

Chair's Welcome



'Accused' Sara's most recent feature film has resonated with audiences worldwide, hitting #1 on Netflix UK

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Front cover photo: Thank you to Katrina Sheikh (2004) for allowing us to use her photo, taken at the 2024 Milestones' Reunion in April. Photo credit: Pete Lopeman



I am sure you will spot someone you know in this edition and enjoy reading their news and that of school developments. A big "thank you" goes to Debbie Macleod in the Development Office who works incredibly hard in the preparation of keynotes and is very patient with those of us who do not get our pieces in on time (me!)

Thanks also to Jess and Laura who arrange all the reunions and networking events. In a break with tradition, our main reunion in the summer will be a joint event with the Old Boys from KES which will be quite fitting as Kirsty von Malaisé is now both Principal and Chief Master of both schools.

Sadly, we are saying goodbye to Adelaide Bailey as she leaves the Development Office for pastures new after ten years. She has been a great support to Old Edwardians, especially the committee throughout that time and we wish her well in her new post. Fortunately, she is an Old Edwardian herself so we hope she will come to future events and enjoy the fact that she hasn't got to worry about anything!

I hope you enjoy your copy of keynotes and any events you may attend.

Annette Duffy (née Glennon) (1983)
Chair of the BGOEC

I am delighted to welcome my fellow Old Edwardians to the latest edition of keynotes, in particular the Class of 2024.

It is also a pleasure to welcome Dr Paul Arnold who became Head of School at KEHS in September. I'm not sure it was in the job description, but along with that role he becomes our new President - the first male to hold the title. We look forward to working with him and introducing the wider Old Edwardian community to him at future events.

The Development Office now has 3,600 'Active' KEHS Old Edwardians on its Database which is quite a community to be part of! If you have ever wondered what happened to girls that were in your form, contact the office and they will certainly try and help connect you.

Another way to contact former classmates is via the website (oldeds.kehs.org.uk) which has links to archives, networking events, reunions and school related news.

Being an Old Edwardian allows you to interact with so many more people - through reunions, the publications which the Development Office email and post to us, and of course social media. Often someone will post a random memory on Facebook and the response is amazing - those of us of a certain era will never forget being taught "I left my pink parasol, on the upper deck of a Rubery bus!" by Miss Douglas in Music classes.

I am lucky enough to still be in contact with a group of girls from my form - 3B (the aforementioned Miss Douglas was our form teacher). We still consider ourselves girls despite approaching a "significant" birthday this school year and agreed at our most recent catch up that despite various aches and pains we still feel 18 on the inside!

The photo shows us all at a party Kate Wilkinson and her partner held for their joint birthdays - can you spot us all in the Form photo taken 48 years earlier!

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Committed to Accessibility

Independent schools like ours are in the political spotlight, with VAT chargeable on school fees from January 2025. It has been a divisive issue, but perhaps the two sides of this debate have more in common than you might think: they both care passionately about education, and they want all children to have access to a good one.

That is exactly what we want too; and it is why we launched our own Assisted Places programme 25 years ago, when Government support ended. We were committed to making KEHS accessible to all bright pupils in our region, and we always will be.

Thanks to generous alumnae and donors, and an annual grant from the King Edward's Foundation, today we are proud to have double the national average proportion of students receiving means-tested support.

The introduction of VAT on fees and some bursaries will not change that – but it will make it harder.

Here's how you can help:

Get Informed

Help us to advocate for schools like ours, that are not the engines of privilege.

- All our Assisted Places are means-tested at entry, and checked again every year, to make sure funding is distributed fairly and carefully.
- We are a financially conscious school. There is little fat to trim in our budgets, and any more would affect the quality of education we provide.
- Unlike most schools, 0% of fees is spent on bursaries. This helps keep our fees as low as possible.
- The KE Foundation gives a grant of over £1 million each year for Assisted Places here, and the same at KES – that's equivalent to 50% of its endowment income (and the endowment cannot be spent).

- The Government suggests that partial bursaries will be subject to VAT at 20% of the total value of the education they receive. Requiring partial bursary holders to pay VAT undermines our efforts to make KEHS accessible to all.

“I was overwhelmed when my daughter was awarded an AP... How big hearted and unselfish of a person who is a stranger to want to give my daughter a chance at a school like KEHS?”

KEHS Mum

Support Us

Whether big or small, if lots of people give together, it will help combat inequalities, giving talented children the education they deserve. You will make an immediate and tangible difference to the lives of children in Birmingham and help to shape a brighter future for generations to come.

Every contribution to the Assisted Places Fund directly protects our students and helps provide for new students. 100% of your donation goes directly to Assisted Places; the administrative costs are also covered by the Foundation.

Advocate for our Students

Speak out in defence of Assisted Places. When it comes to bursaries, this tax does not achieve fairness; this tax will target the very children we aim to uplift by imposing VAT on Assisted Places.

Assisted Places enable the brightest pupils to join our school. In turn, this enriches our community by fostering diverse perspectives and promoting an environment that actively encourages girls to step into other people's shoes. In a world of echo-chambers, Assisted Places create a breadth of perspectives.

Rest assured, that we remain committed to Assisted Places.



Legacies

We are always delighted by the number of Old Edwardians who remember KEHS in their wills. A legacy gift of any size is one of the most significant gifts you will ever make and reflects the things that matter to you.

By leaving a legacy to Assisted Places, you can ensure that future generations of KEHS pupils have the opportunity to thrive here, regardless of their financial circumstances - providing someone else with the same opportunities you once enjoyed. Everyone who includes KEHS in their will is warmly welcomed into the Creak Society.

“I believe that The KEHS Trust will ensure that the School continues to open its doors to bright girls who deserve a place but cannot afford to come without some form of financial assistance. I am also excited about the new opportunities that the Trust will offer the School and generations of future pupils. I have thus been pleased to include a legacy to the Trust in my will.”

– Legator, Class of 1974



For more information on leaving a gift in your will, or in your lifetime, please contact the Development Office at development@keschools.org.uk or 0121 415 2245



Paul Arnold Head of KEHS School

It gives me great pleasure to welcome Paul Arnold as our new Head of School. Paul brings with him an outstanding reputation and broad leadership experience, acquired in several schools.

In his first term, he has already made a remarkable impact, bringing fresh energy and vision to KEHS. His commitment to nurturing curiosity, well-being, and confidence in our students is clear, and I am excited for the future under his leadership.

I encourage all alumnae to come back and meet Paul and me soon—we look forward to connecting with you.

*Kirsty von Malaisé,
Chief Master & Principal*

Paul grew up in Eastleigh in Hampshire. His father worked in the Control Room of Hampshire Fire and Rescue Service, and his mother, initially a 'homemaker' and church organist, eventually became a funeral director. Paul was awarded an Assisted Place at the King Edward VI School in Southampton and went on to Oxford University - the first person in his family to go to university.

Paul's wife, Joanne, is an opera singer. She is visually impaired, and runs a company called

formidAbility, which aims to promote inclusion in the opera industry. Opera has much to do to become fully inclusive for disabled audiences and even further to go for disabled artists. The Paralympics are a great example of how things have improved in recent years for athletes with any form of disability and Joanne aims to emulate this in the arts sector.

Paul and Joanne have a Rhodesian Ridgeback called Phoebe.

Paul has always enjoyed playing football and cricket 'not very well', and is a lifelong supporter of Portsmouth FC. As England are currently playing cricket in Pakistan, the timing works well for listening to Test Match Special on the radio while driving into school in the mornings!

Choral singing was a passion of Paul's, singing in many choirs at school then university. He loved the discipline, the focus, and the sense of responsibility to your fellow choristers. Each individual contributes to making something very special as they all work together. The piece of music which stands out for him and which he only sang once, was a setting of E.E. Cummings' poem 'I thank you God for most this amazing day' set to music by Eric Whitacre. It was an unforgettable performance.

Despite promising his mother, when aged 11, that he would drop Latin at the earliest opportunity, Paul discovered a love for Latin and Classics at KEVI from his amazing teachers

of those subjects, and went on to study Classics at The Queen's College, Oxford. He then completed a doctorate in Greek and Roman Comedy. He hadn't considered teaching as a career, but during his doctorate, he taught undergraduate students and found it very fulfilling. He then did a PGCE in London, and for the next 15 years was Head of Classics in three different schools around the country. He then moved into school leadership and enjoyed finding out how schools operate, making a difference on a wider level as Deputy Head at St Helen's, Northwood, London. From there, he arrived at KEHS in September 2024 as Head of School!

Paul feels that the key to inspiring a love of learning in students begins with making sure that, whatever ignites the spark of curiosity in young people, there's a supportive and exciting environment around them to nurture that flame. Enthusiastic teachers, who recognise the limitless potential in the young people in front of them and are skilled at helping them to realise their goals, are also crucial.

As a steward of KEHS, it is vital to recognise that the alumnae have lived the whole KEHS experience. It will always be important to recognise the school's traditions and heritage, though history shouldn't be a barrier to progress. To our alumnae and the wider school community, I would say 'I promise you that I will do my utmost for KEHS and its community, and I will do my best to earn and appreciate your support and trust, as I welcome you to join me on this journey.'

KEHS is one of the country's foremost schools – we want to build on that. We want every student to experience everything we have to offer; to be curious and confident in themselves; to have the ability to think their way through really knotty problems and to explore all the opportunities available to them during their time with us.

To achieve that we have to have a culture of well-being, self-awareness, and self-efficacy for our young people. KEHS has been on this path for over 140 years, and I think that to help our students be confident, responsible users of technology in a digital world, we will have to harness the potential of technology in teaching and learning. This will always be alongside the irreplaceable skills of learning how to discuss, debate and disagree with kindness and respect. Combining these skills will be crucial if future KEHS alumnae are going to be the leaders of the future!

**Paul Arnold
Head of School**

Sara Sehdev (2005): from KEHS to Netflix #1

Sara's journey from King Edward VI High School for Girls (KEHS) alumna to a leading figure in the film industry is as compelling as the stories she helps bring to life.

A producer, talent agent, and vocal advocate for diversity, Sara is proof of the extraordinary impact of pursuing your passions with tenacity and heart. Her latest film, *Accused*, which has been the number #1 trending film on Netflix UK, stands as a testament to her vision and talent, further underscoring her commitment to under-represented voices in media.



Sara with Chaneil

“Our successes don’t come without hard work, sleepless nights, and so many sacrifices”



From Classics to Core MGMT

Sara's career began after completing a degree in Classics at the University of Cambridge, where her appreciation for storytelling found its roots. Her path led her to the heart of London's entertainment world, where she founded her boutique talent agency, Core MGMT, in 2013. The agency was born out of a desire to give a voice to diverse and underrepresented talent. As Sara explains, her intention was “to create a boutique agency with a big voice, a company that could grow and adapt quickly to the challenges faced by a rapidly-developing field.” Over the past decade, Core MGMT has risen to prominence, representing actors in everything from major Hollywood movies to acclaimed West End productions.

Marking its 11th anniversary, Sara reflects on the agency's evolution: “We continue to grow, searching for and supporting new talent from traditional training but also those from alternate backgrounds whose passion and commitment to developing their craft make them irresistible!” With a team that works across both the UK and Europe - as well as collaborating with US and Canadian teams - Core MGMT exemplifies her dedication to championing fresh, diverse voices.

“I always encourage clients to be the change they want to see - to create, to write, to make things. After many years of doing this, I thought I should put my money where my mouth is, lead by example, and start creating too. This was



Tree house used on the 'Accused' set

when I first began producing - we made a one-take short called *Boiling Point* which was nominated for a British Independent Film Award. We were then able to make a feature film based on the short - again, all shot in one single take, no cheating! - which went on to win four BIFAs and be nominated for four BAFTAs.”

Accused: A Defining Moment

Sara's passion for diverse storytelling reached new heights with *Accused*, her most recent feature film. Produced alongside her previous collaborators, the film stars Chaneil Kular (KEHS 2017)—a fellow alum—as a young man mistakenly identified as a terrorist through social media sleuthing. The film has resonated with audiences worldwide, hitting #1 on Netflix UK.

“The process taught me so much, and it changed my life in ways I never would have imagined,” Sara shares. “Seeing the film at Number 1... is a reminder of why I do what I do.” Beyond its chart-topping success, *Accused* has opened doors for nuanced South Asian stories: “There is a place for South Asian stories—and those stories don't necessarily need to be about brown existence. Colour can simply add context and layers to characters.”

The film's organic success, driven by word-of-mouth, is a point of pride for Sara: “That is a testament to the quality of the work, and the audience's appetite for a good movie with a social hook. And Chaneil is so superb in it, it's worth a watch for his performance alone.”

Giving Back to KEHS

For Sara, KEHS remains a cornerstone of her journey. Returning as the Alumna Speaker at Awards Evening, she found the experience profoundly rewarding: “Seeing a room full of engaged young women, many who looked like me, and getting to congratulate every single one of them, was the most fulfilling and worthwhile experience.” Her speech, full of wisdom and encouragement, reflects her belief in the power of mentorship and community.

“Returning to school always feels like coming home to me,” she says. “I hope my speech sits with them because I know there are girls in that audience that will smash barriers in years to come.”

Sara's commitment to her alma mater extends beyond her visits. Her achievements serve as a beacon of inspiration for current students, showing the incredible heights KEHS alumnae can reach.



London Film Festival (2024)

A Vision for the Future

Whether through her talent agency or her work as a producer, Sara's mission is clear: to create opportunities, foster representation, and celebrate stories that resonate on a universal level. Reflecting on her career, Sara acknowledges the challenges she's faced—from navigating Brexit and COVID to managing the demands of a rapidly evolving industry—but her determination remains unwavering.

“Our successes don't come without hard work, sleepless nights, and so many sacrifices,” she admits. Yet, it's her deep sense of purpose, coupled with the support of her collaborators, clients, and community, that fuels her continued success.

The Power of the KEHS Community

Sara's story embodies the spirit of the KEHS alumnae network—a community that celebrates its members' achievements while inspiring the next generation. Her journey from KEHS student to an industry trailblazer exemplifies the transformative power of education, creativity, and collaboration.

KEHS news

Development & Alumni Relations Events for 2024

The final event for 2024 Alumni Relations' calendar was 'A KE Community Christmas' which included current parents and students, staff and alumni from both KEHS and KES. There was a real festive feel with lights, music, food and refreshments for all, and a variety of stalls. It was a wonderful occasion!

The other very successful events which happened throughout the year included the Diamond & Golden Reunion in February, and the Milestones Reunion (and AGM) in April. For those who were just about to become KEHS Alumnae, we held the annual 'Leavers' Picnic' in June, and their Awards Evening in November, for which many travelled back from their universities to hear from guest speaker, Helen Williams (1994)

Thank you to all those who came to these events! We look forward to seeing many more of you for 'your' events in 2025!



Leavers' Picnic



Diamond & Golden Reunion



Awards Evening



Milestones Reunion



Helen Williams



Christmas Event



Lulu

Some recent individual students' news

Upper Sixth pupil, Lulu, won this year's BBC Young Writers' Award with Cambridge University, having been praised by the judges for her 'confident writing'.

Her powerful story, 'Special', details a neurodiverse student's journey of self-discovery through being introduced to the joys of reading and writing by an empathetic teacher. This is something that Lulu said was inspired by the support of her very own teachers here at KEHS.

Following National Poetry Day this year, Lower Fourth pupil, Japmeh, was selected as Birmingham's new Young Poet Laureate. During her two-year tenure, Japmeh will produce new poems and work to promote poetry across the city.

Upper Fifth pupil, Srilakshmi, was recently elected as Youth Police and Crime Commissioner (YPCC) for Birmingham West. YPCCs serve a two-year term, providing crucial youth insight into the world of policing, especially surrounding youth issues.

"We ensure that the voices and opinions of our areas are heard, and action is taken to make the relationship between the youth and the police force as effective and transparent as possible."

Well done to all of you !



Japmeh



Srilakshmi



News from one of our 'sister' schools: King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy

Education is often described as a journey, one that, in reality, never truly ends. At King Edward VI Balaam Wood Academy, this concept holds especially true. Just a year ago, the academy was grappling with disappointing summer exam results and bracing for an imminent Ofsted inspection. Given that the previous inspection had identified "serious weaknesses," the stakes for the upcoming review were incredibly high.

However, thanks to the commitment, determination, and resilience of our staff - and with the valuable support and challenge from the Foundation - our school emerged stronger. When inspected, we proudly achieved a rating of "Good" in all areas. This was the first time in 18 years our school, or any school in Frankley, has achieved a "Good" rating across the board - which goes to show how vitally important this work is to our community. This success was followed by significantly improved exam results in the summer, leading to a truly celebratory August results' day for our remarkable pupils.

As a small school, one key to our success lies in the partnerships we cultivate. One of our most impactful collaborations has been with Birmingham City Football Club and their Foundation, with whom we have worked for several years. In January 2024, we were thrilled to take this partnership to the next level by launching the first BCFC Academy School. As part of this initiative, two coaches now work full-time at Balaam Wood, providing coaching, mentoring, enrichment, and curriculum development. Additionally, the coaches are helping us realize our vision for the wider community through various sporting and adult education programs. This collaboration has been an overwhelming success.

Looking ahead, we are excited to launch the next phase of our partnership: a collaboration with the University of Birmingham to establish a University Scholarship Programme. This initiative will support Balaam Wood pupils as they transition to further education and eventually pursue degrees at the university. Historically, not enough of our pupils have gone on to university, and this is the next challenge we are determined to overcome.

Damian McGarvey
Headteacher

Introducing two of our very talented Art Teachers

Katherine and Wendy have brought a wealth of experience and expertise to the art department at KEHS and made a huge contribution to the quality of our provision and the standard of work our students produce.

Mr Nick Bassett
Head of Art and Design Technology
Foundation Lead in Art and Design

Wendy Tournay – Ceramicist and Teacher of Art

As Ceramicist and Teacher of Art at KEHS I have had the privilege of developing the ceramics' provision for students across all year groups. I oversaw the expansion of ceramics within the new Design Centre, working with the architects to create a state-of-the-art ceramics studio, fully equipped with two throwing wheels, kilns, a slab roller and a pugmill.

Pupils are offered a broad range of techniques and materials to explore and develop their skills in ceramics. Thirds can join a weekly lunchtime ceramics club, where they work on fun and imaginative projects. For Lower Fourth and Upper Fourth, sculptural ceramics projects are embedded in the curriculum. At GCSE and A Level, I work closely with small, focused groups, guiding students in translating their 2D



sketchbook ideas into 3D creations. Students in the Sixth Form come together on Friday afternoons for enrichment sessions to explore ceramics for pleasure. It is a space for students to relax, experiment, and discover the joy of creating with clay.

In the Spring and Summer term, we welcome children from local Birmingham primary schools to work in ceramics. This initiative offers them the experience of sculpting clay and introducing them to specialist tools and materials.

Alongside teaching, I run my own contemporary ceramics practice where I design and create luxury giftware and interior products, adding elegance to the home. Working with the finest English Bone China, I employ traditional ceramic production techniques such as plaster modelling, mould making, and slip-casting, creating pieces that are both delicate and strong. My fine bone china tableware can be seen on the tables of local Edgbaston Michelin star restaurant, Simpsons.

My role as both an educator and a practitioner allow me to combine my passion for ceramics with a commitment to inspiring and guiding the next generation of artists.

Katherine Howes, Teacher of Art

I have been lucky enough to teach at KEHS for the past six years. My aim at KEHS has been to infuse modern creativity into an already strong, traditional curriculum.

Since joining, I have brought a dynamic approach to the department, introducing lessons in digital photography and graphical processes, as well as championing oil paint as a medium. Over the years, I have also had the



privilege of teaching life drawing classes to the sixth form; an experience from which students always gain a phenomenal amount.

Outside of teaching, I practise my own art using digital and mixed media techniques and have exhibited my work in local galleries like Stryx and the Birmingham Midlands Institute. In 2022, I completed a Master's degree, with distinction, alongside my teaching, where I was recognised for my community building skills with an award.

After this, I helped to form a collective with a group of fellow postgraduate artists and we regularly curate shows together in the region. I believe these experiences have really enhanced my pedagogy in the last few years. Fostering meaningful connections outside the classroom has taught me much about collaboration and networking. I hope this shows my pupils that life can be multidimensional and rich in experience, and to be truly artistic means making new and original connections and not worrying about taking the odd risk!

The best thing about being an art teacher is nurturing the students' ideas from inception to fruition. I have always felt honoured that by sharing their ideas with me, the students share part of themselves. I hope to give my students practical tools to engage with the world visually, intellectually and technically, as artists moving forwards.

FUN FACT: Wendy Tournay and Katherine Howes trained together as art teachers in 2005 at Birmingham School of Art, Margaret Street, under the superb guidance of Pete Worrall before their professional paths crossed again at KEHS!

Message Board

Dates for your 2025 Diary

Saturday, 25 January: Gemstones Reunion
A special celebration for the Classes of 1955, 1965, 1975 & 1985

Saturday, 1 February: Senior Production

Friday, 7 March: Tolkien Lecture
Speaker: Christopher Hodges OBE (1972)

Saturday, 21 June: Milestones Reunion
A special celebration for the Classes of 1995, 2005 & 2015, joint with KES, with the invitation also open to all alumnae

Endowment Update

In 2014, the BGOEC made a generous donation to the newly-established KEHS Trust, to support Assisted Places. These have been invested and have grown around 70% since they were transferred to the Trust. They have helped to fund 40 KEHS Trust pupils to fulfil their potential here.

Assisted Places are a critical part of our school's ethos, and they always will be. Thank you to the BGOEC, and to all donors who help support Assisted Places here. No matter how or how much you give, you are truly changing lives. Thank you.

keynotes Audio Book!

All of our articles will be available on Audio on the web:

[Oldeds.kehs.org.uk/keynotes](https://oldeds.kehs.org.uk/keynotes)

We are very grateful to OE, Louise, for kindly offering to make a recording of each article for us.

If anyone would like to volunteer to be a 'reader' for the next keynotes 2025, we would be delighted to hear from you!

The BGOEC Committee & Keynotes Committee

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CARE.DO.GIVE.



Georgina Urwin (2005)

Georgina attended KEHS from 1998 to 2005 and even whilst at school she spent a considerable time volunteering at Summerfield Stables, a not-for-profit organisation started by her Mum with the aim of making horse-riding accessible to people from a wide range of different backgrounds. Here Georgina spent time riding and training horses, in addition to teaching children and helping to care for the horses and other animals. After leaving KEHS she completed a degree in Theology at University of Birmingham, and then a PGdipEd followed by a Masters in Teaching. During this time she also started her qualifications in horse riding and care by completing an NVQ with Warwickshire College. Alongside a hands-on role with the horses and working with children she became the Director of Summerfield Stables as it became a company limited by Guarantee and later received charitable status. On completing her university studies, Georgina spent two years teaching Religious Studies and Philosophy in secondary schools. She then moved to a college in Nuneaton to focus purely on teaching A Level. Her hours are varied, but as the demands of running a charity have grown Georgina has gradually reduced the hours of college teaching to two days a week.

Running a small charity is a rather all-consuming role with a diverse range of tasks involved. In addition to the day-to-day horse care and teaching, Georgina's role involves writing funding bids, project managing building work and even digger driving!

Summerfield Stables has grown considerably over the past few years and is now home to around 33 horses and ponies, with a second site having opened in 2023. Summerfield provides inclusive riding sessions for over 200 riders each week and also welcomes other volunteers, work experience placements and visiting groups such as children from local nurseries. Since the pandemic there has been a huge demand for alternative education provision and the BHS's 'Changing lives through horses' programme at Summerfield has helped to support many children who are struggling in school or who are school refusers. As a British Horse Society Approved Assessment Centre, Summerfield also provides opportunities for people to train for and be examined on internationally recognised qualifications which help to lead to employment. The schedule is always busy at Summerfield and visitors to the stables have ranged from Olympic athletes, popular equine influencers, Netflix stars, Martin Clunes and even Princess Anne!

As well as seeking to provide opportunities for local people in Birmingham, Georgina is also keen to promote accessibility on a national level. She is part of the DEI Committee for The British Horse Society and received their Unsung Hero Award in 2024 for her work at Summerfield to make horse-riding more accessible for underrepresented communities. In 2024 she also spoke as part of a panel on accessibility at the National Equine Forum and on a similar panel at the National Equine Show. Recently Georgina was nominated as one of four finalists for the Fédération Equestre Internationale Inspire award for her work with Summerfield.

Irene Bannister (Former Staff 1972 – 2005)

Generations of alumnae, will remember Mrs Bannister, who taught at KEHS from January 1972 until she retired as Deputy Head in 2005. You may not know that Irene is also the co-founder of local charity, Kids Like Us, which supports children with Juvenile Idiopathic Arthritis (JIA) and their families.

Irene was only 25 when the Head of Maths vacancy at KEHS was advertised, and considered her application a bit of a long shot – but Miss Wilks saw her talents and hired her



on the spot. Before Irene could take up her position, she found out she was expecting her first child. In an age where the offer could have been withdrawn, Miss Wilks sent Irene a telegram that read "absolutely certain we want you for the job". Procedures were created for what turned out to be the first maternity leave across the entire Foundation. Irene says it was the "feeling that, whatever a situation was, together we'd solve it" and she has subsequently applied this in all aspects of her life.

Her work with Kids Like Us was driven by that same spirit. Irene was diagnosed with arthritis in her late thirties. When attending a hospital appointment, she was struck by the number of children also suffering with the condition. She recalls one visit where she saw a mother hug her 18 month old daughter, only for the daughter to wince in pain. An encounter with a KEHS parent led to a meeting with Paul Bacon, Professor of Rheumatoid Arthritis at the University of Birmingham. He saw Irene's potential and immediately engaged her in a committee that supported children living and learning with JIA. It later became the registered charity, Kids Like Us.

Kids Like Us supports children with JIA, in the West Midlands, and their families. "It brings people together and gives them a support network", Irene explained. JIA is as common in children in the West Midlands as diabetes. Treatments for JIA exist but, as Irene knows, they are harsh, often painful, programmes with strong medications. One medication is a

stinging yellow liquid that must be injected, often by the child's parents. "Children on this medication frequently develop an aversion to anything yellow as a result". One of the practical solutions Kids Like Us offer is buzzing bees – small vibrating toys that can be applied to the injection site to minimise the pain.

Kids Like Us is run exclusively by volunteers, who work closely with local doctors and specialists, particularly through Birmingham Children's Hospital. "We will consider any application that is supported by a child's doctor". The charity funds practical items that can help children to manage their condition, like the buzzing bees, specialist writing materials, hand exercisers or warming teddies. They also support children and their families with events and excursions. Not only do these support children by showing them they are not alone, they also help foster support networks between their parents and siblings. "It is hard for the siblings of children living with chronic conditions, who can easily feel sidelined". These activities build a community.

Kids Like Us host a number of fundraising events throughout the year, Irene also gave many talks to raise awareness of Kids Like Us eg to primary schools, Rotary clubs, Masonic groups, 'knitters and natterers' and at a Scouts' Gang Show, as well as seeking support from charitable trusts. "In my tenure, we raised in excess of a quarter of a million pounds". Irene has now stepped down from her formal roles within the charity, but is delighted to see the next generation have taken the reins.

Laura Scott (2008)

Following a career in the civil service, Laura now works and volunteers in the charity sector, specialising in crisis response.

All of us can remember times where we've seen tragedy in the news and in our communities and wanted to help - whether it's donating money, supplies or even space in our houses in the aftermath of tragedy such as the Grenfell Tower fire or the war in Ukraine, or the thousands who sought out ways to help both neighbours and strangers during the pandemic. It's a huge privilege to have a career that gives me tools, skills and, of course, a fantastic team to address those needs on a daily basis.

I am the UK's Head of Crisis Response and Resilience for the British Red Cross. I lead a team of 120 staff and over 1,500 volunteers to provide support to people in crisis across the UK. We are a busy team, providing 24/7/365 response coverage and responding to an average of five live incidents a day. Moreover, when we aren't responding we are present in communities, building partnerships and finding ways to increase resilience so that the most vulnerable are supported before a crisis occurs, as well as during the long road to recovery after a crisis strikes.

I'm not new to crisis management. During 10 years in the civil service, I specialised in crises, disasters and climate. Most recently this was as part of Cabinet Office's National Situation Centre, providing data and open-source intelligence briefings to COBR during the UK's largest national security and civil contingency crises. I worked under three Prime Ministers, providing situational awareness as we prepared for and responded to dozens of major crises.

While my specialism remains the same, moving from government to a charity has given me some reflections on being involved in the third sector.

1. Working with staff and volunteers can be humbling - and great for your career

When I'm with my team I'm rarely going to be the person in the room with the most expertise. I might be deploying with volunteers who have 40+ years' professional experience in the delivery of frontline emergency services. I could be working alongside staff with fascinating previous careers, operational skills honed in the military, or deep personal motivations for their specialisms in disaster management and a willingness to wake in the middle of the night to deploy them. Either way, there is always



someone (and often many of them) who know more than me. It's unnerving. It's challenging. It's also a great room to be in.

2. It's never a zero sum game

While this is now my career, working with volunteers has reminded me how much of a positive force volunteering has already had in my life. It really is a fantastic way to meet new people, try new activities which I would never normally get to do, and to learn more about the needs in my community.

3. Be creative in how you contribute

Finally, I am regularly reminded how many ways there are to contribute, and how much we all have to give. You can commit your time as a volunteer, share your expertise in pro bono projects, partner your organisation alongside a voluntary organisation or advocate for their involvement, and provide individual or corporate financial support for the vital work which is done across the voluntary and charitable sector. Ultimately, there's so much need in our communities - find the subject which grips you mentally and emotionally, and find the ways that you can contribute to making a real difference in people's lives.

Different Career Paths



Dr Ritu Gupta (1994)

After completing my education at KEHS in 1994, I pursued a degree in Medicine at Bristol University, graduating in 1999. I then returned to the Midlands to undertake postgraduate training in anaesthesia at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. This formative period laid the groundwork for my enduring commitment to medical education. As an anaesthetic trainee, I was nominated to become an instructor for several resuscitation courses, including Advanced Life Support (ALS), Advanced Paediatric Life Support (APLS), and Managing Obstetric Emergencies and Trauma (MOET - not the champagne!). I found great fulfilment in teaching these courses, a passion that I continue to this day.

In 2009, I transitioned to London to take up a consultant role at the age of 32. Shortly after starting, I became a member of the Clinical Audit and Effectiveness Committee. My passion for medical education has been a constant throughout my career, driving me to actively engage in teaching and training at all levels - from undergraduate foundations to postgraduate development. Recognising the critical role of high-quality education in shaping the future with competent healthcare professionals, I pursued further qualifications, completing a Certificate and Diploma in Medical Education from Dundee University.

Early in my Consultant career, I became an Educational Supervisor to trainees, an examiner for undergraduate examinations at Imperial, and an examiner for anaesthetic viva courses. To broaden my teaching methods, I trained as a Simulation Facilitator, using medical simulation as a technique to educate healthcare professionals by recreating real-life medical scenarios in a controlled and safe environment. This allowed learners to practice clinical skills, decision-making, and teamwork without risking patient safety. I began teaching on courses and developed expertise in debriefing techniques.

In addition to my clinical responsibilities as a Consultant Anaesthetist, I took on various educational leadership roles. These included serving as a Foundation Training Programme Director, Simulation Lead for my Trust (with our work featured on the BBC), Simulation Co-Chair for NW London, and Supported Return to Training (SRTT) Champion. As Simulation Lead, I successfully bid for funding to establish a simulation centre in our Trust. I led a team in designing the centre, purchasing equipment through bids and charitable committees, establishing medical scenarios, training faculty, and developing multiple courses. This work garnered media attention, being featured on BBC News.

Currently, I am honoured to hold the position of Director of Medical Education (DME) for the Trust. In this role, I advocate for and contribute to the advancement of medical education by overseeing the development, implementation, and evaluation of educational programs for medical students and postgraduate trainees. I work to ensure these programmes meet accreditation standards, support institutional goals, and enhance the quality of healthcare. My role also requires collaboration with external organizations, including educational institutions, accrediting bodies, and healthcare systems.

Throughout my career, I have also pursued academic interests, with publications and presentations to my name. Most recently, I contributed a chapter on anaesthetic considerations for fetal therapy to an international book on obstetric anaesthesia.

Looking ahead, I am excited about the future of medical education, which I believe must be innovative, flexible, and focused on producing doctors who possess emotional intelligence and a passion for lifelong learning.



Susan Sims (1984)

I've been involved in the property environment since I was 21, when I bought my first property - a shop with a flat over it. I was heavily influenced by my Dad who was a forward thinking property investor in the 70s and 80s before there were buy-to-let mortgages or interest only mortgages.

I initially attended Coventry Polytechnic (as it was then) but left in my first year and secured a job at a national firm of insurance brokers.

This was never going to be the long-term plan and after a couple of years, I went to a recruitment agency to register to look for a new job and they saw I had the requisite attributes to be a successful recruitment consultant. Over the next 20 years, I worked for companies including Pertemps, Reed Employment, Robert Half International and Office Angels. I loved the competitive sales environment and was always in the top three consultants at any of the companies I worked for. The roles were heavily targeted, and we were judged against those targets.

During this period, I also invested in buy-to-let property and built a portfolio with friends and also my family.

In 2011, I began working in property full-time and took a role with an independent letting agency, and after four years established my own lettings business. This evolved into Genie Homes in 2017 and we've grown in leaps and bounds since then. There are now two other directors and a team of 12. We cover the whole range of services you'd expect from an estate agency.

Over the last 30 years, I've built a portfolio of almost 50 properties which are family homes, properties leased to social housing providers, houses of multiple occupancy and serviced accommodation apartments.

If you are seeking a career in property as a property owner/developer you will need to be resilient, proactive, consistent and persistent.

Some of my proudest achievements during this time have been:

- Buying my first property at 21
- Launching Genie Homes and building a successful business in a competitive marketplace
- Building a diverse portfolio of properties
- Speaking on stages around the UK about property, and being recognised as a knowledgeable person in my field
- Having a FB reel hit more than 1m views

I'd say that if you want to invest in property, you need to do lots of research and due diligence, set a firm foundation before you purchase your first investment property and understand how you can finance property.

There are many options for you to build a property portfolio, but you need to decide on your own business model first.

If you want to be a property investor in the long term, then beginning a career in property will be very helpful to you and whether this be that you work for an estate agents; you learn a trade - carpentry, electricians, or you decide to become a qualified surveyor, will all help you in the long term.



Sara Tidy (1981)

“The most powerful person in the world is the storyteller.”

Steve Jobs, Founder of Apple

It was probably my story about the genie in a lamp post that won me my place at KEHS 50 years ago - it certainly wasn't my maths!

Inspired by my fabulous teachers, Miss Diggory (History), Miss Jones (English) and Mr Cooper (Latin), I took these story-centred subjects at A Level before going to the Courtauld Institute of Art (University of London) to read Art History. The whole experience for a girl from Birmingham was surreal. I researched, wrote and presented essays to my tutor, the Booker prize-winning novelist, Anita Brookner, and to my fellow students. I learnt about the power of visual storytelling and how to construct a narrative, about meeting deadlines, responsibility, and I gained confidence in presenting.

I then stepped into Public Relations (PR) as a graduate trainee at the fashion company, Jaeger. PR promotes a positive image about a company or brand through the media - fundamentally, it's all about storytelling through words and pictures.

At Jaeger I was incredibly lucky to do some exciting and glamorous things - like meeting editors at Vogue, filming videos and organising fashion shows in Saudi Arabia. But it wasn't all 'absolutely fabulous, sweetie, darling!'. Top tip: When you graduate from university, while you're at the top of the mountain academically, do bear in mind that you're only at base camp in the working world. Your success in climbing upwards depends on doing both the exciting

and the mundane with equal commitment and enthusiasm. There'll be parts of the job you love, and parts you don't. You need to embrace them all!

After a few years at Dunhill, the luxury goods company, my career imploded when I was made redundant. It was a traumatic experience. I didn't want to work for another big company again and decided to explore working in a PR agency in my next job.

Over the next 15 years, at a variety of PR agencies, I managed teams of people working on award-winning campaigns for brands like BMW, Ford, Cadbury, Tesco, Shell, BP and Procter & Gamble. After my son was born, I worked part-time before returning to my career for the BBC, which gave me a huge opportunity to develop new skills, enabling me to pivot into corporate communications, crisis, change and reputation management.

Now, with over thirty years' experience as a senior communications leader and advisor, I feel very lucky and privileged to have worked for some of the world's best-known businesses including Johnson & Johnson Consumer Healthcare, GSK Consumer Healthcare, Unilever, Tesco, Pernod Ricard, Marks & Spencer International and Samsung.

I think the proudest achievement in my career, to date, has been the initiative I led at Tesco Mobile during the Covid-19 pandemic. We supported more than 6,000 individuals and 800 organisations with over £2m worth of phones and data, helped 4,000 schoolchildren with home education, supported the Red Cross during the Afghanistan evacuation and I established and led our corporate partnership with Crisis to help end homelessness.

Two years ago, I qualified as an International Coaching Federation (ICF, ACC) coach and started my own business, www.peartreecoachingandmentoring.com I now help people, at all stages of their career and personal life, to find their own stories; to recognise their unique strengths and talents, identify their personal values and purpose, grow self-awareness, confidence and communication skills. I help them unlock their potential and discover the right path for them.

Please do reach out to me for a free chat if you'd like to discover your own story.

Sports & PE Today

On the sideline

I was recently standing on the sidelines, watching my sons play football, when the mother of one of the other boys standing next to me asked me what I did for a living. I'm a PE teacher, I proudly told her. Often, when I tell people my occupation, I am met with a torrent of stories detailing how they hated PE and how the games teacher was always dressed up warmly while they froze in tiny gym slippers. I must admit the long, thick canterbury coats staff now wear are really nice and warm, however, the pupils are now encouraged to wear warmer clothing, and gloves or bobble hat can be donned, as long as it helps them participate.

The difference in this story is the parent on the sideline loved PE at school and especially hockey. Is she a rare find? Recalling her happy days on the hockey pitch, I was once again reminded what a lasting impression your school days can leave and how they can shape the way you see yourself and the person you become.

The vision

As the Director of Sport at KEHS, it has been a long-held belief of mine that our role is to do more than win sports matches. The PE department has an important job, as one of only three subjects offered and participated in up to Year 11 (Upper Fifth) and the only one offered to all Sixth formers. As a department, we see our role as central in helping to develop the character, confidence, and sporting capabilities of all the pupils at KEHS.

How do our alumni view their PE days at KEHS? With fond memories of fun times - or with dread and the feeling of wanting to avoid it?

Whilst talking to prospective parents and their daughters on open days or to ISI inspectors or ISGB Governors, one of the things I will always espouse is the importance of ensuring that pupils leave KEHS having had a positive



experience of Physical Education and sport. It's about ensuring that everybody feels they can belong in a sporting environment, and we hope there is something that each pupil feels they can achieve in PE, and that fundamentally they had fun.

We don't have any data to verify whether we have an impact on the pupils once they leave, but we do have current participation data that shows how much our pupils want to participate in sport and how they really do enjoy their PE lessons. We survey them every two or three years and, through their responses, we have adapted the curriculum and extracurricular programme in accordance with their changing needs.

PE changes at KEHS - Facilities and Curriculum

Many of the recent alumnae will know that we redesigned the sports hall space, doing away with the three squash courts and replacing these with an extension to the fitness suite, which now houses a weight rack and Olympic bar. We have a mirrored dance studio, two additional changing rooms and a classroom which is proving very handy with the introduction of GCSE PE some years ago and an A Level PE course on the horizon. The sports hall had a makeover in 2023, and indoor cricket nets were installed. This investment in cricket has led to National Finals success for our U13 indoor team last Spring term.

Football now has equal weighting to hockey and netball in the curriculum, with two 7-a-side pitches permanently marked on the grass field with accompanying goals. The reinstatement of the House system has also seen House football



Feedback from you

What impact has sport at KEHS had on you? What could we do better? What did we do well? What do you wish we offered, or would hate us to stop offering?

If you were happy to spend five minutes of your time filling in the survey, it would be really appreciated.

Compiling this data on your experience and thoughts will help us reflect on our current offering and support our future planning.

Whether you left 3, 5, 15 or 35 years ago, we would love to hear from you.

You may have loved bench ball, loathed hockey, constantly made excuses for missing swimming lessons or had the best time on a foreign sports tour, please tell us your experiences.

Hearing from alumnae ensures we have an opportunity to better understand your relationship with physical exercise, and what role KEHS played in it.

We would really love some data from you.



Please scan the QR code if you wish to do the survey



become a popular event in the events calendar. Snorkeling was added to the swimming programme and nobody has to wear a leotard for gymnastics! Your swimming costume does not have to be black or from the uniform shop. 'Standards are slipping!', some might cry but our philosophy is one which wants pupils to be comfortable in what they wear.

To keep up to date with goings on with in the PE department please follow us on X and Instagram @kehsp

Sarah Blanks
Director of Sport

Sixth Form PE is now offered to both the Lower and Upper Sixth, timetable permitting; we have tried to focus this area on preparing the pupils for life at university. We offer match play against other schools to pupils who still enjoy the team sports of netball and hockey and have a range of options for those who prefer an individual activity. We offer spin and body pump classes across the road at University of Birmingham, and a walk around Cannon Hill Park for those who want fresh air and low-level exercise.

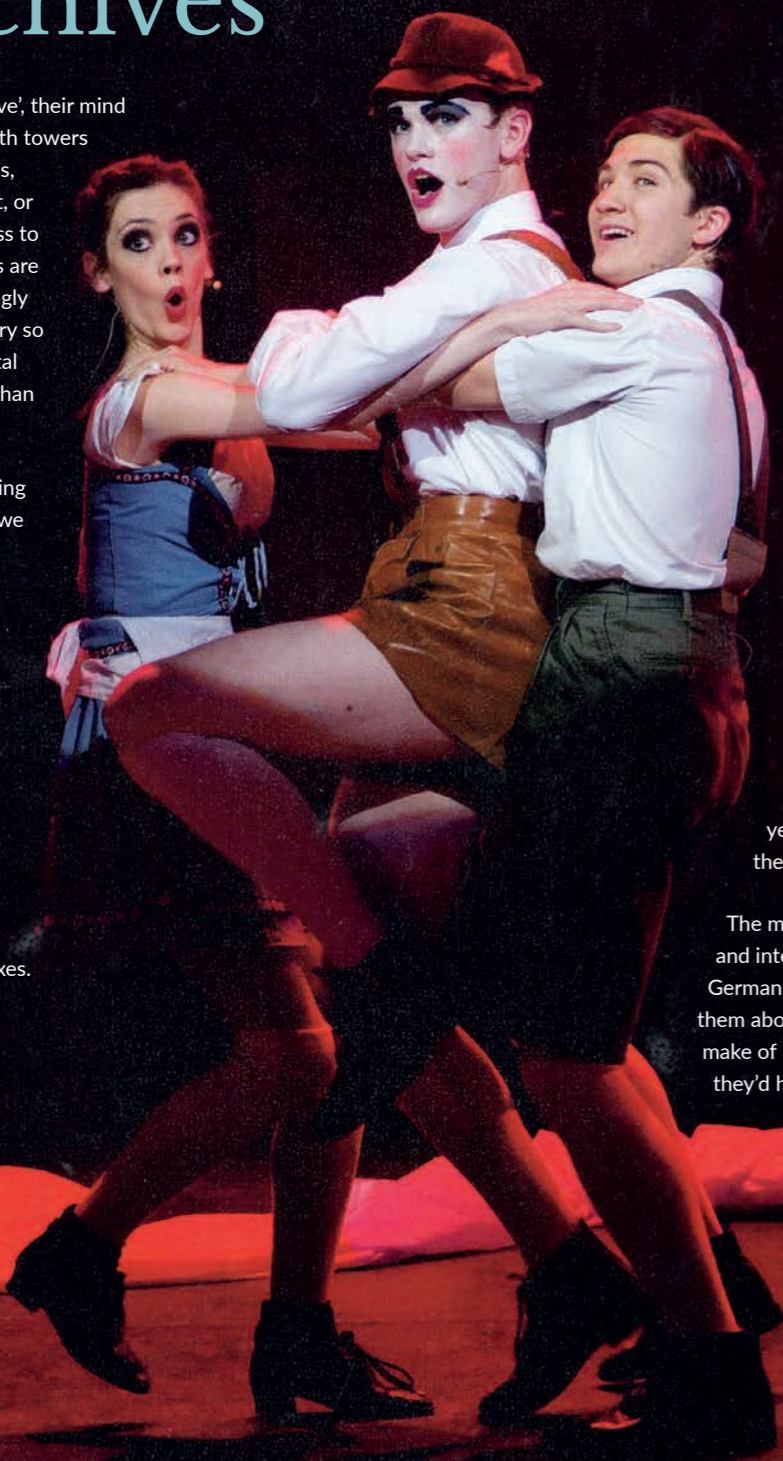
Dance Production still holds a firm place in our department as a priority in the calendar. The production has been performed over the past decade in the fabulous Performing Art Centre. We continue to have between 100 to 150 girls involved each year, and the Dance Committee is, as always, a huge part of the production's success.



1995-2015 Tales from the Archives

When people hear the word 'archive', their mind may conjure up a dimly lit room with towers of precariously stacked dusty boxes, illegible handwriting on parchment, or snooty archivists obstructing access to records. Most of these stereotypes are just that and archives are increasingly about collecting more recent history so that it is not lost to time, with digital records being more at risk of loss than physical paper records.

With the Milestones Reunion coming up in 2025 (find out more below), we delved into the KEVI Foundation archive to see what records we hold about 1995, 2005, and 2015 school leavers. Aside from administrative records, it's mainly school magazines and drama programmes. The magazines offer a fantastic overview of school life for each academic year and are one of the few documents that directly record students' voices and opinions. Here we look at some of the events and articles in the 1995, 2005, and 2015 Phoenixes.



Photograph of a performance of *Pirates of Penzance*, 1995, ref KES/G1/6/A37

The 1995 Phoenix opened with sombre news that Nicola Blakeman, who'd left KEHS in 1994, had died in a road traffic accident in Cambridge, where she was studying Law. Her parents set up two prizes in her memory that are given out each year, reflecting Nicola's passions for music and languages. They also created the Blakeman Fund at Robinson College, which purchases books each year for first year law students, and still support the School in whatever way they can.

The magazine moves on to staff news and interviews with three French and German Assistants, with students asking them about where they grew up, what they make of KEHS, and most importantly if they'd heard of Boyzone!

The Senior Production that year was *Pirates of Penzance*, but there was only a brief mention in the magazine. However, in the KES archive there are some great photographs of the performance and copies of the programme.

Write-ups of Upper Sixth trips that year included a biology trip to Devon and a Symphony Orchestra trip to Lyon, France. The Upper Sixth Charity Week, included an Upper Sixth vs staff basketball game and a fashion show. Unfortunately, there are no photographs of these events in the archive, so please get in touch if you have any!

The first article in the 2005 Phoenix was a farewell piece to Deputy Head, Mrs Bannister, who had been at KEHS for over 30 years. Starting as Head of Maths in January 1972, she



Hand painted design and ticket for *Sweeney Todd*, 2005, ref KES/G1/2/141

instigated and witnessed numerous changes in the Maths Department and beyond, including abolishing the 'top and bottom sets' in favour of teaching Maths in forms, the start of trousers being permitted as school uniform, and the school buying its first electronic calculator which had to be plugged into the mains and cost £60!

Sweeney Todd was the pick for the Senior Production, and this time the magazine included several photographs from the performance. The KES archive includes the hand painted design that was used on the tickets and programmes. There's also a write-up of a project where six Upper Sixth girls teamed up with Mrs Herbert to stage their own version of Offenbach's *Orpheus in the Underworld* with 30 children from Blue Coat School.

Other events featured were Olivia Toye completing the London Marathon in 03:51:07, the A Level Art Exhibition, and an account of an A Level Biology trip to Borth, Wales, with useful advice for future trip-goers such as: 'Get a room with a TV', and, 'Always order fried options in the hostel (continental breakfast sounds good - but is a croissant and apple, how chic)'

By 2015, the school magazine had become much more visual and colourful, and this issue was in the style of a planner belonging to a fictional student, Phoebe Phoenix. It contains letters from Sixth Formers to their Thirds' selves, with nuggets of wisdom like not being so angry or anxious, to laugh at life, and giving mixed advice on rocking or reducing their big backpacks.

2015 leavers will remember the Ruddock Performing Arts Centre opening in 2012. In 2015 the RPAC was transformed into the "snazzy Kit Kat Klub" for the Senior Production of *Cabaret*. This issue also features reciprocal letters on what KES and KEHS thought of each other, with the KES piece starting, "It often seems that the schools coexist in reasonable harmony. Parents will point to the Ruddock Performing Arts Centre as evidence; pupils will point to the 'lovers' field' next to it".

The magazines have been digitised and are freely available here: kingedwardvi-highschoolforgirls-archives.org. In 2023 Charlotte Gallant, Foundation Archivist, and I began a project to catalogue the entire Foundation archive, and the KEHS section can be searched here: <https://kevi.epexio.com/records/KEHS>.

If you have any mementoes (physical or digital) from your school days that you think would add to the collective history of KEHS, please do get in touch.



Rachel Brown, Project Archivist
Email: keviarchive@keviham.org

As a nervous newly qualified teacher, Miss Frazier, I started KEHS in September 1996. At interview I had been through the process of being challenged by the outgoing Miss Ena



Evans and the incoming Miss Sarah Evans! Meeting the delightful members of the English department, including Doris Trott, who was retiring, Alison Warne, then Head of English, and Jean Moule, with whom I went on to lead the English Department from 2005 until 2016, revolutionised my understanding of what teaching was really all about: forging relationships.

So much has changed over the years. Those of you from cohorts in the 90s and early 2000s will be in possession of handwritten reports, long since updated by digital pdfs, and all of you will remember a time when there were three forms simply known as A, B and C (extinct from 2012). Even up to the mid-2000s, there were still daily assemblies, with all of us crammed into the hall and only sixth formers and staff allowed the privilege of sitting on seats; sadly, fire regulations no longer permit us to squish together daily as a community.

In those first few weeks at KEHS I realised that this was a place where girls felt safe, people felt known as individuals and being curious and questioning was the order of the day. It has been the place where I have truly felt at home ever since; some things never change.

Sarah Shore-Nye
Senior Deputy Head (Pastoral)



To book the Milestones Reunion please scan the QR code

Photograph from a performance of *Cabaret*, 2015 ref KES/G1/3/15

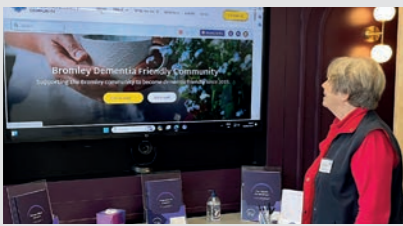
News in brief

1950s

Angela Clayton-Turner (née Rubery) (1957)

In June a friend and I explored the north of N Ireland, travelling from Belfast to Derry and taking in Portrush. We learned a lot about the political history which led to "The Troubles" and the building and sinking of the Titanic. We also explored the Giant's Causeway and took the ferry to Rathlin Island, hoping to see Puffins. I am about to travel by steam train to N Wales and will be climbing Snowdon - by train!

As Hon President of Bromley Dementia Friendly Community I am delighted to say that we launched our website, www.bromleydfc.org, in June, aiming to provide useful information, both local and national. Do take a look!



1960s

Linda Winkley (née Holland) (1960)

I have had a good year after retiring from my job as Consultant Psychiatrist in the NHS. I am enjoying my volunteering work with Bookmark. In addition, I have joined an art class and history group, and have also helped my husband, David, with editing the three new novels he wrote during Covid.

As a psychotherapist myself I am very pleased that my daughter, Kate, also an Old Ed, has qualified as a psychotherapist this year. She is also a sculptor and teaches refugees to speak English.

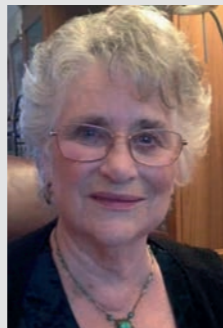
We visited my brother, Nick, in Portugal this year. He is a distinguished designer, and like David, Kate and myself, also attended the KES/KEHS schools.



Janet Garfield (née Richards) (1961)

Wonderful news this year as our eldest granddaughter, Martha, gained her MBChB and is now doing her F1 year at the North Tees Hospital, Stockton-on-Tees.

Another Health Worker in the family following myself who was an Operating Theatre Sister and her Dad, who is a Consultant Intensivist and Anaesthetist. For my husband and me, we celebrate our 56th wedding anniversary in September!



Paula Lawford (née Street) (1963)

After my A Levels I went to Trinity College, Dublin, to read Italian and French. On graduating I went to Italy where I taught English in a language school in Turin. I met my husband, Jeremy, while there and after five years we decided to return to the UK where he became Head of a Prep School in Edinburgh and I gave birth to our two sons.

In 1981 we moved to Exeter, where we still live. Jeremy was Head of Exeter Prep School, I taught French and some Italian, but in 1994 I took a diploma in Counselling and worked as a Counsellor till I retired. I also volunteered at the local hospice and chaired a fund-raising committee for 23 years.

I've recently turned 80 (October) and would love to hear about others who were at KEHS at the same time.



Jean Wilson (1963)

While back, I had the brand-new experience of participating in a podcast, which is not, I am sure, a new experience for most Old Eds, but before I did I had no real idea of what a podcast was, and, although it was very enjoyable, I was faintly disappointed to find that it is just like being interviewed for a radio programme - so nothing to be worried about. I was on the TLS podcast for 23 November 2023, and I heartily recommend the first half of the podcast (the bit I wasn't in) about magic in the Middle Ages.

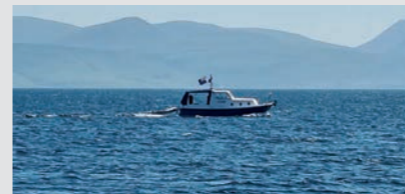


Stephanie Merry (1967)

My big news this year was having my 23 foot motorboat 'Sea Rider' shipped to Scotland for the season, to go cruising with various friends on the west coast. I am writing a very lengthy log of the trip, but please see a short description of a particularly memorable voyage below:

Carob (pronounced 'Kroov') is idyllically situated in the heart of Scotland's most sought-after west coast cruising area and on 8 September, I set off in Sea Rider from Oban to Craobh Haven, accompanied by two friends. The weather was calm with sunny intervals as we motored down the Sound of Kerrera into the Firth of Lorne. From there, the channel is scattered with low-lying rocks, many unmarked. We passed the majestic Fladda lighthouse, which stands sentinel over the safe passage into the Sound of Luig. (It reminded me of previous experiences in these treacherous waters during the 1990s and early 2000s.)

On this occasion, we glided peacefully through the channel, at a stately seven knots. The tide was slack by the time we turned to port around Ard Luig rock, heading northwest for the final 3.5 miles to Craobh Haven.



Pam Stanier (1967)

In September, I appeared on television, taking part in 'Only Connect': a rather eccentric TV quiz with no prizes and no audience which is on BBC2 television on Monday evenings. My team first met through a U3A group (University of the Third Age) in Malvern where I have lived since I retired as a Headteacher in Manchester. It was a really enjoyable experience though it was strange seeing myself on the screen!

The U3A has been an important part of my life in my retirement: I've led groups on Longer Poems, Buddhism, Cryptic Crosswords and French. It's been important to me to continue to learn so I'm also in a Maths group, though I was never good at this at KEHS despite the efforts of my teachers, mainly Miss Hartley.

Being a KEHS student has affected me more than I ever realised. As well as academic studies, I learnt how to speak in public, to organise people and events and to write coherently. As I'm currently Chair of the Parish Council, I draw on all of these and I'm profoundly grateful for my education at the school.



Carol James (née Statham) (1968)

Summer 2024 and here I go again - Stamford Shakespeare Company - 26 performances of "A Midsummer Night's Dream"!

This year a gender changed role - Egea rather than Egeus - a small role but the character gets the whole story going with his/ her "vexation" with Hermia, giving her and Lysander the reason to venture into the woods!

Our set was magical, and a backstage shot of Egea (on the right) chatting with a fairy was all in a day's work!

1970s

Erica Smith (née Thorne) (1971)

After my undergraduate degree at Keele University and a Masters at London University, I found my niche at Sainsbury's as a personnel manager. We emigrated to Australia in 1987 with our family, and have been here ever since, mainly in Wagga Wagga, and in Ballarat. Our family has grown to include four grandchildren.

After various part-time jobs while the children were small, I gained full-time employment, aged 40, as an academic, training teachers who worked in the much-undervalued vocational education and training (VET) sector. I continued in this work for most of the next three decades. I'm also an active researcher and Co-Chair of the international network of apprenticeship researchers.

In November 2023, after my retirement, I was awarded the title of Emeritus Professor.

I often think back to my good fortune in being educated at KEHS. While we regularly return to England, it wasn't until 2023 that I visited the school for the annual reunion. It was wonderful to catch up with people I hadn't seen for 50 years, and to see all the archives and memorabilia in the Library.



Sue Phillips (née Lockley) (1972)

Three friends from the 1965-72 cohort met in August for an afternoon tea in Edgbaston, Birmingham, to celebrate our 70th birthdays.

The picture shows Sue Phillips (née Lockley) currently living in Hampshire, Val Ruston (née Stanier) based in Birmingham and Noelle Walker (née Clack) from Nottingham. It was the first time we'd managed to meet up, all three together, since 2019. So much better than Zoom calls... and we hope to get together again soon!



Ruth Reinstein (1968)

I worked - and am still working intermittently - as an Educational Psychologist. Super job and important, but I would say that, wouldn't I?!



In that role, I had television experiences and impressed my colleagues by being on Richard and Judy a couple of times. Now that I'm pretty old, where previously I was introduced to my children's friends as My Important Mum, their Father too, I am now introduced as, the mother of My Son (he is the Mayor of South Yorkshire).

I have thought of a radio blog where old people talk about things they have discovered, like the fact that ailments now accumulate rather than repair and you just add the newest thing to the one before; that older people know the names of all sorts of drugs; that school peers are now retiring and show off about going on cruises etc!

Zoë Skinner (formerly Powers, née Jones) (1968)

In July we had an addition to the family - a surprise extra granddaughter! My son and his wife are both 42, and their first and only other child is nearly 12, so this was a delightful surprise to all of us. I will be looking after the little one, named Lucinda, one day a week when my daughter-in-law goes back to work. I'll be 75 by then, so I hope I have some energy left!

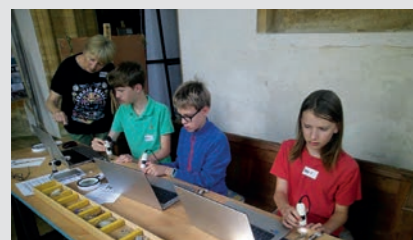


Helen Aldhous (1975)

After an enjoyable career teaching in Gloucestershire, I moved down to Somerset with my husband, where we have become engrossed in the local history and heritage of the Parish of Kingsbury Episcopi. We had a successful bid in 2023 to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for a five year project called "Our Hundred: Heritage Matters" and this has allowed us to run a number of events, all related to our local heritage.

The photo shows me with a group of MAYAs - Mick Aston Young Archaeologists - engaged in using Dino-Lites to look at "finds" in a workshop we ran in our local church. The Dino-Lites are digital microscopes which attach to a laptop and are great for examining objects closely. The HLF funding has enabled us to buy all sorts of equipment which we can use at local events we hold.

We have run two family summer schools as part of the project, which have involved digging test pits, and various craft workshops - pottery, stone carving, willow weaving, leather work. All tremendous opportunities for us to learn with local families about our heritage crafts, working with local crafts people. So never a dull moment... what retirement?!



Christine Moreland (née Smith) (1975)

My first Grandson, Nathan, arrived on 3 April 2024, to my daughter, Ellie, and her husband, Will. Everyone is very happy, especially his Great Grandmother - Audrey!

Looks like he'll be a thespian like his parents.



Allison Bucknell (née George) (1977)

I was at school during the Maggie Thatcher era. She was a strong powerful woman. I remember being told at school that as women we could be what we wanted to be, the only thing stopping us is ourselves.

I still strongly believe in single sex education from the age of 11-16 and going to an all-girls school with a boys' school next door worked very well.

The early part of 2024 marked quite a few milestones - 65th birthday in March, May 6th was 25 years as an elected member for Lyneham Division, which is part of Wiltshire Council - a Unitary Authority (although I was first elected as a North Wiltshire District Councillor and then we became Unitary), and May 22nd was my Silver Wedding Anniversary with Steve, which I celebrated by proving that I could still get into my wedding dress!



Jayne Howard (née Brama) (1978)

I enjoyed the 2023 edition of KEynotes, and especially the news from Graham Line. I was at KEHS from 1971, and we had Mr Line for Latin. He was a Doncaster Rovers supporter, and we Aston Villa fans used to take great delight in the fact that we had moved out of Division Three where they still languished.

I was also reminded of him when watching the Dr Who episode Fires in Pompeii, in which the characters of Caecilius, Metella and Quintus appeared - taken straight from our Cambridge Latin Course!

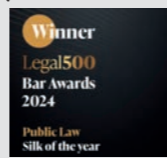
After working as a teacher, health manager and public health director, I now work at the National Centre for Creative Health on a programme which is aiming to embed arts, culture and creativity in the health and care system across England. I have been in this field for about 20 years now and have seen how arts and creativity can transform lives and help to address health and social inequalities in our society.



1980s

Samantha Leek (1987)

I thought you might like to share in the 'News in Brief' that I have been awarded the 'Public Law Silk of the Year' award by Legal 500.



Dulcie O'Shea (née Branson) (1987)

What a happy coincidence! Twelve Old Edwardians from the 1980-1987 cohort had arranged a reunion lunch on what turned out to be Founder's Day - 12 October! It was so good to see familiar faces (no-one has really changed!) after such a long time. Some of us had not seen each other for 39 years! We all agreed we'd thoroughly enjoyed the catch up and must do it again very soon.

Photo - clockwise from bottom left: Stephanie Burrows, Dulcie Branson, Ellie Hurley, Caroline Mirfin, Jenny Mound, Rowan Pearce, Pippa Edwards, Kate Jenkins, Clare Wyatt, Helen Cockbill, Helena Dick, Sarah Laming.



1990s

Emma Waring (1996)

Delighted to have been promoted to a Professorship at York Law School at the University of York where I teach and research in Property Law and am Programme Leader of our interdisciplinary postgraduate programme, the LLM in Art Law. Additionally, I have also been Ordained this summer as a Priest in the Church of England. I am undertaking my Curacy part-time as a Self-Supporting Minister at the benefice of Christ Church, Skipton and St Mary's, Carleton.



2000s

Oyinlola Oyeboode (2001)

In September 2022 I took up a role as Professor of Public Health at Queen Mary University of London where I lead the Centre for Public Health and Policy. Due to a pandemic backlog, my inaugural lecture was held two years later on 25th September 2024. Five KEHS girls were in attendance, Gayatri Sehdev, Rachel Mary Moll, Jyoti Sehdev, my sister-in-law Charlotte O'Brien, and Rosemary Walmsley who I worked with at University of Warwick in 2017 (and her work was featured in the lecture). The lecture told the story of my career, from school days to my current focus on research to help us understand what can be done to support people to eat more sustainably and healthily in an equitable way.



Lucy Wasinski (née Wasse) (2001)

In July this year I did the Lakeland 50 - an iconic 50 mile ultra marathon in the Lake District. It was an incredible experience, not just the event itself but getting to know the route over several months of training. I had the support of my sister, Jo - another Old Ed (1999) and hearing her cheer me on as I was running down the hills into the finish in Coniston after 12 long hours of hilly running was wonderful!



The long-distance training paid off as I became quicker over short distances as well! This culminated in getting a qualifying time which meant I could represent England in a 5km race versus Wales as part of their Masters running programme. The race was near Chester in August. I achieved my second quickest time over 5k and was the 2nd V40 female in that contest.

We can all definitely make the most of the opportunities we get when at school, but it's never too late to take up new things as we get older...you never know where it might lead!

Ashley Templeton-Browne (née Neale) (2006)

My family and I have recently moved to Australia, and I'm starting a new job in Brisbane as Quantitative Research Director at a media and advertising agency. I'm excited to start a new chapter in a new city!



Meet the Founder and Editor of PS! Magazine: Barbara Davis (née Bayliss) (1944)

Barbara joined KEHS in September 1938 and has been actively engaged with the school ever since. A committee member since 1982, Barbara has always supported the Old Edwardian Club to keep alumnae in touch with the school and with one another. "It's important to have a network to turn to, for friendship and for business. The BGOEC provides that".

In the late 1990s, Barbara was already producing an annual newsletter. She was approached by a group of young alumnae, who said that this community would benefit from an informal magazine, and so PS! was born.

"PS! Is a quarterly magazine full of all sorts of interesting articles that Old Eds send us: reviews of books and programmes, places to go and things to try, reviews of experiences, recipes, memories, 'how to' guides, and even humorous accounts of things happening in people's lives. PS! has something for everyone."

Barbara's favourite piece was written by an alumna who worked as a dispatcher during WWII. Her role was to go and collect aeroplanes from the manufacturers and pilot them to their new aerodromes. "I thought 'what a clever thing to do'. A typical KE girl, taking on something she'd never done before and learning a new skill".

Barbara's own career began in a similar vein, as a Librarian and Programme Researcher with the BBC. "My role was finding things out for departments who couldn't find these things out themselves". One example of this was when a sound engineer asked her to find a 'clean' tunnel where he might record the rumble of a passing train. "I found a good spot and I sorted it out with the train



operators, asking jokingly if it was clean - they said our crew would be welcome to clean it if they wished!

PS! today is run by a committee of dedicated volunteers, some of whom were there with Barbara at its beginning, and others who have joined along the way. "Our meetings are a riot!" and are hugely enjoyed by friends old and new. The PS! Committee runs this magazine entirely under their own steam and have a global circulation. It is available by subscription. Please email Barbara at: 295barbaradavis@gmail.com

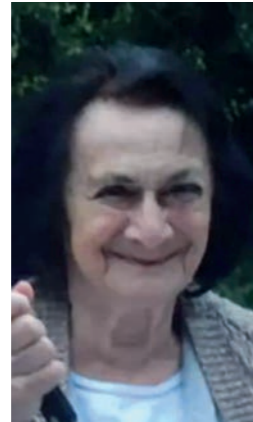
Barbara is delighted that PS! remains a printed magazine: "a connection to other people that you can hold and carry with you".

Barbara is also a keen pen pal to many far and wide. "If any alumnae would like to start writing back and forth with me, I'd love to hear from them".

Barbara is proud to be one of our oldest and most engaged alumna - and we are hugely grateful for all she continues to do for Old Edwardians and for the school.

Leila Goldman (née Cohen) (1944)

My mother, Leila Goldman, was born 12 August 1926 in Selly Park, Birmingham and attended KEHS from 1937-1944. Her first cousin, Lois Freedman (née Singer) was at the school at the same time (Lois is now 95 years old and lives in London. She was London Branch Secretary for a long time.)



In 1939 the whole school was evacuated during the war to Pates Grammar School Cheltenham but returned after a year. Feeling unsafe in the city the family relocated to Hagley, again for about a year.

After leaving KEHS, Mum went to Birmingham University to train as a teacher studying English, History, Scripture and Craft. In those days the course only took two years and she taught at Turves Green Primary School until she gave birth to me in 1951, having married in 1949. My brother Mike followed in 1953, but by 1957 she was teaching again - unusual in those days to go back to full time working so quickly - in fact my brother had to go to a Nursery School of which there were not many at the time. By now she was working at Hall Green Junior School, a school my brother and I both attended after going through Infant School there. My brother was in her class for a whole year - I only had her for needlework in Top Juniors where she punished me by making me stand in the waste paper basket for talking too much!

In 1964, Mum moved to Anderton Park Primary School in Balsall Heath and in 1968 she was appointed as Deputy Head at Brookfields Primary School in Hockley. By this time Mike and I were carrying on the family tradition - he was at KES and I was at KEHS. On 31 December 1989, Mum retired after 38 years of teaching - she became acting Headteacher for her last term at the school.

Mum still lived in the house we had moved to in 1968 (for 56 years) only having to have a carer once a day for the last year of her life. She was always very active and enjoyed many holidays abroad with family. She died in the QE hospital on 8 June 2024, aged 97 years, four days after a fall at home - the first time she had been in hospital for 90 years!

She leaves two children, four grandchildren and three great grandchildren.

Prue Davis (daughter)

Christine Helen Payne (1952)



Christine was born in Dorset in 1935, her family living in many places before settling back in Birmingham.

Christine was schooled at King Edward VI High School for Girls before gaining an art degree from Birmingham School of Art. She then taught at a variety of schools and colleges whilst raising a family and living in Leamington Spa. In her youth she travelled extensively in Europe and was influenced by the sights and landscapes she experienced. After moving to Evesham to teach at Prince Henry's School, she developed her love of painting and batik.

In 1984, she moved to Llangadog in Carmarthenshire to run a B&B alongside her work with painting. Whilst there she was heavily involved in the local Riding for the Disabled group which followed on from her love of horses. She developed a naturalistic style of painting with old trees, and beach landscapes being her main inspiration. She won the Dyfed art prize in 1990 and was commended the following year. Exhibitions in Pershore, Swansea, Haverfordwest, Cowbridge, Milford Haven and Narberth ran alongside many local initiatives to promote art in schools.

Christine was always accompanied by her dogs: Bunny, Piggy and Siani and she spent many hours hacking in the Welsh hills with her horse, Jane.

She moved back to Evesham in 2012 to live with her son, Doug, and continued to walk with friends through the Vale often sketching and photographing the wildlife.

She passed away after a short illness in January 2024.

Doug Payne (son)

Pamela Holt (née Young) (1953)

Pamela was born on 3 December 1935 in Hall Green to Agnes and Donald Young and became a younger sister to Derek.

Her first school was Dunoon School where she demonstrated her excellence at a range of subjects, including English, Music and Arithmetic. Pam gained a scholarship to King Edward VI High School for Girls and began in 1946. Her long-lasting friendships which remained until her death included Noreen Oliver, Margaret Steane and Kathryn Blunt.



Pam excelled in all her subjects but especially in English and languages - learning French, German, Italian, Latin and Spanish which she would have loved to study had she gone to university. Instead, in 1953, she left KEHS with her A Levels and went to secretarial college.

Pam started work at the BBC in 1954. She worked as the Editor's Secretary on a number of TV shows. She worked closely with David Coleman (the sports commentator) on 'Sportsnight with Coleman' and Percy Thrower on 'Gardening Club' which later became 'Gardner's World.'

Pam met Ted in 1963 during a youth hostelling weekend. They became engaged in 1964 and married in 1965. Whilst Pam loved her time at the BBC, she gave it up to make a family home and then to welcome their children, Tracie and Steve.

In the 1970's, Pam and her friend, Pauline Quayle, set up a catering business for weddings, birthdays and social events. Then in 1981 Pam went to work for a newly established company - Couch, Perry & Wilkes - a partnership of mechanical and electrical engineers. Pam joined as PA to the Partners. The firm was hugely successful and Pam ended up becoming the Company Secretary.

Pam was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis in early 1991. She was very resilient and showed grit and determination to carry on walking with or without sticks for as long as possible.

Pam was so proud of her role as a 'Grandma', a journey which began in January 1997 with the arrival of Lewis, then Phoebe in January 2002, Amber in January 2004 and finally Poppy in January 2009. January was always a busy month!

Ted passed away in August 2021 and in January 2023 Pam moved into Birchmere House Care home in Knowle. The staff found Pam friendly, kind and having a beautiful smile. She had a strong Christian faith which remained with her throughout her whole life.

For Pam's 80th birthday, we captured words from family and friends describing her, here are just a few that summed her up:

Inner strength; a true friend; always smiling; always ready to help others, beautiful wife to Ted.

Sadly missed by Tracie and Steve, their partners and four grandchildren.

Tracie Malin (daughter)

Gillian McIlwaine (née Leatham) (1963)

In 1945, Gillian was born in Preston, Lancs, the second daughter of Enid (a teacher) and the Rev. William Leatham. She was married to Physics teacher, Karl, became mother to Andrew and Nigel, and grandmother to Joshua and Jacob.



Gillian was a rather poorly child, dearly loved by her parents and sister Brigid. Educated at Harborne Junior School, she was helped greatly by her sister who taught her to read when she was too ill to attend school herself. She recovered from these childhood illnesses and was able to attend Harborne Junior School and in due time won a place at King Edward VI High School For Girls, where she flourished academically and was eventually appointed Head Girl by the redoubtable "Lolly Will" - Mrs Lloyd-Williams.

Gillian left KEHS halfway through the third Sixth Year, having been awarded a place at Girton College, Cambridge, and found temporary employment in Hudson's, the University of Birmingham book shop, where she and Karl met and became boyfriend and girlfriend. They were married just weeks after her graduation having been awarded a First-Class honours degree.

She enjoyed a long and happy family life with her husband and sons.

Gill subsequently taught RE at Holly Lodge School and then at the Church of England College in Edgbaston where her energy and enthusiasm resulted in her being severely over-worked and, eventually, forced into early retirement.

She gave birth to two sons and supported her husband (with energy, fidelity, loyalty and love). She was an enthusiastic innovator at school and church but, later in life, Gill's health gradually deteriorated and, in Field House Care Home, sadly, she passed away on 26 October 2023. As a teenager and for the rest of her life, she was a deeply committed Christian.

Her gravestone in Quinton cemetery reads:

"Sadly mourned
Greatly missed,
Forever with the Lord".

Karl McIlwaine (husband)

Stacy Duggins (2002)

Stacy joined KEHS in September 1995, one of a crowd of new girls in our bug green and black uniforms. She very quickly drew a lot of friends to her, not because she was someone who chased the spotlight or tried to be in the "in crowd", but because of her kindness, loyalty and effortless coolness. She was one of the few people with a strong network of friends across all the classes in our year and the boys' school. Without trying or even noticing, she was a centre of gravity who held our world together.



Stacy was funny, but not cruel. Clever, but not cocky. Gentle, but no pushover. She loved silly fun - hitting the dance floor with joy and abandon, being passionate about soap opera 'Home & Away' and throwing herself wholeheartedly, unironically, into Eurovision every year. She was expert at getting from lessons to the dining room to be first in the queue for a slice of pizza, and the look of sheer misery on her face when Mrs Leonard made us do five laps of the hockey pitch was unforgettable. She had an achingly cool sense of style, sourced from charity shops and bargain bins. Hours could easily vanish chatting to Stacy - on the drive of her house at the end of a teenage night, or years later on the phone, sharing every detail of life. When we left school, Stacy moved up to Leeds to study Classics, before settling down happily in Manchester, but she remained a constant friend for many. She was someone you knew you could call and chat as easily as though no time at all had passed.

Her career was as a public health analyst - first for Oldham Council and then for the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) - eventually completing a master's degree in the field. But Stacy's priority was her family. She was close to her parents and adored her two brothers, Alexi and Tom. She married Jack in 2013, a joyful day of flowers, homemade decorations and a bubblegum pink VW camper van. She had her daughter, Alexa, in 2015, and became a simply amazing mum. Stacy met her second husband, James, in 2021. When they had their wonderful son, Caolan, together in April 2023, Stacy's family was complete. Heartbreakingly, this joy didn't last long and in July, just three months after Caolan arrived, Stacy was diagnosed with cancer.

As with everything in her life, Stacy met this awful news with a positive mindset and with kindness. She was so brave in the final months of her life. Even in her worst times, she never stopped caring about those around her. In November 2023, Stacy and James invited their loved ones to a fabulous celebration of their marriage, with Stacy dancing the night away as if she didn't have a care in the world.

When Stacy died at the start of 2024, a few months short of her 40th birthday, she left a horrible hole in so many people's lives. The dozens of school friends who travelled up to her funeral were a testament to how much she still means to so many of us. We all miss her vivid personality and expansive beautiful spirit.

Rachel Coyle (née McLaughlin) (2002)

Pauline Brace (Former Staff: 1960-1967)

Pauline Brace, who many old girls from KEHS will remember fondly as Miss Meanley-Smith, died in January this year, aged 95.

She was born in Edgbaston in 1928 and grew up with some significant health issues and without a father from the age of nine, circumstances - she always said - that helped her 'grab hold of life and not let go'. This attitude drove her to take a huge opportunity (or risk!) in 1955 when she sailed to America for a 12-month teacher exchange. The experience began a deep transatlantic family friendship that is just as strong today - an example of Pauline's ability to befriend and inspire everyone she met.

Pauline honed her teaching skills at KEHS, which she joined in 1960 to teach History and English with a focus on the latter. She taught under two headmistresses - Miss Lloyd Williams and Miss Wilks - and under Head of English, Kate Flint.

Fellow English teacher, Janet Cockin (née Lister), remembered Pauline welcoming her to the school when she joined the staff on a teacher training term:

"That moment began a friendship that has lasted to this day and has meant so very much to me," said Janet. "I knew Pauline was not just an extremely good teacher but also a brilliant organiser and always got on with everyone. I was therefore delighted when KEHS offered me a full-time position, partly because I knew I would be teaching with Pauline."

Pauline was soon promoted to the Second Mistress (Deputy Head) role in 1963, which demanded a lot of organisation and communication, both of which she excelled at. She was also the organiser of the annual Junior Drama Festival, which allowed her to shine as an amateur director.

Pauline married Keith Brace in 1964. He was the Literary Editor of the Birmingham Post at that time. She left in 1967 to have her only son, Matthew, who was born in September that year.

Outside school, she was a regular at the Crescent Theatre in Birmingham, acting in and directing plays. Among others, she directed Shakespeare's Love's Labour's Lost and Arthur Miller's All My Sons. She was also an amateur actor at the Birmingham Rep, sharing the stage with - among others - Paul Eddington (The Good Life and Yes, Minister).

Pauline played an important part in many pupils' lives during their school years and long after. She will be deeply missed by very many people.

Matt Brace (son)



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