



The King Alfred School

Upper School Newsletter



October
2025

SCHOOL NEWS

Oar-some KAS crews row 21 miles

An early morning start and strong teamwork paid off for KAS Sixth Formers, who triumphed over their KAS competitors in a 21.6-mile rowing race up the Thames.

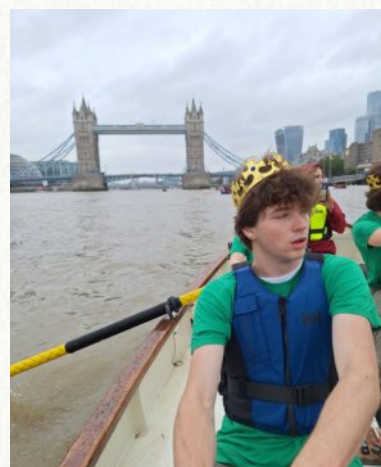
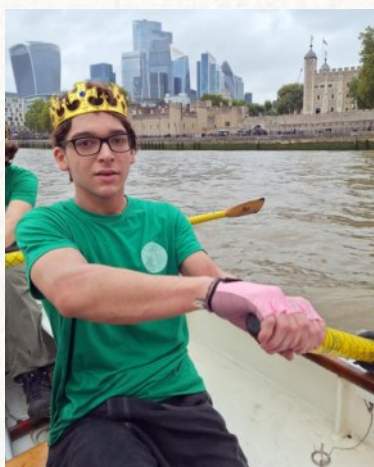
Three KAS crews — students, staff and parents — rowed from Millwall to Richmond in the Great River Race, among 300 boats. They used the school's boats, *Æthelflæd*, *Æthelgifu*, and *Ælfthryth*, named after King Alfred's daughters.

"It was an opportunity to do something different," said Sixth Former **Jimmy B.** "The 7:30 am start did make me wonder, 'Why am I here!?' But at home, I would just have been asleep in bed, so it was better to be doing something. It's there to be done, after all!"

Jimmy rowed with two close friends, two younger students, and KAS teacher **Julian**. The team rotated roles and took snack breaks to stay energised and in sync. And their efforts paid off: the student boat reached Richmond two minutes ahead of the teachers and five minutes ahead of the staff!

The atmosphere was a mix of focus and fun. "Half the participants were professional athletes, then in the other half, you've got people dressed as parrots," Jimmy laughed. But for him, it was more than just a race: "It's quite meditative when you get into the swing of it."

Well done to all who took part and represented KAS so wonderfully — proving what teamwork, spirit, and an early alarm can achieve!



30 years of Claire!

Early this term, we celebrated a remarkable milestone: Head of Year 8 **Claire Murphy**'s 30th anniversary as a teacher at KAS.

Claire has made an incredible impact on generations of students, and her dedication, warmth and wisdom have become a cherished part of school life.

To mark the occasion, we invited the KAS community to share their memories and tributes — and the response reflected the deep and lasting impression Claire has made over the years. We have shared some of the messages here.

If you see Claire around school, please do join us in celebrating this wonderful achievement!

“You are magic!!!”



“I wish I could still go to Claire’s office when I have any problems!”

“Starting a netball team was so much fun! You were a smiley inspiration when you started, Claire.”

“You’re the absolute BEST Claire! ❤️”

Marvellous efforts in Maths

Well done to our Sixth Formers who took part in the UK Maths Trust’s Senior Mathematical Challenge this term!

Three Year 12s and seven Year 13s completed the 90-minute challenge, tackling 25 stimulating and testing multiple-choice problems. The participants included:

Year 12:

Ace B
Mateo R
Jayden H

Year 13:

Alex L
Jemima R
Sofia D
Paloma L
Ella L
Koko K
Samira R

The results will be shared next month. Fancy tackling the challenge? [Head here!](#)



Elsewhere in the Maths department, teacher **Sam Kirkwood** and Maths Club students created the Rubik’s pumpkin pictured above, compiled of various online pixelated images of pumpkins and converted into Rubik’s colours.

Playful poems for National Poetry Day

We are thrilled to announce the winners of this year's poetry competition, held to coincide with National Poetry Day.

This year's theme was 'play'. Our Co-Head of English, **Zoe Rawlings**, shared: "The standard was incredibly high this year, particularly in Year 9 – it was near impossible to select a winner!"

After much agonising, the winners and special mentions were revealed as:

Year 7

Winner: Mark B

Special Mentions: Marlen A-M, Hayley R and Maja M

Year 8

Winner: Molly C

Special Mentions: Ella M and Ludo M

Year 9

Winner: Charlie F

Special Mentions: Vivian S, Leon O, Ella R-P, Marley S, Nate C-D and Olivia W

Well done to all who penned an entry, and congratulations also to our staff winners: **Pat Leacock** (Learning Support) and **Victoria Stewart** (PE)!

You can enjoy the winning student poems on the right and on the next page.



Poem

By Mark B (7B2)

When the morning sun begins to shine,
I run outside – it's playtime!
Skipping ropes and bouncing balls,
This has just began

I've heard it twice 3 to 4
It's playtime
Game time

Playtime
play boy
Gimme that dog

U wanna know what i ment
Well i ment

Taxes goin up
Stink BOMB

Playtime
Game time
Gimme that dog

Word play

By Molly C (8A2)

Through the trees, stones fly like fire,
Fire, fly through trees like stones,
'Stones through trees', Fire Fly,
Fire stones through trees,
Trees through stones,
Through trees,
Trees.

Everybody goes to the party with hats,
Everybody! To the party with hats!
The party with hats everybody,
Hats with everybody, party,
Party hats everybody,
Hats everybody,
Everybody.

Ducks eating pickles and mangos in Utah,
Eating mangos and ducks, in Utah,
Ducks eating mangos in Utah,
In Utah, eating mangos,
Mangos, in Utah,
Utah Mangos,
Mangos.

A Song for Old Hands Camp**By Charlie F (9A)**

Once upon a time you were twelve years old with the eyes of a doe and skin of the wind
 Once upon a time you were twelve years old with a voice of grass and hair of cinder
 Once upon a time you were twelve years old and you ran away north with the breeze
 Once upon a time you were twelve years old but you walked with the age of the earth
 Once upon a time you were twelve years old and the sky told you to savour your youth

You knew how to lark in the cruel wet snow
 You didn't cry when the hits got hard
 You told the river about your birth
 And forgave its broken bed
 Before slipping in its water's sunken arc

Once upon a time you were only ten and they all wished to be ten again
 Once upon a time you were only ten and you sighed and wished for home
 Once upon a time you were only ten and you didn't know the fight quite yet, you knew
 you had
 been fighting but you didn't quite know who
 Once upon a time you were only ten but with your head hung low and your teeth stayed
 wet
 Once upon a time you were only ten with a cry full of unskipped stones

But you kept the fire in your soul
 You let it heat your tired morning breath
 You wrapped your wounds with dirt and stars
 Ignored the burns and mold
 And let yourself be given to their hearts

Once upon a time you were near fourteen and you spoke of all the things you'd seen
 Once upon a time you were near fourteen you couldn't hold your tongue
 Once upon a time you were near fourteen with a bitter tongue and teeth of green
 Once upon a time you were near fourteen and you sang of dusty memories and
 Once upon a time you were near fourteen with a heart of heavy gold

I met you once at old hands camp
 You looked beyond your years
 You told us stories of the way you used to smile
 The day before you left you gave me silent wild advice
 And this is what you were singing all the while:

You told me
 "Play my story by the fire with your trusty old guitar
 Only when my soul is good and gone
 Don't let the coffin get to me when it's my turn to rot
 Let me be washed and eaten by the dark

Year 11's taste of A level life

This term, Year 11s took part in a focused morning designed to help them make informed choices about their A levels. The sessions encouraged students to explore unfamiliar subjects and those only available at A level.

Maisie B appreciated the clarity it brought: "It gave me better insight into what lessons would be like, what the course content would include and details of the exams and workload. I feel much better able to make a decision now."

In a separate workshop, Year 11s also had the chance to speak directly with current Year 13 students about how they selected their Sixth Form routes. These conversations offered valuable peer



Chemistry



Photography



Economics

insights into the decision-making process and what to expect from life in Sixth Form.

Bonfire Night tickets now on sale

Tickets are now on sale for our annual **Bonfire Night** celebration, which takes place on Saturday 15 November 2025. Harking back to Bonfire Nights of old at KAS, this year's event will put participation and community at its heart. There will be family-friendly activities, delicious hot food, drinks bars, a dazzling fireworks display and a warming bonfire.

Earlybird tickets are available until midnight on Sunday 2 November, priced at £18 for adults (normally £20) and £12 for children (normally £15), excluding booking fees.

Doors open at 5pm, with the fireworks display at 6pm and the bonfire lighting at 6:15pm. We hope to see you there! For tickets, [click here](#).



Buzzing for books

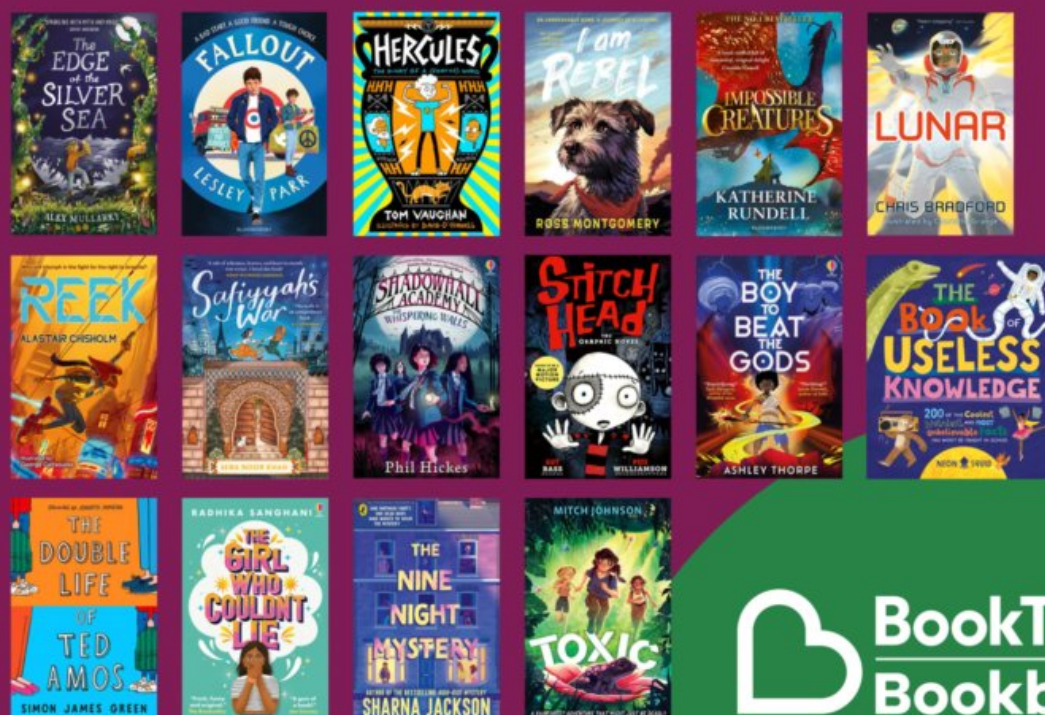
Year 7 students are buzzing after being treated to a new book!

Bookbuzz is a reading programme which lets students choose and keep their own book from a list of specially-selected titles. Run by BookTrust, the UK's largest reading charity, the aim is to support students to continue reading for pleasure as they transition into Upper School, and get them excited about books and reading.

Our most-chosen books this year were:

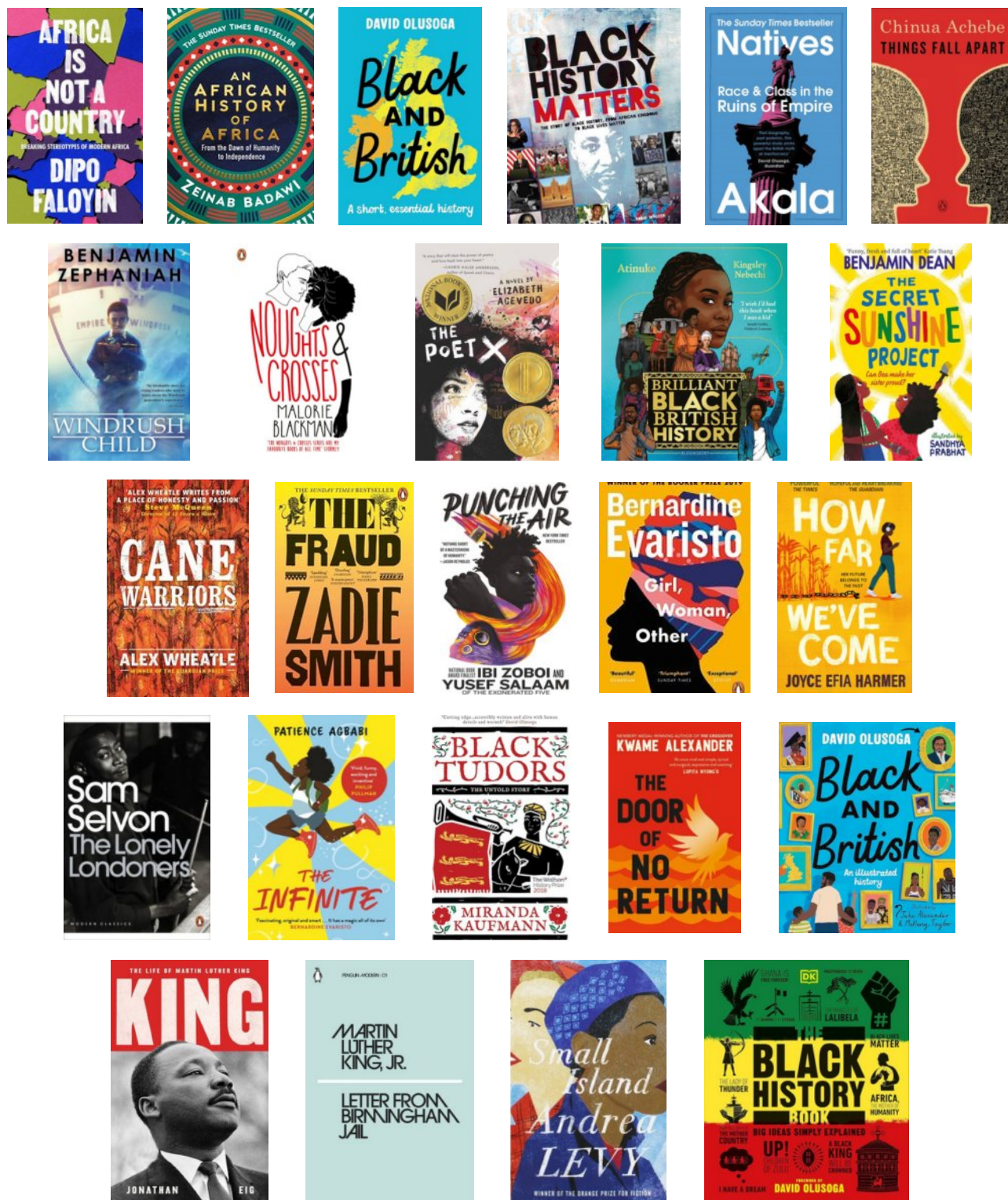
- *The Nine Night Mysteries* by Sharna Jackson
- *The Girl Who Couldn't Lie* by Radhika Sanghani
- *The Book of Useless Knowledge* by Sophie Allan et al

The books should arrive next half term. For more information, reading lists and author blogs, visit the [BookTrust website](https://www.booktrust.org.uk/).



**BLACK
HISTORY
MONTH
2025**

BHM Selected Reading



All books available in the Upper School Library

ART, MUSIC & DRAMA

Learning from a pro

Anne-Marie Duff returned to school this term for a workshop with our Year 13 **UAL Performance & Production Arts** students. The BAFTA-winning actor coached students on their Shakespeare monologues in preparation for drama school auditions.

"For me, it was the best thing we've done in our UAL course," shared **Tommy D.** "Anne-Marie's expert insight and guidance were invaluable – she really transformed our monologues. She knew exactly how to make the emotion of the piece real, and what triggers you need to think about."

Fellow student **Sasha P** added: "She prompted us to draw on personal experiences to make our performances more authentic. The difference in my acting at the end of the session was incredible!"



Our Head of Drama, **Lucy Hall**, said: "We're so grateful to Anne-Marie for her time and expertise. Our UAL students feel even more confident as they prepare to start their applications for life beyond KAS!"



Return of the Phoenix!

After extensive refurbishment, we're thrilled to share photos of the new and improved **King Alfred Phoenix Theatre**. We hope you'll agree that it's looking spectacular!

Improvements include the dressing rooms, bar and foyer, and the addition of a green room.

Students are already benefiting from the use of such an impressive performance space (see above and below for a few examples!), and we look forward to you seeing it at an upcoming school event.



Music industry insights

Our GCSE and UAL Music students were treated to a workshop with internationally renowned drummer, record producer and songwriter **Jack Baker** this term. The drummer for Grammy-nominated electronic act Bonobo shared insights about working in the music industry, answered questions, and treated students to a performance!



Life drawing day

This term, our Year 12 and 13 students participated in a fantastic one-day life drawing workshop with **Charlotte and Dani**, a teacher-model duo from the prestigious **Royal Academy**.

The studio buzzed with energy as students tackled a series of rapid-fire drawing exercises designed to challenge their perception and push their mark-making skills in fresh directions.

It was a long, tiring day, and the students finished with charcoal-smudged but smiling faces – plus a huge sense of accomplishment.



CHOICE, EXPLORATIONS & GLOBAL CHALLENGES

Year 8's terrific terrariums!

Year 8 got their hands dirty in a recent Science lesson where they made terrariums.

Students gathered soil from nearby Hampstead Heath and moss from around the school grounds. Back in the classroom, they learned about the important role that water, oxygen and carbon dioxide play in helping the mini-ecosystems thrive.

"It's science, but fun science!" said **Emma M.** Meanwhile, **Mylo C** found the creativity in the project: "It was really satisfying placing the moss and seeing it take shape."

The project was part of their STEM Exploration topic on 'Systems'.



Surviving (and thriving!) in Year 7



Year 7 students have been tackling the challenge of survival in their 'Surviving and Thriving on a Desert Island' project.

They began with a quick-fire task: building a spaghetti structure strong

enough to hold a marshmallow. Then, with DT and Forest School teacher Chris Raymond, they headed to the woods to construct a full-class shelter using only natural materials.

These activities have tested their ability to think creatively, work collaboratively and communicate effectively. They are now making mini prototypes ahead of building their own shelters in the Amphitheatre that must be stable, waterproof and warm.

Throughout the STEM Exploration, students will learn not just how to survive but also thrive in the wilderness.

SPORT

Netball season so far...

It's been a busy and exciting term for KAS netball, with teams showing skill, resilience and great sportsmanship across multiple fixtures.

Year 9 (pictured right) and **Year 10** faced tough competition against CCF, with final scores of 20–26 and 7–18. Despite the losses, both teams displayed strong teamwork and determination. They later bounced back with impressive wins against SMSJ: 16–0 (Year 9) and 12–1 (Year 10), highlighting excellent defence and sharp attacking play.

Elsewhere, our **Year 11** team competed in the ISA Netball Tournament at Abbots Hill School, finishing eighth overall. Their performance reflected years of dedicated practice and provided valuable experience ahead of league fixtures.

Two Year 7 teams entered a separate tournament, which saw the As finish



third, a fantastic achievement for their first outing. Meanwhile, the Bs went all the way to the final – and brought home the plate, pictured above! Some brilliant interceptions and standout shooting were key in their success.

Well done to all of our netballers for their energy, teamwork and commitment!

Football focus

It's been a great term for boys' football across the school, with standout performances from multiple year groups.

Year 11 dominated the pitch, securing three consecutive wins, including a commanding 8–0 victory over Maida Vale School.

Meanwhile, **Year 10** showed resilience, drawing 5–5 with North Bridge House Senior Hampstead before clinching a 3–1 win against Highgate.

Year 9 impressed with a solid 3–0 win, while **Year 7** celebrated a 4–2 triumph over Highgate.

Despite a tough 2–15 loss for **Year 8** against St John's Senior, the spirit remained high. And our **Sixth Formers** faced a challenging match against CCF, ending in a 0–5 defeat.

Overall, the teams demonstrated great skill, teamwork, and determination, setting a strong tone for the season ahead.

CAMPS & TRIPS

Anglesey odyssey for Year 7

September marks the beginning of a big transition for our Year 7 students. Whether they are joining KAS from another school or moving 'across the field' from Lower School, they are embarking on a new journey.

To aid the transition, the entire year group headed off on the train to Anglesey Outdoors for a week of activities. Head of Year 7 **Lucy Wiser** explained: "We wanted to bring the students together for a true adventure, somewhere that felt very different to North London.

"I came away from my first Year 7 camp feeling that I knew everyone really well. Seeing the students bond over the shared memories and build on the resilience they developed at camp is wonderful. If you can survive jumping off huge rocks into a pool full of jellyfish, you can do anything!"

So what was the student verdict? "The whole week was so much fun," confirmed new starter **Hayley R.** "I particularly loved the bodyboarding activity and the talent show, which we won!

"The on-site games were a great way to build trust and make friends," she added. "There was one game where you had to guide your team through obstacles when they were blindfolded, which was fun."

"I didn't know anyone before I came here so it was a good chance to get to bond with everyone," said fellow new KAS student **Eve A.** "Now we all know each other, I've got lots of friends and we hang out at break times."





Bradwell,
Essex



Building bonds at the start of Sixth Form

Incoming Sixth Form students at The King Alfred School kicked off the academic year with our annual Year 12 camp – a two-night trip designed to foster friendships, community, and a strong sense of belonging.

Held at Essex Outdoors on the River Blackwater Estuary, the camp welcomed both new students and those continuing from our Upper School. With phones put away for the duration of camp, students embraced a packed schedule of outdoor activities including crabbing, sailing, power-kiting and high-rope courses – all encouraging meaningful interaction and deeper connections.

“The activities were really fun and surprisingly, I didn’t miss my phone,” said student **Noam S.** “Being unplugged made it easier to be present and enjoy the moment.”

A highlight came on the second night when an ice cream van made a surprise visit. “That prompted real child-like joy,” shared Director of Sixth Form **Eleanor Mitchell-Webb.**

“Seeing everyone laughing and chatting with their ice creams was a simple moment that captured the spirit of the trip.”

“Year 12 camp was an incredible experience,” Noam concluded. “It helped shape new friendships and brought our year group closer together.”

With much more to experience ahead – from our vibrant common room to a rich co-curricular offer – our Year 12s are off to a great start.

Redecorating & resilience in Namibia

After completing their GCSEs in July, a group of Year 11 students swapped classrooms for the Namibian desert in a life-changing trip with **Elephant-Human Relations Aid (EHRA)**. The charity works to reduce conflict between wild elephants and local communities, promoting peaceful coexistence.

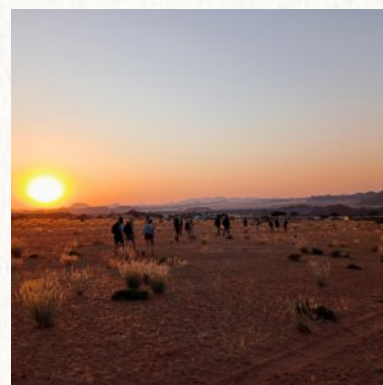
Students spent their first week volunteering in a village, repainting a classroom and bathroom. "It was hard work," said **Bea J-A**, now in Year 12, "but in the evenings we played football with the children and took lots of photos – they loved the cameras."

The trip, funded through student-led fundraising, supports EHRA's work and offers a chance to bond after exams. "The EHRA team were lovely," said **Alexia C-F**. "We all got on so well, singing while painting and chatting around the campfire."

In the second week, students learned tracking and navigation skills, culminating in a challenging self-guided trek. "We went off course and walked an extra 10km," Bea recalled, "but finishing it gave us a real sense of achievement."

The experience also offered new perspectives. "Seeing people live happily without the things we think we need was eye-opening," said Alexia.

The trip not only supported a vital cause but also helped students' personal growth. Many returned to Sixth Form in September with renewed confidence and lasting memories. "It definitely built that sense of 'I can do this', which we'll need for A levels," concluded Bea.



Biology field trip

Sixth Form biologists visited Flatford Mill in Suffolk this term to complete the ecology components of their A level **Biology** course.

Everyone engaged fully in the intensive three-day course, which saw them studying succession on the salt marshes at Holbrook Bay and habitat diversity in the woodlands. They also completed their own project using fieldwork techniques and statistical tests learnt during their time at Flatford.

Head of Science, **Phil Price**, said: "I'd like to publicly thank the pupils for their excellent behaviour and hard work throughout."



Flatford Mill, Suffolk



Year 12s invest in research



Bank of England Museum, London

Last term, **Economics** A level students headed into the City as part of their studies.

Our student insider, **Ella R**, shared: "The Year 12 Economics trip to the Bank of England Museum was an interesting day that gave us a closer look at how the UK's central bank works.

"We started the day with a self-guided tour of the museum, where we learnt

about how banks have changed over time, as well as the Bank of England's history since its foundation in 1694, the evolution of bank notes, and the Bank's crucial role in maintaining financial stability. A particular highlight was the opportunity to lift a genuine gold bar, weighing around 13 kilograms!

"After the museum, we got to go on a walking tour of London, and we got to see very interesting buildings like the Lloyd's building, AKA the inside-out building. The next stop was Spitalfields Market where we had the opportunity to enjoy a wide range of food and soak up the atmosphere.

We also got the chance to visit Sky Garden, where we enjoyed views of London's financial district. This provided a unique perspective of the City of London, complementing the day's focus on finance and economics."

Artists in (their own) residence

For A level **Art** students, it's important to get out of the studio and to learn about artistic practice from working artists (as well as their fabulous teachers!)

This term, they were invited to visit the studios of **Idris Khan and Annie Morris**, where they spent time talking to them about their work.

"Seeing how artists work, exploring their creative spaces, and hearing about the context and journey behind their work is incredibly valuable," said **Rose F** (Year 13).

"It gives you a sense of freedom in your own practice – realising that art isn't rigid, that every artist works differently, and that even the things you might want to discard can hold meaning."



Morris & Khan's studio, North London



Forming ideas on AI at Bletchley

Year 7 students took an inspiring trip to **Bletchley Park**, the historic hub of Allied code-breaking during World War II, as part of their Liberal Arts Exploration titled 'Should We Fear or Embrace AI?'

Students immersed themselves in a dynamic exhibition showcasing the transformative power of artificial intelligence. They explored how AI is driving innovation across healthcare, environmental sustainability and the creative industries.

Highlights included hearing AI-generated versions of their own voices and participating in an engaging educational session on cybersecurity – bringing abstract concepts to life.

"This trip offered rich inspiration for students as they prepare to present their own perspectives in an end-of-project exhibition," said **Hannah Sheath**, Head of Interdisciplinary Projects.



Bletchley Park, Milton Keynes

OLD ALFREDIANS & DEVELOPMENT

OA Reunion Day

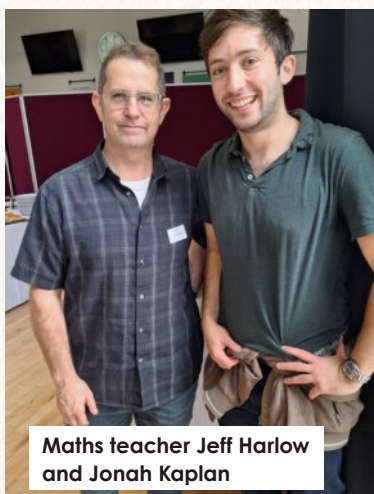
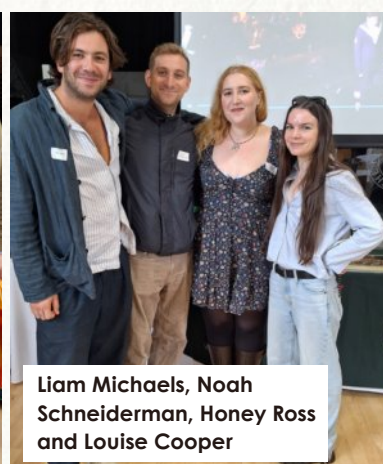
It was a joy to welcome Old Alfredians of all generations back to KAS for OA Reunion Day, where they reconnected, shared stories and explored the school.

Among the many returning OAs, we were delighted to meet **Johnny Posner (OA 1960s)**, who hadn't visited the school in 30 years! A career pharmacologist and visiting professor at King's College, Johnny has developed life-changing medications, including treatments for epilepsy – a truly inspiring reminder of the extraordinary journeys our OAs take.

The day was also a trip down memory lane, featuring whole-class photos, Alfredian covers from years past, and an archival recording of students performing *Sweeney Todd*. Generations mingled effortlessly, including **Sebastian Cody (OA 1974)**, **Anthony Meacock (OA 2005)** and **Peter York (OA 1962)**, who enjoyed a lively chat. Anthony and Peter both participated in our Creative Industries Forum two years ago, so they had plenty to discuss.

Meanwhile, the Class of 2015 brought such energy to celebrate their 10th anniversary, diving into table tennis, taking a group photo in the Amphitheatre, and exploring The Farm. Class of 2015, thank you for coming back to school. We love to see how connected your year group remains.

Thank you also to every Old Alfredian who joined us. Your stories, energy and memories made the day truly special.



Connections Talk: Amadeo Alentorn

This term, our Sixth Form students enjoyed a talk from **Amadeo Alentorn**, Head of Systematic Equities at Jupiter Asset Management. With a background in robotics, computer science and finance, Amadeo shared how data, AI and creative thinking come together to impact investing.

He encouraged our students to combine creative and critical thinking with technical skills to open doors to careers that didn't exist a decade ago, from designing robots to building AI-powered investment models.

Amadeo advised students that their passions could become their profession, as long as they keep learning and stay curious, reminding them to "think of your studies as an investment".



Thank you, Amadeo, for inspiring our students to stay creative and work hard.

Stay connected with our community via KASConnected, a hub for work experience, job opportunities and mentorship. Join students, parents, staff and Old Alfredians at [kasconnected.org](https://www.kasconnected.org).

WWW.KASCONNECTED.ORG



**HAVE YOU
SIGNED UP?**



**FIND &
UPLOAD JOBS
TO THE KAS
JOB BOARD**



**CONNECT
WITH OLD
ALFREDIANS
IN YOUR
INDUSTRY**



**PROVIDE
MENTORING
& ADVICE**



SCAN TO JOIN

School Calendar

<u>Term Dates</u>	
Autumn Half Term	Monday 20 – Friday 31 October
Autumn Term	Monday 3 November – Friday 12 December
Spring Term	Tuesday 6 January – Friday 27 March
Spring Half Term	Monday 16 – Friday 20 February
Summer Term	Tuesday 14 April – Thursday 9 June
Summer Half Term	Monday 25 – Friday 29 May
<u>Key Events</u>	
Axe Monsters	Thursday 6 November
Bonfire Night	Saturday 15 November
Upper School Show: Guys & Dolls	Tuesday 25 – Thursday 27 November
DEIB Parent Forum	Wednesday 3 December (9:15 – 10:15am, Main Hall)
Jazz Concert	Wednesday 3 December
Christmas Concert	Wednesday 10 December
Middle School Show (title TBC)	Tuesday 19 & Wednesday 20 May
KASonbury	Saturday 27 June 2026

Please note, dates are subject to change

A note on Pastoral Care

Parents are reminded that counselling and pastoral support is available in school. In Upper School, students can either self-refer directly via counselling@kingalfred.org.uk or talk with their Head of Year.



**The King Alfred School,
North End Road, London NW11 7HY**

 kingalfred.org.uk



[@thekingalfredschool](https://www.facebook.com/thekingalfredschool)



[@kingalfredsch](https://twitter.com/kingalfredsch)



[@the_king_alfred_school](https://www.instagram.com/the_king_alfred_school)



[The King Alfred School](https://www.linkedin.com/company/The King Alfred School)