang – and then he cadged his return air fare off me!

*Laurence Taylor (1992)*

## Benjamin Pesian (2018)



In the summer of 2025, a fine young man left the world's stage. Benjamin's family and friends lost a truly amazing person whose intellect stretched far beyond his years.

A musician, a connoisseur of books and films, a thoughtful listener, a generous friend, a formidable chess player, a true artist.

An independent thinker with a clear sense of right and wrong, never anywhere without a sketch book, rarely without listening to an eclectic range of music, expressing his witty love of words and narrative in multiple languages.

A quiet force, a gentle dreamer, steady optimist, always carrying a disarming honesty and kindness. He touched people to the core and saw straight into their souls.

During the time at KES, Ben played the clarinet and the piano, he sang in the KES Choir and the Choral Society. Memories of parents' pride and joy shine through the years; never forgotten the sweet treble voice in Camina Burana, never forgotten the happy bass of a grown-up singer in his element.

Ben travelled far and wide on the school's holiday tours, he loved playing hockey and table tennis, actually, all games. He sailed, of course, the Optimist, in UK Nationals and international championships in Germany and Slovenia.

He loved Birmingham and the world. He loved people and people loved him. He loved life, his friends and his family.

He leaves an unfillable gap.

On 31st July 2026, Birmingham City University will award him the BA Hons degree in Architecture.

Ben would have liked that - a lot!

*Beate and Sia Pesian (Parents)*

## Karl Mcllwaine Former Staff (1965-2000)



Karl Mcllwaine, a devoted husband, father, grandfather, teacher and man of faith, died peacefully on 7 October 2025 at Field House Care Home, where he had lived happily for around eighteen months.

Born on 4 April 1940 in Lurgan, County Armagh, to Joseph and Annie Mcllwaine, Karl was educated at Lurgan College before studying Physics at Queen's University Belfast. He later completed a Master's degree at the University of Birmingham and gained a Postgraduate Certificate in Education,

achieving a distinction. Education mattered deeply to him and this shaped both his career and his life.

Karl did his teaching practice at King Edward's School and, walking down the drive on his first day, is reported to have said, "Well, this is me fixed until I retire". Characteristically, he was right. He spent his entire career at the school, retiring in August 2000 after thirtyfive years' service.

As a Physics teacher, Karl was known for his care and diligence. He believed in doing things properly and in embracing new methods and technologies, such as computer simulations, as they emerged. Beyond the classroom, he was a Form Tutor, House Master and later the first Head of Middle School. He led the King Edward's Sea Scouts for many years, taking students sailing twice a week, and organising memorable sailing trips, first to Cowes and later to the south of France.

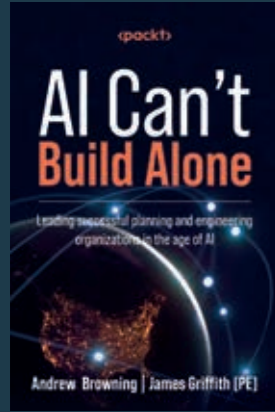
Karl and his dear wife Gill were married in 1967. Their partnership lasted almost sixty years until her death in 2023 and was marked by deep affection and a shared purpose. They raised two sons, Nigel and Andrew (1988), and were proud grandparents to Joshua and Jacob, Karl taking pleasure in coaching Joshua for his Science GCSE. Faith was central to Karl's life. A committed member of St John's Church, Harborne, for over sixty years, he served in many roles, including as a member of the choir and as Church Warden. Together with his wife Gill, he welcomed and supported others, including numbers of international students, and, in retirement, volunteered at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

Despite twin diagnoses of dementia and bowel cancer, Karl wasn't in pain and, though his memory was certainly failing, the essence of the man remained - a great comfort to his family.

Karl is survived by his sons, daughter in law, and grandsons and is remembered with love and affection.

*Nigel and Andrew (sons)*

# Old Edwardian Publications



Andrew Browning (2008)  
James Griffith (2010)  
*AI Can't Build Alone*  
Packt Publishing



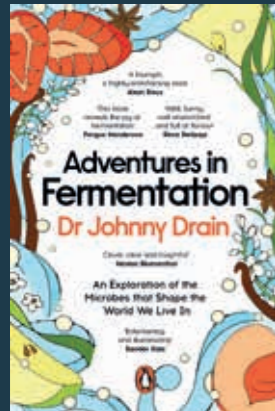
Tim Franks (1986)  
*The Lines We Draw*  
Bloomsbury



Paul Mitchell (1990)  
*Gaskell and the Law*  
Hart Publishing (Bloomsbury)



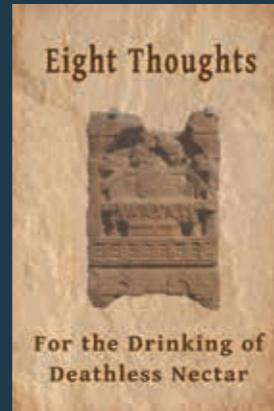
Hugh Houghton (1994)  
*A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*  
Stuttgart:Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft



Dr Johnny Drain (2001)  
*Adventures in Fermentation*  
Penguin Life



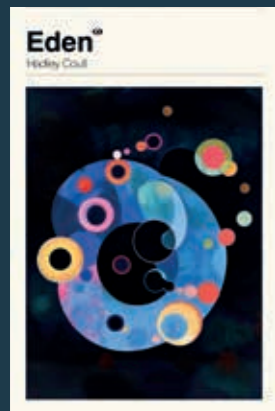
Edited by Paul Cockerham (1975) & Christian Steer  
*Tomb Monuments in Medieval Europe*  
Shaun Tyas



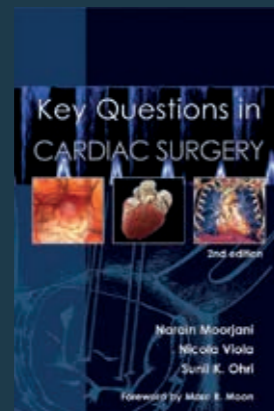
Mike Cross (1977)  
*Eight Thoughts for the Drinking of Deathless Nectar*  
Windbell Publications



Christopher Hodges (1972)  
*Regulation That Works: Transforming the Future of Regulatory Spaces*  
Hart



Hadley Coull (1995)  
*Eden*  
Late Night Books



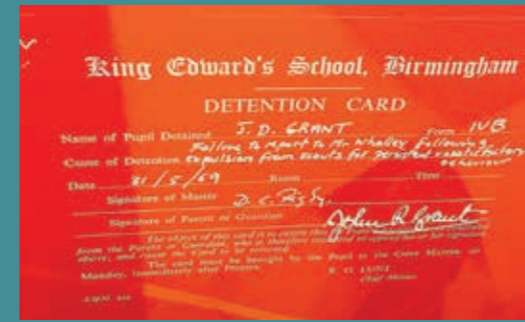
Narain Moorjani (1989)  
*Key Questions in Cardiac Surgery*  
TFM Publishing Ltd



Garry Martin (Former Staff 1976-81)  
*Spindrift*  
Colley Books Ltd



Richard Harris (1970)  
*The Rise of the Neighbourhood in Canada, 1880s-2020s*  
University of Toronto Press



## Jim Grant (1973)

On 4 November 2025, a new exhibition celebrating Old Edwardian Jim Grant (1973) opened at Grand Central.

Known to most as Lee Child, he is one of our most distinguished alumni. The exhibition, *Creating Reacher*, offered fans an exclusive insight into the mind of one of the world's best-selling authors, showcasing material from his personal collection and the Lee Child Archive.

Jim said of the exhibition: 'I had a great time growing up in Birmingham, and I still love the place, so it's a thrill and an honour that Birmingham remembers me.'

Highlights included handwritten drafts, private photographs and even report cards from his time at KES.

He added, 'I'm back in the UK now, as a political refugee after nearly thirty years in America, and I'm trying to be retired, but not really succeeding - I'm doing a lot of library support around the country, and I've been running literacy support in prisons - in fact the government made me the Prison Reading Laureate for 2026. So I'm still pretty busy. One day, maybe.'

Coinciding with the exhibition's opening, his 30th novel, *Exit Strategy*, was launched - making it a true Birmingham homecoming for him. Jim also spent the day signing books, including a copy for Laura Salt, our Development Director.

**STOP PRESS:** Jim is returning to King Edward's next year to give the Tolkien Lecture as part of our 475 celebration! Save the date: 20th April 2027.



"I had a great time growing up in Birmingham, and I still love the place, so it's a thrill and an honour that Birmingham remembers me."



475

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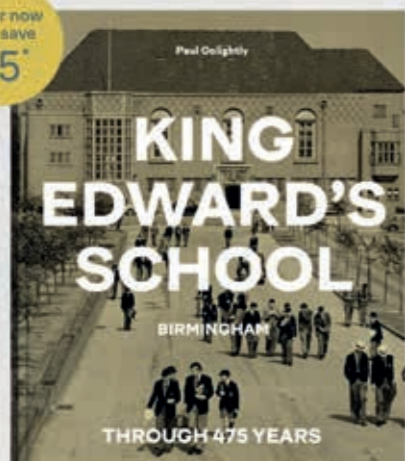
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Work is underway to create a special 'Treasures' book that brings together the traditions, places, people and everyday moments that make King Edward's School distinctive. Thank you to all the Old Edwardians who have contributed to the book so far, or who are in the midst of writing their pieces!

From co-curricular life and cherished rituals to iconic spaces, objects and a brief history from 1552, this beautifully-illustrated book due to be published in summer 2027 will capture what makes King Edward's special, resonating across the school community.

You are invited to become a subscriber of this beautiful volume and be acknowledged as such in its final pages.

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