



# WOODBIDGE SCHOOL

OLD WOODBRIDGIAN MAGAZINE 2024



**IN THIS ISSUE:**  
EDUCATING OWs  
HISTORIC OW CONNECTIONS  
IN MEMORY OF MARY LILEY

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# FROM THE HEAD

Dear Old Woodbridgians,

Although my parents will still bring out photographs of me as a small child teaching my dolls to write and marking their work, I did not always want to be a teacher. For some time my heart was set upon law. It was only when I was studying English that one of my modules, entitled 'Shakespeare in the Classroom', confirmed what my vocation was going to be. Later on, as part of my teacher training, I was paired with the most incredible teacher – Mrs Jane Saunders. I still have all her notes taken from lesson observations, her schemes of work, and her dog-eared, annotated copy of Beowulf is one of my most treasured possessions. Jane taught me first hand the importance of connecting with every student. As an English teacher she would say that there is no excuse for a pupil not falling in love with language and literature and so it was the art of a teacher, and the joy of that experience, to ensure that they found common ground to connect. Many Old Woodbridgians reading this introduction who were taught by me in Year 7, will recall my own Mrs Saunders-inspired lessons on Beowulf and Grendel alongside our subsequent inspiration from Sutton Hoo. When I arrived at Woodbridge School over twenty years ago, I could not believe my luck at how close we were to this Anglo-Saxon burial ground, and the many links between our School and this archaeological treasure.



Whenever I attend OW events, I am often regaled with stories about teachers at Woodbridge. There will always be that one individual who captured your imagination, who encouraged you to be ambitious and to believe in your own abilities, and who fuelled a lifelong love of a topic or subject area. In the pages of this edition, we shall hear from several OWs about their own experiences and recollections of the teacher(s) who most inspired them.

Our School continues to grow and thrive. At any point if you are close by or back in the area then do not hesitate to get in contact with us as we would be more than happy to show you how our site has evolved, and everything that is going on. Walking the corridors and being within the grounds, no doubt memories of those teachers and life at Woodbridge will come flooding back.

With all best wishes,

**Shona Norman**

# EDUCATING OWs

To celebrate the high proportion of OWs who are in education we asked a few of you to share your experiences. We'd love to hear from more of you, so if you'd like to share your story, please get in touch. However, to get the ball rolling we asked our President Stephen Cole why he entered the teaching profession.

“I can root the choice in two experiences: my Godfather was for 30+ years head of science and housemaster at King's School, Ely. I remember one lunchtime him leaning over a steaming chocolate pudding and saying, “I love the smell of the latent heat of vaporization”. The other was a lesson at Dulwich with a now deceased maths teacher nicknamed “Oogle Boogle” (on the basis of his army

service on the Suez Canal). He showed us how to solve trigonometrical integrals with de Moivre's theorem. It was complete fun. (But then, as I have often said to my granddaughters, I wasn't square in those days, more cuboid). In my final year at Oxford, we had a compulsory half-hour with a careers officer. He asked what I wanted to do after graduating, and I replied that I had been asked to study for a DPhil but

wanted to teach physics. He said that I wasn't to waste his time and needed to be serious. I left with offers of interviews at Porton Down, Sandhurst, the British Missionary Service and Imperial Tobacco. (I have never smoked but otherwise he was a good judge of interest!) I binned it all just outside his door and stayed at Oxford for my PGCE: a decision that at no time during the ensuing half century I have ever regretted.”

*In 1959 Keith Banthorp (1952-1959) and Anthony Bill (1951-1959), each blindfolded, stuck a pin in a map to help them decide where to do their teacher training. Anthony's pin landed in the Midlands, Keith's aim was less helpful, and he found himself metaphorically floundering in the English Channel so he plumped for the closest place to his pin, Bognor Regis. Keith and Anthony were by no means the first OWs to become teachers and will certainly not be the last. Here are just some of the many OWs who teach:*



**Name: EMMA BROWN**  
(née Drane)

**Years at Woodbridge School:**  
1988-1995

**Degree/University:** BA in Humanities, Art History & Music, PGCE in Secondary Music/ Goldsmiths University

**First teaching post:** Eltham Green Secondary School, Teacher of Music

**In between posts:** The Bridge Academy, Fulham, Harrogate Grammar School, Harrogate, St Peters College of Maths and Computing, Redcar, Harrow Way Community School, Andover, Saplings Forest School, Rushall, Swindon Academy Primary School, Swindon

**Current teaching post:** Swindon Academy, but due to start at my new school in September – Clarendon Junior School, Tidworth

I believe teaching is more than just imparting knowledge; it is also about instilling values and giving all young people the chance to realise their potential. I studied Music and Art History at University and learnt very quickly that these



**Name: KATE BOOTH-DAVEY**  
(née Pike)

**Years at Woodbridge School:**  
I joined the Abbey in Year 5, (I think! I was 9 nearly 10) in 1989. Then went onto Woodbridge until I left in Year 13 in 1998

**Degree/University:** BSc Biology with Oceanography/ Southampton

**First teaching post:** Clevedon School, Clevedon, Somerset

**In-between teaching posts:**  
Photogrammetric Technician with Ordnance Survey, making maps with aerial photos  
**Current teaching post:**  
Redmaids High School, Bristol

I wanted to do something that related more to my degree in biology and also let me be flexible to travel. Having started teaching for these reasons, now I teach for the job satisfaction and constantly changing days, with entertaining children.

Having been head of biology at my previous school for quite a while, I wanted to step down and have less pressure, so I took on a more part time role as a teacher at Redmaids. The school is much smaller, and the teaching day is longer so it feels less stressful.

subjects, particularly music, are extremely accessible and inclusive, and provide everyone with the opportunity to achieve success. I remember how my art teacher Mrs Jones gave me confidence to achieve, despite not being a naturally talented artist. Mr Bruce was also an amazing languages teacher and I remember him teaching me much more than just the knowledge I needed to learn those languages. Music has given me so many opportunities to build confidence and development personally. Music at Woodbridge reinforced this, particularly with Mr Penny and Ms Davidson, along with my involvement in the National Youth Choir.

All of this inspired me to go into teaching; I wanted to inspire young people to believe in themselves and ultimately achieve their goals.

After teaching music for some years and becoming head of department, I became far more interested in seeking to better understand young people and support their behaviour. This led to roles such as Assistant Head of Inclusion and Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). My teaching career has spanned early years, primary and secondary, including mainstream provisions, a PRU (pupil referral unit) and founding and being Director of my own forest school for nursery-aged children.

For a number of reasons, not least my husband's time in

During my time at Woodbridge, I loved doing CCF and this is where I was first introduced to teaching. Mr Bruce and Miss Richardson encouraged me to teach and lead small groups of my peers. I remember having to write a proper lesson plan on how to teach someone how to clean a rifle and despite the hard work, really enjoyed it. I was also inspired by some really fantastic teachers at Woodbridge: Mr Mileham was a huge support and always had time to help me with any chemistry questions and Mr de Wet and Dr Carter inspired me in biology. I loved my time at the Abbey and Woodbridge and even had my wedding reception in the main hall and grounds of the Abbey.

the British Army, I have so far taught in seven schools across London, the north of England and now in Wiltshire. Since settling in the South West I have taught in three schools covering all age groups. In their own particular way, all schools must deal with challenges, whether caused by child behaviour, parental engagement or extreme deprivation. In September I will start a new role as head of a primary school in the Army garrison town of Tidworth. I anticipate subtly different challenges here, particularly considering the transient nature of military communities and long periods of separation within families.

## EDUCATING OWS



**Name:** LISA PANG

**Years at Woodbridge School:** 1999-2005

**Degree/University:** BSc Zoology/ University of Bristol, PGCE Science/University of Reading

**First Teaching Post:** Ilford Grammar School

**In-between teaching post:** Abbotsfield School for Boys

**Current teaching post:** King George V School, Hong Kong

No day is dull or ever the same, no matter how much

you prepare. Every teaching day you get a chance to try and do better: develop someone's understanding; boost their confidence; promote a love of learning and of course grow as an educator. The energy from the students is refreshing. On some occasions roles are reversed with teenagers but the challenge of teaching is always a motivation. The mix of skills needed to be a good teacher are numerous and that's what makes the job interesting. I am continually trying to improve by understanding the science of learning – how the brain works (how the teenage brain works), being inclusive, organised, dependable and ask good questions, nurture independent thinkers, coach, mediate... the list goes on. Also, the people you work with are amazing.

I think back to my days at Woodbridge and I appreciate all my teachers. They really inspired

me and supported me throughout my whole time at school – I wish I was as good a storyteller as Mr Milehem, Mr Pluke and Mr Cole.

I moved to Hong Kong searching for more understanding of my heritage. My father had moved back the year before and my London-based housemate was also returning. I went without securing a job, just with hopes and dreams that something will work out. I find the fast paced, easy going, gritty, bougie way Hong Kong runs fascinating. It's everything in one tiny place. This makes the teaching, students and colleagues even more varied and the job is even more exciting. Being in a global city has opened my eyes. The phrase a lot of people say as expats working here is, "I came for a 2-year contract, it's really hard to leave Hong Kong!".



**Name:** JAMES RAMSDEN

**Years at Woodbridge School:** 1999-2006

**Degree/University:** Mathematics BSc/Durham

**First teaching post:** Bromsgrove School, Worcestershire (3 years)

**Second teaching post:** St Paul's School, London (6 years)

**Current teaching post:**

The Godolphin and Latymer School, London (4 years)

I guess my first glimpses of teaching came during my time at Woodbridge and, whilst I enjoyed lessons at school, I'm not sure it particularly crossed my mind to consider teaching until after I left. In Sixth Form I experienced a range of teaching methods and it seems odd now there were few computers in classrooms then – the Redstone building was seen to be modern and I recall Mr Rabjohn using software in teaching Further Maths but at the other end of the spectrum half of my A level physics was delivered via a large roll of acetate and an OHP (and maybe the very occasional VHS on a trolley).

My first job as a pupil was helping at kids' Saturday sessions at my local tennis club. Then later at Woodbridge I did the Sports Leadership program where we'd help at the Abbey and other local primary schools. During Sixth Form I went on visits to the Bridge School in Islington with Mr Edwards where a small group of us helped young people with severe and profound learning difficulties and that was and probably still is one of my most significant experiences of the difference an adult can make to a child's life.

At school I was also part of the Chamber Choir, had singing lessons with Elspeth Davidson and was part of a successful contingent of OWS in joining the National Youth Choir of Great Britain. At university, I managed to



**Name:** SIMON HILL

**Years at Woodbridge School:** 2000-2007

**Degree/University:**

MA Natural Sciences/ University of Cambridge, PGCE/University of Sheffield

**First (and current) teaching post:** Meadowhead School and Sixth Form, Sheffield

I love being a teacher at Meadowhead, the largest school in Sheffield. I teach

science to students from Year 7 to 13, and particularly enjoy teaching chemistry to my Sixth Form students. As a comprehensive state school, we have a hugely varied intake from a wide catchment area. We deal with some challenging behaviour, and with many disadvantaged students, but also with some very aspirational families. I am hugely proud of the success our students achieve each year and of the part I play in it.

I have very fond memories of Woodbridge and I am still greatly influenced by so many of the members of staff. I had phenomenal teachers who I of course still think back to when I reflect on what excellent teaching should look like. I would like to mention them all but will have to pick just a few. Stephen Cole

avoid the traditional third-year project/dissertation by opting for a Mathematics Teaching module and then, graduating in the aftermath of the financial crash, it seemed sensible to stay to do a PGCE. At the time I always considered teaching to be a back-up plan despite not having any other career plans (I think I probably just hoped to get rich somehow first).

My PGCE placements were markedly different to my own education – a school in Sunderland where my accent stood out and a now-demolished school in an ex-mining town in County Durham with a lot of challenging behaviour and where a quarter of the lesson was spent trying to get pupils' coats off. That experience left me frustrated at just trying to manage behaviour rather than teach but then a short experience

at Durham School teaching some Further Maths made me realise I loved that part of the job. My first teaching role came at a boarding school called Bromsgrove with lots of Sixth Form experience and I enjoyed living on-site with other young teachers. I had a good time there but ultimately wanted to find a better work-life balance, so I moved to London where I next worked at St Paul's School. It turned out Mr Streat (who had taught me at A level) had taught there and was remembered by a few colleagues. I learnt a lot of Mathematics in my six years there but wanted to progress further in my career. Fortunately, I didn't have to move far and am now Head of Mathematics at Godolphin and Latymer which is one of the top schools in the UK.

was a brilliant headmaster and a huge support to me both during and after my time as a pupil, particularly during my time as Head of School in Upper Sixth. He was influential in me training to become a teacher. Dick Rabjohn made A level maths something I was always excited to study, and he seemed to have endless energy for us and for his subject. Helen Richardson was the same, both as head of Willard and as my German teacher. Stephen Cottrell expected academic excellence in physics, and blended practical science with theory in a way I admire more now. I also enjoyed watching him put high voltage electricity through a gherkin once. Another science teacher with a passion for experiments was Ally Hillman, who was an inspirational and hugely knowledgeable chemistry teacher. Phil Lawrence's GCSE English lessons were a complete joy and, despite now being a science teacher, I think I try to emulate his teaching often. The Army Section of the CCF was also a hugely formative experience for me and I look back with enormous gratitude towards Richard Broaderwick, Graeme Bruce and all of the teachers involved.

I often reflect on the way in which moments which might seem unremarkable or inconsequential as a teacher might nevertheless be remembered keenly by a pupil. When I look back on my time at Woodbridge I am grateful for how many of these small moments have taught me or shaped me positively. I hope that some of these lessons are being passed on, in turn, to the students I teach now.



**Name:** HARRY HOGG

**Years at Woodbridge School:**

I joined The Abbey in Year 4 and went all the way through Woodbridge School (1999-2009)

**First teaching position:**

Ampleforth College (2012-2017)

**Current teaching position:**

Lambrook School (2017-now)

My time at Woodbridge School was brilliant – I joined in Year 4 following a stint at Kyson Primary and Mr Heazlewood was my tutor. Apart from fracturing tendons in my ankle, which put me on the sidelines and shattered my dreams of being a professional footballer, I had a such a happy time down at the prep school. The seven years at the senior school were no different. I could mention so many aspects of my time at school that were notable, from Geography lessons at the top of the old humanities block, to sports tours in Italy or creating sports games in the Sixth Form Centre with Mr Edwards turning a blind eye, to Sports Leadership sessions at local primary schools, there truly is so much to remember. The distinct thing that connects all these things, however, is the people I did it with and the teachers who made it all happen.

It is the people within a school that make it. The lottery of who is in your year and who

has the tricky job of teaching someone like me is remarkable, but I think I got a decent luck of the draw. The chucklesome memories of qualifying for national golf finals were made even more enjoyable because of Mr Saunders, for example. A true highlight of my time but I'm not sure how he put up with silly teenage boys looking back on it. Fortunately, we did better than a school from little old Suffolk should have done, and this must have helped our cause as having us on a trip and all of us sleeping in one dorm must have been taxing on his patience. He did a lot for us, and I'd like to thank him for that. Reading through famous literature and finding deep and meaningful metaphors with Miss Crossland, Mr Lawrence and Miss Norman in the Sixth Form was a ball and Geography lessons with Miss Gill and Dr Broaderwick were cracking fun as they brought it to life and, albeit my final grades don't reflect a glowing triumph of academic success, these have always been fond memories. The list really could go on, but the common theme is the people. The teachers create a school, and your friends make it all the more fun. Isn't it funny how you always bump into someone from Suffolk no matter where you are in the world? My current school in Berkshire had an inspection not so long ago and who was on the panel of inspectors? Mr Cole, of course! Happily, I wasn't involved in his part of the inspection, but it was a great story and fantastic to catch up with someone who was a key figure in my time at Woodbridge.

Teaching was never a 'calling' for me or an obvious route that I was going to explore after

Woodbridge or university. Truth be told, I didn't have a clue where I wanted to go or what I wanted to do, while all the adults around me poked and prodded for a decision. Some people know, don't they? "Off to Oxbridge for me" and Medicine or Law is the course, but from what I have learnt from my time in education, the vast majority of students do not have a scooby – hence the recent transition of schools to a more skills-based curriculum compared to a knowledge-focused one.

I spent five years at Ampleforth following my three years at the University of 'Ull and a kayaking expedition down the Mississippi River while raising money for Help for Heroes with Sam Norman and Matt Fraser (fellow OWs) before joining Lambrook in 2017. My belief remains – the friends you take along with you create the journey and if you look at Woodbridge School and the people within the community, I feel like we're a special breed. It doesn't matter who you meet in the King's Head, down by the river or in a random location around the world, if they went to Woodbridge, you could probably have a good old chat with them. For me, that's what a great school is all about. The good teachers you remember are the ones you had a good relationship with – sometimes you might not even remember the teaching! This is why I'm still in education and enjoy teaching where I do. If I were to leave, it wouldn't necessarily be the facilities, the opportunities or the location that I remember, but the people I have met along the way and those I have had the pleasure of teaching.

**And what of Messrs Banthorp and Bill?**

Tony Bill passed away in 2013 but his OW brother Chris makes the journey from Northumberland every year for the OW Senior Alumni Lunch and tells us Tony had a very distinguished career as a teacher working his way up through the ranks to a headship, taking in a BA in Education and finishing his career in teacher training at The College of St Mark and St John in Plymouth. Keith Banthorp fills us in:

It was the last week of my time at Woodbridge School when my good friend Tony Bill and I realised that, as we were about to leave school, we would need to find a job. We had been called into the Headmaster's Study earlier in the week and asked what our plans were – I think that was my careers advice/interview! Tony and I had become friends as we sat next to each other in class. (Our surnames were next to each other alphabetically which is how the seating plan was organised throughout lower school.)

We thought that teaching might be a good idea; long holidays, short days etc! We discovered it was too late to start teaching straight away and would need to apply for a place at Teacher Training College (as they were known then) for the following September. Our next task was to decide which college we would apply to. Armed with a list of teacher training colleges we each put on a blindfold and stuck a pin in a map of England and agreed the nearest college to where the pin landed would be the college we would apply for. Tony's pin landed in the Midlands; the nearest college was Saltley College Birmingham. My pin landed in the English Channel; the nearest college was Bognor Regis.



JANUARY 16, 1970

MR. KEITH BANTHORP, physical training master at Eye Modern School, briefs his cross-country team.

However, we still needed to find a job for the coming year, and it was at this point we learned that East Suffolk LEA was so short of teachers in some secondary schools they were prepared to employ people waiting for a place at teacher training college. Tony and I were whisked off to Eye Secondary Modern School and offered jobs to start in September. We lived in digs above a shop in Church Street, Eye during the week whilst we taught pupils not much younger than ourselves. During that Autumn Term we both sent off our applications to our chosen colleges. Out of the blue Tony was contacted by Saltley College to say that one person had not turned up and Tony could have their place. In the meantime, I was interviewed by the Principal of Bognor Regis College (in Church House Westminster as I recall) who offered me a place in two years' time: "clear off and do something else" was his advice.

I didn't 'do' something else, I remained an unqualified teacher at Eye for two years. After three years teacher training in PE

and History at Bognor I returned to Suffolk and was appointed to teach PE at Eye Secondary Modern School.

Whilst teaching at Eye I bumped into a fellow OW (coming out of a pub's gent's toilet no less) and he wondered what I was doing. Recalling my 'run-ins' and impersonations of the teaching staff during my time at Woodbridge when I said I was teaching, his face and comment, "My God! **You've** joined **them?**" was priceless.

After ten years I moved into primary education and worked at Trimley St Mary. Four years later I moved back to Eye as Deputy Head of Eye C of E Primary School. Very quickly I found I was teaching children of former pupils –that makes you feel old! In 1986 I was appointed Head of St Martin's C of E Primary School Oldham in Greater Manchester where I stayed until my retirement in 1996. I enjoyed my teaching career in all its different guises. Teaching and working with young people is both a privilege and challenge but I still found room for the odd impersonation and lots of fun!

*I can only begin this round up of the last year in the lives of Old Woodbridgians in one place...*

Probably the biggest OW occasion of the year was technically not an OW event. The wedding of our very own **Sarah Jeffrey** (2002–2011) and Peter Wright took place at St Mary's in Woodbridge on Saturday 1 June followed by a reception in the family home at Tangham. The count of current and former pupils, parents and staff was more than I could dream of. A wonderful occasion, immensely enjoyed by all who were privileged to be there. Woodbridge School can certainly claim this couple as their own as Sarah first met Pete when they both started work at Woodbridge in 2015. All the bridesmaids are OWs. L-R: Louise Goodall, Margy Camu, (Sarah), Lara Garrett, Francesca Ingram, Siobhan Thomson.



The wedding of **Oliver Norman** (2004–2013) and Maggie Hunt at Wrest Park on 18 May 2024, another wedding with a high OW count. Along with Ollie this picture includes his sister-in-law Lucy (née Foskett) Amy, Laura and Sophie Graham (all usherettes), Amy Picken and Georgie Veale.



On 1 July 2023 **Isabella Clark** (2007–2011) married Jack Mann at her family home in Stutton.



**Coco Newton** (2005–2014) married Kati Lestak on 15 July 2023 at Snape Maltings. We were thrilled to welcome Coco as Guest of Honour at Speech Day on 5 July 2024. You can read her OW Profile on page 16.

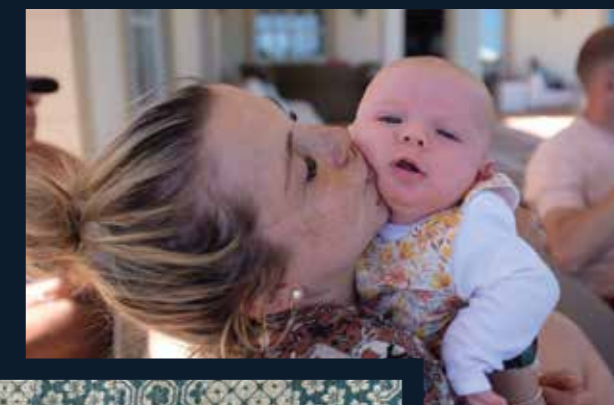


Alice and Charlie Hatcher at Chelsea Town Hall, baby Taron



Jasper Wolfe Mann (28/03/2024)

In time honoured fashion following OW weddings we hear news of OW babies. It seems you are never too far from an OW and this year NCT classes seem to be doing as good a job at reconnecting OWs as I am! **Isabella Mann** (see left...) and **Charlie Hatcher** (1996–2010) found themselves in the same class in Battersea and **Will Bloomfield** and **Charlotte Christie** at another. 2024 being a leap year there was always the potential for 29 February babies. Rather wonderfully we have two OW leaplings. One born to Charlie and his wife Alice and the other to **Jade Foster** (2009–2011) and her partner Jared Pearson.



Jade Foster and Rosie Anya Pearson



Frank Rollo Courtenay Clack born 31/03/2024 is a son, nephew, grandson and great-nephew of OWs. His mum being **Harriet** (née Sutch, 2003–2010), uncles **Louis** (1998–2005) and **Josef** (1999–2006), grandfather **Simon Sutch** (1966–1971) and great-uncle **Adam Sutch** (1964–1970).



It has been wonderful to see many OWs coming in to school over the last year to share their experiences and expertise with our current students. At the end of January **Alistair Jeffreys** (2008–2015) was part of a BT team running a Computational Thinking workshop for local primary schools as part of our wider Primary Enrichment Programme. Another strand of the same Primary Enrichment Programme saw fellow 2015 leaver **Kathryn Clements** bring 30 Year 6 pupils from Sidegate Lane Primary School in Ipswich to the Seckford Theatre for an outreach session with Gemma Mayes to produce a performance of *Twelfth Night*. Gemma, our Head of Drama, had been working with the students, before bringing them to Woodbridge for the final performance. Kathryn has just this term started a new teaching position at Canary Wharf College in London but won't be a stranger to Woodbridge as she continues to return now and again to provide fantastic support to the Drama department as a choreographer, most recently for Shakespeare on the Lawn.



**Ben Askins** (2004–2010) and **Tom Petley** (2002–2010) founded their business Gaia, one of the UK's fastest growing green tech companies in 2023. In June they came back to Woodbridge to judge the Year 9 Enterprise Day.

As part of the sports performance programme at Woodbridge School **Simon Drane** (1991–1998), former TeamGB sports psychologist, joined us in May and June to talk to students about the importance of mental skills in sport as well as the impact that effective training of these skills can have on performance. Simon's OW profile is on page 36.



OWs are a sociable bunch and appear to like nothing more than a convivial catch up over a good meal. The Cherry Tree in Woodbridge (no doubt familiar to many of you) regularly sees this bunch get together, this photo from September 2023.



L-R: Chris Mobbs (1970–1980), John Simpson (1971–1979), Sean O'Dell (1972–1977), Graeme Pryke (1969–1977) Richard Hobson (1969–1979)



**Owen Butcher** (2010–2017) recently became the newest member of *The Swingles*, one of the world's most admired and loved vocal groups. Owen came back and taught singing at Woodbridge last year but is going on to bigger and better things.

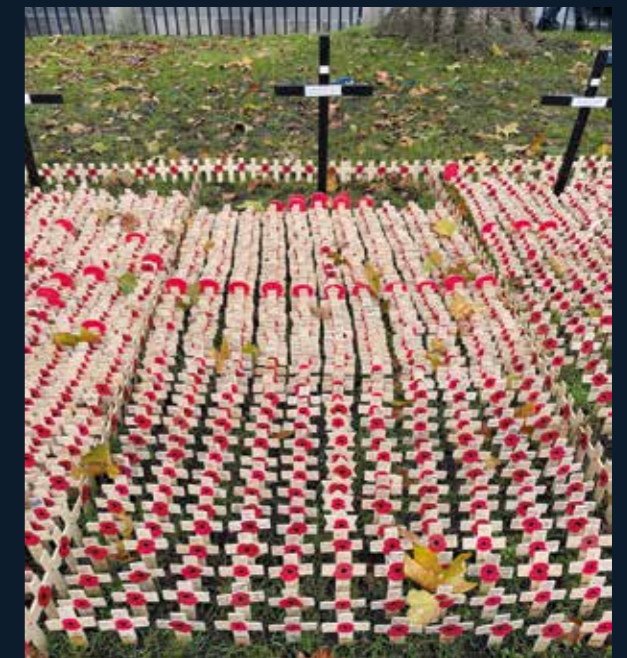
*A few words from Owen: "I am truly lost for words at how excited I am to be joining this amazing group! To say this is my dream job would be an understatement – I could not be happier and absolutely cannot wait to get started!"*

All of us at Woodbridge School are similarly proud and excited for Owen.

South of the Thames this group of 66/67 leavers are pictured having a pre-prandial drink beside the River Arun in West Sussex before lunch at The Black Rabbit in Arundel.



L-R: Simon Lane, Stephen Fry, Brian Dandridge, Peter Mosley, Roger Brown-Hovelt (Tim Jenkins behind the camera, where else?!)



At the opposite end of the country the 'Northern Branch' of the OWs, formed after the 2023 Senior Alumni Lunch, celebrated their first anniversary on 22 May. **Roger Brunt** and **Robert Seaton** travelled to Dundee to meet up with fellow 1973 leaver **Charles Craske**. As a regular donor to the Royal British Legion, Charles requested that the wooden cross which he receives each year, be placed in the Field of Remembrance at Westminster Abbey, in memory of OWs lost in war. He was unable to attend the event himself, but I was honoured to visit Westminster on behalf of Charles and the Woodbridgian community. A beautiful and thoughtful way to commemorate those from Woodbridge School who lost their lives in WW1 and WW2.



In the 40th anniversary year of **Tim Roberts** (1977–1984) winning the McMaster Prize at Woodbridge School he was recognised by the American Society of Neuroradiology: namely the Outstanding Contribution to Research 2024. Tim is Professor of Radiology at the University of Pennsylvania/Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.

Connections formed at school are long-lasting and not just those between students but also those between students and teachers. In March an exhibition took place at Asylum Studios, Bentwaters which showcased work by Jimmy Hutch and **Olly Brown** (2017–2022), both painters but in different phases of their careers.

The artists met at Woodbridge School where Olly was an A level artist and Hutch is Head of Art. Olly has just finished his first year studying Fine Art at The Slade, UCL, whilst Hutch continues to be a practicing artist as well as a full-time teacher. The art programme at school had a major influence on Olly, and symbiotically coaching young artists has had a transformative effect on Hutch. Influence is a two-way street. In this show the artists hoped to juxtapose the different phases of their careers by finding common ground within the space of an exhibition.

A post about this exhibition on Facebook elicited an amusing response which perfectly illustrates how times have changed. From **Willy Gilder** (1960–1970): "Whoa, for us 60s kids the idea of an exhibition at Bentwaters is fairly mind-blowing!"



**Phases**  
An exhibition by Jimmy Hutch and Olly Brown  
16th - 23rd March 2024 Private View 16th March 6 - 8  
Asylum Studios, Building E2 Bentwaters Park,  
Rendlesham, Suffolk IP12 2TW  
ollysemail123@gmail.com  
@olivermatthewbrown  
07850196736  
me@byhutch.com  
@byhutchart  
07814926173

## OW GOLF

Our OW golfers have been busy. At the end of September, a small but perfectly formed group of OWs met to enjoy the sunshine and a great day of golf at Woodbridge Golf Club.

Regular readers will know that Grafton Morrish is an annual tournament between teams of alumni from different independent schools. The finals took place in October, and as ever, we have a Woodbridge team to be proud of.

Another year, another successful Grafton Morrish campaign. We performed well in qualifying to make it through to the finals. With just eight spots available in the finals and 18 schools competing, we're always relieved if we can make it through. There are 48 schools in the finals, and we landed in an incredibly tough section of the knockout draw. Our first match was against Tonbridge, amazingly we managed to beat them which took us to the second round where we faced Sutton Valance. Another magnificent team performance saw us progress to round three where we faced defending champions Epsom. Despite a really good battle, we couldn't quite get it done.

Team: **James Holland** (captain), **Ian Kitson**, **Josh Logan**, **Josh Robertson**, **Tom Wake**, **Steve Whymark**. Finally, a massive thank you to our 7th man **Paul Savage**. He didn't get a game this year but is vital for both emotional support and as a caddy and team advisor. The weather was kind and the team spirit just incredible. It really is a reflection on what amazing relationships can be formed both during school, and also as OWs. The age range in the team is 26 to 75!

James Holland (1993–1985), Captain, Woodbridge School Grafton Morrish Golf Team

In May the OW team qualified for the 2024 finals which will take place later this year. Fingers crossed for an even better result this time.



L-R: Roland Brockman (1963–1967), Philip Ambrose (1956–1961), David Houchell (1953–1964), Roger Burgess (1947–1958), Percy Hallam (1981–1991)

## OW CRICKET WEEKEND – 29/30 JUNE 2024



Woodbridge School's new pavilion project enjoyed a flying start as four teams of pupils and old boys enjoyed a fiesta of cricket.

Ten-over matches receive a bad press sometimes, but it is the perfect format for this weekend, with the matches short and sweet. The present First XI faced a 1990s side led by 1991 school captain Huw Turbervill, a 2000s team skippered by Ben Askins, and a 2010s captained by Ali Lloyd. The latter teams met in the final, which was won by the 2000s.

It was a super day of six hits, tumbling wickets and fine food and drink on the wonderful First XI square, and Tollers, which also looked lovely.

The following day Huw led an OWs XI to another victory over the school in a T20. Chris Marshall (1992–1984) shone with the bat, and Richard Pineo (ex-Abbey, now a PE teacher at the school) was the stand-out bowler.



## MARATHON ENDEAVOURS

Sunday 21 April (momentous for another reason you will hear about later) saw people young and old from across the wider Woodbridge School community taking part in the London Marathon. We were incredibly proud to have many children from our Pre-Prep, Prep and Senior School taking part, as well as the Head of Woodbridge School Prep **Nicola Mitchell**, our Director of Finance **Simon Stafford**, and lots of OWs. I heard from two who made it over the finish line:



**John Hudson** (1960–1970): Just a quick note to say that I am still alive, having completed my 18th London Marathon in rather a slow time of 5hr 28min and 54sec (to be precise). I was 139th out of 198 runners in the 70 to 74 age bracket, about 50,000 runners in total. This was my last marathon, so I just jogged round, to enable me to enjoy the atmosphere and the support of the crowd. The emotions were mixed; joy of finishing again but sadness as it is my last one. I did shed a tear when running over Tower Bridge for the last time. We live in the Exe Valley in Devon. The only way is up from our house, so the training takes its toll these days. A few years ago there was a sign at the entrance to the registration area that said: "You have done the hard part, 500 miles of training. Now the easy part, running 26 miles.". How true that is!

**Victoria Williams** (2004–2018): I left Woodbridge in 2018 and graduated from Nottingham Trent University in 2022 with a first class degree in French and Spanish. Following my degree I carried out a conversion masters in law and earlier this year I started a new position as a paralegal at a boutique law firm in London called McKenzia Solicitors. Away from my job I believe the work that is carried out at East Anglia's Children's Hospice (EACH) is incredible and I was keen to help the organisation get the recognition and funds that it deserves. I loved the marathon! I finished in a time of 4:37:31 and managed to raise £1558 for EACH. Thanks to all those who supported me, especially my OW boyfriend and friends who met me at the end.



## WE REMEMBER

### FORMER PUPILS

- John Alexander: 1932–2023 (1941–1949)
- David Bedford: 1935–2023 (1946–1954)
- John Berg: 1936–2024 (1946–1954)
- Michael Berry: 1930–2023 (1958–1964)
- Joe (Nigel) Broadbent: 1945–2024 (1953–1963)
- Richard Brunt: 1949–2023 (1958–1967)
- John Chilcott: 1931–2023 (1941–1945)
- Ian Crowe: 1938–2024 (1947–2024)
- Stephen Date: 1962–2024 (1970–1980)
- Peter Dowdeswell: 1947–2023 (1958–1963)
- Roger Fairclough: 1958–2023 (1970–1976)
- Nigel 'Leaf' Fielding: 1948–2023 (1956–1966)
- Ian Fletcher: 1978–2023 (1990–1995)
- Nigel Hammond: 1945–2024 (1954–1957)
- Tom Henson: 1931–2024 (1945–1949)\*
- (Eric) Geoffrey Holmes: 1927–2023 (1941–1945)
- Ronald Last: 1929–2024 (1940–1945)
- Geoffrey Lawes: 1930–2022 (1941–1942)
- Clive Marshall: 1930–2024 (1940–1947)
- Sigrid Mermagen: 1970–2023 (1982–1987)
- Christopher Miers: 1958–2023 (1969–1972)
- Dominic Mills: 1980–2024 (1993–1998)
- Richard Morris: 1933–2024 (1947–1950)
- Stuart Rayner: 1938–2024 (1948–1956)
- John Simons: 1930–2024 (1939–1947)
- Donald Wix: 1928–2024 (1939–1944)

### FORMER STAFF

- Mary Liley: 1938–2023 (1975–1991)



\*Two wonderful obituaries were published for former Head Boy, Tom Henson, who passed away in January. One in The Daily Telegraph and another in The Times. Both are incredible testaments to a remarkable individual. Many OWs contacted me to let us know these obituaries had been published which was incredibly touching and a wonderful reflection of the Woodbridgian community. As one person commented 'reading this makes me proud to be a Woodbridgian, it should make us all proud'.

*Whilst we don't traditionally publish obituaries for OWs I had an incredibly moving phone conversation with the widow of Roger Fairclough (1970–1976) who died last year. It was very important to his family, and helped with the grieving process, to write something about him for the school he loved.*

### Roger Fairclough: Husband, Father, Grandfather and Old Woodbridgian

Lots of children grow up reading books like Malory Towers and St Clare's and all the mischief the pupils got up to there, but my brother and I grew up with tales of Woodbridge School as one of my father's favourite things to do was to tell us tales from his days as a boarder. I won't give away all his secrets, but these include making home brewed beer in an old air raid shelter using his mother's recipe or sneaking out for a pint in the Bell & Steelyard Pub!

His time at Woodbridge School left a lasting impression on my father and in 2004 after years of spending our school holidays in Suffolk, we relocated to the town from London, and it has been our home ever

since. My father loved Suffolk and enjoyed fishing, foraging, shooting, gardening, birdwatching and of course the odd pint of Adnams here and there! My brother and I have wonderful memories of searching the woods for mushrooms and the hedgerows for sloes and damsons then returning home to turn them into chutneys, drying them for cooking and of course making sloe gin.

My Uncle would often visit from Switzerland to go fishing with my father and brother. Amongst the stories of "the one fish that got away (which seemed to get bigger each time!) there would of course be stories of their antics at school which seemed to bring back many happy memories for both of them.

Although my father insisted that my uncle was just as naughty, apparently he had a knack of disappearing without getting caught!

With a quirky larger than life character, my father was well known for his hat, beard and long Sherlock Holmes style pipe but he was even better known for his quick wit and dry slightly perverse sense of humour.

After a successful career in the city in IT, my father was very much looking forward to enjoying retirement and spending more time with his grandsons. Unfortunately, after a fight with Non-Hodgkins Lymphoma, my father passed away peacefully with his family beside him in July 2023.

My darling Daddy, although you are with us no longer, we will love you and carry you with us always and we will make sure that your grandsons, Oliver, Thomas, Henry and Freddie will grow up listening to tales of their Grandad Roger and his mischievous antics as an Old Woodbridgian. *Lucy Underwood (née Fairclough)*



# COCO NEWTON

(ANNOTT HOUSE, 2005-2014)



## How did you find your time at Woodbridge School?

I look back with immense fondness and gratitude for my time at Woodbridge. The push to excel, to do your best – be it in sport, academia, music or anything – definitely set me up with a strong drive that I still have today. I enjoyed having the freedom to explore and be curious about the full extent of my skills and intellect, always with the support of my teachers. They all went above and beyond to help me on my journey.

## Do you have any particular memories of your time at Woodbridge?

I have many that stand out: having extra physics lessons with Stephen Cole (headmaster at the time) in preparation for my university applications; spending nearly every Saturday in term time playing a hockey or netball match somewhere around East Anglia; getting drenched in Thetford Forest on a Combined Cadet Force field exercise; volunteering at the Bridge School in Islington; sitting on the sun-drenched Valley hillside with friends between lessons.

## Are you still in touch with any school friends?

I've stayed in contact with two good friends, Tara Pertwee and Rosie Green (2014), who both came to my recent wedding at Snape Maltings near Woodbridge, and Finn Hawes (2013), whom I grew up with in Aldeburgh. Earlier this year I bought a VW van from Finn. He had converted it for all his kite surfing adventures in Wales, but I'm planning to use it for surfing and hiking around Europe. I also somehow have a habit of randomly bumping into various OWs, most recently Lucy Havard at the Cambridge University Boat Club where we had both taken up rowing during our PhDs.

## What did you do on leaving school?

Straight after our final exams, three friends and I spent two months inter-railing around Europe before all departing for university. I originally wanted to become a doctor but ended up doing biomedical science at King's College London. This was where my fascination for neuroscience exploded, having first been kindled by Louise Rickard in A level biology after she recommended



I get a subscription to the New Scientist magazine. I also continued playing a lot of hockey for the medical school team, which is how I met my now wife who was on the medical school football team. Halfway through my degree, I took the opportunity to do an extramural year and spent a year working for a London-based consultancy that had partnered with UCL neuroscientists to understand how urban environments could be better designed for human health. I think that's where my drive for impact and research translation came from.

## What was your path to the career you have now?

I fell in love with being a scientist during my undergraduate degree so immediately took up a PhD at the University of Cambridge Department of Clinical Neuroscience. In my late teens, I had lost my maternal grandmother to dementia, and this was a big reason for pursuing a set of research questions into how we can improve the timeliness and management of a dementia diagnosis. But during my PhD I also fell in love with entrepreneurship, capitalising on the opportunity to do extra-curricular programmes offered by

the Cambridge Judge Business School. Being a researcher enables me to be curious and ask new questions, whereas being an entrepreneur enables me to use my curiosity for impact. I'm now at the intersection of research, business and public health, pulling insights across all three in pursuit of reducing the global burden of dementia – and it somehow feels like it's exactly where I'm supposed to be. I like being a galvaniser.

## Are you where you expected to be when you were younger?

Absolutely not, and yet I couldn't have planned my career path better if I'd tried. I originally wanted to be an architect before switching to medicine, and then ended up doing neither. But now I'm working with architects, designers and doctors every day in multidisciplinary teams, so I get to be a little bit of each and all of them. It's all come full circle, and mostly through complete serendipity. I remember struggling a lot with trying to work out what I wanted to do with my career, and in the end just letting myself be guided by my intuition and saying yes to lots of opportunities to try new things enabled me to carve out the best fitting trajectory. A lot of them weren't 'work' related – being president of my Cambridge college (Robinson), becoming a Yachtmaster Offshore Skipper and competing in the Cambridge Lightweight Women's rowing squad all helped me work out what I valued and enjoyed.

## What next (in an ideal world)?

Currently I'm halfway through a postdoctoral fellowship funded by the US Schmidt Science foundation, which has given me the opportunity to figure out what the best approach is for using my skillsets and networks to help make dementia preventable. Although my PhD



was in cognitive neuroscience, I pivoted into health systems design engineering to better understand the 'on the ground' logistics angle of dementia services and stakeholders. I have a feeling the next step will be founding and leading a start-up that can accelerate our academic learnings about brain health into new digital self-management tools for the public. We could all be empowered to have better understanding of how our lifestyles and environments influence our risk for future brain disorders. I'm exploring this as part of my part-time position with the King's College Cambridge Entrepreneurship Lab. But I may also pursue the traditional academic pathway to a professorship or make a side-step into public health training – there are almost limitless possibilities and, given my track record, I'll probably try them all!



PROFILE 1



A celebration of events over the last twelve months...

# EVENTS

## AN OW CHRISTMAS

A new end of term tradition was started in 2022 with the Former Staff Lunch. The inaugural lunch was such a success we decided to make it an annual event. Thursday 14 December saw former teachers and support staff from across both the Prep and Senior Schools treated to a delicious festive buffet in School Hall. Many familiar faces were spotted and lots of memories and much laughter was shared.



Our traditional carol services in St Mary's were a beautiful way to finish term and to begin the festive season. I attended the services on the afternoons of both Wednesday 13 and Thursday 14 December. I don't think any of us who were there will forget the incredible choir performance of *Glory, Glory, Glory, to the Newborn King* for quite some time.

I would like to extend my thanks to Jade Foster (2009-2011), Ken Bailey (1956-1963), and Ed Hoppitt (1988-1996) for being the OW reader at each of the services. I also need to thank Tom Berresford (1989-2003) for giving Jade the afternoon off work. I was privy to a wonderful moment in St Mary's. Jade had managed to keep the fact she was doing a reading from her younger sister, a current student, a complete secret. The surprise on her face as she walked in and spotted Jade was a joy to see. Jade returned for the evening service on 14 December (which my OW spies tell me that a great many OWs were spotted at - fantastic!) to hear her sister sing the opening solo of *Once in Royal David's City*.

The traditional OW Christmas Drinks took place at the King's Head on Wednesday 20 December. As always, a pleasure for OWs to catch up over the wonderful food and drink the pub (now run by OW Sam Lomas) laid on for us. As Stephen Cole mentions, many OWs were also spotted at the midnight service at St Mary's on Christmas Eve. Do think about attending if you are in Woodbridge this Christmas.



## LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS REUNION

Friday 16 February 2024 - If backstage the atmosphere was a combination of nerves, excitement and exhaustion channelled into adrenaline, then the mood in Music Room 2 can only be described as joyful. This humble classroom had been transformed into a fantastic venue for Shona, Stephen Cole, and me to welcome back some of the cast of the 2014 production of the same musical for a reunion. While the 2024 cast were preparing for their show, the 2014 returnees and their guests were enjoying a delicious supper and a lot of catching up and reminiscing. It was wonderful to see so many OWs return and show off their School to their partners; just as lovely was that two of the 2014 cast had siblings in the 2024 show.

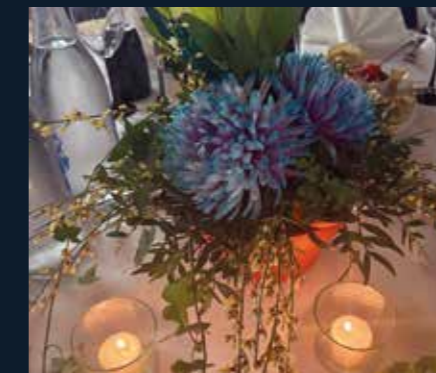
The pride in and love for the School was tantamount, as was the strength of the friendships formed here. One OW commented how surprised he was at how emotional he felt being back here after so long. All relished how welcome they felt and how they still feel part of the Woodbridgian community.

It was tricky to drag the guests away from Music 2 to watch the show at 8.00. Time flew too quickly and there is never enough time at events like this to be able to talk to everyone. But drag them away we did, and it will not surprise any of you to hear that the musical was a triumph. It is truly astonishing what our students, under the expert guidance of our remarkable staff, can achieve. Gemma Mayes and Johnny Williams must have been completely exhausted after a week of performances, but they stayed on after the show to catch up with the OWs. More reminiscing and memories were shared late into the night - it was delightful to hear stories from both performances, today's and ten years ago.



**Guests:** Hannah Barrell (2011-2014), Ella Carter (2008-2015), Maddy Chan (2011-2016) with Megan Hooker, Abigail Dolan (2013-2015), Flora Douglas (2009-2016), Alex Farquharson (2008-2015), Gabriella Harvey (2013-2018) with Ethan Bateman, Anya Hill (2011-2014) and family (Jade Foster, Colin Hill, Donna Hill, Nina Hill, Denholm Holmes & Jared Pearson), Emma Jarvis (2005-2017), Jake Jay (2004-2018), Alex King (2010-2014) with Brodie Andrews (2006-2016), Hannah Lummis (2009-2016), Tom Macdowell (2010-2015), Francesca Ottley (2002-2015) with Umaro Djalo, Florence Paul (2006-2015) with Sam Mays, Matt Sutton (2011-2016).

(NB: we were all having way too much fun to take any photos once the reunion was underway! Photos above from the 2014 production.)





## MILITARY OWS LUNCH & CCF AGI

It may have rained on our parade, but the show DID go on. The weather forecast was not looking promising all week and whether the AGI would take place at all was touch and go for a while, but Woodbridge cadets are made of strong stuff. A little rain wasn't going to stop them, although the parade did take place in the Dome rather than outside for the first time in over 20 years. We try to get an OW to be the Inspecting Officer, but it is not always possible to find one of sufficient rank whose diary/commitments align with the school calendar. We were therefore delighted to be introduced to Commodore Robert JA Bellfield CBE ADC DL Royal Navy by OW Matt Bowden who himself served in the Navy for 26 years. Prior to the AGI, Commodore Bellfield, Shona, Clive Schlee and members of the school community with military connections gathered for lunch with the current CCF officers before moving on to the Dome for the main event.



Clive Schlee, Hannah Bridgland (Head of Contingent), Commodore Bellfield, Shona Norman, Andy Garvie (Contingent Commander)



**Guests:** Will and Tamsin Anderson, Ken Bailey (1956-1963), Matthew Bowden (1982-1989), Howard Blackett, Andrew Jackson, Dominic and Kate Kilburn, Nick Kill (2014-2016) with Madeleine Field, Graham and Carole Kill, Heidi Norman, Dan and Luisa Scott (Dan is Head of Estates and Luisa our Head of Transport, both of whom previously served with the Royal Engineers).

Year 13's Hannah, Head of Contingent, shared her report from the afternoon: Friday 3 May was our annual CCF Inspection, an opportunity for us to exhibit our amazing facilities and excellent cadets. We kicked off with a parade of all 230-plus cadets in the Dome, involving the Navy, Army, RAF and a specially compiled Quarter Guard. The Inspecting Officer cast an eye over our troops and spoke to several cadets. In his speech to visiting parents and friends of the school he emphasised the difficult world we live in and how we can contribute to the safety of our nation.

Once the cadets had fallen out, the audience was treated to two drill displays. One performed by the Navy, current drill champions of two years, alongside their colleagues in the Drum corps, and one by the RAF. Both teams put in a great deal of hard work and did themselves proud with their excellent performance.

Then followed a tour of our grounds and facilities, as well as the activities in which cadets take part on a regular basis. The confidence course was a big hit, with our cadets demonstrating their physical capability as well as wonderful teamwork. Paintballing, low ropes, first aid, flight simulator, command task, fieldcraft and raft building were all on show from various sections, largely led by NCOs from Years 12 and 13. The team from East Coast Adventures held Archery, at which the Commodore excelled, rivalling even our sharp-shooting cadets. The 23 Parachute Engineer Regiment, Royal Engineers, made an appearance with an armed vehicle as well as demolitions equipment, which certainly captured the imaginations of the Army cadets present.

We then returned to the Dome pitch for the gun run, the final competition in the Trower Trophy. Always a thrilling event which gets every cadet cheering for their team, this year it featured an enthusiastic accompaniment from the Drum Corps. The race was won by the RAF A Flight, who also won the intersection competition as a whole. Congratulations to them!

On final parade we again heard from the Inspecting Officer, who congratulated us on the quality of our CCF and reminded cadets of the value of teamwork and camaraderie, particularly in the trying times of the modern world. Despite all of the rain on our parade, quite literally, the CCF showed its very best.

Congratulations to all the cadets involved and best wishes to the Year 13 NCOs, for whom this was the last CCF session and my final parade as Head of Contingent. Thank you all!

As well as Hannah's superb report, Shona also received a thank you from Commodore Bellfield:

*'I thoroughly enjoyed my afternoon with Woodbridge on Friday and thank you so much for your personal investment in time and support for the CCF. I have reflected the support from the SLT in the report. As a local, with my RN 'hat' on, and as a Suffolk Deputy Lieutenant, I'm always delighted to support local schools. Thank you so much for an excellent afternoon. My best inspection so far – by some margin!'*



The Gun Run



Matthew Bowden



Dominic and Kate Kilburn, Ken Bailey, David Beasant

## THE TWO GENTLEMEN OF VERONA



A testament to how students feel about our School, returning Old Woodbridgians play a huge part in enriching our current students' education. None more so than our Drama intern and OW Issy Cory (2012-2019), who supported everyone involved in this year's Shakespeare on The Lawn, 'The Two Gentlemen of Verona', a play she performed in herself almost ten years ago! Prior to the performance Shona hosted a drinks reception for the 2015 cast members, who were thrilled to catch up with Issy, before watching the play with a delicious picnic.

**Guests:** Ollie Bacon (2006-2019), Sam Kill (2014-2019) with Graham and Carole Kill, Mia King (2008-2017) with Leanne King, Ali Lloyd (2006-2019), Anya Trevor-Pallares (2012-2019) with Elsa Trevor-Pallares (2015-2022) & Monica Pallares-Trevor, Toby Stowe (2005-2019).

# SENIOR ALUMNI LUNCH

What better way to start the Trinity Term than with the fantastic OW Senior Alumni Lunch which took place on Saturday 20 April. We were delighted to welcome over 80 members of the wider Woodbridge School community to this ever-popular event. After a dull day last year, we were blessed with sunshine and from 11.00 a steady stream of OWs and their guests filed through the doors of School Hall for a trip down memory lane. All the OWs had left school at least 50 years ago and we were pleased to welcome the Class of 1974 to the OW Half Century Club.

Since the event began in 2018, former teacher Mark Mitchels has been our guest speaker and has delivered some brilliantly entertaining and illuminating talks on local history over the years. Mark's wife has finally been able to persuade him to retire from public speaking, so I needed to find someone else. Big shoes to fill! But who better than our current Head of History, Nick Smith. Nick delivered a fascinating talk on Napoleonic Woodbridge, even managing to cajole the assembled crowd into a hearty rendition of The Grand Old Duke of York. I have previously reported that at last year's lunch Shona rather threw me under the bus by putting me in a position where I had no choice but to make a speech.



Shona Norman and Nick Smith



Heads of School (Ollie & Isla) sharing a laugh. Isla's grandparents are amongst those attending (in case you don't know - Stephen & Jane Cole)



Keeping OWs Together: Ian Barker (1955-1962) and Richard Ambrose (1956-1961)



Clive Piggott (1956-1961), Catherine Piggott and Nick Smith browsing the archive material

This year I thought I was prepared for anything, I had written a speech, what else could ambush me? Turns out my colleagues could, I had a birthday ending in a zero the following day and my (lovely) surprise was to be presented with a beautiful bouquet.

Nick's talk was followed by a delicious two course lunch in the Tuckwell Room, a wonderful time spent reminiscing and sharing memories was had by all. After lunch the Head Boy and Head Girl (Ollie Laxton and Isla Richardson) gave a moving speech reflecting on their 14 years at Woodbridge School and how they are feeling about becoming OWs themselves before taking our guests on tours of the school.

At lot is said about the strength of the Woodbridgian community and with good reason. It is incredibly strong, and incredibly supportive. Every one of you is a member of this community and I hope that it is as important to you as it is to me. A synonym for community might be family. At this lunch we had OW siblings, OW cousins, the father-in-law of a current member of staff, two OWs who are brothers-in-law, the son of an OW, an OW who is a nephew of an OW, the husband of an OW (also a current parent), four people who are grandparents of current pupils, and four parents of OWs. There is some crossover, it's complicated! There is an ever-increasing number of OWs amongst our current parent body. I think that says something.

My favourite anecdote from the afternoon? A group of 1960s leavers and their partners were staying at The Bull for the weekend. On trying to leave the school grounds, via the Bredfield Street exit for obvious reasons, they were confronted with a locked gate (an over-zealous caretaker perhaps?). Rather than walk back up the drive to Burkitt Road and then all the way back to Market Hill they decided to climb over the gate, (not the tall wrought iron one, I hasten to add, the slightly lower five-bar gate close to the art department), inducing several passers-by to stop and enquire if they were escaping or breaking in! One wonders if this was the first time they had tried such an escape from school...



A few of the Class of 1974. L-R: Mike Chapman, Michael Gibbs, Chris Chapman



# FROM WOODBRIDGE SCHOOL PREP

Nicola Mitchell looks back on a wonderful year at Woodbridge School Prep whilst considering why she became a teacher.

## Find your why...

As teachers we all have diverse reasons for having chosen the job that we do. It is said you should not ask, 'What are you doing?' but 'Why are you doing it?' As the Year 6 pupils leave us this term, some after seven years at the Prep, I am minded to reflect on the journey that we have taken together having arrived at the same time.

In my first ever staff meeting I asked staff to find their 'Why?' and we have a wall displaying all our diverse reasons. Mine was simple and actually has not changed:

'To make a positive difference to as many as possible... to enable children to make the most of their opportunities and

talents... to help make happy memories that last a lifetime.' I hope that as we send our pupils off on the next step of their journey, some of the 'whys' will be clearly evident.

Reflecting back on this past year, our theme has been Connections, and this has been evident in the most varied of ways.

We have sought to build on our community ethos and our Dawn Chorus nursery-aged sing-along sessions are proving to be extremely popular every week, with ever-growing numbers of babies and toddlers joining us with their parents and carers. In addition



to this, our musical outreach visits to local nurseries deliver the curriculum in a variety of settings and this year we also took our Mindfulness practice for our youngest pupils, DOTS, out into a range of external settings. Stay and Play, and Mornings of Fun have added to the range of experiences open to members of the community beyond our school walls and our Community Choir continues to expand with their first concert performance being a huge success.



The development of the ponds means we are now in a position to connect even more widely with our natural environment and, as we continue to work with Suffolk Wilder Schools and develop habitat zones around our site, the Waterfall Pond is now an area for scientific investigation, reflective, mindful contemplation and appreciation of our beautiful surroundings.

Connections in other forms have been through the exploration of Artificial Intelligence (AI). As technology moves forwards, we have explored how this can be beneficial in terms of keeping in touch, researching information, connecting with parts of our solar system, such as the Mars Rover, and developing new and adaptive ways of working in the future. The "one hand dirty, one hand digital," has certainly been the balance we have tried to achieve this year.

We have also reached out to parents through our programme of Careers talks where inspiring

talks on a range of topics from golf course design to journalism have engaged the children to think about their futures.

Compassion and care are two elements that always run through the Prep through our two rules; 'Be kind' and 'Try your best' and this year the School supported me as I prepared for, and ran, the London Marathon for Macmillan Cancer Support. Each year group participated in a mini-marathon event and the entire school ran a total distance of 26.2 miles. From verbal encouragement to

sponsorship that raised over £5,500, the support from our community to raise money to help others was fantastic. In addition, our House Charities benefit each year from events that are chosen, organised and run by the children for the benefit of others.

As we reflect on a year that seems to have gone past all too quickly, we hope that the connections the children have made within their learning, and also between individuals, will grow stronger and more meaningful as time goes by.



IAN M BARKER '24

# APPRENTICESHIPS: FOLLOWING PASSIONS, BROADENING HORIZONS

*In the ever-changing world of 21st century careers there is a huge array of opportunities available to our students as they leave school. Here we hear from two recent leavers who are flourishing on their chosen path of apprenticeship alongside the memories of an OW who undertook his apprenticeship in the 1960s.*

**Mussa Hussain (2015-2017)** freely admits that the path he has ended up on in life is not the one he thought he would take, but he would not change a thing if he could go back in time.

After my A levels I initially decided to have a gap year as I wasn't 100% sure about going to university. The gap year was cut short as I secured a job at a boutique mortgage and protection advisor firm on Baker Street, London. I moved from Suffolk to London by myself when I was 19 and worked for one and a half years as their first ever apprentice. I got my qualifications and then moved to a fintech start up business - Trussle. This was a similar role but much more fast-paced and with a much bigger workload. I was promoted to Senior straight after my probation and smashed all their previous records on all KPI's.

After six months, I decided to pursue the accountancy route (this was what I had been considering for a degree, had I gone to university). I managed to get a place with Ernst & Young in their Audit Apprentice Team. They offered 20 people places out of 4500+ applicants. Whilst I was really enjoying my time

at Trussle, this was too good an opportunity to turn down! I stayed there for a year, but it was a serious shock to my system and I realised I didn't enjoy doing 65+ hour weeks for months at a time so I decided to leave and join GlaxoSmithKline as part of their first ever Data Apprentice Team in Consumer Healthcare. This was mid-covid so everything was working from home, so it was a strange experience as I didn't meet the team in person for the first eight months. I won Data Apprentice of the year but decided to leave after a couple months for personal reasons. I also wanted to get back into client facing roles and being around people.



Mussa (centre) at the British Specialist Lending Awards

Shortly after leaving GSK I received a call from Coreco Specialist Finance and my boss here gave me a great job proposition which I took up nearly three years ago. I went from having no experience when I joined in Specialist Finance, to dealing with my director's full pipeline and also assisting another Financial Advisor with technical details all within just over two years. I also ended 2021 on a high as, through serious hard work and grafting to chase a goal, I managed to buy my first home in London aged 23 which was genuinely the best thing I have done so far (I managed to get it over the line just before interest rates hiked like crazy as well!).

Recently I was nominated for 'Rising Star - Broker' at this year's British Specialist Lending Awards and somehow managed to win it. I was one of three finalists and we all had to submit a 750-word

testimonial showcasing our work and why we deserve to win. This was followed by a 20-minute interview with three industry veterans who would judge and decide the winner.

I was promoted to Senior at Coreco after nine months of joining; my role is completely unique and I've used my past work experiences to create a job here that no one else has done previously.



## 2023 Nick Goozee enters Team Penske Hall of Fame

Nick Goozee was inducted into the Team Penske Hall of Fame recently, becoming the 14<sup>th</sup> team member to receive the distinguished honour.

Nick joined Team Penske in 1974 as a fabricator for the team's Formula 1 (F1) operation based at Penske Cars in Poole, Dorset, England. In 1983, Goozee rose to the role of Managing Director of the famed facility on the southern coast of England where F1 and INDYCAR winners were constructed from 1974 to 1999 using standards of build that few other manufacturers could match.

Nick was instrumental in the design, development and build of Penske chassis that would go on to win 14 Indianapolis 500s and nine INDYCAR SERIES championships. This included the winningest chassis in Penske Cars history, the PC-23 that Al Unser Jr., Emerson Fittipaldi and Paul Tracy used to dominate the 1994 INDYCAR season. That year the team won 12 of 16 races - including a historic performance at the Indianapolis 500 with the Mercedes-Benz engine - en route to a 1-2-3 finish in the series standings with Unser taking the crown.

"It is an honour to accept this award not only for myself but on behalf of the many remarkable members of Penske Cars who over three decades made so much success for Team Penske possible," said Goozee.

**Nick Goozee's (1959-1963)** school friends were aware of his passion for motor sport when he boarded in School House. He was lucky enough to turn his childhood passion into a lifelong career which was recently recognised when he had the great honour of being inducted into the Team Penske Hall of Fame at a ceremony held in North Carolina where the team is based.

Team Penske may not be well known to the public over in the UK, but it is the most successful team in the history of motor sport, and I worked with them for 36 years. I am also a member of the prestigious British Racing Drivers Club and have been involved with many of the Goodwood events since they started in 1993.

I still reflect upon my Woodbridge days as being positive in the development of the person I eventually became, largely due to the influences of Mr Curtis (my housemaster) and Mr Proctor-Robinson (my

mentor) and also the formative experiences of playing in the First XV Rugby team under the coaching of Mike Lubbock and gaining my gliding certificates through the CCF. I was a 'dreamer' and in the opinion of most of those who attempted to teach me I should have done better. My academic achievements were sparse but thankfully this had no negative effect upon my eventual career.

My passion as a Woodbridge schoolboy was Motor Racing and through a stroke of good fortune at the end of 1963, I was able to get an apprenticeship with the team of my hero, Jack Brabham.

Having learnt my trade as a mechanic and builder of race cars, I became Sir Jack's mechanic and after he retired, I looked after Graham Hill, amongst others. In 1974 I left the Brabham Team and moved to Dorset



Nick in School House (look at the walls for evidence of his love for motor sport)

where a new American Grand Prix Team had just started. I remained with them for 36 years, being Managing Director for over 25 of those years, during which time they won 11 Championships and the prestigious Indianapolis 500 14 times.



## APPRENTICESHIPS

**Lily Constantine** studied at Woodbridge from 2016 – 2023. After taking A levels in Drama, Religious Studies and Sociology she knew she was ready for a new challenge.

From a young age, I've been driven by a desire to work, earn, and prove myself in the real world. While many of my peers chose the traditional route of university, I knew that diving straight into the workforce was the path for me. Growing up, I was always eager for experiences that taught me the value of hard work and gave me the satisfaction that comes from earning your own money. By the time I reached my final year of school, I was ready to turn my passion for work into a career.

Choosing an apprenticeship allowed me to gain valuable skills and qualifications. However, the process was not easy. I applied to about 50 different apprenticeships, received responses from 10, and was shortlisted for five. Fortunately, I was offered a position as a

Logistics Apprentice at Fred. Olsen Logistics. Starting just 10 days after finishing my A levels, I jumped into the deep end of the professional world. From day one, I was immersed in the dynamics of logistics, learning about supply chain management, operations, and customer relations. The fast-paced environment was exactly what I was looking for. It allowed me to learn on the job and contribute to meaningful projects.

One of the most rewarding aspects of my apprenticeship has been the opportunity to network and build relationships with industry professionals, learning from the best. This has not only broadened my understanding of logistics and shipping but also provided invaluable mentorship and guidance. The practical experience and on-the-job training have been far more engaging and instructive than anything a classroom could offer me.

The support from my team at Fred. Olsen Logistics has been

incredible. As an apprentice they have trusted me with significant responsibilities, allowing me the freedom to manage my own customers. Their confidence in my abilities and continuous encouragement have been instrumental in my development. Recently, my dedication and hard work were recognised when I was awarded the Rising Star Apprentice of the Year. This accolade is not just a reflection of my commitment and passion, but also a testament to the invaluable mentorship and support I have received throughout my apprenticeship.

Choosing an apprenticeship was about more than just starting a job. It was about setting myself on a path where I could continuously learn, grow, and prove my capabilities. For me, it was the perfect way to transition from education to a thriving professional career. I am excited about the future and the endless opportunities that lie ahead, thanks to the solid foundation my apprenticeship has provided.



Lily (centre) with colleagues from Fred. Olsen Logistics after winning Rising Star Apprentice of the Year

# FROM THE HONORARY PRESIDENT OF THE OWS



Stephen and Jane Cole

I hope very much that you enjoy this magazine, skimming as it does across many of the lives of former pupils. For Jane and me, one of the enormous privileges of living in Woodbridge is coming across so many of you who still live here, have returned, or are just visiting. Even this month we have been to three OW weddings and a baptism (there must be a film in that?). And it was a delight to see so many OWs at the Christmas Eve midnight (cf 11pm) service at St Mary's church: I suspect it has become the "unofficial" OW carol service. If you are in Woodbridge this Christmas, do come.

What is more uplifting is the high proportion of you whose lives serve others. So many are working in medicine, education and the armed and civilian services. Others are heavily involved in voluntary work across the world.

Schools like Woodbridge have served their communities for over four centuries, and not for the first time are facing significant political threats. We can all be confident that the school's current leadership continues to ensure that pupils receive a very high quality of education, in all its definitions. We should all, and can, be very proud of all that is achieved by current pupils, and by you who went before them.

With all good wishes,

**Stephen Cole**

Headmaster 1994 to 2014



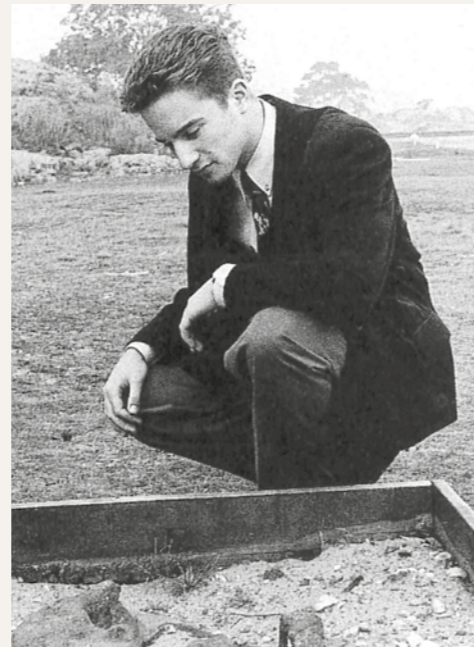
Stephen and Jane at the Senior Alumni Lunch 2024

# HISTORIC OW CONNECTIONS

Sutton Hoo needs no introduction to anyone educated at Woodbridge, but you might not be aware of the longstanding connections between the site and the School. With a new Time Team dig happening this summer and a replica of the Sutton Hoo ship currently being built in Woodbridge it seems a perfect time to unearth the School's ongoing part in one of the nation's most important historical sites.

Inspiration for this year's magazine was slow to strike until an email arrived out of the blue from Dr Rosemary Hoppitt, Chair of the Sutton Hoo Society. The Society celebrates its 40th anniversary this year and Rosemary was keen to track down a couple of OWs who had taken part in some digs at Sutton Hoo as students. I was able to reach **Nick Johnson (1982-1987)** and **Jim Mower (1985-1992)** and Nick attended 'Digger Day' at Sutton Hoo on 22 June 2024.

Jim couldn't attend the reunion but did fill me in on his career path which was heavily influenced by a much-loved Woodbridge teacher: Mike Weaver was certainly responsible for encouraging my interest in archaeology. As the secretary of the Sutton Hoo Society back in the 90s he secured me a place on the dig and helped me get a job as a guide at the Tide Mill. Mike was an outstanding teacher and an important local figure. He really did set me on a path



Jim Mower at a Sutton Hoo dig, summer 1991

to the past. I worked at Sutton Hoo in the early 90s under the great Martin Carver and following a degree in archaeology at UCL have subsequently had a career in archaeology, working in Egypt and Central/South America. This eventually led me to produce Channel 4's Time Team programme for ten years, working with Dr Helen Geake, who also worked at the site with Martin Carver. I am still in touch with friends and colleagues from Time Team and have helped the creator, Tim Taylor, with Sutton Hoo research over the years. I also worked with the designer of the first visitor centre.

Mike Weaver will need no introduction to many of you but younger OWs should know that Mike is something of a Woodbridge School legend. A truly inspirational teacher for those students who were lucky enough



Nick Johnson (seated second from left) at Digger Day anniversary celebrations (photo also includes Helen Geake and Martin Carver) Photo credit: Rosemary Hoppitt



Members of the Sutton Hoo Society with Mike Weaver at the centre

to have been taught by him during his 38 years at the school, who on retirement was involved with the OWs for many years. Mike was also a keen local historian, and we begin this exploration with a piece he wrote for the Sutton Hoo Society, of which he was a founder member, in 1999.

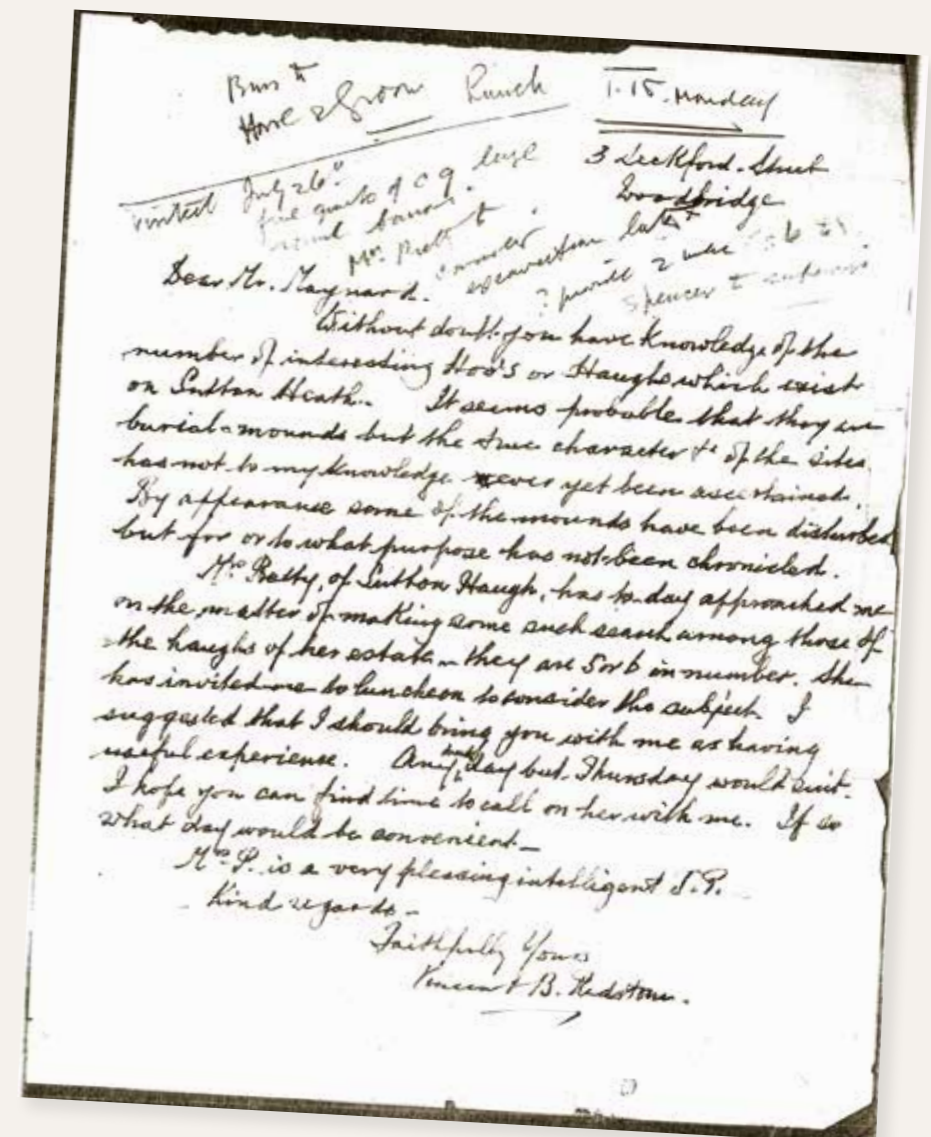
Woodbridge folklore tells of a chance meeting at the local Flower Show in 1937 between Edith Pretty, owner of the Sutton Hoo estate and Vincent Redstone, the highly respected Suffolk historian and antiquarian. We will never know the exact nature of the conversation that took place but it was sufficient to inspire Vincent Redstone's letter to Guy Maynard at the Ipswich Museum and to put in train the events that led to the great archaeological revelations of 1938 and 1939 and a continuing 60-year fascination with this royal Saxon burial site.

The suggestion in the letter is that Edith Pretty 'approached' Redstone. And who better to approach? Vincent Redstone had arrived in Woodbridge in 1880 as an enthusiastic young teacher at the Woodbridge Grammar School. He remained for 41 years, the longest serving assistant master in the

school's history. History was his fascination and his pleasure was to investigate and transcribe medieval documents. It was not uncommon for Vincent Redstone to set his pupils a reading

exercise in class while he worked on his latest find.

The results of his research were published in the school magazine, the **Woodbridgian**, which he himself helped to found in 1882, and later in a number of monographs, including **Bygone Woodbridge** and **Bygone Wickham Market**. He was a family man and his three daughters loyally embraced his interests. Lillian became a highly respected historian. Their intellectual base was the Seckford Library in Seckford Street which became a massive repository of local material. Daughter Elsie eventually became the librarian. Historians nationwide travelled to Woodbridge to conduct research and obtain advice from the Redstones. (It was from this



THE SUTTON HOO DIG, 1968



The mound from the north-east



The inside of the mound



Keith



Team photograph

academic source that excavator Basil Brown was able to learn more of the archaeology and practice of ship burial in Europe, and hence the significance of his finds).

Vincent retired from Woodbridge School in 1921 and enjoyed a further twenty years in the community, writing and researching his beloved subject. Little wonder then, that Edith Pretty turned to him in 1937, taking advantage of his knowledge and his contacts in local society. In August 1939 **The Woodbridge Reporter** published one of his last articles written in conjunction with his daughter Lillian. It was entitled 'Was it King Redwald?' They picture 'this notable kinglet celebrating his supremacy over neighbouring kingdoms at Rendlesham, where torchlight would gleam upon his gold



Scenes from Beowulf 1999, by Mark Mitchels

trappings and on his silver bowls and dishes'.

Vincent Redstone and Edith Pretty died within a short time of each other. Their meeting and conversation at Woodbridge flower show may now be seen as an event of considerable importance in English history.

The National Trust website says that "the discovery of the Great Ship Burial in 1939 not only stunned the archaeological world, but it set the scene for further exploration. Later archaeological campaigns have solved mysteries left by the original dig and revealed more about life in this Anglo-Saxon kingdom." We know that members of the Woodbridge School community have been involved at every stage, with further digs taking place from 1965-1971 and 1983-1993.

The next clue to Woodbridgian involvement at Sutton Hoo is this tantalising selection of photos from The Woodbridgian of Summer 1968. Frustratingly there is no accompanying text anywhere



Year 4 becoming archaeologists



Year 7 at Sutton Hoo Visitor Centre

in the magazine however the 1969 magazine contains this snippet: *Work continued on the Saxon ship burial this year in July and August. After the end of the summer term some ten members of the school were employed there.*

The 1985 Woodbridgian is more enlightening: *now a ten year programme has been proposed and Summer 1985 sees the second season of digging. Staff at Woodbridge School are closely involved. M.A. Weaver and M. A. Mitchels are executer committee members of the Sutton Hoo Society, the former as Secretary, the latter as publications officer. Jason Medway, VIA, is an accredited site guide. This is the beginnings of the dig led by Martin Carver that Nick Johnson and Jim Mower took part in.*

In 1999 Mark Mitchels, another Woodbridge teacher involved in the Sutton Hoo Society, and a man of many talents, put pen to paper and created a play based on Beowulf. His aim was to link the story of the poem with the excavation of the burial mounds at Sutton

Hoo – ambitious, but according to source documentation from the time, fully realised. The play was performed on Chapel Lawn with less than perfect weather only adding to the atmosphere. Lead roles were taken by Tom Bracewell, Victoria Burton, John Carrington, Stephen Hudson, Anthony Marlowe, Philip McGough, Josephine Norris, Nathan Paine, Jamie Robinson, Dominic Smith and Beth Stephenson.

Sutton Hoo continues to provide inspiration for our students. In the Spring term the Year 4 children at the Prep School enjoyed becoming archaeologists in class whilst exploring their history topic of the Anglo Saxons. Following in Basil Brown's footsteps, examining key artefacts, they uncovered an understanding of the discovery of Sutton Hoo and what fun archaeology can be. In June, as happens every year, our Heads of English and History followed in Mark Mitchels' footsteps with a visit to Sutton Hoo for our Year 7 pupils to gain a deeper understanding of Beowulf and Sutton Hoo itself. This was a chance to dig deeper

into the cultural, political and religious significance of this incredibly important place, and to understand its significance in our nation's narrative. Listening to Beowulf, climbing the tower, examining artefacts, and watching a live archaeological dig, made it impossible to leave without imaginations thoroughly stirred.

It is wonderful that we have such a fantastic and important historical resource on our doorstep that might not have been discovered were it not for a Woodbridge School teacher.

My thanks to Rosemary Hoppitt and the Sutton Hoo Society for allowing me to reprint Mike Weaver's article and for the photo of the group.



SUTTON HOO SOCIETY

Vincent Redstone's letter reproduced from original in Ipswich Borough Council Collections, by permission of Colchester and Ipswich Museums

# SIMON DRANE

(ANNOTT HOUSE, 1991-1998)



**How did you find your time at Woodbridge School?**  
 It is no exaggeration to say that my time at Woodbridge School had a profound impact on me. While the academic achievements I gained allowed me to pursue a career that I thoroughly enjoy, the sense of community and lifelong friendships still endure with many fond memories and a deep sense of nostalgia whenever I visit the school.

**Do you have any particular memories of your time at Woodbridge?**  
 There's a hockey trip to Barcelona which certainly stands out as well as some awesome skiing holidays! Also, performing at Snape Maltings and winning Combat Cadet for two consecutive years was pretty special... in fact the CCF summer camps were always great fun. However, beyond those events, I also remember playing football in The Valley, huddling around radiators in our house rooms and for me, the never-ending daily trips to and from school either by train or up and down the A12 by bus.

**Are you still in touch with any school friends?**  
 Absolutely! I feel incredibly fortunate that the friendships I formed 25 years ago are still going strong. We have grown a bit older and shared many significant life events, such as weddings and growing families. I regularly see Tim Cook, Dave Henderson, Jonny Manning, Cain Berry, Tim Ripman, Olly Grundy, Alex Boxall, Vicky Finch, and Alice Ripman. Additionally, I often bump into others from various local groups like Tim Johnson, Jason Finch, and Ben Deacon, to name just a few.

**What did you do on leaving school?**  
 Thanks to some ups and downs in my own sporting performances, I knew I wanted to pursue a career in Sport Psychology, even though at the time, such a thing didn't exist! The first step was an undergraduate degree at



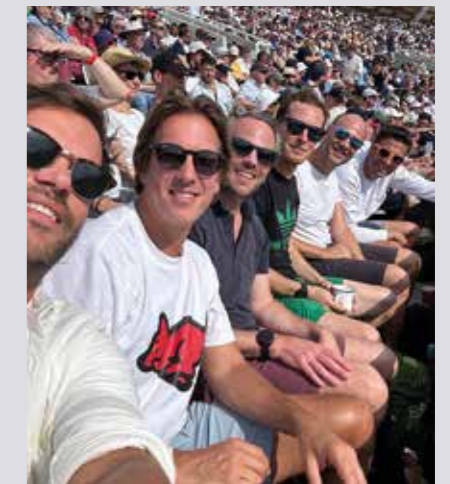
Simon – front row, second left, Head of Contingent with the 1998 winning Combat Cadet Team



Middle row, third from left, probably 1993



Simon and OW friends at the Kings Head in Woodbridge and watching cricket



The University of Birmingham – moving from sleepy Suffolk to vibrant Birmingham was an eye-opener, but I loved the experience. Afterwards, I took a year off to travel before continuing my studies with a Master's in Sport Psychology in Australia. Following

my time in Australia, I moved to Canada, where my wife is from, and spent a few years there. The catalyst to come home, however, was when London won the bid for the Olympic Games – London 2012 was to become a very significant milestone in my career and life.

The birth of my first son marked a significant shift in my values, prompting me to transition my expertise into the business world. I took on various roles at consultancies such as Lane4 and Hatching Ideas, applying my knowledge to new contexts. Recently, I founded my own company, Cognition, which grants me the autonomy to pursue my passions including the provision of psychological support to the pupils and parents of Woodbridge School, focusing on the mental aspects of sport and performance.



Simon at London 2012 Hockey

**What was your path to the career you have now?**

Building on my education, my life became engrossed by the Olympic Games – we called it the 'Gollum Effect', in terms of the impact of the rings! I held a number of positions for TeamGB, the British Olympic Association and was really proud of my time as Head of Psychology for British Athletics up in Loughborough. These positions and the goal of the ever-looming medal table really helped hone my skills to help athletes and coaches ride the ups and downs of 4-year Olympic cycles and deliver when it really mattered throughout London, Rio and some winter Olympic work at Pyeongchang.



**What next (in an ideal world)?**

Quite the question! I am really looking forward to seeing how my children grow up and spending that time with them. I am determined to be kite surfing before I turn 45, and on a professional level – I would love to be impacting businesses, schools and sports in East Anglia, and there is a possibility of a book that would be great to realise!



Simon with wife Elke and children Fletcher and Margot



# IN MEMORY OF MARY LILEY

The whole Woodbridgian community was saddened to hear of the death of Mary Liley last year. Here her family, former students and former colleagues share their memories of her.



Vivienne Mary Liley directed girls' sports as Physical Education teacher at Woodbridge School from 1975 until 1991. She also opened the doors to girls joining the Combined Cadet Force, becoming one of the first female officers in the country and the UK's first female CCF commanding officer. Mary died on 27 November 2023, at her home in Woodbridge, where she had lived most of her life.

Family ties connected Mary to Suffolk, and her intimate knowledge of the area came from formative years riding the countryside on her horse Whisky; crewing for local yacht races (sometimes sleeping overnight on the beach waiting for the tide change to come home); and helping out her father's business, The Woodbridge Dairy, by driving early morning milk rounds through the villages.

After gaining her teaching qualifications, Mary taught in Ipswich at the Thurleston and Tower Ramparts schools. She met David, an art teacher and the love of her life, at a dance at the White Horse in Wickham Market. They married soon after and moved to Aden in Yemen, where both had teaching positions at the British Forces schools. Mary taught in the Khormaksar Royal Air Force Secondary School and at the Khormaksar Girls College, breaking new ground by introducing ball sports and team sports to Yemeni girls at the school. She also helped with the Duke of Edinburgh scheme there.

When she and David returned to England in 1968, Mary taught



Mary with Bob Peggall and cadets, RAF Upavon July 1979



Mary, CCF CO, with contingent

PE at Amberfield before joining Woodbridge School in 1975, soon after the boys' grammar school turned coeducational. She spent the next two decades building up the girls' teams in a wide variety of sports, introducing students to indoor and outdoor hockey, tennis, netball, rounders, gymnastics and trampolining, PE, athletics, cross country running, aerobics (before many people had even heard of this!) and lacrosse, as well as starting the girls' cricket team. Mary coached many players to county success, and many teams to tournament wins.

"Mary's dedication and commitment on the sports field and parade ground played a big part in my school life," said OW Sarah Rafferty (Lubbock). "I will forever be grateful to Mary."

"I really do not know what us girls at Woodbridge School would have done without Mary," said OW Ann Brown (Howgego). "We were only the second year of a relatively small number of girls to be included in the main school, so an outstanding sports teacher for the girls was a high priority, and we were blessed with Mary being exactly that." Ann remembers Mary as "an exceptional teacher, working hard to gain the best opportunities for girls in sport and in the CCF at Woodbridge School



Mary serving rations at camp

and beyond. Firm but kind, a very talented sportswoman herself, with great knowledge but able to share this at appropriate levels, always able to be a leader and yet still able to join with us all in having such fun and laughter."

OW Tracy Smith (Jiggens) recalls Mary's "You can do it!" rallying cry. "Games/PE was not a light-weight lesson in the school timetable, but with Mrs Liley leading the girls in all manner of sporting activities, there was an infinite amount of support and encouragement. She generated real team spirit whether in tennis, rounders or netball. She was



Mary relaxing with the hockey team

always on those school buses for the Saturday afternoon away matches, and whether winning or losing, she made us believe we were great players. What a legacy she has left, as she has made me, and I am sure many others, value sport and exercise. I am still trying to play that great team game of hockey in my late 50s."

Mary was also a valued Sixth Form tutor for a number of years. A skilled organiser, she made things happen. When her teams had the chance to play abroad, she ran mammoth jumble sales and sports marathons to help raise the necessary funds. She was known among her fellow staff for her genuineness, and as a supportive colleague who freely gave her time to support worthy causes.

"Mary was one of the reliable helpers when I did a play," says former colleague Mark Mitchels. "There she would be, helping actors struggle into costumes or smearing on make-up. I think she took part in the legendary Graeme Hall G&S productions which were such fun - and so demanding. Mary was one of those indispensable people in a school who would step up when a job needed doing and most of us could only think of reasons for staying away. Over the years I came to know and admire Mary for her quiet determination and strong sense of what was right. She was always rather shy but knew exactly what she would and would not stand for, and she made her views known. Above everything, Mary was a thoughtful, kind and gentle colleague."

## IN MEMORY OF MARY LILEY



Mary with teaching staff (above) and her Sixth Form tutor group (left) outside Marryott House, late 1980s

When in 1975 her students asked to be able to join the CCF, Mary petitioned the Ministry of Defence for girls to be admitted to the force. When the RAF conceded, Mary undertook the training, and, with a female colleague from Oakham, qualified as the first women officers in the CCF, with Woodbridge and Oakham then becoming the first schools in the country to have girls in the CCF. Over the next few years, Mary rose from Pilot Officer to Squadron Leader, and in 1986 took over as Contingent Commander, becoming the nation's first female CCF commanding officer, a position she held until 1991.

Mary devoted hours to gaining the necessary qualifications. When she went to get her range certification to run the rifle range, the sergeant in charge was taken aback to discover Pilot Officer Liley was a woman. He said he'd never had a woman on his course before – what did Mary think she

was doing? – and complained that now he'd have to moderate his language! Mary opened doors for the girls to participate in flying and gliding, orienteering, shooting, assault courses, and adventure training. Cadets went on to achieve national distinction in leadership roles, shooting and also flying, with Christine Thorpe becoming the first female cadet in the UK to fly solo and gain her wings.

Mary inspired confidence and showed her students how to turn daunting and arduous difficulties into thrilling adventures. The first camp she led on her own was an inter-school competition at Coltishall for orienteering, building a pulley system for a river crossing, and campcraft. Mary's team, with their single, giant and impossibly heavy canvas tent, apparently a relic from the Great War, initially met with ridicule from the other, much better-equipped competitors, yet against the odds they went on to win the event, laying the ground for future

opportunities. When female cadets started participating in the mixed adventure training camps at army bases such as Proteus, Mary went on the night exercises with them to make sure they were safe.

Mary took her charges around the country on climbing, whitewater rafting and other expeditions. Her mischievous sense of fun and can-do spirit strengthened cooperation and sparked laughter and cheerfulness at demoralised moments on rainy mountain peaks or on frigid night exercises. She once said that of all her experiences with the CCF, the most satisfying to her was getting a girl who lacked self-confidence to join and then watching this student blossom as she discovered all the things she could do.

Mary's view was that *"the CCF wasn't so much to do with preparing for war as it was about preparing for life, about the students developing skills to look after themselves and realising their own potential, seeing what they had in them. It gave them confidence and self-sufficiency and the ability to work with one another, to depend on each other when things got difficult. The cadets learned to ask for help when they needed it, or else they found they could help someone else who was in a jam, and that made them feel good."*

In addition to her professional responsibilities, Mary was a supportive parent, encouraging her three children in their varied interests, including sports, music and ornithology. Daughters Vivienne and Chez and son Durwyn all joined the CCF. Vivienne became the first female Head of School. Mary's husband David was a tutor at Tallents House, and sometimes on a Sunday Mary and David would take the boarders to Shingle Street and on other outings. Mary also opened her



Woodbridge School staff on Chapel Lawn, 1975

house to exchange students and visitors from other countries who needed a place to stay, even for extended periods.

When David became ill in 1991, Mary left teaching. After David died in 1992, Mary continued to empower people through her service at the Citizens Advice Bureau. She also volunteered for the next 25 years at the Cancer Research charity shop in Woodbridge. A bibliophile herself, (in 1962 she had co-founded Shire Publications, producing the first book, *Discovering East Suffolk*, on a hand letterpress), she developed the book donations into a popular and thriving department of the shop.

Mary loved stories and was a captivating storyteller with a dramatic flair. Once, on a seven-hour drive from Maine to Connecticut in the United States, she read *Pollyanna* aloud to the other passengers who were so enthralled that even after they had pulled into their destination they refused to leave the vehicle until she had finished the last page.

For almost thirty years, Mary gave her support to the work of the Suffolk Wildlife Trust, helping run the Woodbridge group, conducting hedgerow surveys, delivering magazines, and assisting at events. Mary and her rescue dog Polo were an iconic team, taking the SWT fundraising stall to festivals and happenings around the county.

gardening—increasingly adding wild habitats and revelling in the abundant wildlife she encouraged, including birds at her many feeders, parades of moorhens to her pond, and hedgehogs who fed at her door and hibernated under her hedge at Around the Bend.

Mary volunteered with the Church Recorders to inventory church artifacts, and, in her last years, welcomed visitors at the Woodbridge Museum, delighting in the opportunity to introduce them to the legacy of the area.

Practical and efficient, and in keeping with her lack of sentimentality and desire to always be of use, she left her body to medical research, and a note sealed in an envelope like a treasure hunt bearing a quote from the Victorian naturalist, Bruce Frederick Cummings:

*To me, the honour is sufficient of belonging to the universe—such a great universe, and so great a scheme of things. Not even Death can rob me of that honour. For nothing can alter the fact that I have lived; I have been I, if for ever so short a time. And when I am dead, the matter which composes my body is indestructible—and eternal, so that come what may to my 'Soul', my dust will always be going on, each separate atom of me playing its separate part—I shall still have some sort of finger in the pie.*



Mary with her dog Polo by the River Deben

# FROM THE HEADS OF SCHOOL



## OLIVER LAXTON (SECKFORD HOUSE, 2010–2024)

successful. I have had so much fun being part of the Woodbridge drama department, and I owe it all to them.

In my later years at Woodbridge, I have had the privilege of being taught Latin and Greek by Miss Wright, who is also the school's Oxbridge coordinator. Her passion for the classics is unparalleled, and I will be incredibly lucky if I can find a lecturer at university with an equal level of dedication to the subject. I have her to thank for my blossoming love for Latin and Greek, which I will take further in my studies next year. She is also responsible for providing support for the students interested in entering essay competitions, in which the school has had a very large number of successes in recent years. I would challenge anyone to find someone as ferociously knowledgeable about such a wide variety of subjects as Miss Wright, from the complexities of ancient Athenian statecraft



*Ollie and Isla with those from the Class of 2024 who joined the school together in Reception in 2010*

to the intricacies of Soviet battle tactics. I cannot thank her enough for all that she has done for me during my time here.

Finally, I cannot understate the impact that the late Mr Garrett had on my education while he was head of the Abbey, now Woodbridge School Prep. His door was always open to us as pupils, and he was always willing to offer insightful advice on even the most trivial of matters. The lessons that he dispensed in assemblies were understandable to all of us at the time, young as we were, but they also carried profound and universally applicable messages that I like to think I still carry with me to this day. Of these, surely the tenet of his ethos as an educator was that we should treat others as we wish to be treated, a message so simple in theory but so powerful in its application.

I confidently believe that Mr Garrett's tenet is well and truly alive within the school community today, even if he is sadly no longer with us. The principles of Kindness, Community, Character and Excellence are what make Woodbridge truly unique, and I cannot stress highly enough how positive a force the school has been in my life over the last 14 years. I have made some wonderful memories over the course of my time here, and I am very excited to begin my journey as an Old Woodbridgian!



## ISLA RICHARDSON (SECKFORD HOUSE, 2010–2024)

When it came to writing this piece, I wanted to consider what leaving school meant to me. The power to dye my hair purple, have acrylic nails or get a nose piercing if I so wished, were all things that sprang to mind. However, amongst all the new prospects and freedoms arises a sense of melancholy.

A staple of my time at Woodbridge has been my music teachers. They've put up with me forgetting my music, my lessons, my instrument, they've heard my early attempts at melody and my screechy stabs at vibrato. However, seeing them every week for such a large portion of my life (my cello teacher for over 10 years!) means that they have become a crucial part in growing my self-belief. The best thing I've learned from them is that it's ok to get things wrong.

Last night was the aptly named "Our Last Summer" leavers concert. It would be an understatement to say I shed a tear. In the summer evening glow, we watched countless bands, trios, and solos. What I loved was seeing people perform right at the end of their school career. It demonstrated to me the level of growth that the school nurtures. If you heard some of us attempting to play in Year 7, you would understand what I mean.

It is these school community events that I think I'll miss the most. In the younger years we enjoyed the Year 7 bowling and a rather muddy Geography trip to Ufford Springs. In the Sixth Form

I loved the Sixth Form Review and the Christmas parties. These all act as landmarks in my memory of school. Today I'm looking forward to an event I never thought I'd look forward to: Sports Day (that may be because I am spectating and not participating!). However, I do feel that in the sweaty misery of the 1500m, or, if you're more athletic than me, the heat of the competition, there's a sense of spirit and community that is rare and memorable.

me through changing what I wanted to study at university several times. She caters to the needs of the individual and gives her students the means to stretch themselves. I will very much miss the neon scarves, the piles of holiday reading and her ability to make an explanation of the difference between Ionic and Doric columns absolutely fascinating. I promise to return all the books very soon.

Now, it seems the number of school events are dwindling. After



*The Class of 2024 in their Queen's House days*

There are many teachers I ought to thank for what I've learnt at Woodbridge. I've been lucky to have been nourished by people who encourage free thinking, debate, and confidence. I've had teachers who have seen the merit and intelligence hidden in weird suggestions and poorly thought-out explanations. My love of learning wouldn't be half what it is now without my teachers. However, considering that I'm writing surrounded by piles of books lent by her, it would be impossible not to mention my classics teacher, Miss Wright. Miss Wright represents the very best of the school. She has always encouraged my ever-drifting curiosity and interests, supporting

the Leavers' Ball and Speech Day, adulthood will begin, and my year group will move on to a new chapter. I will never understand how the time has flown from my first nerve-wracking day in reception to signing shirts on my last day at school. Some of the people in my year are those who have also been here since the beginning which, I think demonstrates how Woodbridge provides the stability and care that makes people want to stay. Although I face new, scary changes in my life, I can hold on to the fact that I've been so lucky to have had all these experiences. Wherever life takes me, I will always hold these red brick walls very close to my heart.

# THE CLASS OF 2024

*As another academic year draws to a close, we welcome the Class of 2024 to the OWs*

Esme Ball	2017-2024	Annott House
Joshua Barstow	2017-2024	Annott House
Maggie Black	2017-2024	Burwell House
Wren Bonnett	2022-2024	Annott House
Lucy Bowden	2022-2024	Annott House
Hannah Bridgland	2017-2024	Burwell House
Libbie Brightey	2017-2024	Burwell House
Edward Britton	2019-2024	Seckford House
Oliver Brook	2020-2024	Annott House
Edward Buckingham	2015-2024	Seckford House
Thomas Burrows	2010-2024	Burwell House
Skye Clapshaw	2015-2024	Annott House
Katarina Corfe	2012-2024	Annott House/School House
Isabelle Cotton	2019-2024	Annott House
Hugh Crofts	2017-2024	Willard House
Tom Croome	2022-2024	Burwell House
Chloe Davies	2022-2024	Seckford House
Elsa Davies	2020-2024	Annott House
Digby Davis	2017-2024	Burwell House
Rufus Davis	2017-2024	Burwell House
Henry Dover	2019-2024	Burwell House
Florence Dunnett	2022-2024	Willard House
Eleanor Edmunds	2017-2024	Burwell House
Paul Efe-Oghene	2022-2024	Burwell House
Jonny Evans Lombe	2017-2024	Burwell House
Lulu Everett	2022-2024	Annott House
Amelie Field	2013-2024	Burwell House
George Finch	2019-2024	Burwell House
Kitty Frith	2017-2024	Seckford House
Sophie Fry	2010-2024	Annott House
Jasmine Gamba	2017-2024	Annott House
Jack Gathorne-Hardy	2013-2024	Annott House
Barnaby Gibbon	2010-2024	Burwell House
Stephanie Gifford	2017-2024	Seckford House
Ben Giles	2022-2024	Seckford House
Grace Godwin	2011-2024	Willard House
Oscar Governo	2020-2024	Annott House
Arthur Green	2013-2024	Burwell House
Edward Hammond	2020-2024	Burwell House
Faith Harrold	2018-2024	Willard House
Mimi Haysom	2022-2024	Seckford House
Isabelle Holland	2016-2024	Willard House
Theo Howard	2017-2024	Annott House
James Hunt	2019-2024	Seckford House/School House
Tanya-Yasmine Huq	2016-2024	Burwell House
Daniel Jones	2016-2024	Seckford House
Polina Korchagina	2020-2024	Seckford House/School House
Lara Künzli	2022-2024	Seckford House/School House
Olufunmilayo Laguda	2020-2024	Burwell House
William Laniyan	2022-2024	Annott House
Oliver Laxton	2010-2024	Annott House
Felix Leung	2020-2024	Annott House
Rebecca Long	2023-2024	Willard House/School House



*The Class of 2024*

Caitlyn Maggs	2013-2024	Seckford House
Ada Marson	2013-2024	Seckford House
Moses McBride	2017-2024	Willard House
Hector McLean-Spruce	2010-2024	Annott House
Chloe Morgan	2013-2024	Burwell House
Abdullah Mustafa	2020-2024	Seckford House
Eleanor Parsons	2016-2024	Seckford House
Isla Richardson	2010-2024	Seckford House
Lucy Rigler	2020-2024	Willard House
Raphael Ross	2022-2024	Burwell House
Cameron Russell	2022-2024	Willard House
Evelyn Saunders	2010-2024	Willard House
James Seaden	2017-2024	Annott House
Alice Sharratt	2012-2024	Annott House
Theo Sheldrake	2019-2024	Annott House
Betsy Smith	2019-2024	Burwell House
Freya Smith	2019-2024	Willard House
Florence Spiers	2022-2024	Willard House
Robert Stewart	2017-2024	Willard House
Amy Thornley	2010-2024	Burwell House
Zaid Toubasey	2017-2024	Willard House
Joshua Turner	2014-2024	Seckford House
Silas Twinch	2014-2024	Seckford House
Kira Vertsman	2022-2024	Willard House/School House
Samuel Waugh	2017-2024	Willard House
James Williams	2013-2024	Annott House
Lily Yallop	2017-2024	Willard House

**Teaching Staff leavers:**

Richard Bradshaw	2007-2024
Alex Davis	2000-2024
Ally Hillman (OW)	2002-2024

*Others who have been with us on a more temporary basis, warmly welcomed as OWs*

David Clare
Eleanore Fitzgerald (OW)
Helen McGlynn
Shannon Taylor
Bruce Wiltshire



# IT'S ALL BEEN RATHER LOVELY

**Ken Bailey** (1956–1963) reflects on the end of an era

Actor John Le Mesurier said this about his life, and I am fairly sure my fellow members of the Old Woodbridgian Liaison Group would agree, that our time serving the Old Woodbridgian Committee and, for the last 10 years, the Old Woodbridgian Liaison Group has been an honour and a pleasure.

9 February 2024 felt like an historic date in the life of the Old Woodbridgian Society as it marked the end of this particular era and, at the same time, heralded an exciting new beginning. It has taken many years of patient endeavour to transform the Society from an organisation totally independent from the School to now becoming a completely integral part of the fabric of the School. I think now is a good moment to remember our history and I hope you will forgive me a short foray into the past.

The School was founded in 1662 and so we presume that for 249 years until 1911 there was no formal OW arrangement, but we know earlier OWs arranged dinners and I like to think they kept in touch with the friends they made while at School by letter which was, in those days, pretty much the only option available.

The Old Woodbridgian Society was instituted formally in 1911 and its first President was elected, but all the committee members were volunteers and there was no financial commitment from the School. Of course, the School helped with material assistance such as help with mailings, food and drink and provided use of the



OW London Dinner 9 November 1901 – The Holborn Restaurant

School grounds and School buildings for various functions. All other work was undertaken by the committee volunteers. Things continued in this way throughout two World Wars and through the 1950s and 60s during which time OW and MP

Mr Edward Du Cann made the necessary arrangements for several OW Annual Dinners to be held in the Houses of Parliament in Westminster. Desmond Proctor-Robinson was very impressed!

Throughout the 1970s, 1980s and early 90s Jeff Leslie did a lot of work maintaining contact with OWs and reporting their sightings as and when they

occurred. When Stephen and Jane Cole came to the School in 1994 they soon recognised there was work to be done in this area and appointed Michael Weaver as Registrar of the OWs and paid him a small honorarium. Thus began the first toe in the water towards financially supporting and integrating the OWs into the School.



The OWLG, L-R: Rick Hobson, Ken Bailey, Rob Turner, Paul Jenkins, David Houchell



Menu from 1959 OW Dinner at the House of Commons. On the subject of OW MPs – congratulations to Jenny Riddell-Carpenter (2003–2005) on her recent election to Parliament as the MP for Suffolk Coastal

On 22 March 2014 the decision was made to dissolve the old OW Committee, to provide dedicated assistance from the School Marketing & Admissions Department with Clare Kneebone and Rachael Woodmansee and later under Development Director, Melanie Chew, and now with our Alumni and Engagement Officer, Sam James. At the same time the OWLG was created so that the School and the OWs could jointly make decisions about events and ways and means of *Bringing OWs Together*.

Now things have moved on again, as they always do, and the need for joint decision-making is no longer necessary and so on 9 February 2024 the OWLG was dissolved and the OW Society has finally been fully absorbed into the School 113 years since its foundation in 1911.

As I said at the beginning, my 25 years as a Committee member, including nine years as OW President, have been a complete joy. Working with Michael Weaver for many of those years was an experience I will always treasure and wouldn't have missed for the world. When he passed away in December 2011 I was left, as were many others, with a completely irreplaceable gap in my life. But it wasn't just Michael, every single member of staff, or pupil for that matter, that I have had dealings with over the years

was always helpful, cooperative, charming and made the experience completely delightful.

Thank you both, Shona and Sam, and I look forward to keeping in touch and attending as many OW events as possible in the coming years as "It's all been rather lovely".

Sam and I, in turn, need to extend our thanks to the members of the OWLG for their huge contribution to the life of the School for the last 10 years as a committee, and for the previous years served too. Their final act of generosity was to kick-start our fundraising campaign for the cricket pavilion with a fantastic donation of just under £10,000. Originally built by the school's caretaker, who also constructed our Chapel, over one hundred years ago the pavilion has become a central point for pupils and parents. Whether it is enjoying a quintessentially English summer day, sheltering from those familiar Suffolk stormy skies or a team huddle in the changing rooms prior to a match, the pavilion has been a welcoming haven for all.

**Shona Norman**



WOODBRIDGE SCHOOL

## Cricket Pavilion

*donation appeal*

For all of us, the cricket pavilion holds key memories from our time at Woodbridge School.

It has now reached a century, and Woodbridge is committed to restoring it to its full glory, but also to ensuring that it is equipped to welcome and support the next generation of Woodbridgians.

Any amount that you are able to provide would be so gratefully received, and we would look to thank all those who come forward in due course.

*Scan here*



<https://checkout.justgiving.com/o6e6xgf7gh>

*Thank you*

# JUST VISITING

*It is always a pleasure to welcome OWs and their families back to School. A trip down memory lane for the OWs, a chance to hear some fabulous stories for me.*

**J**im Yip (2009–2011) came to Woodbridge from Hong Kong and lived in School House for Sixth Form. He attended the Whole School Open Day in September and while catching up with some staff revealed what is, to my knowledge, the only Woodbridge School tattoo in existence. Jim is now based in London and works as a Design Manager in the Mission Critical sector. When asked for the reason behind the tattoo he had this to say:

*“Life has a funny way of showing you what means the most to you. After leaving Woodbridge, the young man that I was travelled and lived in different places in the world. Sometimes, there is a feeling of not belonging anywhere although as a designer, I have left my mark on the city. Now that I am a slightly older man, I have come to realise that Woodbridge is a place I feel at home, where I feel safe, connected, understood and loved! Hence, the tattoo, a reminder of home.”*

Shona and I were delighted to be joined by father and son OWs **Keith** (1937–1943) and **James Burch** (1968–1975) for tea and cake in February. Keith was a pupil at school during World War Two and has some incredible memories and stories of his time here (some of which his son had never heard until this meeting!). *“I left school 81 years ago”* was quite something to hear!

OW and Prep School Head's PA Karen Virr hosted a group of OWs for a tour of Woodbridge School Prep. According to Karen it was a fun visit with lots of stories!



Jim Yip and a close up of his tattoo of Woodbridge School Chapel



The ringleader of the group was **Rick Thomas** (some of you may remember his mother, Mrs Thomas was a teacher at The Abbey from 1968–1988) who brought with him **Christopher Caldwell, Andrew Honess, Christopher Meadows** and **Richard Speedman** who were variously at school between 1975–1985.

Sometimes relatives of OWs who are no longer with us visit, curious to learn more about the place where their relatives spent their early years. During the May half term holiday, I missed an impromptu visit from Sally Sestanovich, the daughter of **Ian Crowder** (1945–1948). She was visiting from Australia and popped in on the off chance but sadly I wasn't in. Sally was accompanied by **Harry Field** (2011–2020) who is the grandson of **John Craske** (1941–1946) (an OW connection I was not aware of). John was a childhood friend of Ian's and the families have remained close ever since. A week after Sally had visited, I had an email from her cousin Linda Alderson, daughter of Ian's brother **John** (1943–1948). I welcomed Linda and her family for a visit at the end of June. The three Crowder brothers were pupils at the school until the family

emigrated to Australia in 1948. **Ian** and **Malcolm** (1945–1948) are no longer with us, but John retains fond memories of his time here and still takes a keen interest in the life of the school today.



The Crowder family en route to Australia in 1948. John then Ian on the left with Malcolm to the right. Hard to be sure but are the 3 boys in their Woodbridge School uniform?

While tracing her family tree, Lynda Newson discovered from the 1901 census that her grandfather **Alma Clement Chaplin** had been a boarder at Woodbridge School. Lynda lives in Stafford but was visiting Suffolk and was keen to see where her grandfather had spent some of his childhood. As often happens, this led to the discovery of even more OW connections, in this case Lynda's partner George Wagstaff being the great-uncle to two OWs.

## KEN (1962–1970) AND DAVID (1965–1970) WEEKS

**I**t was in the summer of 1966 when Ken and David were told they were off to boarding school. They were already day pupils at Woodbridge as their father had been running the Atomic Weapons Research Establishment at Orford Ness since 1960, but after he was offered a diplomatic post in Washington DC, the pair became boarders.

David started boarding at the Abbey, and Ken started his first year at senior school in Tallents House having previously been a day boy at the Abbey.

David remembers very quickly being jealous of the freedom Ken enjoyed at senior school as Abbey boarders were only allowed out of the grounds for an hour on Thursdays, a privilege which could be withdrawn for the slightest misdemeanour. David says that he was fortunate to only suffer this punishment occasionally, not because he was a model pupil, but more due to his skill at not getting caught! He has fond memories of Mr Glading, an excellent teacher,

and also Mr Dewar who could be quite intimidating although kind-hearted. Ken has fond memories of Mr Dewar and his skill and encouragement in football and cricket coaching.



Ken moved to School House after one year at Tallents House and was appreciative of the chance to see the house again during his recent visit with David in May 2024. The study bedrooms for individual pupils were a far cry from the open dormitories for 12, and they even had heating, a far cry from icicles on the inside of the windows that Ken remembers!

Our recent visit to both schools brought back so many memories and we left thinking how incredibly lucky today's pupils are to enjoy the environment and the facilities that would have been beyond our wildest dreams.



Above: David and Ken Weeks on their visit to Woodbridge in May 2024

Left: David and Ken at home in Washington DC, the day of departure back to school

## HAYTON CRAMPHORN (THE ABBEY/ TALLENTS HOUSE/SCHOOL HOUSE 1974–1982)



**I**n 1974 at the young age of eight my parents packed me off to Woodbridge Abbey. The world was a very different place in those days and I recall how basic it was, even at boarding school. I was really fortunate as I had a great group of contemporaries all in the same boat.

After three years (Lower, Middle & Upper Prep) we all moved on to the Senior School. Us boarders were initially housed in Tallents House where the legendary

Mike Lubbock and his wife were Housemaster and Matron respectively. It was a wow moment going from the austere Abbey and Mr Dewar to the modern family surroundings of Tallents. Here we had TV, could have a duvet (known in the 70s as a continental quilt) and put posters on the wall. It was the era of Star Wars and life was great. Little did we know that in 12 months we would end up back in reality and School or Queen's House; I moved to School House.

## JUST VISITING

School House was a different bag. Again an old building, and as second year seniors we were back at the bottom of the pecking order, but we had a new Housemaster, Mr Boothroyd as the famous PR (Proctor-Robinson) had retired. I spent four interesting years in School House and as time progressed, we all moved up the pecking order.

In the Fifth Form, we finally got a study. I shared with my partner in crime Richard Merriweather, with David 'Windy' Miller next door, and across the way the famous trio of Steve Brown, Dave Kemsley & Charlie Birchmore. Fifth Form was a blast, it seemed like a coming of age, but it was O level year and instead of getting my head down, I preferred to play rugby, smoke in the changing room/toilet block and generally try and avoid too stressful a life! I also recall the TV Room in School House right at the top of the building facing the First XV Rugby pitch. The



Abbey Sports Day



First XV 1981

reception was so bad we used to get someone to hang out of the window and hold the aerial in the right place so we could watch the 1982 World Cup. I was privileged to have played for the First XV, Suffolk & Eastern Counties in my Autumn Term and as my physics teacher, also Headmaster Fred Vyvyan-Robinson remarked, "it is O level year Cramphorn, and you spend more time on the rugby pitch than in class". Needless to say, I ended up doing rather badly in my O levels and, to my knowledge, was the first person ever to fail Latin which did not go down well with my teacher Mr Nicholls. The trouble was, I had decided to leave Woodbridge School and go to KCS Wimbledon for Sixth Form. However, although I got 5 O levels, I did not get the required grades.

I returned for the Autumn Term of Sixth Form, but it was not to be, so I left age 17 and went home to London where I took a job at Aquascutum in Regent Street selling high end clothing.

After a couple of years of this, I decided I wanted to see the world and in January 1985 I joined the Royal Navy as an Ordinary Seaman. I went on to Officer training at BRNC Dartmouth in April 1987 where I passed out in 1988 and had the privilege of being inspected by HM Queen Elizabeth II and Prince Phillip, a great honour. I served for nine years, leaving in 1994. I married my wife Penny in 1993 and have a wonderful daughter, Emily-Jane born in 1994.

After the Royal Navy I retrained and started a career in HSE and have been practicing for some 30 years, now working in the Renewable Energy Sector following 20+ years in the oil business. It is a career that has let me travel the world extensively which I really enjoy and today I am lucky enough to work as a consultant to a small

company based on Vancouver Island, Canada looking after QHSE & Field Operations (onshore/offshore).

I look back on my time at Woodbridge with great affection and what it taught me was how to look after myself, be tenacious, make lasting friendships and how to succeed. I still have contact with quite a few of my school pals and recall a few years ago, when I was working in the oil business in London, a night out in the Gable near Moorgate where we had the best part of the back line reunited – Steve Brown (Scrum Half), Dave Kemsley (Fly Half), Dave Rea (Inside Centre) & myself (Outside Centre).



Hayton (right) with OW Steve Brown (1975-1984) a few years ago

Last summer I came back to school for the first time since I was 19. It has changed so much and brought back all those fond memories and poor Sam had to listen to me regaling my infamous tales, too many to add in this piece. Only one disappointment, they dug up the First XV Rugby Pitch which was outside School/Talents House and made it all weather, but School Hall, Dining Room & Sports Dome are the same as in my day. Thanks Sam\*, for being such a great host and I look forward to returning soon and hopefully get to see around School House and see how that has changed since I was there.

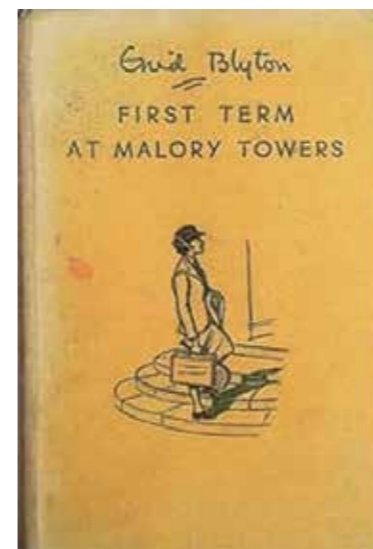
(\*note from the editor – it was a pleasure!)

# FROM THE OW OFFICE

## Why?

By now you will have realised that a focus of this year's OW Magazine has been why... Why do any of us follow the path we do in life? I realised that in last year's magazine I told a lie. I said that 'I had no real idea what I wanted to be' but I recently remembered that when I was very young I wanted to be an author. I enjoyed creative writing at school, I made 'books' for my younger siblings and once came second in a poetry competition run by the Junior East Anglian Daily Times; a masterpiece entitled 'Snow and Ice'. My mother probably still has a copy of the published poem kicking around somewhere...

I also loved reading (I still do!). Enid Blyton is a perhaps a divisive figure these days but as a child growing up in the 70s I devoured her many books. Her writing took me to worlds I could only dream of and was perfect escapism and adventure. My favourites were the Malory Towers and St Clare's books mentioned by Lucy Underwood. My



much-read copies of these are probably as dog-eared and tatty as Shona's Beowulf, especially as they were second-hand, passed down to me by my mum. Perhaps too close to comfort for some of you and probably nothing like the realities of boarding school life, but for a day pupil of a state school in rural Suffolk these girls had adventures and a camaraderie that seemed wonderful.

Shona regularly asks all of us to think about why we work at Woodbridge School. So, why do I work at Woodbridge School? The most obvious answer is that Woodbridge School gave me a job when I applied for one and came for interview. Perhaps the more pertinent question is why do I stay working at Woodbridge School? Why have I taken on more responsibility and work not only as your Alumni Officer but also as an assistant in the Exams Office? Why do I cover Reception sometimes? It is partly, as Harry Hogg says, the people. It is partly as Lisa Pang says, that no day is dull or ever the same. It is absolutely the wonderful Woodbridgian community and the connections I make every day.

My work is not just about the OWs although obviously you are my primary focus. It is about involving all members of the wider school community in the life of the school today. The fact that I can email many OWs I have never met (although very much hope to!) and they are happy to engage and contribute to this magazine, or to come to



events or to participate in the life of the school in another way is tantamount to the strength of the Woodbridge community and makes my job delightful.

As we've seen, one theme at the Prep School this year was connections. Almost every day it seems that I learn of an OW connection I was previously unaware of. OWs are certainly everywhere. On taking my daughter to her first term at university last September I started chatting with one of the other mums in the kitchen. The standard "where do you come from" conversation ensued. She was from Leeds, she'd heard of Woodbridge because her first boyfriend when she went to university was, you've guessed it, an OW!

Working in the exams office gives me the opportunity to get to know students before they become OWs. It is inspiring to talk with them about their hopes and dreams for the future but also about their experiences of school. Invigilating can give the opportunity for proper thinking,

## FROM THE OW OFFICE

perhaps something none of us truly has enough time for. This exam season we had one unlucky candidate who was scheduled to take three exams in one day (a Friday) and so had to come in and sit A level history on his own on a Saturday morning (all necessary permissions and paperwork were completed!) in the Jeff Leslie room with me invigilating. This reminded me once again that I still wish I had taken history A level. Choosing my third A level was tough. I always knew I was going to take music and English Literature, but I was struggling to choose between history and French as my third. I loved both subjects equally and my school made it harder by being kind to me. Either could be accommodated into the timetable so I could wait until I got my GCSE results to make a final decision. I got the same grade for both subjects so that didn't help. Then I found out the history

teacher wasn't returning. That was it. Decision made. I couldn't imagine anyone else teaching me history, so I went for French. My history teacher was so fantastic that the 16-year-old me couldn't countenance the idea that a new teacher could compare. That was the effect of a truly inspirational teacher, I stopped studying his subject! I do still have the love for history which the wonderful Mr Haynes instilled in me but with a niggling regret that I didn't study it for longer.

My job at Woodbridge enables me to realise my childhood ambition for writing, in that I get to put together this magazine, and my passion for history. I love showing OWs around the school today, hearing tales of how it was in their day. I can get lost in our archives for ages tracing an individual's time here for them or their family. Being able to show the granddaughter of an OW who was here in 1901 a photo

of her grandfather at school is a moment I will not forget. I get to meet and work with many inspirational people, a handful of whom are featured in this magazine, many more who aren't. This is my why.



Shona presenting flowers for my birthday with a zero at the Senior Alumni Lunch





*My thanks to everyone who has contributed to this magazine but also to those OWs who have been involved in the life of the school this last year. As ever there are too many individuals to mention but particular thanks to: Ken Bailey, Keith Banthorp, Ian Barker (63 years after his first picture of the Chapel appeared in The Woodbridgian), Kate Booth-Davey, Hannah Bridgland, Emma Brown, Stephen and Jane Cole, Lily Constantine, Hayton Cramphorn, Simon Drane, Nick Goozée, Simon Hill, Ann Hirst, Harry Hogg, Mussa Hussain, Naomi James, Oliver Laxton, The Liley Family, Nicola Mitchell, Coco Newton, Shona Norman, Lisa Pang, Sylvaine Poitau, James Ramsden, Isla Richardson, Roisin Ryan-Self, David Weeks, Ken Weeks*



### CONTACT US:

Woodbridge School Alumni Office  
+44 (0)1394 615 177  
alumni@seckford-foundation.org.uk

### FIND US ONLINE:

-  [www.woodbridgeschool.org.uk](http://www.woodbridgeschool.org.uk)
-  [www.ownetwork.co.uk](http://www.ownetwork.co.uk)
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