

OA Reunion Lunch

On a snowy Wednesday in March we invited Old Alfredians who attended The King Alfred School in the 1940s, 1950s and early 1960s to a special spring lunch in the Lower School Hall.

In this landmark year for KAS, our 125th anniversary, we are excited to acknowledge all that has gone before and with such a long association with the school, we wanted to share our thoughts and expectations on what lies ahead for KAS with this group of Old Alfredians.

Robert, Karen and Sixth formers, Oona and Ella joined us for a lunch of lamb and spring vegetables set to a backdrop of school photos featuring many of those there and also those Old Alfredians who were unable to make it on the day.

For some, it was the first time back at KAS for 60 years. Memories of the independent study and pursuit of passions from physics to art to maths to plays in the amphitheatre (alongside tales of mischievousness!) were shared.



Gillian Sonin, Diana Hardman nee Kabadi and Moira Tait

'Dear Heather and Tamlyn,

Thank you for a wonderful lunch. It was absolutely lovely to catch up with people; it was especially nice to meet John Bayes again after six decades. I really enjoyed the walkabout afterwards and hope neither of you got too cold!

See you in June...

Best wishes,

Diana Shelley (OA 1961)'

'Dear Heather and Tamlyn

This is to say thank you both, from me and Angela, for a memorable event today. It was wonderful to meet up with so many old friends from so long ago, on the occasion of a lovely lunch. A high point was being greeted, by Lyford using my nickname dating from my early days in Royston, "Skinny!".

I reckon I must have been the oldest there, and the whole event was really nostalgic. I think you are both doing a fantastic job.

With best wishes and looking forward to June 24.

Paul Davis (OA 1951)'

'Dear Tamlyn and Heather,

Just a note to thank you for the warm and hospitable welcome you gave

me on Wednesday. The event was a real pleasure to attend and it was lovely to finally meet you both.

Warmest wishes,

Peter Steinberger (OA 1962)'

'Dear Heather and Tamlyn

I want to thank you for a delightful trip down memory lane enhanced by a delicious meal.

Many thanks for everything.

Jane Epstein (OA 1964)'

'Dear Tamlyn & Heather

Thank you so much for organising the lunch today and for inviting me to the occasion. It was lovely to meet the two of you and of course the many OAs who attended.

I look forward to meeting again on 24th June - the date is already in my diary.

Best wishes

Hugh Pearman (OA 1963)'

'It's a joy just to visit my old school.

Kind regards

Hugh Sheridan (OA 1954)'

Continued overleaf...



Anton Smith, John Bayes and Ulf Ehrenmark



David Wolchover, Lorrain De Peyer, Jane Epstein, Lucy Moy Thomas & Diana Kornbrot



Head of Lower School, Karen Thomas with OAs



John Bayes and Diana Shelley took a very chilly tour of the School



Lyford Cross and Paul Davis hadn't seen each other for many years and recognised one another immediately by calling out their schoolboy nicknames, 'Cross and Skinny'. Lyford travelled from Bishops Waltham to be there for the lunch



Diana Hardman nee Kabadi and Hugh Sheridan



Hugh Pearman and Peter Steinberger



Karen Thomas, Head of Lower School and Hugh Pearman who was Robert's Chemistry teacher at school



Peter Ross (formerly Shack) and Peter Seglow examine the school photos for familiar faces



Diana Kornbrot, Philip Castang and Gillian Sonin



Lucy Moy Thomas, Philip Castang, Lyford Cross and Penelope Rowlatt née Ionides



Jane Epstein, David Wolchover and Lorrain De Peyer



OAs gather in the Lower School Hall for the Reunion Lunch



Moiria Tait and Philip Castang



Diana Shelley

KAS Reunions and Events

A Level certificate presentation

We held the Class of 2022 A Level certificate presentation at the very start of the term in January and invited both Old Alfredians and their parents to KAS to share in the celebrations. Takako, Head of Sixth Form and AI, Deputy Head presented the Class of 2022 with their certificates and drinks were enjoyed in the Main Hall afterwards.

The presentation also coincided with the Recent Leavers Drinks reunion for those who left school in 2019, 2020, 2021. It was a great opportunity for Old Alfredians to catch up before returning to university and work after the festive break. **Justin** who is

studying BMus in Music Performance (Vocal Studies) at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire wrote, "I just wanted to thank you so much for yesterday evening. Ethan, my brother and I had a lovely time catching up with the recent leavers and staff alike!"

'This is a great idea!'
Past parent, Jane

'It was so lovely to be back at the school with my parents, friends and teachers. It was great to catch up with old friends and see what everyone was up to.'

Harriet Leadbetter (OA 2022)

'The A Level presentation and drinks afterwards was a lovely low-key evening, where it was really nice to be able to catch-up with students and teachers I hadn't seen since leaving school and to hear all the exciting things people were up to this year.'

Salvador O'Brien (OA 2022).

'Thank you so much for a really special night last night. It was KAS through and through, just with a wonderful touch of style and luxury.'

Vicky Marshall (OA 1986)
and KAS parent.



The Class of 2022



Parents at the A Level certificate presentation



Recent leavers, Ethan and Justin Jacobs



Takako and AI present the Class of 2022 with their A Level certificates



Class of 2022 with Takako and AI



Flame Brewer, Louis Maude, Fiona, Sal O'Brien and Sam Marshall

News from Old Alfredians

Fond memories of KAS

Eliot Katz (OA 1997) reached out after he saw a fantastic photo we posted on our social media accounts from the 1990s. He wrote, 'My uncle Jeffrey Roberts is also an alumni from the 1970s (not sure of his exact dates). Here are a couple of highlights from my time at KAS:

- 1) My cohort was the second to participate in the Village project (circa 1992). Fantastic memories of sleeping in the woods in our cardboard boxes.
- 2) On a trip to Glasgow (circa 1992) our group was attacked by a

local gang in a park (I think they were known as the "Anderston gang"). Dawn – before she became Head Teacher, was amazing in that situation defending us by getting right up in their faces and screaming at them until they backed off. I'm sure she was terrified, but she put on a great show of bravery!

As you can tell, I have very fond memories of KAS. I don't think I'll be in London for the 24th June reunion but my parents still live locally so I tend to come back to visit London a couple of times a year.

All the best, Eliot'



1990s at KAS, do let us know if you recognise anyone or know what year this was taken. Photo credit: The KAS Archives

From static to moving

Milla Lewis (OA 2015) recently popped in to see KAS photography A level students to talk about how she moved from static photography to the moving image. She wrote, "I've recently returned from Poland, where I was selected for a year-long mentorship program at the National Film School of Lodz. Since then, I've been working on a number of personal film projects and as a freelance filmmaker and photographer"



Milla Lewis

Power Cut Theatre

Libbi – Jack Peel (OA 2019) went to study Drama at Falmouth University and has started her own theatre company, Power Cut Theatre. They will be performing in Brighton. This is the link to book tickets. www.powercuttheatre.co.uk

Coppa Feel in the Sahara

We recently caught up with **Carly Moosah (OA 2000)** to hear all about her Sahara walk in aid of Coppa Feel.

If you had asked me a few years ago if I would consider myself a trekker or an avid camper I would have given a firm no in response and laughed at the idea. Considering I went to KAS from 12 years old, I managed to somehow always go on the camps that didn't involve tent sleeping. However, since my Breast Cancer diagnosis in December 2019 and subsequent remission since February 2021, that has all changed and I have discovered a love for adventure unlike anything I have known before.

In just over a year I have trekked 200km for Coppa Feel charity, the only Breast Cancer awareness charity intent on educating everyone, especially young people, on the signs and symptoms of Breast Cancer to ensure it is found early. Early diagnosis makes such a difference to a prognosis and I knew my swelling under my armpit

needed checking thanks to the work they do. In reality, they saved my life! (along with my amazing team who treated me!)

I have just returned from trekking 100km across the vast, incredibly hot, magical, stunning Sahara Desert in Morocco. It can only be described as other worldly. I felt like I was walking through movie scenes and it all felt incredibly dream like (other than the pain from my feet which felt very very real!) The landscapes and terrain were so varied and every day of trekking brought different challenges. Walking up steep sand dunes as your feet sink in was incredibly tough. But oh my goodness, reaching the top and looking around and seeing sand dunes for miles in every direction was breath taking and mind blowing.

130 of us took on this adventure of a lifetime all in the name of checking breasts and pecs and catching Breast Cancer early. With a mix of stories and reasons for applying, one thing bonded us all together and that was that we had stepped out of our comfort zone for something important to us. To do something for ourselves. To take on a challenge and have that incredible feeling of achieving something that is not achieved every day. And to gift ourselves this time away from the hecticness of life to strip it back to basics. For five days we simply walked and talked. And it was hard and at times we felt broken, but it was so incredibly life affirming and connecting too. Making friends for life and finding trust in my body again after my diagnosis and brutal treatment.

From never camping a day in my life a few years ago and not owning trekking boots and thinking a water bladder must mean a full bladder of water (it is in fact a device to carry water in your back pack and sip it throughout your trek which in the relentless heat of the desert was vital!), I now have camped 6 nights in the Scottish



Carly Moosah

Highlands (which was wet and cold!) and 5 nights in the Sahara Desert (which was dry and cold!). I'm an expert wild weeer which is not a sentence I ever thought I would write and in the desert these were some of the most magical moments going for a wild wee in the middle of the night and looking up at the sky illuminated by stars. Seeing planets such as Mars, Jupiter and Saturn so vividly and feeling so incredibly small, in the most grounding spectacular way.

The past few years have been so challenging in my world, but to see how small my world is in the bigger picture was actually incredibly comforting.

I'm so grateful for this experience. And will definitely not be hanging up my trekking boots any time soon. I am proof that it is never too late to try something new. If I can fall in love with camping and trekking at 40 years old, then you might just surprise yourself too!

If you are looking for an adventure you can check out the Charity Challenge website or register interest with Coppa Feel who will be announcing their treks for 2023 in January. Seriously, you will not regret it!



Squirrel Hall

Did you know that the current incarnation of Squirrel Hall was actually designed in 2010 for the London Festival of Architecture? The idea was to make a useful piece of built environment for the cost of an architectural model.

Designed by architect and parent Tim Lucas, it was also used for the Price & Myers 35th birthday party and lent to TRADA for a timber exhibition in Coventry.

Tim explains 'It has a nifty trick of being a scissor lift so you can assemble it flat and wide and jack the corners together to lift it up. No crane required! Each scissor is a pair of 10m long LVL timber beams.'

After a few years in storage, The King Alfred School very kindly adopted it and over the past 5 years it has become New Squirrel Hall at the heart of the school. Squirrel Hall was one of the original classrooms built on the Manor Wood site in the 1920s under the boughs of two huge, sweet chestnut trees.



Building Squirrel Hall in 1929

Tim Lucas (current parent)



Squirrel Hall, today



Carly Moosah and the Coppa Feel team on day 5 of their Sahara trek

Girls cricket at KAS

We heard from **Julie James Bailey nee Heyting (OA 1952)** after she received the Autumn 2022 newsletter.

Thank you so much for sending me these newsletters. I am not sure how I did not pick up on them once they became digital. I am glad to see that there are a number of names I recognise in the recent newsletter. Alas no women feature in the photos of cricket teams! I will attach one with me in it. The other girl there is Sarah Miller the scorer. I had to battle to be able to play because there were so few teams from other schools that had girls!!

Best wishes, Julie.

If you are based in Australia and would be interested in meeting up with Julie and fellow Old Alfredians do get in touch with us at oa@kingalfred.org.uk



Julie James Bailey nee Heyting and Sarah Miller – the scorer in the KAS cricket team

The 1955 KAS Tennis Finals

After a lovely telephone conversation with **Howard Cheek (OA 1957)**, he got in touch with a copy of a wonderful photograph:

'Hi Heather. As promised the photo of that far off day in 1955 – the tennis singles final at KAS.

L to R Sidney Thompson, Peter Lipton, Trevor Wright, and myself. I hope it arrives safely. The crowd at the back was Francis Fletcher, my then girlfriend and Jocelyn Ryder-Smith,



Sidney Thompson, Peter Lipton, Trevor Wright, and Howard Cheek at the KAS 1955 tennis singles final

daughter of Ros and Fred both teachers.

Howard Cheek'

If you have any photographic gems at home like this then do send them in. You can email them to oa@kingalfred.org.uk or post them to the Old Alfredian Office and we will scan them and post them back.

Lou Brown (OA 2016)

I'm Lou (they/them) an Old Alfredian (I joined in year 6 and left after year 11 in 2014). In 2018, while I was studying Politics, Psychology and Sociology at Newcastle University, I set up my small art business called Goodstrangevibes that makes a difference in relation to mental health, body image, LGBTQ+ topics and sex education. I do this primarily through running creative mental health workshops, commissions, sharing my art on social media (@goodstrangevibes) and selling my art on products goodstrangevibes.com/shop. I'd love to hear from you (goodstrangevibes@gmail.com) if you have any questions or would like to hire me for a commission or workshop.



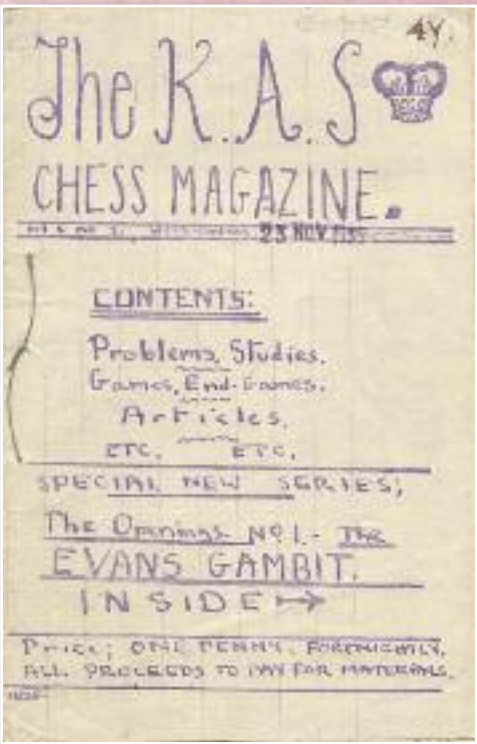
Lou Brown

Check Mate

Chess has long been a big part of KAS life – it is still offered as a Choice option to students today. Taken from the KAS Archives Instagram page, "The KAS Chess Magazine was produced fortnightly in 1935. It included an editorial, match highlights, articles and problems. The first issue sold out in two hours. Contributors used pseudonyms such as "Queen's Rook" and their identities were a closely guarded secret.

KAS had a notably strong chess team 1934-36. Club member and Old Alfredian, **David Brine Pritchard (1919-2005)** later became a county player, wrote several chess books and was a pilot in the RAF during the Second World War."

You can delve deeper into the KAS Archives by following [@king_alfred_archive](https://www.instagram.com/king_alfred_archive) on Instagram or you can find the KAS in 125 artefacts tab on the School website here: www.kingalfred.org.uk/kas-in-125-artefacts/



The cover of the 1935 Chess Magazine
Credit: KAS Archives



The Lower School Head playing a game of Chess on the field circa 1960s

Operatic Success

My name is **Justin Jacobs (OA 2020)**, I graduated from KAS in 2020 and I was part of the first UAL group. I am now studying at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire on the BMus in music performance (Vocal Studies) with one more year to go! I am looking forward to completing this degree and then moving onto a masters in Operatic Performance.

The UAL course gave me many different tools to put in my singing and acting toolkit. Without the training we had in various straight acting shows or the attention to detail in character work in the musicals we put on at KAS, I



Justin on stage in Mesdames de la Halle

wouldn't be the artist on stage that I am today. I have performed on many stages across the UK since leaving KAS, the most notable being my London stage debut in the British Youth Opera's production of *Sir John In Love* at Opera Holland Park which was a roaring success.

Since November 2021, I have had quite a large number of different performance opportunities:

I played the role of Tommy in Stephen Mcneff's Opera 'Banished' in March of last year and also in June, the role of Raflafla in Offenbach's hilarious 'Mesdames de la Halle'. Both of these productions took place at the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire and I have

attached some photos from both of them to this email.

After the Offenbach however, my fun didn't end there! I was very fortunate to have made my London stage debut in the summer with the British Youth Opera. I performed the role of Dr. Caius which was such a fun and, well, French role to play! Below I have attached a review by Gerald Malone from Reaction:

"For example, the ultra-French Dr Caius, intent on punching everyone's lights out, was sung by tenor Justin Jacobs, who posed as a sort of feisty Macron on a pugilistic mission. Jacobs' first BYO appearance was a huge success."

– Gerald Malone, Reaction

After that, I returned to RBC for my third year of study and it is going incredibly well. Just a few months ago I took part in a set of Opera Scenes produced by the fantastic team at Waterperry Opera Festival. I played the role of Nemorino from Donizetti's Elixir d'amore and I was able to perform the scene in which he first receives this 'Elixir' and starts to slowly impress Adina.

2023 is shaping up to be quite an exciting year! Just next week I have a performance with the wonderful Dylan Perez in which a lot of my colleagues and I will be performing lesser-known American songs set to the poetry of Emily Dickinson. After that, in March, I will be performing the role of the Mosquito and the Schoolmaster in RBC's Spring Opera Production of the Cunning Little Vixen by Janáček. I am super excited to be getting this show on the road and dig further into such interesting music.

The Barbers

Recently, the Old Alfredian office got in touch with Kate Barber – Chris Barber’s widow. Hettie, Audrey and Chris are often remembered in OA’s recollections of their time at school, so we are delighted to share with you these photographs that Kate kindly sent to us.



Audrey Barber



Hettie Barber as the Lord Mayor of Canterbury



Chris, Hettie and Audrey Barber in 1994



Chris and Audrey Barber

Printing at KAS

Often Old Alfredians who attended the school in Royston when it was evacuated during the War will talk about Birkett’s print room and how printing at KAS continued with vigour when the school returned to Manor Wood.

Stephen Brandes (OA 1971) recently shared this beautiful painting of the printing press that still languishes in the KAS archives along with the logbooks of items produced here on the press that was then sent to be reproduced in number elsewhere. You can delve into this rich history of the school in more detail in the book produced to celebrate 125 years of the school. You can order your copy here: <https://profileditions.com/product/the-king-alfred-school/>



The KAS printing Press (photo credit: Sophie Willison)

When love blossoms

After interviewing Old Alfredian couple **Joel (OA 1995)** and **Jodi Mishcon (OA 1999)** who met at KAS, for ‘125 Old Alfredian voices’, we began to wonder about the many OAs with a similar story – we would love to hear from you.



Old Alfredians, Jodi and Joel Mishcon on their wedding day, met at KAS

Nightspark

Children’s author **Michael Mann’s (OA 2000)** sequel, *Nightspark*, is available for pre-order. Michael’s debut novel, *Ghostcloud*, was one of Waterstone’s ‘Best Children’s Books of 2021’. He also has a story in the beautiful new Faber Book of Bedtime Stories.

Michael has been busy visiting schools to deliver sessions about how anyone can be a writer and how reading is key to children aged 7-13 years old. His talk also touches upon the importance of diverse representation in fiction, “because the main character is someone of mixed Indian heritage like me.”

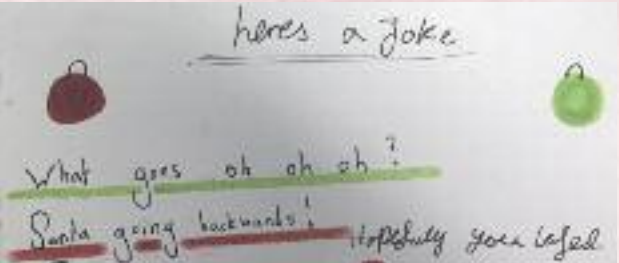
Michael has credited the school and his teachers with igniting his love of reading and writing stories, despite only attending KAS between the ages of 4 and 8 years old. He said: “I have wonderful memories of learning to read with Audrey in Reception.”

Festive Post

Festive Post returned for a second year to a fantastic response from Old Alfredians. Our current Year 6 pupils designed festive cards for 20 of our oldest OAs to wish them Season’s Greetings from The King Alfred School. Rachael Herman, Deputy Head of Lower School invited us to class to hand out the letters we had received back from Old Alfredians to much excitement! It took 20 days for **Paul**



The children in year 6 had a wonderful response from their letters to Old Alfredians



A festive joke



Gay Galsworthy's beautifully illustrated letter to Rosa and Frida

Davis’ (OA 1951) card to arrive despite him living in Hampstead Garden Suburb, so it was serendipitous that he got to meet the pupil who had written to him during the recent Old Alfredian lunch.

Not only is it a joy to see what current pupils write and ask OAs but we are always overwhelmed by the breadth of artistic talent in just this small number of the OA community and the level of effort that goes into their responses.



Marley was delighted to receive a letter from Anthea Goldsmith



A card to Felix Moore



Mani with his photograph from Donald Neal



Reading her letter from Gay Galsworthy



Paul Davis and Summer meet at a recent OA lunch

A Letter From the Head...

1898 was an auspicious year for beginnings. In the world of literature, it gave birth to CS Lewis and Bertol Brecht, in the world of art, Henry Moore and Tamara de Lempicka, in the world of music, Paul Robeson and George Gershwin. In the field of acting, it saw the arrival of Lillian Gish, Lettie Leyna, and Gracie Fields, whilst in engineering, an infant Enzo Ferrari.

As well as people, 1898 saw the arrival of Pepsi Cola, the discovery of radium by Marie and Pierre Curie, and the publication of J'accuse by Emile Zola, revealing the injustice of the Dreyfus affair for which he was subsequently imprisoned. Educational institutions such as the University of East London and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine were born, whilst Portsmouth, finally got a football team.

Within this creative firmament there was of course one more auspicious birth – The King Alfred School. Located initially in Ellerdale Road in Hampstead it got off to a star-studded start – being opened by no lesser person than Millicent Fawcett, the leader of the women's suffrage movement. She campaigned for women to have the vote within the law in contrast to the suffragettes led by the Pankhurst's who at times operated outside the law, and in 2018 she topped a BBC Radio 4 poll for the most influential women of the last 100 years. She also happened to be the sister of Elizabeth Garrett Anderson, Britain's first officially qualified female doctor.

Women were very much at the heart of the original KAS mission. Two were the driving force, Alice Mullins and Isabel White Wallace. These two women represented the twin pillars of the project – rationality and individuality. Isabel White Wallace

came from a scientific background; she believed in the power of reason to sweep away dusty tradition and re-make the world anew. Alice Mullins meanwhile was a sculptor; she believed in the power of creativity and individual expression. That combination of rigorous thought and free spirit has been at the heart of KAS ever since.

The founders were profoundly concerned by the way schools had evolved in industrialised late Victorian Britain. In the words of Isabel, schools "minted young people into pieces like coinage." They hoped to create a very different kind of education: one where their sons and daughters would work together, one that was unattached to any religion, and one which took into account the ideas of contemporary educational reformers. Subjects would be interlinked, homework limited, leisure and play essential, and no scholarships or prizes awarded, for learning for its own sake was the aim. Each child would be enabled to grow into their own unique self, nurturing their confidence, curiosity, and character. This was a time of optimism about what society could be, and the school was an integral part of their vision for a freer, more humane, more joyful world.

It would be no exaggeration therefore to say that the original founders had radical fire in their bellies. They were ideologically driven and formidable.

The first Head, Charles E. Rice, was appointed in 1898 but he and the school parted ways after two years. He was replaced by John Russell, who came from the more traditional UCS. John Russell is seen by many as the person who moved KAS beyond an experiment into a recognisable school. He understood that sufficient pupil

numbers were required to operate, which in turn required a broader group of parents to buy into the school's vision. Despite some disquiet, he introduced a structured and broadly traditional curriculum, ensured that pupils were prepared for exams, and oversaw an orderly environment. At the same time, there was a strong commitment to nurturing each individual, positive supportive relationships between students and staff, the opportunity for practical work alongside academic studies, a recognition of the importance of 'recreation' or play, and a culture of listening to and valuing the contributions of young people. This formula came to define KAS – one foot in pragmatic reality, and the other in progressive idealism.

The 1920s and 30s saw a far more progressive curriculum embedded into the day-to-day life of the school. Imported from America, the Dalton Plan gave a great deal of freedom to students. It was based on a learning contract between pupil and teacher. Pupils pursued subjects in the order that they chose and could decide which classrooms to go to at all points of the day. They completed tasks which made up 'stages' at their own pace and direction, and then were accountable for the progress that they made. Afternoons, in fact all afternoons, were spent on learning for its own sake. They chose which sessions to go to, and the legacy of this structure continues to this day through Choice on Wednesday and Friday.

Over two decades, the Dalton Plan became the defining characteristic of KAS. It showed a strong commitment to the ideals of progressivism and fulfilled KAS's remit as a demonstration school.

After World War Two, expectations shifted, and the new Head, Montgomery, or Monty as he was known, recalibrated. As the scale of the school increased, so did the level of organisation required to make everything function smoothly. Critically, KAS kept its informal relationships, its rich cultural programme, and its powerful sense of being a nurturing community. Hearing the memories of Old Alfredians from that time, there was no doubt that KAS still felt vastly different to pretty much anywhere else.

The 1960s and 70s once again saw modifications. In an era of freedom and experimentation, which should be the role of a progressive school? There



KAS Open Day, 1930

were long debates about the 'ethos' as the school sought to define its identity when many state schools were adapting forward-thinking practices.

In time honoured fashion this was followed by a period of rebalancing. Just as during the eras of Russell and Montgomery, under Francis Moran, who came from Eton, a new formula was struck between pragmatism and ideology. Underpinning this was the traditional KAS emphasis on the development of the individual, all within a relaxed and harmonious school culture.

So, where does this leave us today? How are we adapting to the times and navigating the inherent dilemmas of being a progressive school? Are we in a phase of pragmatism or experimentation? How well are we making the ethos work? How are we squaring that circle that so many others have had to grapple with over the last 125 years?

Well, we are at a moment of educational reform.

For the first time since the Dalton Plan in the 1930s, our curriculum structure for older students embeds educational idealism.

In Years 6 to 8 for example, Explorations are up and running. Embracing interdisciplinarity, enquiry methodology, explicit skills development and individual choice, they provide a quite different experience to 'conventional' lessons, and echo elements of the Dalton Plan. They are integrated into the fabric of the timetable and the site. In Year 7 they make up almost a third of the week and specially trained staff have been specifically appointed to fill the roles. Similarly, in years 9 to 11, we are moving away from the norm for the first time for at least half-a-century. We are creating our own SDCs – school directed courses – which break free of the shackles of the reductionist GCSE curriculum that dictates the life of 15 and 16 years olds across the country. These courses embrace a holistic appeal to content, either by breaking down the silos between subjects or by enabling greater diversity of texts and topics. They have a broader approach to assessment allowing students to demonstrate what they can do through a range of tasks rather than just being focussed on the high stakes 'penalty shootout' of exams. And most importantly of all, they encourage young people to think for themselves. Original thinking is a positive disadvantage within the GCSE system where work is only rewarded for matching the rigid standardised marking rubric – not my, or I am sure yours, definition of an excellent education.

In the lower school, enquiry methodology, based on an integrated framework linking skills, attributes and knowledge has taken root. It is wonderful to see children as young as

five talk about their progress, their learning and their thinking, and have the opportunity to explore the world through play and make links and connections between subjects areas and their own passions. Much of the change in the upper school is driven by this.

There is however an important dimension to all these reforms which is how, in our 125-anniversary year, we seek to square the circle.

Alongside these progressive practices, sit other elements that are more recognisably mainstream. In the lower school, enquiry sits alongside the Maths Mastery programme. In Year 7, the two days a week of enquiry-based learning sit alongside three days of a conventional timetable. In Years 10 and 11, everyone will have a core of GCSEs that sit alongside the more expansive SDCs.

This is literally having one foot firmly planted in our progressive ideology; and one foot in the reality of contemporary North London.

Bringing about any rebalancing is not easy. Any change process demands energy, resources, and creates unavoidable anxiety and stress. Things do not always go perfectly, and critics seize upon blips as evidence that the whole enterprise is doomed to failure. So, why do this then?

In part because of the radicalism of our founders; we want to be true to their ideals and fulfil the aspirations encoded in our legal articles. Perhaps more importantly however, we want to innovate because this is what our children and young people need to be successful in today's world.

We now live in the era of Chat GPT. Is learning quotes or dates or formulae going to cut it in a world where a free app on our phones can produce long and sophisticated answers which can pass university exams? Is producing answers that meet narrow criteria going to lead to the creative thinking, communication and collaboration skills required to find answers to pressing problems such as climate change, sustainability or inequality? We need our young people to be ready to meet the challenges that lay before them and looking back on my 32 years in the profession, I only become ever more certain that only an education founded on the principle of rigorous thought and free spirit is going to achieve this.

We expect more from our young people because they have to think for themselves. They have to manage their learning and learn how to

Outdoor learning at KAS



collaborate with others to benefit the whole. These are the foundational skills they will require to lead happy and fulfilling lives and to improve the World; it is up to us as educators to nurture this.

More and more people are coming to realise that this is what is needed. They increasingly see the limitations of the conventional system and want greater ambition for their children. We see this here in the growing demand for places, and in the numbers of visitors – from this country and abroad – who want to see first-hand what we do. We see it too in the growth of our partnerships with other schools – both State and independent – who want to collaborate with us to take this agenda forward. If ever there was a time for KAS's philosophy, then that time is now.

Returning to our founders, they operated in the same social and intellectual circles as many other well-known luminaries of the time. This included HG Wells who almost certainly knew people associated with KAS. In 1895, he published his revolutionary Novella the Time Machine. Imagine, for a moment, our founders – Alice and Isabel – climbing into his famous contraption and fast forwarding 125 years – what would they make of KAS today?

Well, I believe that they would have been immensely proud.

Proud of the impact their vision had had on so many hundreds of lives over 5 generations.

Proud that their beliefs in rigorous thought and free spirit were still alive and kicking.

Proud that their passion to create a freer, more humane, more joyful world still shone brightly.

And, proud that their school had flourished for 125 years, and that it had never been in a stronger position to thrive for a further 125 years into the future.

Robert

Robert Lobatto, Head

KAS at the Forefront of Educational Innovation

It has been an exceptionally busy term in terms of our external facing activities.

In January, Rethinking Assessment, which Robert and I help to lead, organised a large conference at the very grand Draper's Hall in London, in conjunction with the Edge Foundation, the Association of School and College Leaders, and St Paul's Girls' School. There were over 250 school leaders there to hear about the need for an urgent reform of assessment. I was part of a couple of panels, one on how a reform of assessment could lead to greater overall equity in the system, and one on the desirability of collating all a young person's achievements into a digital learner profile, which is a growing trend around the world to reduce the emphasis on exam grades alone. I also had a chance, too, to plug our approach to School Directed Courses, which are GCSE replacements run by a number of schools, including KAS. We made some additional recruits to our consortium on the back of that, more of which below.

I also had a chance to present our thinking to the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Schools, Curriculum and Assessment in Westminster, led by Flick Drummond MP, who is also on the Education Select Committee. She did not know about KAS. She does now! MPs and Lords from both sides of the houses are rallying around the idea that the current system is not fit for purpose, and we do feel as though we are contributing to building some momentum around change. One of our Rethinking Assessment co-founders, Peter Hyman, has taken up a post as senior adviser to Keir Starmer, so we are managing to get our agenda whispered into some influential ears.

As well as getting in the ears of the policy makers, we are also building a grass roots movement to reduce the number of GCSEs in favour of more school-led approaches. We have established a School Directed Consortium (SDCC) comprised of schools who have

already taken the plunge into writing their own courses to replace some GCSEs (e.g., St Paul's Girls', Bedales, KAS, King's High Warwick, Latymer Upper School, School 21) as well as schools who are committed to doing so in the near future (e.g., City of London Girls', Cheadle Hulme, Bradfield College, Livingstone Academy). I was invited in February to explain the SDCC approach to a cluster group of Heads and Deputies from some weighty schools: Westminster, Winchester, Manchester Grammar, Dulwich College, Brighton College et al. This is not a self-evidently progressive list of schools, but the current system really does not serve anyone very well, and several leaders from these schools will attend our next SDCC meeting at Latymer Upper as they explore ways of escaping their current constraints.

In similar vein I had a chance to pitch the approach to Eton College's Centre for Innovation and Research in Learning, where I am an advisory group member. They are currently undertaking a curriculum review, so a seed has been firmly sewn.

Of course, we are not only interested in changing the independent landscape. One of our school aims is to have an 'impact on the world', and we are very much involved in trying to support the rest of the education sector in finding ways through their barriers to a more expansive education. Our work with the Next Big 10 network is primarily with state schools, and a

great forum for sharing innovative practice. Robert hosted a great meeting of leaders from those diverse schools earlier this term.

Employers, too, are drawing attention to the failures of the education system to develop the kinds of skills they want, and we are engaging closely with some of them to build pressure for change. I presented earlier this week to a global 'EY' (formerly Ernst and Young) audience on why the education system actively works against the kind of diversity that they know they need to build high performing teams. Interestingly EY now ignore school qualifications altogether in their hiring processes, as they turn out to be such unhelpful indicators of likely workplace performance. The other 'big four' firms are heading in a similar direction, as are others.

Internally, we have been pressing ahead with our own curricular reforms. We have undertaken a lengthy consultation process with the community to build consensus that we should build up our suite of non-GCSE courses. The final statistics will be published to the community soon, but there is strong support for the move. We are launching a new literature course - 'KAS Literature' - in September, and the uptake for this is great. More than half the year group will take our new course, which uses a wider range of assessment methods, and exposes students to a greater breadth of texts.

So, much excitement overall. We feel that the needle is beginning to shift in a distinctly more KAS direction, and we are all very proud to be part of the uprising!

Al McConville
Deputy Head, KAS



Snow Days at The King Alfred School

There is something rather beautiful when you see the school field covered in snow and frost. These photos are from a rather festive looking Manor Wood in December 2022. The lino print of this charming snowy scene is from the KAS Archives and was produced in 1929, most likely as a school greetings card.



A frosty start on the KAS farm



A lino print from 1929 of a KAS snow day (credit: KAS Archives)



Snow Day at Manor Wood, December 2022

Movers and Makers

Old Alfredian, **Jordan Schwarzenberger (OA 2015)** visited the School in mid March for the morning. Jordan started the day talking to Year 8 students as part of a Global Impact project they are working on. Jordan spoke about his time at KAS and how he is working in Digital Media and how that can be used for good. Year 8 students clearly loved hearing Jordan talk and had so many diverse questions to ask him.

Jordan then made his way to the Sixth Form Centre to present his Connections talk where he spoke candidly about University and

challenged students' thoughts about what might be right for them in terms of Higher Education. He encouraged them to think outside the box and follow their instinct about their career pathways and gave insightful advice from his own experiences.

We finished off a packed morning with Year 12 Film Studies students talking about the future of film making and the power of TikTok.

Jordan recently featured in the 'Movers and Makers' article in this month's *Independent School Parent* magazine and credited KAS with an education that encouraged his curiosity and creativity.



Jordan Schwarzenberger



Jordan talks to Year 12 about the impact of the decisions post KAS and to take advantage of the opportunities available to them at school



Independent School Parent magazine's article featuring OA, Jordan



Jordan and a very engaged year 8

Café Scientifique

In early March, Philip Price, Head of the Science department at KAS launched Café Scientifique, a place where you can discuss scientific ideas and issues over a coffee or tea with like-minded people. Old Alfredian, **Anna de Beer (OA 2020)** was the Café's first guest speaker.

Anna is currently a medical student at St Andrew's University. She spoke about studying medicine and STEM research but also about her involvement in Marrow – the Anthony Nolan branch at St Andrew's. Her passion for stem cell donation is clear and she explained that her involvement in 'The Hero Project' for Anthony Nolan has a far greater impact on lives than 8 years of her working in the health care system.

After giving A level biology students helpful advice on choosing University courses, she went on to explain how she grabbed the opportunities presented to her through University.

'I'm very lucky to be moving to Singapore for a while on a scholarship to work with the Singapore Immunology Network A*STAR (Agency for Science Technology and Research). Lab based research isn't something I've got much experience in, but research is



Anna De Beer (left), Philip Price and A Level Biology students

a passion of mine due to the potential end benefit to patients. Much like Anthony Nolan, research is a way for a small bit of work to possibly have a great positive outcome. I will be working on a project about skin

microbiome and eczema.'

We will also be welcoming Anna to speak to wider audience of Sixth formers at an upcoming Connections Series at the end of March before she leaves for Singapore.

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JOIN
TODAY!

We are very excited to invite you to sign up to our Old Alfredian portal. KAS Connected is a unique online platform, where you update your profile, connect with Old Alfredians and use the trusted King Alfred School Community to expand your professional network.

Find work experience and internships, post job openings and engage with Old Alfredians for advice and mentoring. Share your experiences of Higher Education choices. Watch our Connections series content. Advance your career beyond KAS with access to a whole host of exclusive features and resources.

Not looking for a career move? Sign up to KAS Connected and offer to act as a mentor to our graduating Old Alfredians.

KAS Connected
<https://kasconnected.org/>



The KAS Society logo designed by Charles F.A.Voysey (1857-1941)

AGM, The King Alfred School Society

We have another date to celebrate in this 125th year! In February 1898 the Arts and Crafts designer and architect Charles Voysey, one of our first parents, delivered the design for the logo of the Society. We have lived with this beautiful logo for the Society ever since but how often have we looked at the detail of it?



The KAS Society Logo designed by Charles Voysey in February 1898

Happily, Voysey left a note describing the ideas behind the design. Central is the tree of good and evil springing out of the heart. He depicted Alfred with details drawn from early manuscripts, notably a crown worn by Edgar. On the king's left is a monogram taken from a coin minted in 880AD in Alfred's reign. The monogram is formed by the letters of Londonia (London).

Voysey used some of the lettering in the logo from the coin but strangely not all of it. The L is missing and the F is not fully formed. That is a little mystery.



On the reverse of the coin there is an image of Alfred in profile and around it the letters ALFRED RE

A non-religious, secular school?

King Alfred is holding The Bible in his right hand indicating Proverbs chapter 2 verse 6 which reads

"For the Lord giveth wisdom: out of his mouth cometh knowledge and understanding". How odd to find a Bible quote in the logo of a school whose founders were so intent that no religion be taught to their children. Another mystery.

What is true is that Alfred was an ardent Christian, known for his zeal and

ability to convert Vikings to Christianity. His other great passion was education and learning, which is why the founders had chosen to name the school after him.

Perhaps we need to look more closely at Charles Voysey himself. He was not one of the seven founders but enrolled his children at the school from the earliest days.

He was the son of a Church of England priest who had educated him. Interestingly his father had been dismissed because he disagreed with certain accepted beliefs, for example he refused to preach the church's doctrine on eternal damnation. He formed his own church, Theism, breaking free from the constraints of his previous role.

What did the founders think when they first saw the design, one wonders? There is no record of any dissent (that we have found yet!) but it is interesting that the next design produced by Voysey for the school lacked any religious references. It was for a stained glass window for Ellerdale Road, the first school building. The V&A has this water colour of the window design. No biblical quotes just the simple Latin motto 'ex corde vita' – 'out of the heart springs life'. We wonder whether the original window is still there. Who is going to knock on the door of number 25 and politely enquire?

The Voyseys remained a part of the school for many years. The eldest son, also called Charles, became an architect like his father. He was laterally called Charles Cowles Voysey as he took his wife's surname as his own middle name upon marriage. It was



Voysey water colour design of the stained glass window

this Charles Voysey who drew up plans for the school at Manor Wood, beautiful buildings that sadly had to be exchanged for used army huts when the move was made due to a severe lack of funds.

Charles F.A.Voysey is known to this day for the many beautiful and distinctive houses he designed. Have a look at Annersley House, 2 Platts Lane, Hampstead. He built this for his father and it is where his father died.

Kara Conti
The President of The King Alfred School Society



The Voyseys with their sons Charles and Annesley

The inaugural AGM meeting took place in February of this year at The King Alfred School and saw a wonderful turn out from the whole KAS community.

Kara Conti hosted a tea at her home before the AGM for Honorary Members of the Society. Former staff member, Joe Keating was a surprise guest who attended the meeting with Tom Bloch, Angela Ratner and Christine Prowse. Silvia Beevers came to the tea after having celebrated her 91st birthday the week before!

The meeting closed with Robert's speech which you can watch here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AuWYJv57tEs>

It really did mark the fact that The King Alfred's School's 125th anniversary year has finally arrived!



Joe Keating and Tom Bloch



Kara Conti, Christine Prowse, Angela Ratner and Heather Roberts

Me, as a learner

The staff inset day that took place after the February half term was themed 'Me, as a learner'. The day began with a visit from school founder, Isabel White Wallis (aka, Kara Conti – President of the KAS Society) who introduced staff to the other founders of The King Alfred School in 1898.

Having selected from an interesting list of activities led by staff members, Robert explained that the day was about exploring ourselves as learners: trying something new or challenging and acknowledging the ways in which we learn as an individual as well as having empathy towards our colleagues in these new situations. Robert encouraged us to apply this learning to our everyday interactions with pupils and staff. It was a fantastic day as these pictures show, that brought us together through learning something new and challenging ourselves.

Activities on offer included, Salsa dancing, cold water swimming, blacksmithing, candle making, microscopy, horse riding, forest school, fitness sessions, bread making, wood carving – the list goes on.



Taking a chilly dip in the Hampstead Ponds



Baking delicious breads in the Orchard room



Tapping away like Gene Kelly



Experimenting in the lab



A Djembe Hand Drumming Masterclass



Forging fire pokers over at Ivy Wood

KAS 125 Book

The 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".

We are delighted that **Gaby Roslin (OA 1984)** wrote the foreword to the book. It seems fitting, given her passion for the School, her long association with it – three generations of her family attended KAS – and her appreciation for the special experiences from over the years of KAS.

There is only a limited print run, and details on how to order it can be found in this issue or you can order via this link:

<https://profileeditions.com/product/the-king-alfred-school/>



Class Photo 1983/84



Drama, 1980s

Obituaries

Yvonne Margareta Wells, née Lehmann 7 April 1927 – 20 October 2022, OA (OA 1943)



Yvonne Wells

Yvonne Wells passed away in October 2022, at the age of 95. Alison, Yvonne’s daughter, contacted us to let us know and shared with us this beautiful description of her life.

“Yvonne was a person with so many interests and talents. She had a lovely personality, she was interested in people and what motivated them. She had empathy and compassion and was a good judge of character. She maintained a positive outlook on life. As my mother-in-law, meeting her, being warmly welcomed, when she was about 50, our relationship was strong and loving, I have held her in great respect and affection through these years.

Much of her strength owes to Yvonne’s wonderful marriage; I have honestly never met any couple so in love as Alan and Yvonne. 72½ years of marriage, but in love for several years before they married – their relationship has been an impressive example of shared interests and togetherness. I think that both appreciated the other so much that their love was always reinforced. Yes – a shining example.

Yvonne’s start in life was very different. Born in 1927 in, Berlin, to Otto Lehmann Russbüldt, an intellectual, pacifist, author, journalist, and outspoken critic of the rise of Hitler and Nazism, and to Lucia [pronounced Lutsia], his much younger wife.

Yvonne’s Polish-speaking grandmother took care of her much of the time as Lucia and Sofi were working as dressmakers. Life had normality until she was about six years old.

But – By 1933 the authorities became aware of Otto; there had to be caution in public, there was fear, there was a search by soldiers, even of little Yvonne in her bed. There was no money, food was insufficient and horrible, there seemed to be danger around for things said or overheard. Then her father seemed to have disappeared.

1934 saw a summer spent in exile in Holland; then, on 1st July 1935, Yvonne and her mother arrived in England to join Otto.

Eight-year-old Yvonne thus had learned three languages – German, Polish and some Dutch – before she began to learn English.

The poverty of refugee life was even more extreme. Her mother Lucia was already in poor health (with Hodgkin’s lymphoma) and Yvonne was placed to live in a children’s home. On 24th July 1937 Lucia died. Things seemed miserable.

Fortunately, Otto Lehmann Russbüldt was a man in contact with journalists in this country, in particular Henry Wickham-Steed, of The Times.

The Steed’s took Yvonne into their home and paid for her education. When the war began her Hampstead school was evacuated to Royston, and memories of those boarding school days at King Alfred School resurfaced vividly in her last years of life. So Alan and Yvonne first met as young teenagers at big Mason family Christmas gatherings at Eynsham Hall.

Experiencing life at Eynsham must have been such a contrast – big country house, servants, a kindly nanny in the household who also gave

Yvonne some long lasting affection that she must have needed.

Alan and Yvonne re-met when they were about 19 and fell in love. Yvonne’s married life took her wherever Alan’s geological fieldwork took him; to a tea estate in Ceylon with baby Alison; to a caravan under the Yorkshire Dales with toddler Alison, and then, plus baby James, constant moves as Alan was working for Royal Dutch Shell in The Netherlands, Libya, Iran, Turkey, Oman in the 1970’s, and finally Canada in 1980. Not every woman could have coped! In between the foreign deployments there were periods in The Hague, and always a house in Cambridge as the principal family anchor point for Christmas and other holidays.

In every place Yvonne ran the family home, managed the children, bicycled them to junior school and befriended local people. Her flair for languages came into its own. Fluent Dutch, enough Turkish and Farsi (Iranian), a bit of Arabic, to converse and shop. A self-taught skill was teaching English as a foreign language. Languages, dialects and even place names all fascinated her. Her pronunciation was impeccable and she was meticulous on lip and tongue placement to exactly reproduce the required sounds in any language.

This specialism led her, when in Canada to volunteer with brain injured adults to help with speech therapy for the brain injured with aphasia. Yvonne was very aware of the emotional side of learning and the impediments to learning when emotions are too frayed.

Alongside cooking, she was a skilled and keen needlewoman having been taught well at a young age. Textiles and textures fascinated her. There were practical items for the house, and later much crocheting, needlepoint, and interesting fabric artwork creations as gifts.

Yvonne the mother? James says her characteristic was fairness. As grandmother? Clare and Antony were much loved, with continuing interest in their characters and careers and families. Three great grandchildren brought smiles of delight to Yvonne’s face when she met the little ones.

This brings me back to Yvonne, the loving wife. Yvonne entered wholeheartedly into Alan’s love of travel, not just for his work, but to see places in detail; whether the long safari in Africa, weekend trips to far distant valleys and mountains in Iran or Turkey, and to see every corner of North America once they had settled there. All of this done with simplicity; hours in the VW campervan on dusty mountain roads or rugged logging trails in Rocky Mountain forest regions. Simple camping food rustled up in any location with a view, a pair of deckchairs the only concession to comfort or bad backs.

All of this travelling fed Yvonne’s wide range of interests, geography, landscape, history, archaeology, flowers, trees, and all wild life in every

part of every country. Pioneer settler life, early explorers, or indigenous culture – Yvonne made the effort to know and understand. They loved collecting artefacts from many places; when possible meeting and talking to the craftspeople.

Yvonne had a talent for maintaining strong friendship over the years; they met and enjoyed the company of interesting people. Christmas cards kept links with people known at King Alfred School, at St Anne’s Oxford, and from every country and foreign posting. After their move to the village of Haslingfield in 1992 they happily entered into that community, making many good friends.

I have every confidence that all who knew Yvonne will remember a

remarkable woman of many talents and interests but above all a warm, sweet-tempered personality, a loving mother and devoted wife.

The sad news of Yvonne’s passing prompted us to re print an excerpt from Paul Davis’ front page article from the KASzette, Spring 2004 about being reunited with Yonny at an OA reunion.

When Skinny met Yonny....
The arrival of KASzette has finally prompted me, most belatedly, to write to you after the memorable Reunion party. It really was one of the very best KAS things I can remember, since leaving all those years ago.

When I arrived at the Reunion, donned my label (Paul Davis 1939-

1951) and made my way into the hall, I did not know what to expect; I was however, overwhelmed by the numbers present. Being of a certain age, I thought I would gravitate towards people who looked to be of my generation. Seated by the opposite wall was a lady whose label stated, ‘Yvonne Lehmann 1939 -1943’. This meant she was at Royston, as I was throughout. I approached Yvonne and we looked at each other – no recognition on either side. I said, ‘were you known as Yonny?’ to which she answered ‘Yes, but how did you know?’ I said ‘I’m Skinny’, my nickname at the time and for long after. So, we renewed an acquaintance after a gap of no less than sixty years! This is of inestimable value.

David Weldon (OA and Past Parent)

It is with deep and great sadness to share the news of the passing of David Weldon. Exceptional father to **Lara and Georgia Weldon**, partner to Rachel Toler, step-father to Esme Toler, and son to Angela Steyn. Never will you meet a human who more faithfully lived his values. David was a teacher of all things and his teachings endless. He was a man strong in body, in spirit, and in commitment. David was committed to making everyone happy. He was a man committed to supporting others and a gentle guider. David would drop anything to provide support for anyone, always made everyone happy and laugh, made everyone feel clever and wise. He had an amazing ability to light up every single room he was in, because he was the happiest man in the world and spread his joy to everyone every single day. David was a man who kept promises, honoured commitments, he was a man of integrity, courage, and respect. He taught us to live your life

like they were your last and treat them like they are the best day of your life. He truly believed that if you tread the world with these systems intact, you would have a good life. David taught us all something new, whether that is the lesson of loving each other or the lesson of being courageous; he changed and shaped those who loved him forever.



David Weldon



David was an OA and father to OAs Lara and Georgia Weldon

Christopher H Noyes (OA 1974)

Christopher’s daughter, Lauren called to let us know that Christopher sadly passed away in July 2021. Christopher was at KAS with his siblings, James and Alison Noyes.



Kit and James Noyes at a Council meeting

Sally Clark (OA 1951)

Sally was always community minded and very active with charity work. She also had distinguished careers in nursing and editing as well as volunteering as a Justice of the Peace.

Sally and her husband, Noel, were successful proprietors of businesses and retired to the Gold Coast, Queensland, Australia 43 years ago. She lived her last 33 years in a retirement village fully independently living and continuing her active social life editing the Village newsletter as well as being on Committees and participating in many activities such as art and craft and playing cards and Mahjong.

During our regular Sunday coffee outings, Sally would often tell us fond stories of her time at The King Alfred School and one of her memories was of the treehouse within the school grounds. She also told us a funny story on her final day at the school when she and a group of girls went over to a nearby hotel for a celebratory drink only to discover one of her teachers who cheekily said “Oh Sally Clark, I thought I had seen the back of you”. The girls were in fits of laughter.

We truly believe that her time at The Kind Alfred School was one of the cornerstones of Sally’s approach to life and a foundation for her success.



Sally Clark

Dolf Polak (OA 1943)

Dolf attended KAS from 1930 to 1939

Credit: Obituary taken from The Guardian by Jenny Polak. Sunday 19th February, 2023

My father, Dolf Polak, who has died aged 98, was a professor of renal medicine who maintained a strong interest in music throughout his life. He was born in The Hague in the Netherlands but moved to London with his family when he was five years old. His parents, Jacques Polak, a lawyer who became a director of Unilever, and Connie van den Bergh, a housewife, both had a love of art and music, and Dolf learned the violin from an early age. Throughout the 1930s, the family home was a haven for Jewish refugees, many of whom were musicians. Connie chose progressive schools for her children; Dolf went to King Alfred's School in north London and then to Bedales in Hampshire during the second world war to avoid the blitz – although he returned to London regularly for violin lessons. He might have opted to become a professional musician, but with the war raging and many Dutch Jewish friends and family members dead or missing, he chose medicine instead. As a medical student at Cambridge University and later at the University College hospital in London, Dolf still

found time for music, playing with many people who later became celebrated performers as well as lifelong friends. But studying and playing were interrupted when the Dutch army sent him to Europe as a dispatch rider, so it was 1948 before he began his 40-year career in the NHS. In 1954 Dolf married Thalia Salaman, a sculptor, and they had four children: Ben, Kate, Louisa and me. In 1964 he started a regional renal unit in Portsmouth, and when a new medical school opened in Southampton in 1971 he became a professor there. He and Thalia renovated an old rectory nearby, creating a large music room: they lived there for 40 years. Despite being a full-time doctor and academic, Dolf was always a sought-after musician, playing in local orchestras and many chamber ensembles. The informal concerts he and Thalia organised at home became more regular after Dolf retired in 1988, and he began teaching violin to private pupils.



Dolf Polak was an accomplished violinist as well as a professor of renal medicine. Credit: The Guardian

In 2006 Dolf and Thalia moved to Cambridgeshire, where they were warmly welcomed by local chamber music players. Dolf played with these new friends until he was 96, when arthritis forced him to stop. In his spare time before that he had begun writing string arrangements for some of the music he loved, creating many short "encores" as well as a full-scale quintet. His formidable knowledge of the chamber music repertoire made him a daunting audience, but after he stopped playing he loved having people to come and play to him, remaining a courteous host to the end of his life. He is survived by Thalia, their four children, nine grandchildren and a great-granddaughter.

Julian Anderson (OA 1956)

12 June 1938 – 3 December 2022

We were very shocked and saddened to learn of Julian's death and our sincere condolences go to his sister Shirley (OA 1952) and his many friends. After speaking to Shirley at some length over recent months, we understand Julian did not want a fuss made, in typical Julian fashion, and there was to be no funeral or memorial. When I visited Julian at his home in Devon less than a year ago, he was still playing his violin every day, and we spent several hours chatting about his role as editor of the School

Magazine. He had copies from 1937 onwards and gave these to us for the KAS Archives. Julian attended KAS from 1945 when it returned to Manor Wood from Royston until he finished school in the sixth form. His A Level subjects were Chemistry, Physics and Applied Maths. He went on to study at Wadham College, Oxford University, initially to study Chemistry, but changing to Geology. Throughout his life the National Youth Orchestra, and the two pillars of his education: KAS and Oxford remained very important to him. Although he called himself a 'gentleman farmer' in his later years, his career spanned an important period in Britain's history. Julian was one of the civil servants seconded to work on the negotiations for Britain's accession to the European Economic Community. He spent three years in Brussels in the early 1970s. Interviewed on the Radio at the time



Julian Anderson

of the protracted Brexit negotiations, Julian referenced the challenges of these negotiations. Julian worked at Ministries of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food for over 30 years, and spent 10 years as Director General of the Country Landowners Association, where his great legacy was the establishment of the Farm Woodland Scheme in 1988. The Scheme, jointly funded with the Forestry Commission, encouraged farmers to plant new woodlands on lands formerly in agricultural use. Julian felt that the environmental movement truly matters and told me that throughout his life, the maxims he learnt at KAS included believing in a cause and acting on those beliefs. Memories of KAS centred on the joy of sport – the celebrated cricket team, featuring Nicky Alwyn (who went on to play first class cricket) with whom Julian opened the batting, hockey and tennis – music, and his studies. Julian credited KAS with giving him the 'joy of learning', the ability to think laterally, and to express yourself. This last quality was deeply influential in his life, as he was taught how to argue his case at KAS. His family will miss Julian greatly, and I will miss my conversations with an Old Alfredian, whose intelligence, empathy and humour shone through. I can still hear Julian's chuckle.

Tamlyn

KAS 125

KAS 125 Event

To mark The King Alfred School's 125th anniversary, we are inviting Old Alfredians to a Reunion Lunch on Saturday 24 June at 12pm for what will be the start of a special afternoon of celebrations. Taking place 125 years to the day since KAS was opened by Millicent Fawcett, this reunion will bring Old Alfredians together in year groups to mark the milestone anniversary over lunch, before Manor Wood opens up at 2pm for a celebration with our whole KAS community. Expect attractions aplenty for all ages, with opportunities to take part in musical, sporting and artistic activities alongside some special moments and displays capturing our unique KAS spirit. A full programme of activity will be released closer to the event. To guarantee your place at these free events – the special Reunion Lunch followed by the community celebration – please book your place today here: nuwebgroup.com The Old Alfredian Reunion Lunch takes place from 12pm to 2pm and should you wish to have guests join you for the wider community celebration from 2pm to 5pm, you can secure a maximum of four additional tickets for that part of the day by clicking here: nuwebgroup.com

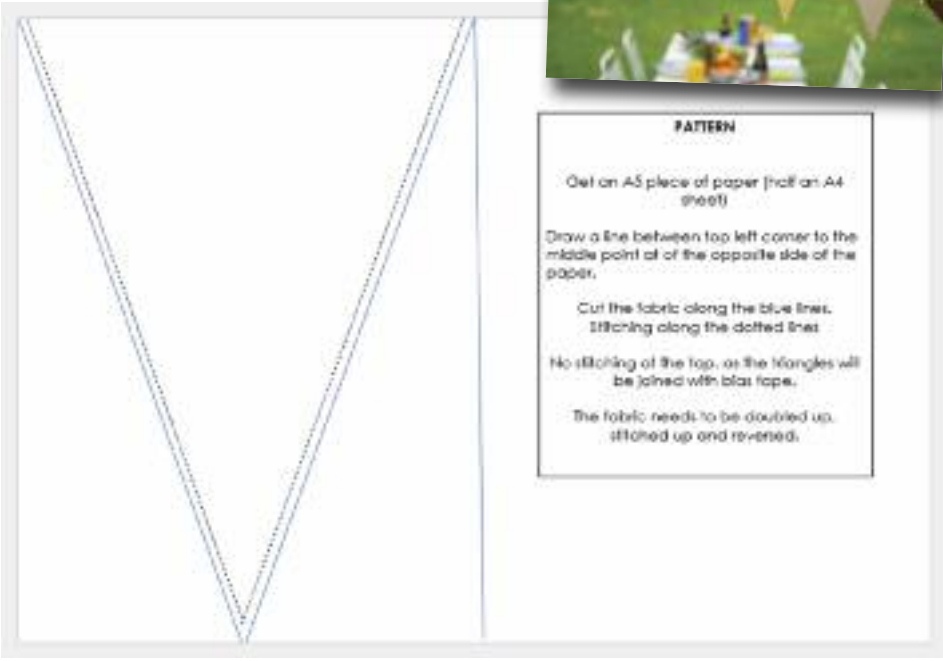


KAS Open Day, 1963



The KAS Bunting Design Challenge

KAS teacher, Pauline Maloney has launched a design challenge. We are asking the KAS community to make bunting flags to showcase and celebrate the past 125 years at KAS. You are invited to design, sew and submit bunting flag(s) that either represent your years at KAS, mark the 125th birthday of the School, or represent the school colours – purple and green. All entries will then be sewn together and displayed as part of the KAS 125 celebratory event on Saturday 24th June 2023. Once your flag(s) is/are finished, please place it/them in an envelope and either leave them in Front of House for the attention of Pauline or post them to Pauline Maloney, The King Alfred School, 149 North End Road, London, NW11 7HY **GOOD LUCK AND WE LOOK FORWARD TO RECEIVING YOUR DESIGNS!** All entries must be received by **12th May 2023** at the latest.



Please use this template to create your KAS Bunting Design

Old Alfredian Diary

KAS 125 Celebration Event and OA Reunion Lunch

24 June 2023. Please book here: <https://kingalfredschool.nuwebgroup.com/events/40131>

Old Alfredians V Sixth Form Football Match

Friday 28 April 2023 4pm – 5.30pm

We are hosting an Old Alfredian V Sixth Form match at KAS on Friday 28th April 2023 and we need you!

This is a wonderful opportunity to gather ALL Old Alfredians for a football match against the KAS Sixth Formers.

We are looking for supporters too to cheer the OA team on. Please mention this event to your OA friends who still play football who might not be in touch with us but would like to play.

Please sign up to play either by using this link: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/OAfootballmatch> or email us on oa@kingalfred.org.uk



Fives Court volunteers

We need your help! We will be recreating the hallowed Fives Court at the KAS 125 celebration event on Saturday 24 June 2023 for members of the KAS community to try their hand at this Alfredian sport. We would love Old Alfredians to volunteer their help and man the attraction. Do get in touch with Heather at oa@kingalfred.org.uk to offer your help.



KAS Fireworks

Save the date: 11 November 2023

Don't miss our Old Alfredian communications

OA emails, invitations and newsletters are delivered predominantly by email. Please add 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/>

Reunion Day

16 September 2023

We will be holding our annual day of reunions in September again this year. Let us know if you would like to get together with your year group and we will make it happen. oa@kingalfred.org.uk

Class of 2013

The TEN year reunion will be held as part of Reunion Day on 16 September 2023.

Get in touch if you want to receive information about this special celebration. oa@kingalfred.org.uk

Old Alfredians
&
Development Office

Tamlyn Worrall
Development Director

Heather Roberts
Development and
Old Alfredian Officer



@oldalfredians



@OldAlfredians



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