



keynotes

2025-26



In this issue...

A remarkable story

Our Inspirational Old Ed's
incredible life

Our Global Network

Discover where many of our
alumnae are and read more
about their journeys

Careers Focus -

Business Leadership &
Entrepreneurship
Insights and lessons learned,
& what is next for our pupils

Chair's Welcome



The BGOEC Committee & keynotes Committee

Paul Arnold – *President*

Lois Freedman – *Vice-President*

Annette Duffy – *Chairman, keynotes, BGOEC Archivist*

Cas Britton – *keynotes & BGOEC Archivist*

Angela Clayton-Turner – *London Branch Secretary*

Grace Mitchell – *Treasurer*

Helen Nixon – *Trustee of the BGOEC*
Jan Smith – *BGOEC Committee member*
Alice Stanley – *keynotes*

Gabrielle Stanley – *keynotes, Trustee of BGOEC*

Debbie Macleod – *Editor of keynotes*

A warm welcome to all Old Edwardians to this latest edition of keynotes, especially those of you who have just become members of this very special club. I can guarantee you that wherever you may go in the world, you will meet a fellow Old Edwardian.

As you will read in our feature article, many Old Edwardians have settled abroad and are leading amazing lives – it is always a delight to hear from them and see what they are doing, some even plan their trips home to coincide with Reunion Events. Kirsty von Malaisé and Laura Salt were able to reconnect with several Old Edwardians in Canada and America when they visited last year.

The Development Office work incredibly hard organising events to enable Old Edwardians to keep in touch with friends and their peers from school. The Milestones Reunion held for those traditionally celebrating 10, 20 and 30 years since leaving was held as a joint event for the first time last year. It was a fabulous summer event enjoyed by everyone who attended – I was there and can confirm that it was a great evening, but I think it is for the 'younger' generation for a reason – the decibel levels in the Boys' dining room were pretty high!

The Gemstones reunion in February this year was a little more sedate (only a little!) The event was mainly for those who left in a year ending in six, and a group of us who started in 1976 went along and had a wonderful day. I particularly enjoy seeing the reactions of those who haven't revisited school since they left after Upper Sixth – they are always amazed how little the building has changed. The archives are always popular, and my friend Hilary found a photo of herself meeting Princess Anne during the Centenary Celebrations in 1983. I found my old school scarf and had a photo taken wearing it (see us both above!)

Sadly, every year we must say goodbye to Old Edwardians who have passed away. This year, in April, one of our most amazing Old Girls, Barbara Davis, died at the great age of 98. She joined KEHS in 1939 as one of the first pupils in our current building and was part of the Old Edwardian Club for 80 years. As Chair of the Club, she instigated the first joint events with the Old Boys – held at her house because we couldn't drink alcohol in the Old Girls Room! She organised many social events, helped modernise the BGOEC Annual Report (which then became keynotes) and even offered work experience at her company to KEHS students. Her obituary (on page 30) will tell you lots more about her amazing life – she will be greatly missed.

The school community is also saying goodbye to Pete Wright, Porter for nearly 40 years. I would like to wish Pete a very happy retirement and thank him for all his help over the years – moving furniture, helping at events, whatever we asked for, he always answered with a smile 'Of course we can girls!'

My thanks, as always to Laura, Jess and Debbie for all they do for the Old Edwardian Alumnae and to Paul Arnold for his great support as our President.

I hope reading this edition of keynotes brings enjoyment, knowing that you are part of the Old Edwardian community.

Annette Duffy (née Glennon) (1983)

Throughout her life, Ilse credited KEHS with not only changing her future - but saving her life.

pg6

Contents

Chair's Welcome	3
Chief Master & Principal	4
Head of School	5
Inspirational Old Ed	6
KEHS News	9
Our Global Network	12
Business Leaders & Entrepreneurship	16
Tales from the Archives	20
Development Update	22
News in Brief	24
Sadly Missed	28
Fond Farewell	38

Kirsty von Malaisé

Chief Master & Principal, KEHS & KES



As we approach the 475th anniversary of King Edward's and the Foundation, this year has been one of both affirmation and momentum. In a challenging educational climate, the Schools have progressed with clarity of purpose, strong values, and confidence in the direction we are taking.

This has been a year of growth at KEHS at a time when growth might have seemed improbable. Expansion in a demanding national context has required careful judgement, resilience, and trust in our long-term strategy. The results, academically, pastorally, and culturally, confirm that this confidence was well placed.

Alongside our growth, and in support of it, our ambition to extend access remains unwavering.

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

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

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

Central to everything we do is our educational philosophy: to develop critical thinkers and independent learners. KEHS continues to develop pupils who are intellectually curious, reflective, and resilient young people who can embrace complexity and act with integrity.

Equally important is the School's commitment to partnership, service, and collaboration. These initiatives remind pupils that education carries with it responsibility: to contribute, to serve, and to engage with others. They also reinforce our role as civic institutions deeply connected to our communities. Next year, we will see a renewed focus on Business and Enterprise education, both within school, and across the wider Foundation, creating a virtuous circle of connection and influence within the city.

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

Within our strong community, OE networks are powerful. They connect past, present, and future pupils, offering insight, mentorship, and inspiration, and reminding current pupils that they belong to a lifelong community.

As we look ahead to the exciting programme of anniversary events, we do so with confidence in the School's direction, fidelity to our values, and optimism for what lies ahead. I hope you will continue to stay engaged, connected, and proud, not only of what King Edward VI High School for Girls has been for you, but of all it continues to become.

With warmest wishes

Kirsty von Malaisé
Chief Master & Principal, KEHS & KES



Paul Arnold

Head of School

KEHS – your School – is a vibrant, tight-knit and very special community

Yes, this is a school where girls get brilliant results (just outside the top 10 independent schools in the Times Parent Power rankings, and once again the best school in the West Midlands for academic excellence); a school where ambitious and scholarly girls thrive, and where the unmistakable buzz of 'thinking chatter' emanates from classrooms.

But KEHS is not a 'hothouse' where exams and results are the be-all and end-all. No, it is rather a 'greenhouse' where we create the conditions for young women to grow, find their passions, explore their horizons, and become the very best they can be.

Everywhere I turn I see the caring KEHS community in action: from the small everyday acts of kindness between peers, to the way that older pupils mentor younger ones in understanding tricky concepts; in the friendly rivalry of inter-House competitions, whether it's the keenly-contested (and noisy!) tug-of-war or the more cerebral and surreal challenges of House Taskmaster and House Escape Room; and in the warm and supportive appreciation of each other's efforts and talent at Athena Showcase events, debating competitions, sporting fixtures and the many instrumental concerts which punctuate the term.

KEHS girls have achieved amazing things this year; only very recently, our U15 Cricket team was placed fifth at the National Indoor Cricket finals at Lord's, and our ESU Churchill Public Speaking team reached the Grand Final,

competing against the very best speakers, chairs and questioners from five other schools.

KEHS pupils also possess a keen sense of social responsibility: many pupils volunteer to support initiatives in their local communities, while our outreach and our Care Do Give programmes challenge us to take action to support those who don't enjoy the same opportunities and privileges as we do. Our pupils support literacy and language learning in local primary schools, donate produce to local food banks, and raise significant funds for a wide range of good causes (over £11,500 in the last academic year).

This year's memorable productions of *Oliver Twist* and *The Great Gatsby* showcased the on-stage and backstage talents of so many girls, and I recently enjoyed our wonderful annual Dance Show, an inclusive celebration of talent and culture – with a record 200 performers this year! Opportunities for girls to develop the skills of leadership, resilience and teamwork will further increase from September, when KEHS pupils will join the KES CCF Contingent for the first time. We truly are a school where excellence of all kinds is celebrated.

Over the last twelve months we have welcomed a number of new staff; I know that you will join me in welcoming new colleagues to KEHS. Conversely, other staff have moved on from KEHS, to other schools or to new adventures in retirement – namely Fiona Hodgson, our morning Receptionist; Sheila Blain, who has inspired so many girls as Head of German; and Peter Wright, who has been our School Porter for the last 40 years (see page 38). We wish them all well.

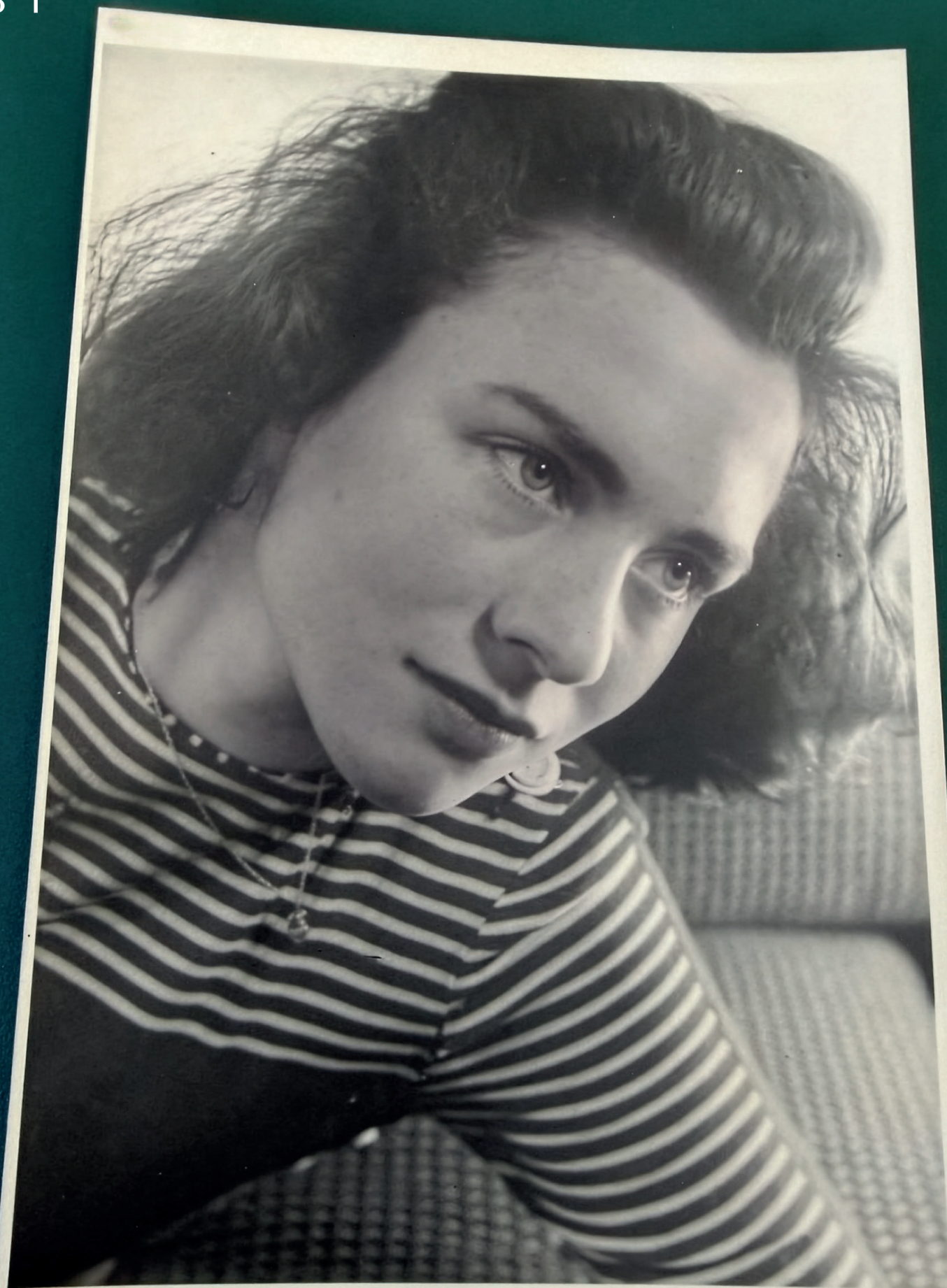
It is always a pleasure to welcome Old Eds back to support school events; our pupils always enjoy hearing about your careers and pathways, and they leave inspired and with their horizons widened! Please do come back to KEHS to share your stories and your experiences, whether with your successors in these hallowed halls or with your classmates and lifelong friends at reunion events; you will always be welcome at your school!

Finally, I should like to put on record my sincere appreciation to the BGOEC Committee, ably chaired by Annette Duffy; thank you for your unstinting support for KEHS.

To return to my starting point: above all else, KEHS – your School – is a vibrant, tight-knit and very special community, and I know that when you visit us you will recognise the timeless qualities of friendship, fun and community spirit which you will cherish in your own memories of KEHS.

I can't resist a PS, in loving memory of Barbara Davis – a much-loved member of the BGOEC Committee and a true friend to the school – whose obituary you will find in this journal. Hers was a life richly and joyfully lived, and we will all miss her.

Paul Arnold
Head of School



Ilse Kagan

The Life Story of Old Edwardian - Ilse Kagan (née Echt) (1946)

A Legacy of Courage, Education, and the Transformative Power of Opportunity

In October, during a visit to the United States, Chief Master & Principal Kirsty von Malaisé, and Development Director Laura Salt, had the great privilege of meeting Ilse Kagan at her home just outside New York City. Now in her late nineties, Ilse shared the extraordinary story of how she came to attend King Edward VI High School for Girls and how the school and its teachers changed the course of her life.

Childhood in Danzig

Ilse was born in the Free City of Danzig (modern-day Gdańsk, Poland), a semiautonomous Baltic port. Her father, a teacher and civil servant, was asked by the Danzig authorities in 1934 to establish a Jewish state school after Jewish children were expelled from the general education system. He founded a full primary school that used the same textbooks as state schools; Ilse joined its very first class.

Ilse was one of three sisters. Her eldest had already emigrated to America by November 1938. As persecution intensified, her father helped organise the Kindertransport from Danzig to Great Britain - originally to help Jewish children escape the Nazis. Only later did Ilse learn that she and her middle sister would also be sent.

In May 1939, Ilse boarded the Kindertransport. She remembered studying an atlas and imagining England through the lens of Little Lord Fauntleroy - a world of lords, earls, & grand houses - far from the reality that awaited her.

Arrival in England and Early Challenges

Ilse arrived in Gloucestershire on 5 May 1939, aged 11, without speaking a word of English. Soon after arrival, she was separated from her sister and sent to live with a foster family in



the village of King Stanley. The local vocational school in Stroud had only one space, so Ilse was sent - entirely by chance - to the Grammar school across the street. Given a bicycle despite never having ridden one, she cycled 4½ miles

to school daily, a challenge that nonetheless placed her on the path to higher education.

Meanwhile, her parents were granted last minute tourist visas to England - approved only days before Britain declared war and fortunately making it impossible for them to return to Danzig. Her parents (after being interned temporarily as enemy aliens) lived modestly until later permitted to work, eventually moving to Birmingham to serve as wardens of a refugee hostel on Wheeley's Road, Edgbaston. Opening in 1939, nearly 1400 people passed through its doors. Initially for all ages, but as more and more children came over on the Kindertransport on their own, it became a home for younger boys and girls.

Ilse visited during holidays and witnessed the intense bombing in Birmingham, but remained in Gloucestershire to continue her education.

King Edward VI High School for Girls

In 1943, while living in Stroud, Ilse was told she would need to move on from her foster home to rejoin her parents in Birmingham, and was placed at King Edward VI High School for Girls. Dr Smith, appointed Headmistress in 1942, led the school during Ilse's time there.

Ilse thrived. School archives reveal she was a talented hockey player - Captain of the Beaufort House team and Vice Captain of the First XI. Her coach, Mrs Field, wrote:

'Very good indeed, her play throughout the year and her great speed have been a great asset to the team.'



Yet it was in the classroom that Ilse experienced the most profound transformation. Despite pressure from refugee committees to leave school and start working at 16, Ilse persisted.

Supported by her parents and teachers, Dr Smith recognised her ability and encouraged her to aim for Oxford, providing additional work and academic guidance. Ilse later described this intervention as lifechanging. She remained in education long enough to win a scholarship to St Hugh's College, Oxford, where she read Modern Languages - an achievement she could never have imagined as a child arriving in England unable to speak English. Ilse had a wonderful time in post-war Oxford making interesting friends as diverse as Kenneth Tynan (a King Edward's graduate) and Sir Keith Joseph.

By 1948, as refugee children grew independent, the Birmingham hostel closed and her parents emigrated to the United States to join Ilse's eldest sister.

A New Life in America

After her degree, Ilse followed in 1949 and, by fortunate coincidence, a friend who was working at the United Nations persuaded her to take an examination for secretaries. Ilse was horrified at the thought as she could not type or do anything a secretary did. Nevertheless, she entered a room full of young ladies sitting very upright and erect, their faces looking onto

the document and their fingers typing. Ilse was resigned to the fact she had no chance. What she didn't know was that there was also an IQ test, which of course Ilse excelled in, and a job was secured at the United Nations that lasted until her marriage in 1951.

After that she lived in Boston and Washington, returning to New York in 1959 where she raised two children. Kirsty and Laura were delighted to meet her daughter, Miki, during their recent visit.

Wanting to advance professionally, she later earned a Master of Library Science from Columbia University in 1960 and worked as a research librarian for renowned energy consultants well into her eighties.

A passionate historian, Ilse became a founding member of the Great Neck History Society and contributed to Jewish communal organisations and civic life. Her career in librarianship and historical research reflected both intellectual curiosity and a deep commitment to memory and service.

A Lifelong Connection to KEHS

Throughout her life, Ilse credited KEHS with not only changing her future - but saving her life. She recognised that education and opportunity had offered her safety, dignity, and purpose at a moment of profound upheaval.

In another link to King Edward's, Ilse has also featured in a book of letters by the writer and critic Ken Tynan (KES 1945). He wrote 'Ilse was wonderful the whole time in hundreds of different ways - in French ways, in Italian ways, and for one wonderful moment, in Siamese ways.'

Ilse has been an exceptionally generous supporter of our Assisted Places Fund, ensuring that girls today continue to receive lifechanging opportunities, just as she once did. She has donated for many years and has also included KEHS in her will.

Thank You, Ilse

Throughout her life, Ilse remained aware of the profound twists of fate that shaped her journey - from the school place she happened to receive, to the family that hosted her, to the opportunities created by teachers who recognised her ability. Her story stands as a remarkable testament to resilience, and the lasting impact of education.

We are deeply grateful to Ilse for sharing her remarkable story with us. Her journey, though not like many other KEHS Old Edwardians, shows the same values of KEHS girls today: scholarship, resilience, courage, and the transformative power of education.

Development & Alumni Relations Events for 2025 - 26

University Networking Friday 12th September 2025



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

KE Community Xmas Monday 1st December 2025



In December, we proudly hosted our second KE Community Christmas event which brought together pupils, parents, Old Edwardians and staff for a celebration that showcased the creativity and talent within our community.

Guests enjoyed browsing a wonderful variety of stalls offering unique gifts, delicious treats and handcrafted items and everyone embraced the warm spirit of the festive season.

Class of 1986 Reunion Saturday 14th March 2026



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

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

Gemstones Reunion Saturday 28th February 2026

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

The day began with a talk from guest speaker, Lucy Smith (2020), who delivered a fascinating talk on codebreaking at Bletchley Park and its historical links with KEHS. Archives activities, a delicious lunch and tours of the school followed, before concluding with more laughter and the sharing of stories!



Overseas Alumni Events

In October, the Chief Master & Principal, Kirsty von Malaisé, and Development Director, Laura Salt, travelled to Canada and the United States to meet alumni from both KEHS and KES. The visit was long overdue, and it was wonderful to reconnect with Old Edwardians in person. Highlights included a brunch in Toronto kindly hosted by a KES OE, Nick Collins (1964), and drinks in Brooklyn, hosted Catherine Mackay (1985). The trip concluded with a fascinating evening at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, with a tour of the Rockefeller Wing, made possible by KES OE, Sir Paul Ruddock (1976).

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

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

Milestones Reunion Saturday 6th June 2026

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

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

Year group photographs were taken, between downpours! These photos not only serve as treasured mementos but will also become an important part of the School's archives for years to come.

The celebrations then moved to the Dining Hall for dinner and drinks, where it was wonderful to see both new and long-standing connections being made. A beautiful rendition of 'Jerusalem' was a highlight of the evening, before guests continued to the Ruddock PAC..

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



Ashrita, Lower Sixth, Chair of Youth Council UK



Ashrita in the Lower Sixth has been elected as Chair of Youth Council UK, representing young people across the UK and its overseas territories – a total of 7.8 million young people. See below for what Ashrita had to say about her exciting new role:

'I am deeply passionate about tackling the issues that impact young people every day, from safeguarding and violence against young women and girls, to substance misuse,

mental health, inequality, and the pressures of the digital world. These are not distant issues to me; they are shaped by both my own experiences and the stories young people have trusted me with throughout this campaign. I am also deeply committed to tackling racism and everyday inequalities.

As a British Asian young woman, I believe stronger understanding, communication and inclusion are essential in helping young people navigate identity and in building empathy between communities. I am driven to challenge and transform the culture surrounding knife crime and youth violence, which continue to undermine how safe young people feel in their neighbourhoods.'

Alayna gets to the 1% question!



We are delighted to share that Lower Fourth pupil Alayna progressed all the way to the final question on The 1% Club Kids, a spin-off of the hit ITV quiz show hosted by Lee Mack. Although she narrowly missed the final 1% question, Alayna still won a fantastic prize - a weekend trip to Disneyland Paris for her and her family.

During one of her interview segments, Alayna also shared her ambition to become Prime Minister, even encouraging her fellow contestants to vote for her! The show aired on 24 May and remains available to watch on ITVX for anyone who missed her impressive performance.

Many congratulations to Alayna on this excellent achievement!



ESU Public Speaking Competition Finals

On Monday 1 June, Aayushi, Connie and Chloe took part in the Finals Day of the English-Speaking Union Public Speaking Competition, held at Dartmouth House in London. This prestigious event marked the culmination of a series of area and regional heats which began back in October 2025. From over 300 schools, the top 11 teams from across England and Wales gathered to compete in the semi-finals in the morning, hoping to secure one of only six places in the grand final later that same day.

Although the team did not ultimately walk away with the overall award, they should be incredibly proud of their achievement. As West Midlands Regional Champions and national finalists, Aayushi, Connie, Chloe and Maggie did themselves and the school proud.

Back-to-back success in the National Cipher Challenge



Congratulations to Priyamvada (Lower Sixth) and team who had the privilege of attending a prizegiving ceremony at Bletchley Park after they were awarded Gold Medals, a cash prize, and the prestigious Hut 33 Prize for winning the National Cipher Challenge for an unheard of second year in a row.

A dawn chorus delight

On May Day, pupils at KES and KEHS and many of their parents and teachers were up with the lark to experience the wonders of the Dawn Chorus. In the resplendent Winterbourne Gardens, our enthusiastic and humorous guide, Glenn, helped us learn to identify different bird calls and behaviour. The Merlin App was cast aside, and we learnt to listen, 'lobing' our ears as amplification devices. We will all remember the Radetsky March thrush call, the Countdown theme blackcap, the 1984 Casio blue tit, the Strauss waltz blackbird, and the troglodytic wren.

The standout moment was arguably a jubilant greenfinch, olive and yellow against the burgeoning dawn light. It was an uplifting, convivial and memorable experience.



Esmee, Lower Fifth – Music Success

Esmee, who, as part of a trio with KES pupils Khai and Yilin, recently performed Shostakovich's Piano Trio No. 2 at the Northfield Festival, Birmingham, won first place in the Instrument Ensemble category.



Maiden Flight

As a student in the 1980s, I can remember girls looking longingly across the drive and repeatedly asking for CCF (Combined Cadet Force) to be offered at KEHS as well as KES. So when I was asked to be involved in bringing CCF across the drive it was an exciting opportunity. I have been training and working with the KES CCF RAF section since Spring 2025 and have recently graduated from officer training at RAF College Cranwell.

A small group of L6th girls will follow, joining the KES CCF RAF Section from September 2026. I have already been on training expeditions involving flying, paintball close quarters battle, shooting ranges, fieldcraft and armoury training. I look forward to doing all this and more alongside KEHS students next year! I will be the first ever member of KEHS staff to serve as an Officer with KES CCF – and it seems only fitting that this honour should fall to an Old Ed!

Pilot Officer Angela Buckley (1991),
KEHS Teacher of Biology, Head of Tudor House



Tim Cooper

Tim Cooper has recently been awarded the Classical Association Lifetime Achievement Award.

Tim is currently in his 51st year teaching Classics, 49 of them at KEHS! As Head of Department for many years, he presided over one of the foremost school Classics departments in the country and has inspired generations of students to pursue their love for Classics.

Tim's teaching goes far beyond the curriculum set by the exam board and he takes every opportunity to discuss the wider context of the Classical World with his students, even leading a handling session of some of his ancient artefacts with them.

We are immensely proud of Tim and pass on our very hearty congratulations to him for this incredible achievement.

The Classics department is keen to find out how taking Latin and Greek A Levels benefit students. They are asking any Old Eds who studied these subjects in the Sixth Form to complete this form so that your feedback can be shared with future Sixth Form Classicists:



Under 15 Cricket Team success

The third week of May marked the third National Final of the year, for the KEHS under-15 cricket team as they travelled to Lord's for the National Indoor Cricket Finals. It was an incredible day for them and their performance was a true testament to the hard work they had put in throughout the year. A few crucial moments meant they couldn't quite get over the line, but finishing fifth in the country was a fantastic achievement and one they are extremely proud of.

Dates for your 2026 and 2027 diaries

Monday 6th July 2026 at 12.00
OEA AGM – Online

Friday 11th September 2026

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

Saturday 27th February 2027

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

Monday 22nd March 2027

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

Tuesday 20th April 2027

Tolkien Lecture – Jim Grant (1973). An amazing chance to see author Lee Child at the Ruddock PAC.

Saturday 15th May 2027

Milestones Reunion - Special reunion for the classes of 1997, 2007 & 2017 from KES & KEHS.

Friday 25th June 2027

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

Sunday 27th June 2027

475 KE Community Day - Enjoy an anniversary cricket match alongside family activities, food, games and entertainment.



Our Global Network

Old Edwardians

Around the World

OLD EDS BY COUNTRY*

Australia	37	Greece	1	Portugal	2
Austria	1	Hong Kong	1	Singapore	3
Bahamas	1	Ireland	10	South Africa	3
Belgium	3	Israel	5	Spain	5
Canada	21	Italy	7	Sweden	2
Cyprus	2	Liberia	1	Switzerland	6
Denmark	2	Netherlands	4	Thailand	2
France	24	New Zealand	9	United Arab Emirates	6
Germany	16	Norway	1	United Kingdom	6153
				United States	42

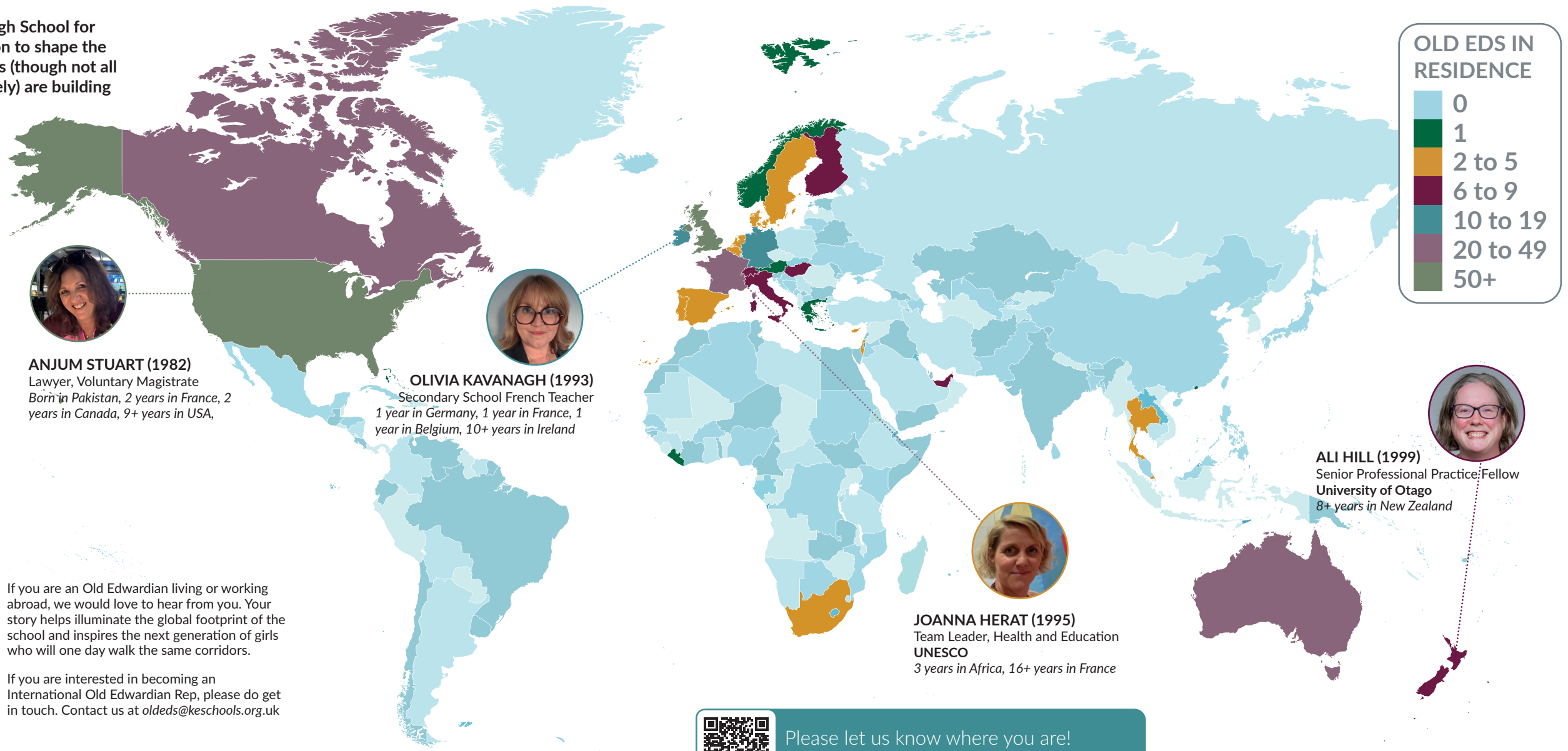
* Database updated to June 2026.

For nearly 145 years, King Edward VI High School for Girls has shaped young people who go on to shape the world. Today, over 6,000 Old Edwardians (though not all of who we are in touch with unfortunately) are building careers on every continent and making their mark in fields ranging from finance, to engineering, diplomacy to the arts, academia, business, sport, technology and public service, just to name a few. While professions, journeys and destinations may differ, one thing remains: the connection to KEHS, and to each other.

In October 2025 the Chief Master & Principal, KES & KEHS, Kirsty von Malaisé, and Development Director, Laura Salt, visited some of our alumni further afield with a trip to Canada and the United States (See page 9). It was fascinating to hear the stories of Old Edwardians' journeys, their reflections on school today, and the generosity they continue to show. It was also a pleasure to connect Old Eds with one another, many for the first time, helping to build new relationships within the cities they now live.

This article looks to explore and celebrate this extraordinary global family by highlighting just a few of the many Old Edwardians around the world.

Wherever Old Edwardians are, commonalities shine through. A love of learning sparked at KEHS, a sense of integrity shaped by the school's values and lifelong friendships formed in and outside the classrooms. The legacy of KEHS continues to expand across the world - not just in numbers, but in impact, influence and ambition.



If you are an Old Edwardian living or working abroad, we would love to hear from you. Your story helps illuminate the global footprint of the school and inspires the next generation of girls who will one day walk the same corridors.

If you are interested in becoming an International Old Edwardian Rep, please do get in touch. Contact us at oldeds@keschools.org.uk

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



OLIVIA KAVANAGH (1993)

I live in Dublin where I'm a secondary school French teacher. Languages and education have been recurring themes in my career - I did German, French, Latin and Italian at school.

My first experience leaving the UK was in my 3rd year of European Studies at UCL: I spent five months at university in Paris then five in Turin. That was a fantastic experience in two contrasting cities, and I met many people of many different nationalities.

Following that degree, where I lived with a close KEHS friend in my final year, I moved to Dublin to do a 3-month stint as a translator. I wondered if that might have been a career for me but it wasn't.

I moved to Strasbourg in early 1998 for a 3-month internship at the Council of Europe. I worked on anti-doping in sport, lived with German and Polish girls, speaking French or English all day at work. Strasbourg is a gorgeous, lively city, so I stayed an extra six months to work in Higher Education policy for Balkan countries.

I returned to London for an MSc in Public Policy, but after a year, in 1999, moved to Brussels to be a civil servant at the European Commission. I made lifelong friends in this fabulous city, and was very happy until my Irish boyfriend - now husband! - and I decided to try life together in London. There I was a senior civil servant, married with two children and very happy to be back home. However, in 2016 we moved to Dublin for professional reasons and a different quality of life. I retrained, doing a Teaching Masters at Trinity College Dublin: here I am, a decade on, as a French teacher. Merci, Mme Waldron!

This is my 7th European city and apart from growing up in Birmingham, it's my longest stay in one place. Living in Dublin is much like the UK in some ways - great city, English spoken, same shops and TV shows - but there's a new language for me to learn, Irish (or Gaeilge), and importantly, centuries of history too.

My experiences have brought me love, friends and a meaningful career. I don't know the key to being happy abroad, but certainly, making an effort with the local language and with everyone you meet helps significantly!



JOANNA HERAT (1995)

When I was 16, I was very fortunate to visit Kenya on a family holiday. My father had worked in East Africa and his experience had always sparked my imagination. It was no surprise that I joined a gap year organisation and spent nine months teaching in Tanzania - it was life-changing. I returned there for a semester during my degree, then to Cameroon for my Masters' research and a voluntary project before beginning a career in International Development. My first professional posting abroad was with an NGO in Cambodia. I made life-long friends with my Cambodian colleagues and with other international people. I was able to have a very good quality of life as an 'expat' and travel in the region, but my work kept me connected to the realities of life in that country.

In 2010 I moved to Paris for a three-year job offer with UNESCO to work on HIV and AIDS. Sixteen years later I am still here in Paris in the same department, working on HIV, sexuality education and gender-based violence in schools. I am passionate about my work and its impact on people, and I work with talented brilliant people from all around the world. This is the best side of an international organisation.

Paris is an extraordinary city to live in - a society that values democracy and a work-life balance, and easy access to half of Europe and the UK. Living in an apartment though with small children and far from family support means compromising on many habits and luxuries.

At school in France my children did not always experience the same supportive school culture that I enjoyed at KEHS, but they are bi-lingual and bi-cultural which will open the door to the world in different ways. We love the museums, the food, the live music and the vibrant mix of communities here on our doorstep.

I have spent 20 of the past 30 years abroad - it's 'fun' but also means a LOT more admin and thought - keeping track of address changes, registering and setting yourself up in a new place for banking/medical/administrative purposes and keeping strong links with family and friends. It can also mean less stability compared to those at home who have invested in family, property and community and stayed put. But it is a rich experience with work and people that have shaped who I am. I am sure that I will continue to live and work abroad, but still keep strong roots at 'home'.



ALI HILL (1999)

After completing my undergraduate degree, I was awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship to study at Massey University in New Zealand for two years. I then returned to the UK to undertake a PhD, during which time I met my partner and we had two children.

Keen for our children to grow up with the experiences and lifestyle unique to NZ, we moved to Ōtepoti, Dunedin in 2020, shortly before NZ entered a nationwide lockdown and closed its borders because of COVID19. While we were able to remain in the country, leaving would have meant not being able to return - an unsettling prospect with close family and friends in the UK. Despite these challenges, we felt extremely fortunate to be in NZ during the pandemic. The country's decisive response resulted in very low case numbers and loss of life, with fewer than 2,200 cases and 25 deaths nationwide in 2020.

I am a Registered Nutritionist and work as a Senior Professional Practice Fellow at the University of Otago, where I teach and mentor future nutrition professionals. I also colead the Master of Applied Science in Advanced Nutrition Practice, a programme that prioritises realworld learning through an extended professional placement rather than a traditional research thesis, thereby preparing graduates for the realities of professional life.

Living in NZ has reinforced the importance of community and of contributing beyond my professional role. I have fond memories of swimming during my time at KEHS, and although I had not competed since school, settling in Dunedin led me back to the sport. I now coach at my local swim club alongside my university role and compete as a Masters swimmer at local and national events. This is something I may never have pursued without the cultural perspective and lifestyle I have gained living overseas.

What I value most about living in another country is the way it broadens your worldview. It has encouraged me to reflect more critically on my own perspectives and to approach teaching, leadership, and collaboration with greater adaptability, humility, and resilience. For anyone considering an international pathway, my advice is to say 'yes' to opportunities, even when they feel daunting. You don't need everything planned in advance - some of the most meaningful personal and professional growth comes from navigating uncertainty. KEHS gave me the confidence to pursue opportunities beyond the UK and to see an international pathway as both achievable and worthwhile.



ANJUM STUART (1982)

I am back living in London after 8-9 years in California. My husband, a Maths Professor, got his dream job at Caltech (think Big Bang Theory!) back in 2016 and I joined him after the youngest of our combined six went to uni in 2018.

I qualified as a lawyer many decades ago but also stopped work when I had my first child and moved into the voluntary sector - along the way I was a magistrate and worked for the Citizens Advice Bureau, ran Camp Hill Boys PTA and marshalled six children for 15 years of blended family life.

The pandemic was a bit of a killer as it was for so many but being 5,500 miles away from the children was very hard especially as my three lost their father very suddenly.

Two good things did happen as a result - I had so much time on my hands that I began art in a serious fashion, having always hankered to do it but was channelled into academic lanes at school and by my parents (Law, Oxford 1983 - 86). It was a joy to immerse myself in art and it's brought me a great sense of satisfaction. The second thing was a realisation that much as life in America was very luxurious and good it wasn't 'home'. We now have a small place in London which gives me a greater sense of balance.

I also lived in Paris, twice, when I was a lawyer at Linklaters and I'd say that working abroad is a fantastic opportunity especially when young. It opens your eyes to different ways of living and forces you to be brave and open-minded. My education at KEHS in languages was excellent and this stood me in good stead for life in France.

Time in America, age 55-62, has been exciting yet challenging and has certainly kept my brain ticking over! It's a big deal starting over at 55 - making new friends, and working out different systems of life. Our next big adventure is that Andrew is moving to NYU and so we'll be renting in Manhattan until he decides to retire! I feel very lucky to have yet another exciting chapter!!

I loved my time at KEHS - it left me with an enduring curiosity for the world. We were lucky to be taught by clever and unusual and often slightly eccentric teachers who encouraged independent thought. It has helped me leap from one life event to another.

Business Leaders & Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship at KEHS is about far more than starting a business, it is about giving young women the confidence to think boldly, challenge assumptions and shape the world around them. Our alumni community is filled with innovators who have followed unconventional paths, taken risks, and turned their ideas into meaningful ventures. In this edition, we spotlight three KEHS business leaders, each forging their own route through creativity, resilience and vision.

Alongside their experiences, Mrs Sangha, Deputy Head of Co-curricular, teacher of Economics and Head of Enterprise, shares insight into how we are looking to embed entrepreneurial thinking into the curriculum, ensuring that our students, whatever their future ambitions, learn to approach challenges with confidence, imagination and purpose.

Entrepreneurship at KEHS is not a programme; it is a mindset. And through the achievements of our alumni and the guidance of our teachers, we continue to inspire the next generation of trailblazers.

Lexi Willetts (1999)

Like many entrepreneurs, I'm a bit of an outlier and my path to owning a business has been anything but straightforward. I started by studying trademark law, then worked in private practice (M&C). Next, I moved to Switzerland to take on a global in-house sports role at FIFA. Later, I moved to London to complete a Masters degree, which was the turning point that really repositioned me.

From there, I was hired as the COO of a social media startup. Since then, I've either led, co-founded, owned or invested in businesses, working in various sectors in the UK and internationally, mostly with organisations that create or own consumer brands. Ironically, my leadership career wasn't really planned. I've often followed my internal compass and I've come to realise that I can confidently lead in most situations, hold my own in most rooms and guide people towards my vision.

Over time, I've had to accept that I'm no longer the go-to expert on a specific topic, particularly legal. Instead, I'm a generalist who needs to juggle everything at once. I've also learned to accept setbacks without taking them personally. Not every startup or new project will succeed, but you need to know when to call it quits before it's too late.

In 2025, I became the owner of Hadleigh Estate Agents, which sells homes in Harborne, Edgbaston and the nearby areas. This business has been a staple on Harborne's high street for years, providing jobs for local people and helping families in the community. However, it faced some tough times with higher costs and increased competition. I've been working hard to improve every part of the business, focusing on making the brand shine and making sure our clients get the best service possible by using AI to make things easier and faster. I'm also making sure Hadleigh is well-known and doing great in the local community and business world. Plus, we've hired and trained an apprentice who has been learning about business administration and we're looking for another one.

I also recently invested in The Gut Stuff, a female-founded company that is teaching people about gut health and sells high fibre snacks all over the UK. You can find their snack bars in places like Tesco and Boots, their app is available on all the app stores and you can watch the founders, Lisa and Alana Macfarlane, on Channel 4. Female founders in the UK face a significant funding gap, with all-female teams receiving just 2% of total equity investment (2024), despite creating high-performing businesses. It's important to support our community.

I left school some 27 years ago, but looking back, I really think KEHS helped shape my sense of opportunity and my chameleon capabilities. Every day, I would travel from a working-class area, taking an hour by public transport to school, to mix with people from all walks of life and different backgrounds. I learned to mix in, adapt and work hard to get better. Because of this, I've never felt like I didn't belong anywhere or that an opportunity was out of reach.

A quote that's stuck with me... 'Aim for the sky and you'll reach the ceiling. Aim for the ceiling and you'll stay on the floor...'

'I really think KEHS helped shape my sense of opportunity and my chameleon capabilities.'



Natasha Groom (2009)

I am the Managing Director and Co-Owner of Chamberlain Wealth Management, a boutique firm supporting families with established wealth through periods of transition including retirement and business sales. Our focus is on clear, practical advice, longterm planning and wealth preservation, helping clients prepare not just financially, but for real life.

My route into financial services was far from linear. I initially studied Public Relations before moving to Sydney, where I worked in a law firm. From there, I experienced a very different pace of life working for Australia's largest avocado grower in Western Australia. These early roles gave me a broad perspective on people, business and decisionmaking, which later proved invaluable.

In 2018, I joined Chamberlain Wealth Management, a firm founded by my father, Robert Pryjmachuk in the early 2000s. As part of his own succession and legacy planning, he invited me to become involved in the business. I began by working across all roles within the firm while completing my CII professional qualifications to become a fully qualified adviser.

I had always been motivated by the desire to make a meaningful impact through both leadership and care for others. Financial planning, particularly holistic financial advice offered a way to combine these values. Early in my career at Chamberlain, I discovered that financial planning at its best is not about products or complexity, but about helping individuals and families navigate important life decisions with clarity, confidence and reassurance. That realisation shaped the direction I wanted to take for the business.

In 2025, as my father moved into retirement, I took on leadership of the firm. Stepping into this role allowed me to shape Chamberlain's next chapter placing pride, impact and legacy at the heart of everything we do. Like many entrepreneurs and senior leaders, I have faced the challenge of balancing commercial realities with principled decisionmaking particularly within a highly regulated and traditionally conservative sector.

'The confidence to question, adapt and lead change has stayed with me throughout my career.'

Over time, my approach has shifted from delivering advice that can feel technical or disengaging, to creating an environment where individuals and families feel supported as they move through different stages of life. Our aim is to simplify complexity, align financial planning with realworld concerns and ensure plans evolve as circumstances change.

The impact I seek to create is reassurance. Beyond individual clients, I believe our work contributes to a more responsible financial services sector, one that values longterm thinking and intergenerational wellbeing.

Looking back, the values instilled during my time at KEHS continue to guide my approach to leadership, think critically, act with integrity and take responsibility for shaping positive change rather than waiting for it. The confidence to question, adapt and lead change has stayed with me throughout my career.

For those who feel they have not yet worked everything out, my advice is simple, don't panic. The moments that spark curiosity often become the foundation for future direction and periods of uncertainty frequently provide the most valuable learning. Trust the process, stay open to opportunity, and allow yourself the time to grow.



Katy Cottam (2008)

Luna Daily was born out of my lifelong frustrations with body care products available to women. An intensive course of antibiotics as a teenager disrupted my gut and skin microbiome, meaning I couldn't use traditional body products on my sensitive skin, especially intimate skin.

It got me thinking... Why are we so ashamed to talk about parts of our bodies that are so important to us?

Fifteen years later, I was Global Head of Brand at Charlotte Tilbury - by any measure a dream job in beauty, but I kept coming back to the fact that nothing in that category had meaningfully changed since I was a teenager. Women were still being offered either clinical, shame-coded products or highly fragranced body washes that weren't formulated for sensitive skin or the body's pH. In the middle of the pandemic, I quit to create Luna Daily.

Today, Luna Daily is stocked in Sephora, Ulta, Boots and leading retailers across the US, UK and Middle East. Our strapline - 'head, vulva, knees and toes™' captures what we make: pH-balanced, microbiome-friendly formulations developed with a collective of dermatologists and gynaecologists, for the whole body, at every age and stage.

The journey has been anything but linear. We commissioned research with over a thousand women before launching, because I needed to know it wasn't just me who felt this way. (It wasn't - 87% said they weren't taught about intimate care at school). Raising investment as a solo female founder, in a category many investors didn't yet have the vocabulary for, was hard. Deciding to use anatomically correct words like 'vulva' openly rather than retreating into euphemism was a commercial risk, and it's why the brand earned trust so quickly.

My thinking has evolved, too. Early on, I tried to be close to every decision; I've since learned the most useful thing I can do is set the clearest possible strategy and trust my team. Saying no to the wrong opportunities has mattered more than saying yes to the right ones. Becoming a mum to my baby girl, Lily, last year changed how I lead in every sense - and, I think, made me better at it.

The impact I want Luna Daily to have is both commercial and cultural. We're building the authority brand in microbiome-friendly body care - a category I believe will define personal care this decade. My long-term vision is to see the 'feminine hygiene' category, as we know it today, disappear altogether.

As for KEHS - what's stayed with me most isn't just the academic excellence. More than anything else, it's the friends I still call my

very best (and between them have given me three beautiful goddaughters); the teachers who treated us as people rather than pupils - no one more so than Ms Edwards in the art department and the haven she created for us there. KEHS also made us want to work hard - not because we were pushed, but because it genuinely mattered to us. That, I now realise, is the exact instinct you need to build a company: to work hard at something because you care.

Kam Sangha

Deputy Head (Co-Curricular)

Enterprise education has never been more important. In a rapidly changing world, young people need more than academic knowledge; they need the confidence, creativity, interpersonal skills, grit and resilience to navigate uncertainty and shape their own futures.

At KEHS and KES, we see this reflected in our alumni stories, many of whom have gone on to become successful leaders in business as with Katy, Lexi and Natasha. Their journeys demonstrate the value of thinking independently, taking risks and turning ideas and opportunities into action, having the confidence to question, adapt and lead change, and above all KEHS made them want to work hard because it mattered to them.

Enterprise education nurtures precisely these qualities. It equips pupils with transferable skills such as problem-solving, communication, leadership and adaptability that are essential not only in business, but in life. Just as importantly, it encourages pupils to view setbacks positively, recognising that failure is often a stepping stone to growth.

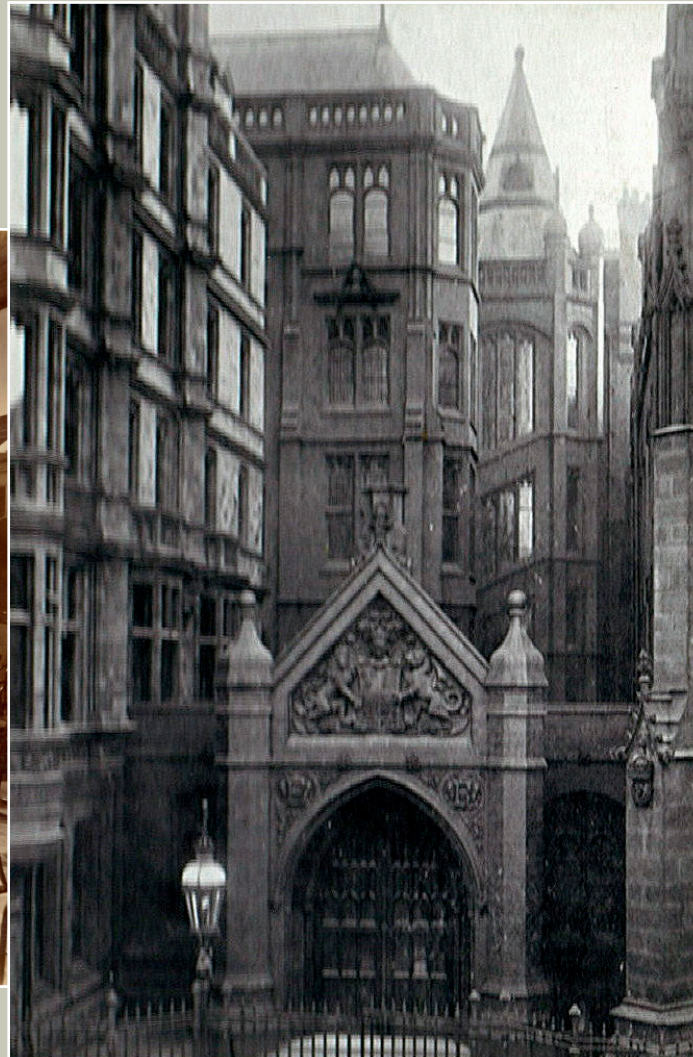
Building on this ethos, we are delighted to be launching The KE Enterprise Exchange, a new joint initiative for Years 9 and 10. Through inspiring talks, interactive workshops and mentorship opportunities, students will engage with real entrepreneurs and explore their own ideas in a supportive and dynamic environment.

Our aim is simple: that pupils leave feeling confident, ambitious and ready not just to face the future, but to shape it - just as so many of our alumnae have done and continue to do today!



‘Enterprise education nurtures precisely these qualities. It equips pupils with transferable skills such as problem-solving, communication, leadership and adaptability that are essential not only in business, but in life.’

Tales from the Archives



The History of the King Edward VI Foundation

The King Edward VI Foundation is one of Birmingham's oldest and most influential charitable organisations, with origins reaching back to 1392, when land was first gifted to establish the Gild of the Holy Cross, a medieval body created to support the people of Birmingham. Over time, this early tradition evolved into the Foundation that underpins our schools today.

The defining moment arrived on 2 January 1552, when local parishioners successfully petitioned King Edward VI to restore confiscated Gild property following the Reformation. In response, the King granted a Royal Charter establishing a 'free Grammar

Schule' and returning income specifically for educational purposes. This created King Edward's School (KES) and laid the legal foundations of the entire King Edward VI Foundation.

While KES was the originating school, the Foundation's mission: to widen educational access and raise aspirations, would eventually lead to transformative opportunities for girls as well.

Across the next three centuries, Birmingham expanded rapidly, becoming by 1791 'the first manufacturing town in the world' and later the 'City of a thousand trades'. As the city's wealth and influence grew, so too did its ambition for education.

The most significant Foundation development for KEHS came in 1883, when the governors

made their boldest decision since 1552. Determined to offer an 'open path for every able child in Birmingham', they founded six new schools, including a landmark addition, our very own King Edward VI High School for Girls, created as the sister school to KES. They too were based at New Street – a headmistress, six mistresses and 150 girls separated from the boys by a locked door and a strict rule not to fraternize.

Though women's education did exist by the time KEHS was opened, it may have opened earlier had the Governors not dismissed it. 19 years earlier it was deemed too 'radical' an idea – it was only when mandatory school attendance was introduced in 1880 that the Governors started to consider it seriously!

The opening of KEHS provided academically ambitious girls with access to a rigorous,

intellectual education. KEHS quickly established a reputation for scholarship, leadership, and cultural excellence that continues to define the school today.

Alongside KEHS, the Foundation also established five grammar schools: Aston; Camp Hill Boys; Camp Hill Girls; Five Ways; and, later in 1911, Handsworth School for Girls. Together, these schools formed a pioneering network designed to broaden access to high quality education for Birmingham's children, regardless of background.

In the 20th century, the Foundation oversaw several school relocations. Most significantly in 1936 for KEHS and KES leaving its original New Street site to move to its current 50-acre campus in Edgbaston, creating the shared campus that remains home to both schools today.

The Edgbaston campus allowed the two schools to thrive academically and culturally, enabling close collaboration through shared societies, concerts, drama, and a rich cocurricular life, while still maintaining their distinct identities.

After more than a century without new additions, the Foundation expanded again from 2011 onwards, welcoming several academies and grammar schools into the family: Sheldon Heath Academy (2011); Handsworth Grammar School for Boys (2017) King Edward VI Handsworth Wood Girls' Academy (2018); Balaam Wood Academy (2019); Northfield School for Girls (2021); Lordwood School for Girls (2022); and most recently King's Norton School for Boys (2024).

Today, the Foundation educates more than 11,000 pupils, approximately 1 in 10 of Birmingham's secondary age students,

through a blend of independent, grammar, and comprehensive schools. Its mission remains to raise aspirations, widen access, and deliver outstanding education across the city.

The current Chief Master & Principal of KES & KEHS, Kirsty von Malaisé, also serves as Headmaster of the Foundation, working closely with heads across all schools to promote excellence, collaboration, and accessibility.

For KEHS, this means being part of a wider educational family committed to supporting girls' achievements, expanding opportunities, and ensuring the transformative power of education is available to all who would benefit from it.

See more in the archives, click the QR code for access.



The KEHS Trust: A Legacy of Leadership



Introducing the New Chair: Hilary Evenett (1982)

We are delighted that Hilary has taken on the role of Chair following the spring meeting. Serving as a trustee since 2018, Hilary brings deep experience, commitment, and continuity to the work of the Trust, ensuring a seamless transition.

Hilary studied Law at Merton College, Oxford, and qualified as a solicitor with Clifford Chance, where she was a partner there for over twenty years, working mainly with companies in the financial services sector. She retired from Clifford Chance in December 2025. Hilary is also Chair of Governors at the Central Foundation Girls' School and an Independent Non-Executive Director for Aviva International Insurance.



Hilary shared her thoughts on stepping into the role: 'KEHS provides its students with academic and other opportunities which would simply not be available to them elsewhere. My personal experience of the school was formative, and I hope that the Trust will continue to play its role in ensuring that the girls who will most benefit from these opportunities can take up places at the school, regardless of family income. I would like to thank Judy for all the work she has done in establishing and steering the Trust to its current position.'

Hilary's leadership will help guide the Trust as it continues its central mission: enabling KEHS to remain a school where talent, curiosity, and ambition, not family income, determine opportunity.

Thank you to Hilary for stepping into the role and to all our trustees for their ongoing time and dedication. We are always on the lookout for new trustees so please do get in touch if you would like to hear more.

Thank you to Judy Dyke, MBE (1972)

On behalf of the school and the KEHS Trust, we would like to take this opportunity to extend our profound thanks to Judy, who stepped down earlier this year after serving as the Trust's Chair since its inception in 2010.

Under Judy's guidance, the Trust was established to receive philanthropic donations for the benefit of pupils' education, with a particular focus on supporting Assisted Places. Over the past sixteen years, the Trust has raised over £5million to support pupils who would not otherwise have been able to take advantage of a KEHS education. Many have gone on to progress to leading universities, professional careers and positions of influence, demonstrating the lasting impact of the Trust's mission.

Judy wished to thank everyone who has supported the school over so many years, 'I owe so much to our School. It has been an honour and a pleasure to serve as Chair of the KEHS Trust.'

Her leadership has set the foundation for the next chapter of the Trust's work, and we are deeply grateful. Judy will remain as trustee for the next twelve months or so and I know will still be very much involved with school for many years to come, but from a distance perhaps!

Thank you Judy.

'I look back on my time at KEHS with pleasure and satisfaction; it was a wonderful education; one I was fortunate to receive without cost. It feels deeply unjust that today, talented girls who have the ability, but not the financial means, may be denied the same opportunity. The school now benefits from a rich and diverse community, and I strongly believe that young women from all backgrounds should have their intellect recognised, nurtured, and celebrated.'

Donor, Class of 1958



Our long-standing mission remains the same

Even as our personnel changes within the Trust, the purpose remains constant.

Today, generosity through annual gifts, multi-year commitments, or by leaving a legacy, allows us not only to support the pupils of the present, but to secure opportunities for the pupils of the future.

For those in receipt of an Assisted Place, the impact is profound: Pupils gain access to outstanding teaching, co-curricular opportunities, and a community that nurtures intellectual curiosity and confidence. The impact reaches far wider than just those individuals in receipt of support - the whole school benefits from a richer, more diverse, more vibrant community of learners.

Each contribution, no matter the size, helps open a door for a girl whose potential deserves the chance to flourish. Thank you for your generosity, your loyalty, and your belief.

Unlocking Potential Through Assisted Places

Pupils who join the School supported by an Assisted Place go on to work in many different spheres. This reminds us that the true measure of philanthropy is not simply the value of the gift, but the potential it unlocks. Philanthropy at KEHS creates opportunities that will change the trajectory of a girl's life.

As we look ahead, we do so with ambition and confidence. Today KEHS stands on the shoulders of a community that has always believed in the transformative power of education for girls. Our priorities are clear:

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

A Sustaining Community

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

If you are interested in learning more about getting involved in other ways, the Development Office is here to connect with you. We would be delighted to have a conversation, without obligation oldeds@keschools.org.uk

Together, we can continue the tradition of opportunity that has defined KEHS for over 140 years, and ensure that the brightest girls can thrive here for generations to come.

Laura Salt
Development Director

Endowment Update

With new gifts from generous donors, and investment growth, it has increased from £585,000 to £1.7 million since 2014.

In 2014 when the KEHS Trust was created, the BGOEC transferred the monies under their stewardship to the new charity. These were endowed and ring-fenced within the endowment, with the capital remaining and the income contributing to the Assisted Places Fund each year.

Income from the BGOEC fund and the main endowment is added to the donations we receive from Old Edwardians and friends of the school each year. Together, they funded 21 Assisted Places across the school in the last calendar year - for girls who could not have been here without that support. Thank you to all of the donors, past and present, who continue to make this possible to ensure that KEHS remains accessible to all bright girls in our region.

Assisted Places are the cornerstone of KEHS and demand always outstrips supply. If you would like to make a gift to support them, please do not hesitate to get in touch. All gifts received in support of Assisted Places are ring-fenced, and 100% of your donation goes directly to this purpose.

'My Assisted Place opened doors that might otherwise have remained closed and gave me access to an exceptional education, inspiring teachers and a community that challenged me to aim higher. It helped shape not only my academic achievements but also my confidence and ambition in what was possible for my future.'

'The opportunity to attend KEHS extends far beyond academic achievement; it equips pupils with confidence, resilience, ambition, and skills that last a lifetime. By supporting an Assisted Place, you are not simply funding an education, you are opening doors, broadening horizons, and helping talented young people realise opportunities that might otherwise be beyond their reach.'

Assisted Place recipient 2010

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

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



1950s

Angela Clayton-Turner (1957)

I'm one of a group of volunteers working towards Bromley being a dementia friendly community. Last year we received an Innovation Fund award which has enabled us to have a website which aims to provide useful information both local and general. Take a look: www.bromleydfc.org.uk

In September I travelled to Cyprus where my eldest granddaughter Zoe and her partner Martyn had chosen to hold their wedding. A joyous occasion with glorious weather in a beautiful setting.

**Hilary Elfick (née Jones) (1958)**

This year the Shakespeare Quarterly is publishing a special edition on ecology. It will contain an article by Sandra Young, Professor of English Literary Studies, University of Cape Town. It will concern a verse play based on The Tempest but set in modern-day Polynesia. The title is 'An Ordinary Storm' and it has been produced twice by The University of Otago. The author is Hilary Elfick, who was at KEHS from 1951-1958. It has been published both in the UK and New Zealand and excited much interest from the international Shakespeare community.



1960s

Paula Lawford (née Street) (1963)

After my photo and short article was published in keynotes 2024, Debbie connected me with a friend from my days at KEHS who had seen the article. She was in touch with another girl and so we exchanged messages and arranged to meet. At the same time, I received a letter from Canada from another old friend who had seen the article and written to me care of our local hospice at which I had mentioned I volunteered. She has a brother who lives not far from Exeter where I live and so in May when she was visiting him, we met for lunch. I had lunch recently with the other two and both occasions were full of laughter and memories and it felt as if we were back 60 years ago!!

The picture below is from left to right: Anne Brown (née Norwood), me and Hilary Riches (née Bulla). The bottom picture: on the left is Elizabeth Wagle (née Skinner) and me in blue.

We are all so grateful for the contacts and we thought you would all like to know how well our meetings have gone. We plan more in the future and didn't think we looked too bad for 80 year olds!

**Stephanie Merry (1967)**

In January 2025 I bought Indigo, a Seaward 29, which we delivered to Scotland in April. This journey of 450 miles exposed a few defects; fortunately the most serious problem didn't occur until the last leg of the trip.

We had a good sail from the Isle of Man up to the Mull of Galloway. On the way we spotted Ailsa Craig, guarding the entrance to the Firth of Clyde. A long swell from the southwest reminded me of surfing up the other side of the Mull of Kintyre on previous voyages. I recognised Arran and its high point Goat Fell – back in familiar territory at last.

An old friend Chris was waiting in Ardrossan to take our lines. The oil pressure in the port engine had dropped to zero, so Chris opened the engine box to check the oil level, but found a much more serious problem – water was pouring in from the shaft seal!

The yard guys had been watching us enter the harbour; despite being about to leave, they leapt to the boat hoist and lifted Indigo out. The boat was trundled off to the yard and left overnight in the strops, so after supper in the local restaurant, I spent a peaceful night imagining that the boat was rocking me to sleep.

Before buying Indigo, an engine survey had flagged up that the shaft seal was in urgent need of replacement. The mechanic who had done the survey and been contracted to carry out repairs, had omitted to replace the seal! The boatyard in Ardrossan arranged for it to be replaced and for the next 95 hours of running in Scotland, it proved to be watertight!



News in Brief

1970s

Carol James (née Statham) (1968)

Another year - another season at Stamford Shakespeare Company, Toilethorpe! This year I was cast in multiple parts in a Punk Rock version of 'The Taming of the Shrew' set in 1980s London!

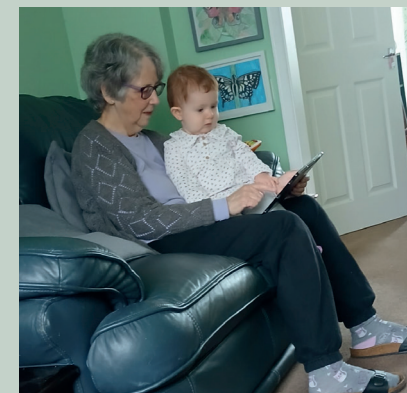
I was PA to Baptista, a Roadie for Petruchio's band - Heaven's Artillery, a Pedant and the pretend Vincentio - four costumes, four wigs and an awful lot of running around backstage! I'm clearly not signing up for a quiet life yet!

**Zoe Skinner (formerly Powers, née Jones) (1968)**

This year I finally retired from my one day a week job teaching primary French. I had managed eight years, and considering that I was 67 when I started, I'm pleased that I kept going that long! I loved it, and I miss it, but it was time to stop. Especially as in September, I started my new 'job', looking after my 'surprise extra' granddaughter one day a week. She was born in July 2025 and is lovely. It's a tiring day, but it's wonderful building up our relationship.

I still do a bit of supply at the secondary school where I used to teach, but only a few hours a week.

Last week Mike and I celebrated our ninth wedding anniversary. Happy days!

**Madeleine Armour (née Hall) (1971)**

My news is the celebration of our 50th wedding anniversary in July 2025.

I met Ian Armour during Freshers Week at Sheffield University where we were both living in the same hall of residence. He was studying Engineering and I was reading Modern Languages, which involved an intercalated year in Germany for me teaching English at a girls' secondary school in the Saarland. This meant that I graduated a year later than he did and we married shortly after my graduation, when I went to join him in London to take up a graduate traineeship in the City.

We celebrated on Saturday, 26th July with a dinner for family and friends (see picture) followed by a garden party attended by neighbours from our Dorset village and a lunch at home next day for those who were staying over. We have a son, James, who lives next door to us with his partner, Rachael.

**Katharine Hobbs (1972)**

I'm an Arena season ticket holder at the BBC Proms, and I usually attend more than 60 Proms each season.

Last year I was selected to represent the 'Prommers', and presented Sakari Oramo with his thank you gift on stage at the Last Night of the Proms, in the Royal Albert Hall.

I'm wearing EU colours, as I also organise the annual EU Flags at the Proms action on every 'Last Night'.

**Rebecca Cohen (1976)**

I am just retired and am writing a book about my life experiences since running away from home, (before my O Level results arrived), and about my family.

There are already four books about my family, so although the book starts in WW2, most of the book is about my working my way off the streets to become Dorset Business Woman of the year, 1991, and the trials and tribulations I faced. There will be many reflections on my mother's insistence that I took up the KEHS scholarship, and the help I received from Miss Diggory, who inspired me, and Mrs Hunt, who showed me it was only my confidence stopping me from achieving.

Miss Wilks, the Headmistress, and Miss Crisp conspired to motivate me, putting my Cleopatra and Tutankhamen pastels in Miss Wilke's office for a term.

I have tried to stand silently amongst the noise and haste and have rarely achieved it ... when I do, the world appears furious and busy, I am glad to be still.



Hilary Cooper (1978)

The Sex Discrimination Act (1975) came into law over 50 years ago, while I was at KEHS. To mark this milestone anniversary, I published a Viewpoint article in Women's History Review in December 2025 reflecting on how it changed the world of work for me and millions of other women and girls, albeit still leaving unfinished business.

'What was it like to be sixteen and female when the UK's Sex Discrimination Act (1975) was passed? Starts in the school hall at KEHS and continues up to the date I qualified for my state pension 50 years later, embracing a lifetime of experiences in between.



Meriel Howells CBE (née Jenney) (1978)

It's been an amazing year!

I was awarded a CBE in 2025 for services to cancer treatment and to research in children and young people. I received it alongside my husband, John Howells, who was awarded an OBE for services to the Welsh language. Our investitures were in early October 2025. I also received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Children's Cancer and Leukaemia Group (the paediatric oncology association within the UK) earlier that year.

I was appointed as a consultant in paediatric oncology in Manchester in 1993, then was awarded a Harkness Fellowship to the United States 1993-1994 and met my husband during that year. We moved to Cardiff in 1997 where I worked as a consultant paediatric oncologist until 2024. I took on a number of senior managerial posts and latterly became Medical Director for Cardiff and Vale University Health Board. I have maintained my research interests throughout my career - my specialist areas were paediatric sarcomas and

understanding and assessing the quality of life of children with cancer.

We have three adult children and are delighted that they were not put off by our careers! Our eldest has followed my husband into the civil service and the younger two are embarking on careers in medicine.



Fiona Atay (1979)

A significant number of our old 'B' form from 1979 keep in touch, and we collectively agreed that, while we couldn't make the official school reunion, we would all like to meet - our last private reunion having taken place in 2019 (BC - before Covid!). To that end, and organised with help from Di Wordsworth and myself, we all met up at the Garden Room of The Physician pub in Edgbaston on 10 July 2025. This location proved to be an ideal choice for us as it is just a short distance away from Five Ways Station and those coming from further afield were easily able to find accommodation close by - plus it was a location familiar to us all from our school days!

We knew that it would be nigh on impossible to have every member of the form come so, as we had room for thirty persons, we expanded the invitations to some members of Forms A and C with whom we were also in touch, plus some well-loved teachers from our years at KEHS. On the day, 22 of us turned up at 12 noon in glorious sunshine and spent a wonderful few hours catching up. We were thrilled to welcome Mrs Lessar, Mrs Rutter and Mrs Britton as well as Nicola Thomas, Deb Castle (née Harris) and Samantha Philips (née Jenkins) - A and C formers - along for the fun!

We all still had plenty to talk about hours later at 5pm, when train times and departures forced an end to

the proceedings. We look forward to the next excuse to meet in a year or two!



1980s

Sarah Williams-Robbins (1986)

According to Saint Augustine, walking solves everything. While it's a grand claim, taking a walk in the company of friends, is a joy.

So last summer, a group of us from the Class of '86, met for brunch followed by a walk through the fascinating historic streets of the City of London. I'm a qualified City of London guide, so it was wonderful to share some hidden corners and stories with old friends. Everyone paid for a 'ticket', myself included, which we donated to the RNLI, in memory of our dear school friend Sam Jones, who sadly left us at the end of 2024, after a battle with cancer.

If you would like to organise a guided walk for friends or work colleagues, please get in touch via Instagram @meetmrslondoner, or email: swilliamsrobbins@outlook.com



1990s

Sarah Wood (née Clarkson) (1993)

On my daughter's last actual school day at KEHS - before breaking for exam leave for A Levels - as I still have my own uniform (I left in 1993) I surprised her that morning wearing it to take her to the bus station to catch the school bus for the last time too!

It was the first time I'd worn mine since 1991 as we didn't wear the uniform again, unlike these days, when they wear it once more to celebrate their last day in school!

Here we are - with my uniform last worn in 1991 - original blazer and the original summer shirt!



2000s

Niki Arulanandam (née Jayatunga) (2006)

Niki welcomed a new baby girl, Kira, to the family in August 2025, to join big sister Reya. As Niki's parents moved away from Birmingham in early 2025, she no longer has physical links to the area, but will always fondly remember her time at KEHS and will tell her girls about the friends and fun she had!



2010s

Grace Mitchell (née Duffy) (2013)



The last 18 months have been quite eventful for me! In September 2024, I started my new role teaching A Level Psychology at Peter Symonds College in Hampshire, which has kept me quite busy.

The following summer, on 11 July 2025, I married my husband, Jack Mitchell, at Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Redditch, followed by our reception at Gorcott Hall - I highly recommend both! It was a glorious summer's day filled with lots of love and laughter, as well as a handful of Old Edwardians present!

We celebrated our honeymoon in New Zealand over the Christmas period, where we did plenty of exploring in our hired motorhome and took in the stunning scenery across the country. Of course, we paid a visit to Hobbiton on the North Island (along with many other LOTR filming spots), during which I reminded Jack several times of the inspiration Birmingham gave to the Lord of the Rings series.

To top all this excitement off, we have started 2026 with the wonderful news that we are growing our family and are due to welcome our first child, a baby girl, in September. A potential third Old Edwardian perhaps, following in the footsteps of her grandmother Annette Duffy (née Glennon, 1983) and myself.

Shivani Sharma (2015)

I am pleased to say as of January 2025, I have moved into the role of LBC reporter for the East of England.

I regularly report on national radio about the key political, social and crime stories of the day. I have interviewed the Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer, the Conservative leader Kemi Badenoch and other well-known voices on a number of occasions.

I have also notably visited Buckingham Palace this year (see picture attached) for an event celebrating regional media, and had a short conversation with His Majesty the King about my role.

I am thoroughly enjoying my role and hope to continue doing a job which I love!



Beth Zheng (2018)

I left KEHS in 2018, with lots of brilliant memories and great friendships. I then went to Durham University to study Law, graduating with First Class Honours.

After university, I moved to London, working as a paralegal in Employment Law. I then started my training contract in September 2023 and officially qualified as a Commercial Solicitor on 4 September 2025! I now work in commercial disputes at a large US law firm, based in London.



Deaths

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

- Ruth Naish (1939)*
Pamela Norman (née Laughland) (1939)
Angela Wendy Clark (née Hayward) (1942)
Barbara Davis (née Bayliss) (1944)*
Helen Parry (née Russell) (1944)
Joyce Brackpool (née Crampton) (1947)
Georgina Smith (née Pitt) (1947)
Margaret Lichtenhein (née Hague) (1949)
Valerie Beaumont-Harris (1952)
Gillian Sharp (née Treasure) (1953)
Marian Masters (née Ward) (1955)
Pamela Barwell (née Cliff) (1957)
Susan Revis (née Jones) (1969)
Jane Hansford (1977)
Helen Ball (née Stokes) (1979)
Janine Biggs (née Price) (1986)

Former Staff:

- Daphne Stallard (1976 – 1998)*
Daphne Lora (1974 – 1987)**
Dr Matthew Simpson
(2010 – 2015, 2017 – 2023)

The Laughland Family

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

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

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



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



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

**Family requested no obituary

Ruth Mercy Naish (1939)



Ruth Mercy Naish was born on 2 August 1920 - Birmingham-born, to Birmingham-born parents she was always proud of being a real 'Brummagen Button'.

She was educated first at a small private school before joining KEHS in 1931. At school she was a real all-rounder with many extra-mural activities. She always wanted to teach and after school, she gained a free place at the newly created 'Education Department' at The Birmingham University, where she completed a Primary Teacher's Certificate.

On qualifying, she taught briefly in Weston-Super-Mare, but when her father was made redundant she returned home to provide for her parents.

She took up the post of 'Scripture Specialist' at King Edward's, Handsworth where she worked until she retired. When she retired, her headteacher summed up her career, 'Miss Naish's teaching is characterised by its clarity, so that girls of all levels of ability... have for generations felt that they can rely on her to bring them understanding.'

Ruth's Christian faith was very important to her. From her childhood she had been taught to read the Bible and pray daily, a habit she continued to well after her 100th birthday. She kept notebooks of her daily prayers which are moving to read, and speak of a complete faith in a God who loved and kept her throughout her life.

When you live to be 104, life post-retirement is longer than life of employment and Ruth entered into a busy retirement in 1980.

A computing course, caring for Guide Dog puppies, a continuing interest in church activities and local matters, gardening etc. filled her time. She took painting classes and became a prolific and quite accomplished painter of watercolours.

Lockdown was hard for Ruth as for so many elderly people. She had been used to having many visitors, chatting to neighbours, attending church and going out. But though she still managed do a bit in her garden, she was coping less and in 2020 with a second lockdown looming she moved to live initially with her niece and subsequently into a Care Home in Birmingham. Being dependent on others was hard for someone who all her adult life had preferred to be a giver rather than a taker. It is perhaps fitting that when she died two years later it was in the same quiet self-effacing way - peacefully in her own room.

Rachel Anderson (niece)



Pamela Dorothy Norman (née Laughland) (1941)



It is very likely that Pamela at her death, was one of the last students who attended the New Street School. She told some wild stories about sooty windows, stone stairs and cold corridors.

Pamela left school in 1939 aged 16. She did not wish to be evacuated to Malvern, so she joined the Air Transport Auxiliary wanting to be a pilot like her brother, but she was too young. So, she served as a librarian in the Technical Library at RAF White Waltham. Her three brothers all went to KES:

Russell (1937): RAF, double DFC for destroying enemy submarines, John (1941): Royal Navy, Lost at Sea, and Bruce (1949): Barrister and QC.

After war service, Pam trained as a speech therapist at the West End Hospital, London, qualifying in 1951. A quote from her tutor was: 'She had an exceptional gift with the treatment of speech disordered children and her adult patients have always had great confidence in her methods'. Another tutor said that 'she had a natural and pleasant manner equally suitable for dealing with children or adults'. This hints at her future ability to adapt herself to her immediate company and being empathetic with all people regardless of age or background. Her speech therapy training helped many young people from Alcester. That was the nature of Pamela throughout her life.

She married Denis in 1952 and had two children, Elizabeth, a Barrister, and Nick, a helicopter pilot. The family moved to Alcester in 1955. Denis died in 1981.

Pamela and Denis were founder members and Presidents of The Alcester Civic Society, where she became a driving force in protecting the character and heritage buildings of this Roman town. With the help of Barrister brother Bruce QC, she helped to secure foot bridges over a new bypass so that the people of Alcester could access the countryside. She had a great love of nature and opened her garden every year in aid of Cancer Research. Even at aged 100 she would greet everybody who came to view her garden. She loved wild birds and had a hide built.

Pamela had an indomitable spirit which carried her through her long life.

She was interested in the law and was a Warwickshire magistrate for 20 years. She was quite liberal in sentencing, preferring rehabilitation to punishment.

At age 68 she obtained an Open University degree in Psychology, Earth Sciences and Biology Form and Function.

At 102, when her eyesight and hearing were failing, she would insist on collecting for Remembrance Sunday. She wore the war medals awarded to her brothers.

The family is an example of dedicated service to their country by former KES and KEHS pupils.

Addressing her funeral, Sir John Saunders KC, described Pamela as a legend and an exemplar of KEHS. May her story live on in our memories.

16 February 1923 - 28 November 2025

Wendy Ingram, (née Priestman) (1962) & Alf Manders (KES 1954) (friends)

Angela 'Wendy' Clark (née Hayward) (1942)



Wendy was born on 18 August 1926, to William Hayward and Gladys Jones. A much loved only child who excelled at school in her small village in Wolverhampton. She was proud to be the first from her village to win a place at King Edward VI High School for Girls in Birmingham.

In 1950 she met her husband, Frank, who was a student at The Birmingham University. They married in 1953 and moved to the North East, where they purchased their first home in Gosforth, where they lived for many years.

In 1957 their only son Richard was born and they lived happily with friends and family nearby. During that time, Wendy trained as a teacher, eager to be busy and impact the world. They loved the Northumberland coast, and bought a small property in Beadnell.

When Frank retired they moved permanently to Beadnell. Following suit and retiring would have been the easy choice but Wendy was not for retiring, teaching was a mission to her and continued at Scotswood, West Denton and Newbiggin Hall estate, and commuted from Beadnell.

Wendy was thrilled when Richard married Nicola in 1985 and when her grandsons were born. She loved spending time with the family and they spent many happy weekends and Christmases up in Beadnell.

Wendy started working at the RNLI shop in Seahouses; she played bridge, and the WI hut had become a second home - always knitting for England in her spare time.

She celebrated her 90th birthday at the WI hall with a lot of her friends, it was a day she really enjoyed, as that Hall had been a big part of her life - seeing christenings, weddings and birthdays there.

In the 1990s Wendy decided to take computer lessons and received her Microsoft certificates. She printed notices for the WI and was very proud of her skills.

Her last Christmas was a good one and all her old friends, still with us, checked in. After a short stay in hospital she died on her mother and her twin sister's birthdays on 21 January 2025 aged 98 and 5 months. She had had such an impact on so many people over the generations.

Richard Clark (son)

Helen Parry (1944)



My Mother was born Helen Provost Russell on 24 April 1926 in Harrogate, Yorkshire, daughter of a Methodist minister, Rev. William C Russell and her mother, Nell.

When Helen was 18 months she and her parents moved to Swindon in Wiltshire, and in 1929 her brother Peter was born. The family then came to Birmingham and over the years Rev. William was Minister in five different circuits in the Birmingham district.

All through her school life Helen was educated in Birmingham and she went to King Edward VI High School for Girls from 1937-

1944. After leaving school Helen went on to Royal Holloway College in London and received her degree in Maths and Physics. On leaving college Helen came back to Birmingham and became a nursery school teacher. In 1959 Helen gave up teaching when she married Douglas Parry, and their son, Martin, was born in 1962.

In 1970 Douglas came home with terrible tummy pains and was taken to Good Hope hospital where he died the next day, leaving Helen to bring up Martin on her own - he was only 8 years old at the time.

Helen was an active member of the KEH Sutton Group till she had to go into a nursing home. She had an interest in exploring canals for many years and was a helper at a toddlers' group at the church she attended - Sutton Coldfield Methodist Church.

As Helen got older she was having problems with reading due to her deteriorating sight, and by 2009 she was having difficulty in walking and had to go into a home. Firstly, HAFODs care home from 2009-2018, then Beech Hill Grange nursing home 2018 -2025. Helen died peacefully in the early hours of 8 July 2025, aged 99, just nine months short of her 100th birthday.

Martin Parry (son)

Barbara Davis (née Bayliss) (1945)



Although Mum was small in stature, she was immense in presence—determined and, at times, single-minded, a quality that served her well throughout her many achievements.

Born in 1927 to Grandpa and Nannie, she grew up in Handsworth with her brothers Gordon and Stan. She attended King Edward VI High School for Girls, which remained important to her throughout her life, and she became a valued and active member of the Old Edwardians.

During the war, she was evacuated to Painswick near Stroud, a place she grew to love. That fondness stayed with her, and as children we enjoyed many weekends camping in the area at Hilltop Farm, first in tents and later with a caravan.

Her first job was as a librarian at the BBC in Pebble Mill. There she met Mary, who happened to share her surname - Bayliss. After repeated postal mix-ups, they became great friends. When Mary introduced her brother William to Mum, they fell in love and married in October 1951. Their early years together were full of parties and dancing, something Mum enjoyed her whole life.

In 1956 I came along, followed by Debbie, Eddy and Victoria, along with Tawny the dog. Mum loved bringing people together - hosting birthdays, anniversaries, barbecues and family gatherings. Holidays were special too, with camping trips, caravanning, and later visits to places like Sandbanks and Fairbourne, which became particularly dear to her.

Our family home on Monmouth Drive was completed around 1960, and Mum often laughed that Dad called her the most demanding project manager he'd ever worked with.

Tragically, Mum faced the sudden loss of our father, and later her own mother. Despite this, she remained strong, supporting us and maintaining stability at home, supported in turn by a close network of friends and community.

Later, she found companionship with George, a long-time acquaintance who had also been widowed. Their friendship grew into love, and they married, blending our family with Heather and Beverley.

Mum was always active and went on to become Managing Director of Bayliss Ormerod, also serving as Chairman of the British Packaging Association, travelling widely. She was Chairman of her Bowling Club, Editor of the 'PS! Old Edwardians' magazine, and involved in many local groups well into recent years.

She and George travelled extensively - Mexico, New Zealand, the Maldives among them, and she loved warm weather. When advised to get more vitamin D, she joked, 'Send me back to Mexico for two weeks and I'll be fine!'

Family time remained central, especially holidays in Fairbourne with grandchildren, friends and dogs. Even in later years, her diary was full and you often had to book ahead.

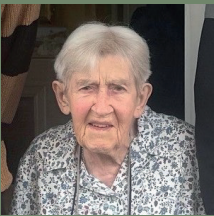
Mum lived a long, full and happy life. We will miss her greatly, but take comfort in the many happy memories she gave to everyone who knew her.

And finally, a story that captures her spirit, on returning to her care home recently, she was asked if she needed anything. Without hesitation, she replied: 'Yes please, a glass of white wine.'

John Bayliss (son)



Georgina Smith (née Pitt) (1947)



Georgina was born on 2 February 1929 in Birmingham. After her father died of TB in 1935 her mother brought Georgina and her elder brother up on slender means but with a strong love of learning. Georgina excelled in the 11-plus, earning a place at KEHS.

She joined the first intake at the new school site on 18 September 1940, travelling daily across Birmingham by tram and on foot, air raids notwithstanding. Mum maintained school friendships all her life and spoke fondly of her schooldays. She enjoyed sport, becoming vice-captain of netball and captain of rounders. Her favourite subjects were Latin and Greek and she hoped to teach Classics, but ill-health led her to leave school for a secretarial course instead.

Her true calling emerged after a subsequent back operation required several weeks in hospital, inspiring her to pursue nursing. She started training at Birmingham General Hospital on 29 March 1949, shortly after the NHS was founded. She later trained in midwifery at the City of London Maternity Hospital and handled one memorable home birth by the light of her bicycle lamp after the electricity meter ran out. She retrained as a chest nurse, becoming a ward sister at the National Hospital for diseases of the chest on the Isle of Wight. Her TB patients came from all backgrounds, including prisoners, monks and gentry, all of whom she treated with equal dedication. Her career then took her to Pembrokeshire, Birmingham again, and Surrey.

Through nursing she met her husband, fellow TB nurse George Smith. They married in 1963 and moved to Barnstaple in Devon where they raised three children: Alexandra, Peter and John. Georgina finally had an opportunity to teach Latin when Alexandra took O Level Latin out of school. George died in 2013, shortly after their golden wedding anniversary.

Mum continued to live independently, taking great interest in family, neighbours and friends and retaining an impressive memory for names and dates. Her love of Classics endured: she wrote ages in Roman numerals on birthday cards and, at 96, could still sing a verse of Oh My Darling Clementine in Latin. She cycled well into her '90s despite severe osteoporosis but after an uncharacteristic fall at the end of 2025 a spinal tumour was discovered, and she moved to a nursing home for palliative care, dying on 19 January 2026 just two weeks before her 97th birthday. Georgina was a devout Catholic whose faith sustained her throughout her life. She leaves her three children and three grandsons, all of whom remember her with great affection.

A touching reflection of her lifelong connections was that the last person to leave her funeral wake was the granddaughter of the lady in Suckley who had hosted Mum as an evacuee 86 years earlier.

Alexandra Wilowska (daughter).

Joyce Brackpool (née Crampton) (1949)



My mother was born in 1931 and attended KEHS from 1942 - 7. She was proud of being the first child from her primary school to go to KEHS. She described her time at KEHS as the happiest part of her childhood and adolescence.

She enjoyed the music, singing, maths, science and sport, and all her life she enjoyed watching sport particularly cricket, recalling times at the nearby Edgbaston Cricket ground. After five years she desperately wanted to continue into the Sixth Form and thence to teacher training but despite intervention from

the headmistress, her parents insisted that it was time to earn a living. Therefore, as with so many young women of that time, she learned secretarial and bookkeeping skills instead.

Joyce married my father, Bob, in 1953 and I was born the following year. Julie followed in 1957 and my brother Jonathan in 1961. By this time we had moved to Surrey following Bob's job. Joyce had a number of low paid and unsatisfying part time jobs until Jonathan started school when her wish became true and she was accepted at Gipsy Hill Teacher Training college to train as an infant/junior teacher. Her piano qualifications replacing the higher school certificate she was denied.

With Bob's help she managed to juggle family life with the course demands and taught in Surrey and later in Gloucestershire where she and Bob moved in 1981. She always enjoyed her time in the classroom and her administrative skills were also valued by many organisations over the years including Towns' Women's Guild and Mothers' Union.

After retirement she enjoyed her home and garden where she excelled in a number of crafts, especially knitting, and was visited by her three children, seven grandchildren and six great grandchildren. Bob died just weeks after they had celebrated 70 years of marriage. Joyce's memory deteriorated in her last years, but she enjoyed receiving keynotes. Her time at KEHS remained unusually clear to her even when more recent years were confused. She died on 12 January 2024.

Wendy Barber (daughter)

Margaret Lichtenhein (née Hague) (1949)



Margaret Florence Hague was born on 29 August 1931 to Laurence and Marion Hague. They lived in the Hall Green area of Birmingham.

After the second world war, she attended King Edward VI High School for Girls. Her strong Methodist upbringing ensured that young Margaret prioritised her schoolwork over everything else, leading to an excellent Higher School Certificate.

The proximity of the family home to Edgbaston cricket ground led to her developing a strong interest in the sport and becoming one of Warwickshire Cricket Club's most ardent supporters – right up until the day she passed. She met a boy called Laurie at Methodist Sunday School who was an equally avid cricket fan – but of the rival county, Worcestershire.

After High School, Margaret enrolled into teacher training at Southlands College in Wimbledon and had a very enjoyable time as a student, making many lifelong friends along the way.

After graduation, she returned to Birmingham and met up again with Laurie. They married there on 31 July 1954.

Their first home was in Hertfordshire, where Laurie secured his first job in pharmaceutical production at Allen & Hanbury's factory in Ware. Margaret started her first teaching job at the local primary school. After their son, Mark's arrival, they moved within Hertfordshire to the village of Little Hallingbury, where they lived for the next 20 years. Margaret took on a different type of teaching job at the Herts & Essex hospital, teaching children who were in the wards for extended periods.

In 1984, Laurie was seconded by Allen & Hanbury's new owners, Glaxo, to commission a factory in Palmerston North in New Zealand, where they spent the next three years. Once fully retired, they decided to move again, this time to the Portuguese Algarve, where they lived until returning again in 2009.

They moved back to Suffolk, and after Laurie's passing in 2012, Margaret came to live with the whole of Mark's family in Camberley: his wife Amanda, and daughters Charlotte, Olivia, Melissa and Ellie. Her teacher training was helpful, as Ellie was just three years old when Margaret joined the family, and she helped Ellie with her early reading and writing skills. Without any other commitments, she could now fully indulge herself watching cricket on Sky Sports! She would often call out at the television, lambasting England for any failures on the cricket pitch!

Despite increasing immobility in her later years, Margaret was able to enjoy a very full life, well into her nineties. The whole family was very grateful for all the time they were able to spend with her till she passed away on 16 March 2025.

Mark Lichtenhein (son)

Valerie Beaumont Harris (1952)



Val was born in 1934, in Birkenhead. She moved to Hall Green in 1939 when her father took a job in local government, and later moved to Shirley.

Val attended Hall Green Junior School and then gained a place at King Edward VI High School for Girls, where she studied from 1944 - 1952. She thoroughly enjoyed her years there and the academic challenges, and made life-long friends there. She developed a love of English and Drama, taking part in several school plays; she also enjoyed sports and became a player for, and secretary of, the School Hockey Eleven. She was made Prefect in the Sixth Form, Deputy and then Acting Head Girl. Her school days were very happy ones and she remembered the end of term ritual when the whole school gathered for final assembly which invariably began with 'Now thank we all our God'. She requested that hymn was sung at her funeral.

In 1952, she gained an Exhibition to Westfield College, London University, where she made more close friends, and indulged in her love of theatre and Shakespeare. Having gained an Honours Degree in English in 1955, Val went on to train as a Teacher of the Deaf. She returned to Birmingham and had a successful career teaching children the Oral educational system, teaching deaf children to learn lip-reading and speech to fit them for life in a hearing world. She was immensely proud when several of her pupils went on to Grammar schools. She maintained close personal friendships with many of them continuing to take pride in their achievements in adult life, and over 20 of them attended her funeral.

She took early retirement in 1985, and married Denis shortly after that. She was closely associated with Shirley Methodist Church, particularly working with young people. Denis died in 2004.

She never lost her love of Literature and of the English language. She read voraciously and wrote very elegantly, having several letters published in The Times. She also completed The Times cryptic crossword, daily, into her 92nd year.

Val was also a strong supporter of the School's Assisted Places Fund, enabling bright young girls without the financial means, the opportunity to attend KEHS.

She was a very kind and sociable person and great company for her many friends. In March 2025 she was enjoying tea and cakes with a neighbour when she was taken ill; she died peacefully on 24 March at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital.

'We can't all do GREAT things, but we CAN all do small things with GREAT love' (the words of Mother Theresa) – Val tried to put this philosophy into daily life.

Judie Lloyd (family friend)



Gillian Sharp (née Treasure) (1953)



It is with great sadness that we inform you of the passing of Gillian Sharp (nee Treasure) on January 14 2026 aged 90.

Gill moved up to Birmingham from Barry in South Wales when she was four years old. She first went to The Laurels which had a reputation for getting pupils through the major examinations in Birmingham including KEHS.

Gill recounted in her memoirs of sitting the exam at KEHS but was daunted by the fact that when she attended the exam lunch, she ended up sitting next to Dr. Smith, the then headmistress, at the top table in the Dining Hall. Gill was extremely shy and found that the worst part of the day!

Gill passed the KEHS exam and attended from 1946 until 1953. She was immensely proud to have been a pupil, always spoke fondly of her time there and of the wonderful friends she made. Latterly, it was one of the few memories she held on to.

Gill loved keeping in touch with many of her 'old girls' and attended various reunions.

Gill married John Ellis in 1958 after being introduced to John by Gill's cousin. They became regulars at Springfield Tennis Club in Handsworth Wood. Gill loved playing both tennis and table tennis and had a mean forehand smash!

They had two children, Caroline and David who both joined FOCUS, a large Venture Scout and Ranger Guide unit in Four Oaks. John was a leader and David was too later on.

Gill married Brian Sharp in 1992. Gill had known Brian in passing, as Brian's two daughter's Helen and Julie had also been in FOCUS.

Gill went on to lead a wonderful life with her extended family and grandchildren. She was immensely proud of them all.

Gill and Brian travelled the world on many cruises, and a road and rail journey across North America. She loved listening to music, doing quizzes and puzzles, watching snooker, painting and crafting. Their garden and conservatory were Gill's sanctuary and a great place to watch the birds, squirrels and a fox which would make an appearance from time to time.

Gill is sorely missed by us all.

David Ellis (son) and Caroline Utley (daughter)

Marian Masters (née Ward) (1955)



Marian died in her sleep early on the morning of 16 October 2025. From Hall Green, Birmingham, she went to King Edward VI High School for Girls where she met her husband, Keith Masters. On leaving school, she trained as an orthoptist at the Birmingham Eye Hospital, later ending as a senior lecturer there. She spent seven happy years between 1965 and 1972 in Uganda supporting Keith, developing a deep Christian faith, and completing her family.

Marian was a great encourager and had an extraordinary ability to make people stronger and more confident in themselves. With Keith at her side, she was very generous with her time and her home. Their home was always open, with people just dropping in all the time.

She was highly competitive throughout her life from cook-offs with her sister-in-law to cherry pip distance spitting with anyone who would take up the challenge. She enjoyed her tennis and was a keen sailor and, with Keith, took many friends and family sailing in Turkey.

She loved gardening and turned her plot of nettle clad clay into a beautiful 'quiet garden' retreat, open again to those who needed a place of peace.

With a real zest for life, she went wing walking at 70 and always had a warm welcome for friends and strangers. On retiring as an orthoptist, she helped children in schools with learning difficulties.

She is pre-deceased by Keith and leaves her children: Julian, Jonathan, Clare, and Laura and their spouses, 10 grandchildren and two great grandchildren.

Julian Masters (son)

Pamela Barwell (née Cliff) (1957)



We were sad to learn that Pam, our friend of 75 years, died in April 2025.

We came together in 1950 in Form 3B of KEHS, part of a group of friends who were to share the ups and downs of the next five formative years. Pam gained her place by coming top of her year in the 11-plus exam. She was sharp and determined, a strong character who knew her own mind. She was also easy company, warm and friendly with an infectious laugh and attractive smile. She was very grounded and seemed to understand the ways of the world ahead of most of the rest of us.

Pam left KEHS for a post at Lloyds Bank in Birmingham and met her future husband, Peter Barwell, at the local Young Conservatives Association. They married in 1961 (Gill was a bridesmaid) and lived for c30 years in Edgbaston with their growing family, Jenny, Sally and James.

Pam led a very busy life, bringing up their children, later becoming a company director in the business Peter set up, fully sharing Peter's involvement in public service - from 1966 he was the elected Councillor for the Edgbaston Ward. His major achievement was to establish the Birmingham Grand Prix Formula 3000 motor race which ran between 1986 and 1990. (One of Pam and Peter's shared interest was motor rallies - Pam becoming a skilled navigator.) Peter served as Lord Mayor of Birmingham from 1992 - 3 with Pam by his side. She regarded her stint as Lady Mayoress one of the most fulfilling experiences of her life.

Pam made her own major contribution to public service in Birmingham: Justice of the Peace, Chairman of the Birmingham YWCA (and a member of the YWCA National Finance Committee), Chair of Governors of Lordwood Girls' School and Chairman of Calthorpe Women's Luncheon Club. She was quietly effective in all she took on.

Pam and Peter also found time to travel. They had friends in Bordeaux whom they visited regularly but they also travelled the world on various cruises over the years.

In 2000 Pam and Peter 'retired' to Bloxham where Peter had been to school and continued to be a very active and highly regarded alumnus. Pam was a welcoming and generous hostess to friends who visited them in their attractive cottage.

After the sad death of Peter in 2020, Pam could no longer live the independent life she so valued. As all who knew her well would expect, she was completely stoical in facing the reality of her situation. When we visited her at her care home, she was recognisably the animated and sharp personality we had first met in 1950 and we spent happy hours of conversation in which memories of our time together at KEHS still featured strongly. RIP, dear friend.

Angela Clayton -Turner (née Rubery) (1957)
Gill Davies (née Smith) (1957)

Susan E Revis (née Jones) (1969)



Susan grew up in Halesowen with her two younger sisters. She was a bright, intelligent child and an avid reader. At a young age she was granted special permission to borrow library books from general shelves, as she had exhausted the books offered in the Children's Section of Halesowen Library. She loved music; taking piano lessons from about age seven and retaining a life-long love for music.

Her scholarship to King Edward's High School for Girls in 1962 - about six miles from her home - introduced the daily commute routines that she would need for much of her working life.

From KEHS, she went to Lancaster University, graduating in Summer 1972 with a degree in Pure Mathematics. Computers were in their infancy and her relevant degree was a very desirable qualification. She began work with Coventry City Council, helping to move their Rates and Revenue departments forward onto the new technology.

In the late 1970's she began work with Westminster City Council and moved house to Leighton Buzzard, commuting daily into London and always travelling with a drink, a snack, and a book! In retirement, she estimated that her home contained several hundreds of books acquired - and read - during those years of train travel.

Sue was a crossword and sudoku devotee; she could usually solve the Telegraph crossword, and loved the Guardian's annual Christmas offering of the fiendishly challenging King William College Quiz. The GCHQ Christmas Code Breaker was another annual treat.

Sue's move to Leighton Buzzard also began her long association with All Saint's Church. She had been a teenage chorister in the Midlands and she joined All Saint's Choir. With the choir, Sue appeared on Songs of Praise; on a televised Sunday morning church service; and on a Sunday Worship radio broadcast.

Through outsourcing of Westminster City Council I.T. services, Sue worked for various parent-companies including Capita and Cadbury Schweppes.

In the late 1990's, Sue led a team to review and test multiple I.T. systems to protect against the impending Millenium Bug which dominated the news for many months. Reviewers who suggest that Millenium Bug fears did not materialise; that it was all a rather damp squib, may have overlooked the dedication of Sue and others who put their normal lives 'on hold' to adapt and test the technology.

Sue enjoyed the mountains and fells of the Lake District, and similar landscapes. Her holidays included a train journey through the Canadian Rockies, river cruises in Europe, and a variety of National Trust cottages in the United Kingdom.

When Sue was diagnosed with epilepsy she curtailed her travels abroad and surrendered her driving licence but, nevertheless, she soldiered on. Sue's death was not expected. She was hospitalised after fracturing her collarbone while unwell with a chest infection. A temporary relocation to a care home was pragmatic but she was expected to return home early in 2026.

Sue is loved and will be sadly missed as sister, aunt, and friend; but she is now at peace.

Anne Williams and Anthea Staples (sisters)

Jane Hansford (née Cliff) (1977)



No one who was at school in the Seventies, pupils or staff, will have forgotten Jane Hansford (1977), who broke the mould in many ways.

She was very tall, very beautiful, very clever - and was, shall we say, not averse to mischief.

The pranks were too numerous to mention but one can't write about Jane without recalling the great King Edward's hair scandal of 1975. The new Vidal Sassoon salon in town needed models and off we went for a free 'do'. I thought mine was pretty snazzy - then Jane emerged. All her hair had been cut off to a really, really short pixie crop which was dyed black with a giant peroxide blonde 'starburst' on top. Today's girls will not understand the enormity of this but remember, it was the Seventies and several staff nearly fainted on the spot when she walked into school the next day.

Jane's personality and skills made her the perfect candidate for Dartington College in Devon where she completed a degree in theatre studies. She then spent years as a dancer, teacher and choreographer, becoming a specialist in dance work with people with disabilities, including children with emotional and behavioural problems. Of course she excelled.

She was my beloved best friend from the day we met as new members of 3A, so close our names were often spoken as one (Janeandkathryn, never Kathrynandjane) and were still friends when she died from cancer in July 2025, a few days before her 66th birthday. Jane was married to the wonderful Matt and had a daughter, Miriam.

Jane lived in Brighton (as do I) and her ashes are scattered in a beautiful spot in the grounds of the city's Woodvale Crematorium. She will be forever missed.

Kathryn Parkin (1977) (close friend)

Helen Ball (née Stokes) (1979)



Helen was born in Solihull to Maureen and David Stokes and had two younger brothers, Ian and Phillip.

Helen had a happy childhood surrounded by a large family. She went to Peterbrook Primary School, Shirley, and started at King Edward VI High School for Girls in 1971. Whilst there, Helen developed a passion for foreign languages - learning both French and German - partaking in numerous exchanges and travelling across Europe. Outside of school Helen had developed a keen interest in genealogy and social history, often visiting neighbours to hear about their lives.

Helen then went on to do a degree in librarianship, studying in Brighton. Whilst at home for the summer Helen met Nick who was at the end of his first year at Christ Church, Yardley Wood. Nick had already got to know Helen's parents. After the Wednesday morning service Nick would give Helen's mother, Maureen, his dirty washing and would collect it washed and ironed when he had a cooked meal at Maureen and David's on a Friday lunchtime. After a year together Helen and Nick got engaged and married in 1982 when Helen had finished her degree.

Helen started her career as a librarian at Solihull Library, and whilst having a break to have children (Catherine, Caroline and Sarah) she continued working in libraries.

Helen used her skills acquired to support her keen interest in genealogy eventually making a career from it. Initially as a researcher for others and then establishing a business in probate research taking inspiration from daytime television programme, Heir Hunters. Helen spent hours doing family trees for people all over the world, in some cases reuniting families. Helen had an infinite capacity for giving, and gave unconditionally to family, friends, strangers ... to anyone that needed help.

Helen passed away in July 2024.

Caroline Richards (daughter)

Janine Biggs (née Price) (1986)



Janine who joined KEHS from 11 years old in 1979, died on 10 September 2025 after a two-year fight against cancer. Janine grew up with her two sisters, in a big windowed house opposite the football pitch in Blackwell. She loved the quirks of this rural childhood. Golden retrievers, Mrs Frizzell in the Post Office Shop, the rivalrous Anglican and Methodist Church, even her tumble down the vestry steps one Fireworks Night that elevated her status to village folklore.

From 11 she travelled into Edgbaston with an apple green bevy of us on the 62 bus which started out near her grandmother's cottage. Those of us who shared seven vital years of our journey with her, remember a dance of robustness; serious, scrutinising intelligence; hilarity - and sheer attitude. One of our first form leaders, Janine was funny, gruff and kind. We remember delivering a giggling Janine in the Christmas postbox to an unsuspecting thirds classroom; Antigone-Janine in a teeny miniskirt by the swinging Grecian cardboard columns; Janine establishing her trademark bob at the accidental loss of a bunch; Janine developing an interest in the potential of Catholic boys; Janine dancing on the desk to Purple Rain; Janine in love...

And another side - Janine's ethical, tough, stylish mind. Her thoughtful and rigorous contributions to discussion in History and English. She left King Edwards with straight A's at A Level, read law at Sheffield, and went on to marry Adrian and to an impressive legal career. This included service for the Solicitors' Regulation Authority and over twenty years as Director of Risk and Compliance at BDB Pitmans in London. A commute she juggled with green, lyrically-named Worcestershire homes for her two boys; Henry and Toby. She even sewed the curtains herself.

When Janine became ill, she remained stoical and open-minded - despite pain and a typically fair appraisal of her prospects. A group of us from school made crafts with her through that time and her last handiworks remain loud. The bright red-yellow glass sun, rising or setting, at the edge of a horizon and the bird whose wing she embroidered and attached over careful weeks last year.

In what counted most, she was a grafter. Her husband Adrian's closing memorial words seem apt, 'I have never met anyone braver - or more intelligent.'

Cathy Swire (1986) (classmate)

Daphne Stallard (Former Staff 1976 - 1998)



Daphne, was 'a beacon of love at the heart of her family' and they were so grateful for all that she gave them. The beauty of her life and love as well as the prayers of their wider Christian family have upheld them since the shock and grief of her sudden loss.

Daphne's family had known (like many others) much hardship and poverty during and after the war. She had begun to write down some of her life story for her family, to help them know more about her roots, and although they knew that her whole family had faced many difficulties and intense hardship she characteristically wrote, 'looking back I had so many blessings to acknowledge'. She loved her parents and was proud of them, as she also was of her older brother Robin, her sister Peggy and their families.

Daphne was one of the cleverest and most humble people that many had ever known. She was the first person in her family to go to university, gaining a place both at Oxford and Cambridge to read Natural Sciences when she was just 17. She spent an extra term at school as a lab technician until she was old enough at 18 to start as a student at Girton College, Cambridge.



Daphne always wore her academic ability lightly and worked incredibly hard throughout her life. She met her husband while they were both students at Cambridge. They fell in love and Daphne's mother said she was very fortunate to be marrying 'above herself' having fallen for a trainee vicar.

Daphne became a chemistry teacher and taught for many years in various schools. She was Head of Chemistry for many of her 22 years at KEHS. With her three children, she was a full-time mother by day in their early years, when she moved her teaching to the evenings. She was also always fully committed to supporting her husband's ministry - being present in church and active in Christian service; cooking, cleaning, visiting, hosting visitors and guests etc. She was always at the heart of the humble service that sustained church life.

Daphne was an old-fashioned, loving mother to each of her children, and was always concerned for, and so proud of her grandchildren, Harry, George, Jo and Carys, too. Her great love for family and friends meant that she was an avid letter writer and a regular visitor. If she ever read an article that interested her in a newspaper or magazine, she would think of someone to pass it onto, and was forever out delivering letters, messages or cards to people she thought might appreciate the contact.

Daphne's life proclaimed, that we should all be steadfast, immovable, always excelling in the work God gives to us, because we know that by God's grace our labour is never in vain.

Andy, Mary and John (Daphne's children)



Dr Matthew Simpson – Former Staff (2010 – 2015, 2017 – 2023)



Dr Matthew 'Mat' Simpson, beloved partner, son, brother, teacher and friend, died aged 43, of glioblastoma. Despite his terminal diagnosis he continued to be positive and hopeful; nothing that was thrown at him phased him, and even in the most difficult of circumstances, he continued to have the best of times with his partner and soulmate, Nicola.

Mat is remembered for his gentle humour, quiet confidence, and the rare ability to make life feel calmer, warmer, and more meaningful for those around him. He built a life shaped by curiosity, creativity, and deep connection. He studied Chemistry at the University of Birmingham, completing both a Master's and a Doctorate, and it was there that he met Nicola. Their life together was marked by shared adventure, thoughtful conversation, and a deep, steady companionship that enriched them both.

Mat was a much respected Chemistry teacher at King Edward VI High School for Girls, where he became known for his integrity, warmth, and sincerity. Students described him as 'kind, patient and intelligent,' someone who 'always made time,' and whose enthusiasm for Chemistry was 'infectious.' His colleagues saw in him a teacher who embodied honesty, loyalty, and quiet moral clarity. He brought dedication and humour to his work, whether through his bowties, his Christmas quizzes, or the calm reassurance he offered when it mattered most.

Among friends, Mat was 'effortlessly funny, brilliantly intelligent, and quietly cool.' He had a gift for making silence feel easy, for noticing the small things others overlooked, and for moving through the world with a relaxed self assurance that made people feel at home in his company.

Mat was not only a trained chemist and teacher; he was also a gifted artist and gardener. His instinctive feel for colour grew into a body of work that continues to speak for him, and his bonsai garden became one of his quiet joys. He unpicked visual scenes and scientific models to create abstract paintings, usually in oil or acrylic, drawing on both his scientific background and his love of the natural world.

Mat died young and will be deeply missed, but he lived with intention, curiosity and warmth. He left no stone unturned, and he continues to shine through his colleagues, students, friends, family, garden and artwork. He leaves a legacy of kindness, curiosity and gentle courage. His presence endures in the countless small moments he taught others to notice – a quiet brilliance that continues to guide those who loved him.

Written with love, by Nicola

Images –
Self portrait (M. Simpson), acrylic and oil on paper.
Background - 'Water', part of the 'Molecules' collection (M. Simpson), acrylic on canvas.

Peter Wright – KEHS Porter



Pete is retiring after nearly 40 years at KEHS, having started on November 24 1986. During this time, he has seen many changes in both the school and his role.

Pete recalls that his predecessor wore a jacket and a bowler hat and opened the doors each morning. As the school was much smaller then, Pete and Nigel Taylor, who joined him a few years later, shared a wide range of duties, including supervising cleaning staff, covering Reception, and arranging contractors for the many tasks required, after obtaining three quotes for the Headmistress.

Alongside general portering duties and responding to staff requests, one responsibility Pete has always had is the daily cleaning and maintenance of the swimming pool, including adding chemicals and cleaning it thoroughly. He remembers only one occasion when the pool had to be closed briefly due to incorrect chemicals being delivered, when he even came in on a Sunday to resolve the issue.

In the late 1980s, there was no Sports Hall, just the swimming pool and tennis courts.

Pete has many fond memories, including:

- The 125th Anniversary of KEHS, when staff and pupils dressed in Victorian costume - an absolutely wonderful day.
- A memorable (and still amusing) trip with Nigel in the 'blue van' to collect an empty coffin for the Drama Department, attracting plenty of onlookers and laughter.
- Annual Summer Fêtes, held on Saturdays, which were long but enjoyable days, opened by a Queen lookalike cutting the ribbon.
- The warm family atmosphere among staff and pupils.

Pete is extremely proud of his achievements over the years always ensuring the school was ready for the start of each day.

Asked how he feels about retiring, Pete replied 'Absolutely fantastic!' He will miss everyone, but especially Nigel, his close colleague for over 34 years.

Pete is now looking forward to more time with his grandchildren, tackling jobs at home, and travelling to Spain with his wife during quieter term times.

We will miss you very much, Pete, and wish you a happy and well deserved retirement!



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