

# Alfredians



A newsletter for Old Alfredians

Autumn 2022

## Class of 2012 Reunion



Class of 2012 celebrate on the field



Emma Altmann Richer, Ali Poncia, Jackson Paul & Claire Murphy

As part of the KAS Reunion day we welcomed back leavers from 2012 who are now making their way in the world in fields such as academia, film, and machine learning. Despite many OAs from this year group meeting up regularly it was a special occasion to mark having left KAS a decade ago. The friends explored the grounds and even made some impromptu performances with songs they'd written as pupils at KAS. Special guests included Edo, Laszlo and Rita and the afternoon continued into the evening at the Bull and Bush.

Lottie Michaels wrote "Thank you so much to you and the team for organising the reunion, it was so good to come back and celebrate the amazing time we had at KAS. Tying the 10 year reunion with the celebration of KAS music was particularly relevant for our year as this was a big part of so many of our years' school experience."

*Continued overleaf...*





Max Lom Bar, Conor Geoghegan & Lucas Stockman



The Class of 2012 with Jeff Harlow, Edo Skender, Hannah Land & Rita Murray



Nina Fine, Jake Elwes and Coral Meades



Nicholas Ttofis and Mia Rose



Jake Elwes, Nina Fine & Felicity Fine



Claire Murphy, Adil Zulkahari & Natalie Davidson



Dan Parker & Julian Morrall



Class of 2012 gather outside Main Hall



Lottie Michael & Nina Fine



Raphael Marshall Naef & Rita Murray



Old Alfredians enjoy the impromptu musical performances



Raphael Marshall Naef, Edo, Dan Parker & Lucas Stockman



# KAS Reunions and Events

## A Day for Dawn

On a beautiful sunny afternoon in May we all gathered to honour and celebrate the life of Dawn Moore, whose impact as Head of KAS is a great legacy to the school. The generations of Old Alfredians, former and current staff, past and present parents and Dawn's family remembered a warm, bright and compassionate woman and shared stories of the influence she had on their lives and our school. A beautiful magnolia tree has been planted next to Squirrel Hall whilst a bench in Dawn's memory is situated on the edge of the field giving views across Manor Wood.

*"Congratulations on Dawn's memorial day. I thought it went off beautifully."*

**Christine Prowse**

*"Dear Tamlyn,*

*I just wanted to write and thank you, Heather and the rest of your team for organising such a wonderful tribute to our beautiful Dawn. I know you did not meet her but I am sure you will have sensed a feeling on Saturday as to how special she was. Goodness knows what she ever saw in me!! It was such an emotional day for us all. Dawn's folks and the girls were so pleased at the turnout and for the respect, love and care that was shown to Dawn.*

*Thank you again for organising and coordinating everything. I am very grateful.*

*I hope to see you again perhaps at a 'jolly' King Alfred's event soon?*

*Best wishes, Keith x"*

**Keith Moore**

*"Dear Tamlyn and Heather*

*I just wanted to thank you both for organising such a lovely event in Dawn's honour on Saturday. It was a pleasure to be there and hear all the wonderful tributes, recognising her time here at the school. It was also great to see so many familiar faces from the past.*

*The food was delicious, and I loved the display of the photographs and pieces from Dawn's leaving book. Very well done and thank you, Linda"*

**Linda Fraser**

*"It was such a moving event and it was so lovely seeing so many old students there"*

**Sandrine Rodrigues**



*This beautiful portrait was a gift from our President, Kara Conti*



*Eliza Wormell, Esther Sebag - Montefiore, Emma Milburn, Fiona Parsons & Holly Moore*







Guests gather on the field for the unveiling of a memorial bench and magnolia tree for Dawn



Juliette Fardon and Alan Dinham



Lucy Isaacs, Elena Neokleous, Thea Sharrok & Kelly Panayiotou



Jess Doll, Nina Milburn & Georgia Hales



Arnab Banerjee, Kate & Kuldip Malhotra



Dawn's parents and uncle



Brooke Diamond, Marcia Diamond & Lara Diamond - Gilbert



Evi Symeou, Noah Schneiderman, Oliver Zamek, Miki Arenson



Keith Moore, Holly Moore and Ruaridh McLaren Webster





*Mila Lewis, Ed Dowling, Katie Flintham-Taylor, Talia Rack & Kristy Moore*



*Meg Burchnall & Oliver Kazadi*



*Rita Murray and Keith Moore*



*Sebastian Cody & Stephen de Brett*



*Lindy, Paul Fishman & Alex Price*



*Jill Salmon & Elena Tsirpis née Neokleous*



*Jessica Leeney and Isobel Zamek*



*Linda Fraser & Jemima Fairweather*



*Lisbet Davies & Lorraine Kent*



*Stephen Morrall, Lucy Hall, Lucy's husband Kollyn, Meg Burchnall & Christine Prowse*



## Class of 1952 Reunion

Our Old Alfredians from the class of 1952 joined us for afternoon tea in May, some returning to KAS for the first time in 70 years! After catching up in the Bull and Bush beforehand, our walk around the school grounds brought back special memories of the amphitheatre, playing tennis, hockey and cricket, and Maths lessons. It is clear that whilst much has changed at Manor Wood, there is a great deal that remains the same: secret camps, the trees, the swings, the Tree House, lessons in the Old Library, Choice, and the joy of playing on our school grounds long after the school day has finished.



The class of 1952 explore the KAS grounds. Peter Seglow, Penelope Rowlett, Donald Neal and Geoff (Hugo) Bulbulian



Old Alfredians enjoy tea in the Old Library



Much fun was had trying to find each other in the school photos

Dear Tamlyn

Thank you so very much. The school has changed in physical structure so very much, it was astonishing, and sometimes seemed sad, but the atmosphere was just wonderful. The multitude of people, who looked so different from each other, all busy and enjoying themselves, doing all sorts of different activities, and so full of energy and fun. I think if anything it was even better than when we were there, 70 years ago. Absolutely wonderful. A great afternoon for us all. And memorable.

Thanks again.

Penelope

## Honorary Members Afternoon Tea

Since our last newsletter, we have met twice with our Honorary Members by zoom, in late March and mid July, and are looking forward to meeting in person, once again, this term.



## KAS Reunion day

The KAS Reunion day brings together Old Alfredians, former staff and current staff to reconnect and reminisce in the relaxed space of Manor Wood. This year, we had a spotlight on music to mark the respective 27th and 30th anniversaries of Richard's [violin] and Hannah's [flute] time at KAS.

In the crisp autumn sunshine we were treated to performances by Old Alfredians, and in true KAS spirit, spontaneous music-making by those who were there on the day. The power of music to create shared experiences and bring people together is always moving and it was powerful to see it span across the King Alfred generations.



Jeff Harlow, Edo Skender, Laszlo & Paul Fisherman



Alicia Ericsson & Archie Wingate



Samantha and Francesca Tigner-Orchudesch & Isobel Hughes



Lorraine Kent and Poppy Williams



Hannah Lang, Juliette Fardon, Lorraine Kent and Edo Skender



Peter Ross (was Shack), Angela Davis and Gillian Sonin



Guests greet and gather outside the Main Hall



Oliver Hart & Alice Biddulph



Hannah Lang, Juliette Fardon and Peter Hewitt



Rose Hutala performed her own song at the reunion



Isobel Hughes & Alicia Ericsson



Zak Ahad, Sumaira and two month old Zain



Alice Biddulph on cello and Richard Wade on piano play for guests



## KAS**tonbury**

This year finally saw the return of KAS**tonbury** after a two year hiatus and it didn't disappoint. The event kicked off on the Friday afternoon with performances by Lower School pupils under the trees on the field as parents and teachers gather around to listen. Then on Saturday 2nd July we hosted an OA reunion as part of the main event. OAs were able to enjoy all KAS**tonbury** has to offer and soak in the atmosphere whilst catching up with friends in the Sixth Form Centre. We welcomed visits from **Felix Moore (OA 1952)** who was visiting **Anthea Goldsmith** from his home in Bath as well as some of our younger OA cohort. **Alana Phillips (OA 1998)** popped in to say hello whilst visiting KAS with her family.



*Kara Conti, Felix Moore & Anthea Goldsmith*



*Alana Phillips*



*John Williams, Peter Keeble, Ralph Erle & Daniel Miller*



*Jalal Ashraf, Peter Keeble, John Williams, Oliver Hart & Mark Roberts*



*Ori Marash, Georgina Cooper Friedlos & Jamie Toeg*





## [www.kasconnected.com](http://www.kasconnected.com) CHECK OUT OUR OLD ALFREDIAN PORTAL

**KAS Connected** allows you to reconnect with Old Alfredians and use the trusted King Alfred School community to expand your professional network.



### CONNECT

Find and engage with fellow Old Alfredians



### GIVE BACK

Introduce, employ and offer to act as a mentor to our graduating students.



### EXPAND

Leverage your professional network to get introduced to people you should know!



### ADVANCE

Advance your career through inside connections working in top companies and access to exclusive resources.



### FIND JOBS

Post openings and find job leads



### CONNECT NOW!

[www.kasconnected.com](http://www.kasconnected.com)

## Launching this term!

Keep a close eye on your emails for the links to register and start connecting directly with Old Alfredians.



# News from Old Alfredians

## Welcome to the Class of 2022



We would like to welcome the newest cohort of Old Alfredians to this issue of the OA newsletter – the Class of 2022. We are really looking forward to hearing what exciting and adventurous paths you take on this next chapter, post KAS

In June, we invited OA and current parent **Nick Nielson (OA 1994)** to talk about what it means to be an Old Alfredian at the Class of 2022 graduation ceremony. He spoke about how the school gave him the belief that anything is possible, something he still lives by and Robert's words that evening echoed the sentiment.

After a quick catch up with his former teacher, Stephen de Brett, Nick

dashed home to hear all about his child's adventures in The Village that week and we left the revellers to enjoy the rest of the evening at Prom in the Phoenix Theatre.



Nick Nielson and Stephen de Brett

## Charlotte's Drawing

Earlier this year Ian Elvey, **Charlotte Elvey née Berresford's (OA 1962)** widower kindly donated this wonderful drawing. Drawn by Charlotte whilst still a pupil at KAS in the sixties, Ian believes it was a sketch of the Carpenter's Hut. We toured the school when Ian visited in search of where the hut may have been located. Charlotte passed away in 2016.

Charlotte's peer **Anton Smith**

**(OA 1963)** wrote this about her after re connecting with her at an OA reunion in 1994 "I have lots of fine memories of Charlotte – her humour, wide-ranging interests, great intelligence, wisdom, humanity and spirituality" After teaching and working with children in south London, Charlotte was ordained at the age of 50 and continued her work until she was 70.

We would love to hear from you if you know where this hut was situated at Manor Wood. [oa@kingalfred.org.uk](mailto:oa@kingalfred.org.uk)



Charlotte Elvey née Berresford's sketch of the Carpenter's Hut

## Dear future self...



Emma Warner

During a recent sort out of the Old Alfredian office, we unearthed a pile of letters that were written by the Class of 2018 in Year 7 to their future selves. After some super sleuthing we were able to reunite them with their owners just as they were starting to finish University and embark on the next chapter of their lives after KAS. We heard from **Emma Warner (OA 2018)** who loved the letter written to her future self. She filled us in on what she has been doing since leaving KAS:

"After leaving school, I took a gap year and then was offered a place at The Royal Academy of Music to study classical singing. I am currently going into my final year of my undergraduate degree and am applying for further postgraduate studies at The Royal Academy, The Universität der Künste Berlin and Hanns Eisler Berlin."

## Main Hall mosaic



Max and Polly

**Polly Salmon (OA 2008)** and **Max Bogaert (OA 2008)** stopped by the Old Alfredian reunion at KASonbury in the summer and showed us the mosaic they were involved in making when they were in Lower School. The mosaic is currently positioned on the wall outside the Main Hall.

As the school starts to prepare for the 125th anniversary celebrations next year – we'd love to hear what you remember being a part of and how KAS commemorated milestones.



## Fives Court memories

So many of our Old Alfredians refer to the Fives Court when talking about their memories of KAS. Whether playing Fives (a ball game played by two or four players in a court enclosed on three sides, the hard ball struck with the hand, usually protected by a glove) or just hanging out down there, it is such an integral part of the school's history. Old Alfredian, **Lyford Cross (OA 1954)** sent us this fantastic picture, taken around 1949 or 1950 that shows a glimpse of the Fives Court



in the background. We would love to see more of the court before it was converted into the Fives building. Do you have any photos at home you can share with us to build a clearer picture of how it once looked for future generations of OAs? We would love to hear your memories of playing Fives or school antics in the Fives Court. Email Heather at [oa@kingalfred.org.uk](mailto:oa@kingalfred.org.uk) or you can write to Heather Roberts, The Old Alfredian Office, The King Alfred School, 149 North End Road, London NW11 7HY.

## It's virtually a gallery



Leo testing out the VR head set in photography



Visitors walking through the virtual reality gallery

Old Alfredian, **Leo Larche Hitchcox (OA 2021)** worked on an exciting project at KAS last term. In partnership with the photography team at KAS he developed and built a virtual gallery of pupils GCSE and A Level work that was launched at the KAS Photography exhibition in May. Leo is back with us again this year working on various projects at the school.

## The Joshua Jaswon Octet

The Joshua Jaswon Octet is a Berlin-based contemporary jazz ensemble, featuring a broad cross-section of young musicians from Europe's leading jazz scenes. Lead by the London-born saxophonist and composer **Joshua Jaswon (OA 2006)** the octet released its debut album *Silent Sea* in October 2020, which set the texts of contemporary British poems by Rachael Boast, Jackie Kay and Maura Dooley to a new suite of originally composed music. Inspired by the poems' emotional meaning and resonances, the album was selected by BBC Music as



Joshua Jaswon on stage. Credit: Patrick Rupprecht

one of the best jazz recordings of 2020/21 and received 4 and 5 star reviews in Gramophone, Jazzwise and BBC Music Magazine.

In October 2022 the octet played a short UK concert series in Manchester, Nottingham, Oxford and London, including a performance at the Phoenix Theatre at King Alfred School. Details appeared on our social media channels at the time. They performed music from *Silent Sea* alongside material from their upcoming album for Ubuntu Music *Polar Waters*, which was recorded earlier this year and will be released in Spring 2023.

Since its inception in 2019, the ensemble has been supported during

various stages of its development by the Berlin Senat for Culture and Musikfonds Deutschlands.

**BBC Music Magazine 5\* Album Review**, January 2021

'impeccably performed...a powerful soundtrack for desperate times'

**Gramophone 4\* Album Review**, January 2021

'much to admire in this striking new recording from the Joshua Jaswon Octet'

**Jazzwise 4\* Album Review**, November 2020

'Berlin-based sax player, composer and band leader, employs the full range of textural possibilities which this multinational band offers'.



Joshua Jaswon Octet. Credit Sergei Saraiva



## Yoga for all ages

### Sarah Balmond

(OA 1998) went to King Alfred Lower school. She remembers it very fondly - especially, of course, time taken out of the classroom to milk Dolly the goat :)

Sarah is passionate about sharing the wisdom of yoga with everyone, especially children. She has taught in schools and nurseries and believes you are never too young to learn yoga!

Her classes are warm, welcoming, supportive and playful. Through creative sequencing, storytelling, games, breath work and meditations, children are introduced to the foundations of yoga, building strength, flexibility and confidence along the way. Sarah's intention is to offer a space where children and grown ups can unplug from the stresses of the day, and tune back into themselves, so that they may leave feeling lighter, calmer and more relaxed.

Sarah is currently running a series



Sarah Balmond

of Family Yoga Workshops on the 5th November and 3rd December at Crouch End Picturehouse Community Room, 10.30-12pm. You can contact Sarah at [hello@yogaraise.co.uk](mailto:hello@yogaraise.co.uk) for more details and to book your place. You can also follow her on Instagram @yoga\_raise

## A snapshot from 1983

Seb Hoffner (OA 1984) kindly shared this fantastic photo taken at KAS on the 15th February 1983. Do you remember the story behind this photo? Where are you now?



L-R: back row, Mark, Claudia, Seb, Sally, middle row, Sam, Phillippa, Jack, Demo, Jo, front, Fedga

## KAS Quasquicentennial: 125 Old Alfredian Voices...

Sam Shellemly (OA 2021) has been helping out in the Old Alfredian office this summer. Sam has been working on editing the hours of footage we have obtained from interviews with OAs for the 125 Old Alfredian Voices, launching soon. We hope to create an oral history of the King Alfred School, collecting living people's testimony of their own experiences here at KAS to celebrate the school's Quasquicentennial. Sam is studying Product Design at UAL.



Sam Shellemly



Suzy Ratner (on the left) at the 2022 Creative Arts Emmy Awards Governors Gala (Invision/AP)

## Emmy Nomination for Suzy Ratner (OA 1990)

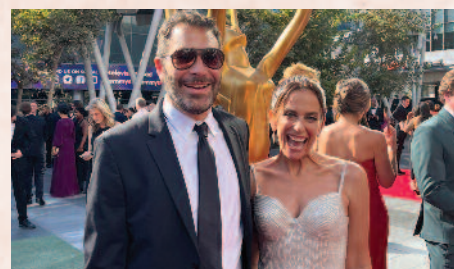
Congratulations to Suzy, who was nominated for an Emmy as producer on 'Selling Sunsets'. Suzy wrote to us following our message of congratulations: *I had an amazing time at The Emmy's! I actually wore a dress that I WON age 16 (so when I was still at KAS) from Elle Magazine! When it arrived my mum said "When are you ever going to wear that?!" and I said well maybe an awards ceremony one day... and so 20 or something years later: Here it is!! All sparkles with a few alterations (it was very long!)*

*I feel that as producer you have to be good with people, King Alfreds gave me so much confidence to do that, and I think it was because we had an informal approach with the teachers and also the ability to mix with the years above and below.*

*To be creative it's all about collaborating with the team, have humour and be fearless! I would say recognise what you are good at and just keep going! I am very grateful for my education and all the confidence and great starting point the school gave me in life and then in my career.*



Suzy at the Emmy's in the dress she won while at KAS



Suzy outside the Emmy's



# Old Alfredians visits

## From across the pond

OA, **Cody Kellner (OA 2017)** stopped by KAS this week whilst visiting friends in London for a whistle stop tour of his old school. He told us about how he honed his soccer skills during breaks, stocked up on British candy and that his love of sailing was ignited at the school. Cody reminisced about the school camps and ski trips and we spotted him in one of Edo's photos from the Ski trip to Formigal, Spain in 2013. Do you recognise anyone?

Cody left the school in year 9 and returned to the US with his family.

You are more than welcome to arrange a tour of your old school by contacting the OA office: [oa@kingalfred.org.uk](mailto:oa@kingalfred.org.uk)



Cody Kellner



Cody Kellner on the KAS Ski trip to Formigal in 2012

## Esmond Harris (OA)

We wish we had more hours in the week, so that we can take the time to visit our Old Alfredians across the UK. It is always an incredibly inspiring way to spend our time. Visiting Esmond to record his '125 Old Alfredian Voices' interview was equally energising and uncovered more wonderful stories about KAS, and the education that it has offered for nearly 125 years. Setting off into the woods for long walks while at Royston combined with his parents' love of the outdoors, led to a life long passion for trees, conservation and wood for Esmond. A visit to his wonderful workshop was inspiring, and I particularly loved being shown the bookcase that Esmond made while at KAS, which remains full of books, some of which have been written by Esmond and his wife. Today, trees remain a vital part of our KAS estate at Manor and Ivy Wood, and activities such as sailing have been a constant throughout the past century at KAS. What we discovered during our visit, was that the caretaker of the Welsh Harp Reservoir, had been a patient of Esmond's GP father. On their way to school one day and passing the reservoir, father and son talked about



what it might be like to sail there. A conversation with the caretaker followed, and with that, the King Alfred School started sailing dinghies on the reservoir, a mile or so from our school. Sailing remains a favourite pastime of Esmond's, and I was astonished to hear that at the age of 96, he has only very recently been persuaded to stop sailing and sell his beloved yacht.

## Childhood memories

It was a privilege to be invited into Juliet's home in Cambridge. **Professor Juliet Mitchell (OA 1958)** talked a lot about her childhood memories spent at the King Alfred School - making bracelets from rose thorns with **Julia Child (OA 1958)** or the excitement of announcing the birth of her brother **Gregory Mitchell (OA 1962)** to Ms Robey. Juliet is Professor of Psychoanalysis and Gender Studies at the University of Cambridge, and an Emeritus Fellow of Jesus College. Juliet splits her time between Cambridge and her home in France.



Juliet Mitchell

## A place of character

**Stephen Brandes (OA 1971)** reflects on the unique KAS environment. As an Old Alfredian, a past parent (**Humphrey OA 2006** and **Roberta OA 2008**) and as a key member of Council, and Grounds and Buildings, Stephen has a very clear perspective on the special place that is KAS. During a visit in July 2022, Stephen recorded his interview for 125 Old Alfredian Voices. He reflected on the influence that the environment has on the education that is offered here. The field remains a central part of the school, a space where children can run, where they can head away into the wilder areas around the amphitheatre, where they can be relaxed and free. Stephen remembers the wonderful feeling of coming out of class to lie on the grass on the bank of the field. These open spaces, and the different styles of the buildings, with very few corridors, contribute to a 'place of character'. Squirrel Hall was an important space, as was the Main Hall and the print workshop. Stephen created a model of Squirrel Hall and a painting of the workshop.



## Ballerinas and more

After reconnecting with **Helen Craig (OA 1952)** through our Festive Post – where year 6 pupils sent festive cards to some of our oldest Old Alfredians, we were able to visit Helen at her home in Cambridgeshire this summer. Over lashings of tea we spent the morning talking about the phenomenally successful, *Angelina Ballerina* – a series of books based on the adventures of a balletic mouse, illustrated by Helen. During the war years, Helen attended Royston (the farm that KAS was evacuated to as a whole school during the war years) with her brother **John Craig (OA 1949)** and then moved to London after the war and lodged with various KAS families in order for her to complete her schooling at KAS. Helen is a keen sculptor and I feel very fortunate to have been invited to look around her studio and see some of her work in progress. You will be able to hear more from Helen as part of 125 Old Alfredian Voices to celebrate the school's 125th anniversary next year.



*Helen Craig*



*Angelina Ballerina*



*One of Helen's sculptures*



*Inside Helen's studio*

## A question of sport

**Derek Cheek (OA 1962)** still lives fairly locally to KAS so one morning I popped in en route to the school for a catch up and to talk about Derek's memories of the school. It was a very jolly morning hearing many jovial

sporting stories. We called and spoke with **Howard Cheek (OA 1957)**, Derek's older brother, **Juliet Mitchell (OA 1958)** whom I met a few weeks later at her home in Cambridge and **Tim Webb (OA 1962)**. Derek kindly allowed me to take away some photos to scan of the football and cricket

teams that he has recently collected from the OA Office. I was able to give Derek a tour of the school and to see what has changed and what has stayed the same. We went in search of where John Bayes dug a huge hole in the ground fondly known as the Bayes Hole by all at the time.



*Derek Cheek in the Amphitheatre*



*The KAS Cricket Team, Derek is pictured, seated front row on the left*



## Hockey and football

**Julian Anderson (OA 1955)** sent us these wonderful photos. You may remember we highlighted the cricket team in our last issue, and Julian has sent us photos of the hockey and football team from his era at KAS. Julian writes:

*In the hockey team, in the back row, I can't remember who is on the extreme left but the next ones are **Victor Zilberkweit, Freddie Herzog, Simon Dobbs, Lyford Cross and Eric Z.** The front row is myself, AN other, **Johnny Partington, Richard Preston and Hugo Bulbulion.***



KAS hockey team



KAS Football team

*In the football team the only people I remember are **Talaat Hassan** on the left with **Johnny Partington** next to him and **Jason Fitzmaurice** behind. Then come **Sidney Thompson**, AN other behind, **Nicky Alwyn** and two other AN others. In the front row I only recognise myself. I used to be the goalie spurred on to heroic saves.*

Our current netball and football teams at KAS are celebrating a series of wins against local schools. We are also delighted that a KAS pupil has recently been selected for the U15 England men's football team. This is a proud moment for him and the school.



Richard Oblath

## A pea-souper

We spent a sunny morning with Old Alfredian, **Richard Oblath (OA 1970)**. This was Richard's first visit to KAS since he left in the early seventies! After a lovely walk around the grounds, Cliff, Head of Photography took Richard's portrait for 125 OA Voices and then we sat in a leafy corner of the grounds discussing all things KAS. We loved hearing about his life since leaving the school and his adventures all over the world. His most vivid memory of being at KAS was the pea soup fog that descended upon London in December 1962, which we decided, on reflection, may have been what prompted him to work in the clean energy industries! **Gerda (OA 1944)**, Richard's mother was also a student at the school and joined in 1938 after moving here from Germany.

## Media and more

We recorded a refreshingly honest interview from **Jordan Schwarzenberger (OA 2015)**, who visited the school in the summer. Jordan shared his story about his A levels and decisions around his university course at Kings College. His 125 Old Alfredian Voices interview highlights the value of work experience, and how this led to not only a permanent role, but a career in creative media and ultimately his own business, Arcade Media. We are very pleased that Jordan is returning to KAS in December to present one of our Connections series to our Sixth Form.



Jordan Schwarzenberger



## Professionally curious

**Nicola Kirkby (OA 2006)** came to see us at KAS in September to talk to us as part of 125 Old Alfredian Voices.

As one of only two students studying A Level chemistry at the time she spoke about the wonderful explorative experiments she was able to enjoy with Joe Keating and below is a snap shot of what Nicola has gone on to do since she left the school in 2006:

*"My career following King Alfred has taken several unusual turns: After starting a chemistry degree at the University of Aberdeen in 2007, I graduated in 2012 with a BSc (Hons) in Geography. I then began working in the non-profit disaster response and humanitarian coordination sector for six years, responding to cyclones in the Philippines, flooding in India, and Atlantic hurricanes in the Caribbean. Our focus was in empowering the multi-sector response to these crises, with improved information sharing, risk assessment methodologies, and effects-based mission planning systems. Unusually for the aid & development sector, we always worked with the express invitation of the governments of affected nations, and in addition to our crisis response efforts we would seek to develop preventative and resilience-building measures with public and private sector stakeholders in these countries where disaster events are common.*

*I moved to work in the public sector here in London in late 2019, taking up a role in emergency situational awareness reporting at the Greater London Authority. We monitor significant incidents in the city that have the potential to cause harm or disruption to London and Londoners,*



Nicola Kirkby

*working with a wide range of cross-government and emergency services stakeholders. I started just a few months before the pandemic, and our pivot towards public health-related reporting during the winter and spring of 2020 is a really great example of how agile and responsive this team has to be: a major focus had been on reporting gang violence, and suddenly we were working with Public Health England to map the spread of COVID-19 cases across the London boroughs.*

*Analysts like myself need to have boundless 'professional curiosity' to be equipped to research, at short notice, issues ranging from vaccine disinformation; to community tensions responding to the conflict in Ukraine; and public sentiment reacting to environmental protests. I feel that a spirit of curious enquiry, developed by my time at KAS, has been foundational*

*to my career."*

We got in touch with **Joe Keating** after meeting Nicola and it was lovely to hear from him:

*"I remember Nicola and Joby as very bright and interesting students. There's so much to convey about KAS back in the 1970's that it's an impossible task to condense it into 200 words. I knew nothing about the school when I applied, believing it to be in the North End Road, close to where I lived in Fulham. On my interview day, I was involved in treadmill trials at the Hollybush Hill research site. These overran so I 'phoned KAS to say that, unfortunately, I had to drop out of the interview. The response was: "Well, come when you can". So, I met Gordon, Roy, Nikki and others, standing on the touch-line at the Staff/School football match.*

*My first term, adjusting to the informally negotiated relationship with the students rather than the formal us/them norm of my own schooling, was quite difficult. It was very encouraging when Roy told me that December that I had fitted in very well and was doing a good job.*

*Cathy and I are both keeping well and enjoying retirement. I have seven grandchildren to keep me occupied and still run and row every day. The rowing machine that was given to me as a leaving present has done great service; I've covered more than 90,000 km during the past sixteen years including several world records. Tomorrow, I'm running the 55km Ultra London course from Woolwich to Richmond. Most likely, I would be in no fit state to write after that.*

*Best regards to all at KAS, Joe"*

## A sweet catch up

**Ilana Bergsagel (OA 2004)** and her young family were in the UK briefly this summer to celebrate her brother, **Daniel's (OA 2007)** wedding. Ilana lives in Israel but took time out of the trip for an impromptu visit to KAS. It was a gloriously hot Friday afternoon and Pam, in her inimitable style had put a hamper of refreshments together to enjoy on the field. Fellow

classmates, **Sophie Dunnell (OA 2004)** and **Harriet Fisher (OA 2004)** also joined us for the sweet catch up.

If you left KAS in the mid noughties or you know someone who did – do get in touch we would love to get you all together for a reunion or let us know if you are an OA from any period and going to be in the area on a return visit – we would love to see you. Email us at [oa@kingalfred.org.uk](mailto:oa@kingalfred.org.uk).



Sophie Dunnell Ilana Bergsagel & Harriet Fisher



Harriet, Pam, Sophie & Ilana



# Farewells

"Goodbyes make you think. They make you realise what you've had, what you've lost, and what you've taken for granted" – **Ritu Gautorney**



James and Lucy who both left KAS this summer!

## Lucy Hall – Lower School Teacher

I am very excited for KAS that it is the school's 125th anniversary next year. I was editor for the Alfredian Centenary Magazine in 1998 and spent a lot of time researching the school's history in the Archives. KAS has had a rich and diverse journey through it's 125 years which is greatly to be celebrated. I have already offered my assistance to KAS archivist, Sheila, as I hope to be part of sharing my love and knowledge of the school with others. So, as one says in theatrical circles, I have no intention of making a 'a clean exit' from KAS – I will be back!



Lucy is looking forward to returning to help in the KAS Archives

## James Griffiths – Deputy Head of the Lower School

Deputy Head of the Lower School King Alfred has evolved since I started in 2013. Firstly, under the guidance of the empathetic Dawn Moore and the supportive David Weale, and now with the dedicated Karen Thomas and wise Robert Lobatto. Thanks to their leadership, we can articulate the school to outsiders clearly, with confidence and pride. However, I think King Alfred is more than just words. It is feeling. A sense of belonging. A home. If my new school can fill half the gap King Alfred will leave, I will be happy. Farewell King Alfred! I miss you already.



James is leaving KAS to take on the role of Head at another London school

## Finance Farewells: Annabel, Priti and Sharon

There are so many fond memories of Annabel (not least her love of Maltesers!) that she will be keenly missed. The KAS community wish both

her and her husband, Adrian who worked on the Estates team until 2018 every happiness in the next chapter of their lives.



Priti Shah, Annabel Cross and Sharon Myers

## Linda Fraser

After 16 years welcoming families through the Admissions process and telling the world about what we offer through Marketing and Communications we wish Linda well in her retirement.

When Linda started at KAS in August 2006, the school was significantly smaller and had just one person responsible for Admissions. The process for attracting and admitting students was fragmented with only one Open Day each year, an event combined with the KAS Summer Fair. Tours for prospective parents were organized on demand resulting in a staggering 1,360 tours conducted between 2006 and 2012!

Under Linda's leadership, we now have termly open days, KAS branding, a fully functioning school website, targeted advertising campaigns and vibrant KAS social media across Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

Linda said "I've always thought that one of the best aspects of my job is that I get to work with just about everyone in the school."



Linda Fraser is looking forward to the freedoms of retirement and hopes to travel more



# A Letter From the Head...

Anticipation is building as we gear up for what will be a landmark year for KAS in 2023... our 125th anniversary.

Throughout our anniversary year we will both be reflecting on the School's impact and looking forward to the exciting plans and developments that lie ahead. We are summing this up with the phrase **"honouring our past, inspiring our future"**.

As I write this, it is exactly the 125th anniversary of the first meeting of the King Alfred School Society (KASS). This was founded as a charity to advocate for a scientific and child-centred vision of education, something unique at the time and still pretty rare today. KAS, the school, was born 8 months later in June 1898.

Our KASS President, Kara Conti, has been researching the 7 original founders of KASS. She has uncovered the stories of these remarkable people, including an unexpected connection in Hampstead cemetery. I can thoroughly recommend her article which you will find in this edition of the newsletter.

In parallel, our archivist Sheila, has been delving through the KAS archive. She is telling the history of KAS in 125 artefacts - a carefully curated selection of objects and documents, all of which have a wider significance. You can follow these fascinating stories at [king\\_alfred\\_archive](#) on Instagram and [@KASArchives](#) on Twitter.

As part of the celebrations we are also producing a beautiful book to



commemorate the spirit of KAS. It takes a different approach to the volume produced on our 100th anniversary, with a focus on the lived experiences of all the generations who have been fortunate enough to come to KAS. It's going to be a bold book embracing the KAS spirit of creativity, and as our publisher has commented, rather different to any of the other books they produce for schools. There is only a limited print run, and details on how to order it can be found in this issue.

I am sure you will agree with me that it is a proud moment when any

organisation reaches a milestone such as this. KAS is a special place that has always had its pupils, families and community at its heart. I hope you will find some way to be part of the celebrations.

Robert

*If you would like to be involved in helping to organise the 125th anniversary celebrations, please contact the OA office.*



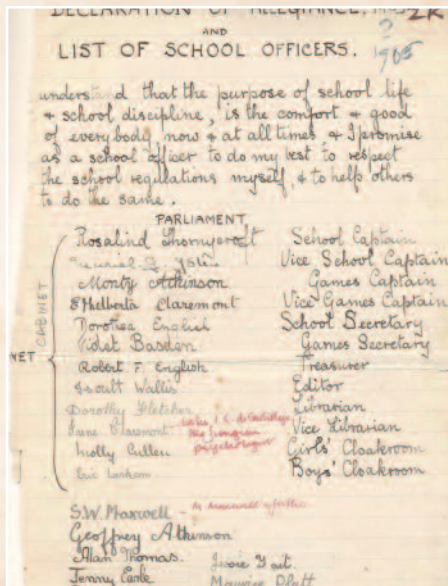


# KAS Archives KAS in 125 Artefacts

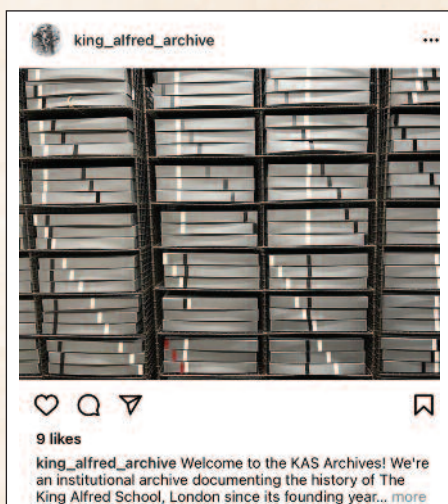
The virtual doors of the KAS archives have been opened! We know how much our Old Alfredians enjoy features from the archives and in anticipation of the school's 125th birthday next year we invite you to follow

@king\_alfred\_archive on Instagram or @KASArchives on twitter or find the whole picture here: KAS In 125 Artefacts (kingalfred.org.uk) to discover little-known stories about the School.

The KAS archives document the history of The King Alfred School since it's founding year, 1898. Our very own archivist Sheila has begun lifting the lid on KAS over the last 125 years. Over the next year, Sheila is telling the history of KAS in 125 artefacts. The King Alfred School has played an important part in so many people's lives and throughout our anniversary year we will be reflecting on the school's impact as well as looking forward to all the exciting plans and developments that lie ahead for our community – honouring our past, inspiring our future.



Pupil voice has always been influential and respected at KAS. These minutes record the 1905 Student Parliament declaration of allegiance and lists roles held by students. Today's School Six student council carries on this tradition of leadership.



The KAS magazine 1906, KAS has a long tradition of student produced magazines. The first editions were hand written and contained original illustrations. The pages were bound into an annual, the only copy of which was kept by the headmaster. Here's a glimpse of the 1906 edition



Behold our newest acquisition! The KAS goat rope! Former students may remember Dulcie, Daisy, Dolly and Billy. The goats roamed the school field and even starred in a pantomime! We no longer have a school goat, but the Lower School Farm remains part of our learning environment.



KAS Goat



# KAS 125 Book

King Alfred School has played an important part in so many people's lives and this book celebrates their experiences. On the centenary of the school in 1998, a book was commissioned which told the history of the school using Council Minutes and official documents, following the history of the school through the Heads who led KAS. This book, in contrast, focusses on those who experienced it, creating a tapestry of stories from Old Alfredians. If the centenary book represents the Head, then this volume represents the Heart, inspired by our motto "Out of the Heart Springs Life".

There is only a limited print run, and details on how to order it can be found in this issue.









# The Magnificent Seven

125 years ago this October a meeting was organised by seven Hampstead parents to discuss the possibility of founding a new school, one that would educate their sons and daughters together, be unattached to any religion, and take into account the ideas of educational reformers and their realisation of individuality. Subjects would be interlinked, homework would not be set as leisure and play were deemed essential, and no scholarships or prizes would be worked for as learning for its own sake was the aim.

These ideas had been circulated to the local community and interested parties were invited to this meeting to discuss a curriculum and an educational ethos for a school that would be very different to anything on offer at the time.

The meeting gained sufficient support to move forward and would lead to the foundation of a Society and the following year a school - but at this point no name had yet been chosen for the project.

As present President of the King Alfred School Society that was surely born that night, I have been researching those seven pioneering parents to whom we owe everything.

## Isobel White Wallis (1853-1923)

Isobel was very definitely the moving force behind the movement, together with her friend Alice Mullins. Isobel was married to a scientist and believed in a rational or scientific approach to education. She was one of the Society's chief propagandists in the press, encouraging discussion of a wide range of views and questioning many contemporary values and practices. She was a long serving member of the governing body.

Here are her two famous quotes



Isobel White Wallis sculpture in Hampstead Cemetery



Ellerdale Road, the school's first site



showing her distaste for the status quo in education:

"by means of examinations and other aids, children are ground in a mill where individuality is repressed and where humanity is minted into pieces as like each other as the coinage"  
"the great juggernaut of modern education, the examination craze, with the overpressure on children caused by the mediaeval method of cramming with juice-less facts, names and dates"

I found her grave in Hampstead Cemetery and the remarkable sculpture of her there allowed me to look into her eyes and somehow capture her spirit.

## Alice Mullins (1847-1935)

Alice, a sculptor, married to a sculptor, worked closely with Isobel to bring their ideas to fruition. She was passionate about artistic freedom and the cultivation of individuality. The very first meeting of the seven took place in her studio.

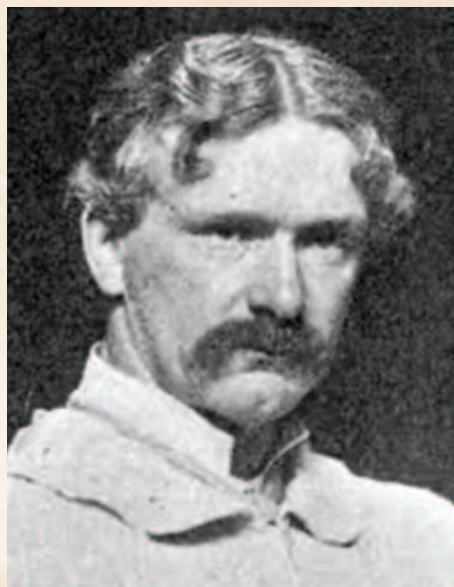


### **Frederick Miall (1857-1934)**

Frederick, a journalist and author, was the longest serving member of the Society serving for many years as chairman. His extensive range of press contacts in and around London served the propagandist aims of the group well.

### **Hamo Thorneycroft (1850-1925)**

Hamo was a sculptor, son of two sculptors, enjoying a high degree of success as a leading exponent of the New Sculpture, a movement in British sculpture reacting against the neo-classicism of mid-Victorian sculpture. He received public commissions for statues of Oliver Cromwell and Alfred the Great and was knighted in 1917.



*Hamo Thorneycroft*

### **Cecil Sharp (1859-1924)**

Cecil was a musician, composer and folk song collector. At the age of 23 he emigrated to Australia where he taught, composed and conducted in Adelaide. He returned to England in 1892 and taught music in a preparatory school in north London. He became Principal of the Hampstead Conservatoire of Music in 1896.

### **Gerald Maberley (1871-1961)**

Gerald was a barrister at law and gave invaluable service to the group, fulfilling the role of Honorary Treasurer. He was the longest serving founding member. He lived at 1 Ellerdale Road. (The school would later open at 24 Ellerdale Rd, Hampstead.)

### **Godfrey Hickson (1854-1932)**

Godfrey was a solicitor and of invaluable service in drawing up all the legal documents in the formation of the Society and the Articles of Association. He lived at 20 Ellerdale Road at the end of his life.

What united these seven parents was the drive to provide a better education for their children, but not only that. They were determined to create a demonstration school that would have long term impact on the world of education. What a brave gang.

**Kara Conti, President of the King Alfred School Society**

*Cecil Sharp*



EX CORDE VITA.

## **KASS (Society) Membership**

Society membership is offered to all parents and staff on joining the school – and indeed to any former parents, staff and Old Alfredians who want to remain actively involved. Membership entitles you to take part in the running of Society, attend and vote at the Annual General Meeting, and elect or stand for Council. The annual subscription fees for membership fund educational research projects and conferences.

By becoming a member of the Society you are able to have a voice in furthering the aims of the Society and the school.

To join the Society, please go to the KAS website  
[www.kingalfred.org.uk/king-alfred-society-membership/](http://www.kingalfred.org.uk/king-alfred-society-membership/)



*Hamo Thorneycroft in his studio*



# Obituaries

## Freda Turney née Mabey (OA 1955)

My Uncle, **George Mabey (OA 1962)**, has requested I prepare an obituary for your Old Alfredians Newsletter as my Mum, **Freda Mabey (OA 1955)** sadly died in April this year.

Freda, born in February 1937, grew up in the Second World War, so though her family lived in Edgware, London, from where she attended KAS, she was evacuated to a small village in Bedfordshire for many of her early years. She had an older brother, Johnny, and two younger brothers, George and Tom, who also both attended KAS.

She married when she was 21 and had three children, Su, Sam and Jim. She kept busy whilst they grew up, showing her creative skills, in part ignited by her mother and grandmother, both of whom were talented lace makers and embroiderers. She developed and honed skills in Cordon Blue cookery (doing weekly demonstrations to groups of women who fast became fans); dressmaking (ensuring her daughter was the envy of her friends with beautifully fashioned garments); gardening and growing vegetables for the family; and upholstery (furnishing the old family home with style and flair). She also did the accounts and administration for the building firm that she and her husband ran for many years in Bedfordshire.

Freda, or Fi, as she preferred to be called, and her first husband Ben, went on to run a successful Free House in Somerset, where she developed the restaurant (previously a garage) with

her vision and, again, drawing loyal customers who loved her as much as they loved her cooking.

In her early 40s she moved abroad - Fi was an adventurer. Her children were approaching an age where she could leave the UK. Whilst abroad, she met Renato who was to become her second husband. Initially they lived in Germany. When they met they didn't share a common language, so Fi learned German. She worked in an Italian tailors, again honing her already amazing skills, making many beautiful garments. When her German developed to a high standard, she worked at a prestigious hotel in Mannheim where she became the Head Housekeeper.

Renato, who is Italian, retired early, so they moved to Umbria, Italy, where he was born and grew up. That was over thirty years ago - again Fi learned a new language, developing her linguistic skills so she could do voluntary work in a local school helping young students with their English.

If Fi decided she wanted to do something, she would almost always find a way - creating; restoring; mending - she had a flair. She also often embellished or enhanced things - rarely wearing something as it was originally made - adding a button or embroidery which always made the garment stand out - Fi didn't want to be run of the mill - she liked her things to be different and quirky - and she was good at it!

Fi had a love of life, she lit up a room when she entered, was generous



*Freda Mabey*

of spirit and very creative. She made embroidered cards and knitted figures for her grandchildren and the children of Su's friends. She made beautiful clothes, adapted patterns, was a fabulous cook and a great Mum - she spent much of her time thinking about others and what she could do, or make, for them.

We will miss the light she brought into our lives. We are grateful that, following a nasty illness, she is now out of pain, and her love lives on in the people she knew. Fi died, in her apartment on Lake Trasimeno, on 9 April this year, aged 85 - surrounded by messages of love from her family and friends. Her daughter and elder son were with her through her last week - her ashes have been returned to the UK and will be scattered, at her request, in the village in Bedfordshire where she and her children grew up.

*Obituary provided by her daughter Su Turney and Freda's brother, George.*

## Roger Pearman (OA 1961)

**13 February 1943 to  
9 April 2009**

We recently found out that **Roger Pearman (OA 1961)** had passed away in 2009. He was an English cricketer and cricket administrator, representing Middlesex in his playing days as a successful batsman. He helped found the Middlesex County League and went on to serve as Chief Executive of Derbyshire County Cricket Club between 1981 and April 1987, where he was instrumental in bringing the club's organisation and facilities up to a much improved standard and returning the club's finances to profit. A talented sportsman at school, Roger captained the KAS football team.



*King Alfred School 1st XI Football team. Standing L-R Ian, Peter, Gregory, Paul, Alan K, Richard, Alan D. Seated: Alan T, Derek, Roger, Nicky, Hugh*



# Mamoun Hassan

12 December 1937 to  
29th July 2022

*Obituary reprinted from the Guardian by Kevin Brownlow (edited)*

The producer Mamoun Hassan, who has died aged 84, was a significant figure in British cinema of the 1970s and 80s, whose remarkable career, if not entirely satisfying his artistic gifts, was unusual in that it enabled so many other film-makers' careers, and gave rise to numerous courageously non-commercial projects. What was notable was how commercial some of them turned out to be.

Although he was a talented director and screenwriter, it was in his roles as the first head of production of the British Film Institute (1971-74) and managing director of the National Film Finance Corporation (NFFC, 1979-84) that Mamoun was most influential, being instrumental in the making of such classic British films as Bill Forsyth's *Gregory's Girl*, Franco Rosso's *Babylon* (both 1980) and the animated adaptation of Raymond Briggs's *When the Wind Blows*, directed by Jimmy Murakami (1986).

Perhaps the most important figure he brought to prominence was Bill Douglas, the Scottish film-maker responsible for the exceptional *My Childhood* trilogy (1972-78) and *Comrades* (1986), an important political film about the Tolpuddle Martyrs of the 1830s.

In 1976 Mamoun had backed and supported Terence Davies's first production, the short film *Children*, and Horace Ové's *Pressure*, the first serious feature film to reflect the black experience in Britain. It was Mamoun, too, who granted the finance to Andrew Mollo and I to make *Winstanley* (1975).

*Babylon* was the first film he backed at the NFFC, after it had been rejected everywhere else. This continued a pattern of breaking the rules and putting his job on the line by committing more money than he was supposed to. When the film was released in the US in 2019, after nearly 30 years, it gained rave reviews. Crucially, also at the NFFC, Mamoun

changed the advisory board of the National Film Development Fund to include directors and producers as well as writers, which radically increased the number of scripts produced and led to films such as *A Room with a View* and *Dance with a Stranger* (both 1985) being made.

Mamoun was born in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to Hamid Hassan, a doctor, and Fatma (née Sadat). His family came to London in 1949, settling in Hampstead, north London, where Mamoun went to King Alfred School.

In 1958, he began studying electrical engineering at University College London. I first met him during this time, in the early 60s, when I was working as an editor for a documentary film company and he came to work for me as an assistant. Eventually, Mamoun made the decision to work in film rather than in engineering, and he left university before graduation.

When I was asked to make a short documentary for the BFI on the last tram in Britain, 9, Dalmuir West (1962), Mamoun was indispensable as second cameraman.

The films that Mamoun made at the beginning of his career – documentaries and shorts – proved his talent. The *Meeting* (1964) won the best short film award at the 1965 Oberhausen international film festival.

Douglas's script for *Childhood*, which was then called *Jamie*, was one of the first that Mamoun read. It was his idea to make it the first of a trilogy, to ensure that Douglas would get the rest of his films made, and after it won the Silver Lion at Venice in 1972, its success helped the BFI move into feature production.

In 1974, Mamoun left to lead the film section for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), based in Lebanon. As soon as he landed, civil war broke out and he found himself avoiding gunfire while directing the film *Some of the Palestinians* (1976). It went on to win an



outstanding film award at the London film festival.

On returning to the UK in 1976, Mamoun was invited to form and head the directing department of the National Film and Television School. The following year he became a member of the Cinematograph Films Council, advising the government, while also being a founder member of the Association of Independent Producers, critiquing said government.

As Managing Director of the NFFC, Mamoun, unlike his illustrious predecessor, Sir John Terry, never asked for an executive producer credit on the feature films he backed and nurtured. Many years later, he confessed this had probably been a bad idea.

In 1988 Mamoun devised the *Movie Masterclass* series for Channel 4, based on his work with students at the NFTS. In 1997 Mamoun was appointed dean of editing at *Escuela Internacional de Cine y TV* (EICTV), in Cuba. He went on to co-produce, co-write and co-edit the award-winning Chilean film *Machuca* (2004), directed by Andrés Wood. With Wood, Mamoun also wrote the screenplay for *La Buena Vida* (*The Good Life*, 2008), which won a slew of awards including a Spanish Goya.

Mamoun was one of the most intelligent men I have met. His opinions were often startling and always stimulating.

In 1966 he married Moya Gillespie, a publishing editor. She survives him, as do their two sons, Sherief and Anies, two granddaughters, Sabrina and Jasmine, and a brother, **Talaat (OA)**.



*Mamoun speaking at BFI (Photo credit: Mamoun Hassan Archives/Lee Evans) and with Sir Terence Davies (Photo credit: Sherief M Hassan)*



*Mamoun at KAS in 1951/52 Back Row: Freddie Herzog, Sarah Miller, Geoffrey Dunston, Mamoun Hassan, Jason Love and Lyford Cross. Front Row: Jean, Christener Bone, Roz Johnson (French teacher) Bunty and Frances Heyting*



## Jill Duncan, née Ambrose (OA 1955)

We were very sad to hear from Jill's dear friend **Gillian Sonin** about Jill's sad passing. Jill's husband, David wrote to us about about Jill's life and times, both at King Alfred's and in her wider life.

To cover the numerous different social groups she was attached to, I think the starting point is to establish her 'name'. At The King Alfred School she was Jill Ambrose. Following her first marriage she was Jill Bernstein. After her divorce she was Jill Duncan-Bernstein and after her second marriage (to me) she was Jill Duncan. From her first marriage she had five sons and following her marriage to me she inherited five step-sons. Between us we have 19 grand-children. She never responded to the name 'Philippa' and quite hated it!

King Alfred's is ever present in our household, with OA newsletters stuffed in every bookcase and the school photograph dated June 1953 hanging in the dining room. Jill knew the names of almost every teacher and pupil on that photo but the only one I can recall is **Anthony Gottlieb** (who later became my business partner). The key person to check with regarding Jill's memories of King Alfred's is Gillie Sonin.

One unusual connection I would like to mention is the coincidence concerning Rev. James Fields. James taught at King Alfred's some years ago. In his previous existence he was a pupil

at Mill Hill School and later taught there. During both periods he was either a boarder or lived nearby and on a daily basis walked past 'Maccab', an ultra-modern house on The Ridgeway, Mill Hill, designed by Eric Ambrose (Jill's father) and occupied by Jill and her parents for many years. It is highly likely that James saw Jill and her parents on many occasions. James is now our next-door neighbour in Northwood!

Prior to King Alfred's, Jill attended St Bernard's Convent in Langley, Bucks., and subsequently studied Interior Design at The Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London. She gained immense pleasure from crochet design, creative gardening and regular attendance at lectures and trips with The Arts Society Moor Park. As you know, she regularly attended reunions and talks given at King Alfred's. To her, King Alfred's was her spiritual home and the source of most of her personal characteristics, from speaking her own mind, holding and defending her convictions, being broad-minded, creative and extremely considerate of other people. As an example, she was a long-standing member of Dignity in Dying and one of their spokesmen, willing to address any group or politicians willing to listen to her arguments.

We had exactly 40 extremely happy years together, argued fiercely,



Jill Duncan (née Ambrose)

travelled widely and felt proud of the manner in which we had brought up our ten sons, often in the face of difficulties.

Gillian described Jill as a sportier pupil than she was academic, always smiling and always laughing. Tennis being Jill's preferred sport. She remembered that Jill's father, Eric would come to the school to play cricket in the parent matches. Jill and Gillian have remained loyal friends from the age of 11 years old.

## Tim Weeks (OA 1977)

Having recently connected with the school after some time it was with great sadness that we heard **Tim Weeks (OA 1977)** had lost his battle with Leukaemia in August of this year.

Tim was a fantastic artist and his friend, **Dave Rindl (OA 1978)** recalls how Timo drew caricatures of the class on the walls of the sixth form common room and commented that creativity

seemed to follow him. They spent many happy hours hanging out in the common room, playing bridge, ping pong and darts. After leaving KAS, Tim continued his artistic studies in Barnet and went on to publish a surrealist novel.

Dave spoke at Tim's funeral and **Christopher Warren (OA 1978)** was unable to attend as he is currently living in Australia but sent a short piece to be read.

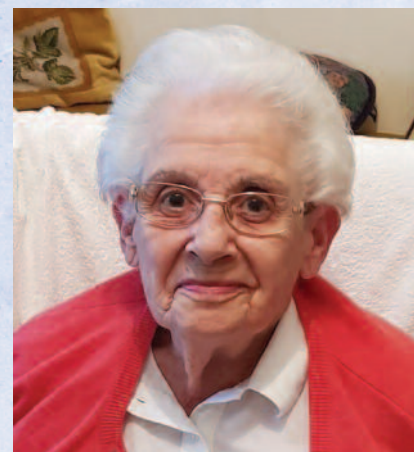


Tim (Timo) Weeks

## Gerda Oblath (OA)

My mother, **Gerda Oblath née Blum**, passed away on 15th August 2021 at 96 ½ peacefully at home surrounded by love. She had a long and fulfilling life and had the joy in her later years to get to know her 3 great grandchildren. She was always proud to have been an Old Alfredian having entered as a 13 year old after leaving Hamburg in Germany in Spring of 1938 only speaking German and Dutch. She was helped settling in to her new country, school and language by many of her compatriots

but especially Margaret Maxwell, a future member of staff who taught me O level English when I was a pupil. She spent part of her time as a pupil in Royston before taking her Matric in September 1941. She returned in September 1945 to KAS as the kitchen supervisor for a few years after having graduated from Battersea Polytechnic in Domestic Science and working in hospitals. In 1951 she married my father, Leslie Oblath a refugee from Hungary, and I was born in November 1954 in Bristol where my father was the General Manager of the Grand Spa Hotel. I became a pupil at KAS in 1958 (leaving after my O levels in 1970) and my mother and father were active parents supporting the school including my father working with Cecil Lush (the then architect) on modernising the kitchen in the '60s. My wife and I spent over 35 years away from the UK but have now returned to live in London. **Richard Oblath (OA)**.



Gerda Oblath



# John Wethered Gibson

1939 - 2022

John Gibson was born in 1939, son of Alexander Gibson, Architect working for Design Research Unit in London, and Molly Gibson, Puppeteer for Andy Pandy and The Flowerpot Men on children's TV. He had an older brother Richard Gibson and a younger sister Julia Gibson. Me.

We all went to King Alfred School on moving to Hampstead in North London in 1944 and I believe John was at school there from 1944, leaving in 1955. From King Alfred's he followed his brother Richard to Bedales in Hampshire as a boarder, another progressive co-educational school, where he became head boy in his final year 1957 to 1958.

From there he went to The College of Estate Management at London University and gained a BSc in 1961 becoming a chartered surveyor. In 1962 he joined Savills Estate agent in London soon moving to a new office in Chelmsford where, after being a lodger with his landlady 'Olive' for a while, our dad designed him a bachelor pad to be squeezed in between some old wooden carpenter's barns, so he named his new house Carpenters, with a wonderful walled garden attached.

In 1974 he got married to Michelle French and inherited two small children, Marc and Sabine. Once married the house was extended to fit them all in. Making it a more roomy comfortable house with a large live-in kitchen for Michelle to cook and entertain in. She was a brilliant cook and gardener. They became

grandparents when Sabine married and had two children, Sophia and Ella, and John and Michelle adored taking them on holidays abroad and having them to stay at home. Michelle sadly predeceased John by three years.

In the mid 1970s John became a salaried partner at Savills, and became a director when Savills incorporated in 1988. He semi retired in 1999, still doing the job he loved best, showing clients round large country houses, he finally fully retired in 2017. He told me he loved every day of all the years he worked there and a colleague said of him "He was the best Country House agent in the firm". He gained a reputation for being scrupulously honest at work which didn't always suit his clients but he gained a following of people who trusted him. And in latter years he was given the friendly nickname of Snowy at work because of his brilliant white head of hair. He was generous hearted and kind. He was always ready for a pint and a game of darts or two at the end of a day's work and he really liked to win.

He had many interests. He collected antique flint lock guns through his childhood from an early age, and in his adult life he collected pipes of all shapes and sizes and puffed on one of them continuously until a few years before his death. I gave him a Meerschaum pipe many years ago which he told me just before he died was still his favourite. He loved shooting, Cricket, photography, cars, whiskey, playing darts and reading ...

and gadgets he loved his gadgets. In later years he and I kept in touch more and more via the internet and on the phone, I liked to ask him how he was feeling that day, what his medications were, what animals he had seen in the garden from his window and what he had eaten that day. I could hear him getting weaker and finally he stopped enjoying food, but would enjoy a glass of Pimm's till the very day he died. I will miss our chats.

As he slowly became more ill in the last couple of years Marc his step-son cared for him brilliantly. I am eternally grateful to Marc. Then when John died in May this year Marc first organised a small funeral held in John's garden before being cremated, and then a big family and friends party in the garden in September. I managed to travel up to Essex from Devon for the party with the help of two of John's very best friends Martin and Rosie Lowry, I was able to meet up with my oldest brother Richard who had managed to travel down from Shetland, and four of my nieces and nephews, three also travelling from Scotland. Also two of our cousins came, some of John's neighbours, and many friends who we had all known since childhood. And it was lovely to see Marc and Sabine. Many kind and humorous words were spoken, lots of good food was consumed and a glass of champagne was raised. It was a joyous occasion which John would have enjoyed.

And here I sign off, it has been nice bringing up so many memories.

Cheers, Julia xxx

Julia Kuhn (OA)

## Messages from OAs following the Spring issue

"Just to say a big thank you for producing a brilliant Newsletter, always really enjoyable to read :)"

John Williams (OA 1969)

"Dear Heather, I just wanted to tell you how delighted I was to see my photo on the front page of the Old Alfredians magazine! I didn't expect it was going to be on the front page. So glad to have other Old Alfredians see it and new Alfredians and KAS teachers of course.

Many thanks and kind regards, Christian"

Christian Davis (OA 1990)

I was delighted to read in School News of "Plant a Tree for 2023" and the reference there to the "beautifully wooded grounds ..." Attending KAS from 1937 to 1939 it was the well labelled trees around the school that attracted me later to a career in forestry.

Before going to the school at age ten I had been interested in woodwork and the trees from which the wood came. At KAS the inspired woodwork teacher, Mr Morish, encouraged me in his workshop beyond Squirrel Hall and from the many labelled young trees around the grounds I learnt their names. All this in turn led me to a career in forestry and to writing several books about trees.

The school that one attends in the early, formative years has such a big influence on one's future and although the war curtailed my time at KAS, its long term influence on me led to a very satisfying and worthwhile life – just what a school should do. Now at 95 my only contact with KAS is the Alfredians but its arrival is always a pleasure, demonstrating that what meant so much to me in the immediate pre-war years continues today.

Esmond Harris MBE (OA 1944)

Our subsequent visit to Esmond appears earlier in this edition.





# Old Alfredian Diary

## KAS Fireworks

**Saturday 12th November 2022**

You still have time to purchase your tickets here:  
<https://kingalfredschoo.nuwebgroup.com/browse>

## Old Alfredians V Sixth Form Football Match

**Friday 28th April 2023, 4pm-5.30pm**

A wonderful opportunity for ALL Old Alfredians to gather for a football match against the KAS Sixth Formers. Please register your interest to either join the team or to show the Old Alfredian team your support! King Alfred School: Old Alfredians V Sixth Form ([signupgenius.com](http://signupgenius.com))

Save the Date:  
**KAS 125 Celebration Event**  
**Saturday 24th June 2023**

## Honorary Members celebratory tea

**Wednesday 30th November 2022 2pm**

Kara invites Honorary members to commemorate the 125th anniversary of the KASS Society forming. Whilst we have been holding teas online for the last few years this will be a chance to celebrate this special occasion in person at the King Alfred School.

## Recent Leavers Drinks

**Wednesday 4th January 2023**

This reunion is an opportunity for Old Alfredians who left KAS in the last three years to come and visit KAS and share your news.

## Year Group Reunions

Following on from the success of our Reunion days in September, please do let us know if we can help to gather your year group back at King Alfred School in person next year.

Please email Heather at [oa@kingalfred.org.uk](mailto:oa@kingalfred.org.uk)

## Class of 2022 A level certificate presentation

**Tuesday 4th January 2023**

## Old Alfredians who are current parents drinks reception

**Wednesday 25th January 2023**

## Don't miss our Old Alfredian communications

OA emails, invitations and newsletters are delivered predominantly by email. Please add [oa@kingalfred.org.uk](mailto:oa@kingalfred.org.uk) to your Contacts to ensure their safe delivery. If you aren't receiving our emails or you have moved, please update your contact details: <https://www.kingalfred.org.uk/old-alfredians/old-alfredians-contact-form/>

## Is it 60 years since you left KAS?

Did you finish Year 13 in 1962 or 1963? We are holding a Reunion Lunch for you on **Friday 10 March 2023**. Please get in touch to make sure we have up to date contact details so you don't miss your invitation.

## Join us on Social Media!

We are on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn. If you have a LinkedIn profile, please add King Alfred School to your Education (selecting the right school page with the KAS logo, click this link), and follow us. Our aim is to provide Old Alfredians with connections across sectors.

Old Alfredians  
&  
Development Office

**Tamlyn Worrall**  
Development Director

**Heather Roberts**  
Development and  
Old Alfredian Officer



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