


CAOKS
NEWS

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Curry and Quiz Night



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Night**
*Thurs 24th September
2026*



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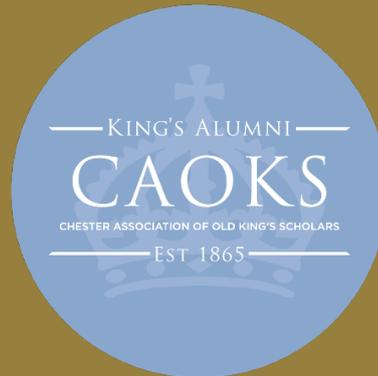
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Introduction and Contents



Amelia Standing (OKS 2018) winning another medal for GB Women
(Read more on Page 9)



Steve Williams

Welcome to the Winter edition of the CAOKS newsletter.

The calendar has just ticked over to November 1st and I am writing these words when it only feels like a few weeks ago that I was writing this very column last November. The leaves have fallen from the Indian Bean Tree in the garden, with the sycamores not too far behind them now. Autumn has well and truly taken hold once again as fireworks and trick or treaters take centre stage.

By the time you read this issue we will have had the latest edition of our Kings in the Capital event. This is turning into one of the most popular events in the CAOKS calendar, primarily due to the number of OKS living, working and studying in the London area. An event that really crosses the generations and, if you haven't been already, why not give it a try next year?

This issue, we have our usual selection of news and features, along with dates for your diary for the coming year. Amongst the obituaries this issue is that of one of the legendary teachers at King's, Mike Fox who was also heavily involved in rowing at school for so many years as well as being a modern languages teacher along with his wife Hilary.

As we head towards the Christmas and holiday season the world can seem to be in an ever more chaotic and unstable place, where some seem hell bent on ignoring the lessons from history and determined to drag us back to the dark days of yesteryear. I hope that the Christmas season can bring some peace as we spend time with family and friends as is traditional at this time of year.

Happy Holidays to you all and all the very best for 2026!

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President and Officers' Messages



From the
President

Steve Williams



From the
Secretary

Peter Bernie

It's been another terrific year of CAOKS and alumni events. The Annual CAOKS Dinner back in March was a splendid evening, and you can find details of next year's event elsewhere in this issue.

I'd like to welcome two new members to the CAOKS committee, namely Clive Crowe (OKS 1992) and Abi Fisher (OKS 2004). It's fantastic to have some new blood involved and I look forward to hearing what ideas and thoughts they have as we move forward towards the 500th Anniversary of the founding of the school. Clive was just two years below me at school so I remember him well. I also remember his father who was such a big supporter of school events and school generally.

Andy "AD" Jones has taken over the role of Dinner Secretary this term as well as that of Vice-President. I'd also like to thank Robin Hardi for all his sterling work as Dinner Secretary over the past years. Robin continues on the committee and will be on-hand to offer advice as and when it is needed.

The Kings in the Capital event continues to be very popular with those living "darn sarf", with the event held this year at the world-famous Fortnum and Mason.

I would like to wish the Headmaster all the very best for his new adventure next year but more on that in the next issue. He's not leaving quite yet haha! George, along with Peter Bernie and the late Anthony Russell were instrumental in getting me involved with CAOKS and school life again and I'm very thankful to all of them for that.

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and all the very best for 2026! See you all in March I hope

Steve Williams 20/11/25

I must start by paying tribute to John Douglas, one of my predecessors, who was HonSec for several years until 1967. John was a lovely man, a stalwart of the Association, and always very helpful to me.

John's death has caused me to reflect, partly because we have already lost all the HonSecs since 1967 - Roger Cash, Jim Edwards, Michael Jessop, Norman Harrison and Adrian Ackroyd, people who will be familiar to many of you.

The good news is that rather like Doctor Who, CAOKS continues to refresh, and we welcome Steve as President and two new committee members, Abi Fisher and Clive Crowe.

Hoping I saw you at Fortnum & Mason and hoping also to see you at our Annual CAOKS Dinner on 21 March 2026.

Peter 07/11/25

Treasurer Update

The Association had reserves of £34,000 at 31st December 2024. Donations received during the year have funded the CAOKS Exhibition together with a number of donations to the School.

If you would like to read more detail, then please follow the link below

<https://1drv.ms/b/c/e9ac12bd9d4e09be/EW8enY4OgblAhIRToZfAHTMBtk1XljxuFNdZvfygEtFc5A?e=4AZfTO>

Mark Thorp 15/11/25



Officers' Messages



From the Dinner Secretary

A.D Jones

Grab your tickets while you can and I look forward to seeing you there

Andy (AD) Jones

PS If you don't have black tie, come as smart as you can (bribing the bouncers with a bottle of vodka also helps)

PPS For the quality of the food and the setup this is quite frankly great value. From personal experience it's less expensive than buying a round of drinks for my alumni year friends in a London pub. As an added warm and fuzzy bonus should the dinner generate a surplus, any funds raised will be used by CAOKS as per its constitution to support pupils at King's in a variety of worthy ways.

Hello all! First things first, a supreme thank you to Robin Hardi for arranging the dinner for so long. After 158 years the poor chap was overdue a break so I'm picking up the baton carrot for the 159th dinner though, if I'm frank, most of the applause for the preparation will ultimately be due to Gemma and the team at school.

This year's menu once again looks like nothing I ever got to eat as a pupil in the 80's, and having attended the last three dinners since relocating from overseas, I am sure it won't be long until the team earns its first Michelin star.

This year sees the departure of both the Headmaster George Hartley and the Deputy Head (Academic) James Millard. We expect both will say a few words at the event and the dinner will provide opportunities to enjoy a drink or two with them and wish them well.

In a change to prior years, we will also be inviting the parents of current students at King's, though CAOKS members will have a 2-week advance booking window to secure their place first. So, without further ado...

You are all most warmly invited to the 159th CAOKS dinner to be held at the school on Saturday March 21, 2026, from 6pm. The dress code will be black tie. Tickets are £85pp. Tickets will go on sale from the date of this newsletter and can be purchased at the following link:

[The King's School Chester](#)

Annual Dinner Menu 2026

CAOKS 159th Annual Dinner Menu

Starters

Spiced tempura of seabass, Asian slaw, sweet chilli and tomato dressing

Whipped goats cheese spring salad, asparagus, pickled beetroot and balsamic gel (V)

Mains

Roast breast of chicken, stuffed with a stilton and spinach mousseline, dauphinoise potatoes, glazed carrots and buttered cavolo nero, red wine jus

Butternut squash, sage and chestnut wellington (V)

Dessert

Salted caramel tart, chocolate soil, caramel ice cream and fresh honeycomb (V)

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## Headmaster's Message



### From the Headmaster

*George  
Hartley*

I therefore look forward to seeing many of you at CAOKS and alumni events over the coming months and particularly at the Annual CAOKS Dinner in school on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2026. It will be lovely to thank you for your all support over the last nine years and to say farewell.

*George Hartley*

[hm@kingschester.co.uk](mailto:hm@kingschester.co.uk)

Paying tribute to George, Chair of Governors, Sandra Verity said;

“During his time at King’s, Mr Hartley has provided inspirational leadership with a dedicated focus on the school’s core commitment of every child being known, valued and cared for. His tenure has been defined by innovation, with the introduction of a pioneering digital strategy, the Learning to Learn programme, and award-winning mental health and pastoral provision.

“His pursuit of academic excellence and well-being culminated in King’s being named The North West Independent School of the Year in The Sunday Times Parent Power Guide 2024 and being rated Excellent in all areas in the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) inspection in 2022.”

Reflecting on his time at King’s, George commented:

“Being the Headmaster of The King’s School has been an immense privilege. When my family and I arrived in 2017, we were met with such warmth and openness, qualities that have characterised the past eight years of leading this wonderful school and living in this vibrant city. “As a staff body we have achieved so much together and we have been restless in our ambition to inspire students to be passionate and collaborative learners who will leave King’s ready to contribute positively to society.”

Dear all,

It’s been a busy start to the year at King’s with the school having been inspected in the third week of term and emerging unscathed and with flying colours. We were particularly delighted to have our co-curricular programme judged as a ‘Significant Strength’ of the school, not least as I know that so many of you benefitted hugely from your involvement with sport, music, drama, CCF and a whole host of other activities outside the classroom.

The inspection followed some fantastic public exam results in August, with our GCSEs being the ‘best ever’ on record and placing us 12<sup>th</sup> in the country for co-educational schools; quite a feat given we are far less selective than most independent schools in London and the South-East. I won’t bore you with lots of %s but suffice to say they were amazing and I’m still recoiling with glee. More generally, the school is in great shape with a new high-water mark for pupil roll of 1170 and with waiting lists for many year groups.

You may have also heard that after nine wonderful years leading King’s, I will be leaving next summer to start up Brighton College in Madrid. Merewyn and I have loved our time at King’s though with both children now at university (both of whom flourished at King’s) and after 17 years of headship in the UK, we are really excited at the prospect of moving to one of our favourite European cities. Setting up a new school from scratch is also something I have always wanted to do and will be great fun, if extremely hard work!



## CAOKS v School Cricket Match

The Annual COAKS Vs the School Cricket Match took place on Friday 20th June. It was a 30-over per side encounter, with the option of a declaration, which the school thankfully took up after 24 overs. The 'timed' element of the game also allowed CAOKS to hold out for a draw.

Many thanks to Mark Baker and Richard Lunn for organising the game and the school's hospitality. Scorecard and joint team photo included, with Seb Neal, who was awarded a 1st XI cap for outstanding service to cricket at King's.



Thanks also to CAOKS Scorer, Saul Marks, who brought some memorabilia with him and summed up the day's play as follows:

### King's 196-6 dec off 24 overs.

60 stand for the first wicket, then a collapse to 73-5. 101-5 off 14 overs at drinks. Then an unbroken partnership of 89 for the 7th wicket between De Rycke (56no) and Morris (41no).

Pick of our bowlers were Scott McCormick with 3-26 off 4 overs and Adrian Waddelove, who took 2-33 off 7 (and could/should have had 5).

### CAOKS 105-9 off 36 overs

Very slow for most of the innings, 62-2 off 18 overs at drinks. Waddelove (32) and Scotty Mc (22) were followed by skipper Atkin (27no) who stayed in when all others were falling around him, to see us home for a draw. He even hit a 6 off their captain and Glamorgan player Franco, who picked up 5-38.

### Here is the CAOKS XI Line up

- A Jock Douglas (wk)
- Adrian G Waddelove
- Glenn M Coppack
- David E Atkin (c)
- Rick J Bengree
- Cei B Sanderson
- Charlie G Cooke
- Scott J McCormick
- Jez M Casey
- William D Richards
- Rhys O Gronow

### Here is how the school lined up

- Ben J Pold (wk)
- Ieuan C Morris
- Maz J Afridi
- Oscar G B Wallis
- Will J Evans
- Cei B Sanderson
- L J Pold
- R C Franco (c)
- Jago T Gitz
- Fabio Franco
- Josh R Hercules
- Ben E Rofe

For those who would like to see the full scorecard for the day, you will find it below.

<https://1drv.ms/b/c/e9ac12bd9d4e09be/EZrCktva5UINqi3ghliuHqcBWm1IgJsqe9GB-DoPCKcc5A?e=0doQZS>

Thanks to David Atkin and Saul Marks for the report and images from the day.



## BATY Overseas VS Award Report

### Baty Travel Award Report - Margot Melville

Participating in five weeks of volunteering as a childcare worker with The Mighty Roar (an organisation with projects worldwide) in a primary school in Sri Lanka provided me with much insight into how the education system operates in a very different part of the world. In 2004, the Boxing Day tsunami destroyed the south coast of Sri Lanka, including Akurala, where The Mighty Roar has developed its school and volunteer village. Learning about the impact of the tsunami, and how the locals essentially had to rebuild their own economy was sobering and fascinating. My placement started on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2025 and finished on 8<sup>th</sup> February, and this five-week period enabled me to connect and establish a relationship with the school children.

charitable work of The Mighty Roar. What struck me most on my first day was the enthusiasm and excitement of the children, both in the Baby Class



and Upper Class, ages three to six. As a new group of volunteers after the Christmas break, we received a welcome ceremony from the children- we were presented with flowers at the school gates and one by one led into the school by a child. We then sat down and observed a ceremony where one of the local monks blessed each child.

It was clear the children were extremely excited at the prospect of returning to school, often pointing to the drawings on the school walls and identifying the image in English. This excitement throughout my 5-week placement didn't diminish. The other school - Sasmitha School- which we visited on a Wednesday was different (primarily because it is state funded and not funded by The Mighty Roar) mainly because it was far less well staffed, under resourced and overcrowded. However, the children's enthusiasm for learning was the same.



My volunteering time was divided between two schools, mainly at Happy Kids School which is a primary school set up and funded by the



Throughout the weeks I spent at these two schools, most of my time was spent teaching the alphabet and familiarising the children with utilising the letters by associating them with a word, such as A for apple and B for basket. Using illustrations was beneficial too for a more visual approach to their education, with the teacher drawing the object in their books, then the children used the shared box of crayons to colour it in. Whilst helping the children with these activities, I was surprised to discover how quickly they seemed to pick up habits which the volunteers displayed, or alternatively the influence of western TV, or media.

For example, when I wore sunglasses on my head, some of the children would take them and put them on whilst posing or dancing in a way which is often shown on Western media. I also found it intriguing how curious they found what I wore especially my jewellery- some children would insist on taking it off me and wear it themselves for a bit, showing their friends before returning it back. Whilst learning English is highly valued, so was the importance of physical exercise to also consolidate language in a larger kinaesthetic way. Most days, we would go into the outside areas

and follow a dance with each movement representing a word in English. At Sasmita School we would spend a lot of time playing with the children, either playing football, or helping them on the climbing frames or swings.



Through attending the school, I became immersed in the cultural calendar of Sri Lanka as almost every week at The Mighty Roar school, there would be a celebration of some kind, the most memorable being their Culture Day. Rather than wear school uniform, each child wore traditional outfits representing their culture and religion including Muslim, Hindu, Christianity and Tamil, and individually they came up to the front of the class to explain and show off their outfits. I came to learn that Sri Lanka has so much more religious diversity than I'd previously imagined, and I found it heartwarming to see the pride each child took when they wore their traditional outfits as well as noting the tolerance and respect shown by all.

### Final Words

I feel incredibly lucky to have participated in this volunteering opportunity. By being immersed in a



country and contributing to a volunteering schooling programme, my eyes have been opened to the difference in cultures and how this effects the education system. For example, the integral role that religion and worship play in the education, every morning and then after lunch, a prayer would be sung, primarily led by the teacher, where worship from the children was directed to their parents, teachers and then the volunteers.

Another valuable part of the experience was to meet new people and as a solo traveller it meant I had to strike up friendships and develop new relationships with lots of people volunteering from all over the UK. In addition, the weekends provided opportunities for either joining organised Mighty Roar trips into Sri Lanka so I could explore other parts of the country inland or to organise more local trips along the coast with fellow volunteers. This gave me a structured and safe way to travel which helped me develop confidence for my 12 weeks of independent travel to southeast Asia after my volunteering placement. During my time in Sri Lanka, my perspectives shifted – what struck me most was whilst being less materially privileged, the children and local staff were so generous and keen to share what they had, whether it be their home cooked food, or encouraging us to learn their language.

**I'd like to thank the CAOKS committee for awarding me the generous Baty Travel Bursary Award in July 2024 which enabled me to spend longer volunteering in Sri Lanka early 2025 as well as providing funds towards The Mighty Roar's invaluable schooling programme in Akurala.**

### Amelia Standing (OKS 2018)



We are very proud of Amelia Standing (OKS 2018), who continues to make waves in the rowing world.

Amelia has had the most incredible season, capping it off with multiple international medals as part of the GB Women's Eight.

This year, she was selected to row in the 3 seat of the senior women's eight, a crew that went on to win the European Championships, take victory at a World Cup race, and claim bronze at the World Rowing Championships.

Remarkably, Amelia's success continues a run of several historic firsts for King's:

**2017** - One of only a hand full of girls to represent Great Britain, competing at the Coupe de la Jeunesse, where her crew won the four

**2021** - U23 World Champion in the women's four.

**2025** - The first former King's girl to medal at a senior World Championships, in a crew that became the first British women's eight to win a World Championship medal since 2011.

Amelia's story serves as an inspiration to all aspiring athletes, a testament to perseverance, passion, and the pursuit of excellence. With role models like her leading the way, the future of King's rowing looks brighter than ever.



## Curry and Quiz Night

The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Curry and Quiz Night took place at the school on Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> September. Fifty five of the finest minds amongst the CAOKS/PTA community came to see if they could be the winners of the prestigious and much sought after championship title (or possibly to have a lovely curry courtesy of the school catering team and a flimsy excuse to booze on a school night lol)



The quiz started in 2023 in attempt to try to run a few less formal events for CAOKS and to link in more with the PTA. I was more than happy to volunteer as quizmaster as it is much less stressful than being the one struggling to find the answers! Nearly half of this year's participants were third timers but there were several newbies as well. Gemma Carvell from the alumni team was on hand to ensure that no under-the-table phone cheating was going on. The threat of public-shaming if caught seemed to have been enough of a deterrent, thankfully.

Fuelled by curry, ten teams of free-range eggheads knuckled down to test their grey matter. The first round was all around events related to 2024. The art of setting a quiz is to throw a few gimmies in alongside the trickier ones. It seemed clear from the puzzled faces however that the "easy" ones were maybe not as simple as I had anticipated.

Five medically themed questions followed (not to name or shame but the team comprised of doctors maybe should have done better...) and

then a tricky round of the real names of five A-list celebrities (with Harry Webb<sup>†</sup> thrown in amongst the 21<sup>st</sup> century ones for the more over-ripened team-members).

Nine apparently unrelated questions with a tenth question to identify the link between them all led up to a break for people to place last orders at the bar and seek inspiration from wherever they could find it.

The second half of the quiz was the picture round (well-known faces as babies and children), the music round (TV theme tunes) and 10 utterly random general knowledge questions. As a throwback to school days, teams swapped papers and, on trust, marked each other's quiz sheets.

The scores were totalled up and announced in reverse order but before this, the prize for best team name was awarded. The judges (aka Gemma and myself) were torn between The Duncing Queens and We Didn't Roger Wickson (mostly OKS 1990 players!) so it went to an audience vote who went overwhelmingly for smutty innuendo over clever punning.



Thanks to the alumni team and to the school for all the hard work behind the scenes that helped the quiz run like clockwork. The quiz will run again on Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2026 and is likely once more (thank you King's School education) to go more lowbrow than highbrow.

<sup>†</sup> In case you didn't know, Harry Webb is the birth name of Cliff Richard

Quizmaster – Ravi Jayaram (OKS 1987)



## Aconcagua – The Last 1000 Feet

### A reflection of 4th January 1992

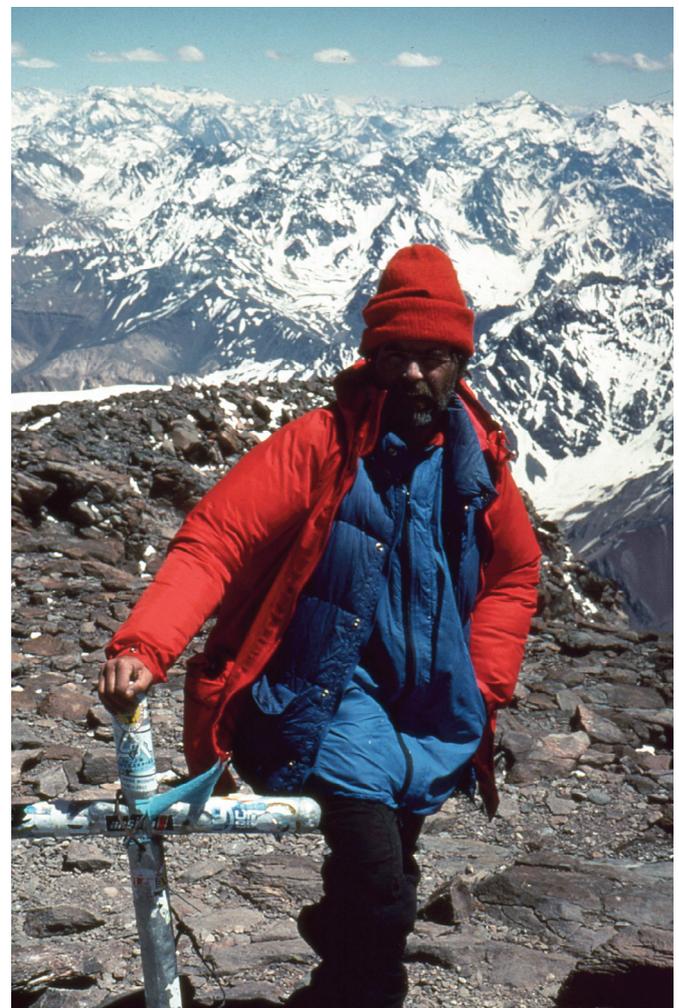
I am at the Canaletta, 1000 feet below the summit of Aconcagua looking up towards the summit. It is a place I have dreamed about, ever since I failed just below this point 10 months ago. Aconcagua is the mountain I have dreamed of climbing for almost 10 years. Ever since I read that it was the highest mountain in South America and that there was a relatively easy route to the summit. It became an obsession, the ultimate test for me as a mountain climber and as a man, a thing to test myself against. And then I failed 10 months ago. I wasn't fit enough or strong enough or determined enough or hungry enough. Whatever. And so, I had to come back to try it again, to suffer again, hopefully to succeed, to climb my mountain of dreams.

I have trained for four months down the gym, running to the edge of exhaustion to train my heart and lungs to cope with the effort of moving at this altitude. Weight training has strengthened my shoulders to carry the heavy loads I will have to bear. I have also lost two stone in weight. I have not drunk alcohol for four months. Will it be enough? Could I handle a second failure? Could I leave this mountain without climbing it? This is for the future.

Now I am at the Canaletta, 1000 feet below the summit of Aconcagua looking up towards the summit. I have read that it is a scree gully, desperately hard work to climb at altitude. But it seems to be more of a boulder slope. And the summit looks quite close. And I am feeling quite good. Lower down I was finding it quite an effort, toiling up the endless zigzags of the path, gasping for breath. But my companion and I seemed to be making steady progress. We overtook two other parties on the way up who were suffering more than we were. So, we must be doing OK. It was very cold and windy lower down, but the weather seems better now, less wind and some blue sky. And I can see the summit. It doesn't look too far. And there is plenty of time. It's only 1 pm. We left at 7:30 am. It doesn't get dark until 8 pm.

All right then, no excuses. Move forward, slowly, with infinite care. Every step has to be planned in

advance, to ensure that the effort is minimised, to avoid the possibility of sliding back on the scree and losing a few precious inches or feet of height gained. I am only concerned with that next step and how my body is coping with it. Am I breathing too fast? Is my heart beating too fast? I am trying to set a pace slow enough so that I can keep moving without stopping for rests. But this is not possible. My heart is thumping, and I am gasping for breath. I must stop to allow my heart rate and my breathing to get back to an acceptable level. I set myself targets. "20 steps then you can have a rest". Then another 20 steps. Then another. Every now and then I look up to the summit. It doesn't seem to be that much closer, although it now looks to be a long way down the Canaletta.



My companion has chosen a different route over to the right. I must choose my own route, go at my own pace. This is what I have dreamed about for the last 10 months, myself alone against the mountain. What will the outcome be?



Now I am getting higher, nearer the summit. I must go more slowly, take fewer steps, and stop longer for a rest. But I am still in control of my body, thinking clearly, that is the wonderful thing. In the past I have suffered badly from altitude and been on the limit of what my body could take. I can't afford to be on the limit here. It is too far from the top camp, too far for anyone to come to rescue me. And every step I take takes me further away from the top camp, further away from safety. But I must keep going. It is my destiny to test myself against this mountain.

Now I can see that the summit is getting closer. There is a ridge on the skyline. It looks to be higher on the left. I can see two people above me moving to the left. My companion is now a long way below me to the right. The weather is perfect.

Slowly, steadily, I move up towards them. There is more snow amongst the rocks. It is harder work on the snow. I try to keep to the rocks wherever I can. I can see them clearly now, a man and a woman moving steadily to the left. I wave up to them. They wave back. The warmth of human contact gives me a small boost. There do not appear to be any difficulties. Eventually I reach their tracks in the snow. There is no sign of them. Their tracks lead to the left, following a shelf just below the summit ridge. I follow their tracks. Suddenly I see that the crest of the ridge is just above me. Surely the summit must be nearby. I can hear their voices above me.

Now the shelf comes to an end and the footprints. Where to now? There is a short rocky gully just above me. This must be it. Scramble up. That's it! The summit cross! I embrace it choking with emotion. The man and woman (an American couple) think I am crazy. We take pictures of each other. Talk about the climb. For them it is just another mountain. Look at the view. It is 3pm and the weather is perfect. I look for my companion. He seems a long way away. It will be 3:30 before he reaches the summit.

The American couple leave the summit. I am left alone to wait for my companion. For those 30 minutes I know total peace and fulfilment.

Stephen Hartley (OKS 1969)

## CAOKS Golf Day 2025

The annual CAOKS Golf Day was very enjoyable despite the hot temperature.

There were 16 participants including the winner from the previous year, Mickey Moore.

The event was held at Chester Golf Club in Curzon Park, which is the closest golf course to the school.



The winner of the Stableford competition was Freddie Cheshire with 38 points, who received the prestigious CAOKS Golf trophy and the runner-up was Bill Pinnington with 37 points.

The longest drive was won by Will Lamb (275 yards) and Al Wilson won nearest the pin.

An excellent two-course meal was provided in the clubhouse after the golf.

Plans will be underway already for the 2026 edition of the CAOKS Golf Day and we will have full details in the Summer 2026 newsletter due, as ever, in May.



## Calendar of Events

If you would like to book onto an event, please visit [The King's School Chester](#) or call Gemma on 01244 689492

### **2025 Leavers Catch Up**

*Fri 2<sup>nd</sup> Jan, 2026 - The Ship Inn, Handbridge*

King's will be hosting a catch up for this year's leavers on Thursday 2nd January at Liquor and Co, 31 Watergate St, Chester CH1 2LE, UK from 6.30pm. It's a great opportunity to catch up with friends you haven't seen for a while and let Mr Carter and other teachers know what you've been up to.

### **1996/06/16 Reunions**

*Sat 7<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2026 - King's School 2:30pm*

### **1956/66/76/86 Reunions**

*Sat 28<sup>th</sup> Feb, 2026 - King's School 11:00am*

### **Curry and Quiz Night - Spring Edition**

*March, 2026 - King's School*

Following on from the successes of the recent September nights, we have decided to have another one in March!

### **CAOKS 159<sup>th</sup> Annual Dinner**

*Sat 21st March, 2026 - 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! See menu and booking details elsewhere in this issue.

### **Ladies Day - Chester Races**

*Date TBC, 2026*

After the success of the past 3 years join us for our very own Ladies Day at Chester Races, exclusive to our female alumnae.

This is the perfect opportunity for our female leavers to connect and enjoy time together within

the Festival Village, A high light of the racing calendar.

Tickets are £100.00 per person, RRP over £400.00!

### **CAOKS Cricket v School**

*Fri 19<sup>th</sup> June, 2026 - King's School*

If you are interested in playing for the CAOKS XI then please get in touch. You can read all about the epic encounter this year in these pages.

### **Henley Tea Party**

*Friday July 3rd, 2026*

Start planning your summer and join us for a right royal time at the Henley Royal Regatta – one of the English social calendar's key events.

### **CAOKS Golf Day**

*July 2026*

*Date TBC*

Date and venue TBC. Please get in touch with Nigel Cunniffe or Rob MacKenzie regarding this one. Alternatively drop me (Ed) a line and I'll forward your message to the guys.

### **Rowing v School**

*July 2026*

*Date TBC*

### **Curry and Quiz Night - The Original**

*Thursday 24<sup>th</sup> September 2026*

We are back with another Alumni and Parents Curry and Quiz Night after the success of past couple of years!

Will the winners keep their crown?



## Memories of School 1958-1970 - Michael (Monty) Goodman (OKS 1970)

As an avid reader of the Kings School CAOKS Newsletters I must confess to my “crime” of not visiting the school or attending any alumni meetings or dinners etc since leaving in 1970. Shame on me.

My reason for writing this is that in the last few newsletters I have come across referenced Norman Hallas and Graham Hutton, (and sadly the passing of Mike Fox) amongst other teachers who I believe are “still with us” at the time of writing. So, I thought it might be interesting to recall something of my time at King’s and share with others, which I hope might jog some happy memories for other pupils who were present during my time at King’s.

I entered the Junior School in 1958, being on one of the last intakes to have experienced school life in the city buildings prior to moving to Wrexham Road in 1960. I performed in a Junior School play, “The Jackdaw of Rheims” in front of the then Queen Mother when she officially inaugurated the New School – no BAFTA though.

I became firm friends with Mike Younger, who was with me at Abbeygate Prep School in the city, who sadly passed away in 2023. Teachers included John Hudson, Popeye Owen, Ces Garnett & Mrs Holcroft. It was there that I was given the nickname “Monty” as there were 3 Michaels in our class, Mike Younger, Michael Barnett who became Mick and myself who became Monty after an early TV show with Charlie Drake who catchphrase was “Mick not to touch Mont” a character called Montmorency. To this day there are individuals who still refer to me as Monty, as did some of the more friendly teachers,

I never liked Maths and I was always late for Maths lessons with Mr Hudson if it was the first class of the morning. Sometimes I would arrive at school on time but hide in the toilets until near the end of the class and then stroll in saying “sorry I missed the bus.” His response would be “Again!” Several “chats” would follow until I was made to see the error of my ways (allegedly!)

Passing into the senior school I was in Lower Shell stream (no idea why!) and was in Evans House. I certainly wasn’t the brightest scholar by any means. I just didn’t enjoy the lessons apart from Geography and History. Some teachers inspired me and some didn’t (no names) but sport was my salvation, really enjoying anything of a sporting nature; football, athletics, tennis, badminton, squash etc. My father used to jokingly say my brains were in my feet and I was the strongest in the class – primarily because I was always either bottom of the class or near the bottom and holding everybody up.

### Teachers:

When I first was at school Canon Harvey was Headmaster, soon to be replaced by Arthur Munday a strict disciplinarian. If he thought your hair was too long, he would send you into town to get a haircut or if your shirt wasn’t white, he would give you a replacement shirt and bring it back washed and ironed the next day.

During my time at King’s, I can recall being taught by Messrs’ Tolliday, Owen, Evetts, Lysons, Wrigley, Evans, Furze, Watts, Davies, Humphreys, Cole, Hook, Hutton, Orry, Jones, Denton, Marsh, Nelson, Sutton, Clamp, Read, Fox, Bourne, Hallas, Hutton & Kerr. I can still recall their faces even today, some with fonder memories than others

### Progress?

As I meandered my way through school, I do recall two chastening experiences which I look back on with embarrassment, not just for me but for my parents. Firstly, due to my apparent lack of educational advancement I was put on Weekly Report by Mr Munday. At the end of each week, I had to get an attainment mark from each Teacher for my weekly performance. On a Monday morning, I would queue up outside Mr Munday’s office with other “offenders of various crimes” to report to him when he would always set a higher target for the following week. Pleading and begging was not allowed.



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My second embarrassment was when I was held back a year after flunking my "O" Levels, much to the delight of a couple of teachers who when a question was asked in my new form would say "lets ask Goodman as he has done this before!" Not my happiest experience but I got through my "O" levels so in hindsight it may have been a good thing. Teachers know best!

## **Sixth Form.**

What a change in attitude once you entered the Sixth Forms. Teachers seemed to see you as individuals and adults and treated you with a bit more respect & conviviality.

I choose English, Geography, Economics and General Studies as my A levels and this is where I will make special mention of Norman Hallas, who really treated you as a person and had time for you as an individual – even though he gave the Economics prize to Dave Dooley (who went to Hull University with me to read Economics. I became a school prefect and the struggles I endured, some of my own making I admit, seemed to now be worthwhile.

## **Sport:**

Kings was an excellent choice for me from a sports perspective offering a wide range of activities which one could join in. I was Captain of Football under Paul Considine, and our final season was successful as we only lost one match all season, unfortunately in a cup game. Dave Carr and I attended a weeks football course in Durham with Cheshire Schoolboys (where I played like a wet flannel) but was chosen to represent Cheshire schools in a tournament, but I was away on a school trip for the dates, so it never happened.

I played cricket (not my favourite sport,) Badminton for the school under Alan Furze, and Tennis under Norman Hallas and we actually played at Wimbledon, admittedly on the outside courts when we entered the Independents Schools Tennis Tournament in 1969. We started to play squash with coaching from the Army Squash club at the Castle in the city. Mike Fox wanted a couple of us to transfer from Football to Rowing but that was vetoed. Similarly, I think it was when Mr Kerr arrived as a teacher to try to introduce Rugby Union to the school it never happened for similar reasons as

football was imbedded to much in the school curriculum.

I also played in the Chester & District Youth Football League with Farndon FC with Mike Younger and Ian Beech from School.

We would often play 2 games on a Saturday – morning with the school and then Farndon in the afternoon but school always took precedent. We were quite successful finishing runners up in the League and losing in the cup final played on Chesters's home ground at Sealand Road.

Years later I found out that my parents had been approached by a couple of Football League clubs, not major clubs, to see if I would sign apprentice deals with them but my parents refused, saying my education was more important. They new I would have wanted to go so they kept quiet about it. It would have been nice to try but not to be.

## **School Trips:**

Trips to school camp near Abersoch were great fun, sleeping 4-6 in a bell tent and enjoying the outdoor life with Tom Clamp and his wife – her porridge slabs could support any number of historical buildings. On one occasion, Clive Dorman got bitten by an adder which added a bit more excitement to the week Two skiing trips to Wenganalp in Switzerland were a lovely introduction to foreign travel for a teenager. Sited at the foot of the Eiger mountain overlooking the Jungfrau mountains was a beautiful experience on a hot sunny day.

In those days it was a real trek to get there. Firstly, an early morning start from Chester Cathedral in the old school bus (always breaking down) to Dover followed by a ferry across to Calais, then an overnight train to Interlaken, having changed trains at Basle. Finally, the local train to Wengen and then up to the hotel on the mountain railway. Tom Clamp and his wife came with us on one trip and when his wife fell over, he was heard to say "pretend you haven't seen it"

Another amazing trip was on the SS Nevasa, in 1965 or 66, a dedicated schools educational liner when we sailed from Southampton to Gibraltar, Tripoli, Athens, Istanbul and finally Venice before we flew back home. Fellow travellers included Mark Warburton, Geoff Darlington, Martin Kilshaw and Nobby Clarke I think.



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Messrs Tolliday and AT Owen led the trip and whilst every other school were marched around in school uniform and in crocodile fashion we were given the option of seeing the sites either with Tolliday and Owen or we could go off on our own with the final words "be back by 5 or miss the boat". None of us did miss the boat and whilst we saw the major tourist sites we also found some more interesting sites of our own!

Not classified as a school trip but I went on a summer holiday to Spain with Mike Younger and Ian Morrey when we drove down to the Costa Brava for a few weeks in Mike's White Ford Anglia loaded to the gunnels.

### **Extra-Curricular activities;**

It would be remiss of me not to recall some of the places we use to frequent when out of school, notably pubs.

In the pre-drinking days of teenagers, it was the KD or Steps where we would meet up after school for a coffee. I lived in Marford, North Wales, for a time and Bob Butchers' parents owned the Trevor Arms at the foot of Marford Hill where Bob, Nick Cohn and I would play cricket in the car park and then retire to the pub and have a quick lager and lime (aargh!)

Then, when we were "legal" and way before the advent of the breathalyser, we would meet up in a number of different pubs, The Boot, Aldersley Arms, Cock of Barton, The Black Dog and The Pheasant. We would meet up with some of the girls from Queen's school usually Cath Thompson, Claire Bottomley, Anne Northway and Biddy Kermode and there would be me, Mike Younger, Ian Beech, Dave Carr and Mark Warburton. Invariably this would end up in Dave Carr's house to play snooker after closing time.

### **Post School:**

I gained 4 "A" Levels and went to Hull University along with Dave Dooley to study Economics. Three years of fun, frivolity and a bit of hard work. University finds you in one sense. You can swot hard for 3 years and get a First, unless you are exceptionally clever or you get the balance right and enjoy your time there and still come away with a good degree. Everyone is different on how they approach university life and you make

your own choices. Some succeed and some don't for a variety of reasons. Thankfully I got 2:2 Hull University was to me a good choice although not one of my original choices. I recall the vicious East coast winds and freezing temperatures and the constant smell in those days of either breweries or the Fish Docks. Made a great number of good friends and we keep in regular touch and occasional meet ups after 50 years of friendship. Sadly, some have passed on but the memories continue.

### **Summary:**

As this is primarily a reflection of my time at King's I will refrain from further details of my life since leaving. Suffice to say I have led a varied and highly enjoyable number of jobs mainly working in Management Training and Development sectors

I recently met up with Mark Warburton, Ian Beech and Dave Sandiford and Micky Moore at Mike Younger's funeral a couple of years ago and it was nice to banter about school days. I am also in contact with Dave Carr who now lives in Galicia in Northern Spain, who is married to Anne Northway, formally of Queen's School. Ian Morrey is another who I am in touch with and he meets up with other ex-schoolmates and lets me know what is going on.

I now live in North Devon with my partner Katrina and I am still working on a part-time basis with a Local Health & Social Care provider with 65 Domiciliary Care Workers. During my 14 years with them I have been a full time Care Worker, Business Manager and now semi-retired I work 2 days a week as Training Manager.

Retiring scares me, so I will keep on working as long as I can and somebody wants to employ me. It keeps me active and gives the brain something to work on at a time when it's easier to just wind down and put your feet up.

If I have made any errors with names, dates and places then I apologise. As one gets older memory can play funny tricks on you, imagining things that may or may not have happened. I hope my memory is still reasonably intact. My best wishes to present and future members of CAOKS and thanks to the Alumni staff for continuing to keep us senior members in touch.

Michael (Monty) Goodman (OKS 1970)



## “Ten for Now and Then” – Michael Ellis (OKS 1952)

“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](mailto:Editor@caoks.co.uk)



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

I started at Arnold House, the junior school, aged 8 in 1942. In September 1945, I moved to the senior school, which was very

different. We began in the Removes, which following the big influx of new pupils because of the 11+ was very numerous – possibly 50 of us. The need for a large room meant we were put in the Library. The wide range of books on the shelves were fascinating to explore in lesson breaks. Some would be considered unsuitable for 11-year-olds – a popular one was “Jean qui rit” a bound volume of a Bel Epoque French magazine with many illustrations of scantily clad young women.

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

In August 1945, the war had ended following the detonation of the atom bombs over Japan. I was fascinated by atomic fission and eager to learn more. So, when we started chemistry with Mr (Gomer) Davies on the Periodic Table, which included Uranium and Plutonium, I was hooked, and chemistry remained my favourite subject throughout my school time.

### 3. Who was your favourite teacher and why?

Mr Davis, not just because he taught chemistry, but he was such a nice chap, apparently easy-going but he never had any discipline problems. He understood boys and how to get the best out of them. In the sixth form, he got several of us to give presentations on “The Chemistry of ...”. My subject was bread and my

talk argued that it must be good for us as its liquid form was beer, which the lads all thought was very amusing, but which Mr Davis said was a clever concluding touch as well.

I must add some words about Mr (Jock) Loadman. In those days you had to have a Pass in School Certificate Latin, to get into Oxbridge, even if you intended to read maths, science or engineering. Thus, all of us “scientists” had to do Latin. At the start of the School Cert year, Mr Loadman walked in and said, “I’m going to get you all through” and he did! A disciplinarian but again someone who understood boys. Once he told a rare joke, saying there were three stages of drunkenness. First, one became ‘Jocose’. He knew that we called him “Jock”, but never to his face of course, so this drew some suppressed giggles. The next stage was to become ‘Bellicose’ (some laughter as we imagined Jock in a fight) and the final stage was ‘Comatose’ -- complete collapse into laughter by the form as we imagined Jock lying unconscious.

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

I participated in everything available, football, cricket, rowing, tennis, swimming, running, boxing. I was keen but not a star. In cricket, I found a niche as a wicket keeper and opening bat (I only had one stroke - to block the ball). I gave up football at age 14 to play rugby in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> XV's of Chester Rugby Club, only deigning to play ‘soccer’ in house matches as the goalkeeper where I could handle the ball.

I did not enjoy the annual cross-country race – it always seemed to be held in cold wet weather. This experience was highly useful when I joined the Royal Navy, where sport was virtually compulsory. I even played soccer occasionally, besides adding



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hockey, skiing and golf to my sports. Now I just go to an Oldies' Dance Exercise Class.

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

There was no choir or orchestra during my time. In the lower forms, we had a 40-minute music period once a week. The form would gather in the main hall and each pick up a "Community Song Book"; the music master, Mr (Daddy) Robinson, would accompany us on the piano while we sang (many out of tune) standards such as Men of Harlech, Rule Britannia, and even the Camptown Races. My favourite was *There is a Tavern in the Town*. There was no tuition, but we all enjoyed singing exuberantly and the break from standard lessons.

The school owned a prewar wind-up gramophone, and this was used by the Music Club. Once week after school, a few devotees would gather and listen to orchestral records (78s of course). I was not a member until late on in my time when it became more attractive as it held joint sessions with the Queen's School. I was much keener on Jazz and in 1950 or 51, I resurrected the Rhythm Club, having succeeded in persuading the Head, Rev Mr (Len) Harvey, that this was a serious undertaking. We also used the wind-up gramophone, and members would bring in their own records to play for mutual enjoyment.

One year in the early 50s, the enterprising Mr Tolliday, with the aid of Mr Lyons, organised a "School Concert". The centrepiece was an enjoyable performance of "Trial By Jury". I took the part of an obstreperous jury man who was frequently knocked on the head by the Clerk of the Court (David Miller). This was followed by the Rhythm Club contribution, playing two numbers, where I was on the drums, with young Noel Clark, an excellent pianist, providing most of the content, and poor Roger Davies, who I had dragooned into plaintively plucking a ukulele.

[Having mentioned the Queen's School, I have taken the liberty of inserting a new question here, namely "How did you get on with contemporaries of the opposite sex?"]

In those days, nearly all secondary education in UK was single sex. In Chester, we had five grammar schools, King's(boys) and Queen's(girls) in the city centre, City

Grammar (boys) and City High (girls) across the river in Handbridge and Convent (girls) by the Amphitheatre site. We were all going through puberty and for most boys, girls which had been previously regarded as silly or a nuisance, suddenly became very interesting.

The first time I kissed a girl was in a chaste game of Postman's Knock at form mate Phil Mullock's 13<sup>th</sup> birthday party. We began to have girlfriends, teenage romances which lasted weeks or months. An occasion to meet girls was each school's annual play – often the Shakespeare being studied for that year's School Cert English – all the other schools were invited to send their fifth and sixth formers to form the audience. Later I was to learn that after our performance of Macbeth, a group of girls nicknamed me "Ruddy Macduff" based on my pink cheeks and strong Cheshire accent.

Important too was the "Interschools Dance", well-organised by a committee of sixth formers from the five schools. The dance was held twice a year (Christmas and summer), usually in the basement ballroom of Clemence's, a restaurant in Northgate Street, with the Denis Williams Quintet providing the music. Admission was by ticket, which the committee had printed and sold. The girls wore fashionable dresses, while the boys generally looked a bit awkward in their best suits.

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

I left in April 1952 to join the Royal Navy at Dartmouth, much against the Head's wishes. He wanted me to go up to his old college, Balliol, to read Maths. Nonetheless, he gave me little book "Spherical trigonometry for Navigators" which I still have. I now realise I am one of the last generations to have navigated by the stars. Besides several specialist technical courses in the Navy, I was fortunate to be selected to be sent to Sweden for six months to learn the language, obtaining a translation diploma. This eventually led to my third career as a freelance translator. In 1974, I began two years exchange service teaching at the US Naval War College – their university. I was the only foreigner on the faculty, and all my colleagues had degrees. I more than held my own however and was awarded an honorary master's



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degree. This inspired me on return to UK to study for an Open University Degree, which was hard work sandwiching studies between my naval duties. I started one assignment in Wellington, New Zealand, and finished it in Hong Kong. It was however an excellent mid-life education that stood me in good stead both in the RN and in my second career in the IT industry.

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

Inevitably, the Navy drew me south and after my wife and I bought a house in Hampshire, visits to Chester became infrequent, ceasing after our parents died.

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

I had intermittent contact with some contemporaries for a few years, but this petered out. Many years later I discovered John Tomlinson FRCGP lived nearby in Hampshire, and we renewed our school friendship. Sadly he died four years ago but via the CAOKS Newsletter I have contacted Peter Jones by email and we correspond regularly.

I have not attended any CAOKS events. Looking at the newsletter photos and articles I realise I am improbably old and would have little in common with most, if not all, attendees, but I must emphasise I do enjoy the newsletter.

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

Hard to choose, perhaps being appointed LVO (Lieutenant of the Royal Victorian Order) by HM the Queen in 1983. It reminded me of Raleigh being knighted, in that HM conferred this honour on the spot, onboard the Royal Yacht in Stockholm for my services in organising her State Visit to Sweden, where I was the Naval Attaché. However, the most interesting time I had in the Royal Navy was as Signal Officer of the aircraft carrier HMS EAGLE in 1969/70. It is difficult to explain how continuously intense life can be in a carrier; 18 hour working days for weeks on end were normal.

For my third and fourth careers as a Swedish translator and Baltic naval historian, in 2023 I was very proud to be elected a Fellow of the Royal Swedish Society of Naval Sciences (founded 1771).

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

For me the main benefits were an ability to pass exams, a willingness to do my best at any task but not to take life too seriously, and a good solid grounding in Maths and Science - my contemporaries in the Navy when still alive often said: "You always were a clever bastard, Ellis!"

Michael Ellis ('Mick')



Michael, aged 18, on completion of RN Cadet training with prize tankards presented by the Duke of Edinburgh.



### Ghosts and Guides: a September Pilgrimage to the Western Front – Seb Neal

It's something of a tradition for newly retired teachers to take a holiday in September, once the schools have resumed and prices – at least in theory – dip slightly. Less traditional, perhaps, is choosing to spend that holiday on the battlefields of the Western Front. But the pull was too strong for this ex-teacher to resist. Fortunately for me, it proved equally irresistible to OKS and current King's parent James Holladay, and so we set off on a six-day tour.

Rue-David Military Cemetery wasn't on our itinerary. A satnav recalculation took us down the unremarkable country lane that is Rue David, as we travelled between Arras and Ypres. Sitting in the flat farmland of French Flanders, criss-crossed with narrow waterways draining and irrigating the fields, the cemetery is substantial with around a thousand burials. Over a third are Australian, many unnamed, probable victims of the brutal fighting at nearby Fromelles in 1916. Spotting the cemetery as we passed, and knowing it held the grave of an OKS, we made an impromptu stop.

As a resident of Hough Green, my companion James had long wanted to visit the graves of men who had lived there around the time of the Great War. By this point in our journey, we had already paid our respects at Wihéries to Captain Ernest Rae Jones, who fell fighting to the last at Audregnies, and to Second Lieutenant Wilbraham Fremantle Smith, an old King's scholar mortally wounded near Leuze (or Lousy) Wood on the Somme and buried at Grove Town. The first visit was planned; the second, a slight tweak to the itinerary. Rue-David, however, was pure serendipity. I had no details with me of the OKS buried there – no name, no regiment – and the visitor's book didn't stretch back far enough to record any previous visit of mine. So, we turned to the cemetery register, hoping for a clue. It didn't take long. James soon struck gold: "There's a chap here from Hough Green – Private Edward Lloyd, King's Shropshire Light Infantry. That him?" Indeed, it was.

Edward Lloyd was born in Handbridge in 1894, the elder son of Edward Lloyd senior, a butcher, and Phoebe Ann Lloyd. As she died young, Edward and his younger brother Reginald were raised by their father at 25 Eaton Road, Handbridge. Both boys attended

King's from May 1906 to December 1907, and both appear on the 1917 Roll of Service, though Reginald's wartime record remains elusive. By the time of Edward's death, their father had moved to 20 Hough Green, Chester.

Edward enlisted in Chester, initially joining the Cheshire Yeomanry – a mounted Territorial Force unit originally intended for cavalry roles. During the war, such regiments were often repurposed as infantry, cyclists or machine-gunners, depending on operational needs. The Cheshire and Shropshire Yeomanry were merged into the 10th Battalion of the King's Shropshire Light Infantry (KSLI), which served in Palestine before transferring to France in May 1918.



After arriving in Marseilles, the battalion trained for several weeks before entering the line in French Flanders and later the Somme. By early October 1918, they were back in Flanders. The war had become more mobile, and on 3 October, A and B Companies advanced beyond Fournes, west of Lille, without resistance. But the retreating Germans had left behind



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penny packets of men to delay the Allied advance. That evening, KSLI patrols spotted enemy troops. At 8am the next day, A and B Companies pushed forward behind strong patrols, soon encountering machine-gun fire. The battalion war diary notes that the companies lost contact on their flanks. Captain George William Sparrow was killed at 10.30am.; Second Lieutenant Hepworth took command of B Company. Later that afternoon, Second Lieutenant Blair was wounded. Despite these losses, a defensible line and battalion dugouts were established.

The war diary makes no mention of Private Lloyd or the other three privates killed on 4 October 1918, less than six weeks before the Armistice. They seem to have been unlucky, like Captain Sparrow victims of sporadic German attempts to slow the Allied pursuit. 'Only' another 21 more men of the 10th KSLI would die before the war's end, as the battalion harried the retreating Germans through north-east France and Belgium. There had been single days when the casualty figure was over three times that number. Much luckier was another OKS – Private Richard William Gordon West – who, almost exactly three years earlier, had survived a bloodbath at the Hohenzollern Redoubt near Loos. James and I had looked at his story the previous day and pondered on the fortunes of war. The son of a clergyman, perhaps he had God on his side.



Loos is an eerie battlefield. Former teacher A. St. G. Walsh called it 'most unattractive' – at least in the conventional sense. Empty and exposed, it lies beneath vast skies. There's little to draw the eye, save for the Double Crassier – twin slag heaps that, in German hands at the battle's outset, offered

commanding views of British positions. It was ever thus.

We stretched our legs along the track from the Dump past the Redoubt to the electricity pylon, and then across a thin grass line – hardly a path – cutting across a farmer's field towards Quarry Cemetery. Beside the track, next to a farm, sits the 46th (North Midlands) Divisional Memorial. Modest and almost embarrassed, it belies the scale of sacrifice: the Division suffered over 3,600 casualties in a failed attempt to take the Redoubt on 13 October 1915. Among the attackers was Private West, part of a bombing party at Little Willie and Big Willie Trenches – named by Tommies after the Kaiser and Crown Prince, in case you were wondering. Against the odds, he survived, and like several from that 'failed' division, went on to serve in the Royal Flying Corps, later the RAF. He ended up a Squadron Leader.

There is a second memorial to the North Midlanders, the original one, on the Vermelles- Hulluch road, closer to the troops' starting point. Cars and lorries thunder past. There's nowhere to stop, and no footpath for walkers like us. Cycling might be the best way to visit it, though no cyclists were out that day. A stiff wind and sudden, sharp showers loomed. Perhaps the ghosts of the 46th North Midlands – and all the other divisions that fought here – were watching over us, for we stayed dry, just reaching the car as the first heavy drops fell. At Quarry Cemetery, we saw the headstone of Captain Fergus Bowes-Lyon, brother of the late Queen Mother – a reminder that war respects neither rank nor class nor privilege. A lesson worth remembering. Money is mobile, of course, but technology means no one's home is their castle anymore.





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We also passed Madagascar Point, a German machine-gun position shortened on British trench maps – aptly – to ‘Mad Point’. Along a track beside an old railway line, the guidebook told us there had once been medical posts tending to dazed and bloodied men. A cemetery had stood there too. Now, there were just fields. We saw no one, not even on the tracks – only a puzzled resident of a house on the main road who peered from his window as we passed. I greeted him as I followed James. The Frenchman nodded, bemused. Two idiot Englishmen – not the first this landscape has seen.



That thought was gently corrected by the very touching contents of the Musée Alexandre Villedieu. After lunch in the car park at Loos-en-Gohelle, we met Gilles, a volunteer guide at the museum, for a prearranged tour – the only way to visit. Old-fashioned and charming, the museum is sadly too small for a school group – a regret of mine. Gilles proudly told us every item had been donated, some by the families of veterans. He hovered the whole time, but gave us space to read, to look and to photograph. How long can such places survive? What happens when there are no more Gilles? He asked to photograph us for a Facebook post – part of the museum’s effort to boost its profile. Naturally, we agreed and made a small donation. Worried I hadn’t given enough, I resolved to return next year with my friend Clive, a former King’s parent. The remains of his great uncle, Private Joe Rycraft, were recently discovered during construction work, identified by DNA, and reburied with full military honours in the nearby Loos British Cemetery Extension.

That cemetery – and Private Rycraft’s grave – was our final stop of the day. I almost forgot to sign the cemetery visitor’s book, but something made me look

back towards the brass door that holds it – and I remembered. Spots of rain meant I had to hurry the considerable distance back to the car, which I reached just in time before the heavens opened. I marvelled at the Providence that kept us dry amid so much rain that day. Were the ghosts of Loos watching over us, knowing our mission? What made me turn my head before I left Loos British Cemetery Extension? And was it the satnav – or the ghost of Edward Lloyd – that called us to Rue-David?





## Glyn Meacher-Jones OKS (1959)



David Meacher-Jones kindly wrote to us to inform us of the passing of his father and he very kindly forwarded his words from the Order of Service at his Dad's funeral.

"I would like to take a moment to share with you a little about Dad's life, and some of the memories that mean so much to us. Dad was born on 13 January 1942 in Hoole, and he was always very proud to be a Cestrian. His roots, though, were in Wales. His grandfather was born on Anglesey and played football for Wales but later moved to Crewe to work as an accountant for the railway and from there the family moved to Chester.

"Glyn went to Newton Primary School and later attended the King's School when it was still based in the Cathedral. King's played a large part in his life and he later became President of CAOKS, The Chester Association of Old King's Scholars. In his younger days he rowed for both King's and Royals, and his passion for the sport endured as he never missed the Oxford-Cambridge boat race and often attended and sponsored a race at the Chester Regatta.

"Growing up I'm told, dad always loved cars and motor racing and he would spend as much time as possible at Oulton Park. He managed to talk himself into a job selling Wall's ice cream there because it gave him free entry into the race meetings.

"Dad's career started at Williams Deacons Bank — later known as Williams & Glyn's and it was on a bank outing that he met Mum, who worked at Midland Bank on Eastgate Street. They began married life in

Vicars Cross, but before long Mum persuaded him to move out to Farndon. Having lived in Chester all his life, Dad joked it felt as though he was moving to the other side of the world. He soon grew to love it though, and in the early 1970s they built a house on a plot of land they owned in the village.

"And when I say **they** built it I mean **'they built it'** with my dad doing much of the work in the evening's and at weekends. I personally have fond memories of growing up on what was, for a time, a very exciting building site.

"Over the course of his working life, Dad held several positions in finance, but perhaps most notably he became a co-owner and Group Finance Director of Geochem a role that took him all over the world including Egypt, Syria, Nigeria, and America — negotiating and securing contracts for oil exploration.

"Following the sale of the business in the late 1990s, he turned his energy closer to home and helped me set up my own accountancy firm in Chester and I will always be grateful for his support in making that happen.

"One of the passions we shared was clay pigeon shooting and I have many happy memories of shooting with Dad, whether it was on Mike Cornes's farm in Crewe by Farndon or at the West Midlands Shooting Ground in Hodnet. I'm also grateful for the times we spent together at the City Club, the Pitt Club, and the Lodges we were both members of. In my year as President of the City Club I am so pleased that he was able to attend our Annual Dinner and my President's Invitation Lunch last Christmas.

"Now not many of you will have heard about Dad's unexpected midwifery skills. But on a cold, dark night in January 1973, he ended up delivering my sister Helen himself, when the midwife didn't make it to Farndon in time.

"His granddaughter, Melody has memories growing up always wanting to be like him. He may have been a businessman, but he had such a love for music and photography that rubbed off on her. She can still picture him picking her up from school in his Jag, blasting out Toto's "Africa" or Tina Turner, and her sitting there thinking she was the coolest kid around.



# Obituaries

“Then there are the memories of Pwllheli and the boat. One day, as they were sailing out of the marina under a clear sky with a gentle breeze and calm sea, the peace was shattered by the Titanic theme blasting out from the cabin below. Melody had decided the moment needed a bit more ‘drama’ — and the entire marina got to enjoy it too!

“In early 2020 dad was diagnosed with Parkinson’s which he always referred to as a ‘cruel disease’. Despite this he wanted to enjoy himself and up until fairly recently was still managing to have lunch at the Club every Tuesday with his dear friends John Leaman and William Major.

“He was an avid fan of Tina Turner and enjoyed her music for many years and a couple of weeks ago we brought a smile to his face when my mum danced into his room in the care home wearing a Tina Turner wig with Tina Turner’s ‘Simply the Best’ blasting in the background.

“I’m sure you will all have your own fond memories of my dad. I think what has stood out to the family is the number of people who have commented on the same things about him – his cheeky smile, his kindness and what a gentleman he was. He was all of these things and much more. To us, he was..... ‘Simply the Best’. Thank you.”

## John Stanley Douglas OKS (1949)



King’s is saddened to share the news that John Douglas (OKS 1949), passed away peacefully on Thursday 8 August, aged 93.

John was a hugely valued, long-term supporter of King’s and past President of the Chester Association of Old King’s Scholars.

Reflecting on his time at the school some years ago, he said: ““For me, King’s is not just a school, it is also a family. My association with The King’s School is a long one. I attended the School from 1942 to 1949. One of my grandchildren – followed in my footsteps, attending between 2007 and 2012 and today my daughter Janet sits on the School’s Board of Governors.

“My years at King’s were punctuated by the onset of WWII, yet despite the tumultuousness of this difficult time, the School did its utmost to maintain excellent academic standards and I have always been thankful for the solid all-round education which I was provided with.”

He also gave his name to the John S Douglas Snooker Challenge Trophy, that he kindly provided for OKS versus Grammar School match, held at City Club, since 1994. John was a well-respected and long term member of the Club, having joined in January 1974. He was also a Past President of the Club, having been President in 1998.

Before retiring, he was a Partner at Denton Clark & Co. He worked in surveying and property with a focus on rural work. He was well respected in the community and was also very proud to have been a Past President of the Chester Association of Old King’s Scholars. He enjoyed travelling and family time as well as being a Club member, golfer and member of a shoot.

Our thoughts remain with his family and in particular his daughter and former King’s Governor, Janet Carr.



## Alan John Howell OKS (1971)



(60% or more in every subject) qualification in Methodist Preaching.

He worked for an international religious charity for most of his life both in this country and in Turkey where he covertly carrying out missionary work.

Alan worked for People International and Interserve within which he was manager of Kitab, their book resource, for 16 years.

Alan’s brother David wrote to me to let me know the sad news, having found a copy of the CAOKS newsletter in the unopened post.

“I regret to have to inform you that Alan died at his home at the end of May 2025, recorded death 3 June 2025, at the age of 64.”

Alan attended the Chester King’s School between 1969 and 1971, a pupil in Mrs Marsh’s BETA class in 1969 to 1970



## John Boyne OKS (1951)

I am sad to inform you that my father, John Boyne, has passed away recently.

He was very proud of his time at King's. He believed that it gave him a firm foundation from which to build his first career as an army officer, retiring with the rank of Major General, before going on to develop a second one as Chairman of the Board for international businesses focussed on property and the largest global horse racing and breeding operation.

Best regards,

David Boyne



He went on to achieve a BSc degree in Science of Engineering Materials and later achieved a Grade 3



# Obituaries



**Event Details** Saturday, 21st March 2025 The King’s School

Arrival from 6:30pm | Carriages at 10:30pm

£85.00 per person – includes arrival drink and a delicious three-course meal

## Menu

### Starters

- ★ Spiced tempura of seabass, Asian slaw, sweet chilli and tomato dressing
- ★ Whipped goats cheese spring salad, asparagus, pickled beetroot and balsamic gel (V)

### Mains

- ★ Roast breast of chicken, stuffed with a stilton and spinach mousseline, dauphinoise potatoes, glazed carrots and buttered cavolo nero, red wine jus
- ★ Butternut squash, sage and chestnut wellington (V)

### Dessert

- ★ Salted caramel tart, chocolate soil, caramel ice cream and fresh honeycomb (V)

(Please advise of any dietary requirements when booking.)

Please book your tickets via the following link

<https://alumni.kingschester.co.uk/events/691b1ecd274b370008b006fc/description?ticket=691b1ecd274b370008b006fa> or via the alumni website.

We hope you will join us for what promises to be a memorable evening of celebration, reflection, and community

With best wishes from the Alumni Team

We are pleased to invite you to the 159th CAOKS Annual Dinner, taking place on Saturday, 21st March 2026 at The King’s School.

This year’s dinner will be a particularly significant occasion as we gather to celebrate and bid a warm farewell to George Hartley in advance of his summer departure. His leadership and commitment have greatly shaped the School during his tenure as Head.

As George prepares to move to Madrid, this evening offers a special opportunity to honour his contribution to our community. We will also be recognising James Millard, Deputy Head of Academic, for his dedicated service to the School over the past 21 years.

A new format this year we wish to let you know that, for the first time, the Annual Dinner will also be open to parents. Parents will receive their invitation on 10 December 2025, but we are sharing this early invitation with our alumni community first to ensure you have full opportunity to secure your place.

With an expanded guest list this year, we strongly encourage early booking. If you would like to sit together with friends, please consider reserving a table of 8–10 guests. Otherwise, you may be seated with other guests.



## The Final Word



It never ceases to amaze me how quickly time seems to fly by these days. It's almost like there is direct correlation between the passing of time and us getting older. A subconscious realisation maybe or the realisation that once you have hit 50 then you have probably had more time in this world than you have left. For me, that has really focussed the mind in the past couple of years. Don't put off until tomorrow what you can do today.

Like many of you I was saddened to hear of the passing of Mike Fox earlier in the year. I remember Mike and his wife Hilary very well despite not being taught by either of them as far as I recall. Maybe a term or two of German in the Third Form perhaps? But I didn't stick at that very well – and it wasn't a lone subject in that regard haha! My memories are mainly from when languages and music were taught in mobile buildings surrounding the junior school playground area.

I was mentioning Mike to my friends in the OKS 1990 WhatsApp group and one of them mentioned that when they started as a trainee at a London law firm, they were paired up a 2nd year trainee who turned out to be Ben Fox, Mike's son. I remember Ben from his rowing exploits as the cox.

Other memories of Mike included remembering that he used to refer to a chap in our year called Swinnerton as Swine-er-town. Another chap recalled Mike telling the class about how languages can overlap with others. He and his wife went to Scandinavia and saw a "Bok" shop. Somehow everyone got fixated on "Bog" (kids eh?) but of course it was a bookshop not a bathroom fittings emporium.

Of course, we have the new Alumni website online now which will offer another means of keeping in touch with other OKS. Many thanks to Gemma Carvell and everyone involved in bringing this idea to fruition. You can find the site here

<https://alumni.kingschester.co.uk/newsfeed>

It has a familiar social media style "skin" which should allow people to interact with ease no matter if young or old. There are also groups within the application based on year (Class of 1990 for example) and based upon interests (Music, Football and so on). Take a look and get involved if you fancy it.

I was speaking with another former classmate the other day who has not got back in touch with school. The same kind of thought processes as I had a few years ago when considering whether to go to a reunion or summer event: Shall I go? Will they remember me? Is XXX still an idiot?

I think the key is that we have all changed a lot since we were at school (particularly when we are talking about 30 years or more) and yes, maybe we were not so keen on some of our peers for whatever reason but, coming back to how I started this column, don't "die wondering". Give it a go – come along to reunion, a CAOKS event or even the Christmas Carol Service at Chester Cathedral. I will be at the Carol Service in December so if anyone fancies meeting up the evening before or after the service, just drop me a line and we can sort something out.

As ever I would like to thank everyone for reading our humble newsletter and for contributing in many cases too. It's the heart of the operation and without your input, there isn't a newsletter really. Wishing you all a Merry Christmas, Happy Holidays and all the very best for the coming year.

Steve Williams

23/11/25



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# Officers

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## OFFICERS AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

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|                             |                        |                                                                                  |
|-----------------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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|                             | Robin Hardi (1987)     |                                                                                  |
|                             | Clive Crowe (1992)     |                                                                                  |
|                             | Abi Fisher (2004)      |                                                                                  |
|                             | Selena O'Donnell       |                                                                                  |
| <b>HEADMASTER</b>           | George Hartley         | <a href="mailto:headmaster@kingschester.co.uk">headmaster@kingschester.co.uk</a> |
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| <b>STAFF MEMBER</b>         | Ann Marie McMahon      |                                                                                  |

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