



ISSUE NO. 87 | MAY 2024

King's in the Capital



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Introduction and Contents



CAOKS President and guests of the Association at the 157th CAOKS Annual Dinner, held on January 20th, 2024



From The Editor *Steve Williams*

Welcome to the Summer edition of the CAOKS newsletter.

Back in January we had the 157th Annual CAOKS Dinner at the school and it was a fantastic evening. You can read more about it later in this issue. Many thanks to Robin, Gemma and everyone who worked so hard to make the evening the success it was.

On a personal note, I began the year by joining two choirs (Male Voice Choir and the Choral Society) in Romsey which is near to where I live. I've spent a lifetime in music and this year I felt like challenging myself in a different way and I'm so glad I did. Two incredibly welcoming groups of people and I'm having an absolute blast in both settings. I grew up around Male Voice Choirs in Rhosllanerchrugog in the 1970's and 1980's and, with my father being a vicar, choral music is still familiar as well. New year, new challenges!

I'd like to say thank you to everyone who has submitted articles for this hallowed publication since I've been in the editorial hot seat. It's been brilliant to read your thoughts on a variety of subjects. Please keep sending them in.

We are introducing some new features in this issue, one of which is called "Ten for Now and Then". The idea is that each issue a CAOKS member answers 10 questions relating to themselves and their time at and post King's. If you fancy taking part in this, please send me an email with your answers to the 10 questions (which are always the same, of course) and, if you wish, a photo as well.

The CAOKS AGM will take place this year on Monday June 24th. Full details can be found later in the issue. All are welcome to attend so please do come along and join us if you can.

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President and Officers' Messages



From the President

Mark Thorp

I am now six months into my term as President – so far there has not been a dull moment and the events have been coming thick and fast!

The much-anticipated King's in the Capital event at the House of Lords fulfilled all expectations. The venue on the riverside terrace and guest speaker Jonathan Samuels were excellent. It was a pleasure to see such a wide age range represented – I spoke to number of people who had left King's before I was born! It seems to be undeniably the case that a large proportion (if not the majority) of King's pupils eventually settle in and around London after University. It's great then that they can keep in touch at events like this one.

The 2024 event is to be held at Lord's Cricket Ground on 24 November. The Alumni events booking page is open now for what promises to be another excellent event at an iconic location.

In February, I had the pleasure of being invited to the School's production of A Monster Calls. Very different subject matter to the plays performed in my time at the School! A hugely impressive production featuring the mechanical monster which will stay in the memory for many years.

The CAOKS Dinner is always a great evening and above all else a chance to get together with your contemporaries from School. I certainly got a different perspective on events during this year's dinner – not least from being completely sober when the speeches concluded! My personal thanks to Andrew Green for his company on the evening and his Toast to the Association.

Sadly, we must recognise that at present numbers attending the dinner have not yet recovered to pre-pandemic levels. Hosting an annual dinner was one of the original objects laid down for CAOKS by its founders

way back in 1865. In his message, our dinner Secretary Robin Hardi alludes to some format changes for next year. Hopefully these will be favourably received and increase numbers. Please do support the Alumni events and especially the dinner if you can. MT



From the Secretary

Peter Bernie

To encourage you to come to our AGM on June 24th, it's being held at The Architect on Nicholas Street

In addition to the usual approval of the annual accounts, election of officers and vote of thanks to the school's hard-working Alumni team, we plan to adopt a new constitution to bring it up to date and to expand the Committee from the present nine people to twelve.

[CAOKS Constitution 2024.pdf](#)

You will see from the accounts that the Association has £38,000 of reserves. Donations received in the year have funded the CAOKS Exhibition as well as several donations to the School.

[CAOKS 23 Accounts Final.pdf](#)

I also encourage you to join us at one or more of the events listed in the Newsletter. And outside the organised events, it's good to meet up informally. This March, again organised via our WhatsApp group, six of my year met up at The Parcel Yard, a Fuller's pub next to Platform 9¾ inside King's Cross Station, to enjoy supper and a few pints.

While a lot of us want to minimise our exposure to social media, using a WhatsApp group is a useful easy way to message your year group. If you are willing to start one and would like CAOKS to advertise a few people as the year group reps, please contact me.

Hoping to see you at a 2024 event – PB



Officers' Messages



From the
Dinner
Secretary

Robin Hardi

Notice of Annual General Meeting

Date: Monday 24th June 2024

Venue: The Architect, 54, Nicholas St,
Chester CH1 2NX

Time: 19.00

Agenda

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the 2023 AGM and the 2023 Special General Meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Approval of Annual Accounts for the year ended 31 December 2023
5. Election of Officers until the next AGM:
 - (a) President - Mark Thorp offers himself for re-election
 - (b) Vice President - Steve Williams offers himself for re-election
 - (c) Honorary Secretary - Peter Bernie offers himself for re-election
 - (d) Honorary Treasurer - Mark Thorp offers himself for re-election
 - (e) Dinner Secretary - Robin Hardi offers himself for re-election
 - (f) Newsletter Editor - Steve Williams offers himself for re-election
6. Election of additional Committee members: in addition to the above Officers, and the School's three nominees, if someone holds two or more Officer roles, additional Alumni members can be elected, and the Committee therefore nominates:
 - Ravi Jayaram and
 - Andy Jones
7. Adoption of new constitution
8. Vote of thanks to the School alumni team
9. Invitation to the events proposed for 2024/25
10. Any other business

We launched our events in January this year with the 157th CAOKS Annual Dinner. Once again held at the School and set in the wonderful Vanburgh Theatre. As ever the Alumni team provided excellent support in setting up the event and the catering team provided a superb meal and dinner service. My thanks to all involved, not forgetting the pianist and welcome team, all Sixth Form pupils who did a great job. The guest speaker was Mr Andrew Green, a renowned BBC radio presenter who shared his experiences of his varied career as an interviewer. Our President was also joined by the Dean of Chester Cathedral, the High Sheriff of Chester and Lady Sheriff.

Whilst we continue to modernise the event, I do feel a sense of pride and achievement that we have maintained this annual tradition of a dinner for the alumni for such a long period and hope we can continue to take advantage of this opportunity to connect with friends for many more years to come.

Looking forward to the 158th CAOKS Annual Dinner, the committee continue to discuss the format and venue and how best to balance it with the other events held throughout the year. We appreciate that travel is getting more expensive and January isn't always the best time to get anywhere. With that in mind we are moving the event to 22nd March 2025, remaining at the School, and are exploring options to make it an even more popular. Feedback is really important in making the evening a success and we welcome any comments on how to grow and modernise in this fast changing world. Please feel free to send any feedback to me at

caoksdinnersec@gmail.com

Thanks again to all who supported the Dinner and let's now look forward to a bit of summer sunshine.

Robin Hardi

[Minutes - CAOKS AGM 13.06.23.docx](#)

[Minutes - CAOKS AGM 11.10.23.docx](#)



Headmaster's Message



From the
Headmaster

*George
Hartley*

I write this in the warm Spring sunshine of Handbridge at the start of the Easter holidays.

It's been another busy and fulfilling term at the school, during which we welcomed back various alumni who left in years ending in '4'. A relatively modest turnout for the 54/64/74/84 leavers' event in February (bravo to Mr Robin Crosby for representing the class of '55) was followed by a much healthier throng of leavers from 94/04/14 in March, with both Saturday afternoon events involving a tour of the Senior School, short presentation from yours truly and a lunch/canapes served in our wonderful new Sixth Form Centre. The new centre, which went down very well with CAOKS members of all ages, was opened by our patron the Duke of Westminster in November; highly appropriate as our Wrexham Road landlord and given his father had opened our infant school, Willow Lodge, in 1915.

We also organised the first of what we hope will be a series of regional CAOKS events over the next few years with an enjoyable evening in Newcastle featuring Ravi Jayaram as our guest speaker. Breakfast the next morning was rather disrupted, however, with news that the school had flooded back in Chester, resulting in closure for the day and an extended half term break for many delighted students. Fortunately, we were able to clean everything up and ensure there was no further risk of flooding over the subsequent two weeks in time for the second half of term.

Otherwise, we continue to thrive as a school with stronger student numbers than ever before (currently 1154) and waiting lists in most years. We have also been delighted to pick up a few awards this year, firstly at the IDPE national awards in London for Outstanding Educational Partnerships (for our Chester Schools Together partnership which I have previously described in this newsletter) and then The Sunday Times Award for Best Independent School in the North West.

This latter award, based on last summer's examination results, leavers destinations and various other factors including our pastoral provision and co-curricular programme, was particularly well-received given it meant coming ahead of all the independent schools of Manchester. I hope you'll agree this is a quite a feat for King's and helps put in an encouragingly healthy position with a few political and economic headwinds likely to come up over the next year or two.



We enjoyed hosting the CAOKS Annual Dinner again in January, with former BBC radio presenter and producer Andrew Green as our guest of honour, and before that a very popular London drinks event at the House of Lords which featured an entertaining address from the Sky Broadcaster Jonathan Samuels.



GH

Alumni News

Work Experience - can you help?

Dr Ravi Hensman, Head of Careers at King's, asked if we could include a piece relating to work experience in the next issue of the newsletter – and here it is. Please get in touch with Ravi or the school if you might be able to help in this area.

Dear CAOKS members and KSC Alumni,

I hope this message finds you well. As part of our commitment to providing valuable learning experiences for our Lower Sixth students, we are currently seeking opportunities for work experience placements in various fields.

We are reaching out to the alumni community in the hope of finding supportive individuals and organisations in the Chester area willing to host our Lower Sixth students for work experience. This is an excellent opportunity for them to gain insights into different professions, develop practical skills, and make informed decisions about their future academic and career pursuits.

If you would be interested in offering work experience to one or more of our Lower Sixth students, we would be grateful if you could complete the form below indicating your availability. Placements would need to be scheduled during school holiday periods, but the duration of the placements can be flexible, depending on your requirements.

<https://forms.office.com/e/eB49xrs8ik>

For information, our summer break will run from 5th July 2024-4th September 2024 and our October half term break will run from 19th October 2024-3rd November 2024.

In addition, we are always grateful to OKS who help with our Next Steps initiative. We do this in a Career's breakfast format. The idea is it gives current students the opportunity to connect with recent Alumni to hear about their experiences of higher education and the

workplace, as well as to benefit from their insight and advice about the next steps after King's.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or if you would like to discuss the details further. We appreciate your consideration and look forward to creating meaningful and enriching experiences for our Lower Sixth students.

Dr Ravi Hensman

Philip Bowcock (OKS 1949)

Phillip emailed me recently and I decided to include his entire mail here as it made more sense to do so. (Ed)

It is quite a long time since I last corresponded with your predecessor, and I can't remember what I said anyway so I thought it was time that updated my present situation.

Having arrived on the planet in 1932 I was at King's from 1944 to 1949 when it was in the old building next to the Cathedral. The then Head, Harvey, advised that it was not worth my while to go to university so I took articles with W E Brown (long since gone) and qualified RICS at the age of 21.

After a year of national service (which is another story) I worked in private practice for a year and then joined the Inland Revenue Valuation Office. During this time, I graduated BSc (EstMan) of London University (external) at a time when very few Chartered Surveyors had graduated at all, and then moved into teaching. My last 30 years until retirement were at Reading University as Lecturer in Valuation.

Other activities – My late wife and I were foster carers for Reading Social Services for many years and cared for 136 children in total. I was also Organist and Choirmaster at a local parish church until I was forced to resign after a major accident. I now spend my time in writing my memoirs and commenting on some of the policies of the RICS. This month I celebrated 69 year's corporate membership of the RICS and my 91st birthday.

Kind Regards
Phillip Bowcock

Carina Edwards (OKS 2002)

I attended the King's School for Sixth Form from 2000 to 2002. I was fortunate enough to be given a full scholarship. The quality of teaching was incredible and the academic standards were intimidatingly high. I left with 2 A/S and 3 A Levels and I was awarded the school Spanish prize and the Edwards Memorial prize. I went on to study for a BA honours degree in Spanish at the University of Bristol. This was a fantastic experience and I spent a year on the ERASMUS programme in the enchanting city of Granada. I studied at the university and taught English to children part time. I had the time of my life in Granada and have returned several times. Although my career took a different direction, I still speak Spanish, have many Spanish friends and have returned to visit many other parts of Spain and to do the Camino de Santiago pilgrimage.



After graduating with a BA (Hons) in Spanish, I returned to my hometown of Rhyl and an opportunity came up that I couldn't resist. It was a two-year apprenticeship in Community Development Work. This included many work placements at different organisations, alongside studying for a qualification. This fit well with my values and desire to improve the community I grew up in, one of the most deprived areas in Wales. All started well until I experienced an episode of 'manic psychosis' and was involuntarily hospitalised and diagnosed with bipolar disorder type 1, the most severe type. I spent some time in hospital and eventually left, worried for my future and whether I still had my place on the apprenticeship. There were 17 of us doing the same programme across Wales. I went back to the role,

completed the apprenticeship and then was selected from all of the apprentices to do a speech in the Senedd, Wales' parliament about the project.

The apprenticeship led to many opportunities and just a few years later I was the Regional Manager for a thriving mental health charity. This was a busy and interesting role. I got involved in lobbying and campaigning for improved mental health services and treatment. I sat on the National Mental Health Partnership Board for Wales and the Time to Change Wales Programme Management board, I had a monthly column in a Welsh newspaper on the subject of mental illness.

I spent time in America and spoke at one of NAMI's (The National Alliance for Mental Illness) conferences in Pennsylvania and visited different projects and services in the United States. I also spent some time in Madrid and visited mental health charities there.



Then, unfortunately, I was diagnosed with breast cancer, this was quite a shock as none of my blood relatives had had it, it came completely out of the blue. In the end, I had to leave the job because I could not manage the treatment whilst doing that role. I had treatment but the cancer came back a second time. I had operations, chemotherapy, radiotherapy and a 5-year hormone treatment. I moved to Cardiff the second time to live with my sister whilst having the treatment. There is a cancer trust there called Velindre and the treatment was excellent, I am forever indebted to them and our NHS.

I then decided to do an Master's degree at the University of South Wales in Arts Practice; Arts, Health and Wellbeing. I had finished the bulk of my treatment by then. I decided to focus on working with people who had had psychosis and bipolar disorder. Unfortunately, in the middle of this, I had another psychotic episode and was involuntarily hospitalised again in Cardiff.

Once I had picked up the pieces of my life and recovered, I finished the MA which culminated in an online open call for artwork on the subject of psychosis. I worked with all the participants to decide how best to use their incredibly varied submissions and the decision was to do a virtual art exhibition which I built and curated and was able to showcase the work of many people with lived experience of psychosis. I achieved a Merit in the MA. Since then I have received commissions for four more online virtual exhibitions, all showcasing the work of people with lived experience of mental illness.



I have also been fortunate enough to work freelance for a number of organisations over the past 5 years. This type of work is called 'Lived Experience' work and it is where people are paid to use their experience of illness and treatment to help feed into reports, services and other such things.

I worked for the British Psychological Society on their report 'Understanding Bipolar', I have done a lot of work for Mind including being an advisor for their 5 year strategy, reviewing and creating their resources and even judging and presenting their staff awards alongside the Chief Executive.

I am currently working for the McPin Foundation reviewing applications for funding interventions in psychosis. Last year I received a Renaissance Award from the Mental Health Collective to do a series of art workshops in my local psychiatric unit in order to gain views on a new unit they are building. I also have a chapter and an illustration in a book coming out this year about the psychiatric system.



I have recently experienced another psychotic episode that I am currently recovering from. I am very lucky in that my breast cancer has been cured and I no longer receive treatment. However, bipolar disorder is very persistent and it is always a great challenge to recover from and takes some time, but I will get there.

Really, having bipolar disorder has shaped my whole career. Although it is very difficult to live with, it has afforded me a great deal of interesting opportunities and I am grateful for that.

Carina Edwards

Nicholas Bennett (OKS 1964)

We were saddened to hear the news of the passing of Nicholas Bennett (Fellow ABP, C.Psychol, Fellow CIPD, AFBPs) on January 3rd 2024. He was 80 years old. His wife Annie was very kind in writing to let us know of his passing. Nicholas attended King's between 1958-1964.

Everyone associated with The King's School and CAOKS offers our heartfelt condolences. If you have memories of Nicholas or were friends with him at school, we would love to hear from you as we didn't have a tribute or an obituary for him.

I've included a link to Nicholas' LinkedIn page below.

<https://uk.linkedin.com/in/nicholas-bennett-fellow-abp-cfcipd-c-sci-c-psychol-8b8ab016>

You can read more about Nicholas and his work here

<http://www.ledborough-associates.co.uk>



Calendar of Events

If you would like to book onto an event, please visit
www.kingschester.co.uk/alumni/alumni-events/ or call Gemma on 01244 689492

CAOKS v School - Rowing

Fri 7th June, 2024 - 5pm

Join us at the Boat House from 5pm, with racing between 5pm and 6:30pm.

CAOKS AGM

Mon 24th June, 2024 - 7pm

Join us at The Architect on Nicholas Street for a short AGM followed by beer and supper.

CAOKS v School - Cricket

Fri 28th June, 2024

Contact David Aitken or Nick Guest for further details regarding this event.

davidewardatkin@gmail.com

CAOKS Golf Day

Fri 12th July, 2024

Join us for the CAOKS Golf Day at Helsby Golf Club, Tee-off times from 1.30pm followed by Dinner and Prize Giving after the Golf.

Rob MacKenzie mackenzieclan30@gmail.com and Nigel Cunniffe nigel@arranps.co.uk are organising.

Henley Tea Party

Sat 6th July, 2024

Join us at the King's gazebo on the Henley Cricket Field to enjoy the world-renowned Regatta and the free flowing Pimm's and Prosecco!

Bangor-on-Dee Race Day

Date TBC

Please contact Will Lamb for further details

sixhitter@hotmail.com

Curry and Quiz Night

Thurs 26th September 2024

£5.00 per person entry. Prizes for the winning team!
 Hosted by Dr Ravi Jayaram

CAOKS Snooker Evening

Fri 8th November, 2024

Pot the black, sink the pink and catch up with some old pals over a few frames of snooker and a bite to eat. This event is more popular than ever so do come along and join us. Contact Peter Bernie or Mark Thorp for further details.

King's in the Capital

Thurs 21st November, 2024 6:30pm

This year's King's in the Capital event will be held at the renowned Lord's Cricket Ground on Thursday, November 21, 2024, at 6.30pm. We are thrilled to announce Kate Coppack (OKS 2012) as our guest speaker. Kate made history as the first female to play cricket for the school's first team and continues her cricket career with Middlesex, Sunrisers, and Welsh Fire.

Book your place here:

<https://www.kingschester.co.uk/news/kings-capital-lords-cricket-ground/>

2024 Leavers Catch Up

Thurs 2nd Jan, 2025 – The Ship Inn

It will be over 6 months since our 2024 leavers left King's. It's a free event, including a complimentary drink upon arrival.

CAOKS Annual Dinner

Sat 22nd March, 2025 – King's School

All alumni spanning the decades are invited to join us for what promises to be a fabulous evening of great food, good wine and camaraderie! Full details coming soon

Calendar of Events

If you would like to book onto an event, please visit
www.kingschester.co.uk/alumni/alumni-events/ or call Gemma on 01244 689492

2025 REUNIONS

Reunion for 1995, 2005, 2015 Leavers

Sat 8th February 2025, 2.30pm start

<https://www.kingschester.co.uk/reunion-1995-2005-2015-leavers/>

The reunion will be held at The King's School and the itinerary will be as follows:

2:30pm:	Welcome by The Development Team
3:00pm:	Tour of the School, view all new developments including our Sports Centre and Sixth Form Centre.
3:45pm:	Brief presentation on King's today and a look through some archive material
4:15pm:	Complimentary drinks and canapes
5.30pm	Event Closes

Reunion for 1955, 1965, 1975, 1985 Leavers

Sat 26th April 2025, 11am start

<https://www.kingschester.co.uk/reunion-55-65-75-85-leavers/>

The reunion will be held at The King's School and the itinerary will be as follows:

11am:	Welcome by The Development Team
11.30am – 12.15pm:	Tour of the School, view all new developments including new Sixth Form Centre and Sports Centre
12.15pm – 12.30pm:	Brief presentation on King's today and a look through some archive material
12.30pm – 2pm:	2 Course Buffet Lunch

Reunion for Alumni who missed out due to covid!

Reunion for 2000, 2001, 2010, 2011 Leavers

Sat 8th March 2025, 2.30pm start

<https://www.kingschester.co.uk/2000-2001-2010-2011-reunion/>

Due to covid we were unable to host a reunion in 2020 for our 2000 and 2010 leavers and again in 2021 for our 2001 and 2011 leavers, so we would like to put things right. If you left King's during the years mentioned we are delighted to invite you to join us on Saturday 8th March 2025.

The reunion will be held at The King's School and the itinerary will be as follows:

2:30pm:	Welcome by The Development Team
3:00pm:	Tour of the School, view all new developments including our Sports Centre and Sixth Form Centre.
3:45pm:	Brief presentation on King's today and a look through some archive material
4:15pm:	Complimentary drinks and canapes
5.30pm	Event Closes



Features

157th CAOKS Annual Dinner Report

I left Southampton around 10:00am on Saturday January 20th – destination Chester. I'd never previously attended a black-tie event, so something different at the grand old age of 52. It's about a four-and-a-half-hour journey from my place in West End, Southampton and I took the motorway approach on the way up, followed by the scenic route via Llangollen on the way back. It's mainly motorways that way too but at least there is some nice countryside and an opportunity to pass through places I knew very well, as a child growing up in Rhosllanerchrugog.

Having arrived safely and checked into my hotel for the night it was soon time to head to the event itself, after a lengthy battle with the bow tie that could have gone either way! It wasn't even a real one either, so it probably says more about me than the tie.



On arrival there were drinks in the area that, in my day, was where the staff dining table used to be – set on a pedestal amongst the dining tables for the pupils. Having caught up with fellow CAOKS committee members Peter Bernie and Robin Hardi, along with Gemma and Selena from the Alumni department, I then met up with my 1990 colleagues Andrew Jones, Andrew Miln and David Chan. It was also great to meet a couple of guys who were a year or two below me at school – namely Clive Crowe (OKS 1992) and Mark Pugh (OKS 1992).

From there we proceeded into the dining area which used to be the assembly hall but is now the Vanbrugh Theatre. As you can see from the menu above, we were treated to wonderful three course dinner in a superb environment. Huge thanks to the school catering team for such a fantastic job. You can see more images from the evening in the pages immediately following this account.

Giving a toast was another new experience for me. I've stood on stages around the world and played in front of hundreds (sometimes thousands) of people but I've never done something like this. All part of life's rich tapestry, as my father says.

We were then treated to an excellent after dinner speech from Andrew Green (OKS 1971). I particularly enjoyed the cricket references, although that may not have been for everyone. It was also good to hear from Headmaster George Hartley and CAOKS president Mark Thorp.



Features

As you can see, the tables were beautifully dressed and laid out. Table 4 was where the lads from my year were sat, along with Peter Bernie, Robin Hardi and Gemma Carvell. Gemma and Robin put an incredible amount of work and effort into ensuring that the night was a great success and we certainly couldn't have done it without them. Thanks very much guys.



Time flies when you are enjoying yourself, or so they say, and that was certainly the case on this January evening. After a couple more drinks and conversations it was time for everyone to start making their way homeward or to their respective hotels for the evening. Andy Jones very kindly dropped me at my hotel on his way home, and thus an enjoyable evening came to an end.

The 2025 edition of the Annual CAOKS Dinner, which will be the 158th, is set for March 22nd so please keep this date free in your diaries. I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible. It's a great night to be able to catch up with old friends and teachers and maybe even make some new acquaintances too. You will find more details about this elsewhere in this issue.

Further photos from the evening are available via the following link.

[Annual Dinner 157 2024 Photos](#)

Our class of 1990 have a WhatsApp group with over 30 members in it and we find this to be a fantastic way to co-ordinate these kinds of meetings so that everyone knows there will be several familiar faces guaranteed.

For many years I was one of those guys who didn't even consider attending the Annual Dinner or any other CAOKS events for that matter and didn't want to get involved or, as I saw it, go backwards. I now have a very different view and thoroughly enjoy attending events, being part of the CAOKS committee and being the editor of this humble publication.

Give the Annual Dinner a go in 2025, you won't be disappointed.

Steve Williams (Ed)

Photos from the 157th Annual Dinner





“Not a Great Academic Record”

Christopher Hodges (OKS 1978)

The Editor, Steve Williams’ remark on p19 of the November 2023 edition of “CAOKS News” that he didn’t “have a great academic record” made me, as someone whose public examination academic record at King’s could best be described as “mixed” (2 As, 3 Bs & 5 Cs at ‘O’-level followed in 1977 by A, B, C, E at ‘A’-level) reflect on how a school with an academically-selected intake of just 60 boys at age 11 could produce such a varied outcome.

In my case, I’m convinced it was a combination of poor revision technique and too many extra-curricular activities: some drama plus choral, operatic and instrumental music at school – luckily coinciding with the Martin Merry (music)/John Flint (drama) tandem – city, cathedral and county level as well as a Saturday job at Mander & Allender, a former men’s outfitter on Bridge Street. Interestingly, I only got the balance right in my final year reading Economics & Public Administration at Bedford College, London – now Royal Holloway following a merger in 1984 and its site in Regent’s Park now occupied by Regent’s University – when I abandoned singing and politics to focus on academic work (including an improved approach to revision) and playing ‘cello with the University of London orchestra. Despite the “focus”, the 2:1 in my final-year exams wasn’t enough to offset the 2:2s from the previous two and so I graduated in 1981 with a 2:2 – another “mixed” record.

In mitigation, I had by that stage reached Grade 8 piano, ‘cello (distinction) and theory of music, performed in leading London venues including the Queen Elizabeth Hall and St. Paul’s Cathedral and met the Queen Mother (Chancellor of the University while I was Chairman of the orchestra, taking over from another OKS, William W. E. Jones) as well as prominent Conservative politicians from the era such as Sir Keith Joseph and Kenneth Baker.

Having decided to pursue a career in international banking and been accepted onto the Barclays graduate training programme, the revision strategy adopted for my finals comprising memorised, précised essays covering all main aspects of the topics to be examined together with lots of practice questions – a tactic

deployed by Mike Fox and Paul Parker to prepare us for French A-Level and recommended by Accountancy tutors encountered later – proved invaluable for passing exams during subsequent years.

Those began with a 7-subject Associateship Diploma run by the Chartered Institute of Bankers (now The London Institute of Banking & Finance) which Barclays required graduate trainees to complete before the end of the 5-year programme; a 6-week intensive course in Spanish prior to starting my first appointment as Account Executive, Corporate Banking at the bank’s subsidiary in Madrid in 1986; and a 4-stage Diploma in Spanish offered by the Chartered Institute of Linguists which I finished during my first 3 years in Spain – greatly helped by meeting my partner, a (male, Spanish) professor of legal history – and to which I was elected Member in 2007.

After a series of promotions in Madrid, Barclays appointed me Executive Director representing its shareholding in a publicly-quoted merchant bank in Seoul. My arrival in 1997 coincided with the Asian sovereign debt crisis requiring negotiation of emergency funding and a capital increase and the role disappeared in 2000 following Barclays’ sale of its investment.

Using contacts from Barclays, I returned to work in Madrid in a senior role in Finance & Planning at the subsidiary of Belgian bank, KBC and, between 2002 and 2005, took advantage of a less dramatic working environment to complete an 18-module distance-learning-with-residencies MBA at the Whitman School of Management, Syracuse University, New York: a tsunami of work with yet more exams but a tremendously worthwhile experience and I graduated first in year.



Features

Coinciding with KBC's decision to sell its subsidiary in 2006, I was offered a new role as Head of Corporate Banking at the Cayman Islands subsidiary of Butterfield Bank, Bermuda which was followed by a return to Madrid in 2011 as Head of Credit Risk at a recently-established branch of a Luxembourg private bank, working alongside former Barclays colleagues.

Turning 60 in 2019 meant receiving the pension accumulated while working for Barclays so I took voluntary redundancy from the private bank and retired from full-time work. In 2020, as a final development experience, I embarked on an unexpectedly challenging, 1-year online diploma in The Principles of Interior Design & Decoration at the Inchbald School, London, for which I was very pleased to achieve a distinction. As a long-time reader, I should also confess to having become something of an inveterate writer of Letters to the Editor of the "Financial Times" after one was selected for publication in 1997: a further 8 have been published since. In addition, contrasting with my reputation at school for "not being very good at games", I became a convert to working out regularly in 1989 after joining one of the first macro-gyms to be established in Madrid. And I feel most fortunate to count among my closest friends two from King's: Simon

Talbot and Richard Harden from the Junior and Senior Schools respectively.

Never say never, of course but I can't envisage moving from Madrid now: my partner and I have just bought our first joint property and, motivated by Brexit, I applied for and was granted Spanish nationality in 2022, swearing allegiance to King Felipe and the Constitution on the very afternoon Queen Elizabeth died.

On p11 of the Newsletter, Steve Williams wrote that "Not everyone follows the same path in life": I hope mine illustrates that you can have an interesting and varied life, with academic success and a "mixed" record at King's.

Whilst writing, I also attached an amusing photo from the Summer Term 1969 when I was in Form Beta at the Junior School. It shows, from left to right, Nigel Gurney (Form A), David Rutherford and me (both Form Beta) waiting in Foregate Street to take a bus to Christleton; we were spotted by a group of tourists from the US, one of whom asked if she could have her photo taken with us and who subsequently sent us a copy.

Christopher Hodges (1978)



King's in the Capital 2023 Report

Steve Williams (OKS 1990)

This was the first time I had travelled to London on public transport since before the COVID pandemic and only the second time being in London since early 2020. For someone who used to travel there regularly for band rehearsals and concerts, I must admit it did feel a bit strange to be heading that way after so long, and not only heading that way but doing so in what folk commonly refer to as "smart/casual" attire. I never really knew what that meant to be honest, given that I've spent a lifetime in jeans and t-shirts!

Having landed at Waterloo, I took the underground over to Westminster and got a reminder of how many tourists are in that area of London. It had been a while - did I mention that already? Once I'd done battle getting through the crowds, I grabbed something to eat before it was time to meet up with some of the lads from my year - the Class of 1990.



We had arranged to meet at the Westminster Arms, a short walk from both the House of Lords and Westminster Tube station. Over the course of the next hour, I met up with Jeremy Casey, Andrew Miln, Jonathan Hinkins, Johnny Evans, Andy Jones and Mark Lenel. From there we headed over to the venue where we met up with another couple of the Class of 1990 - namely Dickie Wallis and Graham McWilliam.

We arrived at the venue and I must admit I was expecting a little bit more in the way of security checks and so on but we scooted through that and were directed across a courtyard to the room where our event was being held. Having been greeted by Gemma and Selena, we made our way into the main area where the event was to be held.





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I caught up with fellow committee members Mark Thorp and Peter Bernie not long after arriving, along with the Headmaster George Hartley. There was a good mix of young and older OKS and I had a nice conversation with Andrew Edge who was 3 years above me in school but used to get the same bus as I did (The D1 I think it was between Wrexham and Chester). His cousin also used to get the same bus and I remembered him very well too.

The speaker for the evening was Jonathan Samuels (OKS 1991) who has been a broadcast journalist for Sky News, BBC, Channel 4 and Channel 5.



A special mention for the bar staff who kept the drinks flowing throughout the evening. When I mentioned that I wasn't really one for wine or prosecco, one of the barmen disappeared and returned with a selection of bottled beers for me to choose from. "Just tip me the wink when you need a top up sir" he said after I had made my selection. Now that's what I call service!

Our group said our goodbyes and left around 9:45pm. I had a train to catch back to Southampton at 10:30pm so I left the lads at St. Stephen's Tavern near Westminster Tube Station whilst I headed back to Waterloo.



It was the first event of this type that I had attended and I have to say I thoroughly enjoyed the whole evening. Many thanks to Gemma and Selena for all the hard work and organisation that goes into making these events such a success and thanks to everyone who came along to support the event. I look forward to heading up again for the 2024 version of this event later in the year.

Steve Williams (OKS 1990)



Ten for Now and Then - Dr Ravi Jayaram

I'd like to introduce you to a new feature making its debut in this edition of the newsletter. "Ten from Now and Then" puts the following questions to a different former student each issue. We would love to hear from anyone who would like to take part in this new feature. Whether you left the school 5 years ago or 75 years ago, it doesn't matter. If you fancy taking part, you can drop me line at the usual address. Editor@caoks.co.uk

First up is CAOKS committee member **Ravi Jayaram**.



1. When did you begin your journey at King's and do you recall your initial impressions?

I joined the junior school in Autumn 1976, aged 8. For some reason only known to the grownups, I was put into form Beta which was the year above my age group.

My initial impressions were of feeling a bit out of my depth to be honest, not so much academically, but very much socially and physically. I'd like to think that these days, any decisions to move children up a year would be based not only on academic ability but would also take a more holistic view of potential benefits v harm.

Back in 1976, King's, and I guess Chester itself, were not particularly diverse places. The fact that in the last year of junior school and for the first couple of years of senior school, racial taunts on the bus, in the corridors and in the classroom were the norm were just a reflection of the times.

However, these events helped to shape my own political views and sense of right and wrong, which is a lot of why I am a passionate campaigner against prejudice and injustice.

If you've read the above, you know who you are, and I forgive you!

2. What was/were your favourite subject(s)?

I always wanted to do medicine so gravitated towards sciences through necessity. However, I loved French and bizarrely Latin and Ancient Greek too (I got a grade A in Greek O-Level aged 14 - this has never worked in any way to impress members of the opposite sex) Least favourite were art and woodwork. I had and still have the hands equivalent of a dancer's two left feet and just couldn't do any of the practical stuff (hence not going into any branch of surgery)

3. Who was your favourite teacher and why?

Keith Richards joined the school when I was in Shells and was my Form Master for two years as well as teaching Classics. I had a couple of "off the rails" years where clowning around in a bid to be accepted took precedence over work and he steered me through this expertly.

Mike Fox for instilling discipline and focus with both French and rowing. First time I'd felt positive about myself and was actually vaguely good at something.

Elwyn Evans, such a lovely gentle man but an inspiring teacher in how he showed passion for biology but also passion for making sure his pupils could share that passion for the subject too.



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4. Did you take part in any organised sports at King's?

The aforementioned general incoordination meant that I was rubbish at football/hockey/cricket/anything requiring hand-eye coordination. Rowing became an option in third year so I defaulted to it and went from being an overweight couch potato to some kind of athlete in a year. Although I stopped rowing in Upper Sixth, the Mike Fox effect has led directly to me doing silly things like Ironmans and ultramarathons!

5. Did you take part in any of the musical activities at King's? (Choir/Orchestra etc)

I came out of my shell in my mid-teens. I joined the school choir and I was in Iolanthe and the Gondoliers with Roger Wickson at the helm. I also had the lead role in a joint production with The Queen's School of Richard II in Upper Sixth. Fortunately, video technology was in its infancy so my butchering of iambic pentameter only lives on in people's fading memories.

I was also very involved with voluntary services including the Soup Kitchen in town and "Friday Club" at the old West Cheshire Hospital

6. When did you leave King's and where did you attend University?

I left in 1985 and went to Newcastle to study medicine, much to the disappointment of Joe Marsh who was trying to push me to go to Cambridge! I have no regrets about that decision, apart from the acquisition of a painful Newcastle United supporting habit

7. Do you still live in, or have family in the Chester area?

I couldn't wait to get away from boring Chester but having lived and worked in the North East, Bristol, New South Wales and London, when a post as a consultant paediatrician at The Countess of Chester was advertised, I jumped at the chance to come home. My mother still lived in Chester, my in-laws were in Liverpool and, with two small children, Chester seemed like a perfect place to live and

work. I like to think this was nothing to do with me getting older and more to do with Chester becoming more interesting, but I suspect this may be inaccurate.....

8. Have you kept in contact with any of your former classmates and attended any Alumni or CAOKS events?

I didn't join CAOKS when I left in 1985. I had kept in touch with a small group of people from my year but when I came back to Chester, I found that there were quite a few of my peers who were around the area. My better half got a job as a teacher at King's and so my links with the school were re-established by default.

I was "tapped-up" by Adrian Ackroyd to join the CAOKS committee and within a couple of years became President. I have really enjoyed being part of CAOKS and this has helped me to appreciate the role that the school played in making who I am today. It's also led to a lot of my year group getting back in touch with each other and hopefully we will get a good number together for a 40-year reunion in 2025

9. What would you regard as your career highlight to date?

I've been lucky enough to have worked in a lot of different places with some incredible and inspiring people so there's no single highlight. I've also been lucky enough to have had a bit of medical media career which is both good and bad. It's given me a platform to raise public awareness of many things (medical conditions, NHS politics, ethical dilemmas) that might otherwise have not been on the radar of the public. Highlights as such would be getting interviewed/shouted at for 5 minutes by Piers Morgan on GMB (whilst Susanna Reid tried to shut him up) and sitting on various big sofas talking to people off the telly!

But nothing beats the feeling of knowing that you have made some kind of difference in spite of the relentless negativity from politicians and a lot of the media about the NHS.



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10. What would you say were the main benefits of attending a school like King's?

Hard one to answer as I have no other point of reference. As I've said, I am who I am today in no small way because of/in spite of King's. I do think that in my time, it taught me that trying hard, doing

the best you can and being kind to others should always be guiding principles in everything that I do. This was in no small part down to some incredible teachers who imparted so much more wisdom than just the subjects that they taught

1950's Rowing Memories

Ian Travers (OKS 1958)

With the start of each new school year the school's sports leaders welcome newcomers, assess their sporting aptitudes and preferences, and do their best to satisfy everyone. Heaven only knows what the rowing master in September 1954 made of this diminutive character still in short pants, who was recorded in his Summer term report as 5ft 0in tall and weighed in at 8st 4lb. A potential cox perhaps.

For me it was the opportunity to escape the mud of the soccer field (remember those goal mouths?), the hard ball of the cricket square (I lost a thumb nail after a mishit – thank goodness that was all I lost!) and the cross country runs (once I was so slow they sent out a search party for me towards Balderton railway level crossing, the run's turning point, having started from the school's Lache Lane playing field, wondering where I had got to). But by now I was old enough to join the rowers and take to the river to see what I could achieve there.

So it was that I started in tubs – clinker-built boats like the rowing boats hired by summer visitors to The Groves but with sliding seats, adjustable footboards with straps for the feet, and outriggers with swivel rowlocks to take full-size oars, one each side, while retaining the usual forward-facing rear seat for the steerer.

On our sports afternoons we launched from The Groves in front of the Grosvenor Rowing Club boathouse. The building and club still thrive, as does the Royal Chester Rowing Club on the upstream side of the Boathouse Hotel property (then just a pub – no 'Riverside Rooms'). The big change now of course is the conspicuous home of the King's School Rowing Club between the Boathouse Hotel car park and the historic RCRC buildings.

I and my peers must have made reasonable progress in the arts and skills of rowing and navigation. At least

during term time the river would have been mostly free of the hire boats of the Summer season and our mentors could give us good guidance over the length of the river's reach from The Groves to the White House and beyond.

'White House' is not an error. That building was once the downstream neighbour of the Red House and is seen splendidly at: chesterwalls.info/whitehouse.html

It was demolished and its site redeveloped some years ago. Now, it seems, the Red House might soon share its fate.

The White House also featured in our early rowing activities. Its boathouse, tub and pontoon were available to us on Saturday mornings. I cannot recall what supervision or training we received there then, but I do remember taking out a tub with two other boys one Saturday morning when there was a strong current running. We managed to row upstream from the pontoon and round the bend towards Heronbridge, where we paused for a breather in slack water on the Meadows side before shooting back at speed with the current and luckily turning into the stream just right to come alongside the pontoon again. No adult would have permitted such a foolhardy venture even then - certainly not nowadays. But we got away with it.

Whatever supervision there may or may not have been on that occasion, serious training for competitive rowing was developing thanks to, as ever, a small group of people who gave generously of their time and resources. I'm pretty sure that the ubiquitous Graham Tolliday of Continental Trip fame was one of them, but I do know that they included John Lowe with his slipper launch and John Dorman, both of whom I believe were King's old boys.



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John Lowe was a member of the Lowe family of silversmiths whose shop was on Bridge Street Row East until its recent closure (my wife's engagement and wedding rings were both purchased there around 1966/7 – where else?). John Dorman had a tyre business with his brother, trading from premises in Pepper Street (a very different street then).

By 1956 I had joined the 2nd eight in the number two oar position and held it until early 1958. I received my one and only 'pot' when we won the maiden eights' races at the Peterborough Regatta on the River Nene in 1957.

Here are two action shots. In this one, nearest the camera is the King's School 2nd eight in close contention with an unidentified rival nearing the finishing line at Sandy Lane in a heat of the 1957 Chester Regatta.

[View Image 2nd rowing VIII \(web-archives.net\)](#)

In the next photo our boat is seen heading downstream after shooting Hammersmith Bridge on the Tideway in the 1958 Schools Head of the River race. Crew members in both events, from memory, were: Bow. Olyott; 2. Travers; 3. Dutton; 4. Jones; 5. Beavan; 6. Latham; 7. Waterworth; Stroke. Little; Cox. Wilson or Kane.

In the Tideway event, having started upstream of Chiswick Eyot, there was still a long way to go from Hammersmith Bridge before reaching the finishing line just short of Putney Bridge, where the University Boat Races start.

Commercial river traffic didn't stop for this event as it does for the University event. I have a clear image in my mind of what seemed like a huge vessel, perhaps only a small tugboat, bearing down on us as we approached Hammersmith Bridge – definitely an encouragement to greater effort!

Our arch rivals locally were Wallasey Grammar and Chester City Grammar schools. John Dorman referred to the latter, perhaps just a touch snootily, as The County Boys. But Wallasey were the more formidable opponents.

Happy days! But all good things come to an end and it was a lumbar disc prolapse that drew a line under my rowing years in 1958. I believe it happened one day after we had lifted our boat from the water alongside the Royal Chester pontoon and, leaning back slightly, rested it on our knees as usual. The next move had previously

been for four of us to take the weight of the boat while the other four crawled underneath to take hold of it on the other side. Between us we then turned the boat over at body height ready to carry it into the boathouse and store it on its racks upside down.

The slicker method we had changed to was, from that first resting position, to heave the boat up and over our heads and hold it there steady for a moment, arms straight up, all facing to the stern. Next we would lower the boat between us, bow-siders going to one side and stroke-siders to the other, and hold it down at arms' length for the walk to store it as before.

This photograph captures the first move in this new process, the 'up' part of the 'up and over'. I'm second from the left of those wearing white kit.

On one fateful occasion when performing this routine, my recollection is that I was the only one at the bow end to catch the boat after the 'drop' stage while just two others managed to hold it at the stern end, the other five ending in various degrees of disarray under or alongside the boat. The cause of my prolapse? Perhaps. But afterwards I went on to gather another four lumbar disc prolapses in the next half century, so an innate vulnerability is suggested! At least the boat wasn't damaged and I'm still here to tell the tale.

Robin Alden had by then joined the school teaching staff and was introducing new training methods for the rowers. I think it was my first introduction to the term 'circuit training'. But after my disc prolapse I remember having great difficulty in persuading Mr Alden that I was no longer able to occupy the number two seat. So ended my rowing career. A year later I was encased in a plaster jacket for 2 months, one of the standard treatments then for this affliction. You can't row burdened with one of those. Coxing was out also. If you've ever occupied the cox's seat you'll know just how sharp is the jerk when eight rowers simultaneously plunge their oars into the water and apply full power. Not good for the spine.

A personal highlight of those rowing years occurred in 1956. I have only the vaguest memory of it but a newspaper cutting of the time shows it must have been true (no AI then). I coxed the Royal Chester Rowing Club's winning crew in the North of England Head of the River Race that year. In this copy of the cutting I'm in my distinctive striped school blazer, standing on the Royal Chester pontoon while the Bishop of Chester Dr Gerald Ellison presented the pennant to the winning Royal Chester crew:



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[View Image Head of the river 1956 \(web-archives.net\)](#)

I have seen an original photograph taken just after this one. It shows Bishop Ellison presenting the 1956 pennant to the winners of the clinker division, none other than King's 2nd eight. I'm sure I saw it in the school web archive, but sadly I can't find it again. A similar scene has been repeated this year, though without a bishop. On Sunday 12 March a Royal Chester crew took the top honours yet again (see their website).

Talk of rowers these days and images of the giants of the Oxford and Cambridge crews will come to mind, or of the Olympic greats Redgrave and Pinsent. My school

report of Autumn 1957 showed my height had then increased to 5ft 5in and weight to 9st 8lb. It doesn't mention that I was then wearing long trousers. But that's a foot or more less than many of today's rowers and little more than half their weight. Disc prolapse or no, I think my rowing career had gone as far as it was ever likely to.

I hope today's school rowers, male and female now, such as those feted in the 'Rowing Success' report in CAOKS News Issue 84 of December 2022, and those CAOKS members of the intervening years between now and then, will be entertained by this personal, if patchy, glimpse into what, for them, must seem like a very distant past.

In Memory

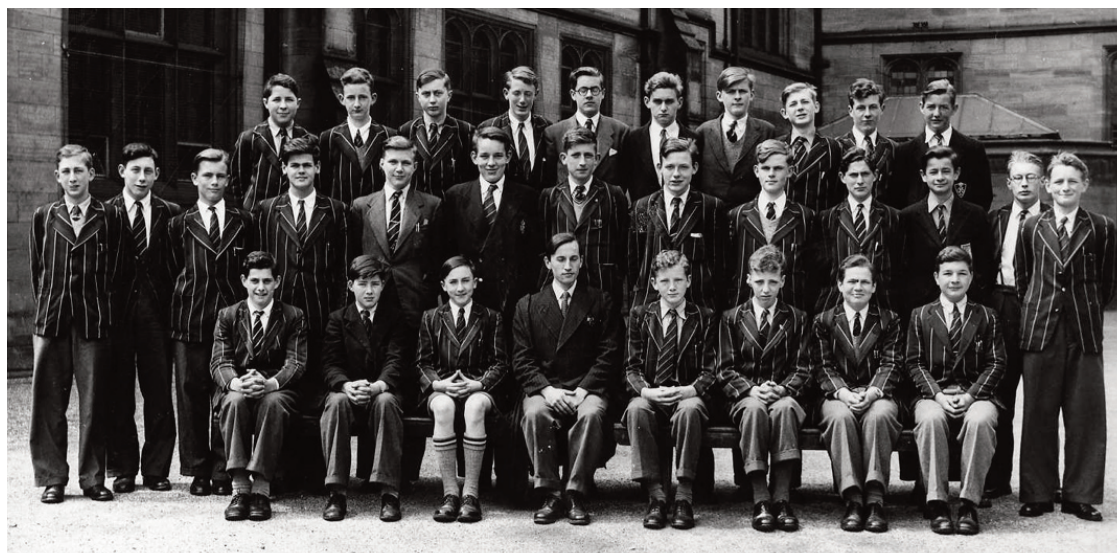
I cannot close without a special mention of Jonathan Price. Jonathan was a classmate of mine from about the fourth form onward when he was elevated from a year below on account of his exceptional academic ability. His elder brother also shone, notably as a pianist for Headmaster Harvey's innovation of a quiet interlude of music prior to morning prayer.

The Price boys' father was the Principal of Chester College in Parkgate Road, the teacher training college that became the University of Chester we know today. It was after I had left school, in the following year I think, that one day Jonathan went out on the river in a single scull, capsized and was drowned. With many others I attended his memorial service in Chester Cathedral. There was a profound sense of loss and sorrow. The dangers of our River Dee's waters should never been underestimated, which is what three of us did from the White House pontoon on that Saturday morning nearly seventy years ago. But for the grace of God...

A view of some of my peers as 15 year olds in the Upper Fourth form can be found in the school archives online at:

kingschester.web-archives.net/Browser/ABImageView.asp?src=1182&alt=U4+form+photograph+1955

Jonathan Price is seated on the front row second from left, while I am seated at the far right of that row. Ronald Pickup is standing to my left and Richard Chaplin is sixth from left in the centre row. Ronald's passing was recorded in the May 2021 issue of CAOKS News and Richard's in the May 2023 issue. I can count twelve rowers among the thirty boys pictured, giving a measure of rowing's popularity at that time. Our form master was Mr A T Owen.



Nigel Grundy-Wheeler OKS (1949)



While very committed to his medical and teaching practice he had a lifelong interest in the Arts particularly in classical music/opera and in English literature again with a special interest in Shakespeare and Keats. The latter stimulated him to write three novels under the pen name of Nigel Wheeler: "The Girlfriend" (2013), "Harmony and Dissonance" (2014) and "Survival" (2017), all available from amazon.co.uk with contemporary settings loosely based on his personal and professional experiences.

He also enjoyed model trains, fly-fishing and was an excellent, accomplished pianist. He and Helga moved from Wiltshire to Bad Ischl, Austria in 2005. His last years were of gradual decline from the dementia which so cruelly takes a person away before they are gone. Throughout, and including the last months and weeks, he was at home, nursed devotedly by Helga.

Nigel was raised by his mother and stepfather in Surrey, his father, whom he never knew, having failed to return while flying a Lancaster over the occupied Netherlands. The surname reflects this double paternity.

He was schooled at King's School Chester and took First MB to pursue medicine having first considered alternative careers.

After house jobs at The London Hospital he went into private general practice in Sloane Street, Central West London before going on to enter NHS general practice in the Cotswolds. He had also made anaesthetics a special interest whilst at Yeovil.

Following divorce from his first wife, by whom he had three children (Oliver, Antonia and Henry), he spent a period as Medical Officer with the Shell Oil Company, during which time he travelled to West Africa where he met and married Helga. She was to be his rock and support thereafter.

Later he joined the RAMC as a Medical Officer, serving in large garrison towns in both Germany and the UK. Nigel was an MRCGP Examiner for twelve years from 1987 and was awarded the distinction of Fellowship of the RCGP during this time. He was also awarded the Knott Memorial Prize (RAMC) in 1991 for "outstanding work in the field" and was a Lecturer in Communication Skills, GP Trainer and Course Organiser for the RAMC.

After retiring from the RAMC in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel he continued as a Civilian Medical Practitioner to the Army in Catterick Garrison and Upavon Station until full retirement in 2004.

NIGEL GRUNDY-WHEELER

MB, BS, FRCGP, DA
LT COL RAMC
LHMC 1962-1967

BORN 25 SEPTEMBER 1943
DIED 20 OCTOBER 2023

Many thanks to Peter Freedman and Richard George for the kind words about Nigel and his life.

I exchanged a couple of emails with Helga upon hearing the news about Nigel and she informed me...

"He was always following the CAOKS newsletter with great interest. He was especially keen to read about who was rowing for King's, being an oarsman himself".
(Ed)

Simon Hughes OKS (1997)



Simon Mark Hughes, 44, of Riverside, Chicago, IL, USA, passed peacefully in his sleep on November 25, 2023.

Beloved son of Joseph Michael Hughes and Heather Clare (nee Foulkes); devoted husband of Sarah (nee Meyer); loving father of Aiden and Lily Hughes; grandson of Harold Foulkes, nephew to Debbie and Christopher Foulkes, cousin to Lucy, Charlotte, and Becky; dearest son-in-law of Cora and Michael Meyer; brother in law to Anne and Ian McWilliams, and cherished uncle of Rosie and Boone McWilliams.

Simon was an experienced research and machine learning engineer and worked on search and recommender systems at Vectara, The Home Depot, and Dice.com.

Simon received his Doctorate in Computer Science (AI), Machine Learning and Natural Language Processing from DePaul University, a Masters in computer based information systems from Sunderland University, and a Bachelor of Science in molecular biology from Durham University.

Simon was an avid video gamer, loved going on holidays with his family, car enthusiast, and genuinely interested in the world. He was also a loving, loyal, funny, devoted friend who showed up in every way for everyone he could.

Many thanks to Dr. Christopher Saul for sending these words to us regarding Simon.

Bryn Hughes OKS (1968)



David Bryn Hughes was born in Huddersfield, his mother's hometown, and then moved to Newton where he attended Newton Primary School. His neighbour was J.C. McPeake (OKS 1967), a classmate and later an archaeologist. Bryn joined us in Form B of the Junior School in 1958. He was a sociable, jovial boy and a friend to everyone. Our cadre of Arnold House inmates, supplemented by new arrivals in the Removes, stayed together until the 5th form when Bryn branched off from the mainstream to retake some exams. He subsequently did double maths and physics at A level - not an easy choice, but he was well taught by Reg Read with whom he formed a good relationship that served him well in his subsequent career.

Bryn was known and respected in the class as a formidable chess player, yet he recently told us that Richard Eales from the class below and Christopher Cornforth were much better! Belying his modesty, Bryn was, nevertheless, Captain of the School's chess team for several years.

We don't remember him as being athletic, rather the reverse in fact, but he later was a keen promoter of sport in his teaching career and worked closely with Reg Read at King's in fixing up joint activities and fixtures. He was also a keen cricketer and later played for local teams in Gloucestershire, Oxfordshire, Cornwall and Kent.

He left King's in 1968 having served as Head Boy in his final two terms. When Jeffrey Storey (OKS 1967) reconnected with Bryn in 2017 after a gap of 50 years, they vividly recalled an Easter 1967 school camping trip Borrowdale in the Lake District and Bryn produced a group photograph taken on the snow-covered summit of Great Gable.

He had one year at Nottingham University studying maths, which experience reinforced his belief that he was not destined for a career in academia. He moved to St Pauls Cheltenham to do a B.Ed. and he pursued a career in teaching for 12 years. His first teaching post was at Bournside School in Cheltenham which he loved. He brought his school football team on a tour including to play against Kings – but no record can be found of the score.

In 1977 he and Vicky were married and in 1980 Bryn was appointed to Henry Box School in Witney and was made Head of Maths. He managed at both schools to make good and lasting friendships with people he esteemed highly for their professionalism.

He was seconded to take his Masters in the Management of Change at Keble College, Oxford which became the foundation for the rest of his life's work.

He and Vicky decided to move to Cornwall to help the Good News Crusade. They lived there for six years eventually leaving to work with David Cormack at Marc Europe training Christian leaders. Bryn had converted to faith in Jesus through the Billy Graham Crusade when he was 14 and this faith was nurtured by the YCF at All Saints Church in Hoole.

In 1991 Marc Europe closed leaving Bryn with a body of material and several clients to begin an independent business. He worked with World Vision in Russia and later in Africa. Africa Inland Mission continued to have him help them over 10 years changing their working practices. Many churches, smaller missions and charitable organisations asked for his help across Europe, in America and finally in Bangladesh. Other work included the oil industry, housing associations and the coffee business.

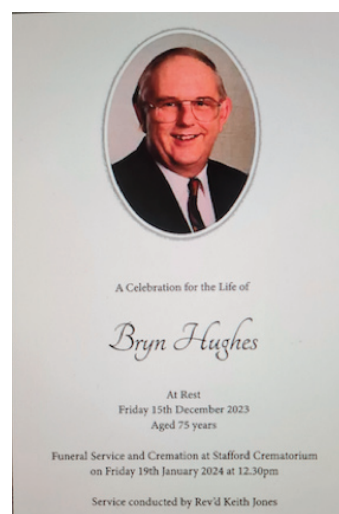
During this time he wrote three books which came out of his work with Churches and charities: "Leadership Tool Kit", "Small Group Know How", "Discipling, Coaching, Mentoring".

When he and Vicky moved to the village of Aston-by-Stone, Staffordshire, close to his brother Gareth and family, Bryn was happy to retire and let people come to him and draw on his experience.

He saw in his illness the final challenge to put a smile on the face of every person who had to deal with him and he succeeded in his goal.

A large congregation attended Bryn's funeral at Stafford Crematorium on 19 January, 2024, including 2005 World Snooker Champion Shaun Murphy, with whom Bryn enjoyed a long friendship, built through a shared involvement with the Church.

Prepared by Gareth Hughes (OKS 1971), Jeffrey Storey and David Wilkes (both OKS 1967)



PS. Does anyone know of the whereabouts of David Wilson who left Kings in 1971 for Bristol University.

Please e-mail: gthughes180@gmail.com



Derek Halbert OKS (1967)



Derek was born in Portsmouth. His family moved to the Wirral in 1957 and he was a pupil at the King's School from 1959-1967.

He was accepted as an undergraduate at Selwyn College Cambridge in 1967, achieving a law degree in 1970 and an MA in law in 1974. He was called to the Bar at Inner Temple in 1971, having come fourth that year in the Bar exams. He was sworn in as a member of the Wales and Chester Circuit from 1971.

In his time as a barrister, despite his very full-on career and busy home life, he also achieved a degree with the Open University, a BA in technology in 1984.

He was Head of Chambers at Sedan House from 1989 – 1995.

He was appointed as a Recorder in 1991 and then as a Circuit Judge from 1995 until his retirement in 2015, initially sitting principally in the Crown Court in Cheshire and North Wales before moving to sit almost full time in the County Court in both areas. He was appointed as the designated Civil Judge for North Wales and later for Cheshire.

Whilst still sitting as a judge, he played a significant part in the day-to-day life of law students at the University of Chester. and he received an Honorary Doctorate of Law from the University of Chester in 2012. He also generously gave a significant amount of time to allow older secondary school children and students to do work experience with him as mini pupils and marshals and provided advice and support to young aspiring lawyers.

Following his retirement in 2015, Derek continued his work with the University of Chester, including publishing a book on advocacy and public speaking, together with a member of the law department. Derek helped law

students and their lecturers in a wide variety of ways, including in mooting, specific legal matters and general help and advice. Derek's benefit to the University was marked with the appointment of an Honorary Professorship in Law awarded just before the pandemic. The university now awards the 'Derek Halbert Moot Trophy' to the best mooting students each year, in Derek's honour.

In his personal life; Derek married Heather in 1972. They had two daughters, Sarah and Elizabeth and 2 grandchildren, Lara and Connor. He was a lover of all things DiY, trains, drains, tools, books, good food and the great outdoors. Home projects, big or small, were a particular delight to Derek.

Derek was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2004. He bore his illness with a huge amount of dignity and really tried to not let it beat him. When he got the opportunity for Deep Brain Stimulation surgery he jumped at it. He sat through the live surgery, following directions to move his arms around or speak so that electrodes could be placed incredibly precisely to maximise their function. This changed his life and he would 'show off' his remote control and explain how he could change channels in his own brain!

Derek was a very positive person. In recent years, he managed to strike a balance between taking opportunities to do things when he had enough mobility and acceptance of when he would have to rest for a while. For someone who had climbed every mountain in the Lake District at least once and Great Gable, his favourite, 47 times, he realised and appreciated the benefits of having a scooter, quickly finding it really useful to wizz about both on holiday and up and down Mold High Street.



Both Heather and Derek were passionate about travel, architecture, history and art and took Sarah and Elizabeth to many wonderful places. In later life, they had several big adventures as a pair including Peru and China and discovered cruising, visiting the Caribbean, exploring the Norwegian fjords and sailing through the Panama Canal. Last year they made it up to the Northernmost part of Europe, within the Arctic Circle and had a fabulous picture taken holding hands, dressed in identikit top to toe waterproofs, grinning happily despite obviously trying not to be knocked over by the wind.

He was a warm hearted and kind man, loved by many and will be hugely missed.

Derek Halbert

25/03/1948 – 02/11/2023

The Final Word



So here we are again at the end of another edition of the CAOKS newsletter. I hope you've enjoyed reading the articles and I hope the new content ideas have gone down well.

You can catch up with all the latest school news via the website. I thought it was better to try and come up with original content for the newsletter rather than duplicating information that is already out there.

Don't forget to drop me a line if you have a piece you would like included in an upcoming issue or if you would like to take part in "Ten for Now and Then". Please email me at Editor@caoks.co.uk

Thanks to everyone who has contributed to this issue. There is no newsletter without input from you guys so please keep sending things in.

I started putting this issue together in February and it's now almost summer again and the end of another school year. I hope that we are blessed with warm weather and that everyone has the chance to take a holiday, a few day trips, visit family or whatever it is that you like to do during the summer.

Personally, I'll be making sure I attend as many cricket matches as I can. Although I live within walking distance of the Hampshire ground, I'm a Gloucestershire supporter (thanks to my father) and I'm much looking forward to heading up to the Cheltenham Cricket Festival at Cheltenham College in June/July. It's something that I did with my Father for many years before the journey became too much for him. So now I go along with my partner Anna and we take a picnic like my folks used to bring. Keeping the tradition alive.

The next issue will contain full details for the 2025 Annual CAOKS Dinner. I'd also like to hear from you about the Annual Dinner. Do we need to change the format and modernise somewhat? What do you guys think?

Don't forget the CAOKS AGM takes place on June 24th at The Architect in Chester. Please do come along and join us if you can for the meeting and perhaps for a beer and a bite to eat afterwards.

Have a great summer.

Steve "Taff" Williams (Editor)





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